



ies

# BIG STORIES

**The Bo Bartlett Center  
Columbus State University  
Columbus, Georgia**

| September 15th to  
| December 16th, 2023

**New York Academy of Art**

| January 26th to  
| March 3rd, 2024

**Curated by:** Bo Bartlett, Noah Buchanan,  
and Carl Dobsky



# BIG STORIES

## A WAY INTO, AND OUT OF, THIS WORLD

*“The seat of the soul is where the inner world and the outer world meet.”*

- Novalis

*“We will arrive at the universal not by abandoning our particularity but by turning it into a way of reaching others, by virtue of that mysterious affinity which makes situations mutually understandable.”*

- Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Great art can grab us by the back of the neck and take us out of ourselves. Artists have made marks to express themselves since the beginning of time. The cave paintings of Lascaux reveal the innate urge to satisfy the craving to document and express our inner and outer worlds. The narrative element in artistic renderings is as old as art itself. In the history of Western Art and Literature, scenes from the world around us have given way to stories created to enhance and encode human experience. From Homer to Shakespeare to Spielberg, the history of Western culture is rich with narrative storylines which excite and illuminate us. The paintings in this exhibition, *BIG STORIES*, are no less primal than the original cave paintings. The artists in this survey are contemporary realists. Many were trained in a classical manner in North American art schools, academies, or ateliers. Although there is no overarching representational prerequisite for inclusion in this exhibition, it is clear that the Renaissance casts a very long shadow. The artists in this survey of large-scale narrative paintings represent some of the premier contemporary figurative artists working today. Artists in the exhibition include; Steven Assael, Bo Bartlett, Margaret Bowland, Noah Buchanan, Aleah Chapin, Alfred Conteh, Vincent Desiderio, Carl Dobsky, Michelle Doll, Najee Dorsey, Paul Fenniak, Zoey Frank, Andrea Kowch, Adam

Miller, Odd Nerdrum, Amy Sherald, Tim Short, and Patricia Watwood. These artists are all at the top of their game. Most have been practicing their craft for decades. The range of narrative in the work varies from artist to artist depending upon their location, temperament, gender, race, schools, and influences. This broad group of artists from North America and Europe comprises an array of diverse approaches to multi-figure compositions. Some artists are not strictly academic, while others are. Some have stayed true to their academic training, while others have expanded upon conventional subject matter to embrace more contemporary issues. In contrast, others have moved beyond their classical training to embrace more expressionistic styles and surfaces.

In America, the bedrock of our artistic foundation is built upon the large figurative compositions of artists such as Benjamin West, John Singleton Copley, and others. In the 19th century, the academies in Paris, Rome, and London once trained the world’s elite artists in the disciplines and techniques of the Old Masters. As the pertinence of these ateliers and schools dissolved in the wake of Impressionism and Modernism, and the Industrial Age, art gave way to new ways of thinking and experiencing the world. Artists who continued to paint realistically were not always iconoclasts. Although, as we know, traditional representational painting fell out of favor during the heyday of 1950s Expressionism, there



John Singleton, *Copley Watson and the Shark*, 1778, Oil on canvas, 182.1 x 229.7 cm

was always a tiny corner of the art world comprised of those artists who felt that it was their duty to carry the torch of realism even in the darkest days. The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the Arts Students League of New York housed some of these proponents, and students were drawn to these institutions to try to learn the secrets of the Old Masters, which were at times dangling from a thread. For example, students at the Pennsylvania Academy continued to draw from plaster casts long after other institutions had thrown their cast collections out their windows. The instructors in direct lineage from Thomas Eakins continued to espouse the importance of drawing and painting from life regardless of what final form their artwork took. The institutions which held to these values fell out of favor as abstraction ruled the day, followed by conceptualism and then performance art. But change is constant, and things have a funny way of cycling back around. Over time, recognizable imagery began to be accepted again thanks to the emergence and ubiquity of photography and its acceptance as an art form. Pop culture icons such as Andy Warhol, Norman Rockwell, and a slew of photorealists ushered recognizable imagery back into the mainstream. Some artists who came out of the Philadelphia school, such as Barkley Hendricks, led the way for a reassessment of representational iconography in contemporary painting, which still influences and persists.

Today, the stigma of representational painting has all but faded, although there are decidedly two schools of thought that separate the camps into traditional and more modern realism. Traditional realism leans toward romanticism, tends to have softer edges, and would be most easily recognized by what art critic



Thomas Eakins's *The Gross Clinic*, 1875, Oil on canvas, 243.8 x 198.1 cm

Jerry Saltz would deem “brown painting.” Modern realism tends to take into account not only the advances of color, geometric form, and fractured composition from the mid to late 20th-century art but also the overriding existential crisis of the era. There are places in the *BIG STORIES* exhibition where the two schools cross over, but for the most part, the approaches and techniques are easily recognized and categorized by their obvious surface attributes. Regardless of style or way of approaching the subject matter, the artists of *BIG STORIES* are all in search of their own narratives. Some may rely on previous stories, biblical texts, or literature, while others come out of historical, sociological, or purely personal experiences. Personal histories abound, as our need to tell our stories is what drives the majority of the artists in this group. Art becomes a vehicle for finding meaning in our personal lives and communicating with the world.

We dive into art history and riff on it. We look for a way into the subject, a way that is original and uniquely our own. We follow this urge instinctively and intellectually. We get into a story for the reasons any storyteller gets into their story: to find a way into a private reality that helps us escape the world at the same time we are defining it for others. It is a tightrope act of balancing our inner world with the outer world. All artists are aware that they are presenting something which the public will access. The larger the piece, the more obvious that it is meant for the public at large. Small paintings, after



Barkley L. Hendricks, *What's Going On*, 1974, Oil, acrylic, and magna on cotton canvas © Barkley L. Hendricks. Courtesy of the Estate of Barkley L. Hendricks and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

all, can be hidden under cover in a private drawing room.

In her seminal book, *The Mind of the Maker*, mystery-writer turned theologian Dorothy L. Sayers explores the idea of creativity being comparable to our concept of the divine. She equates it with a Triune God. Idea, Energy, and Power are equal to, in theological terms, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or Mind, Body, and Spirit. She writes that the three, the Idea of the work of art, the Energy used to execute it, and the Power resulting from the two being in balance, determines the ultimate creative success of the work. It is chewy stuff. But, the basic concept that the idea must be in balance with the effort exerted in bringing the work to fruition is pertinent in that it relates directly to the works in this exhibition. None of the artists in *BIG STORIES* are producing teetering scalene triangles, none are just experimenting, none are just fooling around, and none are playing and hoping they stumble upon something. All are producing stable equilateral triangles of Idea, Energy, and Power. All are engaged in a serious effort to find and tell their stories in as direct and earnest a way as possible. These are not moral tales. These are not dogmatic history paintings. These are not old-fashioned preaching fables. The paintings of *BIG STORIES* are the manifestations of contemporary artists striving to find the stories that connect to the larger world,

where personal stories become universal, and their inner world finds a connection to the outer world. By going deep into their own lives and presenting their own personal narrative, they are connecting through universal stories to the world at large.

The hours, days, weeks, and months that these artists spent resolving the complex personal and public puzzles they have created for themselves are a testament to the fact that a full-throttle zeitgeist is alive and well in today’s creative sphere. We needn’t be cynical about the state of current national politics or geopolitical upheaval or even the perceived sad maudlin state of satire, cronyism, or productization and commodification in the art world. *BIG STORIES* is a sign of hope. Artists are finding a way into the meanings of their lives and a way out of the perceived turmoil of this world through their own highly personal creative practices within a rich and storied tradition. We are lucky to be a part of it. Lucky to be able to present just a small droplet from the vast ocean of great work that is currently being produced in private studios all around the world. Joseph Campbell said, “The artists are the prophets.” If that is true, it might serve us well to pay heed to the stories these artists have to tell. They are out of this world.

