

Julien Nguyen

Returns

February 8, 2019- June 16, 2019

EDUCATOR GUIDE



WELCOME EDUCATORS!

Dear Educators,

We are delighted to have you join us at the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) for the exhibition *Julien Nguyen Returns*, on view through June 19, 2019. Julien Nguyen is a Los Angeles-based, Vietnamese artist whose work incorporates a multitude of muses, idols, and mythologies into a historical treatment of today. His work employs inspiration from a menagerie of sources, from Florentine architecture and Mannerist painting to Hollywood film, Japanese manga, and the impossible bodies of video game fantasy. This hybrid of styles comes together using historical and recognizable vehicles to pose contemporary queries.

This educator guide provides the framework to prepare you and your students to visit and view the exhibition. Information about the exhibition and artwork will give you some background on the work. Some lesson and discussion suggestions are included, as well, which introduce and explore some of the key themes and ideas of the exhibition.

We look forward to introducing you to the artwork.

Enjoy your visit!

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Julien Nguyen

Born in 1990, Washington D.C.

Lives in Los Angeles

Education: Rhode Island School of Design (2012)
undergrad, Master's degree from Staatliche, Frankfurt
(2015)



QUOTES

“By leaving portions of the work unfinished, Nguyen unmoors the figures from their places in the biblical narrative and leaves them floating in an ambiguous space. The story once preceded the image; now the image precedes the story.”

-Mimi Chu

“It is my strong belief that from the 17th century onwards much of western art slowly transforms into (bad) apologetics for imperialism—but not before! It is from before where we might still learn, if we could only remember.”

-Julien Nguyen

“History is ultimately a universal story, despite its tragedy. The past has been a tale of differing paths for differing peoples.”

-Julien Nguyen

ABOUT THIS EXHIBITION

Like an early Renaissance painter engaging the politics and popular culture of today. Vietnam-born, Los Angeles-based artist Julien Nguyen employs subjects and compositions from Florentine architecture and Japanese manga to science fiction and Hollywood cinema. In so doing, his work exercises a kind of archaeological grafting that references art history while disrupting the narratives and hierarchies it canonizes. In his hands, practices such as one-point perspective and elongated figuration are applied to deities, politicians, and personal friends alike—collapsing the past and present to conjure hallucinatory allegories that span multiple eras and mythologies.

Nguyen’s work is unique as he pulls from a variety of different kinds of artwork and imagery to create the mystical scenes and figures presented. Many of the settings and sceneries seen in Nguyen’s work are inspired by imagery from the Early Renaissance. This recognizable style is then used as a backdrop for his characters and figures who are inspired by popular styles of manga and video game imagery, as well as historical Mannerist styles. Use of this recognizable imagery enables Nguyen to communicate personal as well as controversial topics and issues related to gender, sexuality, and politics. The figures in his scenes are often based off of people he knows, and they occupy the space in an almost “gravity-less” way due to their mystical styling and unfinished edges. It may also be interesting to note Nguyen’s inspiration from manga due to how gendered manga is, yet how fluid and androgynous Nguyen’s figures are.

KEY WORDS and Vocabulary

Archive	Mannerism	Renaissance	Androgynous
Elongation	One-point perspective	Anime/Manga	Science fiction
Humanism	Realism	Abstraction	

Themes

Archive/Art History—Nguyen’s use of art historical references, i.e. Renaissance, Mannerist compositions and concepts. This use of historical imagery and reference make some elements of Nguyen’s work recognizable, such as his Renaissance-esque scenes done in a one point perspective or his elongated Mannerist figures, however, Nguyen uses this recognition as a vehicle to present his often controversial contemporary topics.

Gender/Sexual Identity—as a gay male, his use of androgynous figures and exploration of homoerotic imagery. Many of Nguyen’s works are focused on presenting something personal to the audience. Part of Nguyen’s personal story is of being a gay man; this is also a public social issue that Nguyen uses his art to comment on, causing one of many collisions of public and private in his works.

Loneliness/Personal Anxiety—Sense of loss from failed relationships, as well as the deep negativity expressed towards current events. The personal nature of Nguyen’s work brings you into his inner monologue revolving around relationships and the social aspects that involves, including being a gay man in the world today.

