

The Faithful Artist: A Vision for Evangelicalism and the Arts
 Available November 2016
 \$26, 290 pages, paperback
 978-0-8308-5064-8

Reconciling Evangelicalism and the Arts

In this latest volume in IVP Academic's Studies in Theology and the Arts series, Cameron Anderson lays out a vision for how Christian artists can faithfully pursue their vocational calling in contemporary culture.

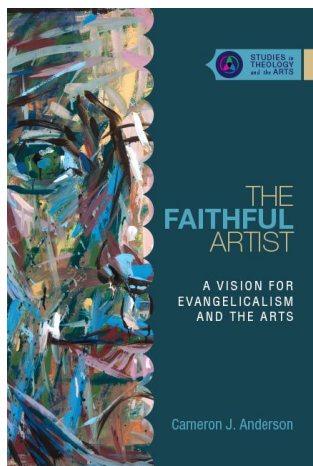
In recent history, Christianity and the arts have seemed pitted against one another, leaving many artists in tension between their religious community and artistic vocation. In *The Faithful Artist*, Anderson traces this relationship between evangelicalism and modern art in postwar America, provides Christians with guidance on the many issues that arise out of the conflict, and offers a hopeful vision for the future of art and faith.

"Properly conceived, a vision for the visual arts wherein serious art and serious faith are woven into whole cloth is a glorious and contemporary possibility," Anderson writes. "But for this goal to be realized, the obstacles, conundrums, and heartbreak that have kept too many Christians from embracing a biblically and theologically robust understanding of the visual arts must not be only identified but also overcome."

In this work, written to both artists and art-loving Christians, Anderson addresses the following:

- The relationship between evangelicalism and modern art in postwar America
- How to be both a Christian and an artist, inspired by Anderson's own experiences
- The suspicion and hesitation from the Christian community about the visual arts
- The role art should play in Christian life and worship
- The role of our bodies and senses in our experience of the arts
- The time-honored yet controversial practice of drawing, painting, and sculpting the nude
- The relationship between text and image, and the way evangelicalism deepened the chasm between the visual and the verbal
- The bitter and long-standing debate over the use of religious images
- The meaning of beauty and pursuing God through encounters with beauty
- The artist's vocation

In writing *The Faithful Artist*, Cameron J. Anderson (MFA, Cranbrook Academy of Art) draws on his experience as a practicing artist, a Christian, and the executive director of Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA). He frequently lectures on the arts, media, advertising, and contemporary culture and coedited *Faith and Vision: Twenty-Five Years of Christians in the Visual Arts*. Prior to joining CIVA, he served on the staff of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship for thirty years, most recently as the national director for graduate and faculty ministries.



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“Convincingly shows...how artistry is a worthy occupation for believers.”

“In *The Faithful Artist* Cam Anderson extends an intellectual welcome to readers who may feel that modern and contemporary art are an exclusive party, a private conversation for an artistic elite. By skillfully unpacking cultural factors leading to the modernist rejection of traditional artistic forms, he reveals some of the reasons for art’s estrangement from educated laypersons. Anderson then clarifies for Christians why art still matters in the midst of tensions between traditional religious belief and modern aesthetic sensibility – issuing a compelling call for artists to rediscover their accountability and calling within the body of Christ, broken afresh for the life of the world. Additionally he makes a vital argument for why the church needs art and artists, providing genuine answers for how these might once again find their way into healthy communion with one another.”

–**Bruce Herman, Lothlórien Distinguished Chair in Fine Arts, Gordon College**

“In this detailed overview and synthesis, Cameron Anderson opens up the mysteries of contemporary art, describing how works of art may operate as lenses through which to view the seen and unseen within culture. This illuminating book allows the double foci on faith and art to converge, introducing us to the worldview of the Ultimate Artist.”

–**Luci Shaw, poet, writer in residence, Regent College, author of *Thumbprint in the Clay***

“This is a thoughtful, remarkable book that will help evangelical Christians face their history of shunning modern art. As a convinced follower of Jesus Christ, Anderson lovingly laments the past evangelical practice of pitting binary opposites against one another: soul against body, word against image, church ministry against being an artist. Anderson shows how the millennia of church history and a fresh biblical stance can overcome these polarities. Through his writing, which is extremely well researched and gives evidence of many years of wide reading, he convincingly shows how visual culture can be central to piety and how artistry is a worthy occupation for believers. This work is exciting, people friendly, deeply faithful, and wise.”

–**Calvin Seerveld, professor emeritus of philosophical aesthetics, Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto**

“Cam Anderson’s vision inspires, challenges, and encourages me. He is wise about creativity, faithful about imagination, and provocative about beauty. We are invited into a deeper humanity and a greater faithfulness to the Artist who made us. I am so grateful for this book and believe many other readers will be too!”

–**Mark Labberton, president, Fuller Seminary**

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ENDORSEMENTS

Praise for IVP Academic's Studies in Theology and the Arts (STA):

"This series is an exciting and critically important development in the burgeoning theology and arts field. It promises to advance the discussion in fresh and highly fruitful ways."

—**Jeremy Begbie**, professor of theology, Duke Divinity School, director, Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts

"Studies in Theology and the Arts provides Christian scholars, artists, and church leaders with an opportunity to shape our theological perspective on the arts in light of the creative realities of our Maker God. These resources can help by extending the salvific narrative into broader creation and new creation narratives, enriching our grasp of the gospel, and revealing how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ."

—**Makoto Fujimura**, director, Brehm Center, Fuller Theological Seminary

"Cam Anderson has read a lot of good books and that's part of what makes *this* book so rich and rewarding. But, far more importantly, this book represents a lifelong engagement with the arts and a deep faithfulness to Anderson's roots in the evangelical church. So this is a personal book in the best possible sense. It is, to quote Eugene Peterson, evidence of 'a long obedience in the same direction.'"

—**Gregory Wolfe**, editor, *Image*

"From the perspective of his longtime dual residency in both the modern art world and the evangelical church, my good friend Cam Anderson is uniquely qualified to lead evangelicals and artists to understand and love one another. As I encountered a wide range of modern art in his book (Manet, Monet, Newman, Rothko, Warhol, Pollock and many others) I experienced a sense of wonder at the power and elegance of work that I had not noticed or appreciated before. For Christians seeking an aesthetic adventure in the modern art world and for Christian artists working to fulfill their God-given vocation, this book provides excellent guidance from one who is a faithful Christian and a gifted artist."

—**Walter Hansen**, professor emeritus of New Testament interpretation, Fuller Theological Seminary, author of commentaries on the New Testament, coauthor of *Through Your Eyes*

"Cam Anderson's *The Faithful Artist* is the most probing analysis ever written of the roots of the negative attitude of twentieth-century evangelicals toward the visual arts. Anderson knows evangelicalism from the inside. What greatly enhances his analysis is that it is set within the context of a broad, deep, and sympathetic understanding of developments in the world of the visual arts in the twentieth century. The book reaches its climax with an eloquent, biblically based appeal to evangelicals to engage the visual arts, both as creators and as viewers. We have needed this very book for a long time."

—**Nicholas Wolterstorff**, Noah Porter Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology, Yale University, senior research fellow, Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, University of Virginia, honorary research professor, Australian Catholic University

"An engaging and carefully researched summation of where Christian faith and visual art have been and where they may be headed. Artists are invited to take a seat at a wedding feast where binary opposition withers and an enriched complexity emerges. Observing how conviction and restless longing coexist in 'the faithful artist,' Anderson sets out to illuminate a way forward."

—**Lynn Aldrich**, artist, Guggenheim Fellow

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