



Oxylus the Infinite

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: UTOPIA: works by Manuel "Raid" Zamudio
Where: Platform 204 Art Gallery & Studios, 119 W. Van Buren, Harlingen
When: Through August 25, 2018
Hours: 10am-2pm, Thurs-Friday, 10am-5pm Saturday
Open during Harlingen Art Night
Contact: (956) 456-6570

The Story Expands

This exhibit reveals beginnings of a shift in the artist's personal storyline concept through unexpected inspirations.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

With this recent exhibition, Manuel Zamudio brings some of his signature characters along with some new additions to Harlingen's Platform 204 Art Gallery & Studios. UTOPIA hints at the beginnings of a shift in his aesthetic direction along with his search for a perfect world. Here, surrealist characters are suddenly mingling with more realistic and recognizable ones. Of particular note in this show is Zamudio's interest in the writings of philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, and psychologist, Carl Jung. UTOPIA includes oil paintings and ballpoint ink drawings. Some of the works focus on an independent idea, breaking from the storyline that we are used to seeing from this artist. In a stylistically transitional painting, "Übermensch" (superman), Nietzsche appears as one of the faces on Mount Rushmore depicting necessary new values that include the need for humanity to empower itself instead of so often assuming the role of a victim. Nietzsche's Übermensch does not rely on religion and belief systems that he believes can dilute the sense of personal responsibility. "That's something that I fully believe," proclaimed Zamudio. "So, this is Nietzsche in the middle, staring at you. Reading the wall, he's making contact with you, and the story is being told around him. Because he goes against

traditional religious views, the power of philosophy that is embodied into this character is to disrupt the home, and the home can be seen as the mind.” The image of a horrified Jesus is also included and, like Nietzsche, is depicted realistically, while a symbol of the disconnected everyman and another, are surrealistic, “Archetypes” reflects Zamudio’s thoughts on Jung’s concept of human archetypes and is also separate from the standard storyline. Clustered together, the artist’s archetypes float above the natural landscape in what seems to be a state of varying uncertainty. Realistic depictions of Jung and the artist’s wife show concerned awareness, along with the surrealistic yellow common man with his cigarette habit. Fried eggs are meant to tell a story of polarity. One is fully cooked and the other is runny, suggesting the duality of values that surfaced in the “Übermensch” painting. Here, it’s Christ and Jung representing strength and the diminished.

Several small ink drawings embody personal beliefs. Some also reflect the ideas of the larger paintings. An ingenious drawing showing the face of Christ emerging from a shell represents the Christ breaking down the barriers of a typical person and coming out.

Explaining where he wants to go with a realistic approach, Zamudio explained, “It’s pushing the boundaries of technique and what I could really do with everything. I think that Realism, even if it’s character based, is always where I wanted to go; it’s always the end goal. I’m pushing and making it more real by adding some human faces to the paintings - it’s just the beginning to the path to getting more realistic.” Certainly, these works are fascinating, but the layers of meaning are getting deeper to fathom. Zamudio needs to be careful that his ideas and beliefs are being successfully transmitted, and not as thoughts that only he can see.

Platform 204 Art Gallery & Studios is a creative space in the mid-Valley where artists can show their work. Located on a second floor, it is comprised of three or four separate gallery spaces. The last Friday of each month may be the most convenient time to plan a visit.

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