

FUNK ART FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL ARTIST

by

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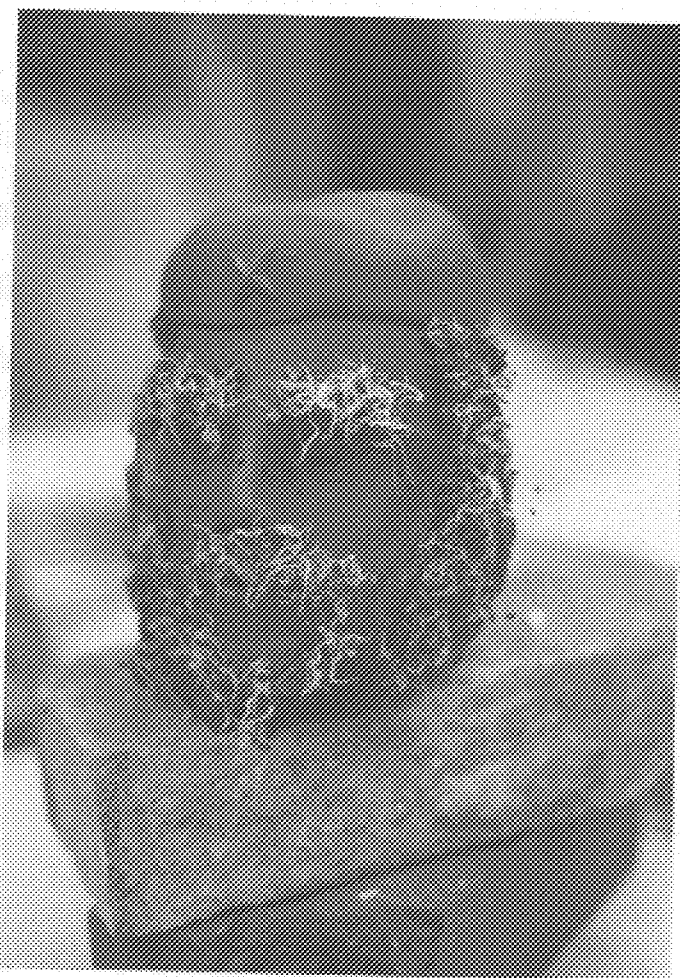
"Chia Guevara" (1992) Fred Maves

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"Chia Guevara" (1992) Fred Maves

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Unlike Abstract Expressionism, Photorealism, Romanticism and other styles, the Funk Art movement has never become a formal "ism", nor has it had the same measure of exposure common to most other Postmodern schools. The fact that, proportionally, few artists have worked in this manner is of course significant. Add to this a relatively vague definition of Funk Art, and the result is a movement that has generally not been taken seriously. After all, how does a movement that looks more like playtime in the studio equate with styles of deep philosophical import? I plan to make a strong case in favor of Funk Art as what Ken Magri calls "*A Touch Of Serious Play*." It is at once a mixture of social commentary, parody and satire combined on a level of lighthearted whimsy. "What this approach may sacrifice in profundity it makes up for in its ability to be universally understood and enjoyed" (Magri, 1987, p. 4).

It is from this easily interpreted narrative form that its application to the high school art curriculum becomes apparent...a way to "slip" some content into student art while having fun doing it. My intent is to reveal how high school students can employ historic subject matter already learned, sociopolitical points of view based in other concurrent disciplinary studies, relationships to their own consumerism and pop culture and attitudes surrounding other cultures and lifestyles.

Stylistic Origins

It is generally held that the Funk movement originated in and around the University of California-Davis c.1964. The major force behind the movement is clearly Robert Arneson (1930-1992). Arneson, being inspired by the work of Peter Voulkos in the late 50's, became another liberating force continuing a freedom to push the limits of ideas to great extremes. Beginning with the strong gesturing and expressionistic surface attention of Voulkos, Arneson adds his own macabre version of history and biography.

From this point the cause and effect influences are not so clear. Gilhooly, though one of Arneson's most significant students, has been given credit for influencing Arneson himself. Clayton Bailey, working in a relatively obscure Midwestern college, seems to have come upon Funk imagery simultaneously...after all, was it Picasso or Braque who originated Cubism? In Chicago a group of artists produce works consistent with Funk definition; "the Chicago Imagist Style", "the Hairy Who"...most notably Roger Brown. Somewhere loosely connected to this group is Peter Saul.

The actual roots may be found much earlier in the works inherent in the Dada movement of 1912-1920 (Duchamp, Picabia and Man Ray) which contained similar irreverence, satirical slapstick, and topical content as Funk Art. It's not surprising that this led to surrealism...visions that counter any known logic. Enter David Gilhooly (b.1943) whose world according to frogs is as surreal a concept as any dating to this early departures into flights of fantasy. The art of the San Francisco Bay area in the last few decades has been referred to as "dude ranch dada" (Barnett,1989). Though not an anti-art movement, Funk does ask the

observer/critic to rethink past and present definitions of art. Can "real" art be funny? If Duchamp questions the moral values of Mona Lisa (*"L.H.O.O.Q"*, 1919) is Robert Arneson's *"George and Mona in the Baths of Colonna"* (1976) an equally important statement? Arneson downgrades George Washington and Mona Lisa, exemplarily dignified figures, to a sexually engaged couple. How does Peter Saul's *"Donald Duck Descending The Staircase"* (1979) fit historically with Futurism (Adrian, 1985, p.349)?

Objects shown in a humorous light are evident in the work of Claus Oldenberg as happening concurrent with Funk. His expansion of the mundane as subject and as reinvention of context place the works like his *"Proposed Colossal Monument for Thames River : Thames Ball"* (1967) and his *"Design for a Tunnel Entrance in the Form of a Nose"* (1968) clearly in line with those of the Funk movement. Oldenberg, Yale and Art Institute of Chicago educated, has been linked more with the Pop movement of that time; yet, there is a dimension to his work that extends beyond merely elevating the mundane to higher levels of visibility. Imagery was incorporated into new contexts (Rose, 1970, p.103-15).

Earlier yet, another facet to the Funk vocabulary can be traced to the political satire and social commentary of Daumier's "Ratapoil" caricatures. Though not as serious, Funk artists would have found the same subjects and incidents suitable for manipulation. Though obviously times have changed in the hundred fifty years since Daumier, artists continue to vent their political spleens. Repercussions are most notably different. While Daumier's attacks on the French monarch Louis-Philippe in 1832 yielded a six month jail sentence (Chilvers, 1988, 134), Arneson's *"Portrait of George (Moscone)"* (1981) rip of the U.S. criminal justice system resulted in San Francisco officials locking up the sculpture in the city's art museum

closet (Irwin, 1982, p. 33). Peter Saul openly attacks the hypocrisy of the Right in paintings like the piece that depicts Ronald Reagan chomping down on a sandwich layered in five dollar bills ("*Ronald Reagan II* ")(1984). These days this kind of work only brings scorn by one camp and applause from the other (Storr, 1985,99).

MY CONNECTIONS TO THE MOVEMENT

While studying as an undergraduate at what is now called the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater (1963-1968), I was influenced by and subsequently emulated the work of my teachers. Being a relatively small regional campus in a community of about 10,000, the art studios were the cultural mecca of the town. Professors and students worked in close proximity, shared studio space, made frequent visits to each other's homes, and met socially. It is in this kind of environment that I grew to know Leanne Shrieves, Clayton Bailey and Verne Funk...yes, Funk. Verne Funk is the real name of my then ceramics professor. Verne was full professor with assistant Clayton Bailey. It is at least remarkable that as a painting and printmaking major I would, thirty years later, be writing this thesis based on the three dimensional works of these early contacts.

Leanne Shrieves Stevenson helped me to see the humor in everything. My work at the time was etchings and paintings with the common theme of the female breast. Shrieves' work had more overt sexual subject matter. Her "*Events* " (1963) won a \$3,000 award at the Art Institute of Chicago, but the piece was not displayed because of its graphic content. I remember a news paper photo of Leanne and Clayton at the opening of the show; he with his inflatable latex tie.

Clayton Bailey was experimenting with latex forms made from clay models

and was instrumental in promoting the "happenings" in and around the campus. Years later I would join Bailey in two group workshop experiences.

Verne Funk was more of a social contact though through mutual friends I became aware of the unique humor of his painting and ceramic work. In 1967 Verne displayed his "*Chest Set*" (a mixed media wall sculpture) in the annual faculty show and became interested in the work I was doing.

David Gilhooly interviewed for a teaching position at Whitewater in 1968 and was a hit with my circle of students and professors. At the time I recall that he was too hot to settle for the position being offered, and we all figured he was just taking advantage of an expenses paid trip to the Midwest. This was the period of his ceramic fry pans with buttered frogs.

While teaching art at Edgerton High School (WI) I became increasingly interested in clay and eventually mixed media. Through periodic contact with Bailey and Shrieves and further course work at both Whitewater and Madison I have focused on mixed media sculptures that can easily fit into Funk themes. Guidance and encouragement by the professors I have known and studied with at the University of Wisconsin-Madison during my graduate work have helped bring me to the work I am currently creating and will describe in detail later. I became more serious about my work only after studying with Richard Burkett in the summer of 1989. Through subsequent study with Elaine Sheerer, Bruce Breckenridge and Bruce Howdle I developed the excuse I needed to produce enough work to seek masters level quality. (See Chapter 3 for details and plates)

APPLICATION TO THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

From a motivational standpoint I have recognized the simple fact that most students find a degree of interest in anything humorous. On the other hand it can be difficult at times to encourage the teenage artist into taking anything seriously. Also, given their interests and attitudes the high school artist is a prime candidate for the Funk art experience. The incorporation of humor and/or satire with the normal inclination to enjoy studio production can make for a great combination.

I have had students work in the Funk idiom in both formal and informal settings. The results have been pleasantly satisfying. It seems that when students are challenged to create original work that strikes them as funny, pokes fun at established paradigms, or treats subjects with a degree of irreverence the usual difficulty is eased and art studies becomes more of a game than an assignment. Greater interaction within the group and a more positive working atmosphere are side benefits. As a result, students seem more competitive, vying for the most unique combination of reality and fantasy. This excitement has spilled over into the school district art club.

A group of my most creative students meet in an extra curricular activity group once a week after regular school hours. The Edgerton Art Students League (E.A.S.L.) is a very energetic and informal cadre of both regular art students and other "arty" types. They have picked up on the Funk concept and have produced both real and conceptual products. One of their creations is a miniature museum of unlikely objects. Art leaguers add to this periodically. To date, we have a section of Mel Gibson's exhaust pipe from the movie "Mad Max", Hitler's brain in a mayonnaise jar, a Tupperware container of Elvis' sweat, a corral of "dust bunnies"

with electrified fencing and my addition...the 12 year old Hostess "Twinkie." Currently they have plans to do something with a really tacky piece of "string art" and some table lamps.

ART AS STATEMENT FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL ARTIST

The graduate education course work completed with Ron Neperud and Doug Marshlek at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has given me insights into worthwhile methods to incorporate the studio experiences with my teaching assignments in a high school setting. I am currently in my twenty fourth year as art instructor in the Edgerton (WI) School District. The recent movement away from straight studio based curricula toward more content or discipline based formats has opened up a flood of possibilities that get away from technique training per se by challenging both the instructor and the student to perform at higher intellectual levels. The broad scope of multicultural studies, global awareness, and interdisciplinary relationships are all exciting ways to pump fresh blood into tired and hackneyed lesson plans.

