



GRANDMA'S REMINDER
Acrylic on Canvas
4 x 5 ft
2020





La Loma
Acrylic on Canvas
5 x 8 ft
2020





Riot
Acrylic on Canvas
5 x 8 ft
2020

Childhood Remembrances
Recent Works by Reen Barrera

If Freud is to be believed, adult behavior and identity are largely conditioned by the formative years of childhood, where some of the strongest memories are established. For Reen Barrera, it is also the wellspring of his art. His works, both in painting and sculpture, bear strong references from his childhood, which in turn remind the viewer of his own: the wonder of exploration and discovery, the making of actual and imaginary playthings, the thirst for adventure.

In his solo exhibition, Recent Works, Barrera continues to plumb the depths of childhood to surface some of its enduring images: action heroes, pets and loved ones, imaginary friends. Central to its narrative was his early life in Caloocan which saw his grandmother as a dominant figure, serving as a parental figure to grandchildren whose fathers and mothers were abroad making a living.

During this time, the young Barrera was mostly at home, playing with his cousins and devising his own games to amuse himself. This was how his imagination was fired up, whose creative spark naturally extended to the kinds of works he would produce later in life. His main toy sculpture, named Ohhlala, may be seen as a stand-in for the toys that he never had.

In his paintings, one can see a riot of colors, patterns, and images in mischievous fun, all connected to memories he had growing up, with no single character dominating the work. With the elements juxtaposed in an explosive fashion, Barrera's works are a visual equivalent of a how a child would tell a story: eagerly and breathlessly, filled with swashbuckling highlights.

Recent Works is but a continuation to the narrative that Barrera has been weaving since he burst into the art scene, in which play is central and significant, reminding us, the viewers, that try as we might, there are certain things we will never outgrow. In the universe that Barrera has created, they are treasured, celebrated, and made all the more memorable.

-Carlomar Arcangel Daoana



Tori
Acrylic on Canvas
4 x 3 ft
2020



Tori
Wood, Resin & Cloth
4ft
2020