

TIM VERMEULEN

Passage



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Tim Vermeulen's ancestry is Dutch and Flemish and he was brought up in a strict Calvinist household. His affinity for Northern European painting of the 15th century comes naturally. He brings these intense influences to his own paintings.

"In Dutch narrative painting there was a 'realism of particulars' in which artists put in a lot of objects to make the paintings more real and certain objects were imbued with symbolic weight," he explains. "There is still a kind of quirkiness about them—they hadn't figured out perspective, for instance. In my work there's often something skewed—and I like it."

"The gold frames of these new paintings tie into the

idea of altar pieces. There's almost a religious connotation to it. I like the idea of making small paintings that draw the viewer in.

"Sometimes something sparks an image in my mind but if it doesn't have any personal meaning, I just discard it," he continues. "In Jungian dream therapy I kept a dream journal which I use in a lot of my pieces."

Once he has an idea for a painting, he searches for images to support it and assembles them either mentally or in a physical collage to set the composition. He does a complete underdrawing on his prepared panel and then begins applying many layers of thin paint and glazes in the manner of the Dutch.



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Murmuration, oil on panel, 12½ x 15½"

2
Meditation IV, oil on panel, 11½ x 8½"

3
Meditation II, oil on panel, 13½ x 10½"

4
Communing II, oil on panel, 29 x 35"

In *Communing II* he depicts himself naked as Jung's "True Self," the person behind the "False Self" we construct to protect us against a cruel world. "I'm feeling my mortality as I get older," he says. "There's a battle between fighting against it and finding a kind of acceptance. The crows in the painting reflect the fact that we think of them as harbingers of death."

In *Murmuration* he stands in awe at the natural wonder of a huge flock of birds in flight but continues his exploration of dualities with the intrusion of power lines into the pristine landscape.

He says, "My paintings are attempts to articulate in visual form, through symbolic and allegorical stories, a chaotic web of emotions and ideas that is at once deeply personal and about our universal condition."

His latest work can be seen at George Billis Gallery from January 22 through February 23. ●

George Billis Gallery

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