

LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES



JIM ADAMS

ETERNAL WITNESS

DESCRIPTIONS OF PAINTINGS



Jim Adams
Look Upon the Rainbow, 2000
Acrylic on canvas
31 x 49 in (78.7 x 124.5 cm)
JA10489

“The title *Look Upon the Rainbow* (2000) is a line from a spiritual that offers hope of a better future. While Hephaestus/Vulcan is not-so-handsome, he is an intelligent and educated man wearing his university sweatshirt under a military jacket as he comes home from the Olympic Wars. He looks forward to seeing his beautiful wife Aphrodite/Venus, after years of forging weapons for the Olympians. He discovers a betrayal—Ares/Mars, one of the gods he served faithfully, has been sleeping with his wife. The painting shows a war-weary Hephaestus gazing in disappointment at a rainbow, a symbol of hope and of the happiness he has long sought.”

—Jim Adams



Jim Adams
Harry and Anubis, 2018
Acrylic on canvas
32 x 42 in (81.3 x 106.7 cm)
JA10922

“Anubis the Jackal is the guide of the underworld helping the recently deceased to find passage to the 28th and final gate before eternal life. I envision him as a chain-smoking Sam Spade type, the collar of his trench coat up against the cold and the wet of the underground river. The Owl of wisdom (named Harry in memory of Surrey-based ceramicist Don Hutchinson) perches on his shoulder, whispering intelligence on those seeking passage. In the top right corner of *Harry and Anubis* (2018) you can see my studio window, lit up because I work late. I live on Russell Avenue, a dead-end street with an appropriate dead-end sign—a visual pun for the afterlife. When it rains, one side of the street turns into a little river heading for the storm sewer under the sign. I painted a supplicant’s boat heading for the gate, unaware of the dangers that await. Parchment papers with hieroglyphics inscribed by the god Ttoth float by on the left. To pass through the 28th gate, one’s heart is placed on a scale and it must be lighter than a feather, a concept the Egyptians referred to as Ma’at—truth, balance, order, harmony, justice, and morality.”

—Jim Adams



Jim Adams
Saturday Night, 2001
Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 49 in (76.2 x 124.5cm)
JA10490

“I grew up in a Philadelphia neighborhood in decline—no playgrounds, one small park a mile away, literally nothing to do unless you had an imagination and could retreat from the decay...*Saturday Night* (2001) portrays a haunting image of a young man from a tenement neighborhood on the verge of self-destruction. There is an eerie feeling of uneasiness as the figure emerges from the shadows. The subject establishes eye contact with the audience, staring directly at them as they do at him. The piece of paper floating among the buildings suggests something is about to happen, the presentiment atmosphere highlighted by the distant smoke and lightning.”

—Jim Adams



Jim Adams
Lil Zoose, 2008
Acrylic on canvas
49 x 37 in (124.5 x 94 cm)
JA10488

“Like artists through the ages, I have turned to the Classic myths of the Greeks, Yoruba, and from ancient Zimbabwe because they deal with the issues of humankind. All human cultures tell the same stories with different characters—my version of the sky god Oloron/Zeus takes the image and interprets it through my eyes as a 21st century person. As with previous artists, directors, choreographers, and writers, I placed Zeus in a contemporary context—Zeus is a rap star. His “thunderbolts” come from massive speakers and [post-it] notes refer to his battles and sexual conquests.”