The projects that have worked the best have been based on those subjects that students are most familiar with...pop culture. "Hot" consumer goods, fast / junk food, MTV music, and personalities have always found their way into adolescent art works. My experience has been that this has not necessarily been an ideal formula for creative expression, but more an avenue for the student who is at a loss of idea. Traditionally, these are the very subjects that have been the scourge of the school studio. As art teachers we all have seen more than enough product logos, copyrighted cartoon characters and Mountain Dew cans. These and other cliches

have been hard battle to win over.

By channeling these interests through the Funk idiom, students at Edgerton High have transformed what would normally be nothing more than just another symbol rip off to a work that says something. Not only are the students recognizing the mindless repetition of certain imagery, but they are using it in a context that represents a meeting of one culture with another. Together, we have recreated the history of painting by including of a series of transplanted characters representing current culture. If David's "*Death of Marat* " was painted today, who would be the tragic figure ? How and why did both meet their demise ? What style might be used ?

Students have built an environmental shrine that includes imagery all the way from the Ho Chunk Casino to the Home Shopping Club. The theme is money: how it is won and lost, the high pressure sales imagery and methods, and how easy credit is obtained. A third project saw the creation of a new line of Chia Pets that would not likely be found on any curio shelf in the near future. Students learn of the exploitation of the Third World artist / craftsman through connections with the Social Studies curriculum.

The work that young people are doing now have a unique features. They are looking at mass culture from both positions of participants and victims. Individuals realize that they can resist becoming a consumer "lemming" by using an objective viewpoint. How do the cultures of the past serve as a basis for understanding our own? Can art history be learned with less boredom? Can other content areas find their way into art ? How can I use what I already know ? Why can't all this be kind'a fun ? The bottom line is a fresh way to interject content painlessly.

Chapter 2

DEFINITION OF FUNK

The Oxford Dictionary of Art defines Funk Art as "a type of art that originated in California in around 1960 in which tatty or sick subjects -- often pornographic or scatological -- were treated in a deliberately distasteful way. The word 'funky' originally meant 'smelly' or 'sick art' and is sometimes used as a synonym for 'Funk art'." (Chilvers, 1988, 189) Only the English would use words like tatty or scatology to define this work. This definition is obviously from outside the environment that spawned the movement. They are quite right, though. Distasteful in the traditional sense, Funk became the rowdy "bad boy" of the art world. The aura that surrounded much of its imagery was born as a byproduct of a free-wheeling attitude that refused to side step previous taboos, and by artists intentionally exploring the fertile ground of the base and the crude.

Harold Paris (1967) contends that Funk is more an attitude than an identifiable visual. Each artist has his/her own interpretation; yet, they speak a common language. Historically it was a nonspecific protest waged against feelings that traditional forms and ideas have betrayed the artist :

Artists of the current generation have turned inward. Rejecting collective ideas and moral judgment they are hypersensitive to their own elemental feelings and processes. What is real and tangible; what is thought is to be distrusted. Intuitive perception is desirable. The residue, or the byproduct is more interesting and provocative than the intellectual process that creates it. In essence, "It's a groove to stick your finger down your throat and see what comes up," this is funk (p. 95).

Paris' definition is almost a form of Funk itself. Suffice to say it is enjoyed by some, scorned by some, and misunderstood by others. One of the first formal exhibitions included some work that was clearly not in keeping with either definition. In the 1967 UC-Berkeley show titled "Funk Art", Peter Selz displayed other works that more or less had no genre.

Of the two previous definitions the second is based on an understanding of the very "stuff" that makes up the lifestyle of those in the 60's Bay Area; a sun drenched mentality, the Doggie Diner, hobby crafts movement, skinny-dipping, and perfumed toilet tissue. "This is the land of Funk" (Paris, 1967, p.98).

DADA TO POLITICAL SATIRE

Funk as a style no longer exists today and to some has the same dated sound as the word *hippie*. Most practitioners have moved on to other things, their purpose being served. Funk was "...a purgative for the art, flushing out the last vestiges of formalism in ceramics and adding the second American mainstream to ceramic art within a decade" (Clark, 1979, p. 164) A much earlier purging occurred at the hands of the Dadaists and Surrealists of the late nineteen teens. In a similarly nonchalant attempt to shake up the world of established values they originated the use (or misuse) of the common and the found object.

More importantly, Dada and Surreal objects were to be viewed as something outside the formal definitions of sculpture. They had a more symbolic function...purely contextual. Good form, bad form was not a concern. "The only issue was the reaction evoked between the object or objects and the viewer's preconceived notion of art. They were designed in many cases to affront and offend and so challenge the tasteful tours de force of the mainstream modern art"

(Clark, 1979, p.160). Duchamp's "L.H.O.O.Q." (Pl.1) mentioned in my introduction is certainly a textbook example of an affront. The inscription translates to an obscene statement when each of the five letters is pronounced in French.

The readymade converts the mundane objects of everyday life into the context of self expression. This expression raises the question of validity. What separates art from non art? Does the inclusion of found objects as art make it less legitimate or does it merely expand the definition of art? It is generally held that the Dada and Surreal artists believed that art as well as life is meaningless, and through the arbitrary selection of certain objects declared to be art then it is so. Man Ray's clothing iron with nails attached to the flat surface, "Gift " (1921), Francis Picabia's stuffed toy monkey "Portrait de Cezanne" (1921) and Meret Oppenheim's fur-lined tea cup(1936) all make this declaration through the manipulation of everyday objects. As in Pop art the practice of removing the common object from its traditional domain and placing it into gallery or museum forces the viewer to reconsider its importance as well as its form.

Marcel Duchamp's "The Fountain " (1917)(Pl. 2) is nothing more than a commercially produced urinal signed not with his given name, but the alias R. Mutt. This personal distancing from the work was by the Chicago Imagists' shows "The Hairy Who" (1966-69). Each artist in the exhibitions signed their work with the same name, Hairy Who (Adrian, 1980, p. 93).

Jack Earl, Tom La Dousa, Ann Agee, and many others return to the bathroom fixture as art while participating an artist-in-residence program at The Kohler Company; a major industry that fabricates plumbing fixtures and gasoline engines . (fig. 4) "Art / Industry" was established in 1974 and continues today being funded by both Kohler Co. and the National Endowment for the Arts (Agee, 1928, p.

24). Funk artists using this media as a literal interpretation of the term "bathroom humor" have converted the toilet bowl into everything from over-sized tea pots to surfaces for landscape and portrait painting. My students have found a place for the toilet bowl in their *"Shrine to Pop Culture"* (1993)(Pl. 3) They took their reference from the ubiquitous "Bathtub Mary" replacing the bathtub with a toilet fixture and Mary with a troll-headed saint .

Functional mundane objects have found their way into most Funk art works either as actual mixed media assemblage or as slip cast or hand-built facsimiles. Though the artist has long ago ceased to specifically create non art, the scope of useful subject matter now includes pretty much anything the artist can get his/her hands on. The intent continues a kind of free association of earthy imagery; improvisation of object based representations of the artist's view of current culture, politics, attitudes, and morals.

Historially, social consciousness has not been a concern of most artists. Rebellious, at odds with society, unconventional and even a bit "cockoo", but they are not generally interested in the social problems of their given time. Spotted through the history of art there are instances when contemporary events associated with violent injustice and social cruelty have inspired artists that, with time, have taken on the character of judgments on human folly in general.

The political satire and social commentary of Robert Arneson, Peter Saul, and Ed Kienholz has its origins in the work of nineteenth century artists Francisco Goya and Honore' Daumier. Granted, Goya's *"The Third of May, 1808"* (1814) has arguably heavier content than Arneson's *"Portrait of George (Moscone)"* 1981. In Goya's work Napoleon's inhumanity toward the Spanish loyalists is depicted by a view of a French firing squad executing by lamp light. A central

figure stands in defiance at the last moment of life (Cole, Gealt, 1989, p. 204-5). Though the times have changed and life these days is much less harsh the consequences of any cultural deviate are still the "stuff" of good artistic expression. Arneson's work finds a subject in the senseless assassination of San Francisco mayor George Moscone in 1978. Here the era is chronicled by a bust of the mayor placed on top of a classical column containing graffiti styled messages that allude to the decadence of the legal system and the gross lack of security for those in public life (Irwin, 1982).

As mentioned earlier, Honoré Daumier's art made political reference to the prerevolutionary French government of Louis-Philippe. Daumier's work goes beyond social commentary into the realm of satire.

Sat-ire...1.: a literary work holding up human vices and follies to ridicule and scorn

2 : trenchant wit, irony or sarcasm used to expose and discredit vice or follie **syn** see WIT

(Merriam-Webster, 1981)

To ridicule, scorn, and discredit through sacasim; these were the tools of artistic dirty politics he employed. His use of the newly developed process of lithography focused on cartoons and caricature (*Caricature* being an anti-government weekly) to satirize the gross misuse of power and wealth. Louis-Philippe is "represented by Gargantua swallowing bags of gold extorted from the people" (Chilvers, 1988, p. 134). Since, the word gargantuan was "coined" and can be found in most dictionaries defined as an ability to consume great quantities of food or drink and/or a menacing giant. Of course, the relationship of opulence to size or girth has been symbolic since Egyptian story paintings.

THE HUMOROUS AND THE VULGAR

As mentioned previously, Funk often has its humorous side. Twisted incarnations of animals reenacting historic events, cartoon characters transplanted into famous paintings, and toilets as tea pots. In the quest for levity artists have also pushed the limits of social acceptability. Many works are of a nature that could not be examined by public school students. I believe that the intent is not meant to be obscene; bawdy yes, licentious sure. With a disregard for tradition comes a similar disregard for strict rules of correctness. A unique feature of this level of expression is its appeal to those outside the cultured elite. Coupled with this and the fact that most of the work already has easily read narrative qualities makes Funk hard to misinterpret.

Claes Oldenburg is known for both humor and low moral restraint. His name is not usually mentioned in the context of Funk, but more likely in Pop discourse. The connections to Pop are based on his commercial "Store" reliefs and their direct reference to advertising plus his reliance on using the most banal objects as subject. Oldenburg does not stop at mere duplication of the commonplace as Warhol did with the Brillo boxes and Coke bottles. Instead he pushed the imagery into a storybook land of child-like riddles that find both exaggeration of size and surface. Further, he transposed the tactile aspects by converting a cold, hard, erect object into a warm, soft, flaccid one "*Soft Toilet*" (1966). "...Oldenburg attempts to delve beneath surface and appearances in order to uncover more fundamental realities and find the universal constants of human experience in the flux of modern life...the artist who takes on such a task must be either a hero or a buffoon" (Rose, 1970, p. 9).

Ludicrous as opposed to heroic was the determination of early Pop critics. After the fall of 1962 the success of Oldenburg reached international levels. "No longer an underground cultural movement, Pop Art now became a chic uptown commodity, eagerly consumed by dealers and collectors and ultimately the jet set and the mass media. Much of the critical controversy generated by Pop was touched off by this showing (Green Gallery, 1962) of Oldenburg's first soft sculpture, whose large scale, brashness, and outright vulgarity made it impossible to ignore" (Rose, 1970, p. 91). Critics were obviously ill-prepared for this artist who forged headlong into uncharted territory with a blatant disregard for consequences. Uninhibited by crudeness and an unpolished product, Oldenburg's works defied convention by incorporating contemporary commercial media with objects that portray popular culture in manner that exposes the human experience in a new reality. On the surface the work makes you laugh. As you further contemplate, however, deeper ironies surface. A stuffed shirt, a giant cheeseburger and huge versions of commercial products are at once visually light and flippant, as are symbols of human attitudes, the obsession for the over consumption of fast food, and the barrage of commercial product promotions.

