



FINDLAY GALLERIES

MICHAEL ALLEN LOWE

REINVENTION

R E I N T E R P R E T A T I O N

That neither the human figure nor the work of the 'Old Masters' have ceased to be relevant is clear in the dramatic and enigmatic work of Michael Allen Lowe. Lowe's use of his sources is not a borrowing, but a complete reinterpretation, and the results are arresting paintings that speak of past, present, and future.

Michael Allen Lowe



FINDLAY GALLERIES

MICHAEL ALLEN LOWE

Michael Allen Lowe holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Kansas City Art Institute. He has illustrated several books and has had his photography and writings published locally and abroad. Michael's paintings are in collections in Asia, Washington State, California, and currently his paintings are being exhibited on the East Coast and West Coast of the United States. He has recently relocated to Richmond, Massachusetts, and is currently studying literature University of Saint Andrews in Scotland.

Michael Allen Lowe was born November 6th, 1979 in Hennepin County, Minnesota. Lowe, along with his father William, mother Kathleen, and older brother, Bryan, relocated every few years due to his father's career in executive sales. This transient youth led Lowe to develop his own entertainments and he began to lose himself in a world of his own imagination. Free-hand drawing came very naturally to him, and he excelled in many creative media.

From a very young age, Lowe experimented with every conceivable medium and craft the arts could provide. At the age of nine, he was casting in bronze and welding nearly life size figurative steel sculptures. His interests, then, included mechanical puppetry, figurative ceramic and metal work, and developing his craft in drawing. By the age of eleven, Lowe had traveled across North America with his family, seen both coasts, and studied in a variety of private art schools and independent art studios. He was placed in advanced classes, often training along side classmates twice his age.

Lowe began to study painting more seriously when he attended high school in a suburb of Chicago. During this time, he began to receive commissions and was honored with several grants, including one from the State of Illinois. Before leaving Illinois, Lowe was an artist in residence at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he continued to study painting.

After secondary school, Lowe received scholarships to attend the Kansas City Art Institute. There, while in the foundations program freshman year, Lowe studied with, and was inspired by, department head Carl Kurtz. The Kansas City Art Institute, known for its eclectic foundations program, allowed Lowe to experiment with a verity of media including: woodworking, sculpture, stone-carving, bookmaking, photography, glass-casting, and printmaking. After completing the foundations curriculum, Lowe returned to painting and focused his efforts over the following three years on developing his craft.

Though the painting department had shifted heavily in favor of abstraction in the aftershocks of post-post-modernism, Lowe was intent on painting in a classical figurative style. The days of Thomas Hart Benton chairing the department had long past. Still Lowe was thrilled to study with renowned figurative painter, Leah Joo, and found himself deeply fortunate to study with painters Ron Slowinski and Lester Goldman. At his graduation ceremony, where he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with an emphasis in fine art painting, Lowe was chosen to give the commencement speech.

After graduation, Lowe continued to reside in the downtown Kansas City arts district. Though he was painting and showing his work locally in Kansas City's blossoming art scene, he quickly realized that his work was being collected in Arizona, Seattle, Los Angeles, and New England, as well as in the Mid-West.

Amidst his growing success, Lowe traveled to Europe to experience first hand the great works of art that had inspired him throughout his life. Upon his return, Lowe retreated to his studio, humbled by his experiences in Europe. He was torn between the polished aesthetic of classical painting and sculpture, and a need to convey his hand as an artist in a modern, expressive application and construction. His struggle prevented Lowe from completing any new work and lasted for two years. In a search of inspiration, Lowe moved to the Berkshires in western Massachusetts in the summer of 2005, where he lived and painted until the end of 2008 when he moved to California.

Michael has now regained momentum and is currently working on his painting and literature creating masterful works of arts exhibiting his works in renowned Findlay Galleries both New York and Palm Beach Galleries.



ARTIST STATEMENT

My current body of work is a union of classical systems and a contemporary methodology. I employ fragments of paintings from history as component parts to a newly imagined whole. I gather a variety of diverse imagery during my ongoing explorations into the more tantalizing aspects of painting in both manner and subject. My discoveries have afforded a body work which simultaneously demonstrates the versatility of technique and the nature of differing painting styles; the resultant paintings appear as overlapping layers of language and subject, creating a kind of masterful graffiti that speaks to past, present, and future.

