

Becky Kolsrud

Ghosts of the Boulevard

February 11 - March 25, 2023

Morán Morán is pleased to announce Los Angeles-based artist Becky Kolsrud's solo exhibition, titled *Ghosts of the Boulevard*, which presents seven new paintings that progress within her own practice while also adding to California's surrealist tradition through their use of symbolic and analogical imagery. In addition to her semi-fictional enigmatic scenes, Kolsrud employs a palette that reflects L.A. boulevards. Through her use of "retail primaries" (the colors she recognizes as generated from the retail palette) she relates the essence of stripmalls and their windows, the specificity of their kitschy display elements and advertising devices.

Mannequins are ubiquitous items in the retail landscape and they inspire prominent characters in Kolsrud's visual narratives. Always in female form, her figures are often headless or present only as busts, and sometimes they appear disembodied as merely a set of legs. In *Ghosts of the Boulevard* (2023), a painting that shares the show's title, she images a group of five headless women posturing over rolling green hills, set against a blue sky. Here, her interest in retail display mixes with classical landscape traditions; however, for Kolsrud the influence of the art-historical landscape instead provides a field for addressing the figure without life, the posture without a soul. The generic figures serve as stand-ins for beauty in a utopian realm with something lurking beneath, as an imitation of life and an illustration of myth.

In another painting, the largest in the exhibition and measuring 15 feet in length, Kolsrud unfolds an arresting horizontal view of a seemingly endless cemetery. Titled *Evergreen*, after the oldest nondenominational and ethnically diverse cemetery in Los Angeles, this landscape posits headstones like minimalist sculptures peppered over more green hills. Spaced symmetrically in the composition, among the graves, are four feminine parts: three pairs of legs and one indistinguishable half-circle shape – a mound. The pink hue of these appendages appear almost fluorescent next to the rest of the scene, existing in contrast to their somber context, and feeling symbolic of unknown lives and incomplete stories.

With her ongoing Gate Paintings series, Kolsrud returns to a topic she began considering almost ten years ago. These works use the effect and resulting geometry of storefront security gates to describe internal/external tensions, and in these new paintings the gates obfuscate wig shop displays. Through the artist's simplified diamond-shape patterned screens, projections of fantasy are complicated and notions of viewership are heightened.