

A Muse, is a Muse, is a Muse:

Saint Mary's University FotoSeptiembre Exhibit 2017

A Muse, is a Muse, is a Muse, curated by Professor Brian St. John, is now open in the Louis J. Blume Library at St. Mary's University. The curated exhibit is a collection of art from three artists including photographer Alexandra Nelipa; painter Carolina Flores; and model Richard Arredondo, who have recreated scenes from the Spanish Colonial Era in the historical memory of artist El Greco. The collection encourages viewers to "step into the picture and travel to the distant past." The photographs and paintings, many of which are painted and photographed on the San Antonio Mission Trail, certainly do draw the viewer into an historical imagination as Arredondo dons the garb of Cardinal Don Fernando Nino de Guevara – a bishop of the Spanish Empire during the Spanish Inquisition.

Light and dark plays across the face of Arredondo as he poses as a bishop shrouded in shadows in the photo, *Pensive Moods of Power and Authority*. The Cardinal's red garbs stands out with stark contrast against the thick shadows in the background, giving the viewer the impression that ominous secrets may stay in hiding under his guard. Likewise, half of the Cardinal's face remains concealed, while the visible profile of Don Fernando is illuminated by a bright beam of light. There may be more than one story for this man, who seems to be equally light as dark. He appears to be in deep

contemplation, perhaps even lost in thought, as the Anglo-Spanish War of 1585 draws to a close with Spanish power dwindling under the pressures of the English, French, and Dutch Protestant forces.

In the second photograph (below), Nelipa and Arredondo give evoke the impression that the Cardinal is roaming the halls of the old Spanish Missions. The posturing of Arredondo is tall and strong, giving the impression of a regal and dignified cardinal with a sense of purpose and prestige. Again, Arredondo appears to be deep in contemplation, reflecting perhaps both the academic rigor of the clergy at this time and also the heavy weight of responsibility probably felt by the elites of the Spanish

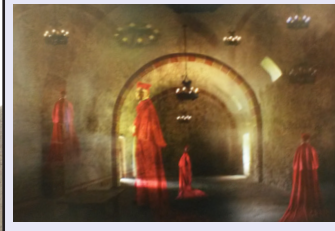
Empire at this time. Arredondo also appears transparent. Perhaps the Cardinal is haunting the halls he once roamed, forever ruminating on what might have happened had Spain proved victorious against the English. The Cardinal remains dignified in these photographs, but dignified in the way that a grandfather is when reminiscing his youth - longingly, but gratefully.

The exhibit is creative and captivating. It presses the viewer to ask questions about the man in the photograph. What is he thinking? Who is he? What did he do? I encourage the reader to go ask these questions for themselves, and perhaps to answer them too.

Review by Christopher Repka

A Surreal Portrait Delving into the Mind of the Grand Inquisitor by Alexandra Nelipa

Model: Richard Arredondo



Pensive Moods of Power and Authority by Alexandra Nelipa

Model: Richard Arredondo