
Edward Schmidt

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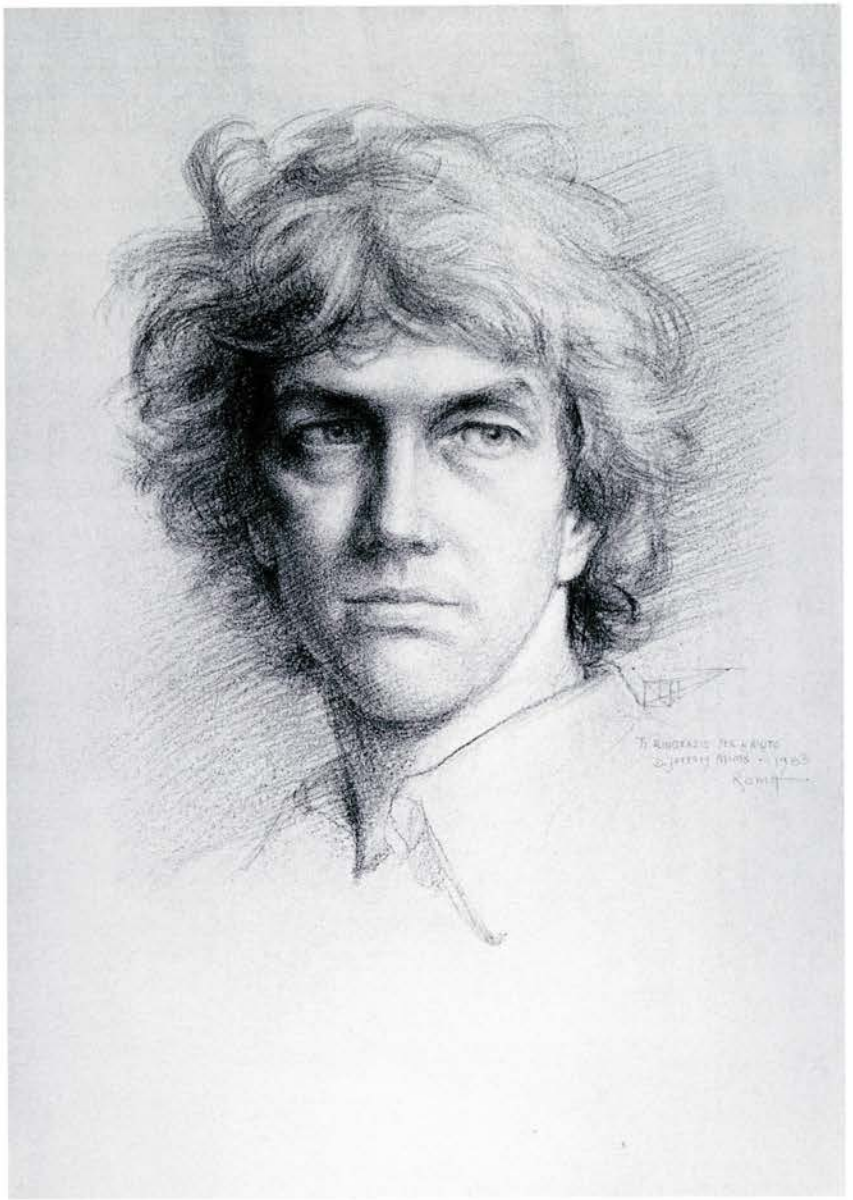
MYTHOLOGIES



Portrait of Edward Schmidt
Drawing by D. Jeffrey Mims

Edward Schmidt

MYTHOLOGIES

Exhibition Curated
with Commentaries by
Stanley I Grand

February 20–March 26, 2000
The Year 2000 Dr. Roy E. Morgan Exhibition
Sordoni Art Gallery, Wilkes University • Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

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The Sordoni Art Gallery's annual exhibition in honor of Dr. Roy E. Morgan (1908–2000) celebrates the accomplishments of a journalist, administrator, and broadcaster, who left an indelible imprint on the civic and cultural life of his community. Among many other honors, he was an inductee into the Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame. Dr. Morgan's long involvement with the arts included twenty-five years of thoughtful and generous reviews of local art exhibitions, concerts, and theatrical performances.

Cover: *Seduction of Callisto* (Detail)

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The Timeless Present

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.

T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton"

Edward Schmidt's Mythologies present an oblique, cultured, yet modern way of looking at reality. Informed by erudition, drawing inspiration from the Classical tradition, and paying frequent tribute to the Old Masters, Schmidt's paintings conjure up an anachronistic, literally timeless, reality in which the past and present simultaneously exist.

His time spent in Rome clarifies this. An historian of Italian villas and gardens, the late Georgina Masson repeatedly likened that city to a palimpsest, a vellum manuscript where generations of incompletely scraped-off writings insistently reappear and poke through later scribblings. Schmidt, winner of the 1983 Prix de Rome and frequent subsequent visitor to The American Academy, knows well a reality where the omnipresence of the past coexists anarchisticly and harmoniously with the present, where fashionably dressed women talk animatedly on cell phones in the intercolumnar spaces of an antique temple filled in by a Baroque architect. Or, to give another example, a reality where the distinctions between pagan and Christian seem to blur, where the church of Mary stands on the site of a temple dedicated to Minerva. Schmidt is part of that world. He is not a parochial artist; he is not a New York artist. Rather he is a Western artist who is both heir to and perpetuator of a great artistic tradition.

That tradition is Classical Humanism, which in visual terms is always concerned with the human figure in the sense that the concerns of Humanism are expressed by means of and through the figure. Historically, the first great era of the human form in Western art spans the centuries between roughly 600 B.C. and 300 B.C. At the onset, we see the gestalt of a younger civilization coming into contact with an older culture and transforming its conventions to express new truths. In the monumental stone sculptures that epitomized permanence and stability for the Egyptians, the Greeks found the essence of movement and change. At first, the Greeks freed the Egyptians' stylized, striding forms from the confines of the stone block. Within a century, however, these delightful, perpetually smiling, rigid slim youths of the Archaic period give way to a more sober and mature type of the Severe or early Classical style, who are followed by the High Classical remote, ideal deities, whose reign ends around the time of the final defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian war. The fourth century B.C. begins with a new sensuality and ends with an expanded range of subjects, types, and ages in the Hellenistic era. In this progression from youthful idealism to duty to compassion we see a microcosm of the human condition, a coming of age. We also see, as has been often observed,

that the Greeks made their gods human and their humans divine. Perfection of physical form became synonymous with divinity. How different from the Christian viewpoint!

After two and a half millennia, the expressive possibilities of the human form have not been exhausted. (That the figure fell out of favor among certain artists during part of the last century is, relatively speaking, of small import.) Indeed, as our civilization has become ever more complex, the tradition of figurative art has become ever more nuanced, self-referential, and weighty. The old tension between idealism and realism, between improving on nature instead of merely "aping" or copying nature, is now but one of many historical and aesthetic subtexts to be discovered in the archaeology of painting.

Understanding a tradition, of course, presupposes knowledge. When the tradition is as old and venerable as literature or painting, a certain erudition is to be expected. In the Renaissance tradition, Schmidt is an artist educated in the liberal arts who deals with ideas. Selecting from a large lexicon of forms and subjects, Schmidt employs visual and literary quotes, puns, and narrative distortions, to create multireferential paintings. Unlike the pure abstractionists, his hermeticism is not one of form but of subject. In this he is closer to the Surrealists and Metaphysical painters than to the Formal Modernists. His emphasis on subject matter, however, should not be viewed as reactionary. As Edward Lucie-Smith observed in discussing Schmidt's *Nocturne*: "Contemporary artists have, in fact, made an interesting discovery: that, thanks to the chasm opened by Modernism between the art of the twentieth century and that of the more distant past, Old Master sources now share the kind of 'otherness' which was once attributed only to non-Western art."[1]

Schmidt's relationship to the Old Masters is not an appropriation strategy. His is a sincere, not ironic, investigation of meaningful, universal, and inexhaustible themes. Nor should he be seen as a pure history painter: His ends and means are both more ambiguous and less didactic. Rather he seeks an intensification and deepening of the visual experience. We should not be surprised that this requires some work on our part as we go from being primary to second-level viewers.

Schmidt's own maturation in terms of technique and subject is manifest in this exhibition. His stylistic development is clear if one compares *Conversation by the Sea* (1991) with *Psyche and Venus* (1995). In the former, the many characters are disposed as if on a stage. A narrow ground separates their space from ours and reinforces the impression of formality. The figures are drawn in clear relief, and their individuality is heightened further by a limpid, defining light. The atmospheric clarity associated with a dry, bright environment—one thinks of Central Italian light, for example—is reflected in Schmidt's limited palette of unsaturated colors applied with a minimum of medium. The paint itself is opaque and frequently left unblended, which gives the painting's surface a modern, vigorous energy.

