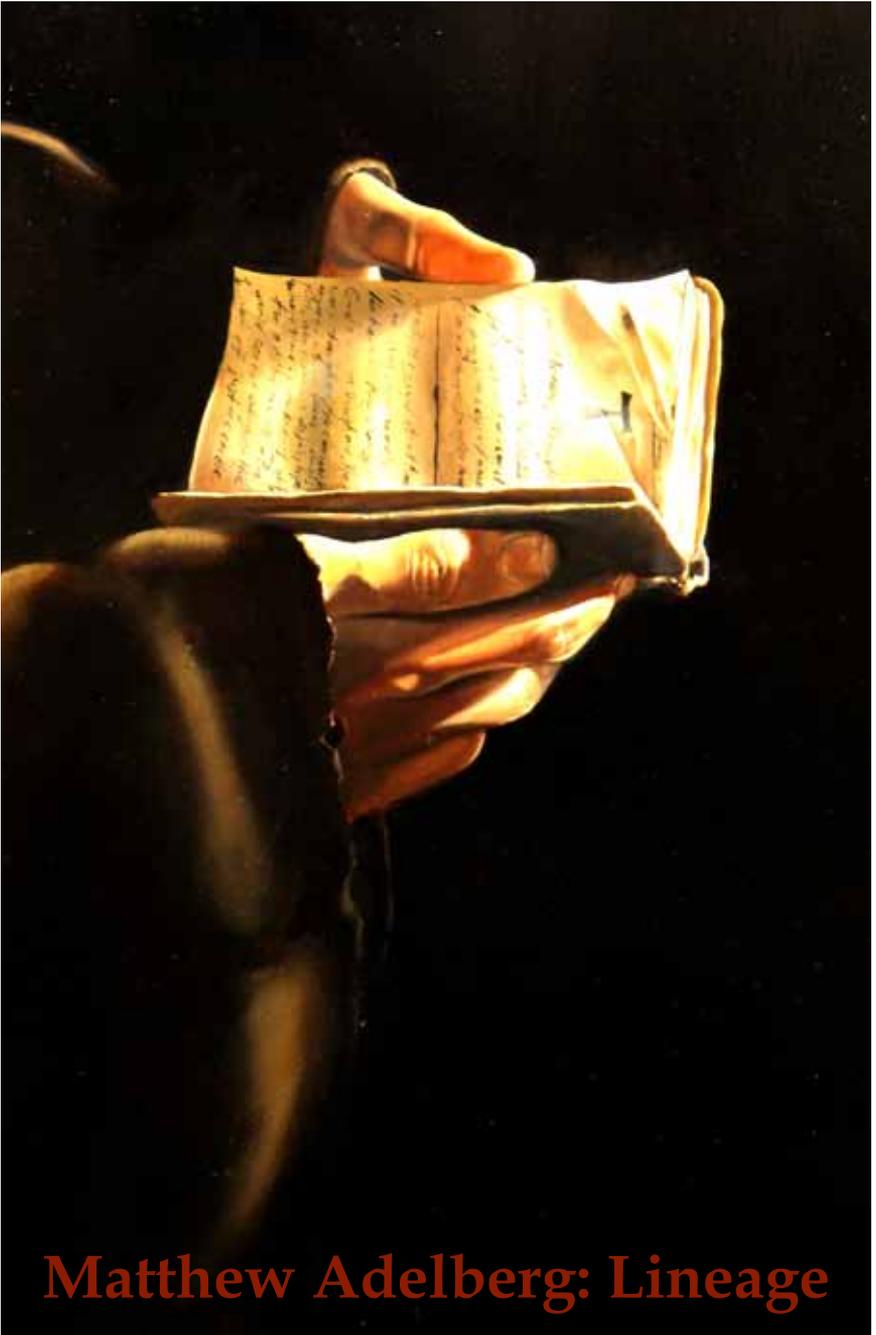


The Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion presents



Matthew Adelberg: Lineage

The Dadian Gallery

Artist Statement

As a child, I grew up in two homes. One was plagued by child abuse and domestic violence against women. The other was a wholesome home, in which morality and kindness were stressed. I frequented both homes, the violent and volatile on Tuesdays, Thursdays and every other weekend. So, inevitably, growing up, I was a frequent victim of abuse at the hands of my father. Having the ability to go back to a “good” home gave me the gift of recognizing from a very early age what was right and wrong on a moral level. This was only magnified by the childhood adversities I confronted until I was fourteen, when a few things happened that directly influenced everything pertaining to my life and work: my father was arrested, my grandfather (a man that filled in the void my father never filled) died, and I became religious. In religion, I found a temporary escape which enabled me to find art, it enhanced my views on morality, and most importantly, it gave me an insatiable spirituality.

