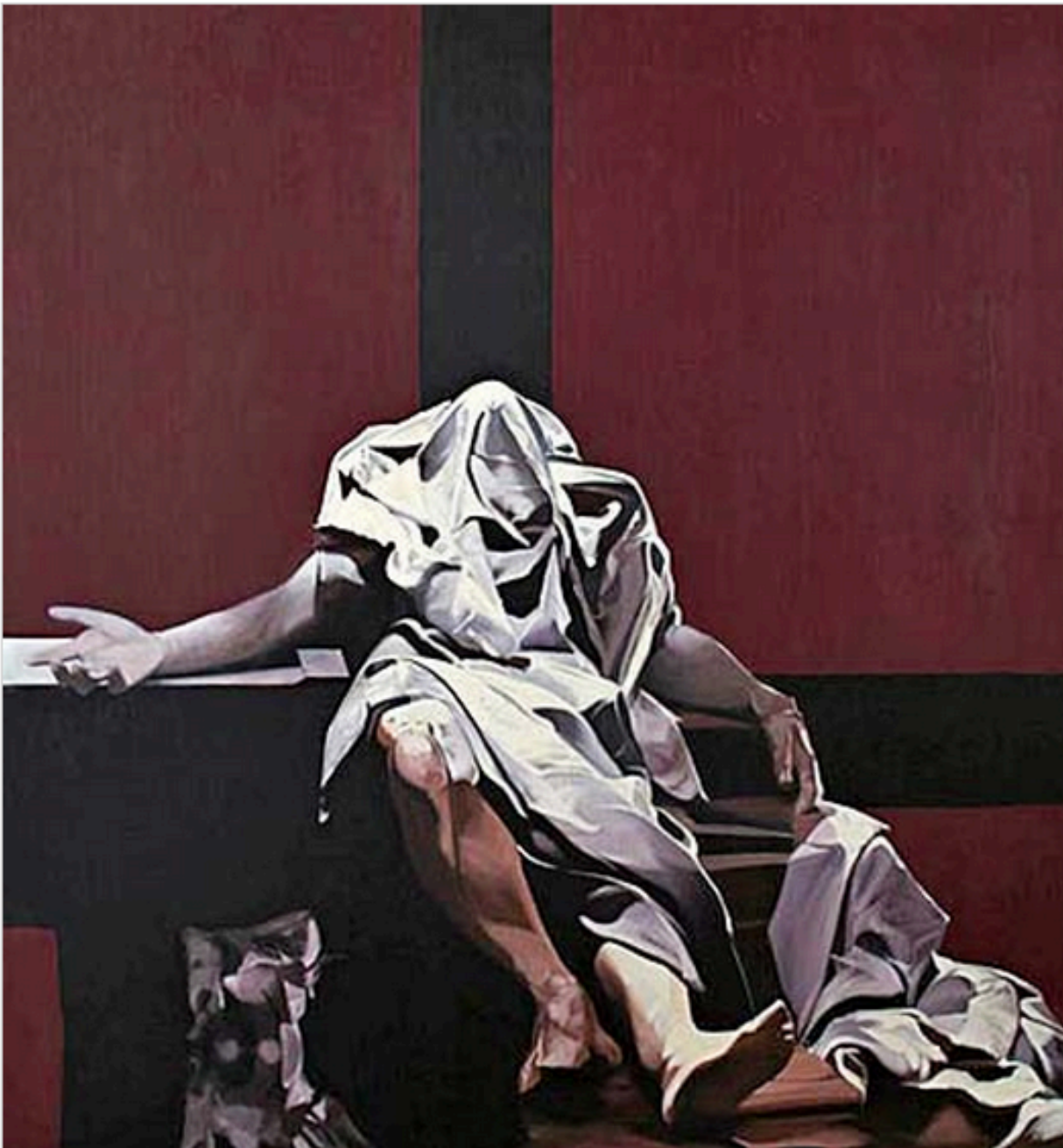


## A dark aura: Realist Painter Neil Stokoe's All Things Must Pass at The Piper Gallery

By Culture24 Reporter | 08 April 2013



© Neil Stokoe, courtesy The Piper Gallery

A peer of David Hockney, Ron Kitaj, Frank Bowling and Derek Boshier at the Royal College of Art more than 50 years ago, Neil Stokoe's most recent works, taking black as their predominant colour, are partly inspired by Francis Bacon's assertion of the "possible catastrophe" capable of striking "at any given moment".

Stokoe's paintings are large and haunting – the gallery has undergone a dramatic change to accommodate them – and they're concerned with pain, despair, loneliness and, as the realist painter sees it, the anguish of everyday life.

"They are arresting paintings," reflects the gallery's founder, Megan Piper, who discovered Stokoe's work while visiting his studio in 2011.

"I was immediately struck by the quality of his painting. The dominance of black paint enhances the eerie quality of the unknown."

Piper says the canvasses often become vast expanses. "They depict ambiguous scenes," she adds. "While having a dark aura, they allow viewers to interpret each work in an individual way."

Stokoe is an artist who spends years deliberating over images and ruminating over the concept of each new work.

He frequently merges a sense of human physicality with a visceral approach to colour. *Renunciation*, from 2001, shows a Christ-like figure lying prone under a shroud. *Whither to Whither*, meanwhile, sets two figures against each other, a void between them alluding to the transient and macabre.