—Jim Adams



Jim Adams
Lost Trophy (Apollo), 2012
Acrylic on canvas
28.75 x 37 in (73 x 94 cm)
JA9919

Jim Adams' *Lost Trophy (Apollo)* (2012) references the Greek myth of Daphne and Apollo. Apollo, the most beautiful and athletic of the gods lustfully pursues the river nymph Daphne. A god of archery, music and dance, poetry and law, truth and prophesy, healing and disease, the Sun and light—Apollo is considered the most Greek of all gods. Having dedicated herself to eternal virginity and fearing for her safety, Daphne pleads with her father, the god Peneus, who grants her wish: he turns her into a tree. In spite of Daphne's terror and evasiveness, Apollo vows to honor her forever and uses his powers of eternal youth and immortality to render Daphne evergreen—the Laurel tree. "Always my hair will have you, my lyres will have you, my quivers will have you, o 'Laurel tree. You will be present for the Latin leaders when a happy voice will sing in triumph and the Capitoline Hill will see long processions." In Adams' painting you see the unsuccessful Apollo staring forlorn in the direction of the vanished Daphne as Laurel leaves drift through the air and settle on his head, forming a crown that would become his symbol and the symbol for the Olympic Games, with which he is associated.



Jim Adams
Nubian Express (Little Pharaoh), 2020
Acrylic on canvas
31 x 41 in (78.7 x 104.1 cm)
JA10869

Nubian Express is the title of an ongoing series that features a train crossing the landscape as it witnesses the environments it passes through. Like Giorgio de Chirico's (1888-1978) train, it moves through the background and "is always there." Adams' states: "In this painting it poses the question, 'what would a teen aged pharaoh be like in the 21st century?' I show him in street clothes flashing a hand sign atop an ancient structure, surrounded by marks of his dynasty's history and the dangers of his own times."



Jim Adams
Nubian Express / Exploration (The Artist Explores his Life), 2019
Acrylic on canvas
31 x 41 in (78.7 x 104.1 cm)
JA11028

“I often use the portraits of myself to explore some aspect of myself. In this one, I am an explorer, exploring the alien world of my own life. I use the floating globe as a way of reflecting what’s on the viewers side of the canvas, in this case significant parts of my life.”

—Jim Adams



Jim Adams
Cydonian Sea (for Arnold Böcklin), 1999
Acrylic on canvas
29.75 x 54.75 in (75.6 x 139.1 cm)
JA11030

Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901) created one of art history’s most iconic paintings, *The Isle of the Dead* (1880), showing the boatman Charon rowing the recently deceased to their new home. Böcklin produced several versions of the mysterious painting—Adams’ homage appears to be closely related to the version at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, *The Isle of the Dead II* (1880). The painting was commissioned by a patron as a memorial to her late husband and at her request he added the draped coffin and the figure shrouded in white to the rowboat. Böcklin himself provided no explanation for the meaning of the painting, though he described it as “a dream picture.”

Adams uses Böcklin's painting to ponder another mystery. Billions of years ago, a massive meteorite struck Mars blasting land and water into space. This water is thought to have formed Earth’s oceans and the Martian crater left in its wake is known as Cydonia. If Mars had an ocean, could there have been a civilization? What could their Isle of the Dead have looked like? *In Cydonian Sea (for Arnold Böcklin)* (1999) Adams links past, present, and future through art history.

Looking closely there are several peculiar details: just beyond the boat and nestled at the bottom of a grove of cypress trees, McDonalds’ double yellow arches poke out of what appears to be a development of ancient cave dwellings, tiny lights across its facade suggesting a thriving city. To the right, several people can be seen socializing on a terrace, and further to the right, beyond the sheer stone face of the islet, a giant moai head emerges from the water. Adams completes the scene with a radiant full moon wrapped in a blanket of clouds and a colossal pyramid looming in the background—witness to any and all events and non-events.



Jim Adams
Royal Flypast (Horus flies over the artist's studio while Seth explodes in rage), 2019
Acrylic on canvas
21 x 25 in (53.3 x 63.5 cm)
JA10921