-Bo Bartlett

Fig. 1 John Singleton Copley, *Watson and the Shark*, 1778, oil on canvas, Ferdinand Lamot Belin Fund, 1963.6.1

Fig. 2 Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of the Alumni Association to Jefferson Medical College in 1878 and purchased by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2007 with the generous support of more than 3,600 donors, 2007, 2007-1-1

Fig. 3 © Barkley L. Hendricks. Courtesy of the Estate of Barkley L. Hendricks and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.



# STEVEN ASSAEL

Steven Assael (b. 1957, New York, NY) graduated from Pratt Institute in 1979 and has served for decades as faculty at the School of Visual Arts and as a senior critic at the New York Academy of Art. The artist’s prodigious technique, his use of light and shadow, sensitive line, and detail are deployed in the interest of the implication of narrative, the psychological import of the scene, the relationship, and the character of the sitter.

Steven Assael has received an award from the National Academy of Design and is a recipient of the Charles Roman Award and Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant. Assael’s work was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Naples Museum of Art (FL). His paintings were included in the 2006 exhibition New Old Masters, curated by Donald Kuspit, at the National Museum in Gdansk, Poland. The Frye Art Museum in Seattle presented a retrospective exhibition for Steven Assael in 1999. Solo exhibitions for Steven Assael have been presented at the Hite Art Institute at the University of Louisville (KY), Cress Gallery of Art at the University of Tennessee (Chattanooga, TN); Lowe Gallery (Atlanta, GA), and Ann Nathan Gallery (Chicago, IL). Works by Assael have been included in group exhibitions at The Arkansas Arts Center (Little Rock, AR), The New York Academy of Art (NY), and The Arnot Art Museum (Elmira, NY). Assael is represented in the permanent collections of several public and private collections, including The Art Institute of Chicago (IL); The Columbus Museum of Art (OH); The Hunter Museum of Art (Chattanooga, TN); The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art & Design (Kansas City, MO); and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NY). Steven Assael is represented by Forum Gallery in New York, NY.

The past is always with us; the present never is. Everything is a memory. All experiences are in the past whether they be of seconds or of years.

*D* was painted from life in 1996. The set up was staged using models that referenced the memory of people from my past and the old subway. As a child, I could remember how the light from the subway tunnel flashed sporadically through the train car windows, falling across the forms of passengers opposite me. The effects were dramatic, theatrical, and mysterious.

With *D*, I began without a clear story. My interest was no longer in a prescribed narrative but in the effect of an implied narrative. The *D* subjects look at the viewer in the way that I felt I was looked at as a child in my memory on the train. The viewer and I share in the confrontation.

The graffiti and background elements were invented with the zig zag effect of the light and shadows across the subway car background. I like to think of this composition as a moving stage. The figures motionless as the light moves along with the train car. I often think of painting as theatre, the stage as artifice where actors in a role reveal something of myself.

*D* was meant as a staging of models/actors in a non-prescriptive narrative. It represents my longing for the Old Master paintings of the past blended with my past memories growing up in NYC.

I like thinking of painting from life as an experience in and of itself. Through momentary observations, painting from life becomes a remnant of accumulated experiences, it references memory both objective and subjective. Painting from life also affords the advent of the unexpected which can change expectations. It allows for the possibility of chance to interrupt our mental and emotional references.



*D*



# BO BARTLETT

Bo Bartlett (b. 1955, Columbus, GA) is an American realist with a modernist vision. His paintings are well within the tradition of American realism as defined by artists such as Thomas Eakins and Andrew Wyeth. Like these artists, Bartlett looks at America’s heart—its land and its people—and describes the beauty he finds in everyday life. His paintings celebrate the underlying epic nature of the commonplace and the personal significance of the extraordinary.

Bartlett studied at the University of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He received a CFA from The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1980 and a Certificate of Filmmaking from New York University in 1986. He holds an Honorary Doctorate of the Fine Arts from New York Academy of Art and Honorary Diploma from Lyme Academy of Art.

Bartlett’s awards include the Pew Fellowship in the Arts, the 1858 Prize for Southern Art, and the South Arts Fellowship. Notable collections include Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (Bentonville, AR), Seattle Art Museum (WA), Denver Art Museum (CO), and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (Philadelphia, PA). In 2018, Columbus State University opened the Bo Bartlett Center.

Bartlett is represented by Miles McEnery Gallery in New York, NY, and he lives and works in Columbus, GA and Wheaton Island, ME.

I know that there are horrible things that happen in this world. My attempt to make paintings is in no way an attempt to cover up or hide the horror. A painting like Leviathan is not trying to prod the viewer or create an obtuse piece of visual art or illustrate some archaic text—it is instead an honest attempt to find an appropriate visual metaphor for where I am in my life. It represents a highly personal inner and outer journey.

I spent a long time working on this composition. The shape is a combination of the masculine and the feminine coexisting. I staged it down on South Sandy Beach, right around the point from where we actually found the whale. In the Jonah story, he is vomited up onto the beach. But in my version, I figured he would get stuck somewhere in the belly of the whale, and people would have to cut the whale open and discover him. That person is like Schrödinger’s cat, half alive, half dead, or all uncertain. It’s a family portrait; there are five figures. Will became the Black figure, like in Copley’s *Watson and the Shark* or *The Raft of the Medusa* by Géricault. Man is wrapped up in the whale with the crucifixion wrap around his chest. I posed with the giant blade that had sliced it open with a version of a young wife or sister standing to the right, and Eliot as the little boy on the turtle shell rock. It’s just about precariousness and the danger of everything. The blade pointing. I was well into it before I put the Virginia shirt on the central figure. That choice gave it an immediacy and made it feel like a contemporary event. I think the V really seals it.

“Leviathan

*Out of the belly of the whale*

*At midlife comes*

*A man half alive*

*Like Schrödinger’s Cat*

*The future is untold*

*Anything can happen*

*And will*

*Jonah sank and prayed*

*But saved the village*

*Out of the vulva split of the  
phallus*

*The union of opposites*

*Hope is born out of  
frustration*

*And The World spins a  
thousand miles an hour”*

- Bo Bartlett



Leviathan



# MARGARET BOWLAND

Margaret Bowland (b. 1953, Burlington, NC) is a faculty member at the New York Academy of Art. She recently had a solo exhibition, *Painting the Roses Red* at the Contemporary Art Museum, Raleigh curated by Dexter Wimberly with an accompanying catalogue. Her work has been shown at various museums, including the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery (Washington, DC), Orange County Center for Contemporary Art (Santa Ana, CA), Delaware Art Museum, (Wilmington, DE) and the Duke Ellington School of the Arts (Washington, DC). Her work has appeared in the FX television show, *Atlanta*. In 2009, she received major recognition as the People’s Choice Award Winner in the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery (Washington, DC). Her work is in the collection of Spike Lee; The Estate of Peggy Cooper Cafritz; The Greenville County Museum of Art (Greenville, SC); the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum (University Park, FL); and the Bennett Collection of Women Realists (San Antonio, TX). She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

I have always been fascinated by Manet’s painting, *Olympia*. Any artist in any medium must confront the issue of ‘point of view,’ in developing the composition of their work.

Manet’s *Olympia* shows us a room in which two young women wait. Through his composition Manet places us, the viewer, in the position of the person entering that chamber. The word “Olympia” was a slang word for a prostitute in 19th century France. So, we, the viewer, are the man; entering that room.