Public/Private –the dual levels of meaning in many of his works referencing both his lovers and commentary on society and simple appropriation of art historical imagery.

Social Critique—focus on deception and “new stories” as norm. Many of Nguyen’s work have a focus on contemporary social and political issues. He uses the historical, recognizable imagery in his work as a way to present these issues in a new way, commenting on his personal as well as the public aspects of these issues.

PRE VISIT DISCUSSIONS

ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER

In 1939, Betty Pollak Rauh, Peggy Frank Crawford and Rita Rentschler Cushman took the advice of Edward M.M. Warburg, the founding father of the American Ballet and a founder of the Museum of Modern Art. He suggested that rather than stress about finding non-existent art jobs in New York, “Why not starting something in Cincinnati? Plenty of room there. If you decide to try, come and see me and I’ll help you.”

By August of that year, Peggy Frank Crawford, Betty Pollack and Rita Rentschler raised \$5000 (about\$93,000 today) and created the Modern Art Society (MAS). For almost a year their “office” consisted of a letter file and a portable typewriter set up in one or another living room. Within a few years, the MAS had exhibited Renoir, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Picasso, Beckman, Klee and many more in the lower levels of the Cincinnati Art Museum. In 1952, the MAS changed their name to the Contemporary Arts Center and in 1964 they earned a space of their own in downtown, Cincinnati. In 2003, the CAC moved into the Lois & Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art designed by architect Zaha Hadid. The NY Times called the structure, “the best new building since the Cold War.”

The Contemporary Arts Center is a non-collecting institution, meaning there is no permanent collection. All exhibitions are borrowed from artists, collectors and other art galleries and institutions. We strive to create exhibitions that allow visitors to “open their minds” to the arts, and to the dialogue that can be had when viewing contemporary art. We believe that art and the creative process belong to all people and that contemporary artists are an important part of how we see and interact with our world today.

RULES AND GUIDELINES

Visitor admission and school tours are free at the Contemporary Arts Center.

- We require that must be a chaperone for every 5 students under the age of 18 for self-guided groups. For docent-led tours, the required ratio is 1 to 10 for student through grade 5 and 1 to 15 for students grades 6-12.
- No backpacks, coats or lunches are permitted in the galleries, but personal belongings may be stored in the large bins or lockers we have available. Instructors may keep any emergency bags and purses with them.
- Currently photography is permitted in all areas of the museum. The CAC encourages you to post photos to various social media sites using @CincyCAC and #CincyCAC.
- Pens are not permitted in the gallery spaces. Pencils are available for use at the front

desk.

- Walk throughout all galleries–no running, climbing, or roughhousing. If visiting with students under 18 please provide guidance and supervision.

ARTWORK DISCUSSION

Pre-visit Objectives:

- Brief introduction to the artist Julien Nguyen and artwork.
- Introduce themes and ideas the students may encounter.
- Make potential connections to prior knowledge.

1. Consider this quote from Nguyen:

“History is ultimately a universal story, despite its tragedy. The past has been a tale of differing paths for differing peoples.”

-Julien Nguyen

- How does history influence us as individuals and a community? How can it influence art?
- How do we think about difference? Why is it important?

2. Ask your students to think about the differences between realism and abstraction. What do these words mean? What kinds of abstract figures have we seen before?

3. More questions to consider before viewing:

DISCUSSION		
Intermediate	Accelerated	Advanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has an artwork ever influenced you to make your own artwork? How and why?• What is the difference between realistic and abstracted?• What is an archive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can you use history in artwork?• How can personal identity (gender, sexuality, etc.) be used in artwork?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you think about power/hierarchy within our own community? Public and private.• What aspects of history do you feel are most influential to artists? How can this be used?

LESSON PLAN IDEAS

Included: Brief outlines of lessons that could be done with students before and/or after they view the Julien Nguyen *Returns* exhibition.