Psyche and Venus, on the other hand, is quite different. The number of figures has been severely restricted while their scale has become more massive. Close cropping creates a claustrophobic space in which the viewer changes from spectator to intruder. Night has begun to fall on Arcady, as twilight replaces midday. With this change, the contrast of light and shade has become more pronounced. The overall tonality of the painting sounds a darker chord. The paint itself has become juicy. Venetian opulence and sensuality have displaced Tuscan lucidity and intellect: The geometry and rigor of Piero della Francesca has yielded to the languor and carnality of Giorgione. Unity replaces multiplicity as a few large interconnected forms define the abstract, simplified composition. The overall finish is higher. Glazing further enhances the unity: Surfaces are more uniform and blended. Although colors are saturated and glow with a jewel-like intensity, it should be noted that Schmidt remains a tonal painter: Line and value, not color, organize all his paintings. Indeed, here as elsewhere, his choice of hues is mostly limited to the primary triad, their complementaries, and earth colors. Finally, the scale of the paintings themselves has increased.

Along with Schmidt's stylistic development, his narrative structure has changed. In the earlier paintings, he addresses universal themes such as Departure, Return, or Death allegorically and lyrically. In these canvases, the actors tell their story more directly and comprehensively, even when the narrative is somewhat unclear: An accident has occurred, workmen build, classical figures gambol

in Arcadia. In contrast, the narrative paintings from the mid-1990s tend to be more ambiguous and brooding. Although the titles appear to be quite specific, Schmidt often chooses to play with and modify the original literary sources. Coincident with the other changes is Schmidt's choice of narrative moment. In paintings such as the *Rape of Persephone* or *Departure*, Schmidt shows the moment when the drama is most intense. Subsequently, in the *Seduction of Callisto* for example, he substitutes psychological introspection for dramatic activity by showing quiet moments of no action. In this strangely still painting, we experience both tranquillity and vulnerability, repose and threat. The seducer's ambiguous, transgenderal sexuality furthers the unsettling mood.

Schmidt's paintings are subject to multiple readings. Like an orator, Schmidt has become increasingly proficient at both clarifying and obscuring his art. His sense of invention has become less illustrative and more suggestive; his deportment of figures on the canvas has become simpler and stronger; his elocution or manner has become more refined; his memory more focused on essentials, and his technique more refined, subtle, and pronounced. What has remained unchanged is his *gravitas*. Schmidt's reality, timeless and vaguely antique, seeks the universal and permanent in a world of constant change.

This essay and the commentaries are dedicated to the memory of Warren G. Moon, Professor of Art History and Classics, University of Wisconsin–Madison.

1. Edward Lucie-Smith, *Art Today* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), 234.

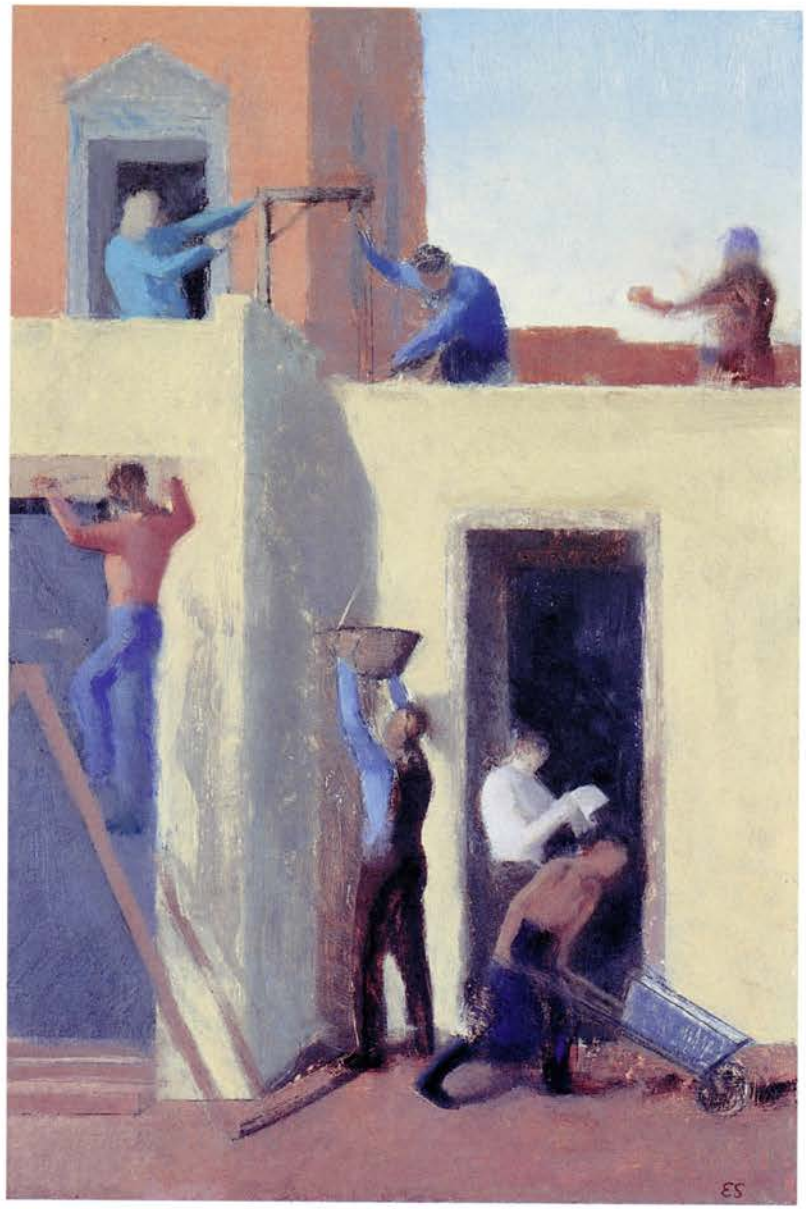
Workers (square), 1974
8½ × 8½

Workers (vertical), 1975
10½ × 7

Although modest in scale, the two *Workers* provide inklings of Schmidt's future development. Perhaps most important, they clearly underscore his commitment to abstract composition, his fluent vocabulary of artistic forms, his knowledge of and respect for the history of art, and his methodical approach to mastery. Like Mondrian, Schmidt has divided his canvases into tightly interlocking squares and rectangles. Unlike Mondrian, however, he relieves the architectonic structure with occasional diagonals, contrasts of void and mass—light projecting forms and dark receding holes—and a three-dimensionality that derives, ultimately, from the architectural illusionism associated with Pompeian second-style painting. On the controlling horizontals and verticals, Schmidt has added movement. In the square painting, the eight figures are disposed in a circular pattern that flows from the foreground cement mixers to the seated architect, up the rising steps, and then downward through the figure standing on the ladder. Movement in the vertical painting comes from the zigzag line that sweeps upward from the wheel of the barrow through the head of the climbing figure with upraised arms and then horizontally through the three figures above. In both works, the animating line simultaneously moves forward and back through space. Schmidt's highly regularized, geometric figures—which trace their ancestry back through Balthus, Seurat, and Piero—further demonstrate his eclectic, synthesizing approach to painting.

Although the paintings have a deliberate, constructed, almost didactic quality, the solutions are elegant, respectful, and confident without being brash. At this point in his development he is concerned with mastering multifigure compositions. His solution recalls the isolated forms of the Italian primitives; subsequently he will develop a more Baroque integration of figural elements.

In these modern yet timeless narratives, Schmidt wears his learning lightly. The paintings maintain a vitality and freshness that is a direct consequence of his brushwork and avoidance of excessive finish.



Departure, 1981–82
40 × 50

In the left foreground, a figure cloaked in a dark hooded robe turns back impatiently from a flight of stairs in response to a restraining hand. He pulls his hood tightly and glares grimly. One slippered, stockinged foot extends beyond the tread of the top step as if to underscore the urgency of the departure. The other figure, recalling Donatello's *Zuccone*, is elderly, barefoot, and dressed in a green toga-like garment that falls in wide, flat folds. He has the veristic, topographic features found in ancestor busts of the Roman Republic: cropped hair, aquiline nose, no beard. Yet his head appears overly small for his attenuated body. He carries a walking staff, a symbol of both the traveler and the aged. In the middle distance, a small silhouette of a bent-over figure, also leaning on a staff, slowly ascends a zigzag staircase to a small plateau before an ochre ruin. The land is uniformly barren, arid, and devoid of vegetation, excepting only a few stunted trees and bushes. One thinks of a Greek island from which heroes set sail upon the wine-dark sea.

Much like the staff that bisects the space between the men, the flowing course of a dry arroyo divides the painting. The contrast of active men on one side of the composition and reactive woman on the other, separated by a charged space, recalls David's *Oath of the Horatii*. The grieving, seminude woman sits on a solid cube and bows her head. Neither of her companions offers any gesture of comfort.

Despite its rational composition, planar recession, limited palette, and clear division into foreground, middle ground, and background, the entire scene is decidedly unclassical in mood. One recalls antique departure scenes on red-figure vases such as Munich 2415, where the protagonists include an old, bearded man, women, and a young warrior. No emotion is shown although all realize that death might well await the young scion. Rather the scene is treated with quiet dignity, as befits a solemn occasion. No exaggerations, no pantomimes, no gestures taken from a Charles Lebrun treatise intrude on the tableau. One also thinks of a melancholic statue of Penelope in the Vatican Museum. Like our weeping woman, she sits on a cubic seat. But whereas Penelope and her gestures are self-contained, here the woman's gesture points toward the outward source of her great grief—Death leading the old man on his final journey.

The steps lead down the steep cliff to a harbor; the destination involves crossing water; Charon is the guide. We sense his impatience as he pulls his body away. The balance of convex and concave contours echoes the action of moving forward and pulling away.

