

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DAN BAYLES

The Apotheosis of Washington

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Ghebaly Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Dan Bayles titled, *The Apotheosis of Washington*.

Growing up in the D.C. area, Bayles was introduced early to the aesthetics of power found within the architecture of the government buildings and the Smithsonian. The disparity between that symbolic representation of grandeur, promoting cultural diplomacy and authority through art and architecture, and the harsh realities of the city's immediate surrounding areas, have made a lasting impression on the artist, and explain his interest in the relationship between politics and aesthetics.

The dome of the US Capitol building, which was constructed during the Civil War, and in particular its epic fresco ceiling painting by Italian born Constantino Brumidi serves as a site and starting point for this exhibition. Dismissing the notion of the separation of church and state, this mural titled *The Apotheosis of Washington* depicts George Washington's immortalization, surrounded by figures and objects based both in Roman mythology as well as American technological advancements of the time. In Bayles' interpretation, the imagery is represented in sectional fragments, editing out much of the subject or positive space, and focusing primarily on the backgrounds or negative space. The painting process consists of a cyclical loop of construction and deconstruction until an aesthetic equilibrium is reached. What remains are atmospheric fantastical landscapes possessing both a child like innocence that might be found within a commemorative coloring book of Capitol Hill, and a certain abject conflict found within the beauty and violence of nature.

Along with the paintings, there is a series of mixed media work representing proposals to erase the mural's imagery so that all that visibly remains are the "giornata" lines, offering a more truthful representation of the state of the union. Meaning, "a days work", these scarring lines or cracks mark the edges of over 100 sections of the mural. They are the result of the fresco process as sections must be completed in a day because of the quick drying time of the plaster. Another proposal returns to Rome's influence and mimics the architecture of the Pantheon which has an open hole or oculus at the top of its dome, and allows for rain to enter inside which is then drained through holes in the floor. Rain water enters, seeps through the widened giornata cracks, and is harnessed for various uses within the structure. The hole allows for much needed ventilation for what has been a space of stagnation in recent years. In retrospect, the mural's narrative seems somewhat comical and its use of symbolism seems more appropriate within the kitsch world of Las Vegas.

Born in Virginia, Dan Bayles lives and works in Los Angeles. This is his fourth solo exhibition with the gallery. For more information, please inquire at info@ghebaly.com.