

APALAZZOGALLERY

Raúl De Nieves ***Who Would We Be Without Our Memories?***

Raúl De Nieves' premiere exhibition at APALAZZOGALLERY, *Who Would We Be Without Our Memories?*, grammatically implies a present conditional of a hypothetical future through the agency of past. It purveys a poetic examination of the circular role of time in realms of cultural heritage, creative evolution, and personal transformation.

Nostalgia combined with fantasy invokes the traditional craftsmanship of De Nieves' native Mexico, demonstrating innovative methods in arts such as beadwork, costume, sculpting, and weaving. Like reproduced pages torn from a scrapbook, early works and DIY posters from the artists' youth are refashioned into elaborate collages. The grandest of these, *New Moons*, presides over the atrium of the gallery correlating the courses of the past with lunar fluctuations. The neighboring tapestries and altarpiece are testaments of emotional states invoked through memory, with its inherent distortion and resonance.

The windows are set with the artist's signature stained glass panels in remembrance of his father who passed on at the age of 33, lending historical significance to that number. As the exhibition coincides with the close of the De Nieves' 33rd year, its content marks the final stages of a cycle of creative development and a departure into new phases of expression.

Renewal through metamorphosis being a prominent theme in De Nieves' body of work, the adjacent gallery poses an optimistic vision of the future. Beaded sculptures of shoes and costumes are ornately composed from undervalued objects allowed to flourish in new and renewable contexts. They reflect the generative process of growth and decay in nature, and embrace them as natural aspects of life, creativity, and social reform.

The entrance hall bridges the divergence of past, present, and future with preserved bodies of birds eroticized by pearls and costume jewelry. They lead into a succession of Saint George and the Dragon paintings, emblems of the sanctity of the present. A flux of sculptures resembling opalescent children descends around them in celebratory postures. The power of will thus navigates narrative, and directs new meaning into ancient iconography.

Raúl de Nieves, born in 1983 in Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico is a visual artist who lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Opening Saturday 30 September from 6 pm
30 September – 11 November 2017

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