

## MATTHEW BROWN

### **Alfonso Gonzalez Jr.**

*There Was There*

712 N La Brea Ave

February 12 – March 19, 2022

"There is a rich visual legacy in Los Angeles that helps define it as a place, as a city, its history, its politics, and its culture. From civic, state, to the film industry and corporate minded interests, these entities have long been powerful purveyors of the carefully and strategically designed image of Los Angeles that has been exported throughout the world since its inception. Clichés and misinformation about Los Angeles abound thanks to this, absencing an entire world that is immigrant, that is low-income, working class, that is Black, Brown, Asian, set within the rich cultural enclaves that sprawl throughout the city— a world that already has always been the true fabric of Los Angeles culture.

Alfonso Gonzalez Jr brings this world to view in his first solo exhibition, titled *There Was There*. Rightfully premiering in the city of his birthplace, Gonzalez immerses guests in a Los Angeles landscape, attending to wall spaces and the architecture of his immediate surroundings, specifically hand painted signage, graffiti, muralism, and weathered surfaces, Brown-owned mom and pop shops, public restrooms, restaurants, and homes. His compositions honor the design and aesthetic sensibilities of renters, small business owners, taggers, and people who leave their marks everyday to join the quotidian landscape of the city. Gonzalez prioritizes their choices in his work, giving shape to and informing his own visual language and allowing him to point to the city. In doing so, he cites not only actual physical spaces, but virtual ones as well, rendering Los Angeles amongst a vast burgeoning community of proud cultural producers of *Angelenxs*. In his paintings, Gonzalez rescues the building up of marks, paint, texture, and layering of images and text from the city, prompting us to remember those people whose homes, businesses, signs, paints, and marks were left unsalvageable, disappeared by the geographic gains of gentrification. His paintings are cultural remunerations that reflect a rich visual landscape by communities that are the true backbone of Los Angeles. They are a visuality of a Los Angeles coming into view, a trace of what was there, has always been there, and what will be there next." — text by rafa esparza

Alfonso Gonzalez Jr. (b. 1989, Los Angeles) lives and works in Los Angeles. *There Was There* at Matthew Brown, Los Angeles will be the artist's first solo presentation.

His work has been displayed in numerous group exhibitions including *Shattered Glass*, Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles (2021); *In Bloom*, Padre Gallery, New York (2021); *Ni de aquí, ni de allá*, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles (2021); *Vernacular Grafikz*, Tlaloc Studios, Los Angeles (2021); *Growing Pains*, Anthony Gallery, Chicago (2021); *Alphabetic Image*, Arsenal Contemporary Art, New York (2021); *Stockholm Sessions*, Carl Kostyál, Stockholm (2021); *Lxs Angelinx*, Galleria Javier López & Fer Frances, Madrid (2021); *BEYOND THE STREETS*, Presented by NTWRK, Online (2020); *L.A Views*, MAKI Gallery, Tokyo (2020); *Screen 2 Screen*, HVW8 Art + Design Gallery, Online (2020); *City of Quartz*, HVW8 Art + Design Gallery, Online (2020); *With A Little Help From My Friends: A Benefit For Bryan Chagolla*, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles (2019); and *Human Nature*, The Pit, Los Angeles (2019).

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