Atonement

Sandy Ceas & Levi S Nelson

CHRISTOS COLLECTIVE



Levi S Nelson

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Each day of our lives is full of mystery and promise, as well as threats and fear. What does it take to balance that tension? As stand-alone humans, it is impossible, but with the help of Our Lord, it is definitely possible. Better yet, we can tip the scales toward a more peaceful walk by submitting to our Savior, allowing Him to redeem us from our struggles, and partnering with Him as we live out our callings. What keeps us from this union? Sadly, it is sin, and sin must be confessed and forgiven so one can be reconciled to God. This action is a form of "atonement," a reconciliationand restoration of the broken relationship between God and sinful humanity. As stated in 1 John 2:2, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins." To be reunited and one with God, we must remove sin and become more like Christ. This task is not easy and often requires many moments of remorse, reflection, and sanctification, yet we all deeply desire reconciliation, especially in those moments when it seems most absent, the least possible.

The works of art in the "Atonement" exhibition by Sandra Ceas and Levi Nelson capture many individual expressions of human experience, portrayed through materials, gestures, and compositions, each with an overarching ethos of worship and prayer. These works sometimes whisper and sometimes scream toward the heavens for justice and our deep need for the wholeness of Jesus. Note the tension in Levi's pieces that juxtapose delicacy with crudeness, illustrating the unique challenge of maintaining balance amid life's tenuous gravity. His colors and textures evoke a fleshy connection to royalty as one's eye absorbs the holistic intensity of the bold, barbed pieces paired with the vulnerable doilies and lace. Compare that experience with your response to Sandra's quieter art, full of reflective whispers that portray a different movement through life and also carry the summons to live in balance. Her colors and compositions ease across the canvas, offering more isolated moments of reflection and connection. No matter where you currently stand in life, stand with Christ so you too can be "one" with Him. His grace and forgiveness are the beginning of your new walk towardreconciliation, redemption, and atonement.

Levi S Nelson





The church banner is an object with connections to Roman military flags once carried to war. A military symbol of power became church processional banners, which have become fading walldecor bearing the word “peace” in gold script font accompanied by a dove. It’s an overlooked decorative object which proclaims one thing while carrying a history of violent domination. A surface can communicate one thing while the presentation it takes can communicate something else. Where one person finds comfort, another can see a threat.

My intent for reshaping the church banner was to push the object to question contradictions, to force it into unpredictable, grotesque territory. What happens when a commonplace decoration is distorted to the point it becomes mysterious again?

The crumpled canvas evokes eroding industrial materials or car accidents but is countered by decorative fabrics we associate with comfort, a warm table in a grandmother’s home. In seeking to connect the work to my own history, much of the fabric incorporated in these works were shipped from my hometown in Wyoming by my mother. Some of the raw material is from frankensteined fragments of discarded church banners. The images employed in holy spaces communicate a permissible range of human experience, which in turn communicates who is welcome in these spaces. Can a prayer ache like bent metal?

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Sandy Ceas





Isolated moments capture my attention and inspire me to illuminate the gesture I have encountered, whether in person or psychologically through the news I hear or read. Sometimes I frame the subject or subject matter theatrically, as if spotlighted on a stage, and other times I compose an ethereal atmosphere for the content to emerge. Gazes, body language, and motion all carry a narrative of life. What is absent is as important as what is present, allowing the viewer to fill in the gaps of the story and personalize their own experience with the art. Moments of reflection bring us closer together as one family with Christ.

Psalm 118:4 “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

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