

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

Rafael Delacruz: *Healing Finger Clean Drawings*

534 West 26th Street, New York

June 1 – July 7, 2023

Opening Reception: Thursday, June 1, 6–8 PM



Mitchell-Innes & Nash is pleased to announce its first solo exhibition for artist Rafael Delacruz (b. 1989). On view from June 1 through July 7, 2023, **Rafael Delacruz: *Healing Finger Clean Drawings*** will feature all new work, including approximately 12 new paintings and a video.

The artist Rafael Delacruz's mother visits Mexico each winter for New Year's. This past year, she brought back cochineal, a natural dye. Cochineal is a parasite, ruins cacti, and comes in little block-form pellets. If diluted properly, it can be mixed to make oil paint and various colors. Through a process of trial and error, and with the help of the internet and a zine from Moe's Books in Berkeley, Rafael worked out how to make red, pink, green, and orange.

Cochineal is a powerful pigment with a cultural history that involves tinting Catholic clergy capes and the coats of English soldiers; it's in candy, make up, and a heap of mass-produced foods. He's done the research but acknowledges that his use of the dye can't possibly compete with its significance, and that he's not employing it as a metaphor. He's just using it, and in a way, it's using him. *It's just what happened.*

Rafael doesn't exactly like cars, but he likes their shape, and he really likes drawing and painting them. *Ken Price had cups, what if I had a car?* He's motivated in part because there's a personal, annoying, and otherworldly aspect to automobiles in his life.

Paintings often start as drawings; first drafts are camouflaged; improvisation and reinterpretation are prized. *How to paint a person petting a dog but not.* Some paintings have lino-cut prints layered across the canvas. They are odd, analog procedurals, and he's always trying to distort and recycle processes and memories back into the work itself. Most are in landscape mode, and discernible content is stacked on the same visual plane against a horizon-like circumstance. He told me once that he wants to "unlock the flatness." Car on head on laundry on sidewalk. But when you move back, the ground shifts, separates.

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There's a video playing in the exhibition, too. It's short, and depicts live painting, so to speak: alcohol ink applied to paper, but it's filmed from the opposite side, so the image magically materializes in the frame. Then he overlapped live rotoscoping footage, digital line drawings, and interludes in which images are constructed entirely from characters on a keyboard. You're not just watching someone draw, but seeing someone build a small, strange world one piece at a time.

There's nothing else that really looks like this. Healing Finger Clean Drawings. Biomorph city desert symbology. Thought bubble.

- Jordan Stein

About Rafael Delacruz

Born in 1989 in San Francisco, Rafael Delacruz lives and works in Berkeley, CA and New York, NY. His most recent exhibitions were *Espers* at Reyes|Finn gallery in Detroit and *Echo's in Talavera: Rafael Delacruz and Ken Price* at Franklin Parrasch Gallery in New York, both in 2022. Delacruz participated in the 2022 Marin Headlands Center for the Arts Artist in Residence program.

About Mitchell-Innes & Nash

Founded in 1996 by Lucy Mitchell-Innes and David Nash, who previously headed the worldwide Contemporary and Impressionist & Modern Art divisions of Sotheby's, Mitchell-Innes & Nash places exemplary contemporary artists within a historical context revealing a continuity of ideas and aesthetic distinction from the Modern era through the present day. Lucy Mitchell-Innes has served as a member of the selection committee of Art Basel Switzerland and is a former president of the Art Dealers Association of America.

Mitchell-Innes & Nash's renowned exhibition program fosters excellence within artistic practice while forging an informed dialogue between emerging and established internationally recognized artists. From acclaimed surveys of 20th century masters such as Jean Arp, Anthony Caro, Willem de Kooning, Leon Kossoff, Kenneth Noland, Roy Lichtenstein, and Nicolas de Stael, to solo exhibitions of Sarah Braman, Keltie Ferris, Daniel Lefcourt, Eddie Martinez, Pope.L, Martha Rosler, and Jessica Stockholder, Mitchell-Innes & Nash has proven expertise in both advancing the careers of emerging artists and maintaining the superior standard set by established artists.

Image: Rafael Delacruz, *Don't sleep while we explain*, 2022. Oil and cochineal on canvas. 77 1/2 by 144 in. 196.8 by 365.8 cm.

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