

Statement of Purpose

As a visual artist, I am interested in pursuing the issues and formal concerns of the fine art of painting not only as an expression of my own inner vision but also as a language, that can be universally understood on a multi-cultural level.

As a Christian, I am interested in coming to terms with my duties and responsibilities explicitly described in the Scriptures. I believe I have a duty to cultivate the gifts and talents given to me for that end. Therefore, I have been diligent to prepare for the present through the pursuit of higher and specialized education.

Modern artists see themselves as spiritual teachers to the world, charged with the responsibility of raising consciousness for the benefit of mankind's social betterment and enlightenment. However, the premise of this spiritual mission is based no longer in Judeo-Christian roots but in mythic primitivism of the ancient civilizations and their arts. Much effort is given to attempt to evoke the spiritual in this manner. Kandinsky, the author of modern art's spiritual definition, refers to these artists as "divine martyrs and servants of humanity, who despised the flesh and lived only for the spirit" in his introduction to his book, Uber das Geis in der Kunst.

In light of modernist and postmodernist theories, art critics and historians are suggesting a shift in content is underway in art which gives me licence to use the images of the past in a new way; to simulate, appropriate and deconstruct those images, both modern and ancient, and to use them as vocabulary that evokes memory and excites argument in the viewers, engaging them as active participants in multiple directions.

For teaching to have weight, teaching must be comprehensible. For theological teaching to be comprehensible in an art context, it must have the weight of sophisticated technique in clearly understood presentations; otherwise, the theology will be dismissed along with the failed art. As an artist, I agree with Kandinsky's observation that we are spiritual teachers to the world, however as a Christian, I take issue with modern art's sources for spirituality. It is for these reasons I desire to study theology. I want my paintings, in artistic and aesthetic values, to be competitive with my contemporaries while being theologically correct in their spiritual evocations.

The foresight of Wesley Theological Seminary's emphasis on synthesizing the concerns of art and religion affords me the ideal opportunity to fulfill my calling as an artist and as a Christian. Through the Master of Theological Studies program and specific directed studies with graduate level painting studios, I will be able to unite my gifts and callings in an attempt to raise consciousness of both the church and the world.

Respectfully,

Wesley Maxwell Lawton, Esq.

Wesley Maxwell Lawton, Esquire