In *Departure*, Schmidt employs continuous narration to show the old man at the moment of his death and subsequently ascending a staircase, a vision laden with Biblical and personal meanings. Painted at the time his mother was dying, this work seeks to universalize a personal sorrow.

The light from the right indicates that the sun is still climbing; an offshore breeze is blowing clouds inland; it is time to go.

Figures in a Forest, 1981-82
36 × 60

In the foreground, two ample, semicloaked females, their bodies forming a triangle, pause momentarily. The reader marks her place in the book and looks up at the listener, who—seated under a large tree—touches her own breast. From the right, an aged man, preceded by his walking staff, enters the glen. His face concealed and body wrapped tightly against an inner chill suggest that the fire has departed his bones long ago. He is an ominous presence, a *memento mori*, an unpleasant reminder that Death too dwells in Arcadia. In the center, framed by the trees, a nude youth runs, his movement indicated by both his posture and his spreading red cloak, which flies behind and offsets the form of his body. A couple proceed to the stately pace of their private minuet. The woman, with her cloak falling to expose both breasts, points at the fleeng youth. Her partner, dressed in a short loincloth, raises his arms like a more restrained version of the famous *Dancing Satyr* from Pompeii. Whatever is going on matters not to the two old anchorites, one of whom sleeps while the other, like a hooded Giotto interlocutor, rests his back against a slender tree and drifts in reverie.

The artist has provided an explanation: "In my picture the two women represent reader and listener. Behind and around [them] are the imagined characters of this imagined book. The whole scene, then, is the product of the imagination of the listener."[1] The painting, therefore, combines "real" and fictitious characters simultaneously, as Edgar Wind believed Titian (?) had done in his *Concert Champêtre*, which Schmidt had copied during his student days in Paris. Schmidt's interest in different levels of reality, in the separate but unseparable realities of life and literature, furthers the allegorical reading of this work from which emerges no single narrative or myth. All that might be noted is the contrast between the vitality of youth, underscored by the strong light, with the melancholy and shadow of age.

It is typical of Schmidt that he here expresses his meaning by gesture rather than facial expression. Indeed, he has left most of the faces in a state of generalized finish. The composition embodies multiplicity, not unity, which adds to the impression of multiple realities overlapping in time. Recession into space is planar and orderly, with alternating bands of light and dark that provide easy access to the scene. Although abundant drapery evokes the Classic past, Schmidt handles the drapery folds most unclassically, further obscuring a literal reading of this allegorical painting.

1. Edward Schmidt, letter to author, February 2, 2000.

The Tempest, 1981-82
24 × 36

In *The Tempest*, a storm assails eight figures on a desolate promontory by the sea. The windswept trees, bending under the gale's lash, express the violence. Two men struggle with billowing cloaks that flare like the pitiful sails on that "brave vessel . . . Dash'd all to pieces!" off Prospero's island.[1] In the middle ground, a nude figure wearing a leafy garland on his head (we presume it's ivy, sacred to Bacchus) incongruously appears to assault a maiden or nymph. In front of this pair, at the base of a twisted tree trunk, a woman in a blue cloak protectively hunches over her swaddled child. To the left, a figure in a tan robe huddles in the meager shelter provided by a few convenient boulders. The contrast between standing and not-standing figures—between contrasting responses to the gale—adds tension and disorientation to the composition. This dynamic equilibrium of opposing elements is manifested as well in the landscape's sloping diagonal rebuffed by the wind's countering force.

Schmidt has recalled a violent storm that hit Brooklyn when he was living there. He describes venturing out to Prospect Park, a neighborhood fixture, and witnessing the havoc caused by the winds: "I was in the park (a beautiful grand place, similar in scale to Central Park) when the strong winds came up fast. The suddenness and intensity of the storm, and the physical force against my body, making it difficult to stand, much less get home, made a deep impression."[2] In the *The Tempest* Schmidt has stripped these memories of specificity in favor of a distilled essence. Consequently, he relies on rhetorical gestures and poses instead of facial expressions to convey sentiment, and thus he leaves the faces concealed or sketchily rendered.

At the time he painted this canvas, Schmidt was experimenting with various underpainting techniques. The first layer consists of a charcoal drawing which he then covered in a greenish-grey oil grisaille. The figures in the monochrome layer were nude. The final layer added both color and clothing, excepting only the nude figure in the middle ground.

We recall Schmidt's interest in levels of reality and wonder if the tempest is more psychological or meteorological.

1. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1: 2, 6–8.
2. Edward Schmidt, letter to author, March 3, 2000.

Dies Irae—Destruction of a City, 1982
36 × 48

Few words are more chilling than *Dies Irae*, the Day of Wrath described by John in Revelation. For John had seen in the right hand of God a scroll with seven seals whose unsealing inaugurates the beginning of the end:

> When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale; the sky vanished like a scroll that is rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.
>
> Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the generals and the rich and the strong, and every one, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand before it?"[1]

Dies irae has had a particularly significant role in Western Christianity since at least the fourteenth century, when a poetic text attributed to Thomas of Celano (active first half of the thirteenth century) was included in the Requiem Mass and inserted into the Roman Missal during the sixteenth. With an important role in the Mass for the Dead, Thomas's poem has inspired a rich tradition of sacred music with earlier compositions by Antoine Brumel, Ockeghem, Giammateo Asola, Orfeo Vecchi, G. F. Anerio, and G. O. Pitoni, as well as works created after the Council of Trent (1545–1563) by Mozart, J. C. Bach, Cherubini, Verdi, Fauré, and Britten, to name only the most famous. In addition, the plainsong motif of the *Dies irae* has haunted many composers through the years, including Berlioz, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff. Although Penderecki's *Dies Irae* (1967) does not depend on Thomas's text, it finds in the tradition a way to memorialize the victims of Auschwitz.

Painted during a time of "major fires, cities being bombed, [and] varieties of urban destruction," Schmidt desired to create "a 'heroic' subject, a picture with seriousness and gravity."[2] Equally fascinating to him were formal concerns: "the wonderful possibilities of odd, broken walls born of invention, geometry, and accidental views, the free form abstraction of the smoke with its value and color richness."[3] Schmidt's painting continues a rich tradition of cataclysmic works that include the Classical sculptural group, now dispersed, of *Niobe and Her Children* being slaughtered by the arrows of Apollo and Artemis, Raphael's *Fire in the Borgo*, and Poussin's *Massacre of the Innocents* and *Rape of the Sabine Women*.

1. Revelation 6: 12–17.
2. Edward Schmidt, letter to author, February 3, 2000.
3. Ibid.

Rape of Persephone, 1982
51 × 67

We read of the Rape of Persephone in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, an epic poem once believed to have been composed by the author of the *Iliad*. In the hymn, the anonymous author relates how Hades, son of Cronos and Lord of the Underworld, swept away Demeter's "trim-ankled daughter" while she was out "gathering flowers over a soft meadow."[1] Having wandered away from her companions, "the deep-bosomed daughters of Oceanus," Persephone was set upon suddenly by Hades: "wide-pathed earth yawned there in the plain of Nysa, and the lord, Host of Many, with his immortal horses sprang out upon her [and] caught her up reluctant on his golden car and bare her away lamenting." The story is repeated subsequently in the hymn; when Demeter asks Persephone to describe what happened, she replies "we were playing and gathering sweet flowers in our hands . . . but the earth parted beneath, and there the strong lord, the Host of Many, sprang forth and in his golden chariot he bore me away, all unwilling, beneath the earth." Although the versions differ slightly—in the second we learn that Persephone was taken underground—both include Hades' chariot.

Artists, on the other hand, have often preferred the dramatic possibilities inherent in distilling the scene to its essence of struggling figures—eliminating the horses and chariot. Completed in Italy during his Prix de Rome fellowship, Schmidt's sketchlike painting reflects a firsthand knowledge of Bernini's well-known marble *Apollo and Daphne* in the Villa Borghese. Compared to this dynamic, lusty conflict, Schmidt's abduction seems rather chaste and tender as Hades grasps his quarry and she pivots on her left foot to face him. A dynamic equilibrium is established between the pursuer's movement to the right and the diagonally inclined trees behind.

Schmidt has populated his version with additional friezelike figures not mentioned as being present at the abduction. To the left a woman—"dark-robed" Demeter we surmise—bends over in grief. She is balanced by a second female, with Michelangelesque biceps, who might be "tender-hearted Hecate," who heard Persephone's "shrill cry." Although the identity of the two naked youths is uncertain—they serve as witnesses to the event—their presence furthers the Classical mood by recalling the compositions on antique sculptural reliefs, including sarcophagi, and establishing a stable, triangular arrangement of the figures.

The Rape of the Maiden, her eventual liberation from the Dark Realm, and her obligation to return there for a third of each year, became the basis of an elaborate fertility mystery. Centered on the gift of grain, the cycles of the seasons, and the disappearance and reappearance of the deity, the myth retains its vitality to this day.