Whenever I look at a good painting, my imagination enters it, as if I am invited onto a stage with a set and actors. I wander onto Manet’s stage and take in the facts: there is a white woman, a black woman, a cat, a bouquet of flowers, and a bed. My instincts are to see what happens if the actors trade places, if the lighting is changed. When I entered Manet’s set, the women looked at me. In that exchange I saw them as compatriots, soldiers in a foxhole. They have each other against a world they cannot keep from invading that room.

Manet is equating the fall of what ‘beauty’ meant in art to the literal notion of the fallen woman in 19th century Paris. But, he looks upon this caught, young woman on the bed with compassion. The role of the artist is to question, never to judge. This isn’t a choice: it is in the very nature of what it means to create.

When I began the *Olympia* series, I needed actors. I met the young black woman in this, Kenyetta, 17 years ago through a friend of mine who is her cousin. I have now gone on to paint Kenyetta’s nieces and her daughter.

Anna, the white woman, is a dwarf. She had been a friend and model of mine for years before the creation of this series. I learned about the suffering of people born with Achondroplasia through Anna. Throughout history the naked female has been used to express concepts of beauty. Before this series, I never painted Anna nude. She questioned this. For the Greeks, ‘beauty’ was the visual manifestation of the intellectual concept of ‘truth,’ and that truth was a notion of perfection. Casting Anna in this role felt right. What is beauty *now*?

I begin my paintings with a knowledge of what I wish to convey, but the actors teach me how. I am drawn into the lives of certain people who fascinate me. I tell them the story and watch them interact. The paintings are gifts to me from the trust and joy the women find in each other as I am allowed to look on. We are allowed such special trust by those we depict.

Every time the three of us were together, Kenyetta spent a great deal of it comforting Anna, who had recently undergone an intensive back operation. Kenyetta found the chair in which Anna sits. Kenyetta chose what she wished to wear herself, the position she wished to take on the bed. I wanted to discover what that original casting of Manet’s meant to me, and this was it.

In every one of the paintings entitled *Olympia* that I have produced, I throw a shadow in the foreground to depict the original man in entering the room in Manet’s work.

Finally, I had to see that this predatory shadow belonged to me.



*Olympia #1*



# NOAH BUCHANAN

Noah Buchanan (b. 1976, Santa Cruz, CA) began his artistic studies in 1994 at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, in classical drawing, painting, and human anatomy. He obtained an MFA from the New York Academy of Art in 2002, intensifying his training in figure painting and anatomy under Martha Mayer Erlebacher and Steven Assael. Buchanan's work is rooted in the mythic and symbolic traditions of the figure, painted in the light-centric traditions of Caravaggio, Ribera, Velazquez, and Zurbaran.

Buchanan has exhibited extensively across the United States, from New York to Los Angeles, as well as internationally in London, Edinburgh, and Tokyo. His paintings and drawings are featured in public and private collections throughout the United States and Europe. He is represented by Dacia Gallery in New York City, NY, and Winfield Gallery in Carmel, CA.

*“Within the tapestry of human life, the blessing of connection weaves its threads. Through relationships, we find belonging, understanding, and love. It is in the embrace of others that we truly come alive, for our shared experiences and shared humanity enrich the very fabric of existence. Embrace the profound blessing of connection, and let compassion and empathy guide your interactions with the world”. - Maya Angelou*

*“Your visions will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes”. - Carl Jung*

The first time I heard the story of Jacob's Ladder, I was struck by the idea of his head lying upon bare rock. And then there is the dream, A sublime dream of angels ascending and descending to earth.

The dream comes to him in a time of strife. He is a refugee, fleeing his homeland. Yet this dream is comforting and paints the feeling of an auspicious future. God announces himself to Jacob and pledges the land beneath him and blessings upon him and his descendants. When he awakens, Jacob agrees to the covenant if God promises to provide sustenance and raiment, and so they enter into a pact.

The angels in my painting not only bestow the promised bread and garment, but they also symbolize a profusion of life's colorful abundance. Their characters and poses represent a bouquet of life's richness: pursuit of knowledge, mystery and adventure, the arts, the wonders of childhood, the journey of parenthood, the love of a spouse, adoration for the world; the miracle of our collective humanity. They bring the bounty of a full life.

These angels are us; they are you and I. My paintings are filled with the real people in my life: my wife, stepchildren, family members, friends, neighbors, students: they all become symbolic and allegorical figures in my work; I want the viewer to recognize themselves in the characters of my paintings, and then go out and recognize themselves in others. The figures in this painting, and their actions, remind us that amidst the challenges and uncertainties of life, there exists a connection between us all: we ourselves are the couriers of the good in life. In this painting, we enter the narrative not merely as Jacob, but as agents of the divine.

Jacob, desperate and lost in his dream, will awaken to discover that he is surrounded by a manifold bounty; we will meet him there to find we are equipped with everything we need.



*Jacob's Ladder*



# ALEAH CHAPIN

Aleah Chapin (b. 1986, Whidbey Island, WA) earned an MFA from the New York Academy of Art in 2012 and a BFA from Cornish College of the Arts in 2009. She is a painter whose direct portrayals of the human form have expanded the conversation around western culture’s representations of the body in art.

Chapin has exhibited in solo and group shows throughout the world, including at Flowers Gallery (New York, London, Hong Kong), The Belvedere Museum (Vienna), Cascadia Art Museum (Seattle), and the National Portrait Gallery (London). Chapin has attended residencies at the Leipzig International Art Program (Germany) and MacDowell (US). She is a recipient of the Willard L. Metcalf Promising Young Painters Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (NY), the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant (Canada), a Postgraduate Fellowship from the New York Academy of Art, and won the BP Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery (London) in 2012. Her work has been published extensively in print and online, including *New American Paintings*, *Juxtapoz*, *Art Maze Magazine*, *London Sunday Times*, and *the Seattle Times*, among others.

For over a decade, my work has explored what it means to exist within a body. Drawing from my own life, I paint people I know, often my mother, my aunties, or myself. This work expands beyond my own personal relationship with these individuals, exploring themes of aging, gender and beauty in a culture that has limited views of such things. Using oil on canvas, I look for those in-between moments that can hold a multitude of emotional expressions, from joy to anger and everything in between. I see paint, and oil in particular, as the ideal vehicle for this as it allows me to arrive at a level of realism through weaving layers together over time, mirroring how we develop both physically and emotionally throughout our lives. The individuals in my paintings do not stay silent. They are not modeling or posing. They are inhabiting their own bodies fully, which stands at the edge of the present moment. We all have a body, and this body is the vehicle in which we experience the world. My work aims to invite the viewer to see themselves and each other in a new way.



*Undertow*



# ALFRED CONTEH

Alfred Conteh (b. 1975, Fort Valley, GA) earned an MFA from Georgia Southern University in 2004 and a BFA from Hampton University in 1997. He was born and raised in a small southern college town, where there weren't many places to be exposed to fine art. As a child, comic books and cartoons were Alfred Conteh's main source of inspiration. His parent's untiring efforts to educate him and his siblings about history, culture, and philosophy started Conteh on the road to becoming a narrative and sculptural artist. In graduate school, he had the time and facilities to experiment and formulate his own visual voice. The process of "making" became far more personal. His experiences as a man, a Southerner, and an African American all found their way into how he expressed himself. It was here that his conviction and confidence as an artist combined to make his work truly important to him. He is represented by Kavi Gupta Gallery in Chicago, IL.

