The Artwork of Ron Richmond: Catharsis no. 27 and Triplus

Josh E. Probert

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol46/iss1/19

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in BYU Studies Quarterly by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
The artworks of Ron Richmond are christological metaphors that induce stillness and reflection. The rich colors and the juxtaposition of photo-real forms against muted, simple backgrounds draws viewers into Richmond’s sacred spaces and invites them to “meditate upon these things” (1 Tim 4:15).

Like many of Richmond’s other artworks, *Catharsis no. 27* creates a metaphorical reflection on the processes of repentance and change. Through cathartic release and atoning abandonment, light and life are gained. The rough-hewn altar is draped with a crimson cloth, which brings to mind the directive of Isaiah, “though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool” (Isaiah 1:18–19). A palm tree—an ancient sign of victory and a tree of life motif—is bathed in light in the distance through the opening in the wall. Nobody is in the room, only the altar with a vestige of the past atop it.

In *Triplus*, Richmond illustrates Moses 6:60, “For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified.” Playing on the same metaphor of purity overcoming its opposite, the use of a white cloth over a red one is made possible through the cleansing power that the bowls contain: water, blood, and spirit.