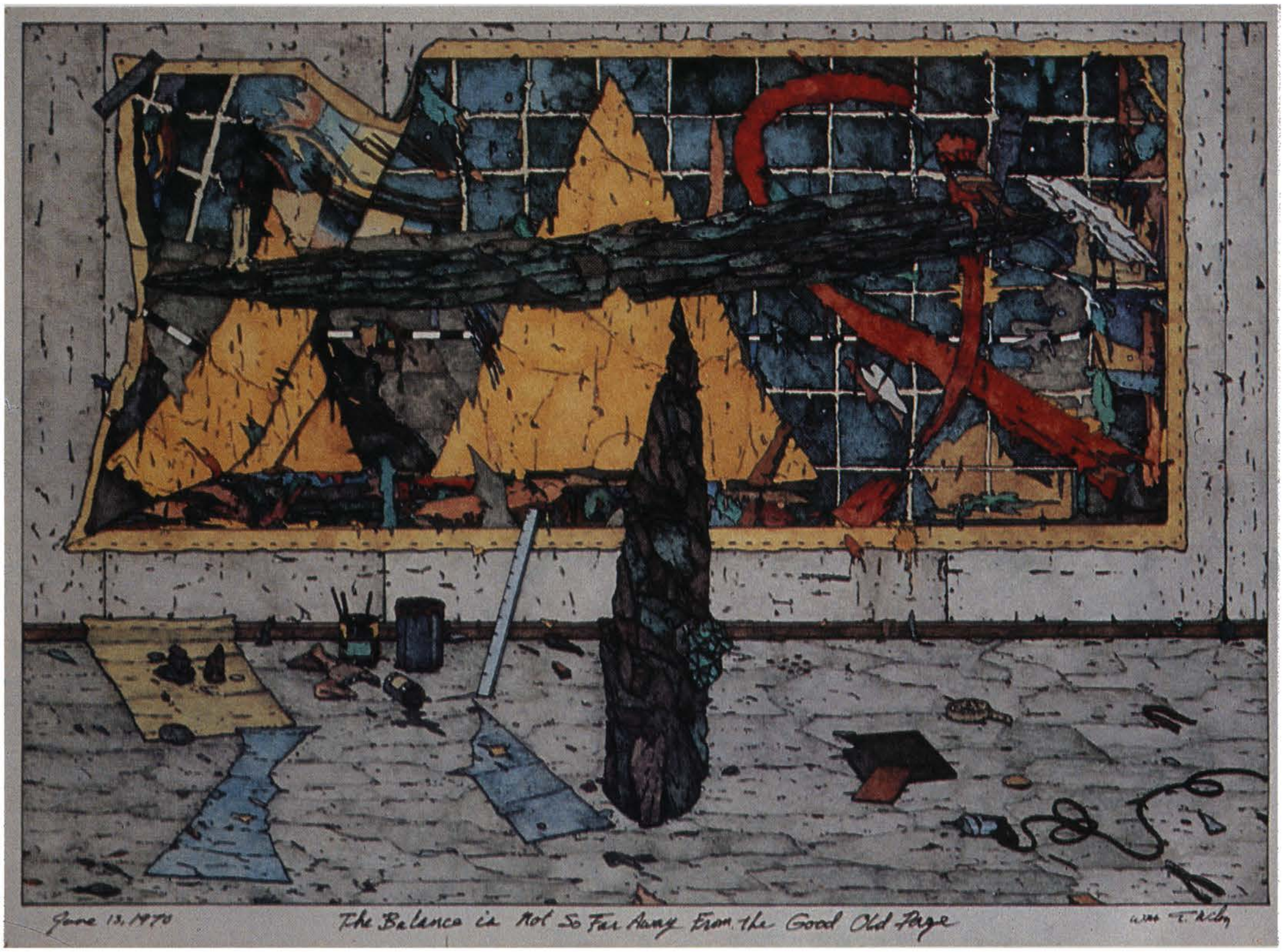
June 13, 1970
The Balance is Not So Far Away From the Good Old Days
Wm T. Riley

William

T. Wiley

May 2 to May 31, 1981

University Fine Arts Galleries
School of Visual Arts
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306

Oct. 15 to Nov. 25, 1981

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Cover:
THE BALANCE IS NOT SO FAR AWAY FROM THE GOOD OLD DAZE, 1970, watercolor and ink on paper, 22 × 30, Collection David Lawrence, Chicago

Foreword

In the 1960s, the Bay Area became the "fountainhead" for an important shift in contemporary American art. Artists working in the area began to achieve national attention for their "individual" approaches to making art and their irreverance for prevailing art doctrines. Their approaches became very contagious and indicative of growing attitudes that spread to other parts of the country and encouraged new audiences to become more receptive to the possibilities of major art being produced outside the art centers of the Northeast.

There are many artists in Florida and throughout the Southeast who continue to share similar attitudes in their artmaking and, in some measure, are influenced by the developments that occurred in California. The Fine Arts Galleries are pleased to present, for the first time in the region, an exhibition that deals with one of the most significant influences during this development, WILLIAM T. WILEY.

William T. Wiley's art is an incredible range of ideas, materials and images with an amazing breadth and depth that distinguishes him, as John Perreault writes, ". . . a special artist and probably a great one."[1]

Nearly two years ago, the Galleries staff began the organization of this exhibition of extraordinary works. We express our thanks to William T. Wiley for his trust, confidence and enthusiasm for our presentation. His collaboration has been an invaluable experience.

This exhibition and accompanying catalog could only have been achieved through the full cooperation of the staff, volunteers, advisors and the many friends of the artist.

At the beginning of our plans and throughout the remarkable undertaking, there has been one individual whose total devotion, friendship and faith has gone beyond the call of duty. Without Wanda Hansen, Wiley's agent, the exhibition would not have been possible, and we express our warmest thanks.

In 1979, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis organized the exhibition, WILEY TERRITORY. The Walker assembled for the first time a large body of information and works from the past ten years. What their effort has meant to our exhibition is the accessibility to a great deal of information and material. We want to thank the staff of the Walker, and especially, Graham W.J. Beal, curator of the exhibition, and Gwen Bitz, the registrar for their assistance.

Never has a more important aggregation of works involving a development in contemporary art been assembled at Florida State University. Nothing is more difficult for a collector than to part with works for a period of time. We are grateful to the many collectors as well as the museums and galleries for their spirit in sharing their collections for the duration of this exhibition and helping us to reinforce our commitment to a large and diverse audience in contemporary art.

Writers have turned to a multitude of words, hoping to see a little more clearly some aspect of Wiley's work. Many would agree what inadequate stuff words prove to be when compared to his ability to present to those who investigate his work a very special experience. We are pleased to have the opportunity to assemble five essays for this catalog and express our thanks to the additional authors and the publishers for their permission to reprint some of these investigations.

Of the Galleries staff: Janet Mauney for publicity, Sharon Collins for registration, and Susan Parks, as secretary, have contributed not only efforts necessary to the accomplishment, but also patience, good humor and wisdom under extraordinary pressures of time and responsibility.

A special thank you to Richard Hubbard, my assistant and preparator, who gave not only his talents and energy, but also enthusiasm to every aspect of the exhibition's organization. Also thanks to Bill Celander, the technical staff and many volunteers for their efforts in making the exhibition a success.

Through special support of the University System, Florida State University has become a major center for contemporary art in the Southeast. This exhibition forms a part of the Fourteenth Annual Fine Arts Festival, and acknowledgments at this time would not be complete without two very special ones. We want to express our thanks to Dr. Bernard F. Sliger, President of the University, for his efforts in gaining additional support for the arts at Florida State University and providing the funding for the Festival. Also, thanks to Dr. Jerry L. Draper, Dean of the School of Visual Arts, whose understanding and support have contributed more than anything else to the Galleries' objectives as an information and documentation center for contemporary art.

Again this year, we extend a special thanks to the Friends of the Gallery for their generous support. We are also grateful to the University of South Florida for scheduling our exhibition later this year in Tampa.

Finally, a personal thanks to Secretary of State, George Firestone, the Department of State, the Division of Cultural Affairs, the Fine Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, and the Florida Legislature for their continued confidence in our programming and their support in making this exhibition possible.

A.S.

[1]John Perreault, "Wild, Woolly Wiley," *The Soho Weekly News,* November 8, 1979, p. 56

LAME AND BLIND IN EDEN, 1969,
watercolor and ink on paper, 30 × 22,
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Harry W.
Anderson, Atherton, California

Albert Stewart

Mr. Unatural

"Funk," an exhibition at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1967, was a pivotal event in contemporary art. It not only brought national attention to a particular group of artists working in the Bay Area—William T. Wiley, Robert Arneson, Joan Brown, Bob Hudson and others—it grew out of an anxiety about the lack of support for their common interests as well as a frustration with the current and pervasive aesthetic doctrines.[1]

At that time our national and international problems had placed American society in a state of flux stemming from an almost feudal centralization mechanism in both politics and art. Art dogma and criticism seemed exclusively devoted to the current developments of minimalism and conceptual art occurring in New York. Most predilections centered around art that was becoming less intensively expressionistic and more formal and restrictive, either in abstraction or in lean-looking (non-object-oriented) conceptual art. Perspectives and permissions regarding the "look" and subject matter of art became exceedingly narrow.

In San Francisco, as well as in other parts of the country, sensibilities and judgements were dominated by these attitudes. Many (rebellious) artists felt that their natural aesthetic impulses were being subtly distorted, and they determined that art *could* be idiosyncratic. A low-key form of art criticism, a sagging patronage, an active political climate, and a geographical distance from New York allowed these non-mainstream anxieties to emerge without much resistance in the "Funk" show, and emerge they did in art that was funny, corny, ephemeral, autobiographical, sometimes ugly, and of course, irreverent. It was Nietzschean in spirit, and, despite many critics' brilliance in evaluating art in general, "Funk" eluded them. Therefore, it was soon inaccurately labeled as a movement not to be taken seriously.

Funk, however, was never a movement at all—any more than "regionalism" is a movement. It was, more accurately, a state of mind. But regardless of terminology, Funk was an important alternative to mainstream art (even before the term "alternative" became a widely accepted substitute for "avant garde").

A collective sensibility existed with the so-called Funk artists; their forms grew from a relaxed enthusiasm about the creative process itself rather than from an habitual inclination to follow fixed, external ideologies. Their art concerned itself with everyday life as subject matter: clever, silly, dumb, tactile, ironic concerns—all were valid. Ideas became contagious and, therefore, mutually supportive. Joseph Raffael expressed to Peter Selz in 1973 that his life in New York had been a function of being an artist; in San Francisco, his art became an outgrowth of living.[2] From this group, William T. Wiley emerged as impresario of this new and intensely offbeat consciousness.

My first contact with this Bay Area theater (the term "theater" gives it a proximity to similar Dadaist ideas) occurred in 1976 in the San Joaquin Valley between Fresno and Modesto on Highway 99. For some reason I had left the obscurity of a small East Texas town for the Great American Dream. ("Go West." I did.) I felt much like a character from Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* minus the dust bowl and the Great Depression. I decided to accept one of those visiting artist's positions available in the state university system, and I found refuge in academe. Never expecting a life-support reason (a job) to bring me to Lotusland, I was delighted to move closer to the Bay Area enigma machine to which I had been attracted since my student days in Austin.

One day I was working in my new environment, stumbling around in a very well equipped university studio (which was not unlike what I had envisioned as a set for a film on the subject of fascist ideology and the purpose of art), when some visitors arrived. They were working on an art-for-public-buildings program, and our conversations centered around the basic proletarian ideas about public art. I didn't expect to see or hear from them again. However, I received a letter in the following spring asking me to join them in Sausalito to continue our discussions. These visits led to others, and eventually I met Wiley and other artists who became a stimulating part of my life in California.

After meeting Wiley, making several visits to Forest Knolls, and partaking in a number of gatherings with his friends, I began to understand what had attracted me to him. His works exude a sense of familiarity while encorporating a wide range of images and writing, and his content and style are unlike those of any other American artist; they are intensely individual. Themes, puns, riddles, wit, humor, and iconography are mixed to give everyday (down-home) autobiographical subject matter a certain specificity and poetic structure. The result is a personal synthesis that reinforces all I have seen in Wiley himself: his lifestyle, his experiences, his obsessions, his vulnerabilities, his tenderness, his acceptance of everything as content for artmaking. Like his art, his life is enigmatic and extremely elusive.

An instinctive history emerges in Wiley's repertoire of personal iconography and his case of characters, which subtly grow and accumulate meanings and interrelationships. Themes about wayfaring, the vastness of the American West, magic, and his own art persist—*The Hound Harbor Series, Land Escapes, Nothing Conforms*. Mr. Unatural (the dead-on self-portrait, the spinning jester/alchemist clad in kimono and wooden clogs, with magic wand and conical hat), Captain Nobody, Zenry (the mute voyeur and monitor of events), Rim Rat (Rembrandt), Sir Rot (Seurat), and other personae are Wiley's absurd and forceful autobiographical associations.[3]

Symbols, like character, repeat in Wiley's images also—triangles, pyramids, cross-hatch marks, tic-tac-toe marks, hatchets, skeletons, figure-eights, and boat parts (to mention a few) are seen but never completely clarified. As a visual vocabulary, they are signatures that chart his personality with repeated, evasive clues. Even a patterned Wiley surface is a mirror of his consistent touch, as well as a structure into which his signs and symbols are placed.

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The narrative subjects that appear (or seem to appear) in Wiley's works are not linear story-telling, but metaphorical recording. Ideas, events, and emotions are accumulated in a mutative process that combines similar and dissimilar ideas. At times the writing supports the contextual roles of the images with crystal-clear expansions of the ideas pictured, as in *The Prisoner Concept*. At other times the writing is poetic adjustment: it illustrates Wiley's stream-of-consciousness meanderings—as in *Twice Upon a Time*. As the viewer is led from one detail to another, layered meanings combine and a kind of nutty philosophical balance emerges from the tension.

But deciphering Wiley's metaphors and symbols is only part of the puzzle he presents. Enticing illusion lures viewers to close examination but, at the same time, obstructs direct communication of any discernable, comprehensible "reality." *Lame and Blind in Eden*, a remarkably lyrical and beautifully created watercolor, is filled with a sense of desperation, loss, decay, and devastation. The overall effect could not have been achieved without Wiley's intensely precise draughtsmanship and interest in mood. However, his clarity and facile drawing are the keys to the paradox: although the viewer is attracted to the images through their exquisite appearance, the rendering sets up a distance between viewer and image. Wiley's familiar symbols are readable without much difficulty, but a real-life translation is impossible. The overall, disconcerting flat space and the inclusion of unexplainable objects *appearing* to function as symbols (concrete pool, clipboard, telescope) make his pictures visionary, surrealistic, and mysterious—certainly not real. Wiley's fascination with the potential of things—their metaphysical possibilities—and his childlike obsession with the mysterious and the absurd are constant, as seen in his writing in *Wizdumb Bridge*.

