

William Allan → Half a Dam

- ^{born} 1936, moved around a lot, settled in Washington
 - became friends with William Wiley & Bob Hudson
 - moved to Nor CAL, and pursued CA funk
 - whimsy
 - humor
 - known for surreal landscapes
 - story paintings
 - commitment to environment
 - dams are our control to control human resources w/out understanding greater impact
 - metaphor → for how little or how much humans care
 - salmon is nature, a fish who dared to swim upstream
 - stories of how people do things
 - salmon → body on rock is of fish a natural process
 - salmon dies naturally after spawning
 - spends times fishing and observing the natural world
- bizarre juxtaposition of human artifacts and natural phenomena.
- he describes painting to equivalent value to fishing

part of Funk art
→ sensual, direct

it's idiotic to give half a dam.

→ people who care give a damn.
→ what's the value of half a damn.

+ collaborative artist

→ Narrative Artworks

→ he relies on imagery from
Alaska, Montana, Baja California,
Nor Cal.

→ he paints natural forms as
an illusionary guide for
something else

symbols

- hummingbirds → warmth, nutrients
for life
- salmon

→ he had a near-death experience
white water rafting in a glacial arctic river

"Most of the paintings are about the paradox of information, and about which way the information is coming from"

"Nature is where you go to get the shit scared out of you"

William T. Wiley → Bay Area Funk art

→ wit and
absurd

"Just to Mention a Few After Bosch"

→ he has hidden metaphors
and layers of meaning in his
works, talking about topics of
war, pollution, global warming, racial tension

- anti-formalist art
- tongue in cheek
references
- imagination
- quirky, humor

• he taught
at UC Davis

→ he pays homage to previous artists like Bosch

→ INFLUENCES

→ influenced by Bruegel, Duchamp, Wyeth,
Bosch

→ he has a book on Bosch, and
opened it to the Temptation of St. Anthony

→ burning village, used that image

→ he uses the greats to understand how
to deal w/ difficult topics

→ news, radio, current events

• theme of the voyage

→ uses Bosch's imagery b/c it is powerful, to express his outrage to events and conflicts

→ after a friend (1986) visited a town in (chernobyl)

→ Bosnia and Rwanda are etched into the bridge to reference war and genocide in the world

he told him about it, and in order to process it he turned to Bosch

→ the fish boat - gondola is taken from the gondola of the foreground of Bosch's Temptation of St. Anthony

He enjoys playful puns and morphs

words

→ Jesus Saves to Jesus slaves → In Cod we Trust

→ wisdom to wizdumb

→ Shock and Awe to shock and gnaw

→ artificial to art official

Quotes

↳ "puns are a way of packing more than one meaning into something — and just about everything has more than one meaning"

The Temptation of St. Anthony

• temptation meant physical or mental attack by demons

Neverlandish painter, 1501

- was a saint who devoted himself to fasting and prayer, retired to the desert
- he spent the night alone and demons came beating him and wounding him



Robert
MOTHERWELL → Italian summer (1963)
(1915-1991)

→ American Abstract expressionist
→ went to the New York school
→ a part of Phillip Guston,
de Kooning, Pollock, & Rothko group

→ influenced by automatic writing by
surrealists

→ intuitive approach to painting.

• born in Washington, but spent much of his
childhood in dry environs of central CA
to relieve his severe asthma.

→ he is educated in philosophy ~~and~~, literature
and art history

↳ got his philosophy degree in 1937
at Stanford

→ Automatism → the idea that
art might be a manifestation of the
artist's subconscious

Bio

- his mother was a hysteric and beat him terribly, and his father would beat him too.
- he grew up terribly nervous and anxiety-ridden
- he got asthma
- he got interested in drawing and painting in kindergarten, he was tone deaf and kindergarten is all singing and dancing
- he used to collect books from the Italian masters, Michelangelo, other masters: Rembrandt, Rubens
- he first came across modern art w/ Matisse

Quotes

"painting is a medium in which the mind can actualize itself; it is a medium of thought"

→ he described the modern artist as

"by definition the felt expression of modern reality"

→ the artist must progress and make something new.

→ it's all about rejecting rules from the outside world

→ he saw abstract art as fulfilling
"the need for felt experience — intense, immediate, direct, subtle, unified, warm, vivid, rhythmic"

[→ "I also think there must be psychologically some revulsion against realism, I mean I must have found reality realistically rendered unbearable]
→ he found real life horrible

It became very clear to me that Structure is, is the relations among the elements and that elements related are meaningful. Which is to say that abstract structures can be meaningful. And for most artists without such an intellectual background, in those days they were very dubious about making abstractions just for fear that they really didn't mean anything. But I knew, metaphysically that by nature they meant something, so that I never had the inhibition about it. It was a moral crisis to move from figure drawing and all the things that one had started, into abstraction. But I took to it like a duck to water"

#15 thoughts on abstraction

EXISTENTIALISM

- creation of abstract art was a personal journey, and result of personal crisis
 - absurdity, personal angst, meaninglessness
- The modern artist, was constantly in a state of questioning his own existence and his own role in the world
- He was interested in psychoanalysis and was psychoanalyzed

"I ultimately did get analyzed. Which I think saved my life, saved my sanity. You know, most of my generation are dead through self destruction directly or indirectly. And I had many of the same characteristics. I was just as wild, just as drunken, just as alienated, just as everything. You know, this is something I normally don't talk about, but I have a feeling that if Rothko or David Smith or some others had been properly analyzed they would not be dead now

His response to Creative people and Mental Health

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: I think the second is true. You see, I think most people are held together by necessity, by daily routine. And if you're self-employed, so to speak, there's not that external routine discipline, et cetera, of having to relate to your co-workers, et cetera. And so if one has the same degree of neurosis as somebody who has a nine-to-five job but is self-employed it's apt to become much more visible, much more something to be contended with, plus the fact that in the end the only thing that really does an artist any good is an expression against very high standards, against standards of permanence really. And that in itself is such a beastly problem that only very few people in a generation are able to contend with it. So that even if one were perfectly, quote, unquote, normal, one is still dealing with a kind of problem that brings hundreds of thousands of people every year to their knees, and one has that as a lifelong preoccupation: to make a statement that is so true, so exact, so exactly a reflection of both one's self and the world that its authenticity is indisputable. That's a problem.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mentioned before about the life in San Francisco and the...