Jim Adams' *Royal Flypast (Horus flies over the artist's studio while Seth explodes in rage)* (2019) references "The Contendings of Horus and Seth," a mythological story from the Twentieth Dynasty of Egypt which is found in the first sixteen pages of the Chester Beatty Papyri and deals with the battles between Horus and Seth to determine who will succeed Osiris as king. Throughout the story, Horus and Seth have various competitions and Horus beats Seth each time. Adams' painting is a representation of personalities, ambitions, and frustrations. Seth wants to take over from the sun Ra but his brother Osiris, lord of the Underworld, stands in the way—Seth cuts Osiris up and scatters him across the world. His wife/sister Isis searches the world, finds his parts and tapes him together; meanwhile, she gets pregnant (with Horus) and sets about presenting her son as the pretender. She does everything to help Horus but, being rather inept, she damages his chances as much as she helps. Ra favors Seth because he protects Ra as his barge travels the underworld to dawn. Isis demands that Osiris and Ttoth choose Horus, and Seth goes nuclear. Adams notes the many similarities to current events (the different aspects of the ongoing battle for the office of Osiris—or president), however at the time that he painted it he wasn't totally clear where things would end up. Now we know.



Jim Adams
***Eternal Symbol*, 1996**
Acrylic on canvas
38 x 49.5 in (96.5 x 125.7 cm)
JA11032

"The pyramid has been with humankind for thousands of years and has become an icon for cultures far beyond its resting place. It has witnessed the evolution of the human race with an unchanging stare. I try to show the sense of scale that it imposes on human history."

—Jim Adams

MINOR SUN SERIES

“Looking into the night skies, we see billions of stars, each of which is a sun. Not all are major. Some, like our own, are minor but nonetheless worthy of note. Each of them is the center of a planetary system, each of them may be responsible for life. Each one is a monumental presence of beauty. Here are four. I have chosen to shape them so that they break the confines of the frame and activate the space around them, just like the actual sun.”

—Jim Adams



Jim Adams
Minor Sun, 2000
Acrylic on canvas, 45 x 46.5 in (114.3 x 118.1 cm)
JA11036



Jim Adams
Minor Sun 2, 2001
Acrylic on canvas
43 x 48 in (109.2 x 121.9 cm)
JA11037



Jim Adams
Minor Sun 3 (Lucifer), 2001
Acrylic on canvas,
54 x 41.25 in (137.2 x 104.8 cm)
JA11038



Jim Adams
Minor Sun 4, 2001
Acrylic on canvas
51 x 42.5 in (129.5 x 108 cm)
JA11039



Jim Adams
Alien Landscape, 2018
Acrylic on canvas
10 x 8 in (25.4 x 20.3 cm)
JA10924

Alien Landscape (2018) is a play on a phrase: what and who is alien? We have human aliens in the form of refugees, science fictional aliens, and the alien landscapes that are unknown to us here and on other planets. What they all have in common is that their *alienness* causes the comfortable discomfort.

—Jim Adams



Jim Adams
Hades Sketch, 2016
Acrylic on canvas
7 x 5 in (17.8 x 12.7 cm)
JA11031

This beautiful study depicts an exhausted Hades trying to keep his kingdom in check. His stoic presence projects a quiet humility and strength, perhaps not unlike that of the artist's own father or other men he was accustomed to seeing in the poor Philadelphia neighborhood of his childhood during the 1940s and 50s.

In the ancient Greek mythology, Hades is the god of the dead and the king of the underworld, with which his name became synonymous. He and his brothers, Zeus and Poseidon, defeated their father's generation of gods, the Titans, and claimed rulership over the cosmos. Hades received the underworld, Zeus the sky, and Poseidon the sea, with earth, the province of Gaia, available to all three concurrently. The origin of Hades' name is uncertain but it has come to mean "the unseen one." The great moral philosopher Socrates argued for a more nuanced understanding of the name—that which holds the "knowledgeable of all noble things." What is unseen becomes seen, what is dark becomes illuminated. Hades was later known as Plouton (meaning "wealth"), the Roman god who both rules the underworld and distributes riches to the world in the form of fertile crops, precious metals, et al.

In contemporary times, we often forget that ancient Greek and Roman gods weren't simply story book fables or action heroes, but powerful forces that could be called on to alter and shape reality. Likewise, seers and mystics have known that in times of tragedy or great challenge (such as the one that we're living in) offerings and blessings carry "unseen" power to uplift and transform the world.



