



Psyche and Eros, 2013, oil on linen, 72 x 48 in.



Semele and Zeus, 2013, oil on linen 60 x 48 in.

Myths and Lies

I often reference historical painting themes and styles in order to throw into relief western tropes in figurative art. Certain conventions reoccur with such regularity throughout history that they can be seen as cultural memes that cut across religious, mythical and secular themes. Other conventions are closely linked to a particular time and place. Mythology and allegory are artistic contrivances that act as mirrors, reflecting ideals and social mores throughout history; it continues today. Google any god or goddess and along with historical art, up pops contemporary illustrations reflecting today's cultural trends.

I have always had a soft spot for academic painting, its clichéd idealism, formulaic standards and use of mythology and allegory to justify the nude; basically all the things the realists and impressionists rebelled against.

Alexandre Cabanel's (1823-1889) *Birth of Venus* (1863) is a favorite that I've previously quoted in my work precisely because of its in-your-face eroticism and cheerful inanity. It's exactly the sort of art Édouard Manet (1832-1883) was challenging when he painted his then-radical *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* (The Luncheon on the Grass), (1862-1863) a

A lie is an
untruth you
tell others;
a myth is
an untruth
you tell
yourself.
Paintings
are lies we
accept as
truth.

brehtaking accomplishment for sure, but the death knell of academic art.

In *Myths and Lies* I'm adopting a kind of "non-idealized idealism." Mythology and allegory are the ostensible premise for these paintings, but a variety of topics, including notions of beauty, gender, and painting itself are the actual content. My mythical figures are real people, friends and acquaintances who volunteer as subjects. The process is a collaborative one in which the models bring props and costumes to my studio and then help formulate poses. In dressing, undressing, and posing, the subjects express veiled aspects of themselves and their personalities. At this stage in the process, I usually have no idea what I'm aiming for. I take hundreds of photographs and later retrofit selected images, which are digitally manipulated, to contemporized allegorical or mythical themes,

which are then painted. I aim for disjointed narratives that exist somewhere between the sacred and profane; the mystical and the comical and the historical and the new. My painting technique reflects an appreciation for faithful representation—I particularly like odd shadowing—but there are spatial and stylistic contradictions that belie any truth of the painted image.

Bruce Adams

adams-studio.com

Bruce Adams is best known as a conceptually based figurative painter who references various (often historical) painting styles. In exploring the act of painting, Adams peels back the layers of meaning inherent in making and viewing art. Formally trained in art education at Buffalo State College, Adams considers his true education to be his involvement in Western New York's contemporary art scene, starting in the 1980s as director/curator of a small storefront gallery called PeopleArt-Buffalo and then with Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center as an Artist Advisory Committee co-founder, long-time board member and board president.

Adams has straddled the fine art and art education communities as a painter, installation and performance artist, public school art teacher, college instructor, arts advocate and, most recently, critical and creative writer. Adams' installations and performances have been staged in public venues such as Buffalo's First Night, the Urban Art Project and most notably the public art event Artists and Models Affair. Adams has exhibited extensively and his work is included in the collection of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery; Anderson Gallery, State University of New York at Buffalo; Burchfield Penney Art Center and the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University. He is also represented in many private collections. In 2007 Adams was given an extensive mid-career survey exhibition titled *Bruce Adams, Half Life 1980-2006* at the Anderson Gallery, State University of New York at Buffalo. Adams won the Bronze award in art criticism at the National City and Regional Magazine Editorial and Design Awards.

