

HEROIC PAINTING AND ITS CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION

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ABSTRACT

My research has involved studying notions of heroism in painted masterworks of the Renaissance-Baroque era and channeling such formats, style, and overall structure of the painting of that time period into my own paintings. This paper communicates the manner in which certain popular culture characters in my paintings – taken from comic books, film, and fantasy storytelling in general – are related to traditional mythological forms. These elements touch on the religious expression of human culture in the context of heroic painting, which will illuminate the varied contexts that inspired the creation of this body of work.

I am motivated by my own love of popular culture, and that of the history of western art. My project objectives were to produce a body of paintings that represent a past glory of traditional art in a modern day setting with updated characters. In techniques employed, each work is a 'master study' from a master artist. Their previous work is examined and informs the decisions made with my resulting artwork.

From combining characters I knew from pop culture – comics, film and video games – I discovered in them comparisons to the hero archetypes of the past. The hybrid result references art history, film, comics, video games, music, mythology and spirituality from contradicting sources. The juxtapositions of old and new, reverent and irreverent are meant to inform the way we look at our present-day "heroes" while reviving a tradition of western art.