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LESLIE DE CHAVEZ
Nameless Presence

exhibition dates:
18 Oct - 17 Nov 2013
opening reception:
18 Oct, Fri, 7-9pm
artist talk:
19 Oct, Sat, 3pm

Nameless Presence by **LESLIE DE CHAVEZ**



Image: Leslie de Chavez, God is on our Side, 2013

As one stands in front of the works of Leslie de Chavez, one is immediately drawn into the narrative not only of each work taken as a whole, but also of every object within that work. In his show **Nameless Presence**, De Chavez paints a social commentary on the depths man can sink, and the accomplishments he too can reach despite the temptation of corrupting agents.

The piece *God is On Our Side* shows three men who have gathered to participate in a baptism in the river, in what would have been a straightforward ritual of initiation complete with a basin of white flowers, candles afloat, and a contemplative initiate. Except this time, all around him are elements to his detriment rather than his salvation. With hands crossed and head bent, the initiate stands in flooded water with debris and destruction to his back, a crocodile lurking in observance or calculating its next move, a storm raging in the distance, and finally - and perhaps what could be most detrimental of all - are the two men performing the ritual. The first is a gray-skinned man, darkened and deformed by the filth he has absorbed holding the basin of flowers and what looks like an idol; while the second man, though more normal in appearance, is the one performing the ceremony. This second man will have the words that seal the ceremony and the oaths made, and yet he has his hands around the initiate's. Is this meant to guide the new member, or to force him into joining their side? Are we witnessing the willingness or submission of the soul?

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In *Sold Without a Guarantee*, a man lies with arms to his side and again in deep contemplation, on his belly perched on a skull. Alone in a vast field, sunshine fading into darkness behind him, the man balances on an object which symbolizes death and dishonesty. Beyond balance, this man has centered himself on the skull; it is his core, his center of gravity, and it is what feeds him. The extended belly and the acceptance in his face are no coincidence; it seems he has found peace and balance in this set-up.

De Chavez is a master of threading execution and result. Each of his works present a social commentary not only written through allegory and juxtaposition, but also written through his painting methods - be it the deliberate use of black as the base color, the evenness of the paint, and even the way the works are framed and presented.

Nameless Presence is a true exercise of thought and process, for both the artist and the viewer. What that presence is, and how it is understood, is a choice made and analyzed within each one's respective context and history. Society as it unfolds, and individual experience, are the lens through this presence is seen, and the pen through which this presence is written.

Nameless Presence with LESLIE DE CHAVEZ runs from 18 October to 17 November 2013 at Silverlens Gillman Barracks at 47 Malan Road, #01-25 Gillman Barracks, Singapore 109444. Opening reception for the artist will be from 7-9pm on 18 October, Friday. An artist talk will be held on the next day, 19 October, Saturday, 3pm. Admission is free.

LESLIE DE CHAVEZ is also part of Singapore Biennale 2013: If the World Changed. Singapore Biennale will run from 26 October 2013 to 16 February 2014. Visit <http://www.singaporebiennale.org/> for more information.

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