

# BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



Enoc Perez, *Hotel Caribe Hilton*, 2022, oil on canvas, 203.2 x 254 cm. (80 x 100 in.)

## ENOC PEREZ

### *New Paintings*

FEBRUARY 1 – 23, 2023

OPENING RECEPTION: FEBRUARY 2, 2023 | 6pm – 8pm

Ben Brown Fine Arts is delighted to present ***New Paintings***, the first solo exhibition of New York-based artist Enoc Perez to be held at the Palm Beach gallery, following his highly acclaimed solo exhibitions ***More Than This*** (Hong Kong, 2021) and ***The Cinematic Self*** (London, 2019). The exhibition features a group of large-scale paintings depicting classic landmarks from Perez's native Puerto Rico, the imagery culled from vintage travel advertisements promoting the allure and promise of visiting this tropical island.

Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1967, Perez moved to New York City in the late 1980s, earning great renown for his paintings of iconic, utopian architecture. Throughout his illustrious career, Perez has developed a distinct visual vocabulary, using architecture and interiors as symbols to examine power, identity, popular culture, history and politics. Perez is similarly interested in the subliminal seduction and historical value of myriad visual media, looking at advertising, both vintage and contemporary, social media and celebrity culture to inform his work.

In the current exhibition, Perez amalgamates his explorations of architecture, advertising, and personal history in Puerto Rico, to present a vibrant and evocative group of paintings that exemplify his achievements as a painter. Perez bases the paintings on idealized imagery from travel brochures and advertisements from the 1960s through the 1990s promoting tourism to Puerto Rico, an industry that would bring development and economic stimulation to the island and offer an exotic tropical experience to the visitor, though undeniably fraught with the complexities that this arrangement brings. These hotels and public spaces form the fabric of Perez's memories growing up in Puerto Rico; revisiting them is a means to share not only the history of his country but also to explore his personal identity.

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Three paintings in the exhibition depict the Caribe Hilton, the first luxury hotel to open in Puerto Rico, in 1949, as part of a government-backed development project that leased the Puerto Rican-designed and owned hotel to a U.S. business. Perez considers this architectural landmark both a marker of the advent of tourism and outside investment in the island and claims it as a personal identity marker for himself and his generation growing up there. *Pond at the Caribe Hilton Hotel*, 2022, comes from a slick advertisement featuring a man-made pond amid a lush landscape dotted with pink flamingos at the hotel, a colorfully kitsch promise of exoticism. Perez deftly depicts this idyll from an elevated perspective, the foreground of the painting increasingly abstracted with his 'brushless' painting application. *Hotel Caribe Hilton*, 2022, demonstrates his signature mastery of architectural detail, the austere grid of the hotel punctuated by a palm tree and scattered picnic tables with colorful umbrellas. *Condado Beach*, 2022, portrays another nostalgically classic Puerto Rican landmark, La Concha Hotel's seashell-inspired restaurant from the 1950s, seen from an aerial view of the inimitable and alluring coastline. Also included in the exhibition are several paintings of Bacardi rum bottles, a series Perez began in the early 2000s, the imagery and titles derived from outlandishly tantalizing liquor advertisements, their 'ready-made' Pop format and personal relevance to the artist providing subject matter to refine and revisit over the years. **New Paintings** presents a visually powerful, personally poignant, accomplished body of work marking an exciting direction for the artist.



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## ABOUT ENOC PEREZ

Enoc Perez holds a BFA from Pratt Institute and MFA from Hunter College, both in New York, NY. Perez's artworks are included in prestigious public and private collections around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The British Museum, London; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico, San Juan. Perez currently has a retrospective exhibition at Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico (MAPR), San Juan. Perez lives and works in New York, NY.

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