



52 WALKER ST | SEPTEMBER 9 – OCTOBER 21, 2023

Eamon Ore-Giron, *Talking Shit with Mama Killa*, 2023
Mineral paint and Flashe on canvas, 72 x 72 in.
(182.9 x 182.9 cm).

Eamon Ore-Giron

Talking Shit

James Cohan is pleased to present *Talking Shit*, an exhibition of new paintings, textiles, and ceramic murals by Eamon Ore-Giron, on view at 52 Walker Street from September 8 through October 21. This is Ore-Giron's second solo exhibition with the gallery. The gallery will host an opening reception with the artist on Friday, September 8, from 6-8 PM. The artist will also be in conversation with writer, art historian, and professor Dr. C. Ondine Chavoya on Saturday, September 9, at 2 PM.

Known for his cross-cultural practice, which includes painting, music, and video, in this exhibition, Ore-Giron returns to and expands upon his *Talking Shit* series, a body of work he began in 2017 while living in Guadalajara, Mexico. The paintings, textiles, and ceramic tile works in the exhibition represent an imagined conversation between the artist and deities from Mexico and Peru's ancestral past. With precisely rendered, vibrantly-colored, semi-abstract references to the gods Quetzalcoatl, Coatlicue, Amaru, and Inti, among others, Ore-Giron explores our ongoing relationship with symbols of culture and the ways in which they come to hold ideas around individual and collective identities.

Ore-Giron's *Talking Shit* works reflect the artist's consideration of how cultural symbols speak across history as their meanings shift over time. The renowned Mexican poet Octavio Paz wrote that in the four hundred years since the Spanish Conquest the famous Aztec (Mexico) statue of Coatlicue now housed in Mexico City's Museo Nacional de Antropología has gone from "goddess to demon, from demon to monster, and from monster to masterpiece." For Ore-Giron, this quote captures the ways in which cultural symbols are continually redefined and reinterpreted with the inevitable evolution and imposition of new contexts. This idea—the mutability of cultural symbols and the making and remaking of their significance—is a touchstone of Ore-Giron's overall practice, and specifically has informed this body of work and his engagement with pre-Columbian deities from Incan, Chavín, Paracas, and Aztec civilizations. Drawing on academic histories as well as his own experiences, including extensive time spent in Mexico and Peru, Ore-Giron

is keenly aware of the myriad ways these iconographies can circulate: they have been instrumentalized by varied nationalist and cultural agendas, been a critical part of the recuperation of diasporic knowledge, and can take on personal meaning for individuals. Ore-Giron has likewise remixed and reconsidered these traditional figures through his own lens. This re-imagining is a form of “talking shit,” a colloquial dialogue that takes the historical and cultural import of these symbols and brings them into the realm of personal exchange.

Working within the generative space between abstraction and figuration, in his new paintings, Ore-Giron reinterprets the iconic forms of Peruvian deities Amaru, Inti, Mama Killa, and Illapa, as well as important cultural artifacts, into compositions defined by rigorously calibrated spatial relationships of form and color. His palette—which ranges from dusk-like purples and blues to radiant shades of amber and verdant greens—evokes the natural world and celestial phenomena, redolent of spheres over which these gods ruled. Ore-Giron’s approach is rooted in multiplicity and simultaneity, drawing not only from historical representations of these mythological figures, but also sources ranging from Brazilian Neo-Concretism, Dutch De Stijl, and Russian Suprematism. Each painting, with its syncretic visual language and flattened geometries, reflects a kaleidoscopic reinterpretation of diverse systems of knowledge, cultural histories, and ways of being. Like many of his peers, Ore-Giron is reckoning with the question of tradition and contemporaneity, reconciling a diversity of positions and influences, and stewarding a living ancestral history.

Ore-Giron is invested in the frictions and evolutions that occur during the translation of an image across mediums and through collaborations with others, a process that creates space for fruitful and unexpected artistic interpretation. The tapestry and ceramic tile works in the second gallery were each created collaboratively with artisans in Guadalajara. Ore-Giron worked with the acclaimed ceramic studio Cerámica Suro to create two ceramic tile murals, *Talking Shit With Amaru (variation I)* (2023), and *Talking Shit with the Snake People* (2023). These compositions celebrate the deep history and tradition of the ceramic medium in both Peru and Mexico, and Ore-Giron’s own history and interest in creating works for public spaces.

Among the first works in Ore-Giron’s Talking Shit series is a textile produced in collaboration with Taller Mexicano de Gobelinos. *Talking Shit With Quetzalcoatl / I Like Mexico and Mexico Likes Me* (2017) is a loom-woven wearable tapestry that depicts the Aztec god of life, knowledge, and art and craft as a sinuous semi-abstracted serpent in vibrant hues of blue, red, and green. Its title references a performance by German artist Joseph Beuys, in which he spent three days in a gallery space with a coyote. Here Ore-Giron has substituted Mexico for Beuys’s America—a play on the critical importance and primacy of Mexican culture over the presence of Central and South American cultures in the U.S. and particularly in Los Angeles, where the artist has lived for nearly 20 years. This poncho, depicting a ubiquitous figure in Mexican and Chicano culture, has been used in collaborative performances by Ore-Giron and artist rafa esparza, and Ore-Giron will activate the tapestry again as part of a performance realized with avant-garde Peruvian sound artist Alan Poma. Using a synthesizer, Poma will create a soundscape suggestive of the sounds of a river in Peru that has important significance in Ore-Giron’s family history. This performance will foreground concepts of ancestral memory, place, and proximity of the past.

Working across disciplines and mediums, Ore-Giron synthesizes formal histories to explore the visual, auditory, and experiential possibilities of cross-cultural influence. With Talking Shit, he delves deeper into his personal history, drawing on memory and his own experience existing in spaces of in-between alongside aesthetic reference points.

Ore-Giron has been the subject of solo exhibitions at The Contemporary Austin (2023); Museum of Contemporary Art Denver (2022); the Anderson Collection at Stanford University (2022); LAXART, Los Angeles (2015); 18th Street Art Center, Santa Monica (2012); and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia (2005), among others. His work as part of LOS JAICHACKERS has also been shown at the Pérez Art Museum Miami (2013), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2008), and Prospect.3, New Orleans (2014).

Ore-Giron was selected to realize major public commissions by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority and LA METRO for subway stations in Brooklyn and Los Angeles, respectively. His work is in the permanent collections of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Kadist, San Francisco; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Minneapolis Institute of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; Pérez Art Museum Miami; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Santa Barbara Museum of Art; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and United States Consulate General, Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, curated by the U.S. Department of State’s Office of Art in Embassies.

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