



COURTESY OF CHARLIE JAMES GALLERY AND THE ARTIST. PHOTO BY OSCEOLA REFETOFF

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CHARLIE JAMES GALLERY · Los Angeles, CA.

The yellow springboard takes us back to an iconic image of Southern California cool. But rather than the splash of an unseen swimmer, we see a Latino man cleaning the pool. A few feet away from him is a housekeeper sweeping the grounds. Ramiro Gomez's *No Splash* (after David Hockney's *A Bigger Splash*, 1967) (2013) revises a metonym of West Hollywood luxury by showing us the people whose labor maintains that veneer.

The acrylic painting in *Domestic Scenes*, Gomez's solo show, is three times the size of the next largest work, quietly asserting the visibility of the working class inside the homes of the rich and famous. Los Angeles is a city whose international brand revolves around hyperbolic glitz and conspicuous consumption. This exhibition of three projects reminds us that that machine does not run itself.

Gomez's reference to his predecessor brings together two of today's top headline issues – LGBT rights and immigration reform. The exhibition takes its title from Hockney's portrait of two men in the shower. And two of the other three paintings – *Nick's Pool Being Cleaned* (after David Hockney's *Peter Getting Out of Nick's Pool*, 1966) (2013) and *Woman Cleaning Shower in Beverly Hills* (after David Hockney's *Man Taking a Shower in Beverly Hills*, 1964) – replace a naked white man with a Latino domestic worker. While Hockney's paintings unsettle

the assumption of heterosexuality in private relationships, Gomez's portrayals remind us that the home is also a space of racialized, economic exchanges.

The series *Magazine* makes these exchanges explicit. The pieces in this body of work are 8.5 x 11 in. pages that Gomez ripped out from upscale design magazines such as *Architectural Digest* and *Dwell*. He defaces the advertisements by inserting faceless Latino domestic workers into these scenes. *Guadalupe and the kids, afterschool* and *Ella's room* (*The day Manuela brought her daughter to work*) include a Latina nanny in advertisements whose subject and implied audience are white.

The series recalls Martha Rosler's two projects *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72), on the Vietnam War; and *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home, New Series* (2004-08), on the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Rosler shows that the upscale sanctuaries of the home front depend on U.S. empire-building abroad. Gomez also focuses his eye on the home front, where the wealthy and their domestic workers negotiate a daily dance of emotional intimacy and economic disparity.

That relationship can be bare bones, as seen in the project titled *Letters and Instructions*. An acrylic, ink, and crayon on panel series simulating legal paper notes, there are instructions to Delia on the day's chores, a cleaning supplies list for Leticia, and driving directions for Candelario. In these works, no one is present, only a form of communication on how to run the house without any human contact. **-Chúông-Dài Võ**