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Parker Ito, *Me in the Studio w/ Red Hat Render (copper tacks)*, 2020, diptych, copper tacks, oil on linen, overall 32 x 24".

facing the viewer. Only the tacks facing inward are real—those that stick out are rendered in paint. This is one of several instances of trompe l'oeil on view in “Longevity Buns,” whose title refers to a Chinese pastry that masquerades as a peach. Ito’s work is indebted to the self-propagating and -surveilling culture of the internet, and that domain’s slippery sense of realness translates here.

Ito has also brought together materials for technological reproduction and consumption (printers, scanners, projectors, and video monitors, most switched on) as well as more decadent, gendered items (clusters of silver chains hanging, like cobwebs, from orchids), all linked by electrical cords that line the gallery’s perimeter. This sinister, humming network is a reminder of the various traps that line both digital and meatspace.

In an uncharacteristic gesture toward self-representation (for the past few years, Ito has refused to be photographed, and he often conducts interviews via proxy), the artist appears as an avatar in the aforementioned series, in both oil paintings and stainless-steel sculptures. This glossy, muscular figure—clad in armor and a backward baseball hat, clutching a sword beneath folded arms, frozen in a battle-ready stance—resembles a video game character, the guy you’d choose to slay monsters on your behalf, and is the latest figure he has cut and pasted from the internet and society. Yet Ito’s avatar does not become more familiar with each encounter, but rather uncannier; he is granted no history or dynamism within the world of the exhibition. Instead, he haunts it, a postmodern specter dislocated from any origin or future.

LOS ANGELES

Parker Ito

CHÂTEAU SHATTO
1206 S Maple Ave Suite 1030
February 8–April 4, 2020

In one of the twin oil-on-linen works from 2020 that are part of Parker Ito’s series “Me in the Studio w/ Red Hat Render,” 2014–, tacks are lodged in the canvas like bullets, and in the other, they thrust out, with the sharp ends

— *Sophia Larigakis*