

Notes on Painting- Exhibition M55 February 2012

The work in this show is all a product of the imagination. The imagination is fed in three essential ways. One is the study of nature, drawing from the human figure or landscape, two is the history of art, and the third is poetry.

The art that has informed these paintings includes Minoan pots and larnake (sarcophagi), Greek pottery painting, Romanesque painting and sculpture, medieval and Persian manuscripts, and the moderns for whom all these were also compelling sources.

Themes are sometimes conceived in advance, and sometimes only emerge in the process of a painting. Often they will change as a painting develops. At other times they are unknown, and only reveal themselves after the painting's completion. The image is a long time coming, and is never predetermined. It undergoes constant, often radical change.

Themes included in this group of work include the swimmer, or the body in suspension, and Herakles and the Lion, or struggle. The painting "Tuneless Numbers" is an image of Cupid and Psyche, inspired by the ode of that name by John Keats. "Pale Flower" was Shelley's epithet for Keats in his elegy on the death of Keats, "Adonais". This is an example of a painting whose theme became known to me only after its completion. Both the figure and the pale flower were there before I recognized my subject.

Somewhat more complex is the theme of the figure and the bear. The bear is the bear that visits my yard daily in early summer, but it is also the beast of the earth from the Book of Revelations who spits demon frogs from his mouth. He is angry at our destruction of his domain; we offer doves in supplication, knowing full well it is not enough.

Lovers, Boy Meets Girl, and Kissed by a Bird are celebrations of mysteries of love and of life.

KS January 2012