

## "The Manhattan Art Review"

Rafael Delacruz, Ken Price - Echo's in Talavera - [Franklin Parrasch](#) - \*\*\*\*.5

Rafael is a friend of mine so I might be biased, but I haven't seen much of his work in the last year or two and this is a mind-boggling jump forward. When I first came across his work I was resistant to the semi-stoner cartoonist sensibility, but as time has gone on I've come to appreciate that that's simply a formal armature, and that framework has faded more and more to the background as a purely painterly sensibility has taken over. These paintings are literally packed with any kind of content you can ask for from a painting: a refined sense of color, technical virtuosity with a dizzyingly range of techniques layered on top of each other on a single canvas, sensitivity to the compositional space as a whole and in the physical texture of the materials, humor, figures that bleed seamlessly into abstractions and back. The works are a literal palimpsest of art historical references and contexts that have been digested and utilized towards the development of his own style. Individual style only comes through this hard-wrought process of influence and redeployment because a unique style comes less from being autonomous than it does from having internalized so many other artists that the accumulated sense becomes impossible to identify as deriving from a clear source. That's called participating authentically in the history of art. I really can't think of another painter under 50 who's working on this level. Comparing his work against the much more famous Ken Price is a good frame of reference: I was so focused on Rafael's paintings that Price's cartoons and ceramics barely registered. For some reason there's no documentation of Price's works on the website, so I can't think of anything to say about them.