EDUCATION

1976 Bachelor of Science, Art Education, Buffalo State College, State University of Buffalo, NY

1982 Master of Art, Art Education, Buffalo State College, State University of Buffalo, NY

RECENT EXHIBITIONS

Solo exhibitions are indicated with an asterisk (*)

2013

god-heads, Studio Hart, Buffalo, NY*
Emerging Converging, Damon Morey LLP Corporate Offices, Buffalo, NY
Monroe and Vicinity Biennial Exhibition, The Tower Fine Arts Gallery, The College at Brockport, State University of New York, Brockport NY

2012

Recent Acquisitions: Selections from the Gerald Mead Collection, Carnegie Art Center, North Tonawanda, NY
Summer in the City, Indigo Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Public Art Commission with Augustina Droze, 938 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo NY
Make Your Mark, Capital Normal University Art Museum, Beijing, China
CONDITIONAL CHANGE: Fourteen Artists Take on Janus, The C. G. Jung Center, Buffalo, NY

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Allegory of Painting, 2014, oil on canvas, 23 x 21 in.
Anath, 2011, oil on canvas, 2011, 56 x 34 in.
Apate Being Deceptive, 2013, oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.
Diana and the Stag, 2013, oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in.
Discipline, 2013, oil on canvas, 24 x 18 in.
Gaius Mucius Scavola Confronting a Tailgating Opponent, 2013, oil on linen, 38 x 30 in.
Gunnr, 2013, oil on linen, 38 x 30 in.

2011

Buffalo on the Bowery, Charles Bank Gallery, New York, NY
A Circle of Influence, Indigo Gallery, Buffalo, NY

Echo Art Fair, Buffalo Central Terminal, Buffalo NY

Figuration and its Disconnects, Center for the Arts, University at Buffalo, State University of New York, Buffalo, NY

2010

Beyond-In Western New York: Alternating Currents, organized by Albright-Knox Art Gallery, alternative site installation, Buffalo, NY*
Drawing Blood III, Bruce Adams: Tattooed Women, GhostPrint Gallery, Richmond, VA*

RECENT AWARDS AND HONORS

2012

New York Main Street program, New York State Office of Community Renewal Matching Grant

2010

New York Foundation for the Arts, MARK Alumni Consultant Program

2009

New York Foundation for the Arts, MARK Participant

2005

Bronze Medal, National City and Regional Magazine Editorial and Design Awards, Awarded by City and

Helen, 2013, oil on linen, 72 x 48 in.

Iris, 2014, oil on linen, 38 x 30 in.

Leda 14 Years Later, 2011, oil on canvas, 54 x 46 in.

Leda, 2012, oil on canvas, 56 x 44 in. Collection of Vince and Regina Paparo, Ramsey, NJ.

Mighty Aphrodite, 2014, oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in.

Muse, 2014, oil on canvas, 14 x 10 in.

Narcissus with Venus Effect, 2014, oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in.

Nemesis, 2014, oil on linen, 72 x 48 in.

Regional Magazine Association, El Segundo, CA

RECENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cassidy, Victor M. "Cows on Parade: The Artists' Experience." *Sculpture Magazine*, January/February, 2002.

Dabkowski, Colin. "Beyond/In WNY' Takes on the World." *Buffalo News*, Sept 19, 2010.

Dabkowski, Colin. "Healthy Skepticism." *Buffalo News*, October 10, 2008.

Eisenberg, Jana. "Sharing Show." *Buffalo News*, March 25, 2005.

Firmin, Sandra. *Bruce Adams, Half Life*, (published on the occasion of the *Bruce Adams, half-Life, 1980-2006* exhibiton, February 9-March 25, 2007). Buffalo: University at Buffalo Art Galleries, University at Buffalo, State University of New York, 2007.

Foran, Jack. "Beyond/In Western New York" *Artvoice*, September 23, 2010

Gaasch, Cynnne. "The Painter Painting the Painting at Insite." *Artvoice*, February 9, 2006.

Grachos, Louis (and other authors) *DECADE: Contemporary Collecting 2002-2012*, Exhibition catalogue, The Buffalo fine Arts Academy, 2012.

Jackson-Forsberg, Eric. "Red Ink Drawing Out the Arts." *Artvoice*, March 24, 2005.

Nymph and Satyr, 2014, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 in.

Nyx, 2013, oil on canvas, 32 x 23 in.
Psyche and Eros, 2013, oil on linen, 72 x 48 in.