This body of work is a visual exploration of how African diaspora societies in the south are fighting social, economic, educational, and psychological wars from within and without to survive. The honest and false narratives of history embodied in this series are primarily personified in patinated colossuses that commemorate the people, culture, and battles that the populations they tower over have fought and continue to fight. We are at war on two fronts.



*Evan and Aaron*



# VINCENT DESIDERIO

Vincent Desiderio (b. 1955, Philadelphia, PA) graduated from Haverford College in 1977 and later attended the Accademia di belle arti in Florence, Italy followed by four years at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He is a Senior Critic at the New York Academy of Art and has been a visiting professor at numerous universities both here and abroad, most recently with a three-year appointment at the Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts in China through the country’s “Thousand Talent Program.”

Desiderio has received several grants and painting awards, among which are the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, Two National Endowment for the Arts Grants in 1987 and 1991, and the Grand Prize of S.A.S. Prince Ranier III, Thirtieth Annual Show of Contemporary Art in Monte-Carlo, Monaco in 1996. In both 1984 and 1986, he was awarded a studio by the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, P.S.1. He is the recipient of honorary doctorates from both the New York Academy of Art and the Lyme Academy. In 2007, Desiderio was invited to be Artist in Residence at Dartmouth College.

His work can be found in many important public collections, including: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (NY); The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (NY); The Hirshhorn Museum (Washington, DC); the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, MA); The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Museum of American Art (Philadelphia, PA); The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art (Kansas City, MO); Galerie Sammlung Ludwig (Aachen, Germany); The Albright Knox Museum (NY); Museo Botero (Bogota, Colombia) and The Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN).

Numerous articles about Vincent Desiderio have appeared in periodicals and magazines including the *New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Art Forum*, *Art in America*, *Art News*, *The Village Voice*, *the New York Post*, *The New York Sun*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Philadelphia Inquire*, *Le Figaro*, *American Art* (Smithsonian Publication), *Comparative Literature* (University of Oregon), and others.

In 2016, Desiderio’s painting SLEEP was used as the basis for Kanye West’s video, *FAMOUS*.

One of my earliest memories was the discovery of a box of oil paints that belonged to my mother. I found it in the attic of our house. When I opened it, I was utterly baffled by the stuff inside. Little rows of colored tubes, like toys. I had no idea what they were for. Unknown to my parents, I would return time and again to my little discovery. One day I decided to open one of the tubes. I squeezed it in my hand which was soon covered in red paint. Shocked by the sudden revelation that I couldn’t put the stuff back in the tube, I closed the box and ran down to the top of the basement steps. The lights were off. It was scary down there. I threw the tube as hard as I could into the darkness.

My understanding of what those colorful tubes could do began at a tender age. We were very young children, no more than six and four respectively, when my brother and I would pour over a book of paintings belonging to our mother. The images constitute some of my earliest memories. They were often frightening to me. I would have recurring nightmares about being trapped inside of them. Hours were spent staring into the mysterious plates and illustrations without the slightest concern for dates or provenance. The names of painters had no relevance to me. Nonetheless, my child’s brain made sense of it all through a simple system of binary classification from scary (Jan van Eyck’s *The Marriage of Giovanni Arnolfini*) to scarier (Edvard Munch’s *The Scream*). All I knew of them was that they belonged to my mother and that they could only be accessed through the tattered volume that she allowed us to see. The images would stay with me throughout the course of the day, and I would invent stories to mitigate the uneasiness that they evoked in me. They have remained with me to this day, inscribed in my memory like an index of fearful objects.



*I Liberati*



# CARL DOBSKY

Carl Dobsky (b. 1972, Victoria, TX) received a classical education in New York City. Dobsky earned an MFA from the New York Academy of Art and a BFA from Ringling College of Art and Design. He is engaged in a practice that explores figuration and its potential to construct narrative. There is a tension between naturalism and artificiality in his oeuvre where issues of the contemporary world are often cast in a Baroque sensibility. His work can be found in public and private collections in both the United States and Europe.

In the year before his death, Pieter Bruegel the Elder painted one of his most haunting images, *The Blind Leading the Blind*. Scholars speculate this work was made in response to mounting discord between Catholics and Protestants in the Low Countries. Calvinists, determined to purge the idolatry of the Catholic faith, destroyed and defaced artworks in a wave of violent iconoclasm. As spiritual unrest often goes hand in hand with political unrest, the Duke of Alba instituted the Council of Troubles to bring the dissidents of Spain and the Holy Roman Church to heel. Both sides believed they possessed the infallible truth and ferociously fought to preserve it. However, neither could fully know the consequences their actions would bring. The harsh and cruel measures taken by the Iron Duke would eventually unite the Dutch in their fight for independence from the Spanish crown, and the Protestant Reformation, rejecting papal authority for one's own reading of Scripture, would help usher in a more secular world.

From out of this turmoil, the modern age would dawn and with it the rise of the Enlightenment. Though religious faith persisted, many began placing their belief in man's rational capacity to understand and order the world; some even holding that Reason could solve all questions and societal woes by a kind of arithmetic or calculus. Accompanying this clock-like universe would come the autonomy of the individual, the Invisible Hand of the free market, and the inevitability of Progress. However, as fate would have it, and as admirable as these architects of the new age were, these things would come with unforeseen costs. The confluence of technological progress, political equality, and economic freedom would bring with it nationalism, the terror, the horrors of World War I and II, the threat of nuclear annihilation, and a consumerist society that threatens its own existence through the destruction of the environment.

The parable, which provides the basis for Bruegel's subject, assumes that if one places one's belief in the truth one can avoid disaster; naturally, not doing so will lead to ruin. Christ, possessing the certainty of truth, condemns the Pharisees saying, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." But as Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God underscores, an Archimedean point from which all things may be judged is a highly dubious proposition. No one has a God's-eye view of the world. No one is infallible. No one's field of vision is wide enough to encompass the complexity of the universe. Counter to the parable which the disciples listened to attentively, the tragedy is not that the blind will lead the blind into the ditch. That is inevitable. The real tragedy is that once they have fallen, how will they get out? Since things cannot be known with certainty, can they at least rely upon one another in the panic of the moment?



*Blind Leading the Blind: In Spite of it All*



# MICHELLE DOLL

Michelle Doll (b. 1969, Canton, OH) earned her MFA from the New York Academy of Art in 2006 and her BFA from Kent State University in 1999. Michelle Doll's paintings capture quiet, private moments hinged on personal connections between herself and her subjects. Her paintings are infused with themes of intimacy and introspection and explore contemporary ideas about family, love, desire, and femininity. The subject matter, although not idealized in form, implies idealized moments of intimacy that we all either consciously or unconsciously crave. She currently lives and works in Hoboken, NJ and is an adjunct professor at the New Jersey City University while also teaching private lessons in person and online. She has taught numerous workshops worldwide in cities such as Rome, Oslo, and New York, NY. In 2019, she received a fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Among her other awards and acknowledgements, Michelle received the Prince of Wales / Forbes Foundation Travel Grant in 2006, was granted Artist in Residence at Eden Rock on St. Barth's (French West Indies) in 2008 and received The Bennett Prize Honorable Mention in 2018. Her paintings have been exhibited in the US and internationally in cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Miami, London, Barcelona, Oslo, Salzburg, and Basel, Switzerland. She was recently represented by Lyons Wier Gallery in Manhattan from 2014 – 2020 and her work is in the Public Collections of HRH Prince of Wales, The Eileen Kaminsky Family Foundation, The Seavest Collection, and the Hudson Foundation Art Collection.

