

Inland, far from the hollowed buildings of crippled cities the burning's presence was inescapable, as its stale stench endlessly lingered in the air. Both near and far, plumes of the abysmal smoke rose from the ground while blaze orange fires continued to indiscriminately incinerate all that lay in their way. Those who managed to survive searched for a reason or an explanation for the fiery enigma, yet their minds were as clouded as the smoke at which they stared. They were alive, but felt absolutely nothing. With only one decision left to make, some struggled and fought fire with fire, while others surrendered and prayed for ashes. With every passing day the memory of what once was faded to gray, and all notions of right and wrong, good and bad hung in the balance, as an uncertain future was left to the few that remained, *The Salvaged*.

In reference of a time to come following an apocalyptic event, I seek to create paintings that embody a powerful revelation of the human condition, which may be accessed through indirect imagery and viewer interpretation of the enigmatic. I am fascinated with what the post-apocalyptic environment has to offer as it deconstructs paradigms and borders that have formed the impotent psyche of modernity. With its limited exhausted resources posing new challenges to what little has survived, the devastated wasteland yields a bleak opportunity for an awakening. The scattered superfluous remnants of an age lost evoke nostalgia, calling into question the new unfamiliar way of life and the perilous path that lies ahead in the depths of ash. Though, when faced with the bewildering quest of finding hope in a hopeless world, the salvaged persevere ennobling the human experience while reinforcing the primordial instinct of perpetuating life and humanity.

While exploring my current vision, I find refuge in the power and versatility of oil paint on canvas, and have deep affection for its ability to authentically describe the three-dimensional. I use a rich and dark color palette to create the subdued tones and distressed atmosphere associated with disaster, destruction, and desolation. In selective areas I use bright cadmiums to break through the darkness fusing beauty with caution. It is in these intensely saturated color moments that my interest in the sublime is usually manifested.

I am often asked from where does this imagery originate. The figures I paint may be in part autobiographical, but also come from ingenuity, fiction, art history, popular culture, and people I know. The post-apocalyptic landscapes are usually inspired by places I've lived or visited fused with an exaggeration of the small disasters and fires I've experienced. As for the symbolic, I seek out personal contemporary objects that are loaded with powerful symbolism. I need not look much further from the mundane to find inspiration.

The manner in which I work has derived from a grand tradition of studio painters. I feel indebted to the old masters Rembrandt, Velázquez, and Turner, and to nineteenth century painters Winslow Homer, Thomas Eakins, and Jules Bastien-Lepage. I am also inspired by and find myself relating to contemporary artists Odd Nerdrum, Eric Fischl, Bo Bartlett, and the late Andrew Wyeth and Anselm Kiefer. I feel connected to all of these artists through the power of paint, image, and pursuit of creating aesthetic transcendence in art.

As for other sources of inspiration, I draw upon moments from my youth, thoughts, dreams, beliefs, coincidences, the subconscious, literature, films, and music. I am intrigued and often mystified by the wonder and power of personal experience and its relationship to time, reality, and delusion. Though my paintings are not always easily read, I find it beautiful that they are subject to different interpretation, and raise open-ended questions. To the great extent at which the work embodies bewilderment and the enigmatic, it may also hint at an underlying notion of purpose and possible providence.

In which direction does the road lie? We seek answers to the many questions of life and are seldom pacified. An apocalypse will come and may not be far off. When this moment arrives will we finally know? Will those who survive the event hold on to hope, a belief that life and more significantly humanity is worth carrying on? 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.