Unanchored and Unfinished (beginning/intermediate)

Many of the works from Nguyen we are viewing in this show are “unfinished.” Structural pencil lines are left exposed and paint strokes wisp off the figure into an unknown future. As a result, many of Nguyen’s elongated, Mannerist, and dream-like characters are left to float in a space of ethereal reality, leaving not only the figure, but the narrative of the image in a state of ambiguity. Nguyen employs this technique to disengage the figures from the scenes that surround them, solidifying the subtle juxtaposition between his historical reference and intentional contemporary commentary. For this lesson, students will employ this element of juxtaposition, presenting a figure or object of significance to them in a scene or world that opposes its existence within it.

Thinking about History (intermediate to advanced)

This discussion-based diagnostic lesson urges students to think about how history, art, and the contemporary social world collide. Nguyen uses themes and imagery found in Renaissance scenes as a way to bring into focus contemporary social/political issues, ideas of identity, and exploring ideas of the public and private. His unique inspiration from contemporary styles of manga, science fiction, deviant art, and video game imagery fuses with his use of Renaissance and historical imagery to disrupt both past and present narratives. Also, his elongated and often androgynous figures comment on ideas of gender and sexuality, subverting the very gendered art movements he pulls inspiration from. This discussion is meant to lead students to think more deeply about how Nguyen creates scenes between these moments in history and very strained social worlds.

Disruption (accelerated/advanced)

This lesson is based on using our knowledge of an art historical style or movement and creating connection with an issue or identity, disrupting the archetypes of that movement or style, as Nguyen does in his work. Nguyen pulls much of his inspiration for imagery and scene structure from the Renaissance; however, he uses this recognizable structure in order to present contemporary issues of identity, relationships, power, and social/political issues. Subsequently, he disrupts and subverts the very hierarchies and archetypes he references. Through an activity, students will choose a recognizable style or scene from art history and disrupt it through creating a character or relationship within the image, which presents a contemporary issue or aspect of identity.

ARTWORK AND INFORMATION

Introductory Wall Text

Julien Nguyen: Returns

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

Artwork and Labels

Homestead

2016 – 2018

Oil on Panel

Private Collection, Germany

This was the first painting Nguyen made when he moved to Los Angeles in his early 20s, and speaks to both the aspirations and angst of the historical settlement of the U.S. West. The Homestead Act was enacted during the Civil War in 1862, and invited any adult citizen (who had never borne arms against the U.S. government) to claim 160 acres of surveyed public land. Claimants were required to improve the plot by building a dwelling and cultivating the land. Imagining his relocation through this pioneering lens, Nguyen constructs a womb-like, if architecturally skewed, bunker where two figures perform an enigmatic familial drama.

A tall, androgynous figure modeled upon Nguyen's ex-boyfriend wears a puritanical black robe and grips a knife as they gaze pensively downward. The face of the blonde cherub-like figure to the right is modeled after Nguyen's half-sister, but her body is a mirror of the Christ



Child in Bronzino's 1545-46 painting *The Holy Family with St. Anne and the Infant St. John*. And while this contemporary pairing does not demonstrate the heavenly warmth of this Early Renaissance Madonna and Child, a similar, if ambivalent spirit of protection informs their interaction. Looking out to see within, the green glow cast upon all parts of the composition (other than the child) is less one of ghoulish suggestion, than a reference to the expanded perspective provided by infrared night vision – especially that employed by clandestine military operations. In this 21st century homestead, piercing the shadows thereby provides both added security as well as the spectre of surveillance, voyeurism and invasion.

Spiritus Mundi

2018

HD Video

Courtesy of the Artist



This video re-enacts a scene from the director's cut of Oliver Stone's 1995 biopic *Nixon*, in which former U.S. President Richard Nixon and then-Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms confront one

another in a tense power struggle. What begins as a strategic negotiation of funding and rank escalates into an ominous rumination on geopolitics, hubris, mortality and corruption. Over two decades later, Nguyen's reinterpretation sees the roles of Nixon and Helms recast with friends from his life in Los Angeles. AlaiiaParhizi, a 23 year-old Swiss artist of Persian descent, plays Nixon; Aidan Nelson, a 20 year-old entrepreneur and actor from San Diego, plays Helms. Austin Norman, also 20 and originally from Palm Springs, plays Nixon's much aggrieved aide, Deputy Director of the CIA and Lieutenant General in the Marine Corps, Robert Cushman. Costumed in a distorted approximation of political dress, and set in an Orientalist office, these attractive, vampiric young men inhabit their positions through a strange and darkly humorous role-play, grappling with a history that lies just beyond the brink of comprehension.

