

HESSE FLATOW

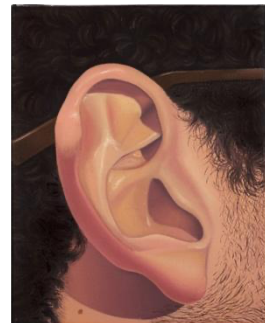
Luis Edgar Mejicanos: *Hypermnnesia*

October 6 – November 5, 2022

Opening reception: October 6, 6-8pm

General inquiries: info@hesseflatow.com

HESSE FLATOW is pleased to announce the opening of *Hypermnnesia*, an exhibition of paintings by the Miami-based artist Luis Edgar Mejicanos, marking his first solo-presentation with the gallery.



At the heart of Mejicanos' narrative-driven works is a fascination with painting and its potent ability to convey and elicit emotion. Grief is frequently at the forefront, partly due to the artist's experience with loss in his own life, which he processes by casting himself as well as members of his family into hypothetical, dream-like vignettes. *Hypermnnesia*, or as the philosopher Paolo Virno describes, "an increasing mnemonic capacity following a crisis," underscores his painterly approach, which begins in a haze of memory and fictive imagination, and gradually focuses or even factualizes alongside each meticulously rendered detail.¹

Influenced by the work of literary figures such as Jorge Luis Borges, Octavia Butler, and Gabriel García Márquez, as well as the iconographic conventions of Early Netherlandish and Northern Italian Renaissance portraiture, Mejicanos builds his compositions with his singular lexicon of allegorical imagery, striking a careful balance between intrigue and intelligibility. From anthropomorphized binoculars and smoke detectors who tearfully lament and sweat with anxiety, to back braces and band-aids whose wearers may possess a certain healing agency. These devices not only introduce humor as a kind of pressure release valve, easing a solemnity in tone, but also an element of science fiction, catapulting his works into an otherworldly, remedial place. Within this theoretical framework, Mejicanos enacts, confronts, and copes with feelings of loss that are often too difficult to put into words, counteracting precipitated absences and unknowns through generative scenes that appear uncannily real.

Hypermnnesia brings together a recent group of paintings that collectively play with the notion of the gaze, whether through the frame of surveilling devices such as camcorders and hearing aids that heighten one's perception, or from the standpoint of actors, portrayed or otherwise, who observe each other from across the room. For Mejicanos, this form of spying is less associated with ominous undertones of voyeuristic watching, and rather more in alignment with a protective watching over, a hallmark of a nurturing parent, guardian, or the spirit of a departed loved one.

Luis Edgar Mejicanos (b. 1995) was born and raised in Miami, FL. He graduated from Fordham University in 2018 with a dual degree in Visual Arts and Art History, and attended the Yale Norfolk Summer School of Art in the summer of 2018. Mejicanos has attended residencies including the Wassaic Project in Wassaic, NY and Vermont Studio Center in Johnson, VT. He is the recipient of the James Storey Painting Award from Fordham University and the Ellen Battell Stoeckle Fellowship from Yale University. His work has been exhibited in New York, Miami and Connecticut.

Image: Luis Edgar Mejicanos, *Oreja Mia*, 2022, oil on canvas, 10 x 8 inches (25.4 x 20.3 cm)

¹ Virno, Paolo. *Déjà vu and the end of history*. London: Verso, 2015.