

# rachel uffner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arcmanoro Niles

*My Heart is like Paper: Let the Old Ways Die*

March 8 – April 28, 2019

Opening Reception: Friday, March 8, 6 – 8pm

Rachel Uffner Gallery is pleased to present *My Heart is like Paper: Let the Old Ways Die*, Arcmanoro Niles' second solo exhibition at the gallery.

For this show, Niles presents a series of paintings which carefully observe how those around him deal with heartbreak and disappointment. Each considers how trauma and loss can consequentially linger within us, reverberating throughout life and affecting our relationships and interactions.

Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Niles continues to draw inspiration from his upbringing and his portraits are based on family members, friends, or the artist himself. While his last body of work found his subjects depicted outside of their homes, here Niles turns to interiors. Considering our emotional attachment to place, he positions each character in a 'safe' space where they feel most comfortable and introspective. Niles takes us on a room by room tour of a house filled with people in states of deep reflection, some seem aware of the viewers' presence and meet our gaze with a challenging stare, while others appear more vulnerable with their heads bowed or turned away.

A traditionally trained painter, Niles is heavily influenced by art history, specifically history painting and portraiture. The poses of his characters and attention to light call to mind classical compositions yet Niles disrupts these standards by using a highly saturated color palette over orange and blue grounds. Niles has removed neutral colors, blacks, whites, and browns from his palette in order to demonstrate the complex skin tones of his subjects while adding a noble glow.

Niles further disrupts traditional standards through the insertion of his "seekers" - playfully outlined figures or strange amorphous creatures that represent external forces influencing his characters. The seekers are impulsive actors, in pursuit of immediate pleasure with no concern for consequence. Often rendered in violent, self-destructive, or sexual gestures, the seekers foil the slow contemplation and seriousness of Niles' human subjects.

Ultimately interested in personal journeys, Niles questions how and why people become the way they are. The narratives that play out here examine coping mechanisms and how people do the best they can with the tools and outlets available to them at different stages in life.

Arcmanoro Niles (b. 1989, Washington, D.C.) earned a BFA from Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, an MFA from New York Academy of Art, and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. He has participated in exhibitions at the University of Delaware, Newark, DE; the David C. Driskell Center, College Park, MD; Long Gallery, New York, NY; Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY; and Shanghai University, Shanghai, China; among others. His work is included in the collection of the Studio Museum in Harlem, the David C. Driskell Center at the University of Maryland and in the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art. A recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant, Niles lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Image: Arcmanoro Niles, *My Heart is Like Paper*, 2018, oil, acrylic and glitter on canvas, 75 x 50 inches (190.5 x 127 cm)

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