

ALT A REVIEW

BESPOKE ARTS AND CULTURE GUIDE

Night by Day: Spencer Lewis on La Noche de Día at Fundación La Nave Salinas, Ibiza



Los Angeles-based artist **Spencer Lewis** opened the 2025 season at **Fundación La Nave Salinas** with his first solo exhibition in Spain, *La Noche de Día* (The Night of the Day). The show, a meditation on contrast, history, and materiality, marked a significant milestone for the Ibiza-based gallery, now celebrating its 10th anniversary. (all images courtesy of the gallery)



Situated off the salt lakes of South Ibiza, **La Nave Salinas** was originally built in 1941 as a salt warehouse, intended to provide jobs during post-Civil War Spain. Left unused for decades, it was rediscovered and renovated in 2015 by art collector **Lio Malca**, whose affinity for New York's 1980s scene (Basquiat, Haring, Condo) brought new energy to the space. Today, it is home to an evolving program of exhibitions that bridge local context with international perspectives.

In this conversation, artist **Spencer Lewis** speaks with **Abigail Yartey** about abstract expression, working with salt, weaving histories, and his vision for Black abstraction in contemporary art.



la-nave-21.06.2025-4.jpg

AY: Can you elaborate a bit on the concept for **La Noche de Día**?

SL: They actually brought the title to me, and I thought it was quite beautiful. There's something simple and poetic about the idea—the inversion of night and day. *La Noche de Día* translates to *The Night of the Day*, and I think for them, it was about illuminating something that's typically hidden or in darkness.

For me, it resonated with how I work. There's always an unknown element in my painting—something unconscious or subconscious, a language that isn't fully formed. It was a nice coincidence that the title aligned with my own creative concerns.

AY: How was it working in a space like Fundación La Nave Salinas? The gallery literally sits on salt—did that physical presence impact your work?

SL: Absolutely. It was a coincidence, but a meaningful one. I've previously experimented with using salt crystals in my work—I've actually applied salt to create textures in some of my paintings. I think they sensed something organic in my practice that fit the space.

AY: Really?

SL: Yeah! I'm also really into graffiti, and the environment around La Nave—where art and nature meet—feels connected to that. The salt flats have this raw texture, like a canvas in themselves. There's something beautiful about how the ground interacts with the surroundings—almost like a beach.

AY: What kind of graffiti artists inspire you? I was going to say Pope.L—but he wasn't exactly a graffiti artist, right?

SL: Haha, no, but I love Pope.L! I saw this incredible piece of his in Los Angeles—a void, a dark square cut into the wall. I met him briefly, and he spoke about Blackness as “becoming.” That stuck with me.

But more generally, I'm drawn to environments that push back, that challenge you. Spaces like La Nave are loaded—with history, with commerce, with escape. People fled here from Franco's regime, for instance. Being an artist, for me, means absorbing those layers. Not always reacting, but being open to how your work overlaps with those histories.

AY: Yeah, not always being reactive.

SL: Exactly. Painting can be a mindfulness practice. You're in the moment—but the moment is slippery. You have an idea, then you wrestle it onto the canvas. It's slow, rhythmic, almost like time travel.

AY: I wanted to ask about your use of jute. The layering, the texture—was that deliberate for this exhibition? Do you make your own jute?

SL: This time, I bought it. But I have made my own jute in the past—we even built a loom. I'm fascinated by the ground of materials. Jute has such a rich history tied to global trade—coffee, labour, empire.

I don't take surfaces for granted. There's economy embedded in these fibres—burlap isn't considered “fine art” material, but that's why I want to reclaim it. It's brown like my skin. I think of it as a metaphor for weaving histories, for communicating beyond words.



AY: That's powerful. Would you say there's a symbolic reference to forced labour and colonial trade within your choice of materials?

SL: Definitely. The economics are baked in. At the same time, I find it beautiful in its own right. Linen, for instance, became a popular surface in Dutch painting because it was easier to move and sell. There's always commerce in art—why not explore and reclaim that?

AY: Final question—what's next for you? Any upcoming projects?

SL: Yes. I have a book coming out this summer, and I'm hoping to launch it with a show in New York in August. The book is titled *Untitled*, which makes sense because a lot of my paintings are untitled too—my publisher liked that idea.

I'm also working on a proposal for a group exhibition featuring Black abstract artists—ideally for 2026 in London. I think there's so much important work happening in Black abstraction right now, and I'd love to create a space for that conversation to unfold.



AY: Amazing. Black abstraction as a movement deserves that platform.

SL: I agree. It's a big topic, and I don't know if it'll happen yet, but I'll keep working toward it.

Spencer Lewis' *La Noche de Día* runs through the 2025 summer season at **Fundación La Nave Salinas**, Ibiza. For more, visit lanavesalinas.org or follow the gallery and artist on Instagram.

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