

JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE



Davis and Langlois: *Into the Void: The Battle of the Martyr as Told by Ingres*

May 20 to June 19, 2010

Opening Reception
Thursday, May 20, 6-8 p.m.

Gallery hours are Tues. - Sat. 11:00am -
5:00pm & Monday by appointment
Additional images are available upon request

Robert Davis and Michael Langlois are collaborators who make paintings together, redefining the conventional notion that paintings are made by a single artist and embody a singular essence or "hand." They met while at the School of the Art Institute and have worked together since 1997, each taking an equal role in developing ideas, choosing subjects, and executing the works.

As they say "For us, representational painting always includes a deferred relationship to the painting's event. In this sense, we see our paintings as historical and symmetrical to our own relationship to the past-defined by an ever-renewing dynamic between memory, its representation and the synchronicity brought about in the object itself. Our vocabulary is derived from popular and sub cultures and while we use the oldest trick in the book (mimesis), we are committed to making classical techniques viable options in contemporary art." Davis and Langlois conceive of bodies of work as complete installations pivoting around central themes that range from desire, family, and identity to martyrdom, utopia, and politics. The seemingly dissimilar images they juxtapose are united through these themes.

The exhibition is meant to be seen as a meta-fable narrated by a resurrected Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres. The story centers on the character Iman, a 15 year old Palestinian-American, as she contemplates the plight of Suquamish leader Chief Seattle, who is forced to relinquish his sacred land to the tune of Black Sabbath and the howls of Soundgarden. In her quest for honor, Iman, finds herself hanging on to every prophetic line. Through the tradition of martyrdom in Baroque and Neo-Classical painting, Davis/Langlois explore contemporary notions of assimilation, empire, xenophobia, and environmentalism. The exhibition invokes the questions "What is honor, and What is honorable? What price does one pay for a steadfast commitment and profound devotion."

This exhibition will showcase work from their exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (September 5 – 28, 2009).