

JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY

CARLOS VEGA

Correspondences

February 22 – March 30, 2019

Opening reception for the exhibition: **Friday, February 22nd**, from **6-8 PM** at **524 West 24th Street**.

Jack Shainman Gallery is proud to present ***Correspondences***, a series of paintings by **Carlos Vega**. Mythology, history, and religion meet in Vega's omnist new body of work. Inspired by the *Santas* of 17th Century Spanish painter, Francisco de Zubarán, Vega creates spiritual icons for our contemporary world.

A mystical force simultaneously compassionate and tenacious lies at the core of Vega's portraits of twenty-four women: saints, heroines, and goddesses, who in their lifetimes struggled with internal turmoil in the search for purpose and meaning. Continuing the lineage of Zubarán, Vega's works are hung in the style of convents in Sevilla, Spain, similarly meant to provoke dialogue of the soul and self-excavation towards higher levels of awareness.

Chinese goddess, Nüwa, believed to be the creator of mankind who restored earth's connection with the heavens, balances both herself and humanity from within a silver ellipse; while Hypatia of Alexandria, mathematician and astronomer who is theorized to have discovered planets' elliptical orbit, calibrates scientific tools in her hand. The martyred St. Teresia Benedicta a Cruce, born Edith Stein, a German Jewish philosopher turned Catholic nun who publicly spoke against a Nazi government that called itself "Christian," looks brazenly outwards before a stack of books. Stein holds in her hands a golden halo-like sphere, representative of her sainthood following her tragic death at Auschwitz. In communion with Stein is Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace Prize recipient and survivor of a brutal Taliban attack in response to her fight for the education of women and girls, painted with emanating light as she boards her bus to school.

This interconnected tribe of heroines is rendered with repetitive, linear, matte gesso marks and vibrant color field backgrounds on linen, recalling both the repetitive chanting and mantras of many religions, while also accentuating a cohesive connectivity between histories past and present. These women's wisdom, generosity, strength, and physical likenesses are rendered by Vega from memory and intuition, rather than photographs or models; a challenging freedom that Vega describes as painting "from the vacuum." This method evokes French philosopher Albert Camus' response to work by famed colorist, Yves Klein: "With the void, full powers." From the expanse of Vega's mind comes a potent spirit capable of awakening the soul.

Vega studied at the University of Fine Arts in Seville Spain (1986) and the University of Fine Arts in Madrid (1988). He continued his studies at the Talleres de Art Actual in Madrid from 1988 through 1990. To explore new avenues, Vega did graduate work at The Art Institute of Chicago between 1990 to 1991. A recent solo show, *Carlos Vega: See You Now*, opened at the Orlando Museum of Art in 2015. Vega currently splits his time between New York and Granada, Spain.

Concurrently on view is ***What's Inside***, an exhibition of new work by **Leslie Wayne** at 513 West 20th Street, and ***Parking on Pavement*** at **The School**. Upcoming exhibitions at Jack Shainman Gallery include **Paul Anthony Smith** at 513 West 20th Street, opening April 4, 2019.

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm. For press inquiries please contact Katherine Wisniewski, Sutton, katherine@suttonpr.com, +1 212 202 3402. For other inquiries please contact the gallery at info@jackshainman.com.