> Dad's toolbox always contained an instrument which I could never define a purpose for. Dad wasn't crippled in any way that I could see at that time, yet the tool that didn't seem to fit was in there with the others Laying like a brace for some unrealized disease.

Wiley sustains the reality/mystery paradox in this three-dimensional work. The constructions precariously combine a variety of dissimilar objects (hides, felt, logs, junk, lead, etc.) which in turn become energized by their unlikely placements; they become less bound by their inherent physicality than by their newfound irony through association. When the works become more physical, the perceptions become more abstract. Wiley describes a particular process of discovery in *Thank You Hide:*

> I found the hide at a flea market . . . brought it home and tacked it on the wall . . . When it was hanging there, I saw the United States echoed in the shape . . . I was reading Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* . . . I can't remember what it was I read, but it was like these Zen things. I saw something on that hide. "Thank you," I thought. The rest was built up from objects around the studio . . . There's a fish lure I found on the beach, some bones . . . a fishing pole . . . I figured I was probably fresh bait for Nietzsche.[4]

On my last visit to Forest Knolls, I began to understand another aspect of this personal synthesis. Upon arriving, I encountered a large oak tree lying across the front walk of Wiley's house. The tree did not look particularly out of place, since the setting, like many of the spaces depicted in his works, was filled with a variety of objects, materials, buildings, hills, and vegetation. However, there was something disconcerting about the location of this tree. My curiosity was stirred. This was probably another work in progress, I thought—one of those elusive obstructions placed there to veil some inner enigma—or, more likely a barrier for his privacy. Challenged, I crawled under the tree and entered the house. Inside, Wiley was having lunch with his wife, Dorothy, his son, Ethan, and Wanda Hansen. The mood was sober, and there was some reluctance to the conversation. I was determined not to let my imagination get out of hand, and I persisted with my observations and interpretations of the curious obstruction. I was well into my "deciphering" when perplexed expressions appeared on the others' faces. Obviously there was something about this situation that I had not grasped. At that point Wiley told me that the old, worm-eaten oak had fallen just prior to my arrival and crashed into Wanda's International Travel-All. I had noticed the truck, but its devastation was hidden among the limbs. I was so preoccupied with the "abstract" elements of the setting that I failed to see the reality. I felt "lame and blind in Eden," and the mood immediately changed from sober to humorous. My experience was more poignant than I had realized at the time, leading to a sort of reciprocal understanding of Wiley's art. In addition to my gaining an unexpected education, Wiley acquired a great deal of firewood and Wanda got a new car.

Wiley's art, though encompassing an expansive range of ideas and images, is not overtly political or concerned with social change, even though he illuminates the human condition and its fragilities, vulnerabilities, obsessions, urgencies, and *potential* for change. His skepticism and humor take art beyond our traditional assumptions—not with a "regionalist" temper or accent, but with a broad concern for universal human issues.

The influences on Wiley's work are numerous and far-reaching: totemic qualities (as seen in primitive art) find their way into such pieces as *Thank You Hide* and *It Remains to Be Seen*. Playfulness makes his art difficult to classify with other Duchampian anti-art, but wordplay and a nihilistic juggling of ideas make the connection clear. Also, the wire puppet in *Dried Ox-Bow Trail* is as much at home in its dried river "territory" as De Chirico's faceless mannequins in their Surrealist landscapes. Comparisons with the dream auras and male fantasies seen in H.C. Westermann are inevitable, and many of Wiley's ideas are collectively shared with Bruce Nauman, Robert Arneson, William Allan, and Robert Hudson.[5] Wiley explains his understanding of these influences, and

their importance, in his statement on Duchamp:

> The puzzle of a man or a man's life should be enjoyed, not feared . . . We must use his example of mobility and flexibility as an imperfect but well-intentioned model for existence . . . Yet should we find in his example a path that interests us, we should trust ourselves enough to follow that path as long as it is possible without an overabundance of human misery. If your life becomes unhappy or wretched, you must have the trust and presence of mind to alter the relationship to one that is less destructive. The pain and joy of your life (are) essentially up to you. Both pain and its absence must be allowed for.[6]

This concern of Wiley's for the quality of life inspires a seemingly limitless flow of energy that moves from his own life through his art to other people, who often, admiringly, become transformed by his special visions. His energy and wit "surface and sing" in the most unexpected ways, and, although his images are singular and idiosyncratic—or *because* they are, at a time when traditional art sometimes appears to be lifeless—his aesthetic has been widely influential and imitated in contemporary American art.

[1]Peter Selz, *Funk*, University of California, Berkeley, 1967.
[2]Peter Selz, "Six Artists in Search of San Francisco," *Art News*, Summer, 1973, pp. 34–37.
[3]Beth Coffelt, "Beyond the Flesh, Beyond the Bone," *San Francisco Sunday Chronicle and Examiner* (California Living magazine), May 29, 1977, pp. 20–22, 27.
[4]Graham W. L. Beal, *Wiley Territory*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1979, p. 41.
[5]John Perreault, "Metaphysical Funk Monk," *Art News*, May 1968, pp. 8–10.
[6]Brenda Richardson, *William T. Wiley*, University of California. Berkeley, 1971.

I Am My Own Enigma

James Joyce wrote that an object "achieves its epiphany" when "its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance," and this concept of epiphany comes as close to describing the essence and intent of the work of William T. Wiley as anything I know. Joyce said that the epiphany was the moment in which "the soul of the commonest object . . . seems to us radiant." Thus, by an absurdly happy and anachronistic coincidence for me, Joyce described Wiley's work better than I could: each piece that Wiley produces embodies a new epiphany, an evocation, a sudden perception of essential meanings, a special insight that we could get no other way.

Wiley has been making art since he was quite small, and he learned very early that art set him apart, in both positive and negative ways ("I guess having been into art for a long time, even in grade school, immediately you get some kind of feedback. If you can draw a tractor or a car, even a little bit, you get some kind of power through it—trade for something, acquire things, time out of class to do what you want.")[1] He was fortunate in finding friends and teachers who recognized and encouraged his abilities as an artist, and his enthusiasm for art as a way of life never really wavered. He says that during his first year at the San Francisco Art Institute the idea was suggested to him that perhaps he shouldn't be specializing so soon, that perhaps a liberal arts education would be the wiser course. He remembers thinking that over and discussing it with Bill Allan, who said, "Well, that's fine if you don't know what you want, but I know what I want." And Wiley says that of course then he too realized that he knew what he wanted, and it was art without any reservation.

In high school in Richland, Washington, Wiley got special encouragement from his art teacher, Jim McGrath. He remembers that McGrath was completely open to all manifestations of creative energy, and used in his own work words and sounds as well as purely visual imagery, inspiring in his students a particularly receptive and tolerant attitude about every possible aesthetic and social variation. Wiley recalls that at that time he was particularly struck by the work of Dali and De Chirico, and also by Arp, Klee, Miro, Brancusi, Morris Graves, and Mark Tobey—among McGrath's favorites. There were frequent side trips to Seattle to visit galleries and artists' studios (and even occasional trips to San Francisco and Los Angeles), and Wiley feels he had a very significant exposure to a wide range of art and ideas and techniques through McGrath's classes.

After high school graduation in 1956, McGrath discussed with Wiley various possibilities for further art study, including the Cooper Union, the Art Students League, and the San Francisco Art Institute. Bill Allan, who went to the same high school, had been at the Art Institute for two years by then, and encouraged Wiley to come to San Francisco to study, and that was his final decision.

> I was pretty knocked out by the school, felt a little bit shaky about it, seemed like a lot of the skills and badges I had accumulated back in high school just didn't hold that much water. But I guess whatever belief I had in my own work, and whatever eagerness I had to get it on, I just adopted pretty much anything that came along. I liked all the different ways of seeing, and different ways of doing things. I'd never seen so much of all that before. Things seemed bigger, sort of "more," more paint. In class we'd sort of worked with small things, light paper, and tempera, delicate things, quiet things. At that point I got sort of heavy into Francis Bacon, mainly just the technique, that kind of blurred quality. I did that a lot, and drawing. And finally I used some of those techniques to shift away from specific figuration. I started mixing in figures, animals, still life, landscapes, sort of blurring and smearing to obscure some of that information that was drawn pretty specifically. Pretty heavy emphasis on dramatic contrasts, too.

At the Art Institute he learned a great deal about the skills and techniques of painting, but much more important than that was the exposure to the professionalism and seriousness of his teachers and fellow students—among whom at that time were, respectively, Ralph Ducasse, Elmer Bischoff, Nathan Oliveira, Ralph Putzker, Frank Lobdell, and Manuel Neri, Bill Geis, Jerry Ballaine, Joan Brown, Bob Hudson, and of course Bill Allan. He was especially drawn to Lobdell, who seemed to him to be very "straight and serious and caring," with an intense but intelligently removed relationship to his own work. The presence of Lobdell and Still in Wiley's painting from that period is very strong—and Wiley is the first to see it and appreciate it.

While in school he learned much from the figuration of Bischoff and Oliveira, and even more from the abstraction of Lobdell. Just the same, he formulated a style uniquely his own, so much so that since 1958 his work had been included in several exhibitions both locally and in New York and had caught the very favorable attention of several New York critics. At that still early date in his career New York critic Dore Ashton wrote of his paintings:

> I found a pronounced streak of originality in his work, an authentic expressionist sensibility, and the makings of a major painter. In a normal and wholesome way, he has learned much from his elders. . . . Yet none of the echoes in his work ever dilute its own strong flavour. . . . Wiley's specific adaptations include the romantic passion for huge formats, often double-panel compositions; the use of the expressionist blur which softens forms and makes their surfaces vibrate; and a stress on asymmetry and diagonal dynamism. He has also joined some of the younger artists in the incorporation of emblematic Americana—stars and stripes, and ambiguous symbols of popular culture. Yet, for all these familiar ingredients, Wiley has not forfeited that which is his own. Specifically, Wiley's own personality is expressed in his use of almost-readable symbols. . . . In his small oil sketches, his urge to symbol becomes more explicit and he has experimented with montages of symmetrical images, repeated slightly differently two or three times on the same page.[2]

Brenda
Richardson

At the Art Institute, too, he had been taught to hold a fairly conservative attitude about showing and "commercialism," an attitude which he adopted with some reservation.

> I think there was a lot of Still's attitude in there about not showing until it was right. Ultimately I think that's a very sound idea, you are the artist, and you are the one who has to figure that out. When you feel right about it, the work can be shown. You just have to realize that you can have that much control over it. But then the idea came through a couple of times that the person who wanted to buy that painting was really trying to buy you, or buy what you represent, or your energy. I just kept thinking, nobody can really do that to you, and I just decided, I should take those risks, and if that possibility was in there, I just might as well find it out sooner or later. It just seems that anybody has a right to it, on whatever level they can get it on. I mean, the idea that it was bad for somebody to buy your painting because it matched their couch. It doesn't matter. If you've got a good couch and a good painting, and it takes care of a chain of visual events that gets it on for you, what's wrong with that?

I think art should be more and more amoral, a realm of exploration. Especially in school, if you could just get that idea across to people, it just means a whole threshhold of getting into art, or the aesthetic experience, or awareness. Just give people a chance to go into it and really flesh out a lot of things and feel themselves in it, without having to set up a commitment to it in any way—to trust them enough to believe their commitment will grow out of their relationship to it.

As soon as he graduated from the Art Institute in 1962, he was hired to teach at the University of California, Davis, and although he has taken time off to accept several guest teaching positions at other schools, he is still a regular faculty member at Davis. He loves teaching, and he has a reputation for being a devoted and inspiring teacher. He also has a reputation for being able to draw good, original, interesting work out of previously completely uninspired students. He doesn't have a teaching "method," except talking to students at any time on any subject, and gentle suggestions of possible directions they might take in their work. He has no set expectations from his students, so he is totally receptive to new ideas and seemingly unorthodox proposals and projects. There is no predetermined "right way" to handle an art problem and no particular response is any more appropriate than any other. In this atmosphere of both form and intellectual freedom, both minds and skills seem to flourish, and there is a relaxed enthusiasm about art at Davis that is due in no small measure to Wiley's presence there.

His attitudes about art and the processes of making and accepting art and art ideas are very contagious, and have not been restricted to his teaching. His energy has infected the entire Bay Region art community to a considerable extent, and his influence in the area has been and continues to be intense. He is a source of constant encouragement to other artists, in an area where low-key criticism, superficial interest, and sagging patronage are continuing problems, spiritual and financial, to anyone determined to live here and function as an active part of the art community.

Although Wiley has shown regularly in New York since 1962 and has established a national (international) reputation for himself, he has never had much desire to live and work there on a permanent basis. Neither does he isolate himself from the New York art scene as do so many West Coast artists. He appreciates the value and intensity of New York, just as he appreciates the strength and style of San Francisco.

> One thing that hit me the first time I was in New York was when you ran into someone who was up for whatever you were offering, the sensibility was honed right up and needed that information—it was just soaked right up like a sponge. Then I saw why art existed in New York the way it did, the place it had in the culture, why it was needed and how much it was needed, and that it was like any other power in the world. It had its good and its corrupt aspects, but it was a total part of the cosmos, just as everything is.

Wiley's career spans a multitude of "styles," both formally and conceptually. He has worked in virtually every possible medium, traditional (oil, acrylic, watercolor, plaster, wood) and otherwise (twigs, leather, felt, dust, wax). He has done paintings, sculptures, drawings, watercolors, pastels, constructions, earthworks, theatre events, music composition, conceptual projects, and films. He makes no comparative judgment about the merit of any particular medium or style in either his own work or that of other artists—he loves Westermann as much as Magritte, Clyfford Still as much as Duchamp.

Wiley gets deeply involved with each of his works, and as a result of such strong personal identification with the pieces, he frequently makes open-ended projects of what from another artist might be a finished, static object no longer in his control. Wiley often originates on-going exchange pieces with other artists; he does paintings that are sold partially incomplete, to be worked on at some later time (a recent painting, for example, is composed of 100 balls, only 33 of which are painted, with the remaining balls left to be painted in at a rate of one for each year of the artist's life—regardless of the ultimate disposition or whereabouts of the painting); he frequently makes new pieces out of old ones—notably, a series of 1966 paintings which he later wrapped and taped, transforming them into soft package sculptures; he adds or alters written inscriptions to "finished" watercolors; and less directly, though deriving from the same impulse never to close off the potential of a piece, is the frequency with which certain pieces appear in other pieces—a construction will reappear as a sketched image in a painting, or a contraption painted from imagination into a watercolor will later appear as a real object on the studio floor. This emphasis on the work as a continuous body is reinforced by his use of a consistent group of themes and symbols throughout the work—especially the pyramid, striped or checkerboard grid, infinity sign (reworked usually to a Moebius strip), the heart,

Reprinted with permission from The University Art Museum, Berkeley, 1971, exhibition catalog, "William T. Wiley."

lightning bolt, and star, the question mark, and a painter's easel—some of which may disappear from the paintings for several years, and then suddenly crop up again in unexpected places. This attitude about the work is only a logical extension of Wiley's personal philosophy and life style. He holds a position of acceptance and tolerance of all possibilities—his belief in unlimited potential, his Zen acceptance of all potential, precludes any closed systems in art or life.

