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info@deboergallery.com  
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## KEN MAR

### *SIMULACRA*

13 January - 2 March, 2023  
de boer (Los Angeles)

Opening Reception:  
Saturday 13 January (6-9PM)

de boer (Los Angeles) is pleased to present *Simulacra*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Brooklyn based painter **Ken Mar**, his first with the gallery. Mar's work makes use of nostalgia and pop culture iconography to engage in dialogue of larger queries such as simulation theory and Jean Baudrillard's theory of 'Precession of Simulacra'.

Mar's paintings exist. Or do they? Painted in oil and drawn with graphite on linen, Mar sources his imagery from old kodak photos he finds online. He culls through various sites, some as well known as ebay, some that are more vague and less user friendly. He looks for a specific kind of image, families on vacation at a Disney theme park. When asked, Mar describes why he chose these parks with little enthusiasm, but clear intention. He thinks of them as a tool, a foil, he has no fanfare for the specific characters or fantasy.

Simulacra is something that replaces reality with its representation. These characters and the theme parks are apt examples of how culture has embraced simulacra into absurdity. Mars captures eloquently the unsettling or comical nature of these characters when they are separated or devoid of their intended context. Removed from the larger world that each fantasy story weaves in its runtime, these characters can become grotesque, surreal, and at times hilarious. On a formal level the paintings operate in a unique way. Leaving the raw linen as a background allows for the painted figures to stand out against the often drawn in graphite backgrounds and surroundings. Creating an illusion that conveys that the rest of the painting has not yet loaded. Mar is often thinking about Simulation Theory, which proposes that what humans experience as the world is actually a simulated reality, such as a computer simulation in which humans themselves are constructed.

The paintings serve as snapshots of interactions between the characters of a Disney theme park and children. This interaction in itself is the peak of simulacra. An amusement park is a constructed reality for the visitors where all the characters walking around have a program of what they should say and how they should act. This gives Ken's work layers of double realities. The dynamism creates a self reflecting mirror where the viewers are in itself the constructs looking at a recreation of the constructed reality. The eerie atmosphere of the paintings serve as a gateway to conveying this message.

#### **ABOUT KEN MAR**

Ken Mar is a painter born in 1969, the year the internet was invented. Mar was born in Oakland, CA. He was adopted as an infant and grew up not knowing his origins. Mar lived in San Francisco before moving to Chicago to attend the Art Institute of Chicago, where he received a BFA in 2000. Ken Mar lives and works in Brooklyn, NY his work revolves around the idea that humanity may be living in a computer simulation. Focusing on ideas and theories of simulacra, and lesser known works that have become more and more relevant with the onset of virtual reality, and artificial intelligence.