

Arik Miranda: Dawn goes Down

by Kari Conte

Arik Miranda's work does not articulate an exacting agenda as most art practices do at present. Instead, through his drawings and paintings, he aims for a particular wholeness which is informed by the collected experience of life including history, love, time, anxiety and beauty. It is significant to consider Miranda's work in relation to the title of this exhibition which is taken from the 1923 Robert Frost poem, *Nothing Gold Can Stay*. This poem recounts the infinite impermanence of the natural world in the following eight lines:

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

Much like Frost, Miranda uses balance and a minimal vocabulary to express a universal vision of the world and our relationship to it. His paintings and drawings depict archetypal forms and moments—the halcyon of the night, the glow of a campfire or streetlight, pierced golden daggers, moons perched above clusters of leaves, and nature collapsing on the ground—existing between violence and lissomeness. These minimalist compositions trace the connection between Japanese aesthetics and Judaica through clarity and modesty by reducing the plane to its bare bones. The inclusion of additional pictorial information is not necessary here, as we realize that by removing the colors, shadows and figures one might associate with these scenes, the foundation is infused with even greater purpose than before.

Miranda does not paint or draw from photographic or filmic references—his memory is the primary source of imagery for his work. His experience of memory is manifold—where sights are linked to music and thoughts are linked to touch. Employing his own rules of perspective, Miranda's work is a construction of his cerebral map.

Art is most honest when it starts from the place that the artist is coming from—crossing physical, emotional and mental terrain. Miranda was brought up in Israel, where God and history are always nearby and this is certainly reflected in his work. However, his art is spiritual without providing the kind of dogmatic religious approach often associated with art from this region. While Miranda clearly backs the ideals of Modernism, one has to question if he is truly a Modernist, as he looks both inwards and outwards and expounds the spiritual. As our world rapidly unravels, art is well-served by being both political and social. However, sometimes it is still imperative for art to also be beautiful, so that we can recover the sublime.

Text by Kari Conte