Michael Allen Lowe



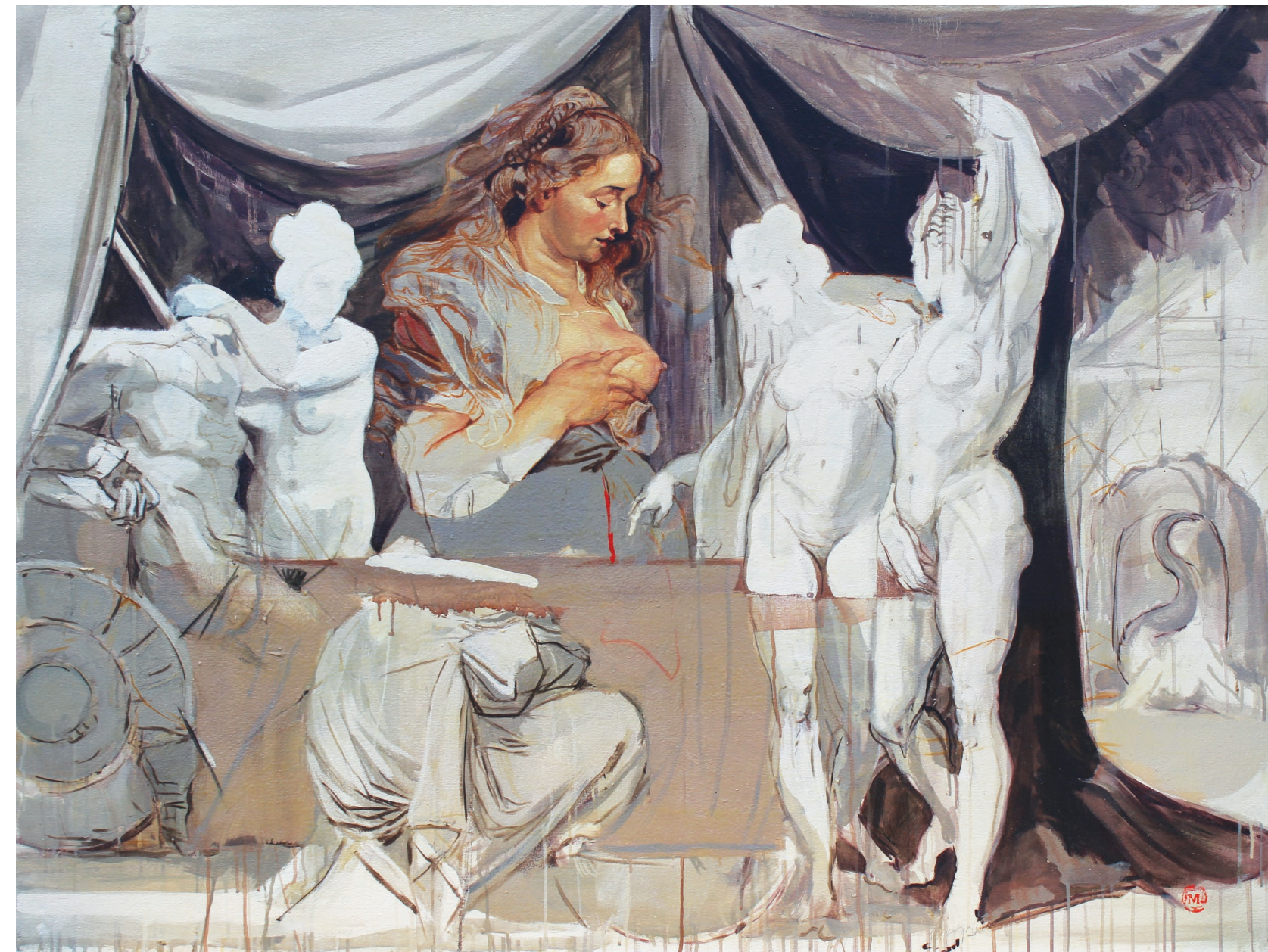
Bower of Bliss

Oil on Canvas • 44 1/4 x 59 Inches • FG©131605

The setting of this work is a recreation of a Henry Fuseli illustration entitled, *Amavia finds her Knight, Sir Mordant, Bewitched in Acrasia's Bower of Bliss*, c.1810. Fuseli's original drawing depicts an erotic boudoir scene from Spenser's *Faerie Queen*:

*Her snowy brest was bare to readie spoyle
Of hungry eies, which n'ote therewith be fild;
And yet, through languor of her late sweet toyle,
Few drops, more cleare then Nectar, forth distild. . .*
(II.xii.78)

Lowe's *Acrasia* was inspired by Rubens' *Roman Charity (Cimon and Pero)*, c.1613. The surrounding figures in Lowe's reinterpretation are statuesque fragments of their original selves, having been laid to ruin by the seductive *Acrasia*.





Such Costuming

Oil on Canvas • 47 ³/₄ x 30 Inches • FG©131596

This work is a reinterpretation of Henry Fuseli's drawing Siegfried and Kriemhild, c.1798, an illustration of the main characters in an epic Germanic poem dating back to the 12th Century. Lowe transforms them into mere symbols of masculine and feminine identity. The luxurious garment, with refined sleeve and hand are taken from Anthony van Dyck's portrait Lady Anne Carr, Countess of Bedford, c.1638. Another painter J. M. W. Turner created a free copy of this portrait that came to be known as A Lady in a Van Dyck Costume, c.1830. Lowe has portrayed the heroine removing her costume capturing the attention of the hero, to assert her sexual dominance.

A Visitation

Oil on Canvas • 48 x 32 ³/₄ Inches • FG©131598

This work is Lowe's reinterpretation of the 19th Century drawing Myth of Melathe and Neptune in the form of a Dolphin illustrated by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, after a Giulio Bonasone engraving of the same title, c.1568. The drawing depicts Neptune, having transformed himself into a dolphin in order to seduce Melathe, overwhelming the young maiden with a thousand caresses. Lowe has portrayed Melanthe as a physically masculine heroine, after Rubens, from The Massacre of the Innocents, c. 1612. Lowe's work is a mythological version of The Annunciation, with Neptune, god of the sea, personally performing the insemination.



Carried Off

Oil on Canvas • 36 x 24 Inches • FG©131590

The catalyst for this work was a preparatory study for one of Goya's Capricio etchings, *They Carried Her Off*, c.1797. This is one of Goya's many etchings illustrating the darker side of humanity. The figures together form a pictograph of the letter 'M' resembling the signature stamp found on Lowe's works. Lowe elaborates on Goya's narrative with characters from a Fuseli painting titled *Dighton and Forrest, the Murderers of the Princes*, c.1782. This reference to a grim scene from William Shakespeare's play, *Richard III* heightens the tension of the narrative and alludes to the internal conflict of such villains. Sin, personified as an androgynous apparition, sits perched atop the victim awaiting the scene to play out.



Lion in the Lazaretto

Oil on Canvas • 38 x 32 Inches • FG©131593

The figure-ground in this work is layered with linear figure studies inspired by a Niccolo dell' Abate drawing, *The Calumny of Apelles*, c.1512. The drawing depicts the Greek painter Apelles brought before King Ptolemy Soter of Egypt under a false charge. Lowe has left Apelles barely visible at the center of the composition awaiting judgment. Calumny has been personified as a Woman with a Stiletto after the Henry Fuseli drawing, c.1817. The lion functions as a symbol of King Ptolemy's hostility in his pursuit of truth, taken from Leonardo da Vinci's *St Jerome*, c.1482. A female nude, personifying repentance is from the Giambattista Tiepolo work *The Suicide of Ajax*, c.1722, which illustrates a scene from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.