Heroic at least in scale, Oldenburg's "*Giant Blue Men's Pants*" (1962) 60"x28"x6" and "*Soft Fur Good Humors*" (1963) 19"x9.5"x2" bring the mundane up to a scale that reinforces their significance in the eyes of the artist. The painted canvas used is not stretched to a frame, but is stuffed with foam rubber and draped over an enlarged hanger. The ice cream treats are made of fake fur and vinyl filled with kapok. One large bite has been taken from each of these examples of cultural kitsch.

Oldenburg pokes fun at the Los Angeles motel culture by creating the life-sized Funk environment "*Bedroom Ensemble*" (1963)(Pl. 4). Blatantly incorporating fake animal skins of synthetic fiber and upholstery vinyl he has fashioned a glimpse into West Coast culture that is campy and provocative. The room environment is based on a typical Malibu motel room c.1950 with a sort of Playboy safari fantasy theme complete with tiger, leopard, and zebra skin patterns. Another interesting touch is the pseudo-Pollack paintings on the walls. In keeping with the transposition of hard to soft and vice versa the bed is rigidly hard rather than what you would expect. Mirrors distort and drawers don't open. "An object that doesn't function provokes the same kind of humor as a human being who tries to do something of which he is obviously incapable. But the *Bedroom* is not only a hilarious spoof motel "moderne," it is also a serious sculpture. The pieces were simplified into geometric solids and built on an angle - an idea inspired by ads in the *Los Angeles Times* that showed blocky shapes in exaggerated foreshortening" (Rose, 1970, p. 93). The result is a challenging visual ambiguity that alludes to one's normal point of view and that of an artist using simple one point perspective.

Worth noting is Oldenburg's use of sexual vulgarities as a link to the Funk Art of others mentioned in this document. A number of phallic representations occur in symbolic forms...actual, too. "*Soft Drainpipe-Red (Hot) Version*" (1967) and his many "Ray Guns" plus his functioning giant "*Lipstick Monument*" (1969) for Yale University all leave little to the imagination. These are mentioned here for the purpose of showing the connection of this work with that of Verne Funk and Leanne Shrieves Stevenson. Cautionary use of these works for high school artists is understandable.

Through the presentation of the above mentioned works and those wildly imaginative proposed colossal monuments, students should be challenged to dream of real or conceptual wonders of their own. Get those right brain cells flowing with a feeling of uninhibited freedom.

The Barbara Rose book that I have been using for reference is incidentally constructed with a soft stuffed vinyl cover. It is completely limp and thus adds a unique tactile experience to those who use it ... a direct relationship to subject.

Edward Kienholz is also linked to the California Funk school through the use of found discards of contemporary society. Kienholz focused less on the comedic and more on the horrific and gruesome aspects of society. His subjects exhibit themes of sex, decay, loss and death in life-sized three dimensional tableaux. *"The State Hospital"* (1966) combines welded institutional beds, figures glued with a nasty looking varnish, fish bowl faces and a neon comic-book balloon (Hughes, 1980, p. 375).

A new phase of Funk developed from a 1966 movement toward a higher degree of craftsmanship. "An early masterwork in this genre was Richard Shaw's *"Ocean Liner Sinking into a Sofa"* (1966) and a subsequent *Sofa* series. . . the "Super Object" tradition in ceramics now began to grow rapidly, using the Surrealist base for its imagery" (Clark, 1979, p. 165). *"Couch and Chair with Landscape and Cows"* (1967), an early work by Shaw, still has the artistic punch of the Funk spirit and could easily be mistaken for a Gilhooly. Later in his highly technical trompe l'oeil works the craftsman takes over the expression *"Stack of Cards on Brown Book"* (1971), but delivers some great realistic imagery based upon Funk object selection. By slip casting metal cans, logs of wood, lumber, bamboo, funnels, books, corrugated cardboard, pencils and other mundane

objects with a high degree of precision Shaw's work challenges the technical limits of the media. Others that place skill above expression are Patti Bauer, Jack Earl, Marilyn Levine, Richard Notkin, John Revelry, Jerry Berta, Robert Hudson, Lucian Pompili, Vernon Patrick, Howard Kottler, Bill Suworoff and David Middlebrook.

My students have long been fascinated by the degree of accuracy possible with the slip casting process. These examples should challenge any serious high school artist. The quest for realism is one that seems the most prevalent in young artists.

After Richard Shaw, Patti Warashina has a 60's Funk heritage seen in her irreverent, even psychedelic images. In the early 1970's Warashina produced "...the *Car-Kiln* series, where automobile and ceramic kiln forms interact in a sometimes symbiotic, but mutually destructive, manner" (Watkinson, 1992, p. 20). During this venture into the subject of the motor vehicle she produced "*Airstream Turkey*" (1972), a mobile home with turkey parts. Incidentally, this image inspired novelist Tom Robbins to feature this travel trailer in his book "*Skinny Legs And All*" (1990). Warashina's later 70's work portrays figures on the four sides of 30" pyramid forms. Subjects range from feminist to Native American, a tattooed flasher and gun control. Each expose yields a glimpse of an idiosyncratic individual.

The 1977 "*Barking Up the Wrong Tree*" links up with the topical context of Funk. "The low-relief (and low-life?) *nudie cutie* alter ego emerges from the *alter* back wearing clawlike gloves and petting a bulldog's snarling head replete with studded collar...the artist's appropriation of pop culture and sadomasochistic imagery is another sign of her hidden agenda. Seen in the feminist context, the

bulldog's is maledom in general, and the tableau finally operates as a spoof on sexual power--and politics" (Kangas, 1986, p. 25).

From substance filled works of Kienholz and Warashina students should be able to confront their own issues with content-filled products. One of the main goals of this venture into Funk is to find ways to incorporate messages into the media.

Throughout the 80's she produced a myriad of tiny white figures many of which were cast. "*A Procession*" (1986) was a commissioned public piece for the city of Seattle. "...This large group of figures--an unruly parade of 71 tiny characters--cavort and jostle their way across a ten foot bridge. Each person is modeled after a real-life character from the Seattle art world" (Watkinson, 1992, p. 20).

Arizona artist Suzanne Klotz-Reilly is worth noting if only briefly. Her work with mixed media is prime to the eclectic media forager. Sadly Klotz-Reilly's exposure is low and few references can be found. The 1982 exhibition "*Roaring Forks Trailer Park*" was displayed inside two sheds and a mobile home all within the Phoenix Art Museum. As with Oldenburg, "Suzanne finds contradictions in her efforts. She emphasizes this to her benefit by making hard objects look soft, earthy creatures spiritual, and less than attractive figures very human and deserving of our attention" (Klotz-Reilly, 1982, p. 58). "*Kevin*" (1982) is made up of a child's metal pedal fire chief car with a baby chick pattern paint job. Inside the driver is a cloth stuffed disproportioned humanoid with fired clay potato-like head, gapping mouth, seven big molers, no eyes, no ears, no nose and a set of random bristles for hair.

This work closely parallels my own intent to employ a wide range of media with a high degree of control. Learning and practicing how to use fabric and a sewing machine as a preliminary step necessary to produce a work is important to

me. It may be necessary for students to learn new skills in preparation of a mixed media piece.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - DAVIS

Most researchers agree, Funk Art as a movement began in and around the University of California - Davis. In the quote that follows it is easy to see how many of the works already described have been derived.

Funk objects on the West Coast did not begin with ceramics. The roots were in the Rat Bastard Protective Association, a group of artists who in 1951 mounted an exhibition, "Common Art Accumulations," at the Place Bar in San Francisco. Bruce Conner, Joan Brown, and others put together ephemeral conglomerations combining all kinds of un-combinable things, called them "Funk and didn't care what happened to them." The title "Funk" was taken from the term *bagless funk*, describing a free, improvised, earthy street jazz and also used in the Cajun patois to describe the musk smell of a woman's groin. The loose style based on ingredients that Suzanne Foley isolated as being "expressionist, surrealist and offensive," continued as an underground movement through the 1950's in visual art, music, and poetry. It surfaced strongly in the early 1960's at the University of California at Davis, where, under the leadership of Robert Arneson, a group of students began to explore Funk as alternative to both cool, mannered Pop art and the so-called Abstract Expressionist ceramics that were now being derogatorily referred to as "the blood and guts school" (Clark, 1979, p. 160).

Robert Arneson is the person most often given credit for the perpetuation of Funk, and many credit him for their inspiration. Prior to 1962 Arneson was what could be termed a decorative art potter. He marked this turning point by producing a perfectly thrown bottle, sealed it with a ceramic cap and labeled it *no return*. "This

gesture has been seen as prophetic not simply for clay, but for the fine arts as well. Jasper Johns's "*Painted Bronze (Ale Cans)*" (1960) announced a similar ironic turn" (Merback, 1993, p. 36). "If you go down to the woods these days, you'd better not go alone...things have changed." These are, as near as I can remember, the words stenciled into the side of an early Funk ceramic work by Howard Kottler displayed in an invitational show of porcelain at the Crossman Gallery, UW-Whitewater in the beginning days of the movement. This statement is a good way to prepare the unwary for what was to happen to that wonderful tradition, ceramic craft.

Other notable innovators were Arneson's undergraduate students Margaret Dodd, Peter Vandenberg, David Gilhooly, Richard Shaw and Chris Unterseher among others. Gilhooly and Shaw surfaced to become the most prominent. As I will explain later, Funk Art was being explored/invented simultaneously on other campuses and geographic regions (e.g. Robert Arneson of UC-Davis and Verne Funk of UW-Whitewater both creating ceramic telephone sculptures of human body parts).

"Today, Arneson's phallic trophies and call-girl telephones with breasts and vaginal openings are well known. They were meant to be as tasteless as possible, but they do not transcend high school humor, nor do they approach the sophisticated punning of such dada artists as Marcel Duchamp or Man Ray" (Folk, 1993, p. 34). Later, his toilet series that traces the history of commercial ceramics is more on a par with Oldenberg and Duchamp.

Arneson's work moved quickly from a pun and Pop style, the crude earthenware "*Typewriter*" (1966) with fingers replacing the keys, to a more monumental, architectural style, "*Fragments of Western Civilization*" (1972)(Pl. 5), a

work that is an environment of clay chards and firebricks all in disarray. *"Fragments"* includes some of the early sexually explicit content, but has much more control and precision. This work is also one of numerous exploitations of the self-portrait. In the February, 1978 Ceramics Monthly, Arneson says,

"The self-portrait is a portrait of the mind. My concept was to build an edifice in my likeness, then knock it down. *Fragments of Western Civilization* is an ongoing dialog with myself. I try not to take myself too seriously, and when I think I might be, it is time to knock over a big piece. I'm not making any social comment, unless it is about my own self-survival from an environmental point of view. I am not looking at the past, I am making a brick--the most heroic of ceramics. The brick--terra cotta--is the ceramic element that has built the buildings of our Western culture. All of old America is a brick" (p. 53).

"*A Hollow Gesture*" (1971)(cover plate), a view of the artist with tongue sticking out, "*Smorgi-Bob, The Cook*" (1971), Arneson atop table covered with food, "*Funny Face*" (1974), a vase with the smiling artist, "*Huddle*" (1972), a large head sculpture with seven smaller heads in football posture formed into the top, and "*Pic*" (1980), Arneson with a finger in his nose are but a few of the self-portraits completed in nearly two decades of this exploitation. In the 1978 "*A Question of Measure*" , Arneson suggests a relationship between himself and Leonardo. He substitutes himself for the perfectly proportioned, ideal male in the famous da Vinci drawing. "Despite the fact that Leonardo pursued perfection in nature and art, and Arneson rejects perfection(especially of man) as an absurd idea--a rejection central to Funk, of which Arneson is a leading advocate--Arneson can be regarded as united with Leonardo through oppositeness." (Kuspit, 1986, p. 38). Both artists are considered rebels. Arneson, as in the "*George and Mona*" piece mentioned earlier, pulls off another Dadaistic slam.

