



Nicole Mouriño
Us at the Carniceria on Knickerbocker
2022
Charcoal, polymer and oil on canvas
60.5 x 65 in

The Big Duck

Michelle Hernandez Vega
Eri King
Nicole Mouriño

Curated by Clarence Johns

July 1 – August 6, 2022

**Opening reception:
Friday, July 1st, 2022, 6–8 PM**

Carracci Art is pleased to announce *The Big Duck*, a three-person presentation of new work by Michelle Hernandez Vega, Eri King, and Nicole Mouriño. Curated by Clarence Johns, the exhibition will be held at 368 Broadway, Suite 305 in Tribeca and will be open from **July 1 to August 6, 2022**. A reception will be held on **Friday, July 1 from 6–8 PM**.

The Big Duck is inspired by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's *Learning From Las Vegas*. The authors' assertion that "architecture depends in its perception and creation on past experiences and emotional association"¹ provides a framework to understand works by Hernandez Vega, King, and Mouriño. Reflecting on commercial vernacular through the lens of memory, the artists create atmospheric images that personalize or recontextualize the quotidian. Venturi and Scott Brown's theory is that a building shaped like a giant duck in Long Island (the 'Big Duck') represents the kind of "building that *is* a symbol."² This idea is key to understanding the relationship of public spaces to memory and emotion in each of the artists' works.

In large-scale paintings by Nicole Mouriño, storefronts are rendered in charcoal, polymers, and oil. *Us at the Carniceria on Knickerbocker* depicts a butcher shop window display and the reflection of the Brooklyn street. Focusing on the superimposition of the storefront and reflected image of two figures, Mouriño fashions a composition that combines the commercial vernacular with personal experience and emotion. In *Single at Myrtle Broadway*, a bodega window with a prominent advertisement of a sandwich is merged with the shadowy impression of elevated train tracks. Mouriño's symbolic use of reflection unites the vernacular and the experiential.

Eri King's *heaven or las vegas* takes its title from the 1990 song by Cocteau Twins and investigates the city from both personal experiences and pop cultural references. Taking the bold floral pattern from the carpeting of the Fiesta Casino and adding camouflaged text, King embodies the rumor that casino carpet designs are intentionally bold and colorful to disguise poker chips so they can be collected for additional revenue. In *heaven or las vegas*, an overlooked pattern becomes a gateway to King's fond recollection of growing up in Las Vegas and investigating communication strategies of mass media and capitalism. *quodiam lovesick blues (kakemono)* brings together the form of a Japanese screen with karaoke-style lyrics from Patsy Cline's 1961 song "Crazy" embellished with plastic flowers, shrimp and nails. These references to King's grandmother call attention to symbolism's relationship to taste and heritage.

Michelle Hernandez Vega's *Wormhole Mouth from Bo. Cacao* draws on the architecture of El Parque de las Botellas in Quebradillas, Puerto Rico. Referencing the park's distinctive mixture of brightly colored buildings made out of glass bottles and structures shaped like dinosaurs and superheroes, Hernandez Vega's mixed media installation is focused around *El Reino de Las Tonterias*, consisting of a ladder balanced on top of a painted cube, with various found objects including a Betty Boop figurine, a conch shell, a flashlight, dice, and small figurines. Activating the gallery by painting protruding fixtures and pipes in primary colors, Hernandez Vega creates a vivid fun house atmosphere. The small black and white wooden blocks placed in the upper reaches of the space relate in their arch-like shape to the doorways of buildings at El Parque de las Botellas and signify portals to different worlds. Hernandez Vega's deeply personal symbolism underscores an approach that exists at the intersection of fantasy and memory.

¹ Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown & Steven Izenour, *Learning From Las Vegas* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1977), 87.

² *Ibid.*

Michelle Hernandez Vega (b.1990) is an interdisciplinary artist living and working in Brooklyn, NY. She received an MFA in Studio Art from Hunter College and a BFA in Photography from The School of Visual Arts. Her work explores themes of translation, bicultural assimilation, self-mythification and the relationship between object and memory through multimedia installations, indexical assemblages, writing and improvised occurrences. She has shown work at spaces such as Dispersed Holdings, New York; Rinomina, Paris; Estudio Marte 221, Mexico City, and Galeria Agustina Ferreyra, San Juan and The Latinx Project, New York.

Eri King (b. 1986) works in various modes such as installation, sculpture, textiles, painting, drawing, video, sound, and performance. Through her lens as a first-generation immigrant raised in Las Vegas, her conceptual framework examines the complex and nuanced connections of seemingly disparate subjects and cultural narratives as a way to unpack the associations and perspectives of established American customs. King received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art and Art History at the University of Las Vegas, Nevada in 2011, and her Master of Fine Arts in Painting at Hunter College in 2018. She currently works and lives in New York, NY as the Studio Director at Sanford Biggers Studio since 2019. She is half of the collaborative art duo, Eridan, with NY-based artist, Daniel Greer. She was a co-founder and co-curator of artist-run spaces 5th Wall Gallery and Project Space in the Emergency Arts, Las Vegas from 2011-2014. She has had solo exhibitions at Winchester Cultural Center Gallery, Las Vegas, NV (2013), Miranda Kuo Gallery, New York, NY (2016), Shiro Oni Studio, Gunma, Japan (2017) and Catskills Gallery, New York, NY (2021). Her work is in the permanent collection at The Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art, Las Vegas, NV.

Nicole Mouriño (b. 1987), is a Cuban-American artist based in Brooklyn, NY. She received her MFA in social practice from Queens College ('16) and BFA in painting from Pratt Institute ('11). Her practice involves photographing windows (ie. bodegas, botanicas, and peluquerias) throughout NYC. These images become the compositional source for large-scale paintings depicting crashing/merging understandings of identity, economics, desire, and beauty. Mouriño's work has recently been exhibited at Untitled Miami, Pulse Miami, Bric, Marc Straus Annex, & The Queens Museum.