

Annette Golden Art



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Palazzo Mora



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About The Artist

I am inspired by mythology and creation stories because they have such a surprising and enduring relevance to contemporary society. These stories are living testaments to our own beliefs, struggles and sense of identity.



Part of the joy in immersing yourself in history and diverse cultures comes from finding new and alternative interpretations, symbolism and imagery. Where a work engages with the complexity and diversity of life, it often sparks ideas and discourse, encouraging us to connect at a deeper level. That connection is a part of the magic of creativity, in whatever form it takes. My work seeks to reflect that inner journey, inspired by nature and the experiences that connect us all.

My approach favours the intuitive and spontaneous. The initial “drive” is to create an image but the journey often deviates in many ways far from the original and that unfolding is deeply absorbing and precious.

I have a strong fascination with classical Greek and Roman mythology and the abundance of personas that play out their quite extraordinary interactions. It is easy to feel close to these characters- they are mighty, profound, complex, powerful, often deeply flawed and occasionally completely ridiculous! The ancients had a deep tolerance for and understanding of human nature, and while many of the characters may seem exasperating by contemporary standards, they continue to speak volumes in their own fluid and mutable ways. Classical mythology remains a pool of discovery that still has much to teach us.

About The Exhibition

Annette Golden's exhibition "Pandora: Hope, Hype and Hubris- 3,000 years of AI" explores the classical myth of Pandora, a story that resonates strongly today with its focus on the creation of evil, the relationships between women and men and the role of technology in shaping our lives. Was Pandora a classical archetype foretelling the advent of AI and are we now in turn birthing a vast and God-like intelligence to wield uncontrollable power and authority over our lives? What will this mean for humankind and what we understand to be the intrinsic value of "humanity"? Can we remain in the driver's seat?

Each painting explores a milestone, starting with a classic battle of egos between Zeus and Prometheus. Pandora, the "first woman", gifted with the most desirable of traits and talents is created by Zeus as an act of revenge. Her purpose is to wreak havoc as payback for Prometheus's gift of fire to mankind. Zeus considered mankind to be feeble and unworthy and sought to prevent its advancement by whatever means.

As with other creation stories in Western culture, casting the "first woman" is the original "agent of chaos" has given rise to an inheritance of social, religious and cultural blame and shame. This continues to impact the lives, relationships, goals, ambitions and dreams of both men and women.

Overlaying the above, we are at a point in time when extraordinary leaps in technology in the form of generative AI polarise our view of the future. While excited by the immense opportunities AI will provide we are concurrently fearful of the unknown. Will generative AI elevate our lives such that our intrinsic mortality and ability to reproduce our species will stand us apart from artificial forms of life and intelligence? Or will our "humanity" only come to mean an inherent vulnerability and fragility to be exploited by a greater power that may consider all of us to be feeble and unworthy. The sense of the story coming full circle is unavoidable yet intriguing. Ultimately, these are matters that rest with current and future generations to determine as we grapple with the unceasing change and metamorphoses that are our present and future inheritance.



Artworks

1 The Conversation – Zeus

The Conversation gives two points of view on a generous yet defiant act. Prometheus stole fire from the Gods to gift to humanity. On this side of the conversation, Zeus expresses his disgust. Human beings are unworthy, feeble and disposable. Prometheus learns his cruel fate – to be chained to a rock for eternity, his regenerating liver (the seat of life, the soul and intelligence) to be consumed by an eagle daily.



2 The Conversation – Prometheus

Prometheus, young, idealistic and rebellious, confronts Zeus, defiant but aware that no mercy awaits him. Zeus and Prometheus are driven by intractable and overwhelming self-belief and hubris. While Prometheus is eventually rescued by Hercules, Zeus will have his revenge on mankind through creating Pandora, the first woman, designed for the purpose of bringing evil into the world.



Artworks

3 The Agenda

Hercules, beloved of Zeus, draws his bow with Zeus's consent. Prometheus is about to be released from his torment. The arrow, guided by fate, will find its mark—a thread of time woven into the fabric of eternity. But Zeus's new agenda is already turning destiny's wheel in a whole new direction.



