



Ramiro Hernandez, *Local Realism*  
March 29, 2024 - May 11, 2024

Massey Klein Gallery is pleased to present *Local Realism*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Ramiro Hernandez. The exhibition will be on view from March 29th through May 11th. An opening reception will be held on Friday, March 29th from 6-8pm. This is the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery. For press inquiries or questions regarding works available, please email [info@masseyklein.com](mailto:info@masseyklein.com).

*I'm sitting outside of my home studio looking out at the Spanish Colonial Revival house across the street. A block east lies the headquarters of the Theosophical Society, renowned pioneers of Yoga and Eastern philosophy in the Western world during the early 1900s. To the south are the quantum scientists of CalTech. To the west is JPL, ground zero for space travel in the 1940s. Its founder Jack Parson, an occult magician, considered the current JPL site to be a portal to another dimension. And that's just within a 5-minute radius. The military-industrial complex and esoteric institutions interweave across the California landscape, forming modern-day California.*

*In Santa Monica, RAND, known for brainstorming many of the Cold War strategies, shares a wall with Starbucks, and is across the street from the iconic Santa Monica Ferris Wheel and Rollercoaster. Satellites, systems analysis, computing, the Internet – almost all the features of the information age were shaped in part at RAND. Silicon Valley's own genesis can be traced back to military presence in the 1950s, which laid the groundwork for subsequent private companies such as Apple, Google, and Facebook. Next door in Big Sur, The Esalen Institute, a catalyst in the New Age movement, today remains a revered sanctuary for the Techno-Spiritualists of Silicon Valley, and is equally valued as a founding pillar of modern marketing. With the emergence of Esalen's Human Potential movement, society shifted its focus to self-exploration. Propagandists seized upon the individualistic methods of self-realization pioneered by Esalen, offering tailored fulfillment of the self through objects and images.*

*The convergence of government research, LSD experimentation, bohemian artistic movements, and cults gave rise to a nebulous counterculture, fueled by utopian dreams—a wave still felt globally today.*

- Ramiro Hernandez

*Local Realism* questions truth through an investigation of the illusory nature of reality in an interconnected, screen-mediated world. Based on the foundations of California landscape painting, Hernandez's paintings demonstrate that to paint a place is not just to paint its geography. By incorporating dreams, ideals, history, and inner life, the artist delves into the complex interplay of forces shaping each hyper-curated, dreamlike reality. *Local Realism* explores the inner workings of semi-realistic paradises, where progress blurs the line between truth and illusion.

Hernandez sources digitally, pulling images from social media, news articles, AI-generated memes, advertisements, and anything else mediated through screens. Varying in quality, the artist uses tracing techniques borrowed from Photorealists and Pop Artists and transfers digitally-projected screenshots onto canvas. The technique allows for a more journalistic perspective, an approach to better capture the nature of the image and embrace the mechanization. Beginning as completed, realistic paintings, each is then dissolved in washes of rainbow-colored pigment. The images are lost, modulated, retrieved, and lost again, a process repeated until each painting reaches a place that almost

doesn't exist. The artist's deliberate technique challenges the sanctity of painting, a nod to the illusory nature of reality, and leaves each painting hanging in the balance of presence and absence.

Each painting in *Local Realism* simulates convergence and separation, where the components of Hernandez's California intertwine to form a modern-day, illusory Garden of Eden. Amidst the seemingly idyllic tableaux lie a complex interplay of forces shaped by complex histories and romanticized pasts. Hernandez's paintings are deliberately unclear, disintegrating, deceptive, alluding, hallucinating, and none are an answer to what "lies behind the curtain" but rather are offering an opportunity to contemplate the elusive nature of truth.

Ramiro Hernandez graduated with a BFA in Painting from the California College of the Arts in San Francisco in 2010. The artist's first solo exhibition with Massey Klein Gallery, [Alta Vista](#), was on view from 3 June through 16 July, 2022, and in the fall of 2023, the gallery featured new and recent works by Hernandez on David Zwirner's Platform. His work has been featured in exhibitions at Harkawik Gallery in New York, Baik Art in Seoul, Bozo Mag in Los Angeles and Pasadena, F2T Gallery in Milan, Marinaro Gallery in New York, M+B Gallery in Los Angeles, Nino Mier Gallery in Los Angeles, the Tecoa and Thomas Bruce Galleries at the California College of Arts in Oakland, the Bluebird Art House in Whittier, and the North/South Gallery at the CCA, among others. Hernandez was featured by *New American Paintings* in their 2021 Pacific Coast issue. The artist lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

Massey Klein Gallery is located at 124 Forsyth St. New York, NY 10002. Gallery hours are Thursday - Sunday 12pm-6pm. To schedule a private viewing, email [info@masseyklein.com](mailto:info@masseyklein.com).

