



Alone with others, alone with ourselves

What is a room? It is private; a sacred space where masks fall and the spirit seeks respite. It is a temple to the holy of holies, the self that no one sees, the self that sometimes, not even the individual knows exists.

"Oh the Unspeakable Things" explores rooms: their interiors, their intimations. Behind walls often shielded from the public, guards are let down, clothes fall to the floor. Masks fall off, or sometimes, masks are put on. Kaloy Sanchez's paintings examines human frailty within the context of private spaces.

A plus-sized pin-up model sits naked on a chair. In one painting, she rests her eyes, her delicate features registering an expression that is in between worry and relief. In another, she gazes into space, an unseen nothing past the shadow of a birdcage that hangs nearby. Sanchez makes it a point to get to know his subjects, believing that the process allows him a glimpse of their deepest fears and desires. He paints a double exposure of a trans dancer in the middle of removing her headgear, her lithe body engaged in this one task. In another painting, a young woman puts on a robe, leaving a naked old man sleeping on a traditional reclining chair. The viewer is led to believe that they have just finished having sex, an act that has left him tired, and her, impassive. And then there is Sanchez's self-portrait, where he sits on a sofa, cradling a dead bird in his hands. Behind him, a woman in a plague doctor's mask holds her arms out unsteadily. (...)

Sanchez's work flirts with the stark and the sublime: each portrait has a story to divulge, with each viewing yielding a deeper secret. We are most ourselves when we are alone, and yet, even in the smallest of spaces, in the most quiet of moments, we find it hard to cast off the selves that we project on others; the image that we have of ourselves. "Oh the Unspeakable Things" show that, even in our most intimate moments, we are still painfully alone.