About Italian Summer → he was in his 40s painting this

1962, summer, w/ wife Helen Frankenthaler, was living in an artist colony in Massachusetts

→ Beach Boys, surfing USA vibes
vibrant 1960s culture

→ part of the series of paintings called "Beside the Sea" → waves crashing on the floor

→ Italian comes to play b/c
he visited the ~~Am~~ Amalfi coast
when he took time off from
Stanford in his 20s

PROCESS

And um, in Provincetown there's a tremendous tide, an 800-foot tide between high and low water. And at high tide, when the wind blows from the southwest, which is the prevailing wind in the summer, the waves burst against the concrete bulkhead. And I would be sitting a few feet from it watching the tide slowly rise and beginning to hit the bulkhead harder and harder. And the spray would begin to fly. And I watched it so much, I began to realize that this spray constituted a kind of automatic calligraphy. And one day, for the hell of it, I thought I'd, um, see if I could make some spray, if you want to put it that way. And did it on some paper. And I discovered if you're just trying to draw it, it looked weak compared to the original. So more and more I began to use my whole arm and hit the paper. And then the paper would break. So finally I got some five-ply paper. I mean, paper, five layers of paper glued together like plywood that you can't break. And by using my full force, then could make a spray that was like the actual spray. And then I realized, um, that instead of imitating the effect of nature, one usually should bring about this—use the same process to bring about the same visual result, so to speak.

And I got intrigued with it because very few
have noticed it





Hoarding my Frog Food

Artist: David Gilhooly

Year: 1982 glaze on ceramics

→ 1970s began frog world
→ aware of global culture,
way of absurd social, political, and ecological issues

Key Research

Funk artist → Bay area art movement that challenged the seriousness of the art world by focusing on absurd images of everyday objects.

→ ceramics was a popular medium of funk artists

Gilhooly parodied ancient civilizations, religion, politics, and culture through his theme of ceramic frogs → known for making frog worlds

→ in 1983 he started using food to satirize man-made and natural disasters.

→ he studied at UC Davis, he got into ceramics trying to impress a girl.

"That was the nice thing about clay" "If you didn't like the way something really was, you could always fix it up"

→ frogs evolved into vegetables and was tied up w/ mythology of different cultures and then food and frogs emerged.

- Macaroni and cheese w/ Frogs
- Frogs in an 8 bean stew

"Frogs are more fun than people"

- sculpted frogs in frying pans, wedding cakes etc
- frog crucifixion
- he sculpted w/ plexiglass, printed, and created collages and assemblages

early
life

- he was a son of a veterinarian
 - he grew up in CA, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands
 - signed up for Biology first at UC Davis
- first tried making a ceramic cup w/ a frog cup handle, then his Frogworld began
 - then created Frog busts of Queen Victoria and Egyptian gods

"leapfrog through history, religion, science, ^{human} experience

→ he proposed that frogs were really human beings in frog bodies

ARKS

"I find the image of arks
compelling; this container; sea
going, and filled w/ lots of
wonderful small things, things
that are not always what they
seem to be"

→ food is pleasure for frogs

ARKS past

- Frog Noah gathering all the plants and animals
- made viking style boats (bringing domesticated European livestock to North America)
- Also to bring fine art to the northern hemisphere
- Frog Claus → wearing a red suit
- Trojan Frogs
- Queen Victoria Frogs

Beavers became
a part of the arks
→ more successful
in bringing
pottery and
Christianity
to the north

Future

- flying saucer frogs as
arks, brought Frog Noah
to earth





Jim Campbell

- San Francisco based artist
- was an ^{electrical} engineer, and patented high resolution television technology
- he works in low resolution
- he likes to get his work as low pixelated as possible just where figures are just identifiable
- process → he thinks of his art as engineering.
 - he says he has an idea, then he takes 3 to 4 months prototyping and getting it to work electronically
 - the piece gets influenced by the engineering phase
- he started off with making films, in the 1980's, didn't like the direction he was going w/ his art so he gravitated

towards electronic art

- the details are gone,
you cannot project
your prejudices on them,
not enough detail
- "unsolvable magicalness"
- there is movement in
the images, but the
spheres aren't moving
- he uses electronic circuit
board
- he worked in HDTV
- what matters is the
movement, not the
details

→ these images pass through our brain simply as edges, shadow, and motion

→ each LED light can have different gray levels, 65,000 gray levels, so they dim, do not refresh really fast on and off.

→ if you look at it in your peripheral vision (primal vision) you can't tell that it is low resolution, you only see the movement

→ he went to MIT, place had a high suicide rate
→ described it as the most neurotic place he's ever been, so he ~~starting~~ started doing photography

and filmmaking to balance the situation, it was his escape

→ he goes by Jack as an engineer which is his real name

→ he uses technology for his art, not because he's excited by tech, but b/c it gives him the effects he wants

→ there is an intersection between logic and emotion in this piece, both very instructional.