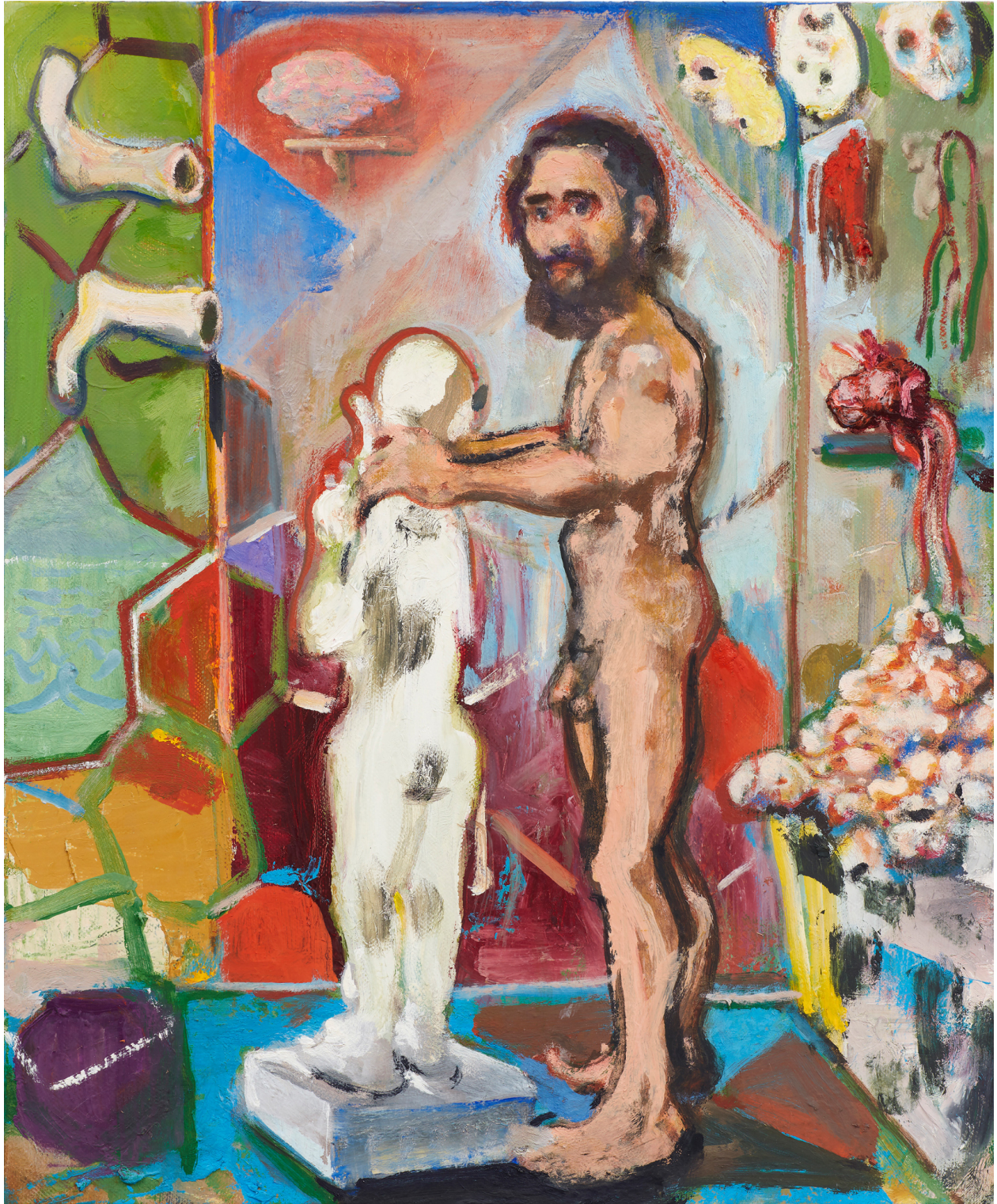


Verne Dawson's Biography Research Paper

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Verne Dawson, *Prometheus in the Studio*, 2019. Oil on linen, 24 1/4 × 20 1/8 inches (61.5 × 51 cm).
Dawson: Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich/Vienna

Prometheus in the Studio (2019) by Verne Dawson displays his distinct painting style of human themes such as spirituality, mortality, and our place in the universe. The two central figures in the painting show Prometheus, an alluring mermaid, and a crucified Jesus. Dawson builds a bucolic landscape with bright colors and geometric-like shapes and linework that connects around the landscape, leaving an intimate feeling. Abstract objects among the figures in the same expansive setting give a mysterious narrative of myths that he is trying to portray. In Dawson's paintings, he creates stories, symbols, and playful narratives examining humanity's relationship with evolution and the natural world, as he bridges the gap between past and present by dealing with astronomy and myths.¹

Dawson was born in Meridianville Alabama in 1961. He is an American artist who focuses on painting still lifes, portraits, allegorical scenes, and abstract works. In 1978, he attended the Art Student's League of New York, NY, and then went on to The Cooper Union School of Art, New York, NY in 1980. His first solo exhibition was in 1985 at the Portrait Studio in New York. He currently lives and works in New York, where he has worked with his curator, his wife Laura Hoptman, for over the last three decades. They met in the late '80s when she was in graduate school at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University.

Dawson's approach to painting is that of an anthropologist studying ancient concepts of time and space, how they have affected humankind throughout its social and technical evolution, and in what way they are still present in our contemporary, everyday culture.² However, far from realism, his paintings often refer to North Carolina, where he spends a portion of the year. He paints not the precise visual information that a realist might want to convey, but rather his feeling about the places. His style also can be reminiscent of Post-Impressionism, with the ejected naturalism of Impressionism, in favor of using color and form in more expressive manners.

¹ Ocula, *Verne Dawson*

² Artefuse, Verne Dawson: Paintings at Eva Presenhuber

Dawson adores working with greens by composing with their various shades and tones and values them as much as he enjoys painting the blues of the sky. He has come to share with his eighteenth-century predecessors an unabashed joy in the sort of “pure painting”³ that blurs and finally dissolves people and objects and turns them into something more like chromatic air, refracted light, or varicolored vapor. He agreed that he had taken to avoiding specificity of detail, “trying to get more breath and air into the paint itself”—evidencing the material and the brush mark and the gesture.⁴ The ideas and stories behind these fields continue to impact the way we perceive and experience life as if we were put in a new point of view.

Dawson’s work is a reflection of his freedom in painting and his wide variety of deep concepts of evolution to mythology and life experiences, as *Prometheus in the Studio*, communicates his ideas and also shares important reminders of our ancestors’ devotion to nature through myth, nature, and the evolution of humankind. He is a genius when it comes to portraying other possibilities that coexist with the timeless scenes we busy ourselves with making.

³ Galerie Eva Presenhuber, *Verne Dawson*

⁴ Galerie Eva Presenhuber, *Verne Dawson*

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