1. All quotations from the *Homeric Hymns*, II (to Demeter), Loeb Classical Library translation.

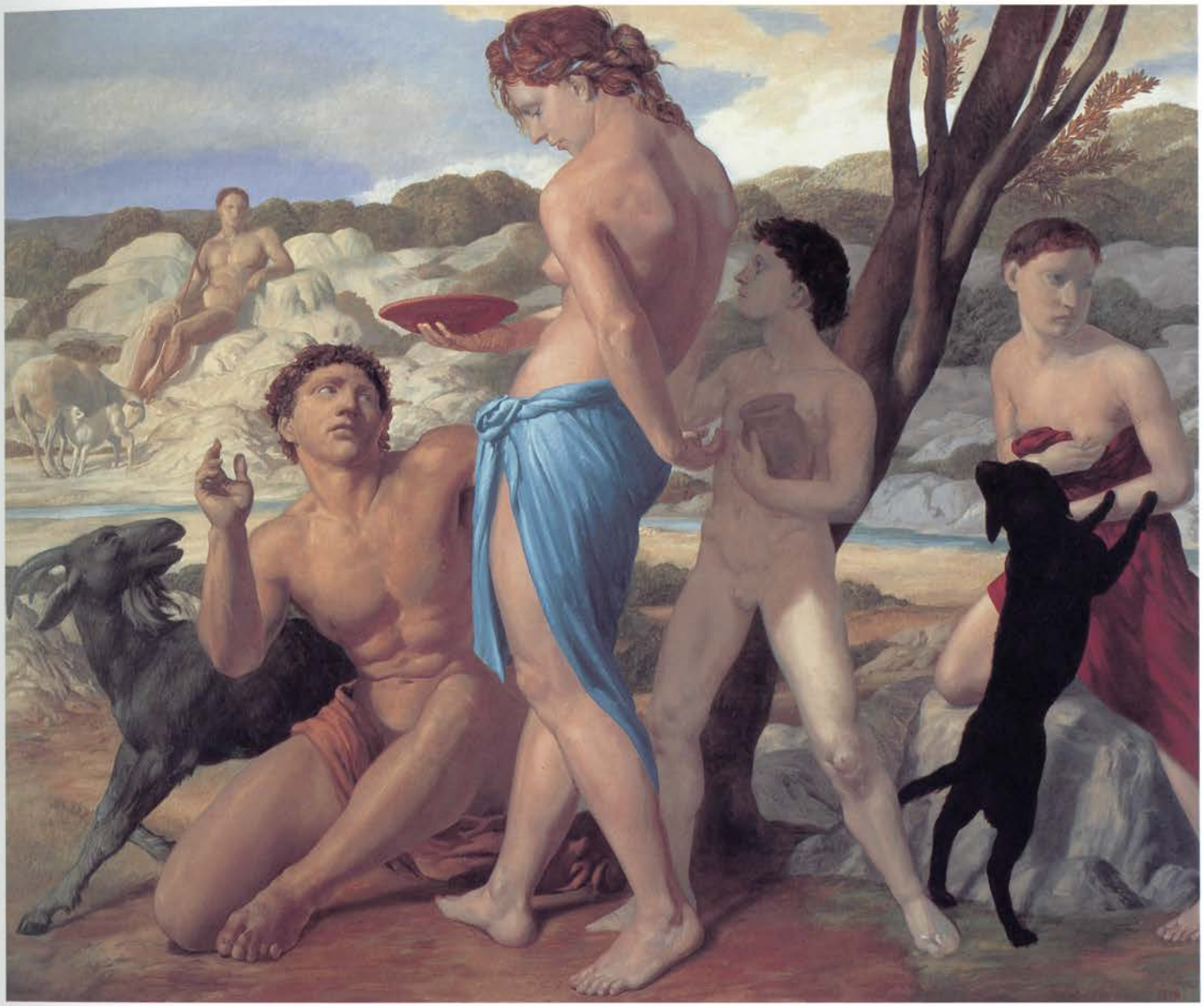
The Shepherd's Dream, 1989
50 × 60

In *The Shepherd's Dream*, Schmidt again revives the old tradition of continuous narration whereby a figure appears two or more times within the composition. In the left middle ground, the shepherd with his staff reclines like an antique hero or god on his rustic, rocky throne. In the foreground, across a small stream—the River Lethe?—he appears again, with upraised arm, gazing at a ministering woman in perfect equipoise attended by a nude youth. The two narratives, however, exist in different realms. The only "real" personage in the composition is the seated shepherd since, according to the artist, the "foreground ensemble is meant as a projection of the back shepherd's imagination."[1] Schmidt emphasizes the power of imagination by painting the ensemble in greater detail than the rather sketchily rendered dreamer. The reverie of desire is more vivid than life.

Originally titled *The Shepherd's Dream—Thirst and Desire*, the painting is a study in contrasts: active–passive, tension–relaxation, dream–reality, consciousness–unconscious. Even the values continue this dichotomy: foreground in shade, the back figure in the sun. Yet both episodes are linked by images of the alma mater or nourishing mother. At the shepherd's feet, a lamb suckles. In the foreground, it is the shepherd himself who receives a proffered plate, while the ephebe holds a primitive vase that lacks handles. Both the plate and vase appear to be unglazed and undecorated. We wonder whether spiritual or corporeal nourishment is being offered. Slightly apart from the central triangular composition, a young woman rests her knee on a boulder, draws a red cloak around her waist, and turns away from both the central scene and the dog that leaps up playfully. The dog's shadow falls on her covering and on the rock.

The juxtaposition of the sheep and the goat recalls Christ's parabl of the separation of the Blessed and Damned on Judgment Day (Matthew 25: 31–46). The two creatures, one light the other dark, also evoke conflicting values: The goat represents lust, one of the seven deadly sins, while the nursing sheep might be seen both as a metaphor for the Virgin and the sacrifice of Her innocent child and, more generally, as Charity. But we are left uncertain.

1. Edward Schmidt, letter to author, January 24, 2000.



Conversation by the Sea, 1991
43½ × 56

Mystery prevails in *Conversation by the Sea*. The identities of the figures are unknown, as is their reason for coming together. The absence of any softening vegetation or architectural details provides no clues to the setting's locale. The time of day is unclear: We don't know if the light that falls from the right is from a rising or setting sun or if the ominous sky in the background is darkening or clearing. Time appears to have stopped as the players assume and hold Classic poses, which serve to transform further the scene from the quotidian into an eternal realm.

Painted contemporaneously with "its compositional doppelgänger,"[1] *Four Muses and Pegasus, in Memory of M.A.* (not in exhibition), *Conversation* shares that work's underlying elegiac mood. The death of Milet Andrejevic, a painter and Schmidt's close friend, which is specifically noted in the title of *Four Muses*, here seems to inform *Conversation* with a quiet and understated sense of loss.

The figures resolve themselves into pairs. One grouping rests firmly on the ground; the other is silhouetted against the sky. The upper and lower groups are linked by a gracile dance of arms that flows diagonally downward from the right. In the disposition of her legs, the line of her back, face in profile, and outstretched arm; the rightmost woman pays homage to Raphael's *Venus and Cupid* in the Villa Farnesina, Rome. Her upraised arm, however, differs from the prototype. And what, we wonder, does the gesture itself signify: Is she cupping her ear to hear better above the roar of the sea, or is she—like the seer from the pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia—reacting to some disquieting vision? Looking at the small red poppy—a classic symbol of death—held by the comparable figure in *Four Muses*, we might answer that she brings the same sad tidings. As she delivers her message to the woman in white, an enigmatic figure, whose elaborate hat and scarf recall those of some Tanagra figurines, stares out to sea—or eternity—like some lonely visionary in a Caspar David Friedrich painting.

On the ground level, the leftmost figure squats in an elaborate equilibrium of tension and relaxation, motion and countermotion: The rotation of her head is balanced by the opposing twist of the torso; the upward motion of one knee is countered by the other; the bent and extended arms neutralize each other. Totally self-contained within a closed, oval contour, the figure, so reminiscent of antique Crouching Venuses, turns inward to reflect upon the words just read. Her downward gaze, face in shadow, and compact form are opposed by the figure draped in white, a balance of opposites that continues in the coloration and attitudes of the sleek dogs or in Schmidt's employment of primary and secondary colors in the draperies.

Conversation represents a refinement of Schmidt's homage to Andrejevic. The gestures are less exaggerated and dramatic than those in *Four Muses*; symbols have been eliminated; and a more Classical restraint and order prevail. Seriousness has replaced emotion; the dross has been burnt away. Typifying this new attitude is the transformation of the leftmost figure from a pleasant girl into a dark and melancholic sibyl.

1. Edward Schmidt, letter to author, January 22, 2000.

Nereids, 1991
40 × 50

Two Nereids, each bare to the waist, bask side by side near the calm ocean. One closes her eyes from the intense sun overhead. The other simultaneously shades her own face with an upraised arm and pulls a blue, wavelike coverlet over the nude body of the sleeping child whose head rests on her left thigh.

We know of the Nereids from many sources, both literary and visual. In his genealogy of the gods, Hesiod (*Theogony* 240–264) writes that Nereus, the son of Pontus (Sea) and Gaea (Earth) married Doris, a daughter of Oceanus and Tethys, and from their union were born fifty daughters. Known individually (Hesiod lists the names of all fifty) and collectively as Nereids after their eponymous father, these sea nymphs appear frequently in Classical art—paired with Poseidon, cavorting with Tritons, or (on a charming kylix [Boston 00.335, Museum of Fine Arts]) surrounded by lively dolphins whose Minoan ancestors (*c.* 1450 B.C.) grace the walls of the Palace at Knossos. In the Renaissance, Raphael painted his great *Galatea* (1513), one of the Nereids, for the Sienese banker and bon vivant Agostino Chigi. Inspired by Poliziano's poem "La giostra," Raphael depicts a dynamic, triumphal sea nymph fleeing from the jealous Polyphemus, a cyclops who had just surprised the Nereid and her lover Acis, soon to fall victim to the one-eyed giant's well-aimed stone.

