



José Luis Vargas, "There's No Way Back", October 10, 2021

"The Unseen is finally visible, even if it is a silhouette about to become something visible. The big metaphor, the analogy is the passage of time and its effect on the poetic imagination."

— José Luis Vargas

Dragon, Crab, and Turtle is pleased to announce a new solo exhibition by José Luis Vargas "There's No Way Back". This exhibition features 11 large-scale paintings free hanging in a raw industrial space, floating like a ghost. With this series of works, one encounters mythical narratives that evoke personal and collective memories of fictional ancestors that create exotic situations from Vargas' home of Puerto Rico. His paintings play with the viewer's perception of alternate narratives depicting symbols, mythical figures, and luminous "gothic tropical landscapes".

Text plays a large role in the artist's visual language. *Dejame Ya Tranquilo!* floats in the center of the minimally painted canvas that hangs in the smaller gallery space, praying to be left alone, front and center in its massive space. These deep psychological encounters with the paintings are as strong as his luscious brushstrokes and bravado of collage elements that are both natural and human-made. His process of contemporary collage shows us how he sees his everyday life and his connection with his imagined spaces. They allow the viewer to enter his passages, that as the title of the show implies, have no return.

José Luis Vargas (b. 1965 Santurce, Puerto Rico, lives and works in San Juan, Puerto Rico) is a painter, performance artist, teacher, community coordinator, and radio producer - Vargas began his art studies at the Art Students League in Old San Juan in the early 1980s. He earned a BFA at the Pratt Institute in New York in 1988 and went on to study at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine in 1991. He obtained his MFA in painting from the Royal College of Art in London in 1994. He also studied art education at Kensington and Chelsea College in London. Vargas has exhibited internationally in London, New York, Switzerland, L.A., Chicago, and Miami and his work is in the collections of the Museum of Art of Puerto Rico, San Juan, the Puerto Rico Museum of Contemporary Art, San Juan, and the Royal College of Art, London. Vargas lives and works in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"There's No Way Back". Will open Sunday October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 — 11:00am - 2:00pm