I am highly in tune with the historical process in which I create my paintings. I begin by painting the canvas black and slowly pulling out the light. This process is extremely important to the meaning of the work. Dark can represent many things; for me they are evil, moral bankruptcy, and my father. By painting the surface totally dark, I am acknowledging this evil and immorality that surrounds me. However, in each painting and each experience, I begin to find my own sense of light, my own sense of G-d as I push through the darkness. In these paintings light is representative of the good, G-d, love, and my mother. And so, in each image I essentially have to re-discover and evaluate the light and all of its implications. Even in all of the darkness, the light always prevails. The best sentence to sum up how I view my process of painting and living is a quote by St. Francis: “All of the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of just one candle.”

In my studio practice, I tend to focus on a few key topics: faith, mortality, morality and lineage. All of these stem out of my experiences as a child and as an adult, and so my work begins to represent my life. Through this process I gain a higher understanding of myself and my relationship with G-d, as well as a sort of catharsis. I find peace of mind in the details of painting. Creating these works has, and I hope continues to be, an act of meditation, self exploration, piety and prayer.

~ Matthew Adelberg

Artist Biography

Matthew Adelberg is a 21-year-old realist figure painter living in Baltimore, Maryland. Adelberg's fine arts education began at a relatively young age, shortly after his Bar Mitzvah. He attended Carver Center for Arts and Technology (a high school specializing in the visual arts), and studied painting in Colorado with the Marie Walsh Sharpe Program. While studying abroad in Italy when he was just 16, he first encountered the Baroque era artist Caravaggio, whose philosophy on naturalism and realism has had a drastic impact on Adelberg's work to this day. In 2011, Adelberg began working towards his B.F.A. degree at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), focusing his attention almost exclusively on painting the figure. He firmly believes that one must paint what they know, thus his imagery is inspired wholeheartedly by his childhood experiences with domestic violence and the mortality of those closest to him, including his own near-death experience. Adelberg considers himself to be an autobiographical artist, shedding light on issues of violence, faith, mortality, and morality, and his paintings tell stories and express feelings as both a form of self-exploration and catharsis.

In the Dadian Gallery:

The Letter, oil on canvas, 2013, 4'x 3'

The Accident, oil on canvas, 2012, 16"x20"

Head of Goliath, oil on copper, 2012, 6"x6"

St. Francis, oil on canvas, 2012, 4'x 3'

Flashback, oil on canvas, 2011, 22"x36"

St. Lucy, oil on canvas, 2013, 40"x52"

The Note II, oil and gold leaf on panel, 2012, 11"x14"

Rosary, oil on panel, 2013, 12"x9.25"

Lineage Triptych: Resh Lakish ~ Heritage ~ Rabbi Yochanan,
oil on canvas, 2013, 4'x 3' each

St. Francis, oil on Panel, 2013, 10"x8"

The Note IV, oil and gold leaf on panel, 2012, 11"x14"

Just After, oil on copper, 2011, 20"x30"

The Least of These, charcoal and gouache on paper, 2012, 4'x5'

The Note I, oil and gold leaf on panel, 2012, 11"x14"

Vanitas, oil on panel, 2013, 18"x 24"

In the office of the President:

Sleeping Cupid, oil on linen, 2013, 19.5"x33"

Nightmare, oil on panel, 2011, 15"x12"

The Deposition, oil on canvas, 2012, 16"x20"

The Note III, oil and gold leaf on panel, 2012, 11"x14"

Prices available on request

Curator's Statement

Matthew Adelberg's young life is an open book. Painting and drawing from his life experiences, the 21-year-old figurative realist explores violence, faith, mortality and morality by pulling his truth out of darkness. Drawing visual and technical inspiration from the most venerated Old Masters of the European tradition, Adelberg simultaneously grapples with the difficult realities of his troubled upbringing and near-death experience by giving visual life to his ongoing spiritual awakening.

Reflecting on the stunningly accomplished depictions exhibited in the Dadian, viewers may be equally astonished to realize that just three years ago, Matthew Adelberg graduated from high school. Without question he is a voracious, enthusiastic student. Invoking the Torah, the Talmud, or the Bible, Adelberg reveals his painted subjects with a fearless generosity: he cathartically investigates his own lineage, unpacks painful iconic passages, and sheds light on pathways to healing.

While the contemporary mainstream and academic art world seems to focus the bulk of attention on art forms produced with shocking, 'new' materials, sensational topics, or inscrutable content, Adelberg's work may seem regressive. Yet his saintly subjects, searing self-portraits, and marvelous *trompe l'oeil* still lifes have the capacity to give his viewers hope. Faith is restored in finely-crafted, deeply felt, beautifully composed, exquisitely rendered, infinitely readable, good old-fashioned painting. As he says, 'Creating these works has, and I hope continues to be, an act of meditation, self exploration, piety and prayer.'

~ Trudi Ludwig Johnson, Curator

The Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion is a program of Wesley Theological Seminary. The Center sponsors a variety of cultural events which explore the intersection of art and religion. All contributions are tax-deductible and gratefully accepted.

To receive electronic postcards for future Dadian Gallery exhibitions and the Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion's newsletter (10 to 12 mailings a year) please use the QR code at the right or send an e-mail with your name and email address to agray@wesleyseminary.edu



HENRY LUCE III
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