

# MARTOS GALLERY



**Alex Chaves**

***The Rose Period***

March 17 - April 23, 2016

Opening reception: Thursday, March 17, 6 - 8 pm

I give you a Rose Period. It started because I thought I had found mine, my circus—sunbeaten argyle pastels of loved costumes, faded pink tarps, and thick tightropes. I saw posters for old school rose tattoos. Svelte acrobats who train hard and live on the run in pop-up tents they paint themselves. “I’m a personal artist, I’m a domestic artist” was muttered in the early morning of a rocky, rusty ranch and whispered in alleyways behind restaurants. I’d heard the circus was in town down the interstate, but this isn’t quite what I expected. The Rose Period. Just beyond hysterics of fast and hard red scrawl on a rough wood panel. Sophomoric, it presents itself after bluish impulses to linger in dark violet mourning like a Munch landscape or a Victorian novel. It will mean most to those who believe in the rare beauty of the first time and lost thoughts between distractions; small death of ideas that couldn’t yet come to be, buried in dreams and left-hand turns.

The Rose Period is a show by Alex Chaves. Who is she? They found her in the barn next to the rodeo sleeping on a striped blanket in a pile of hay. At first they thought she was a goat, a crab—it just couldn’t be. I’ve been tracking her for quite a few years now. It felt kind to call these paintings The Rose Period because I could tell she wanted to have one. It seems The Rose Period is a reckoning, like everything in New York. The dutiful mythic of the paintings struck me. Up to task and well behaved: I include you, I implicate you. I’m in a good mood so I’ll tell you the nice version.

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Chaves was caught up in the colonist impulse, wanted to know—why do we want to possess each other? How do we process union and loss? Roses are littered throughout this show like pendants of the beauty of each passing vision. Roses in dewey, manicured English gardens—sharp and lush, they adorn the patches of England’s soldiers. Rose oil in the cologne of a criminal, or the ones included in apologies of wayward suitors. Roses for sale at a supermarket open until midnight, a splash of rose water in a cocktail. Red roses that sprout from Christ’s grave, his crown of thorns seen in the stems and his conception kept sub rosa—Mary’s rose. Her rose was engraved on the wood panels of Catholic confessionals and on the floors of Greek banquet halls to remind us of the confidentiality of things said under the influence of sex and wine. My favorite is Harpocrates’ rose of silence and secrecy. Harpocrates is a child-god who, along with roses, symbolizes the daily sun. He’s typically pictured slouching with a finger pressed to his lips, son of Horus who labors to bring light to darkness each morning. Chaves relished the midday sun which illuminates and exhausts all things brought into its glare, the ripest phase of the rose of the day.

I cleared out my closets and painted a wall pink. Disposed of all the clutter and shifted around and cleaned up my place. I bought a cabinet and hung nifty lights. Beneath an old painting by the storage closet I found something Chaves had written in a notebook, it read like this:

A ton of hot air  
reluctant heir  
blessed host  
I walk in circles around men  
have nowhere to stand  
a planet  
I spin around in circles  
orbiting you.

-Alex Chaves, 2016