What separates Arneson's work from others of the Funk movement is that most others stop at the humor of idea and don't continue into the handling of the media as sculpture. In his *"Viola With Gold"* (1988), a portrait of Viola Frey...raw terra cotta on one side; gold luster on the other--like all of his portraits, it combines the virtuosity and expressiveness in a manner reminiscent of Rodin, but with a clearly contemporary sensitivity" (Milman, 1990, p. 27).

Other works based on the lives and works of other artists are equally serious sculpture, yet retain his ubiquitous slyness. *"Homage to Phillip Guston"* (1980), a pair of ceramic shoes that look just like those in Guston paintings and *"Jackson Pollack"* (1983), a portrait of the artist with splatters of ceramic glaze to represent the artist's action paintings are both great concept ideas that I am using as a "spring board" into high school Funk projects...represent a known artist through narrative visual elements. Arneson's anti-nuclear works have equally interesting possibilities for political commentary in student works (White, 1987, p. 1).

"Guardians" (1991)(Pl. 6), an ambitious tableau of mixed media references to himself, Jackson Pollack and Pollack's 1943 painting *"Guardians of the Secret"* (Pl. 7), is tailor-made for high school student study. Seldom does an artist give a detailed account of their work. At best we get a "word jungle" interpreted by an art critic whose main message seems to be a display of personal vocabulary and cryptic historical references. In the account that follows, Arneson explains the various symbolic features present in a form and language that students can easily understand with little editing or definition on the part of the teacher.

Two 7-foot-tall totemic figures support a draped coffin (reliquary) that contains "green Boots" (under the grass), "Phallic" (power of creation) and "Head of Pollack" (eternal peace). From the back view, its left totemic figure supports "The Dying Artist" (fear), who clutches three small canvases (three strikes, you're out!). The totem's head is split (personality)---one

half is in flames (passion); the other half is an animal skull with forked tongue (equivocal). The right totemic figure (psyche) is veiled (Jungian) and firmly brandishes a staff with flame (guiding light). Her gown has seven orifices (fertile possibilities?). Both totemic figures are linked below the coffin by "Drip Hose" (umbilical cord) in a looping, autographic line (subconscious expression). Atop the coffin sit the personages of deliverance. The left one, "Boar Head", embodies good and evil, innocence and instinct; perched on its right arm is a beetle (embryo, fetal obsession?). The right personage is "Great Art Bird", with a palette crown and paint can tightly held in outstretched arms; resting on its back is a red feathered cock (ghost of Picasso, castration?). Between "Boar Head" and "Great Art Bird" sits a small figure "Bear Man" conversing with an odd duck (alcoholism). On the top right edge of the coffin sits the figurine "Fish-Out-of-Water" (misfit). The graffiti on the "Coffin Drapery" features some obscure images of fish, faces and slanderous scribbles. Beneath the coffin lies a large she-wolf (guardian of the land of the dead) being mounted by a brush-wielding monkey (mindless mimic and critical Philistine). The she-wolf sniffs the rear of "Odd Bird of Paradise" (Arneson, 1991, p. 51).

Arneson calls Pollack his role model and "*Guardians*" his masterpiece. I would add to that, it's a great teaching tool. The fact that Arneson was fully aware of his terminal disease at this time makes the work even more germane. He died two years later.

David Gilhooly has become the most noteworthy of Robert Arneson's students. Some accounts suggest that they taught each other. Surely Gilhooly was there at the beginning. He went on to develop an entire menagerie of animal based works that had all the comic elements present in the early works of Arneson, but never developed the import or the depth. From a pure Funk standpoint, they remain landmarks of the style. Gilhooly's early works were life-size crocodiles, warthogs and other African species." *Elephant Ottoman #2*" (1966) is a glazed earthenware, plywood and fake leopard skin vinyl piece that could easily have

been done by Oldenburg.

By 1969, the common frog dominates Gilhooly's work. His frog antics were a personification of man's exploits throughout history...a kind of frog mythology. "Irreverent and intuitive in the face of sacrosanct art history, a discipline which Gilhooly never formally studied, Gilhooly's parodies begin with the *Creation of Frog Adam by Michelangelo Frog* " (Gilhooly, 1976, p. 8). "There were frogs from Egyptian, Greek and Roman mythology, and irreverently from Judeo-Christian tradition. Gilhooly also portrayed more recent times; for example, the busts of *"Frog Victoria (Her 100th Year as Queen)"* and *"Mao Tse Toad"* (1976)(Pl. 8) (Folk, 1993, p. 34). Coincidentally, Gilhooly received a degree in marine biology before seriously studying ceramics. The obvious humor and simplicity of these works are fertile sources for high school art works to emulate.

Gilhooly also developed a race of highly skilled "beaver" artisans. "...he has pressed into service a squad of precocious and especially talented beavers who take over from Gilhooly many of the sculptor's chores that require carving (as distinct from moulding and forming from the clay by addition) " (Gilhooly, 1976, p. 3). Like the frogs, his beavers assume the role of early Native American carvers creating totems and scenes from early contact with Western man. Appropriately, a major exhibition of this work was mounted at the Vancouver Art Gallery in October of 1976. A self-portrait *"My Beavers Carving Me My Totem Pole"*, *"The Neighbors Welcome The Vikings To America"* and *"The Early American Hunter"* (all 1976) are examples from this exhibit.

Plexiglas has replaced clay in Gilhooly's most recent works. Remaining, however, are the funky subject transmissions. Continued playful treatments of the art of the past is shown in *"Fruit Descending A Staircase"* (1985). Later he returns

to ceramic media for further parodies of Duchamp with *"Cleaning the Fridge : My Relatives Descend the Staircase "* (1991), a host of food objects being ridden down stairs by little frogs, and *"Ducks Descending Staircase "* (1991)(Pl. 9), twenty little yellow "bathtub duckies" float down stairs with a stylized splash of water. Gilhooly said, "It's not that Duchamp's *"Nude Descending the Staircase "* (1919) is shocking to me in this day and age, but that it is both very beautiful and very well known to the public. I first heard and saw Wiley's *"Food Descending the Staircase "* and thought had not done the title justice, so I asked him if I could use the title, which I thought he had wasted and he agreed". "While in the midst of all my food descending pieces, I see that one person I often share ideas with, Peter Saul, using the same inspiration, especially in *"Donald Duck Descending a Staircase. "*(Pl. 10) I just had to do my own kind of ducks descending" (Baker, 1992, p. 89). The Peter Saul connection to Funk is explained along with the Chicago Imagists in a later section; William Wiley was one of Gilhooly's teachers.

Brief mention must be made of some of the other Bay Area artists whose work fits into the Funk style. Margaret Dodd explored the automobile as theme with expressionistic dispondent-looking Buicks, etc. in ceramic. Viola Frey, a subject herself of Arneson, worked with images that poked fun at cheap, commercial ceramic and plastic figurines while developing a high degree of glaze mastery; duplicating painting effects. More recently her work has gained scale and complexity of surface. Likewise, Chris Unterseher's work is derived from kitsch-pop-tourist objects. In the 1969 work *"Champion Surfer Mike Doyle Teaches Dave's Frogs a Few Tricks "*, small giftshop figurines are joined by some Gilhooly-like frog novices. Currently Unterseher's work is based on a nostalgic look at the past and the passage of time. Both Frey and Unterseher have continued to refine

their work into the 1980's and 1990's. "But both remain close to the traditions established in their earlier work, and true to funk's love of the object itself" (Nixon, 1989, p. 4).

Peter VandenBerge's work, like that of Gilhooly, is the most playful and the most likely to interest the young artist. He is the vegetarian Gilhooly. "While Gilhooly's work featured animals, VandenBerge's concentrated on vegetables. He created ceramic carrots in wooden cartons, but went on to more provocative carrot subjects, such as carrots in a bathtub, or "*Cozy Carrots*" , (1972), depicting two carrots making love on an overstuffed armchair" (Folk, 1993, p. 34). VandenBerge also made large platters to support glazed relief sculpture, an idea I am currently exploring; "*Commemorative Troll Platter* " (1994). (Pl. 11)

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - WHITEWATER / MADISON

My own formal beginnings as an artist and the personal contacts I have made with regard to the Funk movement center on the two University of Wisconsin campuses Whitewater and Madison. From 1963 to 1968 I was an undergraduate student at Whitewater (Wisconsin State College, later UW extension). While an art major there I attended courses, workshops and social gatherings that involved among others Clayton Bailey, Verne Funk, and Leanne Shrieves Stevenson. The accounts that follow are from personal reference and for the most part are not documented. Bailey is the only one of the three whose fame has yielded a number of published accounts.

I lost contact with Verne when he took on a new teaching position in Texas. Vivid memories remain, however. His ever present walking cane doubled as the ultimate pottery critic's device. He would "whack" his cane into any substandard

forms right on your potter's wheel. His artistic works were outrageous for their time. Most were blatantly sexual and uniquely humorous. He worked mainly in ceramics with an occasional companion painting. I will describe some representative works from memory and include some slides from my own personal archives. I recall a kind of voyeur work that consisted of a pair of wheel thrown /hand-built binoculars placed on a column near eye level. Painted on the lenses was a scene with two figures viewed through a window. On the opposite wall was a painting of a house that contained a smaller version of the same window. "*Blowing Machine*" (PL. 12) is the title of another two piece work that shows a sort of strange marital aid menacing the streets of a typical suburban neighborhood. Mouths were found on many of his hand-built and thrown forms. Some had their counterparts as hemorrhoid pots. "*Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Graham*" (PL. 13 & 14) is a mixed method work incorporating male and female body parts on two life-sized old time telephones. Coincidentally, Robert Arneson's *Call Girl*" (1967) has a similar content.

Verne Funk was exciting to be around given his tremendous skills in both painting and ceramics and his sharp, albeit twisted wit. At the time Verne was producing the "*Chest Set*" (Pl. 15) mentioned in the introduction, I was using the female breast as a theme in my painting and etching. Leanne Shrieves was my painting and printmaking instructor. I remember making a darkroom photomontage gift for Verne. The photograph included a view of a giant breast that took up one entire wall of the studio, Leanne and Verne appeared to be critiquing it as Verne raises his cane to strike it. We made art that would include references to each others work and poke fun in a healthy competition.

Leanne Shrieves Stevenson's work had always contained racy visuals dating back to her work as a student at the Art Institute of Chicago. The "*Events*"

series mentioned in the introduction continued through the sixties. They became increasingly more light hearted while continuing the overt sexual content of playful little cartoon people enjoying countless sex acts. After her untimely death in 1987, I purchased the crayon pastel drawing "*Events Under The Mount*" (1969) (PL. 16) from her husband Bob Stevenson. This prime Funk work has a grid of separate "events" that take place below a pencil and crayon pastel drawing of Mount Rushmore...obvious puns intended. Various carnal expletives are sketched around the frolicking figures. In the 1970's she turned to ceramics and her events became relief tiles (PL. 17) retaining the same format and context. Some pieces were in the round using ceramic terry cloth towels and miniature bathroom tiles as a base.

As explained earlier, the atmosphere surrounding the Whitewater Art Department was one of closeness and mutual support. When Leanne Shrieves and Bob Stevenson became Mr. and Mrs. the reception was held at the Dreamland Bar on Highway 12. I took it upon myself to make them a funky wedding cake in the shape of a pink breast. I baked an angel food cake, shaved the contour with a knife and stuffed the trimmings into the hole in the center left by the mold. It was pretty funny when they cut the cake and found all those weird looking parts inside. Leanne had a wild imagination and I credit her for my early inspiration.

