

Hyperallergic, Lisa Yin Zhang, July 01, 2024



Installation view of Javier Téllez, “Charlie don’t surf” (2024), derby bowler hat, Cavalry hat, sunglasses, metal handcuff, bamboo cane, artificial hair, Fabriano paper, cardboard, 57 x 50 x 50 inches (photo by Kris Graves, courtesy Center for Art, Research and Alliances (CARA))

***Javier Téllez: Amerika***

Along the edges of a sidewalk-like concrete floor, blank black posters held up by boot-wearing poles lean against the wall like sheepish figures trying to hide from sight. At the center of another wall, the chain that connects twin poles like a sidewalk barrier reveals itself as handcuffs, and bowler hats and sunglasses mark these posts as figures who stare unabashedly back. The iconic mustache on one signals its referent: In “Amerika” (2024), a film that plays in the next room, Téllez casts Venezuelan refugees living in New York to reenact scenes from classic Charlie Chaplin movies, extending the actor and human rights advocate’s sociopolitical critique to our treatment of immigrants in our own city.

Center for Art, Research and Alliances ([cara-nyc.org](http://cara-nyc.org))

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