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THE CLASSICAL VIEW

STEPHEN EARLY FORMING FIGURES OF STRENGTH & GRACE

Stephen Early's figures are full of powerful emotion, movement, and grace, and convey a strong sense of artistic strength. A former student of Nelson Shanks and a current instructor at Studio Incamminati, in Philadelphia, Early is clearly a disciple of the tradition in which he trained, but he has directed that influence toward his own personal vision. "At Studio Incamminati, I have had the opportunity to study with some of the best realist painters in the world," says the artist. "This has given me the necessary tools to form a solid

technical foundation, which I felt was my responsibility to assimilate into my own voice. The benefit of being exposed to a variety of approaches based on the same principles is that you discover there is more than one way to approach the same objective, and you develop an individual style that works best for you."

For Early, that style is centered on a sensitivity to and understanding of his subjects that allow him to convey their subtlest mental, emotional, and spiritual states. Somewhat ironically, he captures these ephemeral moods through powerful movement and



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

I Wanna Be Adored No. 2

2010, oil on linen, 36 x 34. Collection the artist.

Torso Study

2011, oil on Masonite, 12 x 9. Collection the artist.

Black Shawl

2011, oil on linen, 36 x 18. Collection the artist.

OPPOSITE PAGE

I Wanna Be Adored No. 3

2011, oil on linen, 30 x 36. Collection the artist. This painting was accepted in the Salmagundi Club's 2011 Non-members Show and won Honorable Mention in the Figurative Category of the 2011 Art Renewal Center's International Salon.

gesture, and this contrast creates a poetic tension between what the subject is experiencing internally and what the viewer is seeing externally. Early talks about this dichotomy when discussing the new direction his work is taking and his desire to incorporate allegorical themes into his figurative representations. "I want my paintings to inspire thought and give viewers multiple layers of interest and meaning," he says. "My paintings tend to depict a range of emotions and a sensitivity to the struggles that go along

with them, while trying to maintain a sense of beauty and humanity."

As an instructor at Studio Incamminati, Early is known for his passion to share everything he has learned—and continues to learn—as a professional painter. He teaches figure-painting classes two days a week and spends the rest of his time in the studio working on new ideas and approaches. Early is proud to carry on the educational tradition that Shanks has established at the school—a steadfast desire to educate



LEFT
APVM Demo
2011, oil on
Masonite, 10 x 8.
Private collection.

OPPOSITE PAGE
Figure Study
2010, oil on
Masonite, 5 x 7.
Private collection.

JAY PENNIE ON
STEPHEN EARLY



“ Stephen Early represents the highest ideals of Studio Incamminati: He is hard working, immensely talented, and devoted to helping other artists. Like other instructors at the school, Early is a working professional artist. One of the most enjoyable experiences is to visit his studio on days when he is not teaching and see what he is working on. He has an amazing talent for drawing and painting the human figure and the ability to communicate the beauty and complexity of the human form and all its emotions. He paints from life and captures the essence and ‘soul’ of people on canvas. I am eager to see where Early’s career will go. I know his potential is unlimited.”

Jay Pennie is the executive director of Studio Incamminati. Pennie has been devoted to helping nonprofit organizations fulfill their missions for more than 15 years. For more information, visit www.studioincamminati.org.