"Enter the funky. In 1963, Clayton Bailey made a notorious sculpture called "*Caterpillar with Flying Buttresses*", a fat, worm-like blob of clay rhythmically poked and pinched to form a spine of projecting knuckles around its girth. To the modernist eyes, the supine could refer to the medium itself and the things it likes to have done to it, in this case and drying. To funky eyes, however, Bailey's blob becomes an anti-monument, as enduring as stone, to the infantile fantasy of playing with one's own feces (Merback, 1993, p. 34). This early work was thrown

and hand-built "grubs", the term Clayton used. These were eight to sixteen inch fat, larva-like critters that were later made of latex and inflated, some to the size of four feet. I met Clayton Bailey through Leanne Shrieves. He was known on campus as a free spirit whose diverse methods and media were unique to say the least. I experimented with latex sculptures from his lead, but none were as ambitious as his life-sized "*Hells Angel Masks*". These were often found being worn by participants in the frequent "happenings" he orchestrated.

After leaving Whitewater he was artist in residence at the University of California in Davis where he worked along side Wayne Thiebaud and Robert Arneson. In the 1970's Bailey settled in California teaching at the state college in Hayward. While there he..."dealt with a series of themes in his work, ranging from pornography, the medical establishment, and primitive man of the *Kaolthian* period to his now famous workshops and stage events..." Bailey's work is the most truly Funk of the Bay Area artists and one of the few whose work still patently belongs to this genre" (Clark, 1979, p. 275).

A fear that modern science may be out of control is evidenced by his *Mad Doctor* series. I saw Bailey's "*Mad Doctor's Experiment*" (1974)(PL. 18) at the Fendrick Gallery in Washington D.C. while on a trip with some of my art students in April of 1975. The work consists of *The Mad Doctor*, *Experimental High Voltage Equipment* and a *Brain Bowl*.. The ceramic and mixed media "brain" is contained in a crock with a fluid. Air is pumped in under the "brain" causing it to rise in the fluid slowly and make a blurpping sound as the air escapes.

Continuing from his early experiences with "happenings", Clayton Bailey has continued a series of staged events and workshops all around the country. During the early 1970's, Clayton invented his alter-ego or..."pseudonym "Dr.

George Gladstone" as part of a scam on the world of science. Dr. Gladstone was particularly interested in fossils. Bailey would construct enormous dinosaur bones from clay, then leave them half exposed on a beach and wait for an innocent passerby to "discover" them (Folk, 1993, 35). I have had the joy and privilege of attending and assisting in two such events. In April of 1972, Clayton brought his "show" to Whitewater. Together with roughly fifty observers and collaborators Clayton orchestrated the construction of a twenty to twenty-five foot clay "Bigfoot" skeleton (PL. 19) The true title was "*Giganticus Erectus Morainus*". The parts were fired and buried in the Kettle Moraine area near Whitewater Lake a few miles from UW-Whitewater campus. The following spring the "official" discovery was made and local news media carried the story.

Since that time the size of the work has grown to a reported 50 Ft. tall in the Wonders of the World catalog. Page 5 from this document is reproduced here (Bailey, 1975)(Fig. 1).

Rome News-Tribune

Rome, Georgia, Sunday, April 6, 1975

STUDIED BY DR. GLADSTONE

Giant found at Berry

A LITTLE-KNOWN LEGEND has been confirmed by the recent discovery and excavation of the 35-foot-long humanoid remains of what is being called the Mount Berry Giant. The burial site is located in the woods about 100 yards north of the Berry College art department in the Moon Building.

In a unique scientific venture, Dr. George Gladstone, curator of the Wonders of the World Museum in Port Costa, California, enlisted the help of Jere B. Lykins and the students of the Berry College art department in making the "discovery."

Creating a veritable liaison between art and science, Dr. Gladstone, who has made many other "significant discoveries" in the field of psychoceramic science, instructed Lykins and his students in the proper methods of organization and excavation of the ton of bones, ribs, skull, vertebrae, etc.

DR. GLADSTONE felt that this giant step in the name of psychoceramic science would be preserved at all cost; so with his initial aid and continued guidance by correspondence from Port Costa, the art students of Berry College and Lykins, their instructor, have spent months analyzing and documenting the find. Dr. Gladstone also insisted that the simulated bones and bone fragments be heat-treated so that this curious wonder could be re-installed at the grave site to enable visitors to the Berry campus to make their own psychoceramic observations, and derive mystical pleasure from a

visual examination of the skeleton.

Dr. Gladstone theorizes that the Mount Berry Giant was put here on earth at some very early time by extra-terrestrial beings for the purpose of breeding with the smaller human race. Says Dr. Gladstone, "It's a good thing he was caught in time."

IT CERTAINLY APPEARS that he was a rugged individual, designed by his maker to be a rapid traverser of North Georgia mountains, lakes and forests and able to withstand the coldest and wettest of winters.

He must have found Berry's 35,000 acres of mountain, forests, lakes, rocks and streams a challenge to his once rugged body.

Dr. Thomas J. Mew III, chairman of Berry's art department proclaimed the discovery "an incredible delight and an instantaneous source of puzzles."

Jere Lykins, leader of the discovery expedition agreed and added, "We are certainly fortunate to have as our permanent guest, this wondrous behemoth — a great source of inspiration."

MEANWHILE, ANYONE who is for a helicopter spin over Berry's beautiful acreage or who does a little exploring on foot amid the campus pine trees can easily see, stretched out in a mud bed (ditch), the remains of the Mount Berry Giant. It might even be noted that there is the bare suggestion of a psychoceramic grin on the big skull-face.



BERRY STUDENTS INSPECT REMAINS OF "GIANT"
Huge 35-foot skeleton found in wooded area

OTHER KNOWN KAOLITHIC GIANTS, AND THEIR LAST RECORDED LOCATIONS:

The Whitewater Giant; "Giganticus Erectus Morainus" — 50 Ft. tall.
Wisconsin State University, Whitewater, Wisconsin

The Palouse Giant; "Giganticus Erectus Pullmanii" — 50 Ft. tall.
Washington State University, Pullman, Washington

The Hayward Giant; "Giganticus Erectus Ceramicus" — 30 Ft. tall.
California State University, Hayward, Calif.

(In the permanent collection of Wonders of the World Museum.)

Fig. 1 from Clayton Bailey's Wonders of the World catalog

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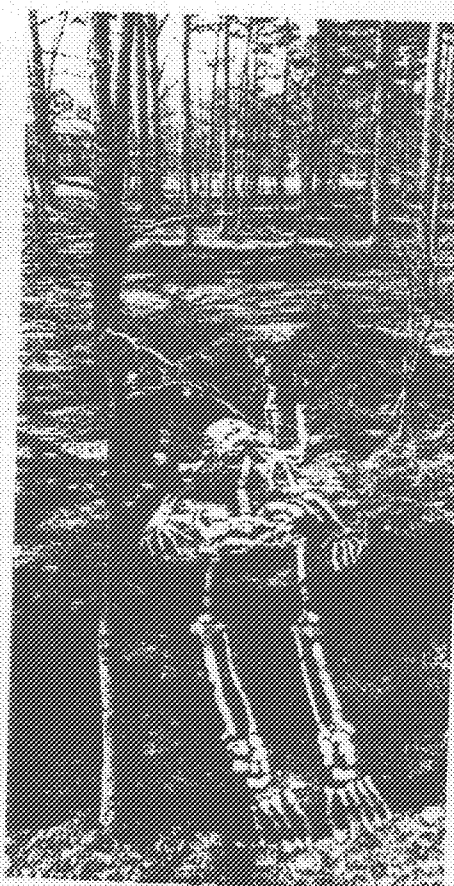
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California State University, Hayward, Calif.

(In the permanent collection of Wonders of the World Museum.)

Fig. 1 from Clayton Bailey's Wonders of the World catalog

In 1979 a group of my high school art students and I constructed a similar, but somewhat smaller version of the "bigfoot" on the campus of Edgerton High School. Unfortunately, when we proceeded to unearth our creation the "grave" had already been robbed. High schoolers can never keep a secret. It's actually funnier as I think back to it.

My most recent contact with Clayton was in April of 1985 when he returned once again to UW-Whitewater for another workshop. This time my son Eric and I assisted Clayton in the construction of a metal and mixed media "robot". Chiefly aluminum, chrome-plated and stainless steel objects were collected and were donated. Everything from automobile parts to coffee makers, tea service to vacuum cleaners. Clayton proceeded to demonstrate not only the way he was currently working, but how to manipulate metal, how to make your own metal-working tools and employing various assembly techniques.

Dadaism and the California Funk Art traditions have provided important references for much of Bailey's work; irreverence and humor may be the most striking continuum. The use of found objects also refers back to these traditions, a direction often scorned by those steeped in formalist sculptural biases. Yet rather than simply making his art and damning the rest of society, as many of these earlier artists did, Bailey attempts to educate and entice everyone to his work. He reveals his "secrets" through workshops and publications, countering the tendency of many American artists and craftspeople to jealously guard their formulas and plans (Hernandez, 1981, p. 1).

Clayton gave me copies of his catalogs and other publications after we finished the workshop. Since, I have used these documents to produce satisfying works with my students. Once again the fun involved with the Funk concepts is a quick "turn-on" for high schoolers. After our own experiences it easy to appreciate the impeccable craftsmanship that Clayton exhibits.

His work goes far beyond mere assembly of prefabricated components.
Page 18 of The Robot Builder's Manual (Levy, 1981) (Fig. 2) is reproduced here.

INTRODUCTION

This is a guide intended to help you design and build a realistic metal robot in your home workshop. The writer assumes that the would-be robot builder is a do-it-yourselfer who enjoys 1930's era Popular Mechanics magazines. No machine shop experience or electronics background is necessary if you use your ingenuity to find and to utilize found objects.

Make Your Own Servant

Many of us would like to have our own robot servant, but such devices are only available as one-of-a-kind experimental prototypes which are still too expensive to be practical. The robot with an "onboard biological computer" is the perfect substitute for the home craftsman. Rather than spending thousands of dollars and years of work attempting to duplicate human intelligence and muscle control with electronics, you can just put a human being inside the robot, and you have a robot with nearly human ability and intelligence. It will be smart enough to do household chores, to answer the door, pick-up groceries from the corner market, and be a companion to your family and friends. Such a robot is of great practical value today because home appliances, power tools, and thousands of other machines have removed many of our natural opportunities for exercise and we have grown weak and flabby from inactivity. Your robot will help to correct this situation by providing you, the human builder and operator with exercise, entertainment, and companionship.

Diablos Ex Machina

Bits and pieces of the older generation of household robots (dishwashers, toasters, coffee makers, stoves) become the "mechanical molecules" which are incorporated into a new generation of humanoid robots. These "molecules" from which the robot is constructed have a past life or history. Regardless of how carefully or cleverly these objects are fitted together, combined, and transformed into a robot, a memory of their history and their past lives remains and provides the Robot with its "soul"

THE ROBOT BUILDER'S MANUAL

Sources of Robot Parts

Everything you need to build a robot can be salvaged from somewhere. The Yellow Pages of your telephone book will help you to locate the following sources of low-cost metal parts for building your robot:

1. **Scrap Metal Yard** - Discreetly take along a screwdriver, pliers and a hacksaw in case you need them to take something apart. Buy your large sheets of aluminum here. Look for robot heads and legs.

2. **Recycling Center** - Look for interesting metal shapes.

3. **Sheet Metal/Air Conditioning Company** - Offer to purchase metal parts from their scrap bin. Look for robot heads.