Night Owls

Oil on Canvas • 72 x 92^{3/4} Inches • FG©138629

The setting for this work is a boudoir scene from Jean-Honore Fragonard's drawing, *Les Jets d'eau*, c.1765-70, wherein nozzles have emerged from the floor spraying water, awaking sleeping nude female figures. Lowe exaggerates the imagery in this mildly erotic drawing by replacing the nozzles with phalluses, and adds figures from his own imagination. The fleshed-out children in Victorian dress are referenced from Antoine Watteau's painting *Country Amusements*, c.1720. Lowe's imagined ghostly apparitions, or owl bottomed ladies, amusingly illustrate the common colloquial term night owls.

*-There many a bird of broadest pinion built
Secure her nest, the owl, the kite, and daw
Long-tongued, frequenter of the sandy shores.
A garden-vine luxuriant on all sides
Mantled the spacious cavern, cluster-hung
Profuse; four fountains of serenest lymph
Their sinuous course pursuing side by side,
Stray'd all around, and ev'ry where appear'd. . .
. . . heav'n's messenger, admiring stood
That sight, and having all survey'd, at length
Enter'd the grotto; nor the lovely nymph
Him knew not soon as seen, for not unknown
Each to the other the Immortals are,
How far soever sep'rate their abodes.*

The Odyssey of Homer (Book V. p.110)
Translated by Henry Fuseli

Social Attire

Oil on Canvas • 27 x 48 Inches • FG©130990

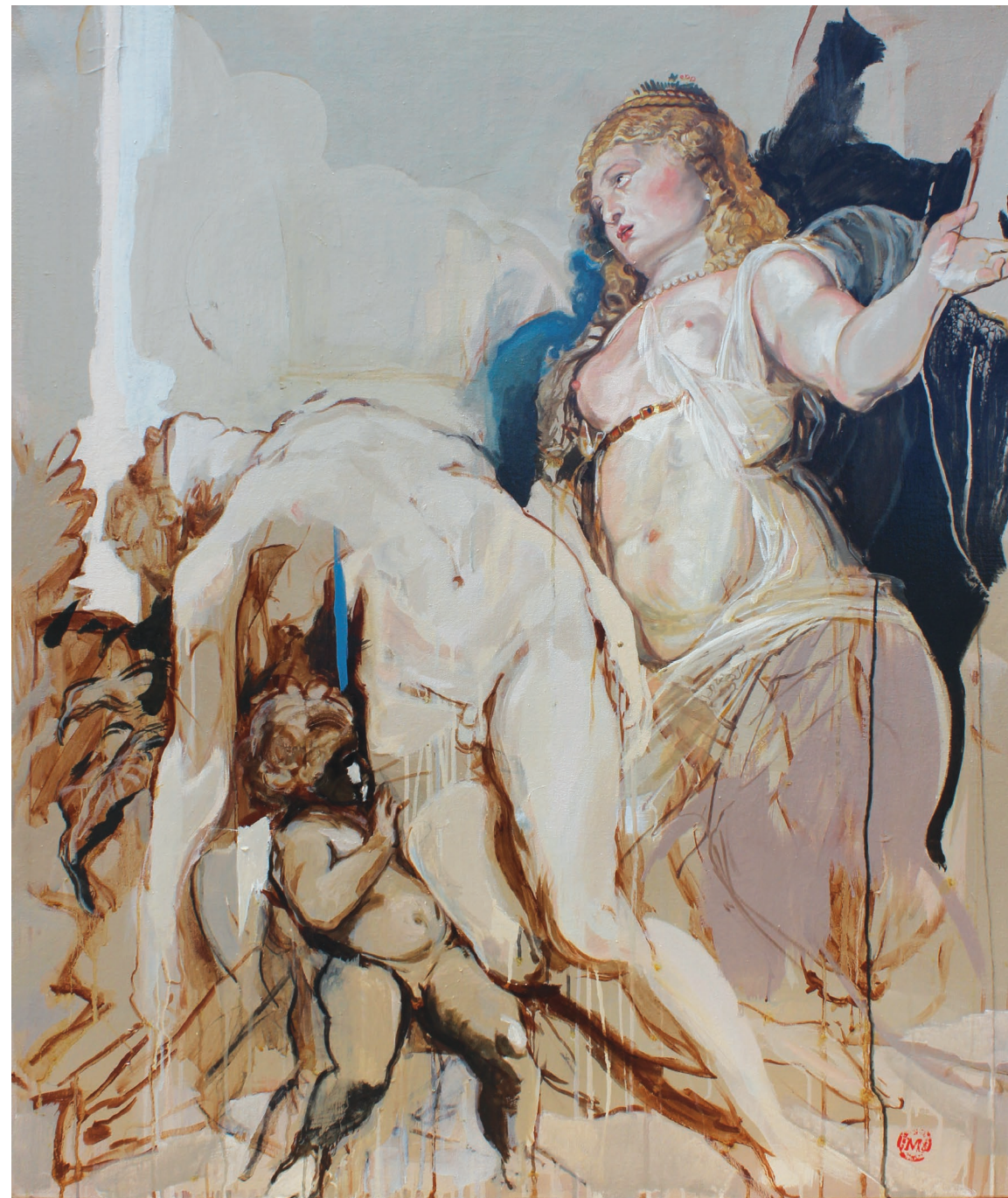
The narrative for this work begins with a reference to a pen and ink drawing by one of Michael Allen Lowe's favorite painters, Henry Fuseli. Fuseli's *The Debutante*, c.1807, features a young woman leashed to a wall, tending to her garment, while a group of envious social counterparts look on. Lowe has supplemented this narrative with a female figure of his own. Lowe flesh's-out this nude figure in a way that echoes vulnerability, but the exaggerated bust radiates an acute lascivious demeanor. Within this central female figure, Lowe is contrasting opulence with an imposed social feminine identity. The Helmet, shield, and sketched armor are taken directly from a Velazquez portrait Mars, the god of war. These accoutrements help to transform this debutant into the Artist's tongue-in-cheek commentary of elite Victorian, or Modern era, social interaction.



