

Artspace

ARTIST TO WATCH

7 Artists to Watch July 2018

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Jonny Negron.



It's the middle of summer and the art world has slowed to a near halt. And yet, we've found a handful of artists with solo shows currently on view that are definitely worth checking out in between your summer vacations and trips to the beach. Here are seven artists keeping it cool in the summer heat.

JONNY NEGRON

Chateau Shatto, Los Angeles

July 14th-September 1



Image: Claw Claw

Puerto Rican-born artist Jonny Negron started out making comic books as a kid in the '90s and has since made a name for himself in the comic book world. His cartoons—often starring women whose voluptuous, spherical figures recall [Tom of Finland](#) and [R. Crumb](#)—depict scenes of symbolic conflict. In *Batmon*, a ripped Bruce Wayne, still wearing the top half of his superhero outfit, cries on the toilet while reading *Maus*; confronted with an empty toilet paper roll, he eventually tears out one of the comic book pages and uses it to wipe.

Now, his first significant debut in the fine art world, Negron's solo show “Small Map of Heaven” at Los Angeles’ Chateau Shatto shifts away from the standard comic book format and instead exhibits stand-alone artworks on paper. (If it weren't for Negron's longstanding practice, we'd be tempted to think he jumped onto the trending bandwagon of flat, cartoonish figuration led by artists like Cheyenne Julien, Janiva Ellis, and [David Rappeneau](#).) Stripped of dialogue and textbook commentary, these 11 pieces work with the idea that every human body represents a miniature of the universe. Whether striding through filthy sidewalks or bright, dripping foliage, his monumental *bentai*-inspired figures seem increasingly overwhelmed by sudden moments of intense, opaque emotion. Like *Batmon*, **a recent work on paper** shows another man crying in a bathroom. Gently fingering the edge of a leaf, he stands on the floor amidst almost solid-seeming puddles of glittery shower water, and the walls are pink, as is the sky.