

From

*Myth* to *muse*

Workman Theatre Project

New works from the fine artists of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

# Publius Ovidius Naso

Publius Ovidius Naso, more commonly known to us as “Ovid” was born in 43 B.C. in Sulmo, a town near Rome. Destined for studies in law and a career in public service, he chose instead the life of a poet. His most famous work was a fifteen-volume anthology of myths, the **Metamorphoses**, so named because each story features a human transformed into a tree, a star or an animal in explanation of a psychological truth or phenomenon of nature.



## **A message from the Honourable James K. Bartleman**

Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

Myths have inspired artists for thousands of years. Each generation finds new meaning in these timeless stories. The fascinating paintings in this exhibition show that myths still have the power to capture our imaginations and connect us with eternal truths. These paintings invite us into a deeper world where symbols and poetry speak to the human condition. One theme unites them all: metamorphosis. As a poetic image and a living process, metamorphosis implies change. And change is the one constant in our lives. It is an ideal subject for artists undergoing personal transformation, especially those on a healing journey towards mental health. I congratulate the visual artists associated with the Workman Theatre Project at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Their art shows that mental illness and addiction can be a stage of growth, a chrysalis from which new life will emerge.

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## **A message from Dr. Paul Garfinkel**

President and CEO, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Artists are, in essence, alchemists. Like the wise druids of folklore, they have found a way to transform the mercury of their thoughts, memories and emotions into the gold of art, story and song.

The artists represented in this exhibit are no strangers to this magic. Through their work, they bring to us astonishing images that evoke both the mythology and the complexity of our shared human experience, and call on us to reflect on our own journeys, beliefs and transformations.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health is deeply committed to supporting artists who live with mental illness and addiction. We do this because these artists deserve our support and because we know the extent to which the arts positively impact the health and well-being of our clients.

Through our support of the Workman Theatre Project, and most recently, through our participation in the launch of the Jean Simpson Studio where artists have an established place to work, we manifest our commitment to the important work artists do on behalf of us all. Without support, artists with these problems are rarely afforded the time, materials and sustenance to create new works, and we are all, inevitably, poorer when this creativity and talent goes unpainted, unsculpted, unexpressed.

Art lives at the intersection of the known and the unknown, in the infinite space between who we are and what we can be. I invite you to pause in this space and connect with these works. You may find reflected back a fragment of your own metamorphosis.

## A message from Lisa Brown Artistic Director, Workman Theatre Project

One year ago, Alison Mackay, co-artistic director of the Metamorphosis Festival invited the Workman Theatre Project (WTP) to participate in Toronto's festival of transformation and the arts, an initiative of the Tafelmusik Orchestra and the Toronto Consort.

After many discussions we decided that in partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, we would commission eight artists from our membership to paint canvases depicting various stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

The eight artists, Alan Parker, Donna Husiak, Christopher Hogue, Henry "Banger" Benvenuti, Peter Smith, Pavel Janacek, Margaret Shaw, and Stephanie Anne each chose a story from Ovid's epic and submitted sketches that laid the foundation for the 9 large canvases now on display.

On behalf of the Artists of From Myth to Muse I would like to express our sense of privilege to participate in the Metamorphosis Festival and also our gratitude to the Lieutenant Governor, the Honorable James K. Bartleman for inviting us to present this show at his suite in the fall of 2005.



# The Charioteer

One day, the sun-god Apollo rashly promised to give his son Phaeton anything he desired. The young boy replied that he wished to be allowed to drive the chariot of the sun across the sky for one day. Apollo regretted his promise immediately and tried to dissuade the boy, but to no avail. Phaeton set off in the golden chariot drawn by four celestial steeds, but soon lost control in the heights of heaven. The sun-chariot careened recklessly across the sky, coming too close to earth and burning it. Only when Jupiter hurled a fatal thunderbolt at Phaeton did the disastrous ride come to an end.

## The Charioteer // by Margaret Shaw

6' x 5' oil on canvas

### Artist's Biography

I am a 4th year student at OCAD and have studied at Sheridan College and the Central Technical Special Arts Program. I receive commissions and have recently shown my work in the Being Scene Art Exhibition and at the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario Suites.