Michelle's artwork has been the subject of numerous interviews and Podcasts such as *ArtSpeak NYC*, *American Art Collectors Magazine*, *Beautiful Bizarre Magazine*, *White Hot Magazine*, *Evolved Magazine*, *John Dalton Podcast*, *The Drop Interviews*, and *Mother Artist Podcast*. Her work is also featured in numerous books, including *The Figure* by Margaret McCann (a Rizzoli Publication) and *The Figurative Artist's Handbook* by Robert Zeller (Published by Moncelli Studio).

This painting is a commissioned portrait of a family that I personally know. Over the course of five days of photographic documentation while living with them in their home, I worked on developing a composition of a collaged moment in time. As with all my work, I am continually searching for intimate and meaningful moments of connection. In this particular painting, although the mother figure is the anchor of the composition, the rest of the family is in their own world processing individual inner thoughts, feelings, and experiences. The fracturing of the figural picture plane is intended convey movement and time. It also allows each figure to experience a present moment while simultaneously perceiving peripheral planes. Just as each of us are individuals composed of mind, body, and spirit, our macroscopic families are complicated and ever-changing tapestries of those interwoven physical, emotional, and metaphysical phenomenon. Ultimately, I am attempting to capture the way we experience intimate family coexistence and love through movement, light, touch, and time.



Family Portrait (Miller-Vargas)



# NAJEE DORSEY

Najee Dorsey (b. 1973, Blytheville, AR) an esteemed African American artist and founder of Black Art In America. His artistic journey began at a young age. Dorsey is inspired by a variety of topics ranging from his rural upbringing, the Black American upper and upper-middle class, and various social movements of the now. His work is characterized by a unique blend of mixed media, found objects, and expressive figurative compositions, which often explore themes of social justice, identity, and the human experience. He is renowned for his powerful storytelling, which invites viewers to engage with the narratives and emotions embedded within each piece.

Dorsey has exhibited extensively throughout the United States, with his work being found in the prestigious collections of The Pennsylvania Academy Of Fine Art (PAFA); The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History (Detroit, MI); Syracuse University (NY); the African American Museum of Dallas (TX); the Marietta Museum of Art & Whimsy (Sarasota, FL); and Liberty Bank and Trust Company (New Orleans, LA).

As a dedicated advocate for the arts, Dorsey founded Black Art in America (BAIA) in 2010, a platform that promotes African American artists and their work, fostering community and support within the art world. In its more than a decade of existence, BAIA has become one of the leading portal and social network focused on African-American Art with nearly half a million visitors from over 100 countries.

In *This My Baldwin*, I delve into the profound legacy of James Baldwin. Utilizing the parlor room as an expression of Baldwin's creative sensibility, I made it a point for him to be comfortable in his space. Baldwin's space is also an inviting one, as he was a teacher to many—so, I made room for another to be centered. Applying a mixed media approach, digital collage, paint, and monoprint techniques are interspersed throughout the work. Also, reflecting Baldwin's unique style and dandy appeal against the vibrant colors in the room, I wanted to present a narrative about a cultural icon whose ideas and influence are still very relevant today.



*This My Baldwin*



# PAUL FENNIAK

Paul Fenniak (b. 1965, Toronto, Canada) is represented by Forum Gallery in New York where four solo exhibitions of his paintings have taken place to date ('99,'04,'09,'16). Fenniak's work has been included in exhibitions in museums and galleries across the US and Canada. He has been the recipient of awards from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, and the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation. Art critic Donald Kuspit described him as “a master of the psychological realism that has existed in secular North European painting from Dürer through Rembrandt to Degas and Max Beckmann.” Fenniak currently resides in Montreal, Canada.

*A Crowd in Shadow* is set in Reykjavík where I had spent some time just before the 2008 market crash set off a series of mass demonstrations there. Overnight people's lives had been turned upside down. Although the subject matter of the painting is one of these demonstrations, the actual subject is the state of mind that results when our comfortable conceptions of a stable reality are upended. I wished to explore the de-familiarizing effect of such experiences: the bewildering sense of entering into an indecipherable space induced by the erosion of the narratives we build for ourselves. At the center of the painting, there is a portrait of a man paused halfway up a ladder. A minute before he was full of burning conviction but now his expression tells another story—an inner change is beginning. He has risen above the crowd and entered a space inhabited by dangling dummies. Behind him buildings begin to subtly tilt as if his own head and shoulders had dislodged them; and as the afternoon wanes Austurvöllur Square fills with shadow...



*A Crowd in Shadow*



# ZOEY FRANK

Zoey Frank (b. 1987, Boulder, CO) makes use of patterns and elements of abstraction in her large-scale multi-figure compositions. Her work draws on a wide range of approaches to pictorial space from across art history.

Frank studied for four years with Juliette Aristides in the Classical Atelier at Gage Academy of Art in Seattle, before receiving her MFA in painting from Laguna College of Art and Design in California. She has received numerous honors and awards, including three Elizabeth Greenshields grants, the Avigdor Arikha Memorial International Residency Scholarship, and three first place awards in Manifest Gallery’s International Painting Annual. Her work has been featured recently in *New American Paintings*, *Hi Fructose magazine*, *Fine Art Connoisseur*, *Artists and Illustrators*, and *American Art Collector*, among many others. In 2023, she served as a juror for the Bennett Prize and for the Figurativas award at the MEAM Museum in Barcelona. She is represented by Sugarlift Gallery in New York and Galerie Mokum in Amsterdam.

I’ve been working on a series of summer paintings for a number of years now, staged at home, in the backyard, and at the pool. The paintings show family and friends packed together, interspersed with the bright colors of plastic inflatable toys and sun hats.

I’m interested in bringing the grandeur and gravitas of Renaissance and Baroque composition to scenes of everyday life in the suburbs: a seventy-year old woman’s birthday party or a family picnic on the grass. This focus on the mundane and the domestic offers me an opportunity to play with the more formal aspects of painting: the arrangement of light and dark shapes, the angles of repeating gestures, and the pathways of color through the painting. Bits of red or yellow or blue from the colorful plastics become a compositional tool for moving our attention across the painting.

I often use a historical painting as the underlying armature for my painting’s composition. In this case, the composition is based on Delacroix’s *The Massacre at Chios*. I liked the interlocking triangles of figures in Delacroix’s painting and used that geometry as the starting point to pose my figures.

I break up shapes and use patches of patterns to create a quilt-like surface, drawing our attention back again and again to the surface of the painting. I’m interested in how different approaches to representation—from realism to abstraction to sculpture—can sit right next to each other and inform each other as our eye moves from one to the next.



Pool Party



# ANDREA KOWCH

Andrea Kowch (b. 1986, Detroit, MI) attended the College for Creative Studies, and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a BFA in 2009. She combines realistic narrative and naturalistic technique, subtly fused with surreal, dreamlike undercurrents in the quest to investigate and represent the human condition. Her paintings are rich in mood, allegory, and precision of medium, reflecting a wealth of influences from Northern Renaissance and American art to the rural landscapes and vernacular architecture of her native Michigan.

Kowch's highly acclaimed paintings garner Best of Show awards globally. Major exhibitions at museums and galleries include the Museum of Art-Deland, where her recent solo retrospective, *Mysterious Realms* was presented in 2023, London and Rome's Dorothy Circus Gallery, Muskegon Museum of Art, where her first solo retrospective *Dream Fields* debuted in 2013, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Jacksonville, Grand Rapids Art Museum, ArtPrize, Art Basel Miami, the Los Angeles Art Show, ArtHamptons, and SCOPE NYC. She also regularly headlines leading national and international art publications. Kowch's works occupy public and museum collections, such as the R.W. Norton Art Gallery Museum of the R.W. Norton Art Foundation (Shreveport, LA), Muskegon Museum of Art (MI), Grand Rapids Art Museum (MI), and significant private collections worldwide. Kowch works and resides in Michigan, and she is represented exclusively by RJD Gallery in Romeo, MI.