Collapse of Adonis

Oil on Canvas • 42 1/4 x 36 Inches • FG©131599

Lowe has exaggerated the myth of Venus and Adonis from Ovid's Latin narrative poem masterpiece, *Metamorphoses* by reinterpreting the Peter Paul Rubens drawing of the same title, c.1604. Lowe intensifies the lamentation of Venus (for her lover Adonis) who has just been fatally gored by a wild boar through the use of Rubens' *Council of the Gods*, c.1602. Lowe's abstract painterly application references the cyclical nature of life as illustrated in Ovid's epic poem. This work is an allegory of humanity's postmortem metamorphosis into elements of the natural environment.



Male Nude Study

Oil on Canvas • 24 x 18 Inches • FG©130495



Dido in Cyprus

Oil on Canvas • 71 x 71 Inches • FG©138628

This work began as a free copy of Hans von Marees's, *Ancient Chariot with a Pair of Horses and Several Female Figures*, mid-19th century. Unlike the original drawing, Lowe has delivered a transparent view through the voluminous masses, revealing the anatomy of the work and previously hidden figurative elements such as the chariot and charioteer. Using live models, the original proportion, scaling, and foreshortening, problems have been corrected. Lowe references a nymph from Boucher's, *Mercury Confiding Bacchus to the Nymphs*, c.1733, to portray Dido, and has incorporated decorative painting elements indicative of Gustav Klimt portraiture. Lowe's scene depicts Dido, Queen and founder of Carthage, upon her arrival in Cyprus, witnessing her soldiers being propositioned on the shore.





Le Trou Perdu

Oil on Canvas • 60 x 71 Inches • FG©138626

The title for this work, *Le Trou Perdu* (The Lost Hole), is comparable in slang with the vulgar shit hole, meaning a dirty and unpleasant place. This work is a reimagining of Fuseli's drawing, *The Death of Eriphyle*, c.1810, wherein the Greek mythological Furies are in pursuit of Eriphyle's murderous son. In a dramatic contrast of this imagery, Lowe has spliced a free copy of William Bouguereau's angelic *Sketch of a Young Woman with a Urinating Female Figure*. Lowe's painting conveys an exaggerated delineation between the realm of the gods, represented by the pursuing Furies of conscience, and the mortal world, represented by nude figures taking refuge in an outhouse.

Europa

Oil on Canvas • 70 1/4 x 80 1/2 Inches • FG©138624

The setting for Lowe's reinterpretation of this Greek myth comes from a mid-15th century drawing, *A Mounted Knight with a Lance*, by Uccello, thought to be St George. Lowe's *Europa* is after a foreground nymph from François Boucher's, *The Rape of Europa*, c.1733-34. Lowe has incorporated decorative art nouveau elements in this work including metallic gold paint and stylized flowers in the vein of Gustav Klimt. Lowe's work is a visual exploration into coexisting and contrasting mythological identities: the primal masculine and the sacred feminine.



Her Attendants

Oil on Canvas • 48 x 32 ³/₄ Inches • FG©131597

The central female figure in this work is modeled after a Henry Fuseli illustration, *Woman at a Dressing Table*, c.1815. Lowe has deliberately left the majority of the female figure unresolved providing the viewer with a titillating focal point. Her attendants are translucent apparitions which represent a fantasy of distinct masculine identities. Virility and sexual desire are portrayed by a naked ithyphallic ghost after a Fuseli drawing of the same name, c.1814. The Protector, or Guardian, is represented by a soldier, after Van Dyck's, *Martyrdom of St Sebastian*, c.1620. An angelic winged figure represents Sensitivity from another *Martyrdom of St Sebastian*, by Peter Paul Rubens, c.1608. Lowe's work conveys a stereotypically male perspective of feminine desires.



Courtesan

Oil on Canvas • 36 x 24 Inches • FG©131591

This work began as a study of George Romney's drawing, *John Howard Visiting a Lazaretto*, c.1794. Lowe has deliberately allowed remnants of this drawing to function as an environment for the central female head and torso, drawn from Henry Fuseli's, *Courtesan with Elaborate Headdress*, c.1810. The sexuality of the courtesan is highlighted by caressing hands taken from Guido Reni's, *St. Cecilia*, c.1615. Lowe orchestrates this work to be a commentary on the distinct purpose of the courtesan as a sexual instrument in an imprisoned environment.

Monument du Costume

Oil on Canvas • 63 x 96 Inches • FG©138625

This work was inspired by a Jean Michel Moreau drawing, *La Déclaration de la Grossesse* (Disclosure of Pregnancy), c.1775, an illustration for the *Suite d'estampes pour servir à l'Histoire des Moeurs et du Costume Des françois dans le XVIII Siécle* (The Monument du Costume), originally published in 1775. Lowe has referenced several fragments of this drawing: the reticule and fire screen, the decorative table and chairs, and two of the figures who presumably represent the physician and grandmother-to-be. The physician's clothes have been fleshed out in the manner of John Singer Sargent, resembling a costume of the artist's *Portrait of Carolus-Duran*, c.1879. Lowe has replaced the expectant mother with an embracing nude couple after Fuseli's *Adam and Eve*, c.1799. The backdrop for this scene echoes the hellish, surrealistic landscape drawing *The Temptation of St Anthony* by Jacques Callot, c.1617. Lowe has painted over Callot's cavernous Hell-scape with an ethereal, almost heavenly environment for this 18th century 'annunciation', allowing only the red dragon to remain.



