

About the cover



Dr. Cindy Ayim (2018), "Self-trade", Accra, Ghana. Dimensions: 60 x 39.6 cm

We trade ourselves to our fears time and time again but we can't survive this way, We must evolve.

"Self-trade"

Artist's perspective

The first striking element of "Self-trade" is the redness of it, which together with the shades of brown, creates a tense uneasy atmosphere. Then you notice a woman covered, feet to the torso, by a piece of fabric, with her arm outstretched towards a man. He is clad in black, with his hand under his chin. Is he being dismissive of her or in a reflective mood? Is he staring at the lamp or completely lost in thought? I will let you in on a little secret – there is a doorway behind the shelf created by the shadow it casts on the wall. I usually get asked a lot of whys about this painting – Why is the woman on the floor? Why is the man looking away? – my favourite one – why is it called "Self-trade?" All these questions seek to unveil the story that the painting holds. The process of painting is very much like travelling – moving from one point to another. With some paintings, you know exactly where you are going and how to get there. Others, on the other hand, take you on a journey through unfamiliar terrain with no map or compass, forcing you to blindly navigate your way through. "Self-trade" was interesting to create because although I knew instantly what the composition would look like, the story behind it evolved so many times during the process. I realized a painting, in effect, paints itself; the artist is merely an active witness and must not interrupt this process with prejudices of his/her own. Originally these two figures were only metaphors. The woman represented us while the man was our fears personified. For some reason, we tend to reach out for and embrace our fears. Lying down helplessly, we allow

ourselves to be weighed down by a piece of cloth which in our minds possesses more strength than gravity. We trade ourselves to our fears time and time again until it becomes the only way we know how to live. Ironically, as often is the case, we can get up and walk out if we allow ourselves to. Although I am the artist behind this, I will leave more questions than answers. This is because a painting is never complete when I put my brush down; it continues to be painted in the minds of those who see it. The other different interpretations of the painting are truly yours to make. Our lives craft lenses through which we view art and interpret it in a way that is unique and true to us.

Dr Cindy Ayim, 2020

Editors' view

Since December 2019 since COVID-19 emerged on the global scene, the world, despite all the medical and scientific advancement, has been left helpless. In its wake, many precious lives have been lost and once robust economies rendered apart. Some of the things we held dear and loved to do remain within the confines of our thoughts and imaginations. Without a cure for the disease, many are gripped with fear of the unknown. When fear controls you, it becomes an unforgiving lord that mercilessly imprisons its vulnerable captives. The painting aptly depicts the present prevailing global fear, especially with reports of a second wave of COVID-19 infections. We may not know what is before us, but despite the obvious gloom, let us not trade ourselves to fear as its prisoners. We should not trade ourselves to our fears for we can't survive this way. We must evolve!!!

How to cite

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