

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# CESAR WINSTON VERA

## “Undercover Cross”

Chi-Chiz is pleased to announce its first exhibition of the work of Cesar Winston Vera. For his first solo New York debut, the native New Yorker has produced large-scale, mixed media paintings on canvas and wood. Currently living and working in Westchester County, Vera’s work invokes the mental and physical trauma that one endures when living with a disease.

Using acrylic paints, Vera has stained the surface of canvas and wood with his somber palette. Viscous tones of blues, browns, and blacks are highlighted by warm hues of yellows, oranges, and reds. These rich, earthy shades synthesize themselves into emaciated, haunting forms reminiscent of Egon Schiele juxtaposed by the emotional tension one finds in the works of Edvard Munch and Francis Bacon. The artist’s subjects are suspended in backgrounds that range from static to frantic, all the while making Vera’s hand prevalent through each brush stroke. They all seem to be trapped within the confines of someone else’s, misconceptions and condemnation.

The “Undercover Cross” series takes its title from the relationship that one has with their own body while trying to co-exist with a disease. The cumbersome task of carrying this “cross” is the bearer’s alone. It is obscured from the view of others because of fear of scrutiny, ridicule, and ignorance. Mortality takes on a whole new meaning in a circumstance such as this one. The artist, and his work, span across national and geographic boundaries for this illness is not unique to this country alone. In relation to the work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Vera is giving the viewer a personal insight to the mental state of a person who is trying to cope with the torture of surviving such an infliction. Who you were before the illness, somehow slowly dissipates into the unknown of what your physicality will be after the illness has taken control. As the artist has noted, “the ‘Undercover Cross’ series will offer a novel perspective on a contemporary disease that remains in the shadows cast by social blindness.” The voice that Vera gives to his work is not exclusively his alone, for its effect has been felt globally, however it is a personal introspective that should be heard by all.

- Karin Melone