The other important shopping areas for the robot builder are the local **flea markets, thrift stores and garage sales**. These sources will provide plenty of raw material if you spend enough time looking. Begin to haunt all the thrift stores and garage sales in your region. Spend two to three hours a week at a large flea market. You need to collect light-weight metal parts which look like they could be robot parts. Anytime you go anywhere in your automobile, one or more sources of robot materials should be explored.

Aluminum can often be purchased for less than its scrap value if you learn to bargain for those "worthless" items that no one else wants. Look for "as-is" minor appliances, coffee urns, pots and pans, lamp reflectors, lawn chairs, ski poles, vacuum cleaners, auto and bicycle parts, and other aluminum devices or products which can be dismantled to yield interesting robot parts.

Dismantle old appliances and machines down to their basic components and learn how things are put together by taking them apart. Notice how parts are joined and how mouldings and trim are used to conceal joints and edges. This is a good way to learn tips on robot design. Study the shape of each component and imagine how it could be used in a robot. Don't hesitate to cut forms apart to make new shapes you can work with. Save the screws, nuts, bolts and other fasteners and remember their special applications when putting together your robot.

Organize Your Materials

Organize your collection of parts and hardware so that everything is visible and accessible. Shallow trays made from cut-down cardboard boxes will help to separate and classify small parts. Keep your parts collection organized according to logical groupings.

Details & Trim

Rubber (Straps, tubes and such, mats and sheets, washers); **Metal** moulding, edging; **Chrome** rings for holes and openings; **Meters**, clocks, gauges; **Perforated Metal**, grillworks.

Hardware:

Springs, spring steel strips; Steel rods and wires; Nuts, bolts, washers;

Electrical:

Bulbs and sockets; Motors; Switches; Wires.

If you keep your growing collection organized, you will be able to find something when you need it.

Designing Your Robot

Building a robot is like solving a 3 dimensional puzzle. First, you must find the pieces, then you fit them together. The final shape of the puzzle is unknown except that it should look like a robot and it must be made from the materials you are able to find. More robot parts are available, ready made, waiting to be used, than anyone could "think up". You will need to become a collector, mechanical engineer and figurative sculptor.

If you want a well designed, believable robot, collect the widest possible range of aluminum shapes and parts to give you ideas for the shape of the robot head, eyes, arms, legs, feet, etc. An anthropomorphic robot would have two of everything that a human has, so get "pairs" of shapes whenever possible. (Never pass up a "single" item, because you will probably find a mate for it eventually.) Never throw anything away, you might find a use for it. You cannot be certain what you'll be needing, or what will fit together, so collect everything aluminum you can find. Unused parts can be sold as scrap when your robot project is finished.

Fig. 2 from Clayton Bailey's The Robot Builder's Manual

"2-2" and "T-T" (1981)(PL. 20), the two "secretaries", clearly display their past incarnations. They retrofit coffee urns with a spigot for a torso, a coffee pot for a head (the spout becomes a nose), an aluminum serving plate for a skirt, metal cones for breasts, and metal rings for earrings. At a time when most robots are androgynous, these feminine touches if not altogether functional, are quite endearing." (Levy, 1981, p. 1) These two works are typical of those that I saw in the traveling exhibition "Robots, History and Fantasy" during November and December of 1985 at the Madison Art Center, Madison Wisconsin. In a 1987 Natsoulas Novelozo Gallery exhibition, we find his "*Marilyn Monrobot*" (1987). The work is complete with curvilinear chrome shapes, costume jewelry, a bottom section that "jiggles," and light fixture breasts. It's a perfect example of the Funk blend of satire and parody with social commentary, "*Marilyn Monrobot*" mimics the movie star's better known physical attributes while not looking much like the actual person. "This starry-eyed perculator head could represent any stereotyped Hollywood sexpot from the 1950's, but as Marilyn it reinforces the tragic interpretation of a woman reduced to servitude as an object of male desire" (Magri, 1987, p. 4).

CHICAGO IMAGISTS (et. al.)

"(H.C.) Westermann's work has no clear line of stylistic antecedents, at least recognized "art forms" although his work now and again presents a statement and examination of visual paradox that Duchamp would appreciate..."(Adrian, 1980, p. 17) "*Walnut Box* " (1964) (Pl. 21), a finely crafted box made of walnut wood that is filled with walnuts in the shell, clearly has that connection. Like Arneson, however,

many Chicago artists availed themselves of the new artistic possibilities that he was investigating. Partially because his own work defies classification, Westermann has sort of blended into the background while those whose work follows more of an identifiable trend have the spot light. Among those influenced are the "Hairy Who" artists James Nutt and Karl Wirsum (a partial list) and, guilty by association, Roger Brown and Ed Paschke.

The whole idea of the "Hairy Who", though not officially recognized as a part of the Funk Art movement, aligns nicely with the Funk propensity for trashing the traditional. From 1966 through 1968 a group of six Chicago artists with similar artistic ideals show their work collectively under the common name "Hairy Who". Of this group Nutt and Wirsum incorporate "funky" imagery and later are grouped with other as the "Chicago Imagists". Predominately painters, their preoccupation with image is likened to the fascination of the Funk artist to the object. Nutt's strange cartoon figures cavort with the same kind of sexual baseness common to West Coast Funk. "*Miss Sue Port*" (1967-68) and "*Here We Are Again*" (1978-79)(Pl. 22) blend a strange surreal erotica with blunt graffiti statements and titles containing sexual innuendo. "Nutt's verbal tags and phrases provide hints and false starts, but they are not so much explanatory captions as provocative verbal echoes of the fascinating visual enigmas they accompany" (Adrian, 1980, p. 91).

Wirsum's work incorporates period "pop" icons like early rock-n-roller "*Screammin' J. Hawkins*" (1968) and 1950's wrestling star "*Gorgeous George*" (1972) displaying ..."several equivalent and simultaneous visual options...often making further visual puns, just when we feel we have seen all" (Adrian, 1980, p. 161). Wirsum has created some Funk-like 3-D works that are based on simple puns. In "*Service Station*" (1979) a highly stylized male tennis player

stands poised on a street map . Though many works appear to be trite because of this reliance upon the lower levels of humor; clichés, figures of speech, homonyms, misspellings and double meanings. "Finally, language extends and enlarges humor and allows further narrative possibilities" (Halstead, 1974, p. 17).

Other Chicago Imagists, Brown and Paschke, have Funk connections through shared visual ideas and a sly humor. Roger Brown Pokes fun at the former thrill-seeking Evil Kinevil in "*Snake River Fellatio*" (1978) and the kitsch movie classic "*Towering Inferno* " (1980). His incidents and dramas are acted out in simple figures and contrasty silhouettes. "What ever the action, we see it with an omnipotent voyeuristic intimacy and secrecy that provides a frisson of guilt-tinged pleasure that comes from the sense of enjoying a forbidden scene, unknown to the protagonists" (Adrian, 1980, p. 35). Brown has created both two and three dimensional scenic versions of cityscape and landscape.

Ed Paschke has shared the "Mona Lisa" image with both Arneson and Duchamp mentioned previously. As in Arneson's "*Question of Measure* ", Paschke coexists with a Leonardo masterpiece in "*Yin and Yang* " (1988)(Pl. 23). Superimposed next to ultimate image of Western beauty, "Mona Lisa", is a self-portrait. No narcissism is intended here, Paschke treats the Leonardo icon the same way he treats the image of Elvis, or Abe Lincoln. Paschke says,

I am using the ideas of symbol, metaphor or icon--ideas that bring with them a baggage of referential information. Certainly Elvis or the Mona Lisa are images that have recognizability and a certain referential arrangement that affects the way we see and understand the subjects behind the images. This potential grows out of a cultural fabric, and I guess what I want to do so to take some well-known images as a starting point and maybe try to combine them others or to break down these images, maybe to dissect what sort of phenomenon broad popular recognizability is (Benezra, 1990, p. 116).

Some of my students and I had the pleasure of meeting Ed Paschke after a slide talk he gave at the Madison Art Center in 1992. In reference to the above paragraph, I found the following quote that I had transcribed from Ed's slide talk. "The viewer completes the circuit with their own personal baggage." I also recall how my students were impressed by his statement that much of his inspiration comes from videos, "channel popping" and colorized computer graphics.

Finally, Peter Saul has surfaced in the research of Funk Art several times; crossing the path of David Gilhooly (mentioned earlier), experimenting with Dayglo together with Clayton Bailey in 1973-4, showing at the same time in Chicago as H.C. Westermann, admitting the visual similarities, and sharing an affinity to comic book characters, "pop" imagery and vulgarity.

Saul not only shared the Duchamp staircase theme with Gilhooly in several works, but exhibited together at Davis in 1992. Saul expanded the theme to all things descending. "*Donald Duck on Toilet Descending a Soft Watch*" (1978), connecting with the time honored toilet theme plus Oldenburg / Dali and "*Francis Bacon Descending a Staircase*" (1979). His extraordinary skill in rendering a distorted cartoon "reality" that is steeped in historical statement is his most striking attribute. "It is this notion of craft as much as the sense of morbid lunacy that links Saul to California Funk artists like Robert Arneson, as well as to the Chicago Imagists and even a maverick like H.C. Westermann, and it is this precedence accorded content over style that links all these artists in one degree or another to a conservative branch of Surrealism" (Storr, 1985, p. 99).

Peter Saul has produced parodies of countless artists and their works; Picasso's "*Guernica*" and Rembrandt's "*The Night Watch*". The fact that the humor and historic content of his work is so accessible to young minds further adds to its

relevance here. In recent history, his "*Jeffery Dahmer*" (1993) just knocks my students out (Lieberman, 1993, p. 43).

Chapter 3

MY ART AND MY RELATIONSHIP TO THIS TOPIC

UW-WHITWATER UNDERGRADUATE WORK

As I mentioned in the Introduction I studied as an undergraduate at what is now called the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater (1963-1968) and while there became influenced by and subsequently emulated the work of my teachers. Being a relatively small regional campus in a community of about 10,000, the art studios and the campus Crossman Gallery were the only place in town that one could make contact with the visual arts. Professors and students worked together in a family-like environment. We shared studio space, made frequent visits to each other's homes, went on trips to regional galleries and met socially. It was within this environment that I grew to know Leanne Shrieves, Clayton Bailey and Verne Funk, my earliest connections to the Funk Art movement. I will refer to these three mentors by their first names and in doing so I mean no disrespect nor intend to commit any researcher sin. Everyone was on a first name basis and writing these accounts otherwise seems detached and unnatural. Sadly, I never asked Verne about the irony of having a last name that described the work he was doing.

Leanne Shrieves, later Mrs. Bob Stevenson, had an ability see the humor in everything and as a consequence this became the general focus of my early work. My work that used images of the female breast can be directly traced to her own

"Events " series (1963) and later the "Episodes" series (1972)(Pl. 24). My first series (c. 1966) was not nearly as controversial nor as ambitious. It consisted twelve, one foot square canvases containing Pop-minimalist versions of "Egyptian Breasts ", "Breast-berg " and "Breast w/ Tan Lines " (Pl. 25). This series extended into my etchings and collagraphs with "Relaxed Breasts " (one long, pendulous breast folded over another), "Breastprint " (a numbered police-style imprint) and t-shirt print editions. I recall the fun we had working with, at that time, a provocative subject and relating to the reaction the work had on its viewers. In the 1960's, on a small Midwestern campus, this was "life on the edge".

From Leanne's later works and from the 1970's Pop "soft sculpture" phenomenon my work finds greater diversity in mixed media and the third dimension. In "Episodes # 19 " (1972)(Pl. 26), she adds stuffed canvas breasts to the surface of the painting. Later, I learned to stitch cloth and leather with a sewing machine to create my own "stuffed" works including "Toxic Carp" (1992)(Pl. 27). This is a school of bright orange, polyester "car pets" with plastic suction cup mouths stuck onto a simulated, contaminated river made of curved, painted glass.