While the lives of most artists are clearly focused on their art to the exclusion, more or less, of almost everything else, Wiley's art is more a by-product of his life. It's not that his art is unimportant to him, because it is, and he cannot conceive of himself not making art. But, just the same, he is concerned with life problems (rather than art problems) primarily, and his art happens inevitably in his life.

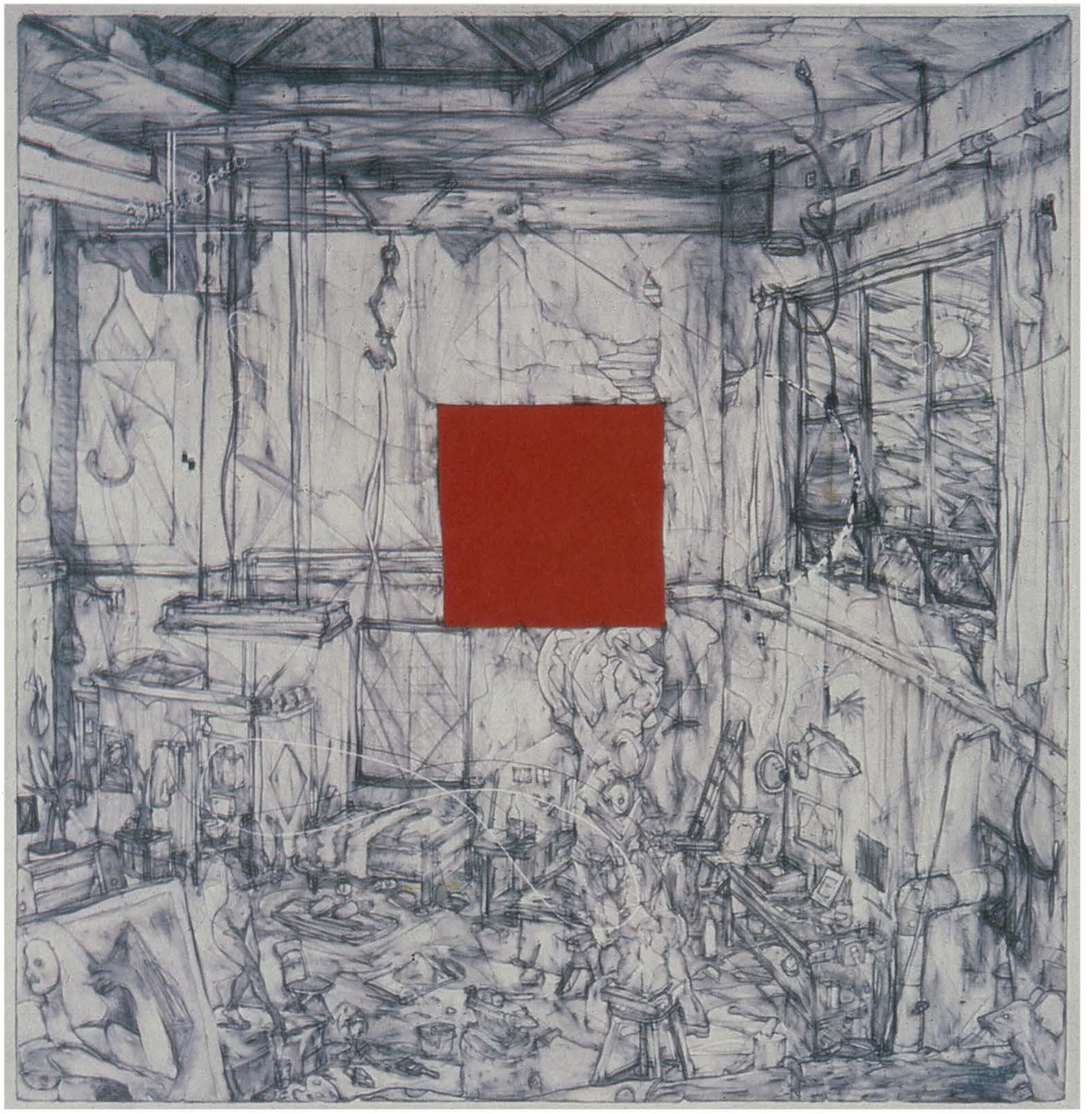
Wiley is an extraordinary person. His art is extraordinary because he is, not vice-versa. He has been called witch and magician, poet and shaman. He insists he's no more special than anyone (and everyone) else. He is genuinely amazed and baffled at whatever skills and sensibilities he has that lead people to new insights. At the same time he is profoundly human, and is accordingly minutely perceptive of human foibles and tragedies. He has a youthful humor, a punning wit, which takes its form in modified cartooning, verbal games, "silliness," and clowning. He sometimes speaks in seeming riddles, sphinx-like, inventing new words or new spellings of old words to create puns or double meanings; other times his work is purely lyrical and its meaning crystal clear. His work is autobiographically inspired, with the everyday commonplace as subject, the intimate sketch as revelation, language as game and invention, and a passionate involvement with the folly and miracle of life. His is well-read, intelligent, sophisticated, and highly developed spiritually—though not in any formal way. He enjoys life enormously, in each of its multiple facets.

Wiley is a gentle fatalist, a sort of Zen existentialist. He accepts everything—ideas, events, people—as having equal value and equal potential. For Wiley acceptance of the human condition is not merely an abstract concept—it is a way of life. Much of his power, personally and in the work, derives from the fact that he does not contain his joy and faith—he expresses it, with an almost mystic capacity of transfusing his essence of strength, contentment, and quiet energy to other people. Wiley feels that the world moves as it must, and however, that may be is alright, or as Kurt Vonnegut says, "Everything is all right, and everybody has to do exactly what he does."

Wiley is himself the greatest work of art he ever created, and to know him is to know everything in his art, and vice-versa. There is a real paradox in both his life and his art, between being totally knowable and forever seeming unknowable. Everything about Wiley is both more simple than it would appear, and more complex. "I am my own enigma," he says, a statement which is not meant to be enigmatic at all, but a statement of fact and clarity about being alive. Nothing is really hidden in Wiley's work; all meaning is present on the surface and is direct and unselfconscious. Wiley's art is a gift that reminds us of the wonder and miracle of it all—it helps us to see with a new calm what has always been there, and to treasure the strangeness and beauty and openness of it.

[1]All quotations from William T. Wiley are excerpts from transcripts of taped interviews conducted by the author with the artist in May and June of 1971.

[2]Dore Ashton, "Abstract Expressionism Isn't Dead," *Studio* (London), September 1962.



STUDIO SPACE, 1975, acrylic and charcoal on canvas, 83 × 80¾, Collection Robert A. Rowan, Pasadena, California

Beyond The Flesh, Beyond The Bone

There have been in the twentieth century two forces—plus mystifying clues to a third—that have made art different than before, and even harder to explain. Marin County artist William T. Wiley, equipped with what he calls "a beginner's mind," manzanita branches and considerable skill, has fused two with the still molten solder of the third. The result is a brilliant if uneasy liaison, the work of a master conjurer. His works are self-perpetuating riddles insulated by enigmas.

Wiley's work contains both the theory of Naum Gabo and the non-theory of Marcel Duchamp. The Russian Constructivist Gabo, fascinated with the potential to art of the use of dynamics in actual operation, said that art was not a fixed state, but a process—not an ultimate goal, but a direction. Gabo also believed that space and time were as important as volume. (Northern Californians got a chance to see this at work in *Running Fence,* an immense work of artist Christo Javacheff, who added unimaginably increased scale to both space—twenty-four miles—and time—four years.)

Duchamp, using the alias "R. Mutt," signed a common porcelain pissoir, titled it "Fountain," and submitted it to an exhibition. That urinal took art out of the museums and academies and flung it back where it came from, out of the here into the anywhere.

But in our headlong rush to track art history along the linear Western route, we sometimes forget the Orient, whose arts, traditions and philosophies have had such a powerful effect on the West Coast; and we forget Africa and Oceania, whose "primitive" arts hold the secrets of all beginnings. It is this mysterious "third idea" that is strongest of all in Wiley's work; the nostalgia for our first insights.

It is there Wiley's work compels us to return, beyond the appearance of things, beyond the apparent logic of our lives, even if it means a descent into the maelstrom.

William T. Wiley is a wild, somber, funny, gentle, profound, and elusive artist, the hardest to write about of any I know. *His moods are paradoxical and change as fast as quicksilver and a writer needs a good mood to slide in on.* Wiley is slippery ice.

He is a tall, handsome, quiet man who paints and writes like a Zen Buddhist cowboy in the Marin woods. His personal life seem insubstantial, more mythical than real, compared to his work; a lanky kid, born in Indiana, who wanders the West trading sketches for candy bars, who comes to the big city of San Francisco from Richland, Washington, to study art.

Wiley will be forty this year. For almost twenty years he has been one of the most sought after and imitated artists around.

"Talent is the word," Fred Martin, one of his teachers in the late 1950s at the San Francisco Art Institute, says. "He was the most talented person around. Gordon Washburn came out to judge a show and gave him the big prize—all of a sudden everybody began to notice Wiley."

He has done it by hard work. Wiley uses himself as a stick of flint. He never fails to strike, whether the lamp is fueled or not. That spark, he seems to say, is what counts—what happens after that is up to you.

His influence as a teacher is incalculable. Bruce Nauman, a now-famous former student of Wiley's at U.C. Davis, calls him the "strongest influence I had.

"It was in being rigorous, being honest with yourself—trying to be clear—taking a moral position," Nauman says.

"Wiley had a great personal involvement with students. He might say it was a terrible work, but he would get at *why they made work.* Bill was one of the first that gave me an idea about moral commitment, the worth of being an artist. It's that Art Institute morality—that art is an *ethic.*

"One of the ways he operates—in a graduate seminar people bring work in for discussion. I guess they expected a pat on the back. Wiley wouldn't say anything. They wouldn't say anything. Half an hour, forty-four minutes would go by and nobody would say anything. You'd think, 'Why in hell doesn't he say something?' But after all, you're a grad student now, you ought to know.

"Finally Bill would say, 'Well, if nobody's going to say anything, we might as well go home.'"

I've known Wiley for fifteen years, but never "know" him. One minute you're laughing at a clown in a black kimono and the next ("feelings like some unknown language you never quite get the hang of"), your heart stops.

The only person I can compare him to is a King, in Carl Sandburg's story *How Bozo the Button-Buster Busted All His Buttons,* the King of the Broken Bottles, a wanderer wandering all over the world mumbling "Easy, easy."

A few years ago Wiley got a letter from the Stedelijk van Abbesmuseum in Eindhoven, Holland, about a work of his they had bought. It was a construction incorporating the stump of a bay tree Wiley had found in the woods near his Marin County studio. The stump, they said, was full of Capricorn beetles eating their way out through the wood and even through some lead plaques bolted to it. Small pyramidal piles of dust were building up on the floor. What ought to be done about it?

Their question intrigued Wiley, who saw in the situation some "interesting possibilities," including just letting the beetles eat as much as they wanted, to see what would happen. (Very often his works include change, or continuing process, as part of their central idea, either actually or conceptually.) He found the prospect of having this army of tiny helpers at work in the middle of a piece 7000 miles away to be very satisfying.

But Wiley, one of the most cooperative artists around, was afraid that the Dutch museum might have problems beyond sharing the fascination of watching a piece they had paid a lot of money for change ineluctably from wood to sawdust.

He offered them several alternatives.

"Finally, I told them to just kill the bugs and get on with it," he says. "They fumigated it."

Beth Coffelt

He couldn't however, get rid of the idea of the potential of these invisible yet resolute kinetic forces at work in the stumps, logs, and branches—left in more or less their natural state—he almost invariably uses in his constructions.

"I wouldn't go so far as to get bugs *in* to eat the pieces," he says, "but . . ."

He looked around the studio at works in progress at the time, and noticed some "extra activity" going on in a new piece he was working on, a stump forming a pedestal for one of his recurring characters, Zenri (from Little Henry), a cartoon head jigsawed from plywood and decorated with a manzanita branch and chicken bones. On it he wrote a Wiley version of *caveat emptor:*

"just be
low the
wish bon
es bugs
are eat
ing me
warning
sounds
too harsh
caution
too tim
id."

"I knew I was going to go on using the wood," he says.

"I thought the answer seemed to be in letting people in on what was going on."

The museum at Eindhoven, which had given Wiley a one-man retrospective show in 1973, was not particularly fazed by this entomological diversion, nor would any good contemporary art museum in the world be. The elements of art have changed drastically in the past twenty years. Artists are using more than just the traditional materials of paint, marble, bronze, or plaster. These "interesting possibilities" come along frequently.

(During the Venice Biennale in 1970, Los Angeles artist Edward Ruscha noticed some of this "extra activity" while installing his "Chocolate Room," a whole alcove sheathed with paper that had been screenprinted with liquid milk chocolate in place of ink. Swarms of Venetian ants had invaded the American pavilion; they must have thought it was heaven. Ruscha decided he liked the dark, swirling patterns they made, and the changing movement, and let them stay.)

For Wiley, who has been known to use everything from rusty tin cans, friction tape, dead leaves, dust, and a live spider in his work, the possibilities increase exponentially.

This philosophy of Wiley's—of letting things happen, involving others in his work, opening up both ends of the creative process to serendipitous fortune—delights most of his admirers, students, fellow artists, and friends, but makes museums nervous. Last year, as part of his one-man show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, he turned one room into an in-process work. Part of one wall was provided for the spontaneous contributions of visitors. This alarmed the MOMA officials, who feared that so egalitarian an attitude might spread to other, more traditional, areas of the museum. The "people's" part was within a seven-foot plywood heart attached to the wall, with ballpoint pens hanging from it. In the middle Wiley had written the samurai's creed, and at the top of the words: "Draw Your Heart Out."

Wiley is so inventive, prolific, and influential that writers in their wild attempts to put a handle on Northern California art use him as a nomenclature bank: "Pop Western," "Dude Ranch Dada" (Hilton Kramer, New York *Times*), "Metaphysical Funk" (John Perreault, *Village Voice*), "Bay Region Mythmakers" (Thomas Albright, *Art News*).

But Wiley resists either leading or following a "movement" classifiable by critics. His is the irreverent spirit of Duchamp, the poltergeist in the *Zeitgeist*. If anyone gets anywhere close to defining him, he transubstantiates.