MICHAEL ALLEN LOWE

As a figurative painter, Lowe utilizes the form of the human body as a vehicle in transmitting a personal dialogue with the viewer. His current work reflects a response to classical systems using contemporary methodology. In his paintings, modern materials, classical imagery, and contemporary application, reminiscent of action painting (Pollock, De Kooning), collide on a visceral battlefield of canvas. However, his work demonstrates the freedom of figurative abstraction and expressive material application. At the same time, Lowe's paintings are beheld to both the craft and intent of classical Master Painting, Sculpture, and Illustration (Bronzino, Van Dyck, Fuseli). During Lowe's creative process, every aspect of his image-surface is carefully considered. Each mark or scrape, drawn through the surface, is as equally important to his finished work as is the nature of paint to the pictorial image. He often includes and edits pieces of master paintings and sculpture to provide context for his imagery and to supplement or reinforce a work's content. In this way, the viewer may utilize a variety of resources in accessing the implied narrative of his paintings. His imagery, and often entire themes, are edited or completely painted out during the narrative construction. These revisions are often caused by Lowe's varying states of emotion during the creation process. Lowe's paintings, manipulated in this way, become layered (figuratively and literally), appearing as relief carvings or unfinished and unresolved master works. Indeed, his paintings seek to have their own dialogue with the viewer and are left open to interpretation. His intention is to provide the viewer a glimpse of what he believes painting really is, and where it can go.

Titania's Dream

Oil on Canvas • 38 x 32 Inches • FG©131592

Lowe's, *Titania's Dream*, was formulated around a Henry Fuseli drawing of the same name, c.1822. The work illustrates a scene from William Shakespeare's, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Lowe's work depicts several consecutive scenes from the play, from Titania's waking, to Bottom conversing with Cobweb while Puck and Oberon look on. Lowe has heightened the sexual tension within this work by juxtaposing Titania's physical vulnerability during her respite postured against the mischievous activity of the other players.



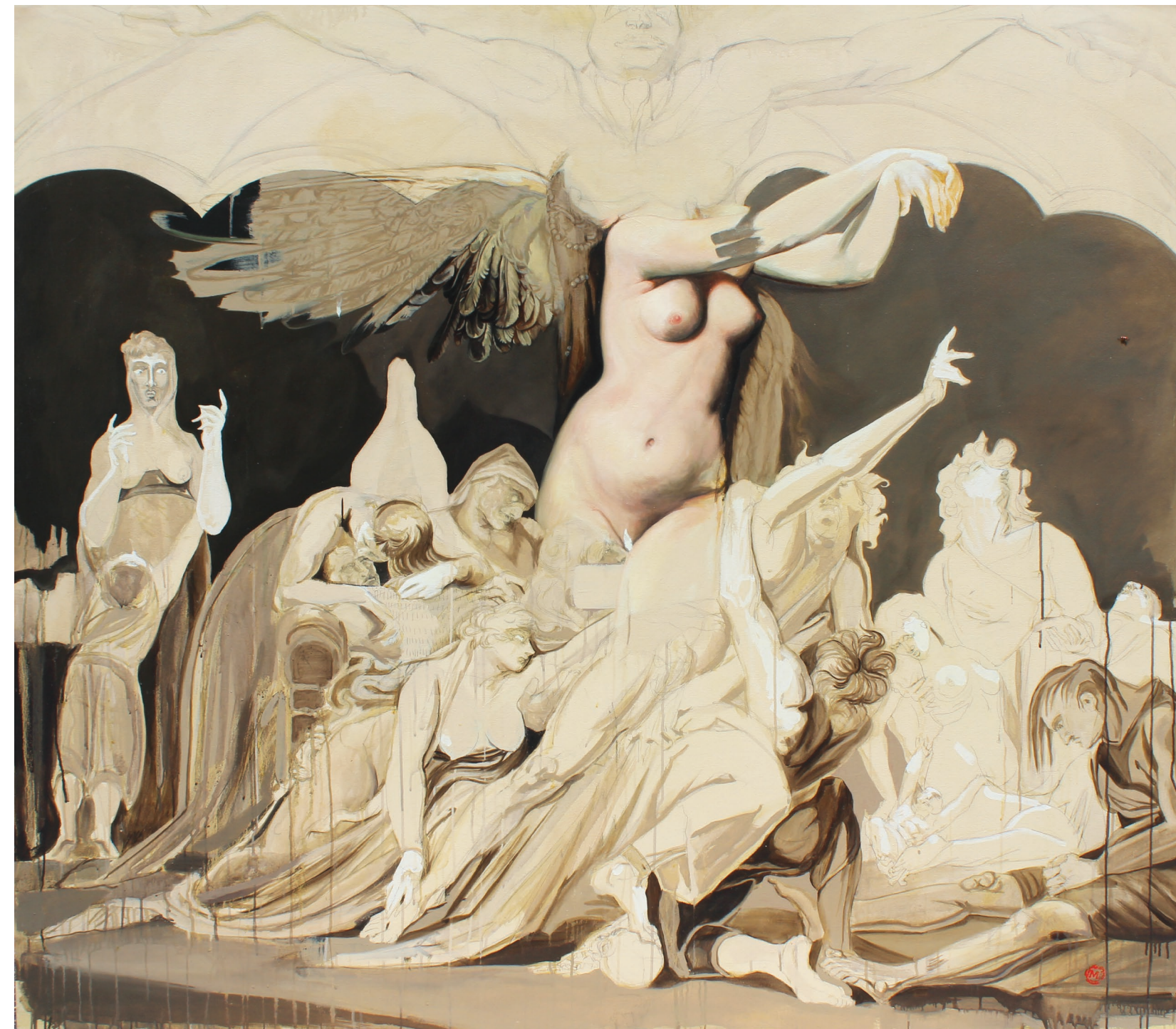
Lazaria

Oil on Canvas • 63 x 72 Inches • FG©131607

Lowe's inspiration for this powerful work of human drama, Henry Fuseli's, *Vision of the Lazar House*, c.1794, is a scene taken from John Milton's, *Paradise Lost*, in which the Archangel Michael is revealing to Adam the horrid future of humanity:

*-Immediately a place
Before his eyes appear'd, sad, noysom, dark,
A lazar-house it seem'd, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseas'd, all maladies. . .
. . . And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike, tho oft invoc't
With vows, as thir chief good, and final hope.
(Book XI, 11.477-80, 491-493)*

Lowe's stylized free copy of the original work has been only minimally altered in a demonstration of great respect for Fuseli's masterpiece. The central female figure, after Ingres' *Angelica* from Roger Freeing Angelica, c.1859, can be interpreted in several ways: as the physical personification of the Angel of Death, the sin of Eve, or Iris, messenger of the Gods. The juxtaposition of this imagery heightens the intensity of this bleak human drama.





