In his upcoming exhibition at Friesen Gallery, Fodor explores historic paintings and sculptures from late renaissance to baroque and neoclassicism. Depicting historical, biblical, and classical subject matter, Fodor’s compositions are a reconfiguration of the old ethos these images were created under, by visually reimagining them; he subverts the mythos of these paintings and obliterates them. Vivid, dream-like abstractions remain with gestures and movement that embody the force from the Old Master’s hands.

A Tireless Hand debuts at Friesen Gallery this August, where 20-25 works ranging in size from 10 x 8 inches to 7 x 7 feet, will be exhibited throughout the gallery. Varying in scale and medium, such as alkyd resin and linseed oil, his oil paintings on canvas will stand beside other pieces on wood panels and wooden cigar boxes. The latter become Kōan Boxes that represent the Buddhist concept but are also integral parts of the process and exhibition for Fodor. Their layers of paint are remnants of the paintings with hints of emotion from the originals; they are a direct relation to the body of work.

The exhibition’s title references the Victor Hugo poem Dieu. Fodor’s compositions, taken with an improvised and spontaneous approach, where he allows the inherent qualities of the medium to function as importantly as, or even more prominently over the process—like the ever-eroding rain to the stone, wash away what has come before and leave behind something new and ever changing. “As rain constantly diminishes bedrock, I allow my materials to disrupt and erode the narratives I appropriate. Recurring rivers of solvent subvert the classical foundations of my paintings; their sources of inspiration are washed, veiled and reconfigured as I reassess and renew these stories with subsequent layers of oil paint,” explains Fodor.

Drawing from a deep well of knowledge in art history, formal study of visual arts, along with his extensive travels, Fodor delves into the history of significant paintings and sculptures of the past. The subjects he chooses are ones that have had a personal effect on him, many of which he has seen in person. While the classic works of art by some of the greatest painters the world has known depict the ideology of their time, Fodor’s paintings are an investigation...
into the philosophical or theoretical framework of these archetypes where he visually challenges and dismantles the outdated narratives of intolerance, dominance and narrow-minded thinking.

Visiting the influences of the past informs the artist’s hand and guides the process of intuitive mark making as the compositions form an abstract story. Getting lost in the meditation of painting and letting the medium have its way, constantly exploring the insights it reveals, is where Fodor finds new discoveries as an artist.

Accessing a deeply personal space, Fodor consequently exposes a universal human experience that viewers respond to. Although Fodor recreates paintings from the oeuvre of Old Masters, he is not one to rely on a formulaic process. By Painting a loose, gestural rendition of the original, not an academic treatment of the classic, Fodor creates an under painting ready for its transformation. He then goes through an intuitive and personal process of repeatedly building layers and obscuring them. Using solvents, various tools, scrapers and his hands, the paint reveals drips, movement and textures that unveil new forms, making them raw, singular and present. The end result is, as Fodor describes, “a somewhat unfinished quality” that he hopes will invoke a dialogue for the viewer. “These paintings are an invitation to exchange and expand personal narratives and investigate how they relate to each other and the world in which we live,” explains Fodor.

Fodor’s paintings are powerful, beautiful and beguiling as he maintains the drama and strength represented in the some of the most influential images in Western art history, Fodor breaks down their mythos through the process of abstraction, telling the story anew, with a contemporary and ever-expanding painting lexicon and in doing so transmutes the narrative of the past, of stereotypes and prejudices, to reveal a new paradigm.

As Friesen Gallery celebrates 33 years, Lawrence Fodor stands alone as the artist who has been with them since the beginning. “Fodor’s commitment and passion in bringing his ideas and vision to canvas is unmatched in my experience. And because he has been with the gallery for decades, the community also has watched Fodor’s evolution and expansion, and thus my staff and I are not alone in recognizing it as a privilege,” says Andria Friesen.

A Tireless Hand is on view at Friesen Gallery, August 2 through 26, 2019.

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Above: LF201910 Laocoon by Lawrence Fodor. 2015-19 40x38 inches at Friesen Gallery.
Above: LF201910 Angel after Pontormo by Lawrence Fodor. 2017-19, 40x38 inches at Friesen Gallery.
Above: LF201807 Visitation after Pontormo by Lawrence Fodor. 2018-19, 48x60 inches at Friesen Gallery.

“While the reasons for painting are infinite, my recurrent encounters with the impossibly rich history of human voices seeking significance, attempting to find meaning or translating a vision, reassure me that these similar pursuits are an evolving continuum—relemtless as the rain.” Lawrence Fodor