



Taka Ishii

Gallery

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Justin Caguiat & Rafael Delacruz “The Toys of Peace”

Dates: Oct 5 – Nov 10, 2024

Location: Taka Ishii Gallery (complex665)

Opening reception: Saturday, Oct 5, 17:00 – 19:00

Taka Ishii Gallery is pleased to present “The Toys of Peace” by Justin Caguiat and Rafael Delacruz, from Saturday, October 5 to Sunday, November 10. This exhibition marks Caguiat’s second show at the gallery since 2021, and the first of collaborative works by the two artists.

Splayed out across the Northern and Western walls are five paintings: kite-shaped canvases pinned up like motionless butterflies, preserved in an orderly fashion. Tails are made from whatever Tokyo has to offer. A film playing elsewhere in the room generated the imagery for these paintings. In a way, they are movie posters—one can imagine the original stills abstracted through a series of folds before they became diamond-shaped canvases. Only vague allusions to confused cityscapes and figures made their way into the paintings, dappled with names and places scrawled in pencil. The non-functional kites harbor unintelligible graphic design.

The kites are drifting off from center stage in an unnaturally horizontal line. Opposite is a makeshift theater set painted teddy bear brown—the same color as the fuzzy costume worn by the life-size puppet. Sat slumped over, the figure is resting against a murky motif painted across the backdrop, framing the composition. The kites on the other side of the room were let go of by the de-animated puppet, who has a hard time keeping its head up.

The puppet’s life plays out just behind the stage curtain, projected on the Eastern wall in 16mm. A nonlinear ten-and-a-half-minute dream plays on a loop. A score of field recordings, foley, and compositions made by Caguiat, Lily Pickett, and their two children plinks and plonks as the puppet strolls and bounds around Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York City. Water trickles down the drain and footsteps clop: non-diegetic sounds are plausible but ever so slightly miss their cue. A ghost clambers around inside a radio looking for a mouthpiece.

The puppet wanders with purpose, encountering glistening cities and nameless characters whose motivations are unclear. Beautiful clowns find one another, run under shining American Eagle signs, and twirl around an oiled-up bodybuilder. The shady figure in the hat and sunglasses might be following them, the blonde girl with a camera definitely is. They skip along the underside of train tracks illuminated by slats of light and out to sunny pastures where they play in a web of kites and wind. Elsewhere, a broken dance recital takes place on a film set: the puppet animates clumsily, taking careful steps past a wooden cross, and bashing its fists against the desk, demanding to levitate before crumpling under its own weight again… misadventures in personhood.

Justin Caguiat was born in 1989, and currently lives and works in New York and Oakland. Caguiat recently presented solo exhibitions at Modern Art, London (2023) and Greene Naftali, New York (2022), and participated in group exhibitions at galleries and project spaces in North America, and Europe. Other important projects include a performance at the Kunsthalle Zürich (2017) and The Sunroom, Richmond (2017). His collection of poems entitled A RAT, A DOG, A BOY was published by Codette in 2017.

Rafael Delacruz was born in 1989 in San Francisco and lives and works in Berkeley and New York. He has presented solo exhibitions in Cushion Works, San Francisco (2024) and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York (2023). He participated in group exhibitions at institutions such as Tokyo Arts and Space (2020) and Oakland Museum of Art (2014).

Text by Blue Marcus

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Tue-Sat 12:00 – 19:00 Closed on Sun, Mon, and National Holidays



Justin Caguiat & Rafael Delacruz

“The Toys of Peace”, 2024

16 mm film (10'31”)

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The trailer can be found [HERE](#)