Schmidt's Nereids are strangely still. They neither drive scallop-shaped water chariots, nor dance, nor frolic with sea creatures. They merely repose on the beach. Even their identities are uncertain. One might imagine, however, that the Nereid protecting the child is Thetis who, along with Amphitrite and Galatea, is one of the best known of the sisters. Like Galatea, Thetis was unlucky in love. Sought after by both Zeus and Poseidon (who ultimately married Amphitrite), Thetis found the ardor of her divine suitors cooled upon hearing Themis prophesy that her son would eclipse his father. Zeus, in particular, would have been sensitive to such a prophecy; he had overthrown his own father, Cronos, who in turn had overthrown his father, Uranus. The father destined to be outshone was the hero Peleus—a mortal, an Argonaut alongside Jason, and a participant with Meleager in the Caledonian Boar Hunt—whose deeds of courage and marriage to Thetis are depicted on the famous *François Vase* (*c.* 570 B.C.) from Chiusi, now in Florence. Their son was Achilles who, despite his mother's best efforts to cloak him with immortality, was fated never to enter the Olympian pantheon.

Although the precise identity of the foremost Nereid is ambiguous, her pose specifically echoes that of the *Barberini Faun* (Glyptothek, Munich), a Hellenistic nude, spread-legged sleeping satyr dozing in a drunken state. The explicit eroticism of the Munich sculpture, so atypical of the preceding Classic era, has been jettisoned and replaced by concern expressed in a protective gesture. A metamorphosis, but this is typical of Thetis herself who, like her father, had the power to assume different shapes.

Dryads, 1993
50 × 52

In discussing the fate of Arcas in the *Seduction of Callisto*, Ovid was the source. But Pausanias, the second-century traveler and geographer, recounts a different destiny for the son of Callisto and Jove. Upon the death of Nyctimus, Arcas became king of Pelasgia, which thereafter was known as Arcadia, and married Erato, "no mortal woman but a Dryad nymph."[1]

The Dryads were woodland nymphs, minor female deities or spirits who watched over and protected oak trees. Along with the Oreads (who guarded hills and mountains), the Naiads (who dwelt beside springs, rivers, and fountains), and the Nereids (who frolicked in the sea), the Dryads possessed youth and beauty and frequently aroused the ardor of gods, mortals, *sileni*, and satyrs, those naughty followers of Pan. Typical of the latter is a scene on a red-figure kylix [Boston 01.8072 Museum of Fine Arts] in which satyrs attack a sleeping nymph. Like Schmidt's, this nymph has a hand behind her head in a pose common to sleepers whether on vases or sculpture (the famous *Ariadne* that de Chirico appropriated comes most readily to mind).

When we think of Dryads and other nymphs, the kingdom of Arcas most often comes to mind. As to how "that particular, not overly opulent, region of central Greece, Arcady, [came] to be universally accepted as an ideal realm of perfect bliss and beauty, a dream incarnate of ineffable happiness, surrounded nevertheless with a halo of 'sweetly sad' melancholy"[1] we turn to Erwin Panofsky. The answer Panofsky advances in his famous essay is Virgil, in whose *Eclogues* is resolved that "vestpertinal mixture of sadness and tranquillity."[2] With Virgil the pastoral becomes elegiac. In painting, the quintessential representation of the elegiac is, of course, Poussin's second *Et in Arcadia ego*, now in the Louvre. As Panofsky has convincingly shown, Poussin compels the viewer to mistranslate the title: the meaning of the phrase becomes "I, too, [lived] in Arcady" rather than "Even in Arcady [there am] I (i.e., death personified)." In Poussin's fully developed interpretation of the theme, the speaking tombstone becomes a *memento mori*, just as the ruins in Schmidt's painting remind us that even in Arcadia, where Dryads peacefully sleep, time devours all.

1. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.4.2, Loeb Classical Library translation.
2. Erwin Panofsky, "*Et in Arcadia ego*: Poussin and the Elegiac Tradition," *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1955), 297.
3. Ibid., 300.

Nocturne, 1993
41¼ × 64¼

Their passion spent, two lovers lie together in a small clearing in the woods. Their bodies overlap, blend together, and seem to form a new entity in a closed, or enclosing, contour. Within the single shape their clavicles join in a continuous curve offset by the angular rhythm of their bent elbows and arms. Their faces, separated by an obscuring, in one case, upraised arm, repose like some cubist visage in which the profile and frontal views appear simultaneously. So closely are these figures linked that only the fall of light isolates one from the other.

Regarding his arrangements with figures, Schmidt has observed that "compositionally, two bodies can be placed in opposition, in order to heighten or contrast—or 'doubled,' or posed similarily, as an echoing of line and shape, to reinforce and enrich a compositional element."[1] In *Nocturne*, Schmidt reinforces the composition by "playing with a repetition of bodies, a double rhythm" that he further enhances by having the "landforms echo the women's outlines."[2]

How these two women arrived here is clearly indicated by the rough pathway that catches a bit of stray light as it curves back into the woods and sky. The dark shapes of the guardian trees, the indistinct forms of the massed foliage, and the sky all possess an atmospheric quality that, like the title, reminds one of Whistler. The green sky evokes the silence and desolation of a de Chirico piazza transformed by the misty light of a late George Inness landscape. A curious mix of artificial and natural lighting further dislocates the viewer.

Edward Lucie-Smith has noted that

> *Nocturne* . . . pays homage to the Italian Baroque, but as much in stylistic terms as in those of content. The probable source is Guido Cagnacci (1601–81). Cagnacci has caught the fancy of twentieth-century art historians because his paintings, especially those of the female nude, have a presence and an immediacy of impact that make them seem anachronistic, in terms of the sensibility of their time. Schmidt has obviously felt this attraction, but his reaction has been to distance the material once again.[3]

Commenting on this observation, Schmidt notes that "I long ago established a belief that all art exists in the present. Maybe I lack that filter, common to artists and others of my time, which rejects the past art's relevance and finds an unbridgable chasm. I was always seeking a bridge to connect to my artistic ancestors."[4]

1. Edward Schmidt, letter to author, January 29, 2000.
2. Ibid.
3. Edward Lucie-Smith, *Art Today* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), 234.
4. Schmidt, letter to author, January 29, 2000.

Ariadne, 1994
50 × 65

On the beach at Naxos, Ariadne awakes with a start. She raises her hand in a gesture of shock. The Athenians' ship is not in the quiet harbor. She is alone. For love Ariadne had thwarted the will of her father Minos, the lord of Crete. She assisted Theseus when he entered the Labyrinth, the handiwork of Daedalus, wherein dwelled the Minotaur, a monster born of the unnatural union between her mother Pasiphaë and a bull. After Theseus slew the monster, Ariadne fled the palace at Knossos with her lover and the other tribute youths. She was to be his bride. Their boat reached Naxos, the Cycladic island known in ancient times for its wine and Dionysian worship, and heaved-to. Now she is alone, abandoned by the fickle Theseus.

This version of the story was popular in the Renaissance. In ancient times, however, it was not the canonical version. Homer, for example, states that Artemis slew Ariadne on the island of Dia (which Diodorus Siculus subsequently identified with Naxos) while en route with Theseus to Athens.[1] The Roman biographer Plutarch records several differing and conflicting traditions, including the legend that after Theseus abandoned Ariadne on Naxos she gave birth to his children Staphylus and Oenopion.[2] Apollodorus, on the other hand, states that Dionysos fell in love with Ariadne and carried her off to Lemnos where she bore Thoas, Staphylus, Oenopion, and Peparethus.[3]

In any case, retribution befell Theseus. When he set sail for Crete, King Aegeus had told his son Theseus to hoist white sails upon his return as a sign that he was unharmed. But Theseus forgot. Seeing a black (or scarlet) sail on the approaching ship, Aegeus presumed that Theseus had perished and flung himself to his death, either from the Athenian acropolis or into sea, which thereafter was known as the Aegean Sea.

Just as the sea holds many secrets, Schmidt's *Ariadne* is not wholly what it appears to be. Beneath the surface is a subpainting that Schmidt has described as "complete, more complex, and more finished" than the present work.[4] The original painting, titled *Danaë*—a subject favored by Titian—had an interior setting in which Jove appeared as "golden light (no coins)" to ravish the wholly nude, splay-legged Danaë.[5] Schmidt's decision to repaint and simplify his composition, to layer the abandonment of Ariadne over the impregnation of Danaë (which resulted in the birth of Perseus), and to move from boudoir to landscape, produces a haunting archeology of symbols and paint.

1. Homer, *The Odyssey* 11: 321–325.
2. Plutarch, *Lives: Theseus* 20.
3. Apollodorus, *Epitome* 1.9.
4. Edward Schmidt, letter to author, January 30, 2000.
5. Ibid.

Demeter and Persephone, 1994
50 × 60

Mother and daughter sleep peacefully on sandy soil near the sea. In the foreground, Persephone reaches out and gently touches her mother's wrist. On the earth between them sit an open book and a linen-lined basket—two white points of light, one hard and geometric, the other soft and convoluted.

