

MATTHEW BROWN

Kenny Rivero

Bad Picture of Me, Good Picture of Us

November 13–December 18, 2021

Bad Picture of Me, Good Picture of Us by Kenny Rivero presents a series of paintings that reveal the artist's musings on the Dominican American experience. Set in locations around New York City such as the George Washington Bridge Bus Terminal and the High Bridge (the oldest bridge in the metropolis), Rivero frames his fantastical depictions with autobiographical backdrops. To convey the complexities of what it is to be Dominican American at this time, the artist borrows imagery from subject matters as wide-ranging as the human condition itself—taking inspiration from salsa, jazz, baseball, voodoo, and much more.

Rivero is a collector of both found objects and found symbols. For the drawings presented in *Bad Picture of Me, Good Picture of Us*, the artist has been amassing bits of paper and carefully selecting from them since he was in graduate school in 2012. Some of the resulting works on paper have a sculptural quality to them as the book cover or book cloth on which they are executed asserts itself slightly off the wall and into the space of the viewer. The other drawing on found paper carries the insignia of the New York art bookstore Wittenborn Art Books, which opened its doors in 1941 and shuttered in 1991 and, during its fifty-year run, was quite popular amongst artists, critics, and art historians.

For the images in Rivero's paintings, the artist has said that he is both channeling ancestral imagery and attempting to provoke or reactivate it. By deploying symbolism from the faith he grew up around—Christianity on his father's side as well as Catholic, voodoo, and African-diaspora faith on his mother's side—and adding the emblems that he encounters in contemporary life, the artist blends his personal repertoire of archetypes into a new language of experiences that can be conveyed to the viewer. This new code of meaning strays from traditional stereotypes in that it is not rooted in any one culture but rather in the lived experience of the individual—it emphasizes a humanist approach to understanding.

Bad Picture of Me, Good Picture of Us is the artist's first solo exhibition at Matthew Brown and in Los Angeles.

Kenny Rivero (b. 1981, New York, NY) received his Master of Fine Arts at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut and his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts in New York. He also studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. He is the recipient of a Doonesbury Award, the Robert Schoelkopf Memorial Travel Grant, the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Grant, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant, and has been awarded a Visiting Scholar position at New York University. He has exhibited his work in the United States and abroad in venues such as the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas, Brattleboro Museum & Art Center in Vermont, Pera Museum in Turkey, the Stedelijk Museum in the Netherlands, the Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis, the Pérez Art Museum in Miami, The Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art and Storytelling in New York, El Museo del Barrio in New York, and the Delaware Contemporary in Wilmington. Kenny Rivero's work is represented in notable public collections including The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; El Museo del Barrio, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Collection of Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and Pérez Art Museum Miami, Florida.