**Statement** • I love painting because it presents endless possibilities and gives me the freedom to express myself. In this work I use elements of colour, space and design.



# The Minotaur

A monster with the body of a man and the head of a bull, the Minotaur was the offspring of a sacred bull and the wife of King Minos of Crete. Imprisoned in a labyrinth designed by the architect Daedalus, the creature was fed an annual tribute of fourteen young men and women from Athens. The Athenian hero Theseus, helped by Ariadne who was the daughter of King Minos, killed the monster and was able to find his way out of the maze by following a track of thread he had laid on the way in.

## **The Minotaur // by Alan Parker**

4' x 7' oil on canvas

### **Artist's Biography**

Art is a kind of kinship with history as presented by the artistic temperament of the times.

As a student I was a failure in the sense that, unlike my peers, I had nothing to say artistically. But I was given a four-year respite in the country, across from a library and I read and developed a set of principles for my art. Information that is relevant today influences the continuing process of learning how to paint. My mentor and teacher was Frederick Hagan at the Ontario College of Art. He taught me the fine art of printmaking and I fell in love with the work of the German Expressionists, something that has transferred into my painting.

### **Statement**

One makes art to communicate. You may not always agree with trends or fads but communication is there and it changes us in some way. Art is often isolating and yet revealing.

The work itself represents all of these dynamics: the literature of art; the often-found meaning and memory on the expression of art; an interest in the structure and colour of art. The possibility of communicating ideas is, however, subtle.



# Apollo and Daphne

One day Apollo mocked Cupid's bow and arrows as unsuitable for a child. Cupid retaliated by shooting Apollo with an arrow, which kindled love and a beautiful nymph named Daphne with an arrow, which suppressed love. Apollo pursued Daphne relentlessly and she ran from him in terror, her hair streaming behind her. When he came so close that she felt his breath on her neck she prayed that her beauty, which had attracted Apollo, would be destroyed. She was transformed into a laurel tree and ever after Apollo wore a laurel wreath as his sacred symbol.

## **Apollo and Daphne // by Stephanie Anne**

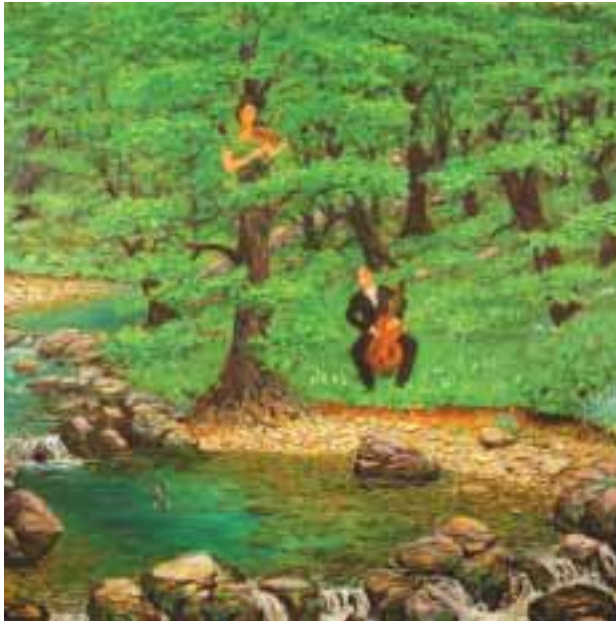
5' x 7' oil on canvas

### **Artist's Biography**

Born on the outskirts of Toronto in 1956, Stephanie spent most of her childhood hiking and horseback riding in the Rough Valley. She sought refuge and peace as she read, sketched and wrote both short stories and poetry. She also found a passion to paint and dreamed of attending OCAD but instead, found herself moving to the wilderness of Northern Ontario at 16 to build a log cabin and live for six years. Her only "art book" was a large volume of the Group of Seven's work. Given to her by her father at age 11, she had it signed by A.Y. Jackson and cherishes it to this day. She loves the way the group captures the 'real' feeling of the woods; the light and mystical qualities of Monet; and the passion and fluidity of Renoir.

