



# Michael Paul Miller

## Artist Statement

I am fascinated by perseverance and find this primordial instinct and necessity of life to be both ennobling and suspect, especially when the path is perilous and destination bodes to be bleak.

My work explores the sublimity of existence through a post-apocalyptic environment emblematic of death, disaster, and desolation, without abandoning subtle indications of hope and beauty. This deconstructive setting is a harrowing and plausible circumstance that allows for an open-ended inquiry into the bewildering human condition, and enables the subject matter to address an extensive range of contemporary issues.

I take refuge in the power and versatility of oil paint on canvas. I have deep respect and appreciation for its immediacy, history, and its transformative capability to depict the authentic. I use traditional glazing, scumbling, and impasto techniques with a dark and rich color palette to create the subdued tones and distressed atmosphere associated with destruction. In selective areas I apply bright cautionary cadmiums that break through the darkness to present an alarming beauty.

The imagery I create and manner in which I work comes from a variety of sources including a grand tradition of studio painters. I feel indebted to the artistic accomplishments of many, though the works of Goya, Turner, Géricault, and Homer often come to mind. As for other sources of creation, I rely upon symbolism, ingenuity, intuition, knowledge, and happenstance. I am intrigued and often mystified by the wonder and awe of personal experience and its relationship to consciousness, delusion, and purpose. I seek out the gray and am delighted when my paintings raise open-ended questions that are subject to different interpretation.

In which direction does the road lie? We seek answers to the many questions of life and are seldom pacified. An apocalypse is inevitable and when this moment arrives will we finally know? As conscious beings we have emerged from infinite mystery, and into mystery we'll return. In the end we may find that mystery is all there is. Until then, may these paintings be an enduring reminder.