The Annunciation

2017

Oil on Aluminum Panel

Private Collection, Bahamas

The Flagellation

2018

Oil on Aluminum Panel

Collection of Patrick and Lindsey Collins





Nguyen returns frequently to classic Biblical scenes depicted in the era of the Early Renaissance, painting and re-painting these influential compositions to simultaneously assess their legacy and detour their path. In so doing, in the place where many foundational narratives of Western mythology radiate, he locates a constellation of power, desire, fantasy and faith. For while we instinctually associate religious iconography with chaste values that oppose (and delimit) the purported prurience of human sexuality, the truth is that many ecclesiastical artworks of the late 15th century employed a thinly veiled eroticism to arouse both interest and allegiance. The relatively common Renaissance custom of the painter incorporating his young assistants (often lovers), as characters within these scenes heightens the sexual charge of the composition all the more – carving out intimate niches to entwine the personal and divine. Centuries later, the eros of Nguyen’s paintings in this ongoing tradition smolder quietly as he infuses his mythical evocations with the sinuous bodies of friends and lovers.

In *The Flagellation*, Nguyen revises a scene traditionally employed to elicit sympathy as Christ is tied to a column and whipped mercilessly by Roman soldiers. His 2018 version features a young, elegantly emaciated messiah, shedding both scars and beard under a casual coiffure of black hair resembling that of the artist. The sadistic soldiers are also replaced by a serpentine Chinese dragon that winds lyrically through the background of the spare, cell-like chamber – complicating the archetypal evil connoted by the snake with the desirable luck and power said to be gifted by its Asian sibling. The long, seductive verticals of this dragon, the central column, and the subject’s limbs climb further into the ceiling, where a bright red grid suggests the organizing matrix of the dystopian HBO show *Westworld*. In so doing, peering into the underlying infrastructure of being, Nguyen relocates existential questions of what it means to be human in realms of, and beyond, religion.

Nguyen stretches the semiotics and setting of another iconic Bible scene in *The Annunciation*, where the Angel Gabriel’s message to the Virgin Mary (that she would conceive and become the mother of Christ) is translated into an uncanny dialect. Based upon Leonardo da Vinci’s 1486 rendition in the Uffizi Gallery, Nguyen abstracts and extends the Old Master’s courtyard into a brushy, striated stage where an angel in the vestments of a Japanese schoolboy approaches a kabuki virgin. In so doing, Nguyen re-opens the mystery, trepidation and magic of the original event, translated into a demure psycho-sexual proposal.

Executive Solutions

2017

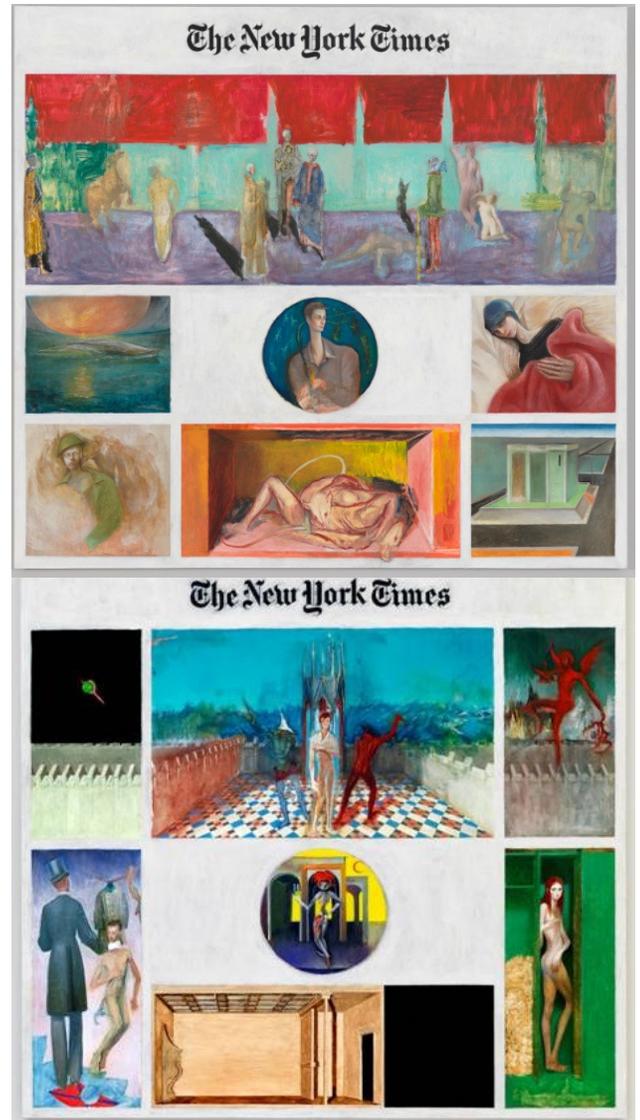
Oil and Encaustic on Linen-mounted Panel
Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art