His work has spun through a hundred changes. From the time of his first solo exhibition at the San Francisco Museum in 1960 to last year's one-man show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, he has experimented with just about everything: construction, sculpture, costume and set design (for the San Francisco Mime Troupe's *King Ubu*), films (*Man's Nature* and *The Great Blondino,* which he made with Robert Nelson), collaborative drawing, performance art, printmaking, conceptual art, and painting.

Sometimes his work looks like something an anthropologist sent home after a field trip to the Antipodes: aboriginal effigies and masks, legends and maps drawn on real or *trompe l'oeil* wood or bark; spirit traps of branches, bones, moss, wire.

Then he comes in with a show of elegant, abstract canvases of deep, haunting space and pure draftsmanship, combining all the scraps and symbolism into frescoes of his odyssey through time and identity.

These big paintings, really murals, are like the collective visual memory of a race of nomads (a recurring word in his work) who return every year to the same wall to inscribe in code and pictograph, their journeys. "I was here," they seem to say, "and then I came there, and on this bridge I met a man, and he went with me for a time, telling me of strange migrations . . ." In between he might do a cycle of lyric water-colors, at once realistic and enigmatic (surrealistic), investing familiar icons like paint brushes with the power to explode, or giving to a deserted backyard greenhouse the poignant mystery of a dream.

Symbols of wayfaring have a special fascination for Wiley. In his Museum of Modern Art show last year he used hobo symbols, the strange cryptograms these lonely wanderers leave for each other on trees, barn doors, railroad depots: a triangle with three smaller ones means "tell a pitiful story," a skull and crossbones means "doctor," and so on. One of his major works of the late sixties was "Ship's Log," a large, elaborate construction of canvas sail, wood masts, boat parts and rope; along with it went a handwritten journal of a voyage into the unknown, a *Hunting of the Snark* exploration amid the floating islands of illusion.

But it is the funky-mystic vernacular of western wayfaring—as if Everyman were a cowboy and *The Pilgrim's Progress* along Route 66—that is vintage Wiley. Often he

carries the western idiom to its furthest extreme by drawing ("colored in directly") on untrimmed animal hides, like the Ghost Dances painted on buckskin by Yellow Nose, a Ute captive of the Cheyenne, in 1891.

In recent years he has added the element of words to his work: carved into wood, burnt into leather, scrawled on paintings and drawings. As puns, koans, or conundrums, sometimes as whole poems, *they add a non-specific dimension, like time to space.* They also make art critics, who think they're being laughed at, cranky. Words are usually given the Wiley spelling (he often leaves out letters or doubles others) and as it is with even the slightest juxtaposition of letters in familiar words—it makes them funny—Wiley has just broadened this to give double meanings: "Nomad is an island," "Modern Skullpture," "Enter rested?" "How to Chart a Coarse."

This element of time/space/mood *juggling is one of his most intriguing effects;* you are moved to look a long time at a piece; you keep discovering new things. Words, silhouettes, igloos, log cabins, bridges appear out of an apparent chaos of cracked mud almost magically; many drawings look like puzzles—find the dog, telescope, monkey, sleeping man in a drawing of an oak tree. And during those unguarded moments while you're just having a good time—who can tell?

At other times he is somber, philosophical ("I wish I had known earlier that you have all the time you need, right up until the day you die"), mock-authoritarian ("If you get too serious, you have to leave") or silly ("rim a niss thass all we can do.")

Then sometimes the mood is sustained, slow, inevitably centered, as in a drawing of a target, black and insistent in the center of a drawing of all-over lines forming rocks, earth, grass, tree branches, a shed; white silhouette in the margin of a figure holding a bow, the tip of an arrow looming at the bottom like the shadow of a camera. Under it is written:

"The modern archer draws his bow . . . a way back he used to know . . . to chip the flint and shave the shaft . . . no separation . . . artcraft. Or he from bow to centers game . . . target tickles all the same . . . like moths too fickle for the flame . . . a dart like velvet space to blame. Large small container sound and true . . . the vacuumed gaps to shape the hue . . . With REASONSKILL the target known . . . beyond the flesh, beyond the bone."

Two years ago Wiley invented a cast of characters. Some of their names are puns: Sir Rot (Seurat), Rim Rat (Rembrandt), Ray Done (Redon), some thinly masked aliases for his own restless selves: Mr. Nobody, Count Nowhere, and the ringleader, Mr. Unatural.

Mr. Unatural, who Wiley says is a "dead-on self portrait," came from a character he played in a performance piece put on by the combined art and drama departments at U.C. Davis. He wears an old black kimono gaping open over a sparrow chest and an off-center belly button. He has a false nose hooked on over the ears, wears Japanese wooden clogs, has skinny, hairy legs, a drooping black moustache. He is also a terrible ham.

Mr. Unatural is never without three props: a high, conical dunce, or sorcerer's hat; a black-and-white striped pole with a forked tip; and a child's slate hanging over his neck with various commands printed on it. The pole has been showing up in his paintings since *Columbus Re-routed* in 1960. Sometimes it is loose and meandering like a path; sometimes coiled like a snake; sometimes twisted into an infinity symbol ("inevitable rhythm locked forever with only minor variations," reads one legend); sometimes stacked like goalposts; but there it is, that conjurer's rope of black and white.

This year Wiley has taken another new direction—unexpected but inevitable, like all his new directions. He has put out a book. Landfall Press in Chicago, whose director, Jack Lemon, has supervised most of his print production since 1972, is publishing *A Suite of Daze,* containing fourteen original etchings, a poetic commentary relating to the work, and a group of hexagrams from the *I Ching,* which Wiley consulted before beginning each print. The text is a record of the making of the book itself, the log of a creative cycle. He wrote it, in other words, as he went along, changing perspective with the weather ("Spring Spits"), the *I Ching*, or the Muse.

Except for a version of the journal in *Ship's Log* (Zephyrus Image Press, San Francisco, 1969), *Suite of Daze* will be Wiley's only published work outside the excerpts printed in Brenda Richardson's catalog of her one-man Wiley retrospective at U.C. Berkeley in 1971. (Copies of that, long out of print, are prized like diamonds.) His other writings—he has kept a journal for years—are locked in the vaults of the Smithsonian and the Archives of American Art, from which they will be eagerly extracted when the word gets out that Wiley is far and away one of the best poets around. William Blake could draw, too.

Despite its apparently kaleidoscopic limitlessness of form, all Wiley's work has running through it a *leitmotif,* like a submerged river, that more than anything else characterizes the near-mythical enclave from Big Sur to Mendocino—the land of Zen and Beatitude, of thorny individualism and shared bread; the spirit of pioneers in a space age who have come to the end of space, and are close to running out of time.

It's a provincial philosophy, perhaps, in the sense that it's *western;* but that home brew was heady enough to sell more Whole Earth Catalogs than Bibles one year, and put the flagships of culture and industry into a holding pattern around a magic circle of redwood trees somewhere north of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Someday we will understand what has happened here in the last twenty years: a revolution beyond comprehension. And that same twenty years just happens to coincide with the creative span to date of an artist through whose work we are becoming known to the world.

"The forms are many," Samuel Beckett said, "through which the unchanging seeks relief from its formlessness."

"Form is void," said Lao-Tse, "and void is form."

"Roughly speaking," says Wiley in *Suite of Daze,* "Norm is lloyd."

FOOD DESCENDING THE STAIRCASE,
1980, charcoal on canvas, 92 × 118,
Courtesy Hansen Fuller Goldeen Gallery,
San Francisco

Metaphysical Funk Monk

Homely anti-objects with outrageous overtones of nostalgia and mess: Funk Art flunks purist notions of finish, finesse and the fine art of abstract pomposity. Centered in California's Bay Area, Funk is to some extent a product of that style of life and that lack of community support that are typical of the area, but it is also an anti-formalist reaction to current esthetic dogma.

New York is still the commercial and critical center of art in America, but Tenth Street no longer exists in any real sense as a breeding ground for new talent as it did in the past. The new "Tenth Street" is spread out all over the other side of the Hudson: Chicago, Toronto, Los Angeles, San Francisco. Given the new facts of mass communication, instant publicity and easy travel, provinciality in art is a state of mind, not a factor in geography.

Funk, at least in the highly sophisticated version William Wiley offers us this month at the Allan Frumkin Gallery (May 7–June 8), is not in the least provincial. Wiley's new work operates out of a sensibility that is completely aware of current esthetic concerns. His work is a reaction to and a denial of these concerns. His own approach, however, is not less sophisticated, but in many regards more sophisticated, more complex, more exciting on its own terms, as well as in its antithetical relationship to the Primary Structures, Minimal or Stained Canvas, blank strangle-hold upon "seriousness" and "modernity."

William Wiley's work is private, oneiric and ironic, as is Funk in general. Funk is humble in its materials and in its sculptural or pictorial presence. A Funk Object placed in a backyard amid clotheslines, playthings, rocks and logs or in an untidy artist's loft might well go unnoticed. On the other hand, its unassuming presence might make everything around it take on that aura of significance that we associate with works of art.

If mathematics can be used to generate visual forms, why not puns, poetry and the impenetrable peculiarities of everyday objects and everyday life, as in the remarkable works of William Wiley?

Funk is often very funny and/or sarcastic. It is humanist without being sentimental. It isn't "pure." One man's Funk is another man's Neo-Dada. One man's Funk is another man's bad breath or breath of fresh air moving in from San Francisco and offering us an alternative to the Big Freeze-out that, in order to justify certain styles (which are often perfectly valid on their own terms), has ruled out poetry, sex, surprise and paradox from art.

William Wiley's daring new works are as intriguing and as enigmatic as a picnic-table full of sticky paintbrushes, odd barbecue gear ("torture" instruments), soggy notebooks, eccentric rocks, logs, hatchets, handwritten poems in an unknown language and just enough rope. It is very intriguing and enigmatic indeed.

The artist's latest works, executed for the most part during his current but temporary East Coast relocation after a European trip, consist of watercolors and sculpture that combine humor, sarcasm and anti-formalism to create apodictic ironies and an exquisite sense of the vulnerable, the violent and the forlorn. Within the past year he has tightened his surfaces and developed a dead-pan style of rendering and execution that, although it moves away from pure Funk fascination with the tacky and the ephemeral, has had the effect of multiplying the ambiguities and deepening the metaphysical enigmas (*à la* De Chirico and Magritte) that are the main characteristic of his work. He does not, however, disown the Funk label, and for the most part his works are by far the most complex and adequately realized embodiments so far of that peculiar new development.

Wiley's art is about art. Since he is a teacher and an artist, art is almost the whole of his everyday life and is therefore his most obvious subject. His beautiful watercolors are renderings of sculpture projects with titles like *Untitled Floating Sculpture, Cap's Furrow, Random Digs* and *November Deadline*. The sculpture, for the most part, is "about" painting. Not in the current show, but included in this year's Whitney annual, Wiley's *Shark's Dream* is in some sense a key to his methodology and his concerns. It is a smoothly illusionistic painting of a shark-like "minimal" work of sculpture, oozing blood. A cartoon-balloon floating above the "sculpture" contains a reversed view. It is a painting of a work of art dreaming about itself.

Although he is not familiar with the works of the eccentric, proto-Surrealist poet Raymond Roussel (the influence, if there, comes down from Marcel Duchamp through Jasper Johns and Neo-Dada), Wiley exhibits a similar concern with explanations that only compound the engimas of the things they purport to clarify. His new works are decorated with strange titles, subtitles and paradoxical paragraphs of explanatory prose.

One of his watercolors illustrates an imaginary work of sculpture that consists of a rock supported by sticks and rigging. It leans over a water-box over which eight strips of colored cloth are suspended. It is titled *Country School* and is sub-titled with the following story: "All morning Miss Cary had kept us guessing. No. It wasn't the new textbooks she was so proud of. Nor the new foreign exchange student. Not the new playground equipment. The new chem lab setup? No! The room's new color scheme? No, that wasn't it. It wasn't the new P.A. system or the new gym, or the new lockers or the new lights. Was it her? Her new hairdo, her new clothes, a new car, new apt., had she gotten married during the summer vacation, a trip to Europe? Some of the board members were getting angry. It wasn't fun guessing anymore, when more important things were waiting to be done.

"When she finally told us, everyone was amused, but it was kind of a let down. She said, 'Nothing had changed since last year.' She smiled brightly. Later we all agreed that Miss Cary was odd, but O.K."

To further complicate the issue, Wiley has constructed an actual piece of sculpture based upon this particular watercolor, calling it *Sub-Standard Test*. The cloth strips have been changed to grey felt, the water-box to a sandbox and the piece contains a jar stuffed with cloth plus a further, even longer subtitle/explanation:

John Perreault

"Sub-standard test is about design inevitable design and testing for seeing and thinking shrinking and expanding and will either record an encounter for you or you will record your encounter with it . . . and seeing and living and the fingers try desperately to the thing for the brain and to hold the hand the good way when it shook badly and to be able to conduct yourself fully and inevitably in your ultimate design and just withstand a substandard test."