Leanne's late 1970's ceramic works were particularly interesting to me because at the same time my main focus was improving my skills on the potter's wheel and hand building. My "Great Moments in Architecture " series(1989)(Pl. 28) was a direct result of that focus and a reaction to the W.A.E.A. and Department of Public Instruction "push" to infuse architecture into the state art curriculum. To date the series has three components, "P.P.P. and Associates " (Peter Piper's storybook pumpkin shell design concept), "Shoe Tenament " (tall shoe with revolving door...Old Woman who lived in a shoe, had so many children...) and the "The Swine Projects " (renovation, progress piece with Three Little Pig architects).

Clayton Bailey was experimenting with latex forms made from clay models and was instrumental in promoting the "happenings" in and around the campus. Years later I would join Bailey in two group workshop experiences.

Verne Funk, as I mentioned in the Introduction, was more of a social contact I met through mutual friends. Like Leanne, Verne's unique humor conveyed through his painting and ceramic work left a lasting impression on me and my work. Verne together with Clayton Bailey, made the "pot shop" a great place to "hang out". Though I never officially enrolled in classes with either Verne or Clayton, I came away with great respect for the intensity they brought to their work and their lives. My major undergraduate course work involved painting, printmaking and wood sculpture. Upon graduation I knew that I had to get some formal experience in ceramics. I confess to teaching clay media my first year with only the background gained through "hanging" with Verne and Clayton. Verne's great gift of throwing inspired me to further my own skills to a point that finally led me to make clay my media of choice. I made my own electric potter's wheel after one he made from an auto transmission.

Clayton led me into experiments with latex and acrylic paint. We shared each other's commercial sources of liquid latex. At the time my father worked at a shoe factory and was able to supply us five gallon pails at cost. My simple latex eggs and breasts were not in the same league with Clayton's "grubs" and "masks" mentioned earlier. Preserving the my latex objects became a problem and Clayton never told me his complete formula...non of my works have survived. This media is one I intend to expand with my high school students in the near future.

In Chapter 2 my later encounters with Clayton are documented. His work with Funk *Big Foot* "fossils" and found object "robots" has provided me with many

lesson plan concepts and has led me to an increased use of discards as media. Upon graduation in 1968, Leanne encouraged me to continue my studies in graduate school because my work was strong enough as well as timely. I took a year and a half off to work in the building trades and in the mean time decided to try teaching at the secondary level. During the time that followed, my work took the form of demonstrational art for the benefit of my students and did not take a serious turn for almost twenty years. Learning skills in the Carpenter and Joiners Union and polishing my technical abilities while teaching have had a positive effect on the work I am currently doing. Now that I have finally taken Leanne's advice, I have tried to tie in the personal direction my work was taking in the late 1960's with the import it can have today. It has certainly helped to stay in contact with Leanne and Clayton over the last two decades.

Since my first year of secondary teaching (1970), I have continued to stay current with the world of visual art along with my students...reading, researching art history topics, going on field trips to visit well-known working artists and setting up art exhibits. Together with my own rather toned-down, socially acceptable art works and vicariously through the works of my students, a kind of continuity has occurred. The more serious I was able to get my students to become about their work, the more serious I became about my own. I instituted district wide faculty art exhibits and started entering the annual Wisconsin Education Association Council Showcase. Through this process I began creating works that were done for the sole purpose of self-expression instead of mere exemplars for high school students. I'll be the first to admit that most of my current work no longer has the topical "bite" present in works from my younger, foolish and more impressionable days. Obviously I have to be aware of my audience here in the provincial town of

Edgerton and among my "charges".

U W - MADISON GRADUATE WORK

My graduate work is mixed media based sculptures with clay being a dominant ingredient. The Funk theme remains, though I am using that term these days only because I fail to find another that describes what I do. Guidance and encouragement by the professors I have known and studied with at the University of Wisconsin at Madison graduate school have helped me focus on improving both the scope of media possibilities and an ability to identify my purposes. In the summer of 1988, I became more serious about my work while studying with Richard Burkett. Through subsequent study with Elaine Scheer, Bruce Breckenridge and Bruce Howdle, I developed the excuse I needed to produce enough work to fulfill masters degree requirements.

Richard Burkett helped me improve my slip casting skills. Prior to that my only experience was gained through a one day convention workshop (c.1977) with Bruce Breckenridge and through my own practice with students. Fruits and vegetables were the subjects Burkett chose for us to use...mix and match, share moulds and create composite pieces. Burkett's own work had a more contemporary, environmental style and did not have the same appeal that my early Funk mentors' works had. My work that summer ranged from rather commercial-looking containers (Pl.29) to the funky pun piece "*Mama Casserole*" (Pl.30) to phallic pickle jars (Pl. 31) to the "*Ollie North Third World Tea Set*" (Pl. 32) , a piece that stretched the class theme somewhat. I was casting everything. The tea set had a four piece pineapple pot, a banana handle, a penis spout and a beret cover. The

cups were cast coconuts with rifle bullet handles. I tell my students that some of my current work has been rated "PG" and "R".

The following summer (1989) found me back in the US studio casting larger forms from hand-built models. I made quite possibly the world's only slip-cast sailboat that actually sails. This piece was the culmination of an exciting class with Elaine Scheer. We were directed to make a piece that was site-specific. The site was the Lake Mondota shore at the Wisconsin Union Terrace.

This was the same summer that Elaine Scheer had me teach her under grads how to throw on the potter's wheel. Her "strong suit" is large hand-built forms...she never cared enough about throwing to learn.

In the summer of 1990 I followed my need to get back to the carpenter work mentioned earlier and built myself a 26' x 48' garage. My work the following summer had a logical increase in size.

Again working with Elaine Scheer, I completed two rather ambitious (for me) works during the summer of 1991. The first was a political parody in the form of a Mister Potatohead game "*Political Potatoes*" (Pl.33). My version was notably larger, 47" x 16", and contained removable facial features and arms. There were three complete set variations, parts characterizing Ronald Reagan, George Bush and Richard Nixon. Each set made reference to the typical caricature features exploited in political cartoon drawings of these famous Republicans. The arm options include "thumbs up / down", backward peace sign, double peace signs and crossed fingers behind. The clay body and parts are supported by a pair of very tasteful black and white wing-tipped shoes atop a Neoclassical fluted column constructed of wood, plastic and plaster. The truncated column rises from a mound of silica sand around which the ceramic "small potatoes" are arranged. This is a

kind participation piece allowing the viewer to mix and match any parts...the results are the same...just another potatohead.

The second 1991 work titled "*Country Radio*" (Pl.34) is a true mixed media expression. The sculpture is 42" high, 13" wide and 9" deep. The FM radio chassis is housed within a base of varnished birch hardwood and veneer, its front radio face plate is made of an old Johnny Cash LP with the station selector hand located at its center. The volume/on/off and tuning knobs are hand crafted ceramic corn ears. Surrounding the LP is blue velvet fabric with chromium studs arranged in the "Lone Star" shape. Red tassel fringe hangs around the top and the whole structure is supported by four blue and pink ceramic thumbs; the symbolism being those numerous missing digits I observed while working in a farm implement shop. The sound is transmitted through the top of the base into an 18" orange carrot with having holes drilled facing front. A miniature black Garth Brooks-styled hat is impaled by the tip of the carrot and a long disproportioned hat microphone spirals down around the carrot with the foam cover positioned in front of the speaker holes. I have usually have country station Q-106FM playing when it is on display. Incidentally, I received an honorable mention award for this piece by the 1994 W.E.A.C. State Art Exhibit jury.

Further graduate work continued during the eight week 1992 summer session with the guidance of the "two Bruces" (Breckenridge and Howdle). The greatest share of my time was spent on a work that parodies the relationship between Native Americans and Anglo settlers. This piece was planned to be the center piece of my masters show. I was not able to resolve the work until the following summer. This was the summer of the "unfinished". Though I completed a number of smaller works the major works continued in progress. Another work in

progress was the plastic laminate troll table completed just prior to the masters show. I completed some other kitsch troll based pieces with slip-cast parts. The wheel-thrown and slip cast "Commemorative Troll Platter " (Pl. 11) documents the return of the troll dolls after a thirty year absence. "Troll Saint " (Pl. 35) was designed to be the slip-cast counterpart to the "bathtub Mary" so prevalent in residential landscape shrines. This work is placed within a toilet frame as part of a large scale high school student group collaboration using a pop culture theme. (described next in Chapter 4)

In passing I must say, working with the "two Bruces" was so natural. Knowing and working with some of the same artists over these many years as well as living through the last several decades as relative contemporaries has been a real "trip". We had so much in common and it was so easy to "tune in" to what each other was really saying.

During the summer of 1993 work was completed on my Native American version of the Statue of Liberty, "*It's Money That Matters* " (Pl. 36). More information about this work is found on page 51. Its relationship to interdisciplinary functioning and subsequently my current work is the theme I am continuing to explore.

This work continues the political commentary found in my previous "*Ollie North Third World Tea Set* " (Pl. 32), "*The Awful Truth About the Grand Wizard* " (Pl. 37) and "*Political Potatoes* " (Pl. 33). With the "tea set" I connect with the commentary found in the work of Daumier and Goya (refer to Chapter 2 - Dada and Political Satire). With my "potatoheads" I reference the monumental Arneson "*Portrait of George* " (Pl. 38) described in the Introduction. I don't claim equal billing, I am just making reference to political attitudes at a different time and with different impact. The Funk connection remains clear.

CHAPTER 4

APPLICATION TO THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

CONTENT - HIGHER LEVEL THINKING SKILLS

While my studio work was evolving academic studies continued during the same sessions. For the past several years I have incorporated both academic and studio studies into my high school lesson plans. In conjunction with a series of art education seminars, I have researched and applied concepts of multiculturalism and interdisciplinary coordination...at one point I had a good thirty page start on a thesis that combined both of these directions. Though both of these pursuits yielded worthwhile teaching experiences and student products the focus was becoming removed from the studio work I was doing and I found myself following the latest trends in curriculum development somewhat blindly and with the results weighted too heavily on the academic and weak in personal expression. Not until I interjected the Funk Art context did the course work and art work come together with a renewed excitement. I will explain how I was able to establish what I think is a good balance of discipline and production.

INTERDISCIPLINARY FUNCTIONING

The inclusion historical content with young students can be a futile effort in light of the fact that most students view art class as "playtime" and that history is taught by the coaches, not art teachers. History, not just art history, is the ideal interdisciplinary subject that can afford the student the opportunity to transfer knowledge gained through parallel studies in other classes. The application of known events, personalities and locations opens up a limitless range of visual imagery. The automatic applications, however, are usually nothing more than a set history text illustrations that merely document. They can lack stylistic interpretation, personal point of view, correlation to previous or current events, satire, parody and of course editorializing or even "tampering with the truth". Another unique feature of this approach is the ability of the student to select the degree of seriousness. Students can chose between pure light hearted whimsy and various degrees of critical analysis; silly or profound.

Through the incorporation of "frog history", high school students enjoy a rather painless infusion of what can normally be a "way boring" part of the curriculum. I have collected scores of examples from Gilhooly's "Frogology" that are the basis of the students' own versions of historical events through the use of any form of personified "critter".

