

Tifé Odumosu'17

Necklaces

Artist Statement

'Necklaces' resides at the borderline of culture shock when differing belief systems and sacred ideologies are put in the same room with one another to engage in conversation and catastrophic collision. My drawings embalm figures in suits of black and white, the colors used to pave pathways and boundaries that surrounded my boarding school. The same dichotomy that symbolized corrective discipline and confinement for 6 of my most formative years. Each drawing questions why we're really mad, the need for a single answer, a single way.

My goal is to depict a fleeting period of Rigor mortis, through agitated, electrocuted figures inspired by the expressive gestures of German renaissance painter, Matthias Grunewald. The viewer is invited into the presence of these colossal figures in awe of their 'past' magnificence. As we behold this Panopticon, we view these idealized creatures and on one hand, we are dwarfed by their hieratic scale and placement, yet at the same time we empathize with their impotence and eternal paralysis. Fallen glory.

Necklaces is a struggle, both literal but also personal to me, the artist. It is a visual manifestation of my battle to find an identity for myself rather than have one imposed on me by others. Inescapably, it is an attempt to find comfort, security and power in my blackness even under the gallows. It is the war within.

Necklaces is a war both within and without. It is an exploration of boundary lines forbidden to intersect. When religious or political groups become self-proclaimed gate-keepers to the access of eternal truth, they draw invisible lines. The purpose of these drawings is to expose those invisible lines created by carnal men, men like you and I, and reveal our folly. The fact that people have been oppressed, battles have been fought and lives have been lost for sake of these invisible lines begs the imperative "Do these lines bring us together or tear us apart?"

Necklaces is by all means a spectacle, a visit to the freak show, a public hanging, the grand extravaganza of the emperor's new clothes. The circus has arrived in town but don't be afraid, all beasts will be caged, dehorned and castrated. Drink wine and eat manna for alas, the day of judgement is not upon us; the emperor has no clothes.