The story of Hades' abduction of the Maid has been told previously in conjunction with *The Rape of Persephone*. Now mother and daughter are reunited. At her daughter's disappearance, Demeter had forsaken Olympus and for nine days neither bathed nor ate as she sought the whereabouts of Persephone. Despite her grief, Demeter rewarded those who treated her hospitably, her greatest gift being the art of plowing and wheat cultivation that she taught to Triptolemus on the Rharian Plain. Schmidt's basket (should we call it an artophorion?) symbolizes Demeter's great gift to Triptolemus. When Demeter finally learned the awful truth—and of the complicity of Zeus, father and uncle to the unfortunate girl—she ordered that a temple be built for her at Eleusis. In sorrow, she retreated into her sanctuary and no longer watched over the fields. All the crops withered, and the gods became alarmed that mankind would perish from the earth. To the gods, who sought to placate her with gifts, she would not yield. Finally, great Zeus sent Hermes to demand the return of Persephone, but as she had already eaten seeds of the pomegranate, she was unable to leave the underworld until Rhea brokered the great compromise between her children Hades and Demeter. Henceforth, Persephone would spend a third of the year in the chthonic realm and the remainder with her mother. By her actions, Demeter unshackled her daughter from the fetters of the Host of Many. Although the Mysteries celebrated in her honor at Eleusis have remained inviolate and hidden down through the centuries, they doubtless concerned death, rebirth, and the initiate's hope of immortality.

Schmidt alludes to the cycle of life by quoting a famous Hellenistic sculpture of a Hermaphrodite, now in the National Museum, Rome. Combining the sexual attributes of both male and female, the hermaphrodite represents a perfect, but flawed, manifestation of the generative principle.

Echo, 1995
50 × 60

Once, loquacious Echo had a form. A nymph then, she would often sit beside Juno, spinning long stories, while Jove, taking advantage of his wife's distraction, would pursue his amorous escapades on earth. When Juno finally realized cunning Echo's true motive, she curtailed the nymph's power of speech, allowing her only to repeat the last few words uttered by others. Such was Juno's wrath.

One day Echo came upon Narcissus, a youth of transcendent beauty, hunting in the fields. In that moment, she fell in love and, concealing herself from sight, followed him stealthily. She longed to win his heart with sweet declarations. But unable to speak first, she only echoed and repeated back his own shouts to his hunting companions. Finally she approached him, longing to embrace his neck, but at the sight of the nymph, Narcissus fled, declaring Death a better mistress. Shamed and shunned, Echo abandoned the bright mountainsides and dwelt apart in dark woods and darker caves. Fueled by grief, her love ultimately consumed her body, leaving naught but a disembodied voice.

In Schmidt's painting, Echo's metamorphosis is in the future. For the present her body remains full. Her pose is complex—the head in profile and the torso frontal. The force of gravity causes one breast to appear almost in profile. The deportment of her legs and arms in the pinwheel manner of a triskelion seems to set the body in motion. She rests her curiously masculine, almost Deco, head on curled fingers. Though the gesture is closely associated with Melancholy (Dürer's engraving comes readily to mind), it here lacks that connotation. In the background, a tree fallen in its prime echoes the quiescent figure's fate. Echo sleeps beside still waters that foretell the watery mirror of Narcissus's destruction and her retribution. For Narcissus could love only himself, but unable to possess his own image, he was destined, like Echo, to wither away.[1] To Ovid's poetic story, Pausanias provides a skeptical rejoinder: "They say that Narcissus looked into this water, and not understanding that he saw his own reflection, unconsciously fell in love with himself and died of love at the spring. But it is utter stupidity to imagine that a man old enough to fall in love was incapable of distinguishing a man from a man's reflection."[2] And yet where love exists, utter stupidity is often to be found.

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.344 ff.
2. Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 9.31.7, Loeb Classical Library translation.

Psyche and Venus, 1995
44 × 56

Human hubris always annoyed the gods. When Marsyas picked up Athena's pipes and challenged Apollo, "Lord of the Silver Bow," to a musical competition, his reward was a flaying. When Psyche's incomparable beauty caused men to neglect their worship of Venus, the goddess determined to punish the interloper. After all, how could she, whom Paris had pronounced the most beautiful in a contest among goddesses, be surpassed by a mortal!

In *The Golden Ass*, Lucius Apuleius recounts the travails of Psyche. At first, jealous Venus simply instructed Cupid (Eros) to employ one of his mischief-making darts and cause Psyche to fall in love with the most ugly, vile, and miserable man imaginable. But on beholding Psyche, Cupid felt the sting of his own arrow and—ignoring his mother's instructions—took Psyche as his wife. This disobedience further enraged the goddess, who then set upon Psyche three seemingly impossible tasks, of which the last involved descending to Hades to obtain some of Proserpina's beauty. Then—having paid Charon twice for ferrying her across the River Styx and back, having thrown both sops to Cerberus, the three-headed guardian hound of hell, and indeed having returned to the world of the living—Psyche, against all advice, opened the box she bore. Instantly, she was overcome by deep and deathlike sleep, and remained so until Cupid finally awoke her.

The story, much abbreviated here, has long inspired artists. Among paintings, the classic rendering is Raphael's on the ceiling and spandrels of the Villa Farnesina loggia. The scene that Schmidt depicts of Psyche sleeping while Venus watches, however, does not correspond exactly to any in Apuleius or by Raphael.

The conflict and its outcome are well expressed in the underlying abstract design of Schmidt's painting. The opposition of the concave arc of Venus's body, suggestive of confidence and sexual openness, with the convex arc of Psyche's back, denotative of self-protection and closeness, implies dominance and subjugation. Psyche is earthbound, not only by sleep but symbolically by the color of her drapery. Venus, the goddess of love, lies on a deep red cloth, the color recalling her attribute, the rose, with a golden yellow cloth wrapped turban-like about her head. Her dominant light tonality further enhances the Triumph of Venus over a broken, dejected, and exhausted Psyche.

Venus's triumph, however, is short lived. Distraught, Cupid pleads his case to Jove and secures divine approbation for his marriage to Psyche. Perhaps then the golden cloth heralds a new golden age, when mother-in-law is reconciled with daughter-in-law, when peace returns to the family, and when even the gods can smile on a most unlikely union. One recalls Plato's *Phaedrus*, where Socrates instructs Ilissus how love (Eros) gives wings to the soul (Psyche). Here Schmidt prolongs the moment just before the soul awakens by the power of love and takes flight.

Seduction of Callisto, 1995
50 × 70

Among the constellations in the nighttime sky, none recalls a more poignant story than Ursa Major. As retold in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Callisto was a woodland nymph whose beauty smote omnipotent Jove. One day, when the sun had passed its apogee, Callisto retired to a secluded spot, known to her, and laying aside her bow and arrows "she took her quiver from her shoulder, unstrung her tough bow, and lay down upon the grassy ground, with her head pillowed on her painted quiver."[1] Consumed with passion, Jove approached her after having "put on the features and dress of Diana and . . . kissed her lips, not modestly, nor as a maiden kisses."[2]

In Schmidt's painting, the seduction has begun: Jove, disguised as Diana, gently pulls back a red cloak to expose Callisto's breast. In perfect profile, he stares at what one writer quaintly called the point of her belly, while she covers her eyes against the light that falls from the left. Only his slightly darker skin, which follows an ancient Egyptian convention that men are dark and women light, contradicts what our eyes perceive. The mood is calm; the pace relaxed. We are witnesses to seduction, not rape.

That Jove's legs are immersed in water is a small detail that foreshadows Callisto's undoing. Pregnant, she seeks to avoid the bosky baths that Diana so loved: "when the goddess . . . came to a cool grove through which a gently murmuring stream flowed over its smooth sands. The place delighted her and she dipped her feet into the water. Delighted too with this, she said to her companions: 'Come, no one is near to see; let us disrobe and bathe us in the brook.' [Callisto] blushed, and, while all the rest obeyed, she only sought excuses for delay. But her companions forced her to comply, and there her shame was openly confessed."[3]

When Callisto gave birth to Arcas, Juno, consort of Jove, flew into a rage, denouncing her as an adulteress whose son would "publish my wrong by his birth, a living witness to my lord's shame."[4] In punishment, Juno transformed her into a bear. Callisto spent the next fifteen years wandering the woods, alternately hiding from hunters and from savage beasts, until one day the boy, out hunting "chanced upon his mother, who stopped still at sight of Arcas, and seemed like one that recognized him. He shrank back at those unmoving eyes that were fixed forever upon him, and feared he knew not what; and when she tried to come nearer, he was just in the act of piercing her breast with his wound-dealing spear."[5] Then Jove "stayed his hand, and together he removed both themselves and the crime, and together caught up through the void in a whirlwind, he set them in the heavens and made them neighbouring stars."[6]

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2: 420ff. All quotations are from the Loeb Classical Library translation.
2. Ibid., 2: 425ff.
3. Ibid., 2: 453ff.
4. Ibid., 2: 472ff.
5. Ibid., 2: 500ff.
6. Ibid., 2: 505ff.