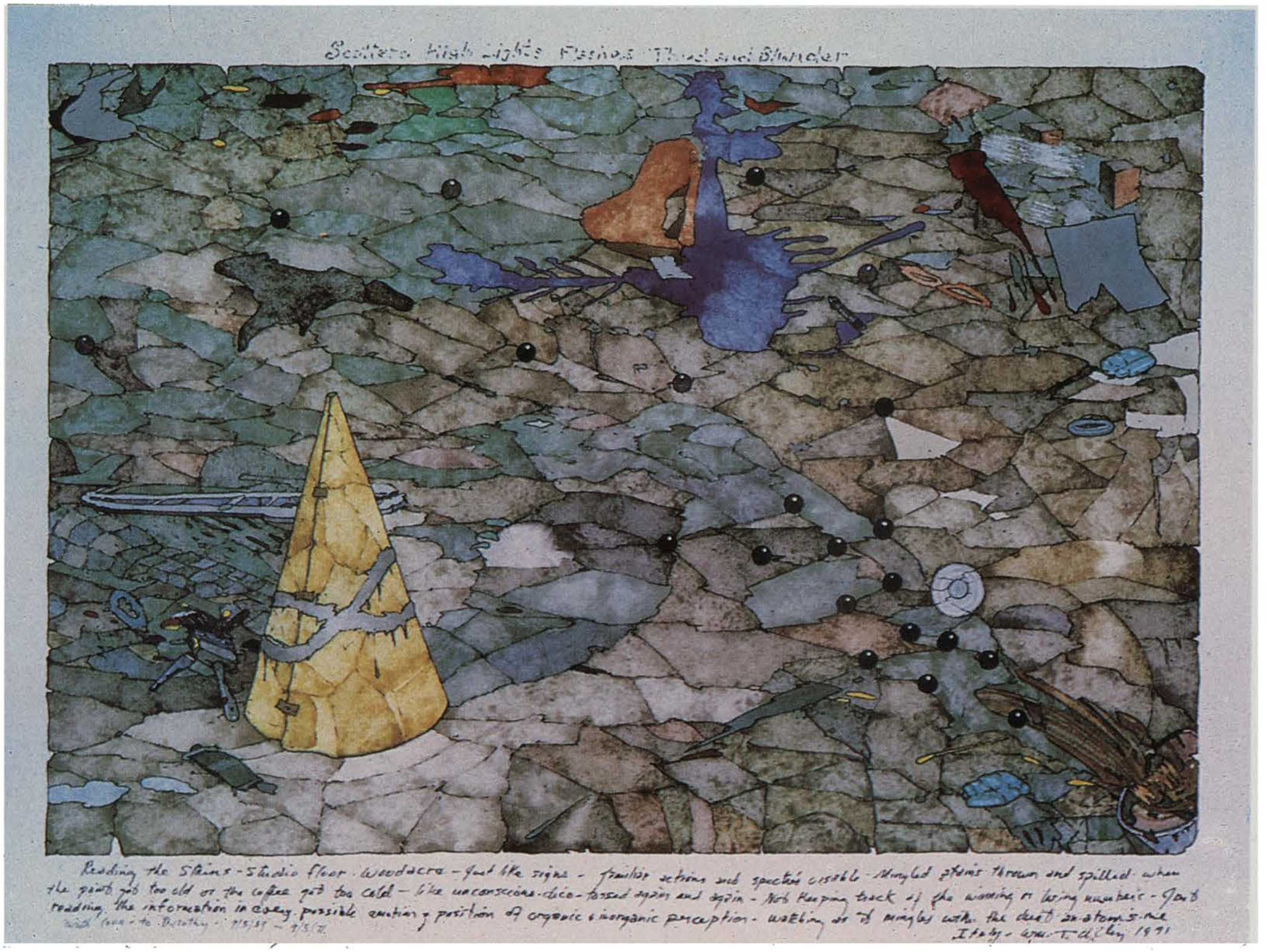
Funk? . . . Once again we are offered a category that is beguilingly vague. "The term itself was borrowed from jazz: since the '20s Funk was jargon for the unsophisticated deep-down New Orleans blues played by the marching bands, the blues which give you that happy/sad feeling," wrote Peter Selz in the catalogue for his omnibus Funk show last year in Berkeley.

But I like William Wiley's explanation better (also from the catalogue): "I watched a lot of good Artists draw backwards in fear while other guys just stood around with fake velvet beards and gunny sacks lined with old Art Magazine covers to get you out on a snipe hunt and leave you in the desert while they sneak back to the fire and eat the weenies. Just mete out a little interest in survival kit form and it will find its place like balls of mercury rushing to the cold end of the thermometer."

It may indeed be very cold at the other end of the thermometer, but, coming out of left field, William Wiley may be in the new center. The art that our senses and our sensibilities need consists of visual and semantic discontinuities. Wiley's new works are a threat to easy equilibriums. They are not "beautiful." They are hybrids. They are not anxious objects or specific objects. Because of their extreme ambiguity and their mysteriousness, they are irrational objects, dream objects, metaphysical objects. The a-rational, irrational and meta-rational cannot be repressed for very long, power-Puritans notwithstanding. The viewer is forced to approach Wiley's watercolors and sculpture with his whole sensibility, his emotions as well as his intellect—rather than with a tape measure or an art history textbook.

William Wiley is an important new artist who re-introduces qualities of subjectivity, complexity and wit and makes them viable by the use of new extremes and by his resourcefulness, his playfulness, his inventiveness. At a time when simplicity is too often a disguise for simple-mindedness and has become not only a cliché, but a dogma, Wiley dares to be complex. At a time when "meaning" is held to be vulgar, Wiley dares to create works that are all meaning—layer upon layer contradictory, dream-like and violently poetic.

Reprinted with permission from *Art News*, New York, May, 1968.



READING THE STAINS, 1971, watercolor and ink on paper, 22 × 30, Collection Dorothy Wiley, Forest Knolls, California

Matthew Kangas

Limits of Elusiveness

Much of the criticism of William T. Wiley's art focuses on its hermetic quality, its self-referential character, and its reliance on what Emily Wasserman described as "intimate or insular biography."[1] A broad overview of Wiley's art[2], however, and a re-examination of writing about him suggests that this approach is perhaps an unduly complicating one. Wiley's art should be seen in the context of other American art of the 1960s and 1970s. How it was a reaction, at first, to abstract and Minimal art, and how it became more and more an oblique commentary on the use of geometric forms in art is a more appropriate investigation.

Rather than pursuing the Minimalists' Primary Structures idea of reductive abstraction which was so widely exhibited throughout the U.S. and Canada during the past two decades, Wiley and a number of his lesser colleagues in the San Francisco Bay Region turned to their own fantasies and began a piling-on of imagery. When Donald Judd and Carl Andre were extracting and reducing the range of pictorial imagery, Wiley kept opening it up. Fearing the decorative trivialising dimension of abstract art which Kandinsky first pointed out, Wiley opted for chaos. Unlike the New Yorkers with their Golden Cubes and Cartesian simplicities, Wiley opened our eyes to the entire cacophonous, bruising world and, adding a fillip of Zen Buddhism, accepted all. Walt Whitman would have been proud.

In this way, he was both reviving certain narrative conventions in American art long dormant (David Smith's medallions, Paul Cadmus' soft-core Home Front paintings) and harking back to a more densely packed kind of composition—as with Jackson Pollock or Willem de Kooning—which had repelled the supersober archbishops of geometry, Judd and Robert Morris.

Ironically, that brainy temptress, Geometry, eventually seduced Wiley himself and one way of looking at his extraordinarily prolific output is to trace the appearance and continued interest in abstract shapes and patterns in his work. I do not call them symbols.

I think much of what has been dreary about Wiley criticism has been its acceptance and undertaking of an unravelling of meaning through symbolic codes which have been connected to a purported recreation of Wiley's "state-of-mind" commentaries frequently appended to his art. While that appending goes on unabated, I propose a temporary suspension of such a close, literary reading of his art. The coincidence and concurrence of artworks with events and locations of the artists's own life may, I think, occasionally be set aside with great benefits. This may seem to some a perilous and contrary task. Actually, it is a liberating one—for the viewer and for the independence of the artwork itself. Wiley is no more "present" in his art once it has left the studio than Mondrian was in his; conversely, Mondrian is as present in his art as Wiley. If this is the case, then might not newer, less stringently biographical interpretations of Wiley's art be possible? Even desirable?

Wasserman and other Wiley critics have held tightly to the artist's life and ambivalent pronouncements as keys to the meaning of his art. In perhaps the most fulsome encomium to appear thus far on Wiley, Brenda Richardson[3] states the life-equals-art case for Wiley with unabashed fervor: "While the lives of most artists are clearly focused on their art to the exclusion, more or less, of almost everything else, Wiley's art is more a by-product of his life."[4] On the surface—and undoubtedly after extensive discussions with the Marin Maestro himself—this may appear to be so. Otherwise, how could those curious notations be understood? I say, "But do they really need to be understood for a full appreciation of Wiley's art?" Once again, biographical trivia passes as the meat-and-potatoes of contemporary art when it really is just the icing on the cake.

But then, there may be deeper, sociocultural reasons for this confusion. San Franciscans have always preferred their artists and writers to exaggerate and enlarge upon their life in their work. From Jack London on (see his autobiographical *Martin Eden*) right up to Desolations's Angel Jack Kerouac and Robert Arneson, the closer the link between daytime reality and studio-time fantasy, the better. Is it any surprise that Brenda Richardson comes right out and says it?

> Wiley is an extraordinary person. His art is extraordinary because he is, not vice-versa . . . Wiley is himself the greatest work of art he has ever created and to know him is to know everything in his art and vice-versa.[5]

Surely this is a wondrous claim. What about the rest of us poor *shnooks* in Tokyo, the West Village, Belltown or on Hornby Island? Richardson's line of thought reminds one that Kerouac himself was probably a lot more exciting and clever in person than any of his woefully disorganised *romans à clefs*. It conveniently shifts the entire onus of interpretation away from viewers' instincts or aesthetic analyses of any kind onto psychobiography—itself a California invention. Perhaps this comfy deinterpretive angle works better when Bill is just a freeway hop away. Unfortunately, it sidesteps dicier questions of meaning.

John Perreault in a series of articles on Wiley came closer to the point by discussing Wiley's relation to Funk Art[6]. Nowadays, West Coast artists once associated with the movement squirm at the term yet Peter Selz's comment in the catalogue essay[7] for the celebrated 1967 exhibition on the "happy/sad" feeling of Funk correctly describes a strong current in Wiley's art. Perreault's contention that Wiley "reintroduces qualities of subjectivity, complexity, and wit" into contemporary American art also was true in 1968. Wiley and the Funkers (Hudson, Arneson, Melchert, Neri, Herms, Berman, etc.) raised playfulness to the level of an aesthetic. That quality manifested itself through the wandering, extremely irregular lines in Wiley's drawings and paintings. It allowed American art to breathe again at a time when large-scale sculptures frighteningly suggested isolation booths or authoritarian structures. What happened with Wiley is that, through the '70s, he reintroduced certain formal controls in addition to his freer "subjectivity, complexity, and wit." These geometric

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anchors—the infinity shape, pyramid, triangle, circle—acted as centralising shapes within the morass of his cluttered studio topics.

Rather than seeing these as deeply personal symbols—such as the black- and white-striped pole—I see them as tentative deferences to art styles with which Wiley has not been generally associated: Minimalism, Hard-Edge, Abstract Expressionism, New Image and others. This is not to diminish the force of Wiley's original welter. Those jam-packed watercolours have always been meticulously composed and toyed with such traditionally modernist concerns as perspective and opticality.

The checkered square which has frequently appeared within otherwise representational pieces (*Nothing Conforms, Blue Stump, Toys of the St. Urchin, Nothing Changes*) offers an eye's resting place, an affirmation of flatness within a deep-perspective picture plane, a positive-negative void amidst gleaming colours, in short, a little sensory-deprivation block within the visual overload of Wiley's compositions.

The black-and-white rod or range pole, though it may have been a surveyor's tool found in the artist's father's toolkit[9] and hence have personal associations, is also a diagonal pointer which intensified perspective's playperiod (*Wizdumb Bridge, Land Escape, I Won't Forget Again One Jillion Times*). In *Bridge for Trudy,* it is a vertical framing device which, attached to the bridge of the title, forms one-third of a hidden triangle anchoring the drawing's form. In *Painting For Rain,* it works less forthrightly as a "charm invoked by the artist to break the 1976 drought"[10] than as a high-contrast central shape which breaks up the monochromaticism of the overall picture.

The geographical subject matter in Wiley's art is part of an already pre-existing tradition of the art of the western U.S. Starting with the 19th-century Yellowstone School (Bierstadt, Blakelock, etc.), painters tended to be preoccupied with the Great Outdoors and, concurrent with the rise of the camera, wanted to capture its glories. Manifest Destiny contributed to this mania. What's entertaining about Wiley's "territory" is that he has literalised the concept of Western terrain and converted it first into a depiction of locationless land masses (seen one canyon, seen 'em all) and, later along, to a more specifically recognisable landscape: suburban California. Without adhering to the biographical reading of many of Wiley's watercolours of the '70s, one can cheerfully glance at *What's Left of the Garden and Mirror* (1973) or *Lame and Blind in Eden* and see a potting shed in Marin County or a backyard down the road.

Similarly, *Rim Rats Cabin* (1975) is most openly concerned with rainy Northern California landscape. *I've Got it All on the Line* (1970) not only contains hippy artifacts like a leather cowboy hat and army fatigue shoulder bag (so what if they're Wiley's!), it opens out onto a typical suburban view of the California coast with houses nestled in the hills and a smoke plume from factories down the coast—or across the Bay.

The plotting out of land—soon to be subdivided by developers—has been a continuing theme in Wiley's art which has allowed him to combine a reputedly complex personal subject matter with less overt yet nonetheless constant formal interests. The crabgrass-ridden yard in *I've Got it All on the Line,* vertical fenceboard in *I.V. at the Window* (1974) or the irregular polygons doubling as parched earth in *Dried Ox-Bow Trail* (1972) all are examples of a regulating tendency in Wiley's art which may seem at odds with the anti-formalist claims made for Wiley by his many critics. Although Graham W.J. Beal has claimed that the imagery of much of Wiley's geographical meanderings is "nautical"[11], I feel that the overwhelming majority of Wiley's "territorial" pieces are earthbound.

In the large paintings, this has led to the building-up of line and a subordination of immediately tangible images. *Village Roots* (1972) has a distant antecedent in Mark Tobey's *Moving Forms* (1930) or his *Northwest Phantasy* (1953) and I need only raise briefly the issue of the artist's Washington State origins to suggest a faint link to older artists who also became preoccupied with the depiction of a generalised, abstracted landscape. *Village Roots* exemplified the map-effect of Wiley's work in the early '70s. *Thudarkages* (1972) is a purer expression of this idea of No-space and yet the moment the eye sets on a corner or a crag, No-space becomes Someplace.

Where is Someplace? More often than not, it is some vaguely identifiable section of the West. Perhaps Wiley's West is a quirky cartoon version of the Yellowstone School. All the same, it vacillates back and forth between crammed peaks and crags and a flat surface composed of tangled lines. The historical significance of Wiley's accomplishment is his having been able to accentuate a superficially obscure interpretation of his work resting on his own unique personality all the while driving closer and closer to the flat picture plane.

The chief difficulties in his art do not surround the literary interpretation favoured by his earlier critics; rather they deal with reconciling a feisty will to complexity with a concomitant urge to simplified pictorial depiction shared by many New York artists of the '70s.

The intricate nature of his drawing links him on the one hand to surrealist and dada forerunners like Dali, Francis Picabia and Duchamp's "machines" and, on the other, to the wiggly, meandering line of a Pollock drip painting. The immediate difference between Pollock and Wiley would seem, at first, to be their attitudes toward subject matter. And yet, just as there is a revised reading of many of Pollock's paintings which suggests more easily identifiable imagery than heretofore thought present[12], so I propose a look at Wiley's large paintings in the light of a less representational reading. That is to say, if it now seems apparent that Pollock and, in fact, most of the Abstract Expressionists switch-hit between abstraction and recognisability, so it is conceivable to me to think of William T. Wiley as an artist whose work slips in and out of abstraction.

This double stream in his art—if we are to perceive it or grant it credence—necessitates a widening of our eyes. To

retain the surrealist cartoon approach to Wiley—with all the attendant Zen paraphernalia—is to, like Zen, run the outside possibility of Enlightenment through contemplating the mundane. Or, to pursue the unravelling of Wiley's texts and follow the line of interdependency of image and world, also might lead to understanding. My quarrel with those views of his work is that other, more instantaneously startling insights might be needlessly precluded.