Executive Function

2017

Oil and Encaustic on Linen-mounted Panel
Courtesy of Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London

In this diptych originally presented in the 2017 Whitney Biennial, Nguyen imagines a dystopian parochial future in the wake of the 2016 Presidential election. Reflecting on the manner in which evangelicalism was mobilized for political purposes, he translates the format of the traditional church altarpiece to the niches and columns of a newspaper. *The New York Times* was an especially frequent target during the election season, condemned as a “failing” enterprise bereft of credibility, whose primary currency was rhetoric and “fake news.” In Nguyen’s version of future front pages, he paints a pan-generational constellation of figures, creatures, and architectural structures that collectively envision a world in conflict. In *Executive Solutions*, an ominous marquee of skeletons dressed in ornate Renaissance-era garb mingles with bodies sampled from art history, including a nude from Bronzino’s 1545 *Allegory with Venus and Cupid*. Further down the “page,” he translates the two virile men tussling in Thomas Eakins’ *The Wrestlers* (1899) into an abject pair of humanoid lab rats, on the verge of cannibalizing one another. Such Darwinian de-evolution characterizes a number of the other panels as well, where bodies are subject to traumas including monstrous mutation, demonic possession, physical containment, and – as a debonair southern gentleman selects a nude youth by the throat – demeaning utility. Twisting acolytes of red and blue vie for the attention of a savior-like figure in the frieze of *Functions*, but the titles of the works suggest two contemporary forms of remedy. *Solutions* refers to the quick-fix form of corporate renewal via re-branding, like that which the infamous Blackwater private security company has done in attempts to jettison their murderous past. *Executive Functions* speak to a more business-minded approach to re-mapping behavior, where fundamental cognitive processes are amplified via pharmaceuticals and “life hacks.”



Julian the Apostate

2017

Oil on Wood Panel

Domus Collection

In this painting Nguyen employs the history of an early Roman Emperor to reframe a former partner he lost to higher spiritual study. Julian the Apostate (331-363) was an author, philosopher, social reformer, military commander and short-lived ruler who believed it necessary to restore his Empire's ancient Roman traditions to save it from dissolution. Such a “pagan” position was heretical to his bloodlines as a descendant of Emperor Constantine, who famously converted Rome to Christianity over the course of his reign. In one particularly iconic moment of this campaign, Constantine dreamt of putting a "heavenly divine symbol" on the shields of his soldiers. He ultimately chose the “Chi Rho,” one of the earliest forms of a christogram formed by superimposing the first two letters—chi and rho (XP)—of the Greek word for Christ: ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (Christos). Nguyen imprints this symbol onto the chair of his subject, a contemplative depiction of a boyfriend he was living with at the time in Los Angeles. When this person was accepted into the Theology department of Columbia University in New York, their relationship fell sacrifice to his academic and ecclesiastical ambitions. As a painterly, if profane, remediation to this series of events, Nguyen imagines him here as Julian in the 21st century, turning his back upon the family creed to save their love from dissolution. And yet, despite his preciously rendered parallel reality, the decaying flowers in the foreground, cast in the same green and gold as the subject’s robes, remind us of the painful truth –the once vibrant blossoming of romance withers with time and circumstance.



