

NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021

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CHAZ GUEST

Gaining Pride with Promises Broken

June 25 - July 30, 2022

Night Gallery is thrilled to announce *Gaining Pride with Promises Broken*, an exhibition of paintings by Chaz Guest. This is the artist's first solo show at the gallery and follows the two-person exhibition *Promised Land*, presented in April 2021.

Chaz Guest's paintings put forth a powerful form of contemporary history painting, alive with urgency and emotive complexity. By championing untold stories in his art, Guest strives to reclaim concealed histories and narratives within African American culture. Visual memoirs unfold with a bold eloquence and dynamism, speaking to the universal impulse to persist in the face of struggle. Each of Guest's paintings are infused with a palpable sense of conviction that celebrates resilience, identity, and our shared humanity.

Gaining Pride with Promises Broken centers around the home life of Black American families in the period immediately after World War II. In the 1940s, men were incentivized to join the war effort with the financial security that would be provided by the G.I. Bill upon their return. However, Black veterans largely came back to the same economic conditions, as the discriminatory practice of redlining all but barred them from buying houses. Portrayed in the intimate quietude of the domestic space, Guest's subjects exude pride in spite of systemic failure, their dignity uncompromised by their government's false guarantee.

The figures that populate Guest's paintings are partially fictionalized, acting as homages to his family members who have served in the armed forces. However, rather than "real" individuals, Guest considers these subjects allegories for a culture that has long been misrepresented and belied by the rhetoric of social progress. In this sense, Guest connects the spiritual resolve of his subjects with his artistic drive to honor their stories. The resulting tableaux are creative accounts of lived experiences, equally as complex as the people depicted.

Each composition begins with an underpainting in Japanese Sumi ink which is then layered with oil paint. At once improvisational and technically rigorous, this self-taught style has become Guest's signature. The immediacy of the calligraphic lines coalesce with fluid strokes in Prussian blue, the unique pigment offering the artist an aesthetic throughline through history and his own body of work. Inspired by the later works of Akira Kurosawa, Guest maintains a distinctive palette that allows for color to become metaphor. Prussian blue alludes to unrealized promises of change, as the artist continues to seek beauty in the folds of oppression.

Chaz Guest (b. 1961, Niagara Falls, NY) has presented solo exhibitions at the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco; Vito Schnabel Gallery, New York; Patrick Painter Gallery, Santa Monica; GRK Gallery, Paris; Les Moliere Palais Royal, Paris; and Justin Gilany, Los Angeles. His work belongs in the collections of Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Herbie Hancock, Beth Rudin DeWoody, and the Rennie Collection, among others. Guest has been featured in several publications including *Los Angeles Magazine*, the *Washington Post*, *The Daily Beast*, *CBS News*, and the *Daily Observer*. Guest lives and works in Los Angeles.