

BIG STORIES: JANUARY 26 - MARCH 3, 2024

**A Group Show of Large-Scale Figurative Painting Travels from the Bo Bartlett Center in Columbus, Georgia to
The New York Academy of Art**



Carl Dobsky, *Blind Leading the Blind: In Spite of It All*, 2023

New York, NY – December 13, 2023 – The New York Academy of Art is pleased to present *Big Stories*, a group exhibition featuring large-scale, contemporary figurative paintings influenced by the narrative tradition. Curated by Bo Bartlett, Noah Buchanan, and Carl Dobsky, *Big Stories* travels to New York after its initial showing at the Bo Bartlett Center at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia.

From Homer to Shakespeare to Spielberg, the history of Western Culture has been shaped by the narrative arc. Stories are the fabric of our lives, recounting heroic journeys across cultures, as described by Joseph Campbell in *A Hero with a Thousand Faces*, revealing the recurring themes of transcendence in our shared experience. The exhibition aims to underscore the profound impact of storytelling on Western culture. Whether the narratives are evident in the surface imagery or deeply woven into the work itself, paintings in *Big Stories* invite reflection on and connection to our shared stories, urging the viewer to find meaning in our existence. Co-curator Bo Bartlett explains in his essay on the exhibition “These are not moral tales. These are not dogmatic history paintings. These are not old-fashioned preaching fables. The paintings of *Big Stories* are the manifestations of contemporary artists striving to find the stories that connect to the larger world, where personal stories become universal, and their inner world finds a connection to the outer world.”

Big Stories showcases a diverse group of artists whose large-scale figurative works vividly capture the essence of storytelling. Many of the artists featured are associated with the New York Academy of Art as alumni or faculty. Featured artists include Steven Assael, Bo Bartlett, Margaret Bowland, Noah Buchanan, Aleah Chapin, Alfred Conteh, Vincent Desiderio, Carl Dobsky, Michelle Doll, Najee Dorsey, Paul Fenniak, Zoey Frank, Andrea Kowch, Adam Miller, Odd Nerdrum, Amy Sherald, Tim Short, and Patricia Watwood.

On the eve of its opening, the New York Academy of Art hosts a Panel Discussion on the exhibition. Thursday, January 25, at 6:30-8pm, Noah Buchanan and Carl Dobsky moderate a discussion about the show with Bo Bartlett, Vincent Desiderio, Zoey Frank, and Amy Sherald. Both the panel and reception are open to the public. The reception will be held Friday, January 26, 6-8pm.

Columbus State University's Bo Bartlett Center is a dynamic, creative learning laboratory serving as part gallery/museum, part experimental arts incubator, and part community center. Situated in Uptown Columbus and part of the Columbus State University RiverPark Campus, its 18,000-square-foot interactive gallery space hosts six to eight rotating exhibitions of regional, national, and international acclaim each year. The center also permanently houses The Scarborough Collection — 14 monumental paintings by the center's namesake, artist Bo Bartlett — as well as the complete archive of sketchbooks, correspondence, journals, recordings, photographs, artistic notes, memorabilia, and objects relevant to the production of Bartlett's work.

NEW YORK ACADEMY OF ART

Founded in 1982 by artists, scholars, and patrons of the arts, including Andy Warhol, the New York Academy of Art is an independent, nonprofit graduate school that combines intensive technical training in the fine arts with active critical discourse. The Academy believes that rigorously trained artists can best realize their artistic vision. Through major exhibitions, a lively speaker series, and an ambitious educational program, the Academy is a creative and intellectual center for all artists dedicated to highly skilled, conceptually aware figurative and representational art.

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