

COMPANY

Raúl de Nieves

Carnage Composition

May 5 - June 11, 2022

145 Elizabeth Street

Opening Reception: May 5, 6 - 8pm

Grave Robber Manifestation

It begins with an ending. Misfortune was the genesis for the central sculpture in this exhibition. A pile of fear and failure and a broken heart kindled the question of what to do with the remains. Rather than yield to fate, Raúl leaned into the symbolic moment and resurrected the misfortune. "The Deaths of Every Day" performs its own self-destruction and tries to transform despair into destiny. Impaled and uplifted by an armature of steel beams, the figure is liberated by its undoing. It reminds me of Titian's "Flaying of Marsyas", a body picked at by flies, dying away, a body ruined in order to free the soul. Little beads and bits of shitty thrift store sequins shine with renewed secrecy. The sculpture's dressed in elevated death drag.

Universal Earthly Delights

Its changing room is a series of wardrobe doors entitled "The Book of Hours". On their insides, a menagerie of leering figures take turns dancing with death. No one leads. Even the skeletons throw their stupid hands in the air, engaged in a ritual but clueless as to which myth they enact. Raúl says "Celebration is a system of belief," and amid the earthly delights, the ripe corn stalks and ribbetting frogs, he has painted a portal that thrums with the white noise of the great void. It's a passageway to the moon, which is represented on the other side of the doors in low relief, entombed in a shallow grave of cratered gesso. Over an abstract topography Raúl maps rhythm onto chaos.

Duplicate Magic

A fabulous little astronaut named Timothy stands outside these doors and he's just a kid, but naiveté has prepared him for everything. Though he hasn't outgrown his dolls, Timothy's readymade boyish features are steeled in anticipation, an allegory of creative exploration. In the adjacent room, an old witch-doctor named Lord gazes on without judgment, but without empathy, also an allegory of creative exploration. Some of the other figures stand on thin sheets of slate rock, like pages taken from a book of earth, a book, incidentally about the moon; seen and not felt, known and not understood.

11th Hour Gratitude

Flies - 1100 flies - are landing on everything. I read that blowflies lay living larvae in rotting bodies. They celebrate life by helping things die

- Ambera Wellmann