Terpsichore and Erato, 1995
46 × 58

How different from Courbet's working girls sleeping by the Seine are Terpsichore, Muse of dance and song, and Erato, Muse of lyric and love poetry? Of their birth in Pieria, Hesiod tells us in the *Theogony* that great Olympian Zeus had lain with Mnemosyne (Memory) for nine nights; when a year had passed and the seasons run their cycle, she bore nine daughters, the Muses. Protectoresses of the arts, the Muses frequented Hippocrene on Helicon, Castalian on Parnassus, and other magical springs whose waters possessed powers of inspiration. For company, they kept the lovely Graces, Himeros (Desire), and Phoebus Apollo.

The Muses combine primordial inspiration with the rise of the new anthropocentric Olympian deities. Memory, henceforth, assumes order and discipline, rather than existing in a great chaotic mix. The Muses determine how the past is preserved and understood. Thus Clio eventually came to oversee history, Melpomene tragedy, Thalia comedy, and Urania the heavens. The other sisters concentrate on poetry, whether epic, lyric, pastoral, or love, along with music, song, and dance. When the Muses first appear in Hesiod, Homer's epics had existed in written form for only two centuries. Prior to the eighth century B.C., the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had been transmitted orally from generation to generation for hundreds of years. The birth of the Muses signals the end of the era of memory, the end of the oral epic tradition, and the ascendancy of the text.

The Muses too reflect the beginnings of a new, more personal era, in which a softer lyric genre expressive of more private feelings and moods coexists with the public, heroic epic poem. In the *Iliad* Homer sings of the final year of a decade-long struggle between aggrieved Greeks and defending Trojans. Although many gods actively participate in the events on the Ilian plain, Dionysos and Aphrodite appear infrequently. Indeed, when Aphrodite ventures onto the furious battlefield, she suffers a blow from mighty Diomedes and promptly retires from the fray. But then Aphrodite and Dionysos, gods of love and wine, are more appropriate to lyric poetry (although, it should be noted, Aphrodite receives her due in Virgil's great epic poem).

Which Muse is which in Schmidt's painting? Characteristically, he avoids depicting the attributes that identify them. Neither viol nor lyre nor harp lies at the side of Terpsichore. No garland of flowers crowns her head. Likewise, Erato has no tambourine or lyre, and no mischievous putto frolics at her feet. Still, the deep red drapery and open pose suggest the heat of love and by extension Erato. If this conjecture be so, then it must be Terpsichore who, encircled by a bit of golden cloth, begins to stir, to stretch, to wake her sister from a peaceful dream. Unlike Goya's Sleep of Reason, that of the Muses produces no monsters.

Checklist of the Exhibition

(Dimensions are given in inches, height precedes width)

The Accident, 1969
oil on paper, 12½ × 10
Courtesy of the Artist

The Accident, 1969
oil on linen, 50 × 41
Courtesy of the Artist

Composition with Fallen Figure, 1969
oil on paper mounted on cardboard, 12 × 11
Courtesy of the Artist

Dance, 1969
oil on cardboard, 15 × 20
Courtesy of the Artist

Judgment of Paris, 1969
oil on paper, 11 × 13½
Courtesy of the Artist

The Philosopher (composition sketch), 1969
oil on paper, 11 × 16¼
Courtesy of the Artist

Workers (square), 1974
oil on board, 8½ × 8½
Collection of Thomas Cornell

Workers (vertical), 1975
oil on masonite, 10½ × 7
Collection of Thomas Cornell

Family at Rest (Flight into Egypt), 1980
oil on masonite, 10¼ × 19
Collection of Mary Salstrom and Brent M. Porter

Departure, 1981-82
oil on linen, 40 × 50
Innes Collection

Figures in a Forest, 1981-82
oil on linen, 36 × 60
Innes Collection

The Tempest, 1981-82
oil on linen, 24 × 36
Collection of David B. Wolf

Destruction of a City (small version), 1980
oil on linen, 18 × 27
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Dies Irae—Destruction of a City, 1982
oil on linen, 36 × 48
Private Collection
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Rape of Persephone, 1982
oil on linen, 51 × 67
Collection of Mark and Lisa Helprin

The Shepherd's Dream, 1989
oil on linen, 50 × 60
Private Collection
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Conversation by the Sea, 1991
oil on linen, 43½ × 56
Private Collection
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Nereids, 1991
oil on linen, 40 × 50
Fredric Goldstein Collection
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Dryads, 1993
oil on linen, 50 × 52
Tracy Freedman Collection
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Nocturne, 1993
oil on linen, 41¼ × 64¼
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. David Berelson
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Ariadne, 1994
oil on linen, 50 × 65
Courtesy of the Artist

Demeter and Persephone, 1994
oil on linen, 50 × 60
Collection of Mariano and Celia Pacheco
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Echo, 1995
oil on linen, 50 × 60
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Psyche and Venus, 1995
oil on linen, 44 × 56
Collection of Henry and Amanda Vandeveer
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Seduction of Callisto, 1995
oil on linen, 50 × 70
Collection of Mark Lupke
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Terpsichore and Erato, 1995
oil on linen, 46 × 58
Private Collection
Courtesy of Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Oreads, 2000
oil on linen, 42 × 84
Courtesy of the Artist

Hamadryads at Rest, 2000
oil on linen, 50 × 74
Courtesy of the Artist

Edward Schmidt

EDUCATION

1978
Atelier 17, Paris
(Studied with S. W. Hayter)

1972–74
M.F.A., Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York

1967–68
École des Beaux-Arts, Paris

1967
Skowhegan School of Painting, Maine

1966–71
The Art Students League, New York City
(Studied with Robert Beverly Hale)

1964–71
B.F.A., Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York
(Honors)

1962–63
École Internationale, Geneva, Switzerland

Born: Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1946

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2000
"Drawings & Works on Paper," Marguerite Oestreicher Fine Arts, New Orleans
"Edward Schmidt: Mythologies," Sordoni Art Gallery, Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

1998
"Figures & Landscapes," Lizan-Tops Gallery, East Hampton, New York

1997
"Drawings & Paintings," The More Gallery, Philadelphia

1995
"Recent Paintings," Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco

1993
"Recent Paintings & Drawings," Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco

1992
"Works on Paper," Stiebel Modern, New York City

1991
New York Academy of Art, New York City

1990
"Muses of Music—Paintings for Riverbend," Gallery West, Suffolk County Community College, Brentwood, New York

1988
"Drawings & Paintings," Brooklyn College of Art, Brooklyn, New York

1983
"Drawings," Temple University, Tyler School of Art in Rome, Italy

1982
Robert Schoelkopf Gallery, New York City

1980
"Images & Ideas," Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia
Salve Regina Gallery, Catholic University, Washington, D.C.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2000

"Classical New York, Now," Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York City

1999

"Derrière Garde," SomArts Gallery, San Francisco
"The Italian Landscape," Gallery West, Suffolk County Community College, Brentwood, New York

1998

"The Artist as Subject," The Art Students League, New York City
"Mural Projects—The National Society of Mural Painters," The Art Students League, New York City

1997

"10th Anniversary Exhibition," Hackett–Freedman Gallery, San Francisco
"Contemporary Drawing," Shasta College Art Gallery, Redding, California
"The Derrière Garde," The Kitchen, New York City
"Re-presenting Representation III," Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, New York
"Instructor Exhibition," The Art Students League, New York City

"Drawn from the Faculty," Buffalo State College, Buffalo, New York

1996

"Classicism in the Twentieth Century," Lizan–Tops Gallery, East Hampton, New York
"Contemporary Figurative Works," The More Gallery, Philadelphia
"Instructor Exhibition," The Art Students League, New York City

1995

"Eight Artists: Eight Views of the Figure," Koplin Gallery, Santa Monica, California
"NYAA Graduate Faculty Exhibition," Plaza Gallery, Fordham College, New York City

1994

"Centennial Banners," The American Academy in Rome, Italy
"Gallery Artists," Stiebel Modern, New York City
"Parallax Views," Koplin Gallery, Santa Monica, California
"Art Miami," Contemporary Realist Gallery at the Miami Convention Center, Florida

1993

"Drawing on the Figure," Carlsten Art Gallery, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point
"Aspects of Figuration: Selections From the New York Academy of Art," Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco
"Drawings by American Artists," Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco
"Drawings III," Koplin Gallery, Santa Monica, California
"Art LA," Contemporary Realist Gallery at the Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles

1992

"New American Figure Painting," Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco (traveled to Rudolph E. Lee Gallery, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina)

1991–92

"Artists from the Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco," New York Academy of Art, New York City

1991

"Gallery Artists," Robert Schoelkopf Gallery, New York City

1990

"Figure," Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco
"The Italian Tradition in Contemporary Landscape Painting 1960–90," Gibbes

Museum, Charleston, South Carolina (traveling exhibition)
"Châteaux Bordeaux," Palais de Beaulieu, Lausanne, Switzerland

1989

"The Modern Pastoral," Robert Schoelkopf Gallery, New York City
Union League Club, New York City
"Drawing: Points of View," Belk Art Gallery, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina
"Design U.S.A.," United States Information Service, Moscow, USSR (traveling exhibition)

1988

"Works on Paper," Robert Schoelkopf Gallery, New York City
"Châteaux Bordeaux," Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (traveling exhibition)

1987

"Storytellers," Contemporary Realist Gallery, San Francisco
Robert Schoelkopf Gallery, New York City
"Modern Myths: Classical Renewal," Boise Gallery of Art, Idaho (traveling exhibition)
"Studies from Life: Paintings by Contemporary Artists," Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia, Charlottesville