Hylas in the Depths

Oil on Canvas • 68 x 47^{3/4} Inches • FG©131604

Behold, Lowe's sadistic and erotic portrayal of Hylas in an abyss of perverse and undulating creatures. The Greek myth of Hylas tells of a soldier, who, while retrieving water for his fellow warriors, witnessed appear the immortal water nymphs out beyond the shore. Overcome with desire at the sight of the naiade creatures, Hylas was lured into the waters and subsequently drowned. Lowe recreated Hylas and the Nymphs by Francesco Furini, c.1632, and fleshed-out a portion of one of the nymphs to allow the seductive painting style to so enthrall the viewer in a similar fashion. Set against the backdrop of Goya's *Gathering of Witches*, c.1799, a favorite of Lowe's, allows the aftermath of the seduction of Hylas to be interpreted as either eternal bliss or as a purgatorial nightmare.

Ancient Night

Oil on Canvas • 96 x 60^{1/4} Inches • FG©131606

In this work, inspired by Henry Fuseli's *The Great Father* and *Ancient Night*, c.1810, the viewer is at a precipice of witnessing the final throes of an ancient civilization. The glowing central figure of 'Night' is depicted in the form of a female statue, one presumes a sculpture meant to honour this forgotten deity. The statue rises up like a column or obelisk, or more crudely, the male phallus. The sculpture, itself, appears the last vestige for what remains of an ancient society amidst a deluge. Fuseli's original drawing illustrates a scene from John Armstrong's poem *The Art of Preserving Health*:

*Time shakes the stable Tyranny of Thrones,
And tottering empires rush by their own weight.
This huge rotundity we tread grows old;
And all those worlds that role around the sun,
The sun himself, shall die; and ancient Night
Again involve the desolate abyss:
Till the great Father thro' the lifeless gloom
Extend his arm to light another world,
And bid new planets roll by other laws.
For thro' the regions of unbound space,
Where unconfin'd omnipotence has room,
Being, in various systems, fluctuates still
Between creation and abhor'd decay;
It ever did; perhaps and ever will.
New worlds are still emerging from the deep;
The old descending, in their turns to rise.*

(B.II, 551-566)

The 'Great Father' extends his arms and offers his seeds for new life in another world. An archangel from Giambattista Tiepolo's *The Virgin and Child with Simon Stock*, c.1749, personifies this transition to new life. Figures representing the newly created are taken from studies after Pontormo's drawing *Glorification of Christ and the Creation of Eve*, c.1550. It is this pregnant moment "between creation and abhor'd decay" where Lowe has intended the viewer to remain.



Company of Thieves

Oil on Canvas • 48 x 64 Inches • FG©138623

This Lowe's inspiration for this work, the subject of Fuseli's *The Thieves Punishment*, c.1772, and William Blake's *The Punishment of the Thieves*, c.1824-27, illustrate a scene from Dante's *Inferno* in which thieves are eternally consumed and transformed by serpents. Lowe's stylized free copy combines the original works in a harmonious splice between their overlapping compositions. The central figurative form of all white unblemished attire, from George Romney's *A Boy, Called William Pitt*, c.1778, meant for a costume of 'innocence' a quality never again to be adorned by these misshapen marploters. This juxtaposition intensifies the essence of its referenced parts in a dramatic contrast of painting styles between Romantic portrait painting and the anthropomorphic forms of Mannerist drawings.



Milk Maids

Oil on Canvas • 71 x 71 Inches • FG©138627

This work originated as a free copy of an erotic lithograph by Achille Deveria, from a private edition of Don Juan in the mid-19th century. In his work, Lowe has removed the male figure from the erotic ménage à trois, and replaced him with yet another female figure that is also attributable to Deveria, from an edition of the erotic novel, Gamiani (Two Nights of Excess), written by Alfred de Musset. All three figures are interacting with a Rubenesque study of a cow. The sprawling female bodies are set against a vibrant color field containing decorative forms indicative of Gustav Klimt portraiture. Lowe has orchestrated an amorous scene of intertwined figures that grossly exaggerates the intrigue and titillation historically associated with the occupations: maidservant, milkmaid, and wet nurse.





Les Agents Provocateurs

Oil on Canvas • 54 x 40 Inches • FG©138619

This work is Lowe's response to a Nineteenth Century Fuseli drawing, *Girl Combing Her Hair, Watched by a Young Man*, c.1810-20. Lowe exaggerates the voyeuristic tension within this original work by adding more figures and staging a much more titillating scene. The young girl combing her hair is replaced with two other figures from a different Fuseli drawing, *Two Lesbians Looking into a Mirror*, c.1810-20. Another agent has been added, a fleshed-out male figure in red period clothing from Antoine Watteau's, *Gilles and Four Other Characters*, c.1719. Lowe has juxtaposed the foreground figures to frame the narrative, having been careful not to eclipse the unfurling erotic scene.

Social Graces

Oil on Canvas • 39 x 32 Inches • FG©138618

This work began as a study of an Ingres drawing, *Embracing Couple*, c.1719. Lowe has used this drawing as the figurative backdrop for his work. The central female figure, originally depicted recoiling from a suitor's advances, has been taken from Antoine Watteau's, *Gathering near a Fountain*, c.1720. The figure's lower torso has been left monochromatic and unresolved as in a study of a seated female nude. The small conflict between background characters in Watteau's original grand scene has been brought center stage in Lowe's work. Lowe has painted a caricature of the debutante's social responsibilities, portraying them as lust filled assaults.