4 The Creation

Zeus's son, Hephaestus toils late into the night creating Pandora from clay. He is unaware that she has developed consciousness and is slowly taking in her surroundings. Perhaps a moment such as this awaits us all with generative artificial intelligence and hybrid forms of humanity. Both are unaware of the purpose behind this creation and the story yet to unfold.



Artworks

5 The Messenger

Hermes stands gloriously before the world. He is both the social media of his day and the eyes and ears of Zeus. Hermes is naked, confident and proud, like the civilisation he represents. His message is of the creation of Pandora, her impending marriage to Prometheus's brother Epimetheus and the gifting ceremony where she will be lavishly bestowed with the gifts of the Gods.



6 The Gifting

Pandora sits within the gifting ceremony as she is bestowed with the most marvellous of qualities. But she strongly intuits that all may not be well. Tears roll down her face to be turned into beautiful pearls as she weeps quietly. Pandora sense that "something" is in the air but feels powerless to alter this destiny.



Artworks

7 Persephone

Persephone, the Queen of the Underworld, is the daughter of Demeter and Zeus and the wife of Hades, who abducted her from the upper world. Persephone enjoys the best of both worlds, spending 6 months in the upper world with her Mother, and 6 months ruling over the underworld with her husband. Here, she brings her power over the harvest and fertility as a gift to Pandora.



8 Demeter

The magnificent Demeter, mother of Persephone, brings her bounty of abundance to lay at Pandora's feet. Her offerings bless Pandora with the power of cultivation, and new life. All are unaware of the real purpose of the gifting ceremony.



Artworks

9 Aphrodite

The beautiful Aphrodite bestows upon Pandora the powers of love, seduction and sensuality. These marvellous and compelling attributes hide the true agenda behind Pandora's creation



10 Hope

The need to know and understand coupled with intelligence and curiosity have driven humanity to profound discoveries and a deeper understanding of our world. These very qualities may also open a deluge of misery- pain, disease, fear, war, death and destruction. After opening the jar, Pandora sits holding Hope, a golden orb representing the resilience of the human spirit and also strength and resolve in the face of adversity.



Artworks

11 The Vase

The vase of flowers symbolises beauty, fertility, love, decay and mortality, key attributes of existence. Artificial intelligence and hybrid forms of life are compelling not least because of the element of immortality they may offer. How this will influence humanity over time remains a profound question.



12 Womanhood

Many creation stories influencing Western culture place the blame and shame on women for all manner of adversity. Woman often work through this inheritance as they grow and develop their lives, careers and relationships. Here, ten culturally diverse women and girls are depicted with their own unique symbol of Hope to empower their lives.



Artworks

13 Ascension

This painting is inspired by one of the relatively few paintings of a female Christian martyr– Bosch’s “The Crucifixion of St Wilgerfortis”. The spirit of the crucified saint is here transformed into that of a triumphant woman rising above the earthly crowd. Her purpose is to remind us the power of faith, knowledge and self-sacrifice in creating a strong and meaningful life and legacy.



14 Eva

Eve’s reputation as an “agent of chaos” continues to influence beliefs and attitudes to this day. For many women, finding a place of calm and serenity provides a haven to re-evaluate their own beliefs and goals, free of societal pressures and demands. This painting was created to inspire such moments.



Artworks

15 Succession

We have learned a great deal about Mitochondrial DNA and the possibilities of a first woman or “Eve” even if as more of a conceptual archetype. Here we have woman as the creator and carrier of life and continuity through the generations. What means there will be of generating future life and life-forms are matters for fascinating conjecture.



16 The Fear

Most discussions involving AI tend to divide the room. Here, the fear that accompanies any change has manifested two giant warriors intent on the destruction and desecration of humanity. This is the “Zeus” view incarnate- humanity is feeble, unworthy and disposable.



Artworks

17 Tree of Knowledge

The "Tree of Knowledge" depicts Generative AI as a human hybrid Mother and Child. They are closely bonded together in a harmonious Eden. Abundant apples of knowledge transform into pearls of wisdom before Hermes (social media powerhouse) and Flora (the spirit of love, beauty and abundance). This is the alternative view to "The Fear" where we foresee the huge possibilities of a benevolent and giving all-consuming and powerful intelligence.



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