Jim Adams
Hades Rising, 2018
Acrylic on canvas
4 x 6 in (10.2 x 15.2 cm)
JA10926

“*Hades Rising* (2018) is another mythic sketch of Hades, in this case he’s rising at night to gaze upon the sleeping Persephone.”

—Jim Adams



Jim Adams
Blood Moon, 2018
Acrylic on canvas
8 x 10 in (20.3 x 25.4 cm)
JA10925

“*Blood Moon* (2018) refers to the blood moon as a biblical sign of the beginning of the end of times. Joel, an ancient prophet of Israel, proclaims in the Old Testament that ‘the sun will turn into darkness and the moon into blood...’ The study shows life going on with Earthly concerns while the end of time approaches.”

—Jim Adams



Jim Adams
Lunatic, 2018
Acrylic on canvas
5 x 7 in (12.7 x 17.8 cm)
JA10927

The term lunatic was once associated with mental illness, dangerous behavior, foolishness, and being crazy—all conditions attributed to “lunacy,” an array of diseases thought to be caused by the moon. Aristotle and Pliny the Elder claimed that the intense light of the full moon induced insanity in the sleep deprived as well as bipolar individuals.

There is proof that the term came into wider use when a group of Victorian scholars known as The Lunar Society of Birmingham gathered late at night to study the moon, eliciting the nickname “lunatics” by those unfamiliar with their work. Hence, all who stared at the moon must be odd or deranged. It wasn’t until the 20th century that the term was reconsidered, replaced in 1930 by “person of unsound mind” and then in the 1950s with “mental illness.” In 2012, Barack Obama signed the 21st Century Language Act into law, effectively removing the word “lunatic” from all federal laws in the US.



Jim Adams
Young Haephestus (Vulcan), 2019
Acrylic on canvas
6 x 6 in (15.2 x 15.2 cm)
JA10933

“The images of Hephaestus show him in the dark of the forge, the young Hephaestus is seen appropriately under a blood red moon casting a light much like that of a forge.”

—Jim Adams



Jim Adams
Autumn Ritual (Elizabeth's Raven), 2013
Acrylic on canvas
8 x 10 in (20.3 x 25.4 cm)
JA11045

“Autumn is the Raven time of the year—most rituals that include the Raven are performed in the fall or winter. The Raven in *Autumn Ritual (Elizabeth's Raven)* (2013) is adorned with imaginary regalia, which might symbolize the Raven's status as it is celebrated in ceremony for its role as the trickster and messenger to the gods.”

—Jim Adams

THE NUBIAN EXPRESS SERIES

“This series of studies are works that may or may not lead to larger works such as *Nubian Express (Little Pharaoh)* (2020). They all bear the similarity of the train crossing the landscape as witness to the events (or non-events) of the environment it passes through.”

—Jim Adams



Jim Adams
Nubian Express #4, 2000
Acrylic on canvas
8 x 10 in (20.3 x 25.4 cm)
JA10387



Jim Adams
Nubian Express (Blood Moon), 2020
Acrylic on canvas
5 x 7 in (12.7 x 17.8 cm)
JA10928



Jim Adams
Nubian Express (Hale-Bopp), 2019
Acrylic on canvas
5 x 7 in (12.7 x 17.8 cm)
JA11035



Jim Adams
Nubian Express #3, 2000
Acrylic on canvas
8 x 10 in (20.3 x 25.4 cm)
JA10388



Jim Adams
Nubian Express (Blue Moon), 2020
Acrylic on canvas
5 x 7 in (12.7 x 17.8 cm)
JA10929



Jim Adams
Nubian Express #1, 2013
Acrylic on board
5 x 7 in (12.7 x 17.8 cm)
JA10390



Jim Adams
Nubian Express (Night Express Train), 2019
Acrylic on canvas
10 x 8 in (25.4 x 20.3 cm) JA10931