

Sayre Gomez

Déjà Vu

October 14 - November 18, 2017

Ghebaly Gallery is proud to announce *Déjà Vu*, the gallery's second solo exhibition with the Los Angeles-based artist Sayre Gomez. The show is accompanied by an exhibition publication with an essay by writer and curator Olivian Cha.

Across several new bodies of work, Gomez masterfully deploys trompe l'oeil painting techniques in a loose exploration of contemporary American subjectivity. The exhibition opens with a six second video loop from the 1941 Disney film *Dumbo*. An enraged captive gorilla shakes the bars of its cage and finds in shock that the bars of its prison are loose. Rather than freeing itself, it restores its cage in order to carry on its angry protest. The short looping video sets a tone of eternal return, prefacing several repetitions and recurrences throughout the exhibition.

Fences, closed doorways, and windows reappear across the show, indicating confinement and foreclosed opportunity. In a set of three paintings, a chain link fence comes into sharp pictorial focus, each backdrop falling into a distant blur. Unnervingly, an identical strand of ivy grows on each fence. The ivy, signifying the passage of time and the lapsing of human control over the environment, becomes a feature the viewer carries from scene to scene. Anchoring these street views are two large storefront doorway paintings, each rendered at one-to-one scale and overflowing with details of degradation and disuse. In one, a worn and faded vinyl layer depicting a tropical landscape blocks a view inside. In the other, scraps of paper cover the doorway from within, the last action of a quickly shuttered business. The storefront, an emblem of American opportunity, comes to stand as a painted closure, sealed before it was ever open.

The exhibition proceeds in a spiral, moving from exterior views to interior spaces, represented in a series of trompe l'oeil wood panel paintings. Simulating the surfaces of varnished wood panels marred by stickers in various stages of removal, Gomez creates psychologically charged works that comment on consciousness and identity formation. Assemblages of cultural attitudes, gender performances, class markers, and aesthetic statements, the works use stickers as avatars of identity. Individually insignificant, the stickers are substances that bind irreversibly with a surface and offer a collective, emergent view of the self.

This consideration of interiority is punctuated by an untitled painting, a confrontational, photorealistic portrait of a futuristic fighter pilot. The source image for this work was created by a fantasy illustration artist and posted to a military enthusiast website. By painting this computer generated soldier, Gomez offers it as another kind of sticker or ornament. The work reflects on the cooptation of a collective imagination, one in which power, violence, and domination are championed and perversely aestheticized.

Sayre Gomez (b. 1982, Chicago, Illinois, USA) lives and works in Los Angeles. He holds a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from California Institute of the Arts. Recent solo exhibitions include Galerie Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels, Belgium; Michael Jon and Alan, Miami, USA; Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne, Germany; and Galerie Parisa Kind, Frankfurt, Germany. He has recently exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, USA; Soccer Club Club, Chicago, USA; Marlborough, Madrid, Spain; IBID, London, UK; and C L E A R I N G, New York, USA. His work resides in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Rubell Family Collection.

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