Traces of raspberry, blackberry, and warm pie crust permeate the air. A dry wind lifts the curtains to reveal a parched, unbroken skyline. Three sisters share a kitchen. The space, further occupied by pestering animals, turns into an overwhelming sense of invasion. The scene is an allegory for the struggle to create order out of chaos, the cry of suppressed emotions too long masked beneath the common routine of our lives. I wanted to entice the senses and evoke the “heat”—hot summer wind, a drought-ridden field, the burning oven, the dizzying swirl of movement and sound, things on the verge of losing control—chaos personified. Yet, the figures appear virtually unmoved. For most of us, it's just another day in the kitchen. The interaction between all the elements speaks to the ongoing power of the proverbial “pie” and all that lies beneath the surface. I want anyone who looks at this painting to feel they can take a seat across from the central figure and be part of the whole environment.



*The Visitors*



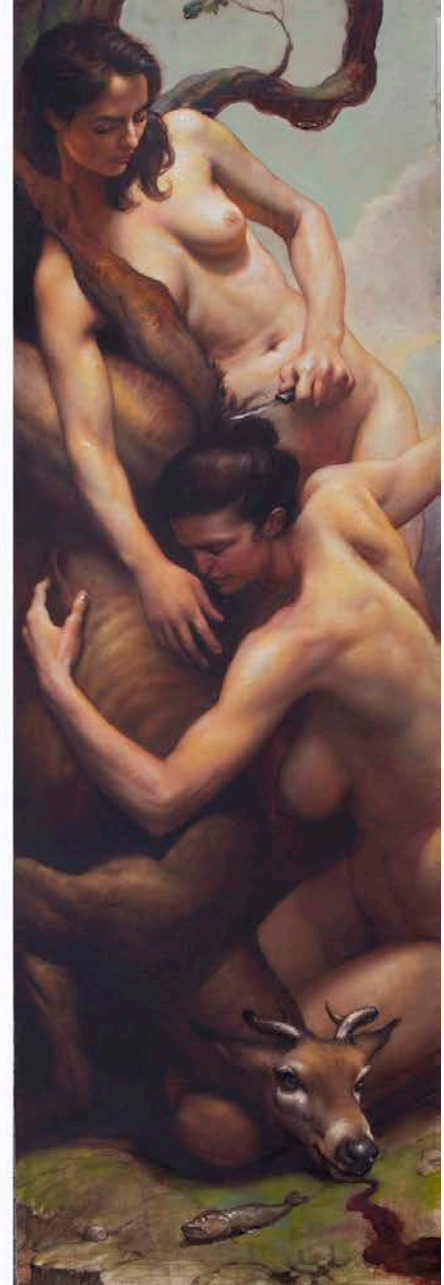
# ADAM MILLER

Adam Miller (b. 1979, Eugene, OR) is a painter living and working in Florence, Italy. He is a reactionary, a traditionalist, and a luddite. He studied painting in Italy, New York and by himself in small and uncomfortable rooms. Adam Miller Believes like Marsilio Ficino and Hermes Trismegistus that if the traditional symbols and forms can be arranged properly in a work of art the gods or their representatives can be summoned and perhaps the state of the world can be made slightly better.

The *Diana and Actaeon* triptych was designed shortly after viewing the Michelangelo drawing show at the Metropolitan Museum in 2017. It was the first piece I made in a new phase of my work that moved away from naturalism while placing a greater emphasis on the manneristic possibilities of the body. Part of this turning back to the classical was the embracing of formalism and symmetry in the choice of the triptych that can be closed like a renaissance altarpiece. At this time, I transitioned from using photo reference to painting exclusively from my drawings as a way to emphasize disegno, line, and pattern in my work.

The subject of Diana and Actaeon appealed to me on two levels. It is a perfect example of the Greek view of unforgiving nature or karma in which the slightest mistake will be paid for, and mercy will not be granted by the gods even when clemency could be justified. Actaeon's sin of discovering Diana naked at her bath was certainly accidental and if his glance lingered for a moment on the vision of the beautiful bathing goddess that was certainly only natural. Despite these mitigating circumstances his punishment came swiftly and violently. Actaeon was transformed into a deer and devoured by his own dogs.

Alongside the cruelty of the scene is the obvious eroticism. I partook of the tradition, which goes back to the Middle Ages, in which Christian subjects of martyrdoms, saints, and Madonnas were the high art of the culture. These depictions were filled with pathos, suffering, and hope while pagan mythology was often treated with a light ironic or sexual character. My forays into mythology have been influenced by the formal, yet, playful natural idylls of Veronese as well as the erotic etching of Giulio Romano and Marcantonio Raimondi.



*Diana and Actaeon*



# ODD NERDRUM

Odd Nerdrum (b. 1944, Helsingborg, Sweden) studied at The Art Academy in Oslo, Norway and later studied with the conceptual artist Joseph Beuys in Düsseldorf, Germany. The iconoclastic Norwegian painter is well known for compelling portraits, stark landscapes, and apocalyptic narratives that depict unearthly scenes. Influenced by Rembrandt and Caravaggio, Nerdrum is admired internationally for his unequalled skill and technique, as well as his extraordinary subject matter, which transports the viewer to another time and place. Nerdrum is an artist known for his rejection of the principals of Modern art turning instead to the artistic ideals of the Old Masters. In *Odd Nerdrum: Themes: Paintings, Drawings, Prints and Sculptures*, Nerdrum explains his choice of defiance to the art of his time: “I saw that I was in the process of making a choice that would end in defeat. By choosing those qualities that were so alien to my own time, I had to give up at the same time the art on which the art of our time rests. I had to paint in defiance of my own era without the protection of the era’s superstructure.” The work of Odd Nerdrum is represented in the permanent collections of several international and American museums including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Washington, DC); The Metropolitan Museum of Art (NY); The New Orleans Museum (LA); The Portland Art Museum (OR); The San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art (CA); Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN); The de Young Museum (San Francisco, CA); and The Frye Art Museum (Seattle, WA).

I painted this piece whilst living on Iceland sometime between 2001 and 2004.

As models I used my wife and son. The landscape surrounding the figures is inspired by the area of Krýusvík. The painting depicts a mother traveling together with her son who, in contemplation, is taking a bath.



