

JOSÉ LUIS CARRANZA

“With this recent series of paintings, José Luis Carranza not only reformulates an iconography with which we have all been familiar since birth, but he also reminds us that the history of Peruvian painting is founded on a pictorial tradition that was intended to catechize, to “evangelize”; that is, to acculturate us through the visions, hallucinations, and abstractions of a religious system that favored the image over the written word. At some point, we intuited that Carranza could become a kind of heretical illustrator of the sacred texts, the only way to revamp that vast branch of fantastical literature...” Manuel Munive Maco, curator. Carranza, Lima, 1981, graduated from the Escuela Nacional Superior Autónoma de Bellas Artes del Perú in 2006, with an academic formation concentrated on the areas of painting and drawing.

Carranza has had thirteenth solo shows. He has taken part in numerous group shows, and won important awards, including the 2006 Gold Medal for Painting at the Escuela Nacional Superior Autónoma del Perú; and first prize in the “Passport for an Artist” contest in 2009, organized by the French Embassy in Peru. The show to be presented at Galería Enlace consists of approximately fifteen works made using oil on canvas in a variety of formats, including a large triptych. With regard to this series, the artist himself reflects, “I can’t deny that today more than ever, I am obsessed by a sense of finitude, more in the form of a colorful carnival standing in the midst of the fresh grass than as a tragic denouement. Painting, for me, is an end in itself, and it is this sense of finitude that bathes, with its tenuous light, the most recent canvases to leave my studio. Cathedral was born for the purpose of building my own personal little chapel, something like a grotto where Saturday mornings are spent pondering the contradictions of the flesh. In this pictorial cycle, I put even more emphasis on the completely disjointed compositions, as if weaving a tapestry. The images bloom automatically. It’s a mental dictate that comes preferably during the most luminous hours of the day. For years now, religious themes have been, for me, a pretext to leave traces of color on a surface. This has also been my only creed: painting as a deliberate act so as not to vanish into the agitated rhythm of the days. I simply wish to convert all this absence of faith into a celebration of the flesh, to make the tissue trickle over skin like melted wax and to vitrify gazes in a useless search for the promised paradise. The human being is a sumptuous beast who abandons himself to his beliefs every time he finds his frontiers violated or senses the end is near. Civilization as we know it attests only to that, fabulous ruins that rise always to the sky. I’d like to witness the end, the one and only end, the collapse of the species: those fireworks that melt cement, protecting it many years later with fresh moss; those fireworks that are mistaken for the voice of God. That colorful and garish ending is what makes me put one foot in front of the other.