

*Laid Back*

James Ulmer

October 16 - November 14, 2021

Opening Saturday October 16, 6-8 p.m.



Marvin Gardens is pleased to announce the opening of "Laid Back," an exhibition by the painter James Ulmer. This is the artist's second solo show at the gallery. This exhibition will run concurrently with a second solo exhibition by Ulmer - "Painting Pictures" - at The Hole on Bowery.

The ten new paintings on view mark a decisive dive into color when compared to recent years. The pigment-heavy flashe paint sings loud on these mostly large canvases, quieted only in its velvety texture.

The works are an arrangement of delicate balances of color and shape. Ulmer paints seemingly simple compositions of reductively flat figures with surreal landscape elements and minimal patterning. In this way they tilt toward abstraction, yet the shapes maintain the edges that define their imagery. Matisse's cut-outs are brought to mind. Ulmer builds the imagery in a similar way, beginning with drawings, which are transferred onto the computer where then he arranges and rearranges shapes and colors until a composition is struck.

Ulmer's repeated figures and flat treatment also call to mind the artist John Wesley. These paintings, like Wesley's, appear pristinely clear and crisp from afar, yet bear the marks of the painter's hand when examined up close. Pencil lines can still occasionally be seen where shapes meet, and color shifts are recorded where the artist changed their mind. These more intimate details of the paintings contrast the iconic nature of the imagery and scale, retaining a gently human balance.