

American Artist - Drawing Magazine | "In The Light of Darkness"

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"Davison's Purgatory appears populated with Klee's phosphorescent flowers, but its tone is warm instead of cool, a color scheme fit for the underworld. Contrary to reputation, or at least to Dante's dreary vision, Davison's Purgatory looks attractive. And this is just the beachhead—what is the source of light beyond the dark stalactites? Purgatory's otherworldly flowers and formations, imagined but unseen by a living soul, invite exploration.

What is the source for this topsy-turvy vision, this halfway house for the soul with fantastical visual appeal? Like many contemporary artists, Davison works from personal experience, leading to his own iconography, or symbolism. The creative result may continue or contradict tradition. "The title Purgatory comes from what was going on in my life in 2009," Davison says. "In a way it seemed as if I was actually living in Purgatory. It was my experience in life that contained the strife and hardship. The drawing's job was to transform the classical Purgatory into an inviting place for me to sit and get some thinking done."

But what if you don't know Davison and his drawing doesn't have a caption for a clue? Rely on your eyes. Form makes meaning. Davison's lines are soothing arcs and comforting curves, not torturous jabs at the eye. His colors—rich, varied, and beautiful—flicker in the light of darkness. The place is remote and lonely, but the flowers on the shore are warm, and the light beyond the tunnel beckons. Davison's composition calls to mind the Romantic landscape tradition with its craggy mountains moonlit seas, and solitary wanderers—seekers enthralled by nature and transported by its scale, power, and light. In the Romantic tradition, the landscape is sublime, and nature offers transcendence. Davison's Purgatory is designed to heal.