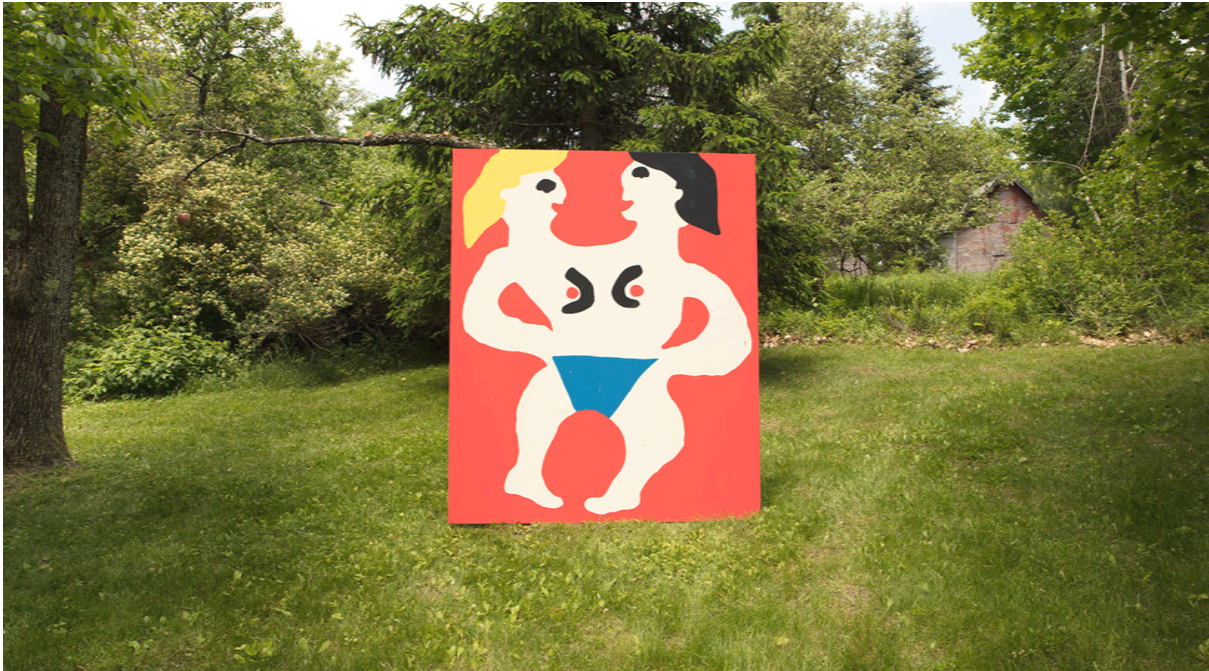


MARVIN GARDENS

1540 DECATUR STREET, RIDGEWOOD, NY 11385

"PLAY ORBIT" June 8 - July 8, 2018



JAMES ULMER Opening Friday, June 8th 7:00-9:00pm

Marvin Gardens is pleased to present *Play Orbit*, a solo exhibition by Brooklyn-based painter James Ulmer.

This show shares a title with a now near half-century-old exhibition staged at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, which featured toys and games created by visual artists, and introduced interesting ideas about who can make what we call art and how fun that art should be. Tangentially tackling similar notions here in his own work, in terms of both inspiration and enjoyment, Ulmer seems to stand unabashedly for broad inclusivity.

Referencing not specific toys or memories of objects, Ulmer instead, for a handful of the larger paintings, incorporates forms from a small, spontaneously sketched ink drawing, allowing his imagination to source the playfulness of the pieces. Despite their minimal surroundings, the scanned figures take on a new resolution in their re-contextualization, as the importing process imbues them with rough and jagged edges, belying their original bulbous nature.

Works like "Boy with Flute and Snakes" and "Two Figures in Blue" are vibrantly colored canvases that eschew the thick black lines of their original source material, in which Ulmer deftly carves out negative space, as silhouettes of faces and figures emphasize just how much can be communicated with suggested shapes. The paintings exist in an enjoyable liminal space for the viewer, where painterly interpretations vacillate between complex scenes being distilled to their essential information and carefully calculated compositions of simple strokes resolving into recognizable forms. There's a certain wisdom in this competition, and often, at once, both feel right.