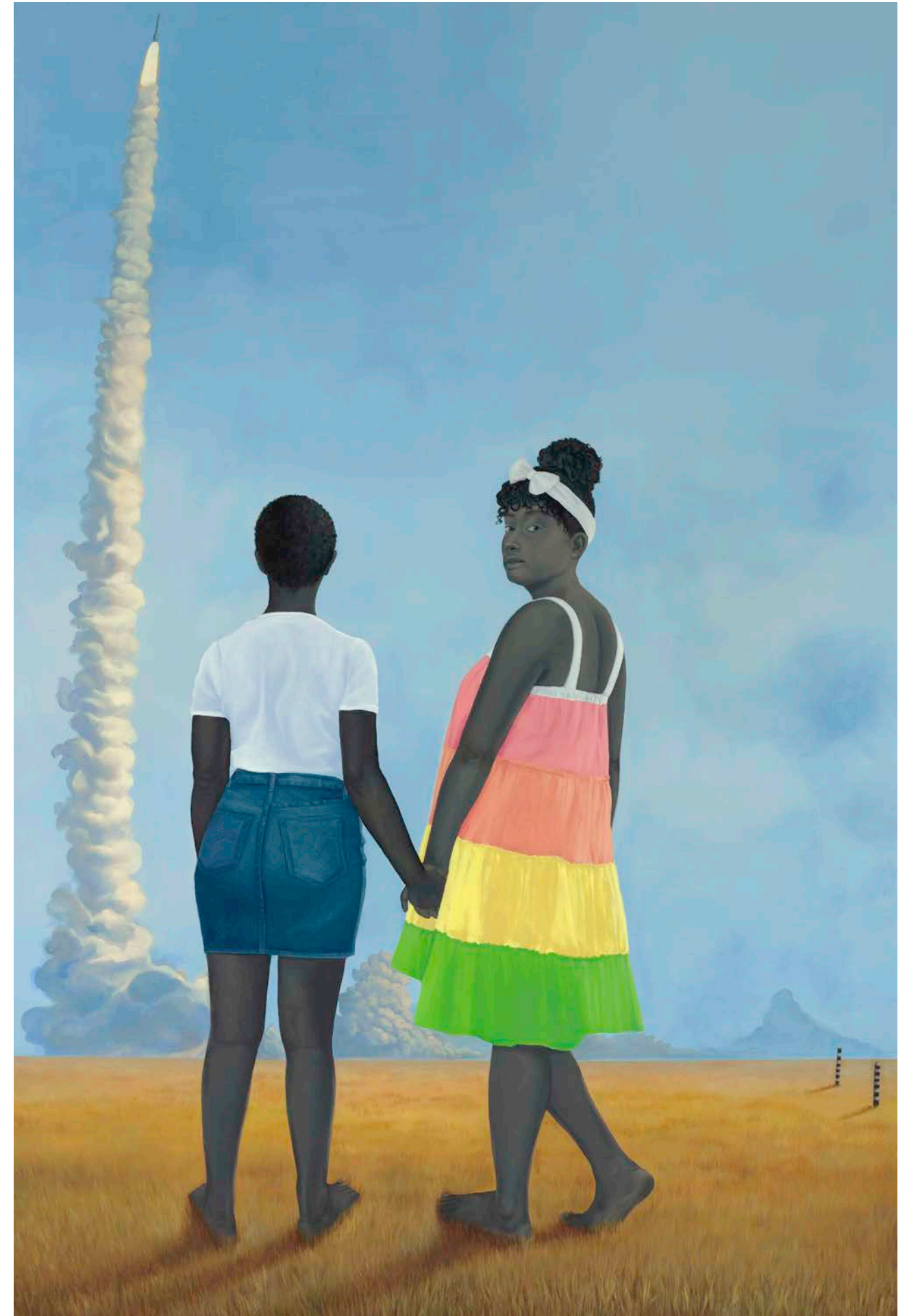
*Mother and Son (Prince of Iceland)*



# AMY SHERALD

Amy Sherald (b. 1973, Columbus, GA) received her MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2004 and BFA from Clark-Atlanta University in 1997. She documents the contemporary African-American experience in the United States through arresting, otherworldly figurative paintings. Sherald engages with the history of photography and portraiture to situate Black life centrally in American art. In October 2022, Sherald presented *The World We Make*, her first European solo exhibition at Hauser and Wirth in London. She was the first woman and first African-American to receive the grand prize from the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC, in the 2016 Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition, and in 2018, was selected by First Lady Michelle Obama to paint her official portrait commission for the National Portrait Gallery. Sherald's work is held in collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, NY); the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (CA); the Long Museum (Shanghai); Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, MA); Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (Bentonville, AR); Embassy of the United States (Dakar, Senegal); and the Smithsonian National Museum of African-American History and Culture (Washington, DC).

*Planes, rockets, and the spaces in between* is a painting I had in mind for a long time. It's a very iconic American moment, watching rockets go up. I wanted the viewer to feel as though they are walking up behind the two women, into their space, and that if you crossed its threshold, your body might turn the same kind of gray they are. I think a lot about the gaze and how my figures relate to the viewer. The figures in my work have relieved themselves of the need to perform. When you walk into the painting, you're walking into a space where they are connected to the most authentic version of themselves. The figures hold the space with the clarity of being in their truth.



*Planes, rockets, and the spaces in between*



# TIM SHORT

Tim Short (b. 1993, Columbus, GA) received a BFA in Visual Art and Design and a minor in African American Studies at Georgia State University in 2015. He is a narrative painter who focuses on building imaginative, atmospheric works centering the Black figure. While living in Columbus, GA, he developed an early passion and practice in visual world-building and constructing narrative. He currently resides in the Stone Mountain, GA, working out of his studio space at Echo Contemporary Gallery in Atlanta, GA.

Tim hopes to contribute to the long tradition of Black figurative artistry and painting by centering the lives of people close to him within his work. Predominantly as an oil painter, Timothy venerates those people by detailing and embellishing their experiences within spaces familiar to them and thus familiar to Black folks everywhere. He employs methods of dramatically grandiose color, lighting, and imaginative imagery to produce vividly epic narratives. Amongst Tim's inspirations are Kerry James Marshall, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Naudline Pierre as well as many other painters, a host of manga and comics, and great Black music.

*Talkin' Across the Table* is an extremely personal work detailing members of my maternal family playing a game of spades. The reference for the work was a short video recorded on my iPhone 5 on Christmas Day in 2016. My sister, Arrianne, had just passed a couple of days before and I immediately returned to my hometown of Columbus, GA in order to celebrate her life and support my family. It was an emotional time and my cousins in neighboring Phenix City gathered together to drink and play cards. That gathering did more for me than I realized as that boisterous, unabashed energy is what I needed to carry me through such weighted loss. I recorded the moment out of the sheer hilarity I felt in being engaged with my folks at that time, unaware that it would much later be used to craft this work.

The reference video was paused and screenshotted at multiple points so individual character stills could be selected that best embodied the personalities of my family members in those moments. Those stills were consolidated together in the drawing process and inserted into the background of my cousin Sharita's apartment. Thus, this piece is a visual remembrance of a memory of my family uplifting me in a time of anguish.



*Talkin' Across the Table*



# PATRICIA WATWOOD

Patricia Watwood (b. 1971, St. Louis, MO) earned her MFA with honors from New York Academy of Art in 1999 and studied with Jacob Collins as a founding member of the Water Street Atelier (now Grand Central Atelier). She is an oil painter, draftsman, teacher and author. Her subjects are primarily portraits, women and figures, incorporating myth and narrative. Watwood current serves as the First Vice President of the Salmagundi Club of New York. Her book on drawing, creative practice, and mindfulness, *The Path of Drawing*, was published by Monacelli Studio Press in 2022.

Her work has been exhibited at the Beijing World Art Museum, Museu Europeu d’Art Modern, The Butler Museum, and is in the collections of The St. Louis University Museum of Art, and The New Britain Museum of American Art. Watwood is also a Signature member of the Portrait Society of America, and she has been named a Living Master by the Art Renewal Center. Her commissioned portraits hang in institutions such as St. Louis City Hall, The Rhode Island State Capital, Washington University, Kennedy School of Government, and at The Harvard Art Museums.

Watwood has produced instructional DVDs including *Creating Portraits from Life*, with Streamline Art Video. She has created several online drawing courses, including *Seven Days of Drawing*. Watwood has authored articles for *American Artist*, *American Arts Quarterly*, and *Fine Art Connoisseur* magazines, and teaches painting and drawing online with Terracotta.art, and in workshops around the country. She’s represented by Portraits Inc. and Dacia Gallery in New York, and others.