1986

"Short Stories—Narrative Painting," One Penn Plaza, New York City
"Michael Graves & Edward Schmidt," Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati
"Figure in Architecture," John Nichols Gallery, New York City

1985

"Art & Architecture & Landscape, The Clos Pegase Competition," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco
"Michael Graves/Edward Schmidt: A Collaboration," Academy Gallery, New York Academy of Art, New York City
"Artists & Architects: Challenges in Collaboration," Contemporary Arts Center, Cleveland

1984

"Clos Pegase Winery Designs," Princeton University School of Architecture, Princeton, New Jersey
Robert Schoelkopf Gallery, New York City
"Figurative Drawings," The More Gallery, Philadelphia
"Instructors Exhibition," The Art Students League, New York City

1983

American Studies Center, Naples, Italy
"Alumni Exhibition," Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York
"Prix de Rome Fellows," The American Academy in Rome, Italy
Grand Central Gallery, New York City
Academy Gallery, New York Academy of Art, New York City
"Realistic Directions," Zoller Gallery, Pennsylvania State University, University Park

1982

"Contemporary Arcadian Painting," Robert Schoelkopf Gallery, New York City
"Juried Biennial Exhibition," National Academy of Design, New York City
First Street Gallery, New York City
"Casts and Cast Drawings," Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia, Charlottesville
"A Painter's Appreciation of Realism," Williams Proctor Institute, Utica, New York
Albright–Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York
"Art on Paper," Weatherspoon Gallery, University of North Carolina, Greensboro

1981

"Contemporary Figure Drawings," Robert Schoelkopf Gallery, New York City

1979
"Huit Voyages à Ners," Musée de la Grande Combe, Ales, France
"Toward a Renewal of Classicism," Tatistcheff and Co., New York City
Bayly Art Museum, Charlottesville, Virginia

1978
"Mural Projects for New York," Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace Museum, New York City
"Metaphor in Painting," Federal Memorial National Hall, New York City

1977
"Art on Paper," Weatherspoon Gallery, University of North Carolina, Greensboro
Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia
Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia, Charlottesville

1975
"Annual Invitation," First Street Gallery, New York City
"New Talent," Robert Schoelkopf Gallery, New York City
The Residence, Pratt Institute, Ners, France

1974
"Annual Invitation," First Street Gallery, New York City

1973
"Annual Invitation," First Street Gallery, New York City
"Drawings," Viterbo College Art Gallery, LaCrosse, Wisconsin

1972
Pratt Manhattan Art Center Gallery, New York City

1970
Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, New York
"The Representational Spirit," University Art Gallery, SUNY, Albany, New York

1968
Le Salon National des Beaux-Arts, Paris

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock
Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia, Charlottesville
The American Academy, Rome, Italy
The National Academy of Design, New York City
The Elizabeth Greenshields Memorial Foundation, Montreal
Crown America Corporation, Johnstown, Pennsylvania

MURAL COMMISSIONS

1989
Fisher House, New York City

1988
Quantum Corporation, New York City

1987
Hotel Giorgio, Denver (4 murals)

1985
Trafalgar House, New York City (Kohn Pedersen Fox, Architects)

1984
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra Pavilion, Cincinnati, (Michael Graves, Architect)
Alwyn Court Landmark Building, New York City

1977
Alegra Industries, New York City (2 murals)

HONORS, GRANTS, & AWARDS

1998
Award in Painting, Arthur Ross Foundation, New York City

1996
National Society of Mural Painters

1994
Artist's Grant, Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, New York City

1990
AIA Honors Award for Clos Pegase Winery Collaboration (with Michael Graves)

1985
Competition Winner (with Michael Graves) for Clos Pegase Winery, Architect—Artist Design Collaboration, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Visual Fellowship Grant, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C.

1984
Society of Fellows, The American Academy in Rome, New York City
Artist's Grant, Ingram Merrill Foundation, New York City

1983
Prix de Rome Fellowship, The American Academy in Rome, Italy

1976
Artist Grant, Change, Inc., New York City

1974
Graduate Fellowship, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York

1972
Artist's Grant, Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation, Montreal

SELECTED LITERATURE

Braff, Phyllis. "Classicism in the 20th Century," *The New York Times* (October 20, 1997).
Bresson, Michael. "Telling Stories with Paint," *The New York Times* (July 25, 1986).
Bolt, Thomas. *New American Figure Painting*. San Francisco: Contemporary Realist Gallery, 1992.
Campbell, Lawrence. "Edward Schmidt at Schoelkopf," *Art in America* (February 1983).
Cass, Caroline. *Grand Illusions—Contemporary Interior Murals*. London: Phaidon Press, 1988.
Clubbe, John. *Cincinnati Observed: Architecture and History*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993.
Cohen, Ronny H. "The Symbolist Renewal," *Drawing* (September–October 1985).
Cooper, James F. "Contemporary Artist Linked to 17th Century French Painting," *Weekend World* (June 11, 1982).
Delman, Frederic E. "Au Clos Pegase," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* (January 1985).
Filler, Martin, and Helen Fried. *Art & Architecture & Landscape: The Clos Pegase Design Competition*. San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1985.
Fort, Ilene Susan. "Contemporary Arcadian Painting," *Arts Magazine* (February 1983).
Godfrey, Robert. "Art Exhibitions Say As Much about Curators As Artists," *Asheville Citizen–Times* (January 24, 1989).
Goldberger, Paul. "Too Much Italian Flavor in a California Winery," *The New York Times* (October 11, 1987).
Gordon, Douglas E. "AIA Corporate Honor Award, Clos Pegase Winery," *Architecture* (March 1990).
Grand, Stanley I. *Drawing on the Figure*. Stevens Point, Wisconsin: Carlsten Art Gallery, University of Wisconsin, 1993.
———. *Edward Schmidt: Mythologies*. Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania: Sordoni Art Gallery, Wilkes University, 2000.

Graves, Michael. "Reading Edward Schmidt," *Edward Schmidt*. San Francisco: Contemporary Realist Gallery, 1996.
Hackett-Freedman Gallery. *Hackett-Freedman Gallery 1987–1997*. San Francisco: Hackett-Freedman Gallery, 1997.
Helprin, Mark. "In Appreciation of Edward Schmidt," *Edward Schmidt*. San Francisco: Contemporary Realist Gallery, 1993.
———. "The Arcadian Lyricism of Edward Schmidt," *American Arts Quarterly* (Spring 1993).
Hollander, John. *The Italian Tradition in Contemporary Landscape Painting, 1960–90*. Charleston, South Carolina: Gibbes Museum, 1990.
Jencks, Charles. *Post-Modernism: The New Classicism in Art and Architecture*. London: Academy Editions, 1987.
———. *What Is Post-Modernism?* London: Academy Editions; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986.
Kaufman, Jason. "Academy of the Future," *American Arts Quarterly* (Spring 1988).
Kohn, Benjamin. *The Centennial Directory of The American Academy in Rome*. New York: The American Academy in Rome, 1995.
Ligare, David. "Premodernism," *Artweek* (August 19, 1993).
Limaye, Kanchan. "The New Radicals," *American Arts Quarterly* (Spring 1997).
Longman, Robin. "A Winning Team," *American Artist* (June 1985).
Lucie-Smith, Edward. *American Art Now*. New York: Wm. Morrow & Co., 1985.
———. *Art Today*. London: Phaidon Press, 1995.
Merkel, Jayne. *Michael Graves and the Riverbend Music Center*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Contemporary Art Center, 1987.
O'Hern, John D. *Re-presenting Representation III*. Elmira, New York: Arnot Art Museum, 1998.
Perl, Jed. "How Simple Everything Could Be," *The New Criterion* (May 1989).
———. "Still Life Painting Today," *ACM: The Journal of Artists' Choice Museum* (Fall 1982).
———. "Life of the Object," *Arts Magazine* (December 1977).
Phillips, Patricia C. "Figure in Architecture: Michael Graves, Edward Schmidt, Raymond Kaskey," *Artforum* (March 1986).
Rosenthal, Deborah. "Metaphor in Painting: The Struggle for a Tradition," *Arts Magazine* (June 1978).
Russotto, Ellen Romano. *The Representational Spirit*. Albany, New York: University Art Gallery, SUNY Albany, 1970.
Schwartz, J. P. *Artists & Architects, Challenges in Collaborations*. San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1985.
Smith, James E. *American Ethos in Contemporary Drawing, Drawing Points of View*. Cullowhee, North Carolina: Belk Art Gallery, Western Carolina University, 1989.
Stabler, Wendy. "Mural Painting," *Interiors* (September 1985).
Stanger, Karen. "Edward Schmidt: Images of Arcadia," *American Artist* (December 1993).
Tapley, George M., Jr. "The Arcadian Ethos in Contemporary Painting," *Arts Magazine* (February 1983).
Taylor, Julie. "That's Italian," *The Designer* (January 1989).
Thorton, Gene. "In Praise of Academic Drawing," *American Artist* (December 1982).
Who's Who in American Art, 20th Edition. New Providence, New Jersey: R. R. Bowker, 1994.
Wolfe, Tom. "The New Radicals in the Fine Arts," *American Arts Quarterly* (Fall 1990).
Woodbridge, Sally. "The Mountain of Pegasus," *Progressive Architecture* (December 1984).

EXHIBITION UNDERWRITERS

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