To begin to look at Wiley as more than the Fountainhead of Funk or the Latter-day Saint of Surrealism or the Carrier of the Standard of Representationalism is to release previous limits placed on his art. I argue for a fusionary view of Wiley seemingly severed at first from the cuddly context of Bay Region art of the '50s. This is to place in better balance the neglected parts of his art—colour, scale, structure—against the decodifying density of an exclusively literary approach.

Given the possibility of seeing Wiley as, say, an American illustrator instead of a Guru of the Feel-goods, it might make sense to cart out a few other old figures of American art like Reginald Marsh (also concentrated on ink and watercolour) or Ben Shahn (*Sacco and Vanzetti* is also a narrative) and compare them to Wiley. The distinction here, of course, is the hydra of surrealism. Marsh and Shahn were working out of socialist-humanist sympathies to illustrate contemporary urban life. What Pollock and de Kooning took from Matta and Gorky was the surrealist automatist method. Their borrowing from surrealism, like Picasso's, was selective. Wiley's has been discriminating, too (dream atmosphere, dislocated imagery seen especially in his sculpture), but his shared pictorial concerns reveal his weakest relationship to surrealism: the conceit of arbitrary disjunctiveness. Magritte kept trying to convince us that he could create a new pictorial logic by placing a racing locomotive before a fireplace. Similarly, Wiley and the successive generations of art students from U.C. Davis to Pullman to Calgary and back took this at face value. Choose an image—a stump. Choose another—a tipped paint bucket. Place them in the same picture and connect them with line and an infinity curve. *Voilà!* Southwest surrealism—and the watercolour *Wizdumb Bridge*. The liberating incongruities of surrealism were seized upon by certain West Coast artists desperately searching for non-New York paths to take in the '50s and '60s. The ironic thing is that only the Minimalists themselves achieved a full-fledged reaction to surrealism. Wiley, his S.F. colleagues and the Abstract Expressionists all drank from the well of surrealism.

The gesture painters (and Montréal's *automatistes*) learned how to effect a deep release of "unconscious" powers. The Californians opened their eyes and, lo and behold, the very world around them was Weird! The chronicling of that world—in watercolours, etchings, lithographs, sculptures, and paintings—is what William T. Wiley began to do in the early '70s. His is a chronicle of suburban Pacific Coast Lifestyle. If Cyra McFadden's characters in *The Serial* ever knew an artist who was a household name, it would have had to be Wiley. The Tenth Street boys, after all, were doing a variation on the same theme in New York: painting their own "landscapes"—Kline's I-beam cross-bars, Pollock's subway-map mazes, Rothko's smog-clouds. Joan Mitchell went off to Paris and ended up doing it, too: spring at Bagatelle.

Meanwhile, the big war that brewed up amongst American artists and divided—so it seemed—formalists from realists, or mythmakers from documentors, appears as we face the 1980s to have been based on much less distinct battle-lines than heretofore admitted. William T. Wiley epitomises this blur. His broadly prolific *oeuvre* has flirted continuously with flatness and Primary Structures of sorts and managed at the same time to contain an abundance of interpretations. This essay has attempted to respectfully remove some of the obfuscating elements—intention, biography, text—and to restore or introduce different issues which may lead to new facets of meaning in his art.

To place templates of interpretation on an artist's work is not to confine it unduly; sometimes it can free it to move and grow more comfortably. The preparation for responses of the future, it could also be argued, is a purpose of criticism.

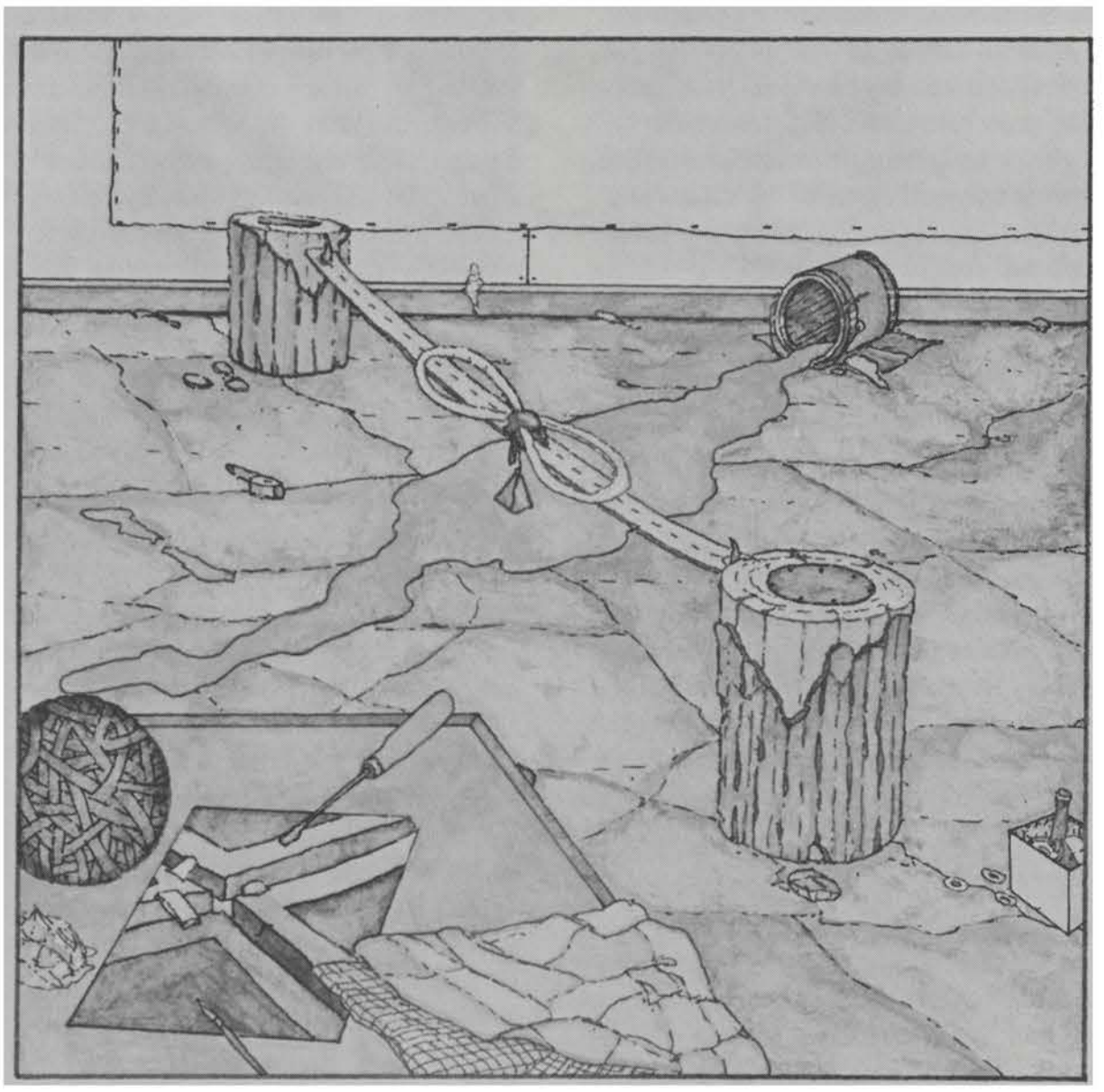
[1]Emily Wasserman, "William T. Wiley and William Allan: Meditating at Fort Prank," *Artforum,* December, 1970, p. 62.
[2]Much of this discussion is based on the Walker Art Center-organized exhibition "Wiley Territory," which the author saw at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts. It opens December 11 at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.
[3]Brenda Richardson, "I Am My Own Enigma," Introduction to *William T. Wiley,* Berkeley: University Art Museum, 1971.
[4]*Ibid.*
[5]*Ibid.*
[6]John Perreault, "Metaphysical Funk Monk," *ART news,* May, 1968, pp. 52–53.
[7]Peter Selz, *Funk,* Berkeley: University Art Museum, 1967.
[8]*Op. Cit.*
[9]Graham W.J. Beal, "The Beginner's Mind," in *Wiley Territory,* Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1979, p. 29.
[10]*Ibid.*
[11]*Ibid.*, p. 36.
[12]William S. Rubin, "Pollock as Jungian Illustrator," *Art in America,* December, 1979, p. 72.

Catalog of Works

Dimensions are in inches; height precedes width precedes depth.

"MODERN ART TEACHER," 1966, acrylic canvas, 66 × 86, Collection the Artist

"LAME AND BLIND IN EDEN," 1969, watercolor and ink on paper, 30 × 22, Collection Mr. and Mrs. Harry W. Anderson, Atherton, California



Wizdumb Bridge

Im a maze of information about reflections, mirrored in opposites. Dad's tool box always contained an instrument which i could never define a purpose for. Dad wasnt crippled in any way i could see at that time, yet the tool that didnt seem to fit was in there with the others Laying like a brace for some unrealized disease.

Wm. T. Wiley
7/10/69

"WIZDUMB BRIDGE," 1969, watercolor and ink on paper, 24 × 19, Collection William and Deborah Struve, Chicago

"FRONTIER LOONEY BIN," 1969, ink on paper, 22 × 30, Collection Mr. and Mrs. C. David Robinson, Sausalito, California

"THE BALANCE IS NOT SO FAR AWAY FROM THE GOOD OLD DAZE," 1970, watercolor and ink on paper, 22 × 30, Collection David Lawrence, Chicago

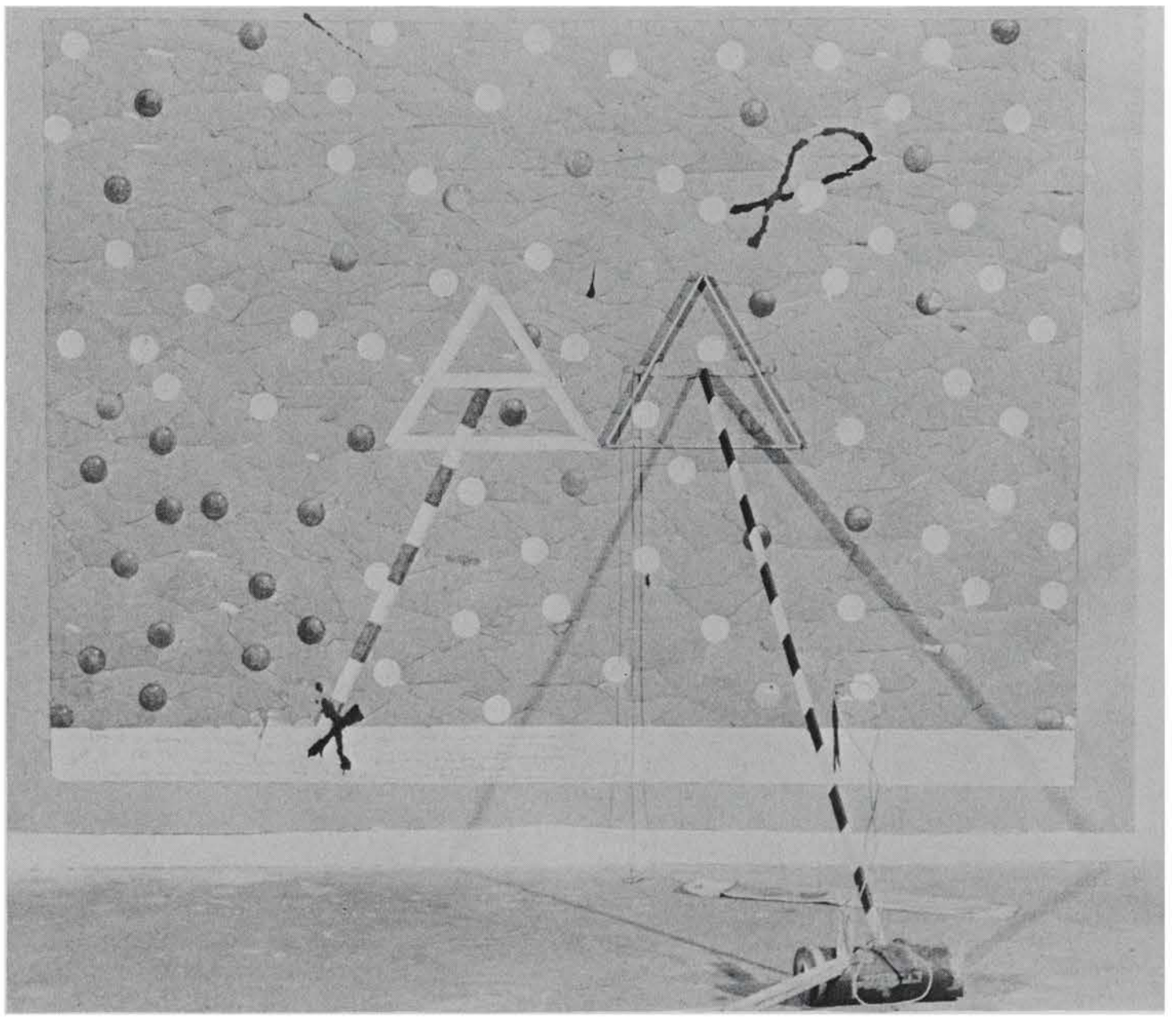
"SAILING PAST THE GUARDIAN," 1971, watercolor and ink on paper, 22 × 30, Collection Sarah Estribou-Franklin, Carmel, California

"READING THE STAINS," 1971, watercolor and ink on paper, 22 × 30, Collection Dorothy Wiley, Forest Knolls, California