### **Statement**

Stephanie spent much time in the last 10 years in prayer and meditation and attempting to transpose the visions from her mind to canvas. It has been said that few artists have picked up a brush and been able to paint so well right off the top. Her third painting was entered in the Art of Stone show and was voted by 80 artists and friends as the best acrylic in the show. As well as painting, she facilitates Relaxation and Meditation with art groups. She hopes her works will encourage and inspire others.



# Apollo and Daphne

**Apollo and Daphne // by Pavel Janacek**

5' x 5' oil on canvas

## Artist's Biography

Born in 1949, in Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic), Pavel immigrated to Canada in 1969. Pavel was educated at OCAD. Pavel Janacek has been an artist for the past 30 years and has had his work exhibited in Minnesota and throughout Toronto.

## Statement

Nature figures largely in my work; a major influence is the Group of Seven's treatment of the Canadian landscape. Art is not only a means of self expression but also challenges the viewers experience of visual poetry and love of nature.

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# Publius Ovidius Naso

Ovid spent the last ten years of his life banished from Rome to the Black Sea. Cut off from his family, his friends and his public, his only voice from exile lay in his art.

From Myth to Muse is an encounter between the inspired artists of the Workman Project at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the first-century Latin poet whose telling of the Greek myths inflamed the creative minds of Shakespeare, Milton, Bach, Mozart, Rembrandt, Picasso, and many artists whose genius sometimes took them beyond the boundaries of society's conventions.



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# Icarus

Icarus was the son of Daedalus, the famous architect who had built a labyrinth to house the monstrous Minotaur. Homesick for his native Athens but kept captive on the island of Crete by King Minos, Daedalus created wings out of feathers and yellow wax for them both to wear in flight. Daedalus warned his son to stay right behind him, keeping a middle course away from the water and the hot sun. But in the joy of flight, Icarus soared too high and the sun melted his wings, sending him to his death in the Aegean Sea.

## **Icarus // by Donna Husiak**

9' x 4' acrylic on canvas

### **Artist's Biography**

Donna Husiak was born and raised in Toronto, Ontario and is a graduate from the Ontario College of Art and Design. Donna prefers to work on raw canvas and washes in acrylic. She has really enjoyed working with studio artists in the Jean Simpson Studio. She likes creating very simple things. Ukuleles and the colour yellow are often the subjects of her spontaneous acrylics.

### **Statement**

Being familiar with the story of Icarus, I was inspired to paint the work because I was interested in the topic of invention and the relationship between parent and child. My painting does not illustrate the fall of Icarus, instead it shows the love between father and son in an embrace.



# Erisichthon

Erisichthon was a man who profaned the gods. Once he cut down an ancient oak, which stood in the middle of a grove sacred to Ceres, the goddess of fertility. As punishment, Ceres asked Hunger to take possession of Erisichthon's stomach. Hunger came to him as he slept and breathed herself into him. From then on, he could never be satisfied, no matter how much he ate. He sold everything to buy more food, even selling his own daughter. Eventually he began to gnaw at his own limbs, and met his death trying to consume himself.

## **Erisichthon // by Christopher Hogue**

8' x 5' oil on canvas

### **Artist's Biography**

When I was a small child I was very happy to be left alone to do creative things. Fully supported and nurtured by family I was a budding artist and enrolled in an arts high school. I was overactive mentally and confused. After high school I submitted work to the Being Scene Art Exhibition at the Workman Theatre Project and they've been a major support ever since.

### **Statement**

I paint in some ways similar to the way I am. Still life is when I am mindful of the stillness of life. I can see we are all master works. It is more sensible now that I focus within what I feel I am, and less within thoughts and perceptions of self and art.



# Battle of the Centaurs

Centaurs had the head, torso and arms of a human but the body and legs of a horse. They lived in the woods and mountains and were sometimes depicted as skilled teachers and doctors. In an incident in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a group of centaurs were guests at the wedding of Hippodamia with the Lapith king, Pirithous. Unaccustomed to drinking wine, the centaurs became intoxicated, attempted to carry off the bride and became involved in a famous battle in which several of them were slain.

