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Like an Old Master of the 21st century, the exquisite paintings of Los Angeles-based artist Julien Nguyen incorporate a multitude of muses, idols and mythologies into a historical treatment of today. From Florentine architecture and Mannerist painting to Hollywood film, Japanese anime, and the impossible bodies of video game fantasy, he builds hybrid histories to pose contemporary queries. This storied staging is anchored with resilient, if no less partial, subjects who speak to Nguyen's underlying navigation of his Vietnamese heritage in a complex post-colonial arena. In this place, where religion is frequently employed for political ends, this exhibition highlights Nguyen's ongoing exploration of the fusion (and strategic confusion) of Church and State – particularly missionary operations conducted via channels of mass media. His virtuosic technique serves as foil in this regard, moving in and

out of the pristine finish we expect from the Renaissance to highlight the amorphous, sometimes grotesque ramifications of his content. The ensuing paintings and drawings are tantalizing and uncanny, seducing the eye long enough to consider the alien/other in the hallows of art history. Within this storied language of canonical paintings and enduring beauty, Nguyen revisits the past to revise its icons and question its legacy. Amidst the value systems and visual codes that the Classical era continues to emanate (and entrench), he marries the past, present and future to conjure hallucinatory allegories that interrupt the relentless march of both time and dominion.

Julien Nguyen: *Returns* is curated by Steven Matijcio and is on view until June 16, 2019. This exhibition is generously supported by Alice F. Weston and Artswave Corporate Sponsor: P&G.