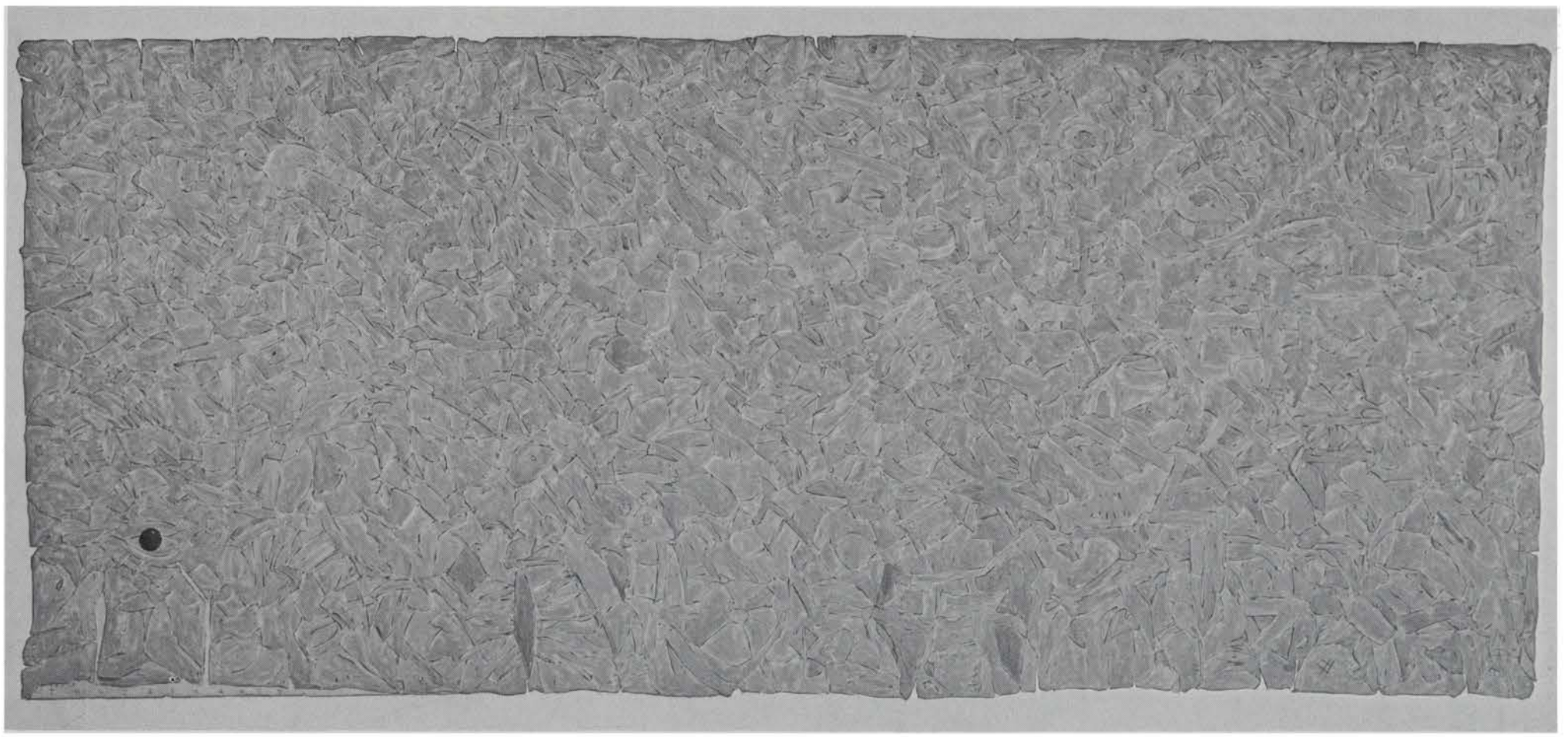
"A KILLING LESSON NO. 1 OR AUDREY'S DOUBT," 1971, watercolor on paper, 30 × 22, Collection Sarah Estribou-Franklin, Carmel, California

"BOBS HIDE," 1971, acrylic on felt with rope, paper, plastic and wood, 90 × 72, Collection Elaine Horwitch, Scottsdale, Arizona

DRIED OX-BOW TRAIL," 1972, watercolor and ink on paper, 22 × 30, Collection San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Gift of the Women's Board



"RANDOM REMARKS AND DIGS," 1971, painting of acrylic on canvas, 86 × 115 × 40, construction of wood, metal and cloth, Collection Mr. and Mrs. C. David Robinson, Sausalito, California



"THUDARKAGES," 1972, acrylic on canvas, 84 × 192, Collection Des Moines Art Center, Coffin Fine Arts Trust Fund

"IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN," 1974, construction of branches, tree roots, acrylic on chamois hide, ink and acrylic on wood, metal, string, leather, glass, English walnuts and spray can, 51 × 36 × 55, Collection Matthew and Wanda Ashe, Sausalito, California

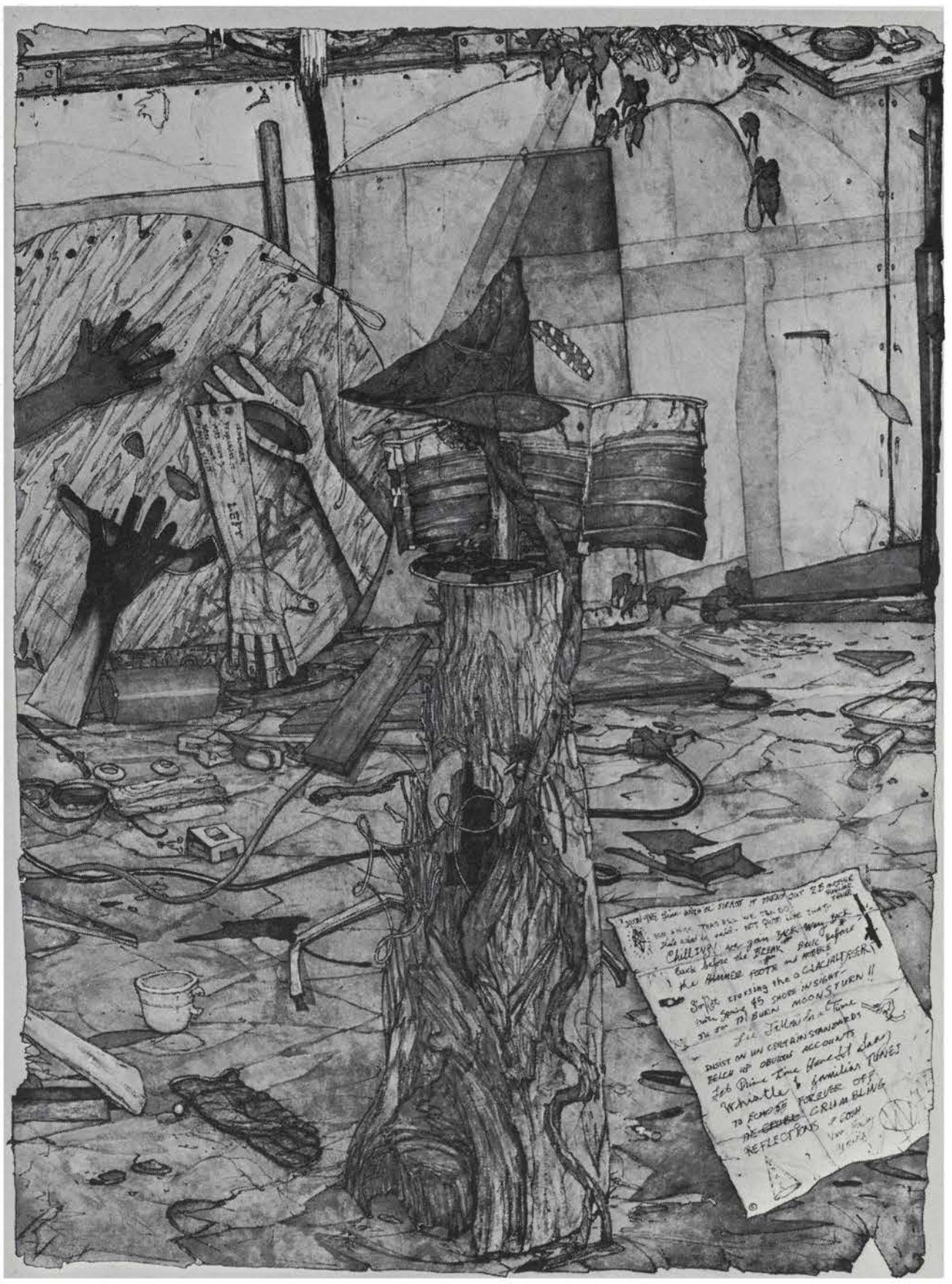
"SAINTSPILL," 1972, acrylic on canvas, 84 × 102, Collection Mr. and Mrs. C. David Robinson, Sausalito, California

"THANK YOU HIDE," 1972, five-color lithograph on paper, 35 × 48, Collection of Des Moines Art Center

"WHAT'S LEFT OF THE GARDEN AND MIRROR," 1973, watercolor, ink and colored pencil on paper, 30 × 22, Collection Mr. and Mrs. C. David Robinson, Sausalito, California

"ZENRY," 1974, construction of tree stump, ink on wood, manzanita, wood, rope, wire, glass and bones, 36 × 38 × 15, Courtesy Delahunty Gallery, Dallas

"RIM RATS CABIN," 1975, watercolor, ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper, 30 × 22, Collection Sarah Estribou-Franklin, Carmel, California



"DOWN THE LINE WITH OL'SIR ROT," 1975, construction of wood, branch, metal, leather and found objects, 32 × 13½ × 11, drawing of watercolor and ink on paper, 30 × 22, Collection Ralph H. Perkins and Steven Smith, Chicago

"STUDIO SPACE," 1975, acrylic and charcoal on canvas, 83 × 80¾, Collection Robert A. Rowan, Pasadena, California

"MODERN LIMITS," 1975, acrylic on canvas, 75 × 96, Collection Robert A. Rowan, Pasadena, California

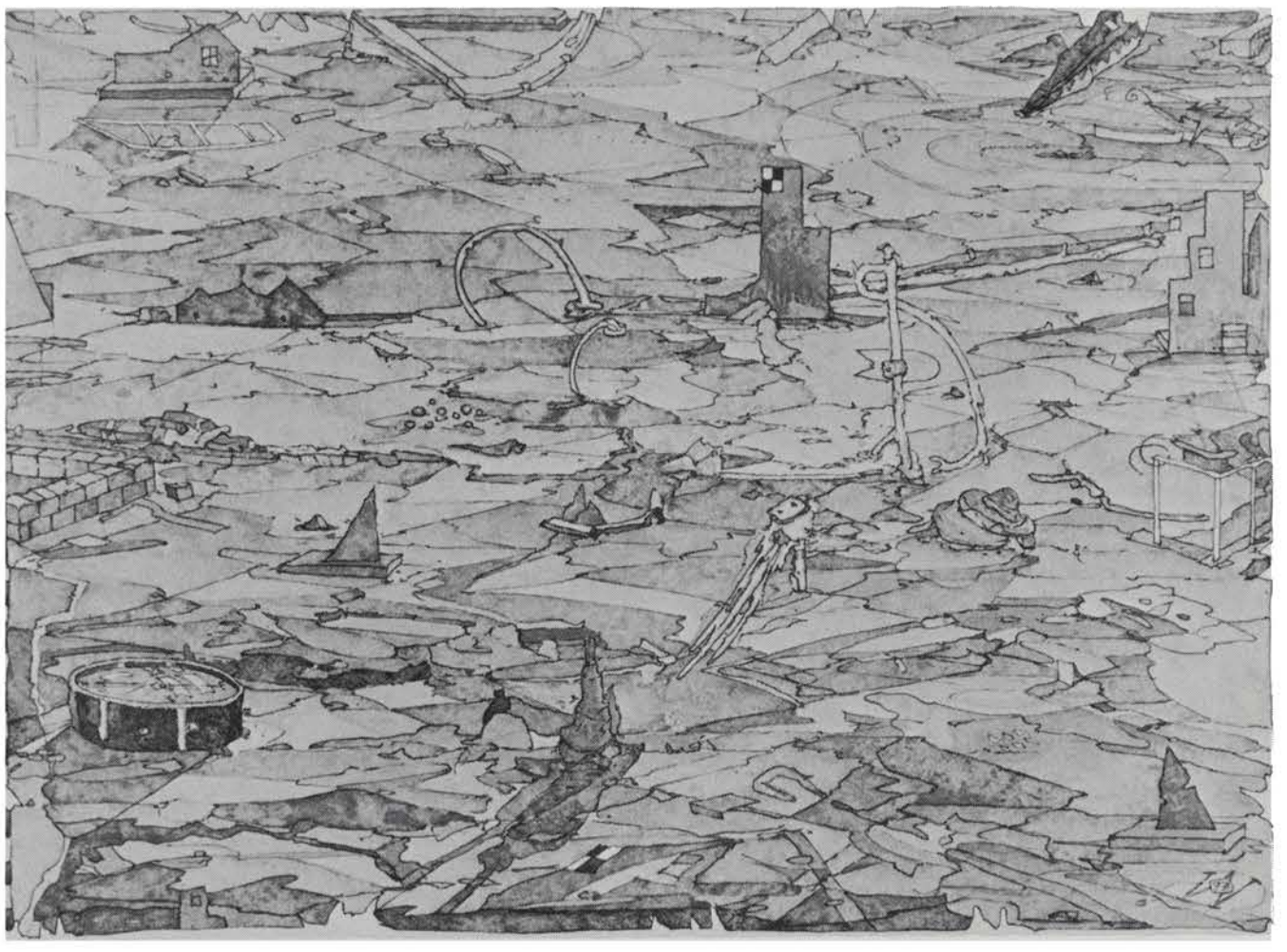
"THE RED PLANET AND BEING FROM THE RED PLANET," 1976, acrylic on canvas, 84 × 74, mixed media drawing, 36 × 25, Collection Sarah Estribou-Franklin, Carmel, California

"HOT JAZZ PNTNG WITH NO MUSIC," 1976, acrylic and charcoal on canvas, 72 × 96, Collection Diana Fuller, San Francisco, California

"MR. UNATURAL AND FRIENDS," 1976, two part construction of watercolor, colored pencil and lithograph on chamois hide, plywood, rubber, cloth, wood, enamel and beans, 38 × 30 × 29; 91 × 82 × 21, drawing of watercolor and ink on paper, 31 × 23, Collection Mr. and Mrs. Gerald W. Bush, Sewickley, Pennsylvania.