Les Animateurs

Oil on Canvas • 42 x 56 Inches • FG©138622

This work is a reinterpretation of Fuseli's drawing, *Symplegma* (Erotic Scene with a Man and Three Women), c.1809-10. Lowe has held closely to some of Fuseli's original illustrative lines while obliterating others. The costume of a sitar playing musician from Watteau's, *Gathering under a Portico*, and *The Music Lesson*, c.1718-19, has been used by Lowe to clothe the previously nude prostrate male figure in this ménage à trois. This scene has also been interwoven with an ensemble of voyeurs, *Comédiens Italiens* (Italian Players), from a drawing by Watteau, c.1717. Lowe has embellished this erotic tryst to the point of transforming it into an animated boudoir rumpus, mired by a gallant party.



Icarus and the Bathers

Oil on Canvas • 42 x 54 Inches • FG©138620

Lowe's work reinvents Fuseli's drawing *The Fall of Icarus and Bathing Women*, c.1795. The mythical fall, dramatized by Fuseli, has been further exaggerated by Lowe. Lowe's Icarus is a free copy after an etching of the same name by Hendrik Goltzius, c.1588. This anatomically proportioned figure contrasts the illustratively painted bathing women. The fleshed-out Indian page has been referenced from Anthony Van Dyck's *William Feilding 1st Earl of Denbigh*, c.1633-34. The young page, originally gesturing to a perched native bird, now directs the viewer's eye to the fall.



