

Bony Ramirez

CAYMAN TEARS

January 7 - February 4, 2023



François Ghebaly is proud to announce *CAYMAN TEARS*, the gallery's first solo exhibition with Bony Ramirez. The show will open on January 7, 2023, and remain on view through February 4, 2023.

Born in the northern region of the Dominican Republic, Bony Ramirez makes mixed media paintings and sculptures celebrating Caribbean culture. His works on panel depict characters with oversized features, elongated limbs, and cartoonish eyes set against backdrops rich with Caribbean iconography. These figures, whose anatomical exaggerations reveal influences from Italian Mannerism, characterize Ramirez's works and signature collage technique. Ramirez paints his figures on paper using thin washes of acrylic paint, colored pencil, and oil pastel before adhering them to wood panels. Swirls of color adorn his character's ears, referencing the interior of a clamshell. Each work is rife with specific references to his Caribbean upbringing, giving a powerful sense of place. Coconuts, plantains, and beaches appear alongside machetes, mosquito nets, and bodegas, all mainstays of life on the islands.

Featuring six works executed on panel alongside a sculptural installation of metal chains embellished with seashells, coconuts, and cast iron suspended from the gallery's rafters, and a major new sculpture with a taxidermied bull at its center, *CAYMAN TEARS* offers a comprehensive introduction to Bony Ramirez's practice and a rare window into Caribbean life. Two of the exhibition walls radiate a pale pink hue, imbuing the gallery space with distinctive warmth. On the gallery's largest wall, a mural depicting caimans circling in sweeping brushstrokes surrounds the exhibition's focal painting: *To Be Desired Is Perhaps The Closest Thing to Feeling Immortal*. Here, a figure stands on a makeshift sandbag bridge over a flowing river while bright red fountains of blood spew from her truncated arms. Committed to representing Caribbean people with reverence, Ramirez shows the central figure commanding space and exuding confidence despite her dire situation. Elsewhere in the exhibition, *Sueños De Campeón* challenges stereotypes of Dominican men by showing a male nude at rest on a soft, floral backdrop with a mosquito net stretched over him for protection, oblivious to a cockfight taking place above him. In the center of the room, Ramirez's latest sculpture in a series of self-portraits, *El Bilingüe*, features a taxidermied bull mounted on a blue plywood frame with an animal trap dangling behind it. This sculpture projects resilience and strength, reflecting the difficulty of Ramirez's experiences immigrating from the Dominican Republic as a teen and growing up in the United States.

Bony Ramirez's evocative works rooted in personal experience shed light on contemporary life in the Dominican Republic, the colonial history of the Caribbean, and the complexities of the immigrant experience. His nuanced and varied depictions of regional characters glimpse Ramirez's dedication to broadening the understanding of the islands across the United States and beyond its borders.

Bony Ramirez was born in Tenares, Salcedo, Dominican Republic, in 1996. He currently lives and works in New Jersey, USA. Recent solo exhibitions of Ramirez's work include *Noblesse Oblige*, Bradley Ertaskiran, Montreal; *MUSA X PARADISIACA*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York; *Grass Under The Wood*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York; and *Bayahibe*, REGULARNORMAL, New York. His works reside in the public collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Perez Art Museum, Miami; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; X Museum, Beijing; and Frye Art Museum, Seattle. *CAYMAN TEARS* marks Ramirez's first solo exhibition with François Ghebaly in Los Angeles.