I am a contemporary figurative artist trained in the classical tradition of oil painting. I use narrative stories like allegory and myth to create images that explore meaning in our common experience and evoke spiritual connection. My painting style prioritizes careful drawing, craft in technique, visual symbols, and aesthetic beauty.

My compositions often have a dialogue with art history, and *Music and Poetry* has its roots in the themes of nymphs and satyrs. Older artworks of this subject played on tropes of the “animalistic nature of dark flesh,” and in moralizing on sexual desire, with equal parts superiority and drooling commodification. Other paintings show the pale courtesan with a dark-skinned servant in attendance. For centuries we have accepted these artistic compositions without much note of their racist and classist underpinnings. Instead, I want a new canon of language with the figures composed in balance: the beautiful nudes are found at leisure together, tenderly intimate, in a yin and yang of contrasts and harmony. This shows a tranquil ideal in which the coded hierarchies of racism and the control of the female body and sexuality do not exist.

In painting the body, I celebrate the mystery of the embodiment of consciousness. Our human flesh is the vessel that carries all our hopes and dreams, genius, lust, rationality, instinct, insight, sadness, and joy. Walt Whitman asserts, “If life and soul are sacred the human body is sacred.” Painting the nude is a means for me to delve into the mystery of “What are we?” and “Who are we?” Beauty is a great rhetorical tool. It can move people and change minds, inspire action and devotion, and soothe the troubled spirit.



*Music and Poetry*



# EXHIBITION CHECKLIST



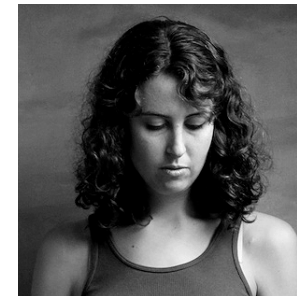
## STEVEN ASSAEL

*D*, 1998  
Oil on canvas  
68.5 x 104.5 in (framed)  
©Steven Assael, courtesy of Forum  
Gallery, New York, NY



## ALFRED CONTEH

*Evan and Aaron*, 2020  
Acrylic and urethane plastic on canvas  
84 x 48 in  
Najee & Seteria Dorsey's Black Art In  
America Collection  
Headshot of Artist: Melissa Alexander



## ZOEY FRANK

*Pool Party*, 2021  
Oil on canvas  
114 x 96 in



## AMY SHERALD

*Planes, rockets, and the spaces  
in between*, 2018  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 67 in  
The Baltimore Museum of Art: Purchase  
with exchange funds from the Pearlstone  
Family Fund and partial gift of The Andy  
Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts,  
Inc., BMA 2018.80  
Photography of artwork: Mitro Hood  
Headshot of Artist: Courtesy of the artist  
and Hauser & Wirth. Photo: Kevin Bullock



## BO BARTLETT

*Leviathan*, 2000  
Oil on linen  
89 x 138 in



## VINCENT DESIDERIO

*Musica Proibita*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
72 x 70 in



## PAUL FENNIKAK

*A Crowd in Shadow*, 2009-10  
Oil on canvas  
63 x 87 in (framed)  
©Paul Fenniak, courtesy of Forum  
Gallery, New York, NY



## TIM SHORT

*Talkin' Across the Table*  
Oil on linen  
54 x 72 in  
Najee & Seteria Dorsey's Black Art In  
America Collection  
Headshot of Artist: Adrianna Clark



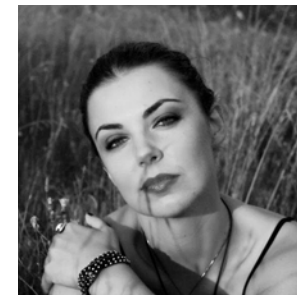
## MARGARET BOWLAND

*Olympia #1*, 2004  
Oil on linen  
58 x 78 in  
Private Collection



## CARL DOBSKY

*Blind Leading the Blind:  
In Spite of it All*, 2023  
Oil on linen  
72 x 104 in  
Headshot of Artist: Jacky Andrews



## ANDREA KOWCH

*The Visitors*, 2010  
Acrylic on canvas  
48 x 60 in  
The Bennett Collection of Women  
Realists, San Antonio, Texas  
Headshot of Artist: Marsin Mogielski



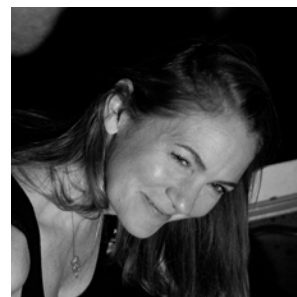
## PATRICIA WATWOOD

*Music and Poetry*, 2000  
Oil on linen  
44 x 68 in (framed)  
On Loan by Margaret and Gregory  
Hedberg, New York City, NY



## NOAH BUCHANAN

*Jacob's Ladder*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
108 x 80 in



## MICHELLE DOLL

*Family Portrait (Miller-Vargas)*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
70 x 60 in



## ADAM MILLER

*Diana and Actaeon*, 2018  
Oil on panel  
36 x 50 in



## ALEAH CHAPIN

*Undertow*, 2023  
Oil on canvas  
72 x 90 in  
Courtesy of the artist and Flowers  
Gallery, London, Hong Kong, New York



## NAJEE DORSEY

*This My Baldwin*, 2020  
Mixed media on gallery wrap canvas  
64 x 56 in  
Najee & Seteria Dorsey's Black Art In  
America Collection



## ODD NERDRUM

*Mother and Son (Prince of Iceland)*,  
*n.d.*  
Oil on canvas  
76 x 97 in (framed)  
Headshot of Artist: Bork Nerdrum



# BO BARTLETT CENTER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## About the Bo Bartlett Center

Located on the Columbus State University campus in downtown Columbus, Georgia, the Bo Bartlett Center is a captivating and interactive space spanning 18,425 square feet. The former textile warehouse turned gallery space, designed by AIA award-winning architect, Tom Kundig, sits on the banks of the Chattahoochee River. The center is a vibrant and imaginative learning laboratory, encompassing elements of a gallery and an experimental arts incubator. Based on the belief that art can change lives, the center embraces a dual mission: first, to reach out to the community through art programs that promote inclusivity by encouraging participation from diverse voices, and second, to engage in a national mission of collaboration with other institutions to present innovative exhibitions that enrich our understanding of art through publications and public events. The Scarborough Collection, a collection of 14 monumental paintings by Columbus native Bo Bartlett, is housed in the center along with Bartlett's archive, which includes records, writing, photographs, sketchbooks, and other materials that assist in the creation of his paintings. Educators, students, and researchers have access to the archival material. The Bo Bartlett Center is a unique cultural institution setting a new standard for innovation and service at Columbus State University and in the Columbus arts community.

## Staff/ Credits

**Rex Whiddon**, Sr. Associate VP of Leadership  
Philanthropy and Strategic Initiatives  
**Michael McFalls**, Director  
**Bo Bartlett, Noah Buchanan, and Carl Dobsky**,  
Exhibition Curators  
**Frank Galuszka**, Exhibition Concept  
**Julianna Wells**, Exhibition Coordinator  
**Joshua Newbend**, Gallery Coordinator  
**Ainsley Steeves**, Gallery Assistant  
**De'Sean Tucker**, Graphic Designer & Catalogue  
Layout Design  
**Greysen Strumpler**, Student Assistant of Outreach

## Sponsors

**Steven Alan Bennett and Dr. Elaine Melotti Schmidt**  
**Bettye and Cecil Cheves**  
**Susan and Robert Culpepper**  
**Anna and Jake Flourney**  
**Donna and Kerry Hand**  
**JoAnne and Bob Hecht**  
**Sandy and Otis Scarborough**  
**Anonymous Members of the Board of Advisors**