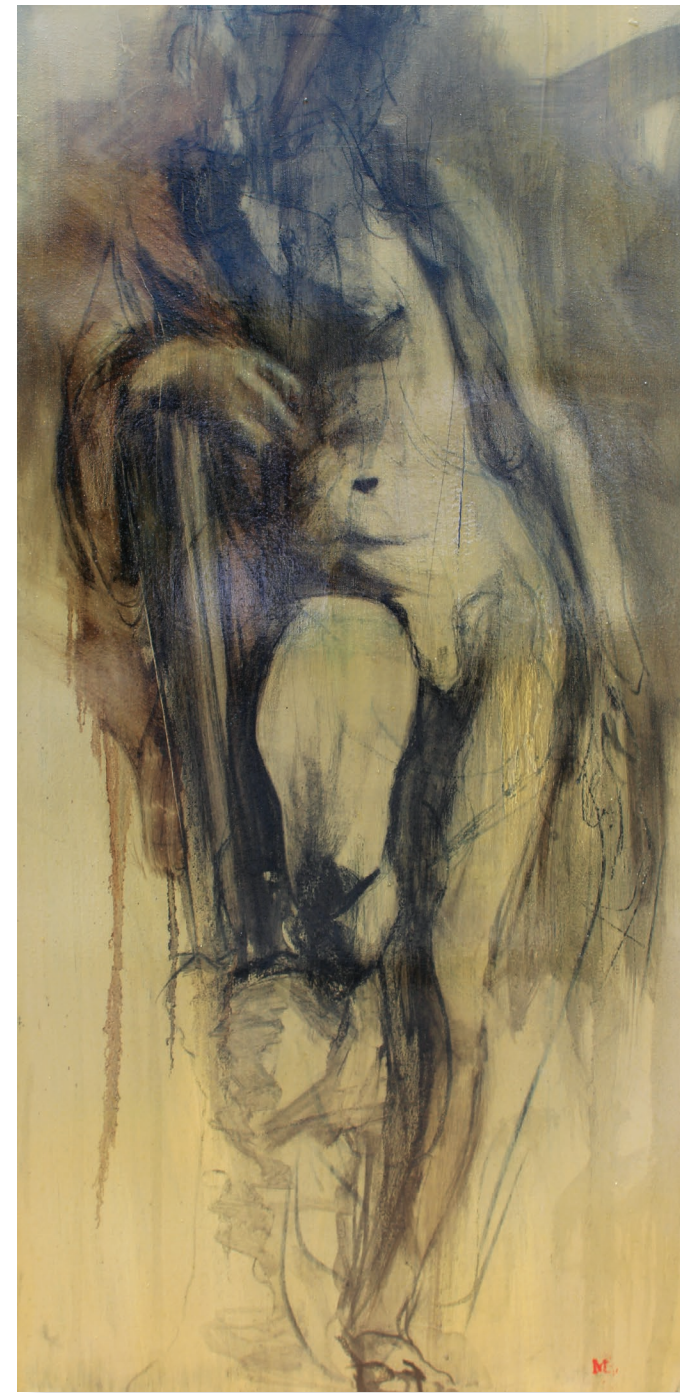
Classical Figure Study IV

Oil on Canvas • 48 x 24 Inches • FG©130488



Classical Figure Study I

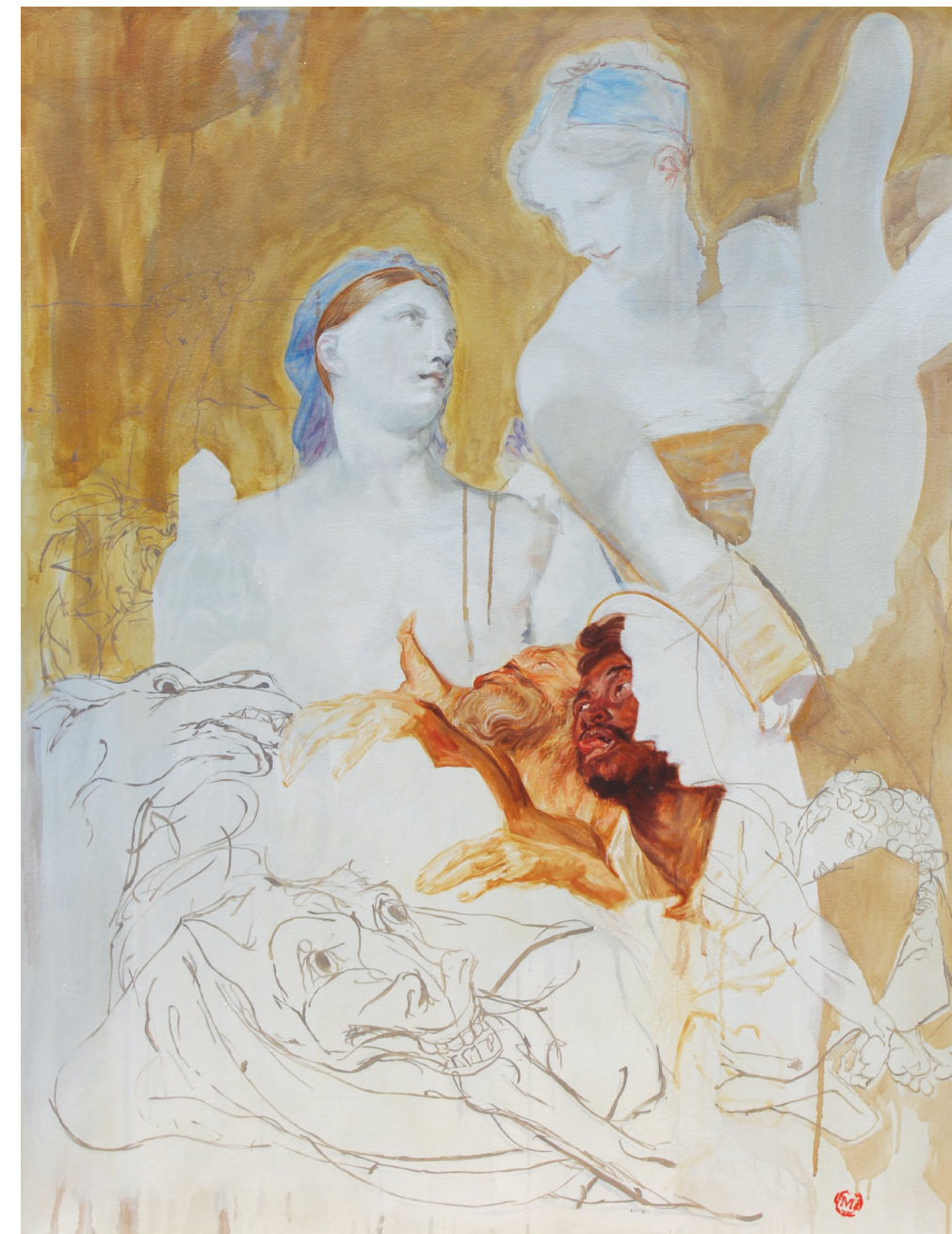
Oil on Canvas • 48 x 24 Inches • FG©130485



Feeding of the Phrygians

Oil on Canvas • 54 x 42 Inches • FG©138621

This work was formulated around an unresolved painting of two female figures by Pierre-Paul Prud'hon titled *L'Abundance*, c.1812-20. Lowe has painted these central female figures encumbered by breastfeeding Phrygians, referenced from Van Dyck's *Drunken Silenus*, c.1620. The Phrygians, in turn, are being fed to the flesh-eating horses of Diomedes, originally portrayed attacking a nude Hercules in Fuseli's illustration, c.1800-05. The abundant produce and sustenance flowing from the cornucopia in Prud'hon's original work has been replaced by Lowe with a ravenous horde of man and beast.



After Van Dyke

Oil on Canvas • 57 x 36 Inches • FG©130510

After Van Dyck was one of the first paintings, in his many similar works, that the artist (Michael Allen Lowe) directly references or responds to a classical figurative element taken directly from a classical work. In this case, the original painting Portrait of Nicholas Lanier was painted by Sir Anthony Van Dyck, c.1630. Lanier, a skilled painter in his own right, held the position of Master of the King's Music and was an art agent/buyer for Charles I. This original half-length portrait, one of Van Dyck's best in Lowe's opinion, encapsulates the magnificent esthetic and beauty of seventeenth century portraiture. In this work, Lowe is responding to both the nature of paint and the concept of portraiture as identity. Set within the frame work of the mathematical composition are exquisite layers of the visceral fluid medium of paint. Paint manipulated in order to replicate an illusion of cosmetic identity. The identity of the figure is not relevant in Lowe's work. The face of Lanier is not even considered by the artist, rather; the absent face acts as a portal into the surrounding environment. In this way, the painting is dissolved of its identity and transformed into an experience for the viewer. Under the many washes of paint, imbedded in the figure-ground, is a faint idealized feminine form. This creature, though not to scale, is in competition with the more masculine narrative. In male portraiture of the time, the sword, sheathed at the side (as it is in Dyck's original) is seen as an extremely symbolic reference to male virility and the masculine. Even it's positioning in the composition (at the groin, left of center) is significant. Being restrained by the left hand from entering what is perceived as the feminine void of nature. In Lowe's work the sword is left out, layering the now visibly present feminine creature (no longer a secondary landscape) against and in competition with an incomplete masculine portrait.



RECENT EXHIBITIONS

2012	Ferrin Gallery	Covet, Group Show	Pittsfield, Massachusetts
2011	Leedy-Voulkos Art Center	Symplegma, Solo Exhibition	Kansas City, Missouri
2009	Findlay Galleries	Art for the Young Collector, Group Show	Palm Beach, Florida
2009	Findlay Galleries	Figure and Composition, Group Show	Los Angeles, California
2009	Findlay Galleries	Summer Selections, Group Show	Palm Beach, Florida
2009	Findlay Galleries	Echoes, Dual Show	Palm Beach, Florida
2008	Findlay Galleries	Contemporary Works, Group Show	New York City, New York
2008	Findlay Galleries	Lazaria, Solo Exhibition	New York City, New York
2008	Findlay Galleries	Art First, Group Show	Palm Beach, Florida
2007	Findlay Galleries	Color Sense, Group Show	Palm Beach, Florida
2007	Findlay Galleries	Festival of Art, Group Show	Palm Beach, Florida
2007	Findlay Galleries	Art for the Young Collector, Group Show	New York City, New York
2007	Findlay Galleries	Figure and Composition, Group Show	Palm Beach, Florida
2007	Findlay Galleries	Figure and Composition, Group Show	New York City, New York
2007	Findlay Galleries	Group Show	New York City, New York



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