## **Battle of the Centaurs // by Henry "Banger" Benvenuti**

6' x 5' oil on canvas

### **Artist's Biography**

Born April 16, 1952 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Henry received 2nd prize in the Kaufman's annual scholastic art competition at the age of 13. He studied 2 years of fine art after 12 years of elementary school. Drafted into the military in 1972, Henry received various illustrator-journalist awards by the U.S. Pentagon. In 1977 he moved to the Lower East Side of Manhattan and joined the Nonson Gallery of Soho. After curating the Punk-New Wave Art Expo that the critics dismissed as "just another rock-n-roll party", Henry, being very depressed chopped off two fingers, protesting the neglect of serious young artists. He ended up, after vigorous attempts to exhibit, black listed from the established galleries. His back to the wall, he became a heroin addict. In 1989, after a traumatic auto accident, Henry flew to Paris and joined the great sympathizer of struggling artists, Agnes B. Agnes exhibited Henry's work at the Chalon-sur-Soane Espace des Arts, and at the Picasso Museum of Antibes, France. In 1993 he moved to Toronto and was married. Henry has shown his work at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. He is currently working on his most important piece to date, 9/11 The Massacre of the Innocents.

### **Statement**

Metamorphosis means a change in nature and appearance. I have chosen to paint 'Galatea, Polyphemus, and Acis', one of Ovid's myths depicting Transformation. This particular myth is a story of love and hate and the transformation that occurs as a result. In this myth Polyphemus, a giant Cyclops who lives as a Shephard in the hills of Sicily, falls in love with a Nemiad [sea nymph] named Galatea. However Galatea is already in love with a young man called Acis. Polyphemus gets very jealous when he hears this and crushes Acis under a huge boulder killing him. When Galatea understands what happened she is both flattered and devastated. Galatea reacts by transforming Polyphemus into a rushing river. Now a sea nymph, Galatea lives in the water, thus imprisoning Polyphemus into the institution of marriage.



# Polyphemus, Galatea and Acis

**Polyphemus, Galatea and Acis // by Henry "Banger" Benvenuti**  
6' x 5' oil on canvas

Polyphemus was a Cyclops, a one-eyed monster who lived on the island of Sicily in a cave in mount Etna. He was in love with a young sea nymph named Galatea but she was in love with a handsome youth named Acis. Polyphemus discovered the young lovers together in each other's arms and crushed Acis under a boulder. In one version of the story, Polyphemus and Galatea were eventually married and had three sons. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Acis was transformed into a rushing river which still bears his name.

## Front Cover - Morpheus



**Morpheus // by Peter Smith**  
5' x 6' oil on board

A secret cave surrounded by poppies and valerian is the dark and silent home of Sleep, the god who reclines on a couch of ebony with black cushions and bedspread. He has a son named Morpheus who is able to take on the shape, clothing, voice and even the walk of humans. He is sent by his father to visit people in their dreams, floating with silent wings. When he arrives he takes off his wings and enters the sleeper's head. After his visit he steals away quietly and returns to his father's realm.

### Artist's Biography

In my early 20's I did a favour for a friend, who happened to be an artist. In return, he taught me to draw. During this period, I took courses with various artists in Toronto and attended the Ontario College of Art and Design. After college I spent many years struggling to find a personal vision. Over the past 2 or 3 years that vision is starting to come together. This year I will have an exhibition at the SHOW Gallery in Toronto. Visual Arts Ontario selected a piece of mine for their 30th anniversary exhibition, which will be touring various galleries throughout Ontario in 2005.

### Statement

I chose "Morpheus" god of dreams because this is the same thing that all people have experienced directly in the past and the present. The nature of dreams is so vast, I felt that this was a wide-open subject, which is what I needed in order to explore and retain a certain amount of spontaneity in my work. This process mirrors how dreams are experienced harbingers of change and transformation.