Semele and Zeus, 2013, oil on linen 60 x 48 in.

Three Graces, 2014, oil on canvas, 16 x 18 in.

Underworld Nymph, 2013, oil on canvas, 18 x 22 in.

Kwiatkowski, Jane. "The Creative Age." *Buffalo News*, March 14, 2008.

Low, Stuart. "New Burchfield Penney Art Center shows Buffalo has more than the Bills." *Democrat and Chronicle*, Rochester NY, December 7, 2008.

Pendleton, Patricia. Paintings by Bruce Adams at Studio Hart, *Artvoice*, July 18, 2013.

Pietrzak, Ted. *Gateways: Space, Place, and the Transformative* Grand Opening Exhibition catalog. Burchfield Penney Art Center, 2008.

Raymond. J. Tim, "Bruce Adams' Divine Beauty at Starlight Studio and Gallery," *Artvoice*, October 28, 2010.

Woodland, Bryan. "ART FEED: Tatted Women by Bruce Adams." *RVA Web Magazine*, Oct 12, 2010.

Yau, Lucy. "In on the Joke." *Artvoice*, January 30, 2008.

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo NY
Anderson Gallery, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY
Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, NY
Burchfield-Penney Art Center, Buffalo State College, State University of New York

Vanitas with Venus Effect, 2014, oil on canvas, 24 x 30 in.

Venus at her Mirror, 2012, oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in.

Venus Contemplating Her Reflection, 2011, oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in.

William Rush and his Model, 2014, oil on canvas 20 x 16 in.

Wood Nymph, 2014, oil on linen, 38 x 30 in.



Western New York Collects: Cindy Sherman is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.



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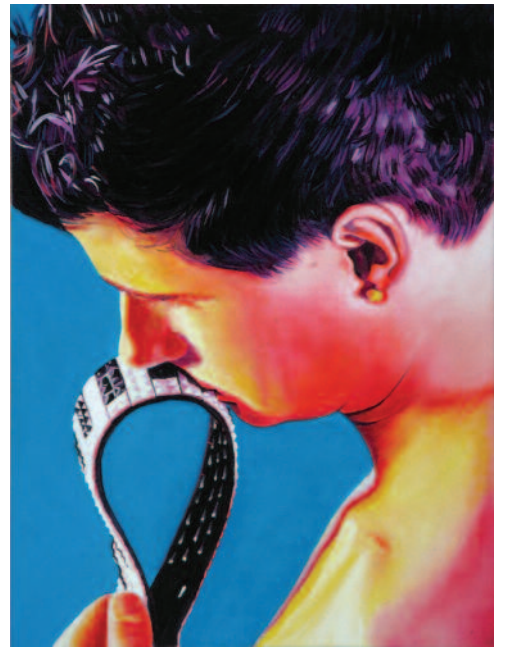
Bruce Adams: *Myths and Lies*

April 13-June 29, 2014

Opening reception, with artist talk at 3:00 p.m., Sunday, April 13, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

CASTELLANI
ART MUSEUM
OF NIAGARA UNIVERSITY





Discipline, 2013, oil on canvas, 24 x18 in.

Leda, 2012, oil on canvas,
56 x 44 in. Collection of Vince
and Regina Paparo, Ramsey, NJ.

