



Spanish artist Javier Calleja presents first solo exhibition in Greece with Dio Horia Gallery

Mykonos, 24 June 2019 — Dio Horia gallery is excited to announce Javier Calleja's solo exhibition *Those Little Things* in Mykonos. This is the artist's first solo exhibition in Greece and the result of his month-long residency at Dio Horia in June 2019. The exhibition is opening on June 28 at 20:00, in the presence of the artist.



Javier Calleja, Lazy today, 2019. Acrylic on canvas, 33 x 41 cm (13 x 16 1/8 inches).

The painting of Javier Calleja possesses a directness that is the result of his very personal way of finding the balance between masterful, sophisticated technique and casual simplicity. He paints portraits of boyish characters with large, life-like eyes, which are painted meticulously and with great care for their expression, color, texture and depth. Everything else surrounding the eyes — the hair, the clothing, the background — is by contrast very plain and empty, and painted in a cartoony, almost silly way.

Calleja only paints boys because all his portraits are self-portraits in a way: every character he paints is a reflection of a part of his own personality. His characters always have blood-shot eyes and their noses are red; this is because he is trying to capture the moment when a child stops crying and is about to smile again. This tipping point between sadness and joy, crying and laughter is important for the artist and the emotion he is trying to evoke through his work. It is a moment of small victory, of being a little hero and overcoming difficulty or pain, in order to smile again and move on.

Childlike innocence and imagination run through Calleja's entire work. This is nowhere more evident than in his heartwarming use of text in his paintings and wall installations. His characters are often accompanied by a small phrase that adds playful absurdity to the scene, or points out a detail in its context that went by unnoticed until that very moment. Just like a child pointing out an evident truth to a group of distracted grownups, Calleja's wide-eyed characters are here to make us see and feel more in the everyday.



As it is typical of Calleja's approach to presenting his work, the exhibition *Those Little Things* is conceived as one large installation, with artworks being in dialogue with each other and the space. Colorful interventions and scripture on the walls expand the viewer's experience of the works, allowing them to immerse themselves in Javier Calleja's affective, optimistic universe.

It was early summer when the artist arrived on Mykonos for his residency with Dio Horia, so he encountered a landscape that was mostly brown and all the hills were dry. Being confident that he could find his Mediterranean palette on Mykonos too, he set out looking for color on the dry Cycladic island. It only took him a couple of days to discover the colors he loves right at his doorstep: clear blues from the glorious Aegean sky and sea, warm orange and pink from lantana flowers (*lantana camara*), deep greens from oleander leaves (*nerium oleander*), ruby red from hibiscus flowers (*hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) and brilliant yellow from an endemic variety of mullein (*verbascum thapsus*).

With this little discovery being the starting point for the artist's residency with Dio Horia, this exhibition is both a celebration and an acknowledgment of all those little things in life that often go unnoticed, but in the end make all the difference in the world.

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Notes to editors

— **Javier Calleja** (b.1971 in Málaga, Spain) studied fine arts at the University of Granada. Before he completed his artistic training at the age of 31 he was a gymnastics athlete training for the Olympics. In his paintings, drawings and sculptures he deploys the aesthetic conventions of cartoons and the illustrations of children's books, in his search for simplicity and immediacy. Calleja has presented 5 solo museum exhibitions and 22 solo gallery exhibitions in three continents, including Aisho/Nanzuka (Hong Kong), Dio Horia Gallery (Mykonos, Greece), Galerie Zink (Waldkirchen, Germany), Nanzuka Gallery (Tokyo), Galería Rafael Pérez Hernando (Madrid), Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Málaga (Spain), Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Burgos (Spain) and Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Alcobendas (Spain). Group exhibitions include museum, art fair and gallery shows at ARCO Madrid, Art Basel Hong Kong, ZONAMACO, Art Brussels, Dio Horia Gallery, Galería Yusto/Giner (Málaga) and Dorothy Circus Art Gallery (Rome/London). His work has been featured in Juxtapoz, Hypebeast and other international art publications. He lives and works in Málaga, Spain. <https://www.callejastudio.com/>

— **Dio Horia** is a gallery for contemporary art and culture that was inaugurated in 2015. Dio Horia Gallery strives to be at the forefront of cultural experimentation both in Greece and the world beyond, by representing young emerging artists from small peripheral countries. At the same time, Dio Horia is running an international residency program and also organizes group shows and publications with established and emerging artists that have not exhibited in Greece. Finally, Dio Horia engages in collaborative projects developed as a result of associations with artists, curators, non-profit organizations and cultural carriers. These fall into categories ranging from social, cultural and literary studies to music and performing arts. The gallery is based in Mykonos, Greece, and in the second half of 2019 it will open a new location in Athens. <http://www.diohoriamuseum.com/>



— Exhibition info

Javier Calleja: *Those Little Things*
Solo & residency show
June 28 - July 24, 2019

Dio Horia Gallery

Panahra Square, 846 00 Mykonos, Greece
Tel: +30 2289026429
Email: info@diohorias.com
<http://www.diohorias.com/>

Hours:

June — daily, 18:00-01:00

July — daily, 18:00-02:00

— Upcoming shows at Dio Horia

Spyros Aggelopoulos: *Donut Factory*
Solo show
July 25 - August 16, 2019

Joakim Ojanen: *Island*
Solo & residency show
July 25 - August 23, 2019

Sam Friedman
Solo & residency show
July 25 - August 23, 2019

Amir Fallah
Solo & residency show
August 23 - September 30, 2019

Download press materials here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/0va5op5uyky2hso/AABdqfmQwcssVdxTXe7VxAhka?dl=0>

For more information please contact the gallery:

info@diohorias.com