"MUSE FROM A LIL CREEP VILLAGE," 1977, watercolor and ink on paper, 35¾ × 29¼, Collection Dorothy Wiley, Forest Knolls, California

"THE PRISONER CONCEPT," 1977, graphite and wax on parchment, 38 × 25⅛, Courtesy Morgan Gallery, Kansas City



"HOUND HARBOR FORECAST," 1977, watercolor and ink on paper, 22 × 30, Collection Graham Gund, Cambridge, Massachusetts

"AMERICAN RIVER RAFT TRIP," 1978, graphite and color pencil on paper, 24 × 34, Collection the Artist

"CAPTAIN CROW BAR—O.O.W. III," 1978, graphite, color pencil and ink on paper, 38 × 25, Collection of the Artist

"COY YOTE," 1978, acrylic on canvas, 90½ × 83, Collection Richard and Barbara Wallis, Leawood, Kansas

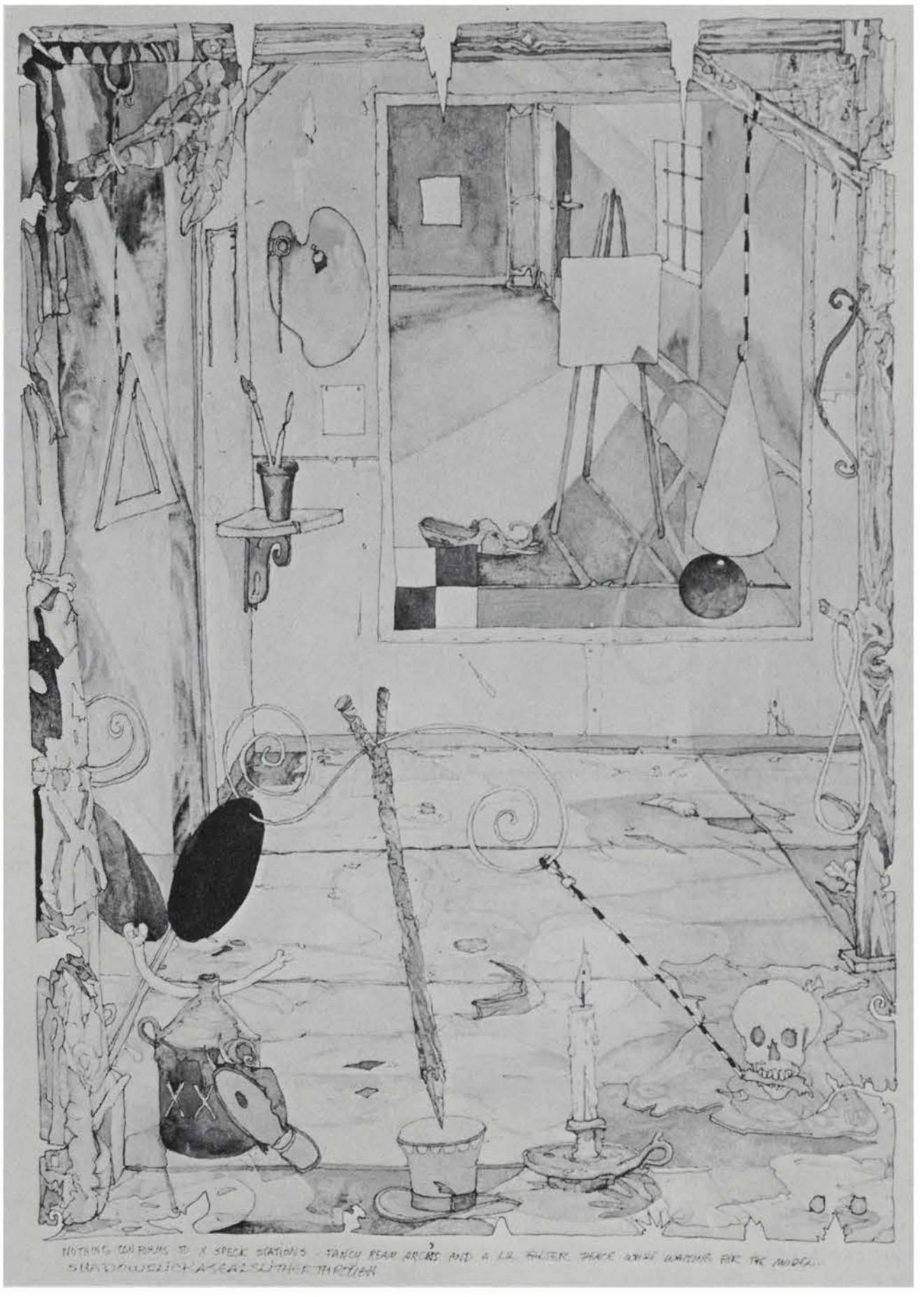
"DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS," 1978, ink on paper, 14 × 20, Collection the Artist

"K.C. BLUES," 1978, watercolor and ink on paper, 22¼ × 30½, Collection Robert Mann, Kansas City, Missouri

"KING GILLETTE," 1978, construction of paper, wood, metal and wire, 52 × 36, Collection Bob Hudson, Cotati, California

"O.T.P.A.G.," 1978, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 87¼ × 100¼, Collection Mr. & Mrs. William C. Janss, Sun Valley, Idaho

"TURNING TO DUST BEEF OAR YOUR WRYS," 1978, pencil, color pencil and ink on paper, 36 × 25, Collection Dorothy Goldeen, San Francisco



"NOTHING CONFORMS," 1978, watercolor and ink on paper, 30 × 22, Collection Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

"QUALMS FOR THE BORE," 1978, watercolor, crayon, ink and graphite on paper, 30 × 22, Private Collection

"THANKING THE VOID," 1979, acrylic on canvas, 27 × 42, Courtesy Hansen Fuller Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco

"SEA MAN AWL WORKS," 1979, construction of mixed media, 52 × 103 × 48; watercolor and ink on paper, 30 × 22, Collection Barbara Morris, Miami

"SUPER SANDALS FOR WILL ROGERS," 1979, construction of mixed media, 35¼ × 18 × 18; watercolor and ink on paper, 22 × 30, Courtesy Allan Frumkin Gallery, New York

"NOTHING TO BLAME," 1979, acrylic, charcoal on canvas, 89 × 169½.
"NOTHING TO BLAME, FEVER DREAMS FOR POCKO," drawing, ink on paper, 22 × 30.
"NOTHING TO BLAME, OVERHEARD AT THE GAME," drawing, ink, acrylic on paper, 35¾ × 26.
"NOTHING TO BLAME, THE WASTE THAT WOULDN'T GO AWAY," printed pamphlet, 11 × 8½.
"SKETCH FOR NOTHING TO BLAME," drawing, ink on paper, 7 × 10
Courtesy Allan Frumkin Gallery, New York.

"EARTH STUDY," 1980, painting-acrylic and charcoal on canvas, 104 × 118¾, Drawing-pencil, wax and color pencil, 35¾ × 25¼, Collection Byron Cohen, Kansas City

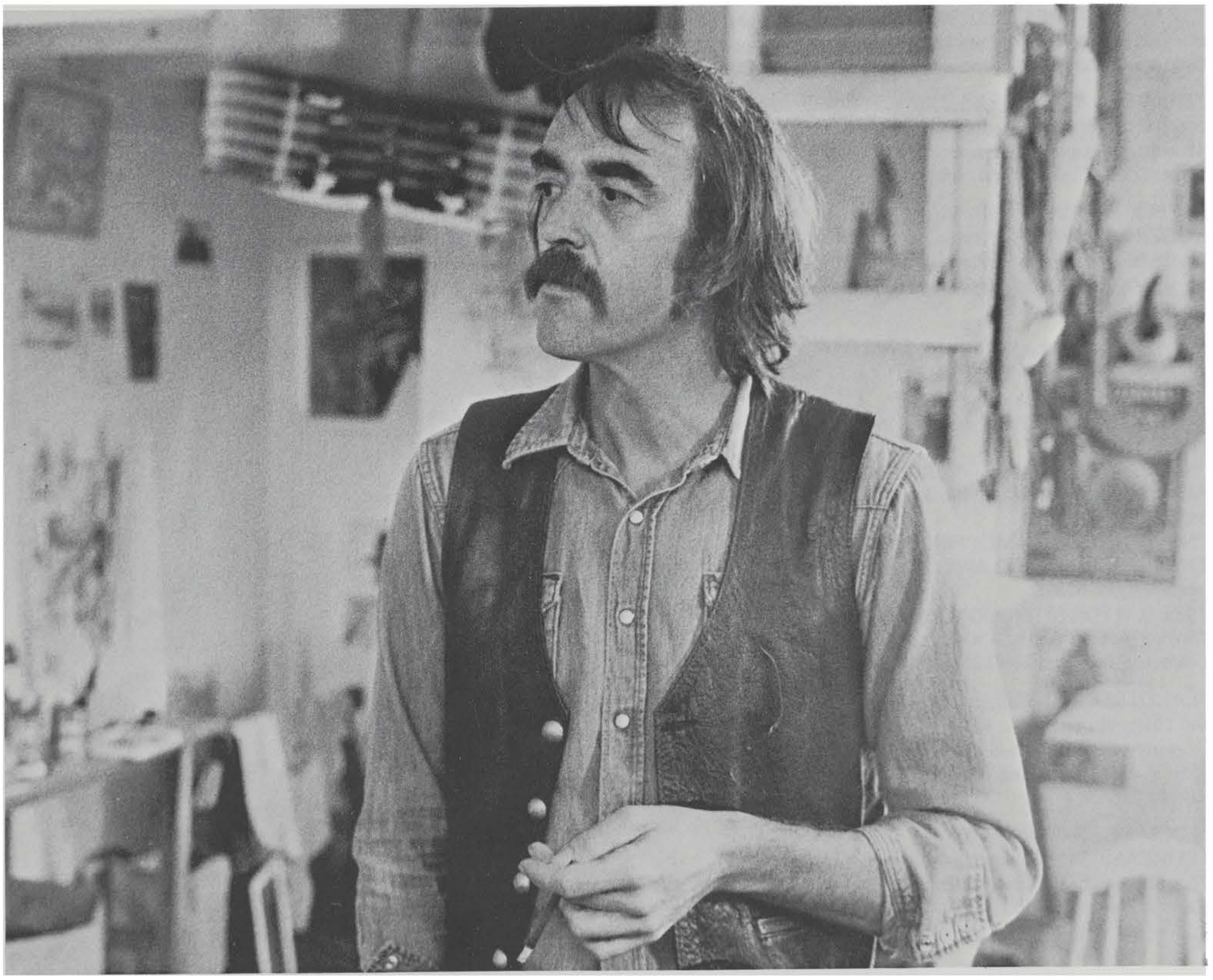
"FOOD DESCENDING THE STAIRCASE," 1980, charcoal on canvas, 92 × 118, Courtesy Hansen Fuller Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco

"GUMBY'S LESSON," 1980, graphite, wax and charcoal pencil on paper, 25⅛ × 36, Collection the Artist

"FAMILY'S TRIP," 1980, charcoal, charcoal pencil and graphite on paper, 45½ × 56½, Collection The Artist

"LETTERS FROM CAMP DIE BORN," 1980, watercolor and ink on paper, 30 × 22, Collection the Artist

"O.T.P.A.G. FOR THE U.S.A.," 1980, watercolor on paper, 30 × 22, Collection the Artist



Chronology

1937	Born, Bedford, Indiana, 21 October
1956	Graduates from Columbia High School, Richland, Washington
1959	Marries Dorothy Dowis
1960	B.F.A., San Francisco Art Institute Birth of Son, Ethan Jacob First One-Artist Show, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
1960–64	Exhibits at Staempfli Gallery, New York
1962	M.F.A., San Francisco Art Institute Begins Teaching at the University of California, Davis
1963	Teaches Summer Session at San Francisco Art Institute
1965	Birth of son, Zane James Completion of film with Robert Nelson, "The Great Blondino"
1966	Included in "The Whitney Annual," New York Fall, teaches at San Francisco Art Institute
1967	Guest Instructor Positions: University of California, Berkeley; San Francisco Art Institute; University of Nevada, Reno; and Washington State University, Pullman Group Exhibition, "Funk", University Art Museum, Berkeley
1968	Guest Instructor, School of Visual Arts, New York Visiting Artist, University of Colorado, Boulder Collaborates with composer, Steve Reich, on Theatre Event, "Over Evident Falls," at Hansen-Fuller Gallery, San Francisco, and at Sacramento State College
1968–79	Exhibits at Hansen Fuller Gallery, San Francisco, and Allan Frumkin Gallery, New York
1970	Completion of film, "Man's Nature" Visiting artist, University of Wisconsin, Madison
1971	Exhibition, "William T. Wiley," University Art Museum, Berkeley
1972	Exhibits at "Documenta V," Kassel, West Germany, and "Venice Biennale," Italy
1973	Exhibition, "William T. Wiley," Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands Stops teaching at Davis
1976	Exhibition, "Projects," the Museum of Modern Art, New York
1979	"Wiley Territory," Retrospective organized by Walker Art Center
1980	Travels to Australia Exhibition at Realities Galleries, Melborn, and the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Queensland
1981	Performance Event, "Some Inchaunted Evening," January 22, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art "William T. Wiley," University Fine Arts Galleries, Florida State University

Selected Exhibitions

One-Artist Exhibitions:

Staempfli Gallery, New York 1960, 1962, 1964.
San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, 1960.
Lanyon Gallery, Palo Alto, California, 1965.
Mills College, Oakland, California, 1967.
Hansen Fuller Gallery, San Francisco, 1968, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1978.
Allan Frumkin Gallery, New York, 1968, 1970, 1973, 1976.
Allan Frumkin Gallery, Chicago, 1969, 1972, 1974, 1979.
Studio Marconi, Milan, Italy, 1971.
"William T. Wiley", exhibition touring to University of California at Berkeley, University Art Museum; Chicago Art Institute, Chicago, Illinois; Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D.C., 1971–72.
James Manolides Gallery, Seattle, Washington, 1972.
Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, 1972, 1975, 1976.
Gallerie Odyssia, Rome, Italy, 1972.
Gallerie Richard Froncke, Ghent, Belgium, 1972.
"William T. Wiley", Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands, 1973.
Utah Fine Arts Museum, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1974.
"Three One-Man Shows: William T. Wiley, Dorothy Hood, Armando Morales", The University of Texas at Austin, University Art Museum, Austin, Texas, 1975.
Museum of Modern Art, "Projects," New York, 1976.
Gallerie Paul Facchetti, Paris, France, 1977.
"William T. Wiley: New Publications", Landfall Press Gallery, Chicago, Illinois, 1977.
"Suite of Daze", Chicago Art Institute, Book Show at Print Gallery, Chicago, Illinois, 1977.
Myra Morgan Gallery, Shawnee Mission, Kansas, 1978.
Delahunty Gallery, Dallas, Texas, 1978.
"Wiley Territory", Walker Art Center, touring to Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, the Denver Art Museum, Des Moines Art cente, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1979–80
Exhibition at Realities Galleries, Melborn and the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Queensland
"William T. Wiley," Florida State University, touring to University of South Florida, 1981

Selected Group Exhibitions:

"Young America Show", Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1960.
"American Exhibition", The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, 1961.
Winter Invitational, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 1961.
Painting and Sculpture Show, Oakland Museum of Art, Oakland, 1961.
"Painting Invitational", Grand Rapids Art Gallery, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961.
University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, 1961.
"90 Years of Bay Area Art", San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, 1962.
"Fifty California Artists", Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1962.
"American Exhibition", The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, 1962.
"Arts of San Francisco", San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, 1963.
"Contemporary American Drawings", Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, Iowa, 1965.
"Whitney Annual", Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1966.
"Current Trends in American Art", Westmoreland County Museum of Art, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, 1966.
"Painting and Sculpture Today", Herron Museum of Art, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1966.
"The Media of Art: Now", University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, 1966.
"Whitney Annual", Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1967.
"American Sculpture of the Sixties", Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1967.
"Funk", University of California at Berkeley, University Art Museum, 1967.
"Pittsburgh International", Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1967.
"Toward a New Metaphysics", Allan Frumkin Gallery, New York, 1967.
Dwan Gallery, New York, 1968.
"Social Comment in America", Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1968.
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