

AD MANUM, AD DORSUM

AN EXHIBITION OF METALPOINTS BY ARTIST DARRYL BABATUNDE SMITH

Statement

My works are a part of the thread of antiquity that still spins to this day. They critique the present with a perspective derived from the rich literary and visual history of the Greco-Roman world. Ancient Greek myths and literature are very important to me because they are the lense and philosophy through which I perceive the world. Since my work is heavily based on literature, my works become surfaces onto which I write and translate my thoughts on representation, diversity, identity, and the human mind. These „translations“ are written using the human body as a visual language developed by the Ancient Greeks.

The materials in which I work come from the Renaissance. Silverpoint drawing and egg tempera painting are delicate, meditative acts similar to writing poetry. These Renaissance art techniques have a profound impact on my process because they allow me to exist in tandem with the timelessness of antiquity which has always fascinated me. I continue to see myself in the words written thousands of years ago, in the myths, and in the Greco-Roman art in museums.

In my current work, I depict myself in Dionysian scenes and classical narratives in which a deity unleashes their power onto a moral or a monster. These scenes and narratives, though seemingly fictional and ancient, manage to discuss contemporary human nature in remarkable ways. The poses I used are derivatives of many types of works from antiquity including Ancient Greek red-figure and black-figure vase paintings, Cycladic sculpture, and Ancient Roman murals and mosaics.

Bio

Born in Georgetown, D.C. in 1992, Darryl Babatunde Smith started making art as a way of interpreting foreign languages as opposed to translating them in English. He studied French, German, and Latin in high school and later began to learn Ancient and Modern Greek on his own. He studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where he completed his BFA in Painting, and at the New York Academy of Art where he obtained his MFA in Drawing and Anatomy. Through Darryl's knowledge of Latin and Greek he immerses himself in antiquity. He uses Greco-Roman symbols and traditional Renaissance techniques such as silverpoint drawing and egg tempera painting to connect personal narratives with Greco-Roman ideologies and philosophies.

His works have been exhibited nationally (Philadelphia, Hillsdale, New York City) and internationally in Reykjavík, Iceland and Athens, Greece. Darryl is currently based in Philadelphia where he is the first Artist-in-Residence at Studio Incamminati.