Kye, Semper Solus

2017

Oil and Tempera on Wood Panel

Domus Collection

Here Nguyen weaves a series of bodies, architectures and emotional states into a composite and highly reflexive self-portrait. Acknowledging the reality that working at an easel can often be an isolating and arduous practice, the Latin portion of this title – *semper solus* – translates starkly to “always alone.” This melancholic assessment was amplified at the time by a recent parting between Nguyen and his close friend and studio assistant, Kye. In homage to the presence that Kye often provided to his practice, as well as the space he regularly occupied in Nguyen’s mind, we see his head and face in this painting – placed upon a long, mannerist rendering of the artist’s body. By combining himself and his partner into a hybridized, yet internally divided figure, Nguyen also channels the brooding “Semper Solus” character in the popular online role-playing game *World of Warcraft*. In this arena of emotional/virtual conflict, where the scars are intense yet intangible, Nguyen cobbles a contingent chamber in a state of slow dissolution. Reflecting the unrest that seeped into the once harmonious studio, Nguyen’s patchwork avatar sits forlorn as the lines of his easel trail



into a hazy background, and the geometry of the dividing screen dissipates in/to brushy suggestion. As art and life entwine in an uncertain forecast, and white calligraphic filigree winds up and down the surrogate's arm, this pensive painter directs his brush/pen towards an indefinite composition.

Noli me tangere, Caesaris Sum

2018

Tempera and Oil on Panel

Private Collection, Germany

According to John 20:17 in the King James Bible, when Mary Magdalene recognizes Christ after he has risen from the dead and attempts to embrace him, the Son of God solemnly declares, "Noli me tangere" (in Latin), which translates in English to "touch me not." And while this denial seems counterintuitive to the humanitarian mandate of Christ, by so doing, he indicates that once the resurrection is accomplished, the link between man and his person must no longer be physical, but rather a bond of faith. This phrase has since become a popular verse in Gregorian chants, and a prevailing subject for paintings in cycles of the life of Christ from late Antiquity to the present. The expression also found its way into wider circles of culture and literature, including the collars of white stags found 300 years after Caesar's death inscribed with "Noli me tangere, Caesaris sum," meaning "Do not touch me, I am Caesar's." Nguyen captions this painting with the latter, while also bringing its broader Christian origins to bear upon this sensual portrait of a young male in repose. The subject is one of the actors from his short film *Spiritus Mundi*, lying down impatiently while he and Nguyen waited for a California clothing store to open as they were securing wardrobe for the shoot. His dreamy defiance subsequently shapes the world around him as Nguyen refashions his muse as a malleable entity, whose sinuous body extends across the canvas as a hybridized horizon. Suggestions of grass, cement, as well as a horizontally reaching tree limb also swim within this embryonic arena where body and space merge into something beyond physical (or pictorial) capture.



Good Sweet Night Prince

2018

Tempera and Oil on Panel

Private Collection, Germany

In Act V, Scene II of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1599-1602), the character Horatio laments the death of his friend, finding redemption in the title character's destructive, but devoted loyalty to his father and country. Expressing love, fear, respect and an earnest wish for the afterlife, Horatio famously announces: "Now a noble heart is breaking. Good night, sweet prince. May hosts of



angels sing you to sleep.” The phrase has since taken on widespread utility in popular culture, such as the 1998 American comedy film and cult classic *The Big Lebowski*, where the character played by John Goodman utters "goodnight sweet prince" before dumping the ashes of his deceased friend Donny. And yet, while we have come to associate the expression with a sincere wish to bid farewell to someone who has recently passed, in online culture the phrase has gained notoriety via memes designed to propagate celebrity death hoaxes – intentionally misidentifying the deceased celebrity with the name of another individual. In the ensuing arena where existence must be negotiated in the fluid frontier of the virtual, the body is propelled into amorphous terrain where prior codes of being are upended. Nguyen renders his subject in this painting with this scenario in mind, stretching the figure beyond the normative ideals of Classical proportion. Drawn from a photo of one of the actors in *Spiritus Mundi* at the beach, this mercurial prince now writhes in a state of becoming, eyes closed and legs flung open, lost in a dreamy slumber. And while our eye is instinctually drawn to the peaks of Nguyen’s technical prowess in the face and chest, it is in the seemingly unfinished limbs and the encroaching white space that the certainties of composition unravel in a seductive state of limbo.

