

Lawrence Montgomery
In the Shadow of the Sabertooth

In the Shadow of the Saber-tooth* is a self-portrait that represents the science/research behind my series of paintings entitled 'March to Extinction'. The painting process, composition, and style are taken from the painting of St. Jerome* by Carvaggio, dated 1605. The aging St. Jerome in Carvaggio's portrait, is shown seated in his study lost in thought with outreached hand towards a skull perched upon his research books and writings. Death awaits him. My version of this painting is a self-portrait, seated and similarly lost in my studies of life in the Anthropocene, hand reaching out towards the skull of a now extinct sabertooth cat, as our extinction awaits us.

In the Shadow of the Sabertooth is part of a series of paintings entitled 'March to Extinction'. The paintings * intend to reflect on the sustainability of our materialistic way of life. The images are all from photos I've taken at Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills , Ca. which represents the epitome of our materialistic 'lifestyle'. Incorporated into the paintings are images of the Mega fauna from the Pleistocene era that once roamed the Rodeo Drive turf and are in evidence right next door at the La Brea tar pits. Now extinct through no fault of their own, these marvelous creatures are surreally juxtaposed in window reflections and dark alleys along Rodeo Drive to remind us of our own vulnerability. We may very well join the Pleistocene Mega fauna in extinction if we do not reflect and act on the unsustainability of our conspicuous consumption. As an artist in the Anthropocene era, during what has been labeled the 'Sixth Extinction,' I am a firm believer that art without content is not art.

The title of the painting comes from the book of the same name by 'renegade' naturalist, Doug Peacock. In one tale in the book, Mr. Peacock describes how Clovis man must have lived in constant fear of 'the shadow of the sabertooth' around every corner. Scientists today similarly have warned us what lies around the corner for us in the Anthropocene era if we do not take necessary actions.

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* <https://borghese.gallery/collection/paintings/saint-jerome-writing.html>