CLEAR AND CLOUDY: THE CAST GLASS FIGURES OF NICOLAS

There is an immediate angelic and doll-like air about this figure in soapy white glass robed in a flowing and heavy garment - the figure and the garment as though in a grand opera or a play of self-discovery. Africano has used this gesture of hands to a face in a number of his canvas works and his sculpture work and here it seems to suggest a posture of defense or a vain attempt at modesty. The figure in the case and in another cast glass bust of a woman we have in our collection is I believe the artist’s wife Cynthia, so this adds another layer of meaning to the sculpture though what that might exactly be is the larger question of Africano’s existential works of art.

Africano has had a long career (he was born in 1948) as a writer and poet and later as a painter who documents tiny moments of anguish or pain or dissolution in a series of figures almost buried in brown wax on canvas - the figures half-dissolved in the material he chose for the image itself.

How a material (in this work cast glass) and the technical process involved can influence the way we perceive the meaning of the work is an important element in his art.

Stillness vs. action, purity vs. impurity - perfection vs. imperfection, all terms that confront us in this dramatic and magical tale of human existence that we feel in front of this figure,