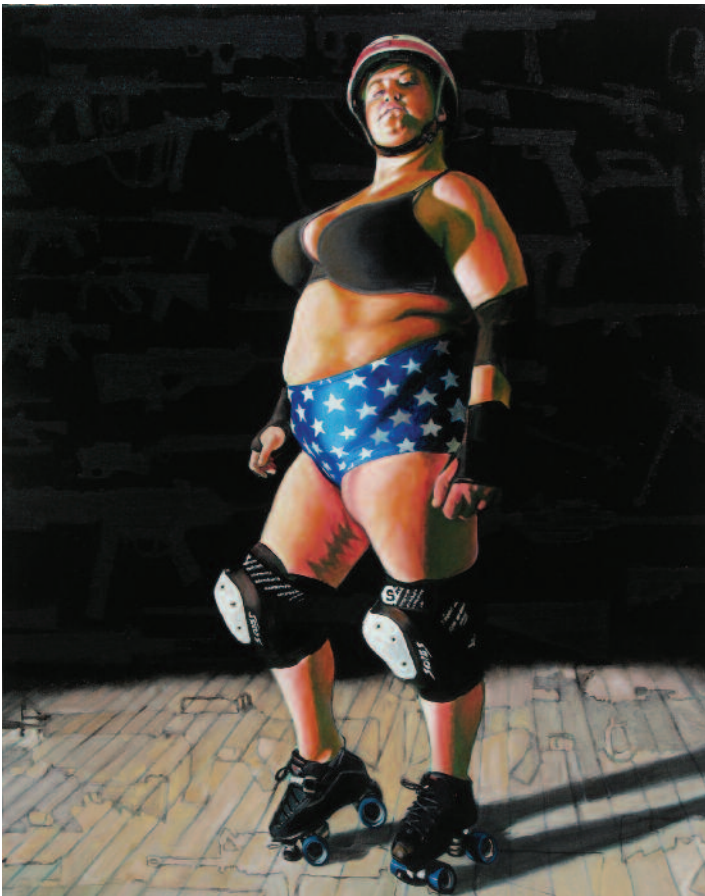
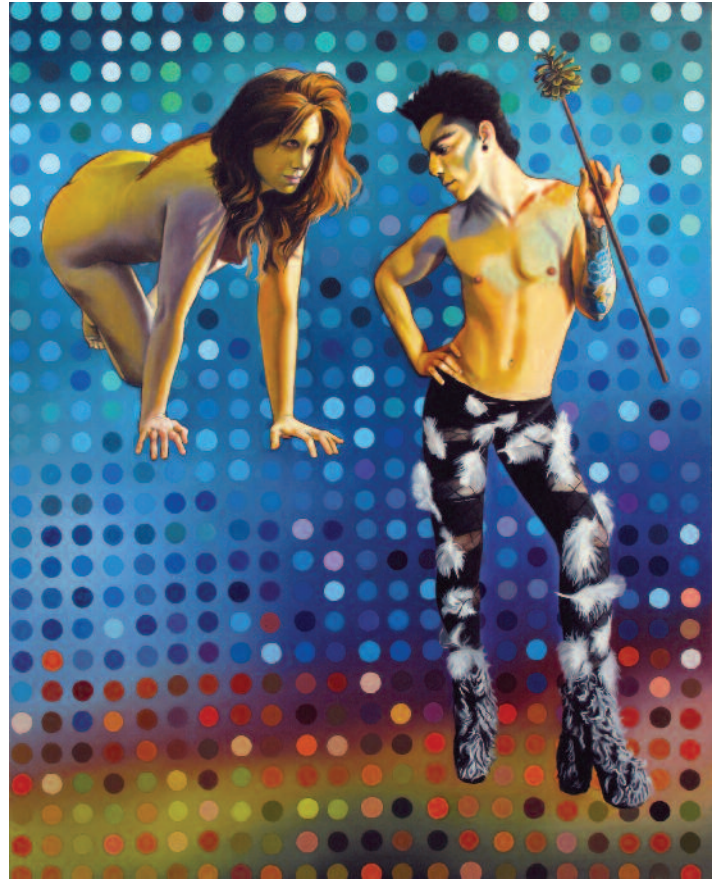


Iris, 2014, oil on linen, 38 x 30 in.



Apathe Being Deceptive, 2013, oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.





Middle panel: *Wood Nymph*, 2014, oil on linen, 38 x 30 in. **This page, clockwise from top left:** *Diana and the Stag*, 2013, oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in. *Nymph and Satyr*, 2014, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 in. *Gaius Mucius Scavola Confronting a Tailgating Opponent*, 2013, oil on linen, 38 x 30 in. *Gunnr*, 2013, oil on linen, 38 x 30 in.