Faust II

2017

Oil on Panel

Collection of David Hoberman

The proverbial plight of Faust tells the story of an erudite, successful, but exceedingly ambitious man whose dissatisfaction with life leads him to make a pact with the Devil – exchanging his soul for unlimited knowledge and worldly pleasures. In Nguyen’s version of this age-old parable, he reverses the direction of acquired divination to consider the consequences of devoting his (artistic) soul to the Christian



tradition. As an ardent student and enthusiast of the Early Renaissance, he translates many of his personal relationships and present-day musings through the aesthetics and iconography of eminent Biblical renderings. On the left side of the composition, Nguyen recreates the rarified chamber of St. Jerome as depicted in Albrecht Durer’s 1514 *St. Jerome in his Study*. Jerome’s venerable theological devotion is, however, replaced here by a candid view of a friend and/or lover pulling up his pants, returning from an intimate moment in the house that piety built. The androgynous nun-like figure with white lenses perusing a book nearby is an avatar of the artist, who is doubled in *Faust II* to also appear in the neighboring panel to the right. In the latter, Nguyen’s sacral surrogate is modeled after St. Francis as he was depicted in ecstasy by Giovanni Bellini in 1482, emerging from his cave to find splendor in the sun. In this updated version, heavenly light is replaced by a messianic rendering of the same blond paramour who is modeled after Raphael’s statuesque 1503 rendering of Christ upon the cross. A beardless, lithe and more youthful rendering of El Greco’s resurrected

Christ (c.1600) floats further in the background, approaching the foreground but remaining secondary to Nguyen’s deified desires.

POST-VISIT REFLECTION

Post-visit Objectives

- Reflect upon and discuss ideas and themes from the exhibition.
- Explore further these ideas through discussion and art making.

DISCUSSION POINTS

THINK ABOUT		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you see? • History • Realism/Abstraction • Perspective • Public/Private • Power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the figures depicted and why? • History/Archive • Renaissance • Power/Hierarchy • Anime/Manga • Gender/Sexual Identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Nguyen showing us? • Androgynous • Science Fiction • Humanism • Social Critique
AFTER VIEWING		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the “unfinished” nature of the work signify to you? If anything? • What kind of world is this? How are the figures and the space associated? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What seems familiar about the figures or scenes? • What role is science fiction playing in Nguyen’s artwork? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Nguyen connect identity to history? • What aspects of identity are most present in Nguyen’s work? • What social commentaries are being presented to us by Nguyen?

RESOURCES

<https://frieze.com/article/gospel-according-julien-nguyen>

<https://www.mutualart.com/Exhibition/Julien-Nguyen--Evil-In-The-Defense-of-Th/971C1FB117C6F6C>

<https://www.flashartonline.com/2016/09/depths-plumbed-julien-nguyen/>

<https://wsimag.com/art/37564-julien-nguyen-ex-forti-dulcedo>

<http://artviewer.org/julien-nguyen-at-modern-art/>

<https://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/3075561/biblical-works-by-julien-nguyen-at-modern-art-london>

<https://www.artspace.com/artist/julien-nguyen>

<http://www.artwritingdaily.com/2018/06/julien-nguyen-at-modern-art.html>

LEARNING STANDARDS

Common Core Standards

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

Ohio Common Core Links

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/OLS-Graphic-Sections/Learning-Standards>

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Fine-Arts/Fine-Arts-Standards>

Kentucky Common Core Links

<https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/standards/kyacadstand/Pages/default.aspx>

https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/standards/kyacadstand/Documents/Kentucky_Academic_Standards_Arts_and_Humanities.pdf

Indiana Standards Links

<https://www.doe.in.gov/standards>

<https://www.doe.in.gov/standards/fine-arts-dance-music-theatre-visual-arts>

Aesthetic Perspectives: Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change

<http://www.animatingdemocracy.org/aesthetic-perspectives>