

# FRED TORRES COLLABORATIONS

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## Earth Laughs in Flowers

By Rick Lee



The iconic fashion and celebrity photographer cum fine artist David LaChapelle turns his surrealistic gaze to the Baroque stylings of Old Master painters in his latest exhibition, **Earth Laughs in Flowers**.

In *Earth Laughs In Flowers*, an exhibition of 10 large scale photographs by David LaChapelle, currently on view at several galleries worldwide (in New York, London, and Milan) the internationally lauded photographer, now working primarily as a fine artist, is inspired by and appropriates the traditional Baroque still life painting in an attempt to explore and make a visual commentary on contemporary vanity, vice, the transience of earthly possessions and the fragility of humanity. It's an admirable – and timely goal.

Success is achieved as LaChapelle exceeds our expectations of the still life, which are satisfied

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through his inclusion of symbolic objects such as fruit, flowers and skulls, but which are also upended by the insertion of everyday objects such as cell phones, cigarette butts, balloons, Barbies and a Starbuck's iced coffee cup. The resulting colourful, eye-popping photographs achieve an almost uncanny sculptural quality, thereby challenging the traditions of painting. They seem painterly, an effect LaChapelle has achieved by using very slow shutter speeds, smoke diffusion and low light sources.

The exhibition's title, *Earth Laughs in Flowers*, comes from the poem *Hamatreya*, by Ralph Waldo Emerson, in which joyous flowers articulate nature's ridicule and contempt for human arrogance in its pretense to dominion over earth. Be that as it may, in the case of this show, it is, perhaps, LaChapelle who gets the last laugh.

*Earth Laughs in Flowers is at Fred Torres Collaborations, in New York, and at Robilant + Voena, in London and Milan, until March 24th.*