

CHATEAUSHATTO

JONNY NEGRON
Spirits

November 20, 2021 – January 15, 2022
Opening reception: Saturday, November 20, 6 – 8pm

Château Shatto is delighted to present Jonny Negron's second solo exhibition at the gallery, *Spirits*. The exhibition will open on Saturday, November 20, 2021, and remain on view through January 15, 2022.

Jonny Negron's work whisks endemic scenarios into spheres of suspended artifice. For nearly two decades, the self-taught artist has developed a *mise-en scène* which depicts an array of social and psychological intercourses. From portraits of individuals appended with symbolic matter, to groupings of figures communing in revelrous overflow, Negron's work expresses the way in which diametric, emotive forces congeal under the headings of personality, ego and communal exchange.

Spirits takes form in a suite of interlocutory paintings and videos installed in concert throughout Château Shatto. Through these new works, the various meanings and suggestivities of 'spirits' is animated, including the culturally and philosophically vast terrain of that which constitutes a spirit: non-physical entities; distilled liquor; and the relationship between alcoholic spirits and what these summon in their homonymic counterpart. Negron's scenarios are distinctly situated in intemperate spaces and capture the entire Dionysian arc, from exaltation to the destruction that attaches itself to the tail of decadence. In Negron's tableaux, it's understood that the varied meanings of 'spirits' each share the condition of an animating force.

Negron's new work continues to draw the aesthetic dimension of sociality and psychology to the surface. This flickering contact, between the immaterial dimensions of human life and that which finds material expression via surface coordinates, speaks to the way the immaterial telegraphs itself through objects and signifiers. Hegel's *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* offers a philosophical referent in Negron's recent paintings, in so far that it proposes that consciousness invariably modifies the objects of its encounters. The drenched atmospheres of Negron's paintings express this saturated status, of the individual spirit and the intersubjective spirit, through a heavily inflected tonality and stylistic affect. The formation of knowledge as it passes through the spirit – or *Geist* – is an idea addressed by the artist in the visual space of the paintings and the linguistic space of his lyrics:

"If you are wise
Everything you need to learn
You can learn on the dance floor
Lubricated again
Lubricated *again*"

Negron's work continuously wraps itself around the mythological, embracing myths that originate in major religions, the occult, classical visual and literary traditions and contemporary myth-making machinery. His works invoke a sardonic, yet effervescent, take on social realism, launching the genre into a proximate consideration of hyper-pop sentiment. Other art historical templates are alluded to in the way Negron builds his compositions, including Byzantine and early Renaissance painting. With *Spirits*, the visual and psychological vernaculars Negron has cultivated in his painting and drawing over two decades is extended into video, where we encounter the specificity of the landscapes the artist circulates in, mediated by the excessive familiarity of the two-dimensional moving image.

For the first time, multiple videos by Negron will be screened concurrently within an exhibition. These new works are composed of footage that Negron has captured over several years and are bound together by soundtracks that are original compositions written and recorded by the artist. Both the visual and sonic elements appear as sensorial scrapings of the environments Negron moves through, handled with the candescent approach to color and light that has become characteristic of his paintings.

Jonny Negron (b. 1985, Carolinas, Puerto Rico) lives and works in Los Angeles. Recent solo presentations of his work include *Blue Dream*, Qingdao Art Museum, Qingdao, and Mao Space, Shanghai (2020); *Frieze* New York, Frame (2020); *Small Map of Heaven*, Château Shatto (2018). Negron's work has been exhibited at Embajada, San Juan; Lily Robert, Paris; Bonington Gallery, Nottingham. Negron's work has been published in Los Angeles Times, CURA, Kaleidoscope, Garage Magazine, Office and The Editorial Magazine, among others.