Another advantageous feature to Gilhooly's Funk work is the high degree of craftsmanship through the use of quite simplistic forms. The work's quality is not based on anatomical correctness, but on clean form and gesture. The intent I always try to achieve is a return to that naive informal abandon that is usually lost sometime about the fifth grade. Gilhooly's work more closely parallels that of the

uninhibited youngster than that of the "masters" of realism. The emphasis is placed on imaginative form manipulation rather than rote duplication of reality.

High school students are not intimidated by his work because it has base level of understanding that cuts through the visual complexity that is inherent of traditional forms that are the usual references shown in the examination of art history. This is not to say that more traditional examples should not be shown, only that the range of alternative forms of expression should include those more accessible to youthful interest and delight. I present the classics as landmark examples of nonsacred icons in glass cases. The students are encouraged to break the glass and use the classics as a means toward their own expressive end based on today's culture and attitudes.

The actual functioning of interdisciplinary instruction in the Edgerton High School usually involves pairs of teachers planning and using logical common denominators. Time for such planning is done informally without any extra time allotments. Recently, however, the district curriculum coordinator administered a day-long seminar / inservice based upon just such an approach. To date, I have worked cooperatively with five other curricular disciplines including math, science, vocational technical, history, and language arts.

The joint venture with the Agribusiness instructor involved the concept that technology student welders could produce sculpture while learning to make the traditional butt and lap welds. Art students could learn media techniques from the welders, and the welders learn design concepts from the art students. Art students were supplied with actual steel plate examples that included test welds of the style and kind learned in Ag Tech. The art students then made conceptual drawings of proposed sculpture keeping in mind the logical limitations and constraints. The

works were critiqued and juried by the art students and myself. The two finalists made working drawings for the welders and worked with the Ag Tech. people periodically until the pieces were complete. The piece, "*X Mass Tree*" (1992)(Fig. 3) lacks complexity yet has a funky storybook quality that we like. Our next piece, a steel "lollipop tree", will join this one in a site being improved by Rick Reese's landscape architecture students. Rick Reese, the Agribusiness instructor, and his students were able to realize the same objectives as before with some added engineering challenges. The conceptual drawings that were not selected for production were displayed as proposed sculptures much like the proposed works of professional artists like Christo and Oldenberg.



Fig. 3 "*X - Mass Tree*" (1992)

works were critiqued and juried by the art students and myself. The two finalists made working drawings for the welders and worked with the Ag Tech. people periodically until the pieces were complete. The piece, "X Mass Tree" (1992) (Fig. 3) lacks complexity yet has a funky storybook quality that we like. Our next piece, a steel "lollipop tree", will join this one in a site being improved by Rick Reese's landscape architecture students. Rick Reese, the Agribusiness instructor, and his students were able to realize the same objectives as before with some added engineering challenges. The conceptual drawings that were not selected for production were displayed as proposed sculptures much like the proposed works of professional artists like Christo and Oldenberg.



Fig. 3 "X - Mass Tree" (1992)

The cooperative activities with the other four disciplines had less dynamic, though worthwhile, results. The Math teacher, Ricki Nehs, monitored my classes while I demonstrated the design and construction of 3-D prisms. Ricki and her students supplied the forms such as tetrahedrons and quadrilaterals, while I supplied the method and technique. Through involvement in this joint venture I was able to explain the concepts relating to architectural scale and Minimal Art to the math students. At the same time, I realized how this content could be used with my own students. The math student's products never made the transformation into objects of art though the math students are now aware of what could be done with their maquettes.

The Language Arts teacher, Nancy Hoitomt, has had me tutor her students in the production of mythological illustrations. She doesn't like the idea that we create our own myths; however, for my students this is great raw material for Funk.

The Computer Science teacher, Andy Kuemmel, and I have traded technological knowledge for graphic composition techniques for some time now. One of my most imaginative students, Krista, is working as a liaison between departments installing new Super Paint lab packs and Video Spigot software in the Mac computer laboratory which services computer students.

Finally, the work I have done with the Social Studies teacher, Mark Papendieck, has included brief art history lectures that range from period studies to the most recent Native American unit.

Almost no extra time is scheduled for collaborative planning and exchange; teachers usually trade classrooms. Ideally, the math teacher would incorporate and transfer mathematics content to art students while the art teacher reciprocates with art information. When possible, the two can be together. While one is

unassigned. Mark and I have produced videos of my presentations that he can play back to the remaining sections I cannot visit personally.

I look at these ventures as a kind of back door approach to teaching art to those students who may not intend to enroll in art classes. I invariably learn useful content myself, and it's also a form of soliciting students to enroll in future art classes.

MULTICULTURAL ASPECTS

The identification and coordination of multicultural and global studies in the current Edgerton School District K-12 Curriculum was addressed in a seminar / inservice day. The four morning sessions were repeated as one fourth of the staff rotated through a four station sequence. The four presentations defined terms, outlined state guidelines, listed current trends, showed methods of incorporation and distributed actual unit outlines or plans.

My most recent collaboration united the Native American unit taught by Mark Papendieck and the background I learned in Melanie Herzog's Native American Art History class. I took this course during the summer of 1993 and completed work on my most ambitious sculpture to date. A mixed media version of the Statue of Liberty, *It's Money That Matters* " (Pl. 36). While researching a paper on the Funk Art in contemporary Native American Art, Still No Word For It, and attending the eight week lecture series, I gained a wealth of background to incorporate in both in my art curriculum and to share with the social studies department.

Mark and I produced a video comprised of stills we shot from my prepared slides and from the texts I used for my history class. Up until this point, the

standard social studies curriculum only made brief mention of basketry, totems, and sand painting. No references were made to other forms of art. Winter counts, hide paintings, and ledger book drawings are also significant. They contain logical references to historical events. Furthermore, contemporary Native American art forms were not presented. I was able to include the history from the Santa Fe School to the present. The most interesting additions that I made, of course, were those ideas and works done by Harry Fonseca, "*Rose and the Res Sisters*" (1983) (Pl. 39), Bob Haozous, "*Ozone Madonna*" (1989) (Pl.40) and Randy Lee White(horse), "*Custer's Last Stand Revisited*" (1980)(Pl.41). Mark and I agreed that the combination of our two backgrounds was mutually beneficial, not to mention the positive results with the students. Mark was able to bring out specific data that would relate to the events being depicted by the Native American artists. This data had direct bearing on the Native American point of view. Social studies students had an extra credit option of producing a work of art that related to any aspect of Native American culture. Of the few products he collected, most were of the safe traditional nature...no Funk revival in his class. At least, I convinced them not to merely replicate images they had seen. Native American art should be left to those indigenous people. Melanie Herzog was very clear when she explained that teachers should not encourage students with different ethnicities to create art that has special meaning for, and in some cases, sacred to Native Americans. Making art using the knowledge gained from the exposure of this unit is the approach to use.

Obviously, the social studies curriculum has little emphasis on creating a tangible product. When I develop my own Native American unit, student art works will be a major feature. I know, however, who my guest speaker will be. My

students will be able to tap the contextual reserves of Mark Papendieck when they come up with their own take on the Battle of Little Big Horn(s) or where Custer stands. Ideally, the social studies students should have access to the art studios and be able to take advantage of the media options I will mention in the next section.

MEDIA

DRAWING, PRINTMAKING AND PAINTING

All drawing, painting, and printmaking media options are applicable to student Funk Art themes. Though Funk is most surely based in 3-D media, pencil, paint, and ink have also been used. I have presented Marcel DuChamp, Peter Saul, Claus Oldenberg, Verne Funk, Leanne Shrieves Stevenson, Jim Nutt, and Ed Paschke as a major and minor 2-D artists that have a Funk style or are some way connected to the movement. Most of these artists have in one way or another reacted to an event or an earlier art work in a form that would represent a new "slant" on the original context. In keeping with this tradition, my second year student painters have been charged with the theme, "Classic Paintings Revisited". I will describe the methods employed in the next section.

"*Worldly Christina*" (1994)(Fig. 4) after Wyeth was produced by Mike Jessup. In his version the barn is being leveled by a "Oz-like" tornado and the farm house has been replaced by a McDonalds restaurant.

Jacques Louis David's "*Death of Marat*" was a popular choice. Eric Knitter replaced Marat with "Beavis" (or is it Butthead ?) holding a T.V. remote instead of the letter while the box table support is in flames from the Bic lighter that lies in

place of the bloody knife...remember the trouble that the producers of these T.V. cartoon characters got in when they advocated playing with fire? Aaron Anderson's version of the same painting shows a rather graphic shot gun scene with the former lead singer of the Grunge Rock band Nirvana...Curt Cobain. Nick Kopke painted a remake of Van Gogh's "*A Starry Night*" by filling the town with fast food joints.



Fig. 4 "Worldly Christina" (1994) by Michael Jessup

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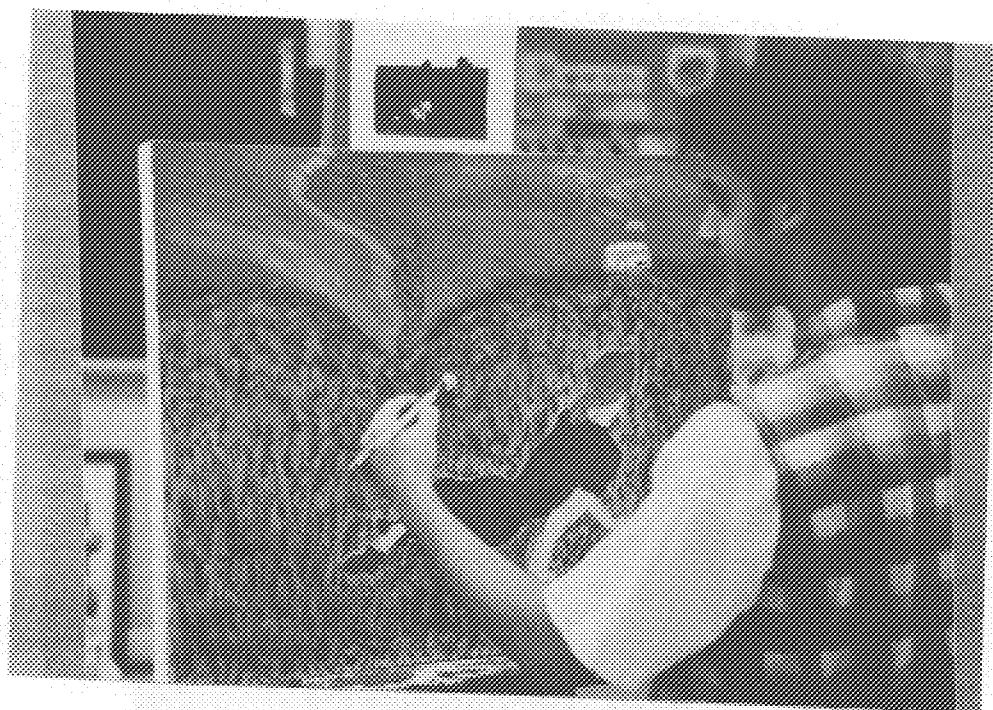


Fig. 4 "*Worldly Christina*" (1994) by Michael Jessup

"Bucky, You're Outta Here" (1994) (Fig. 5) by Ken Wentwirth is a parody of Georgia O'Keeffe's *"Cow Skull with Red, White and Blue"*. Ken says,

"Georgia O'Keeffe's idea for this painting came from a barrel of bones and became the theme of the great American painting. The bones were desert bleached, they were primarily from New Mexico where she painted late in her career. O'Keeffe was a painter who worked in the Immaculate style. I have made the painting more of a reference to Wisconsin.

I used the idea of the bleached bones, but instead of a cow skull I used a badger skull (Bucky). I also added a tree branch to the painting to show that it is not in the desert. "



Fig. 5 *"Bucky, You're Outta Here"*(1994) by Ken Wentwirth

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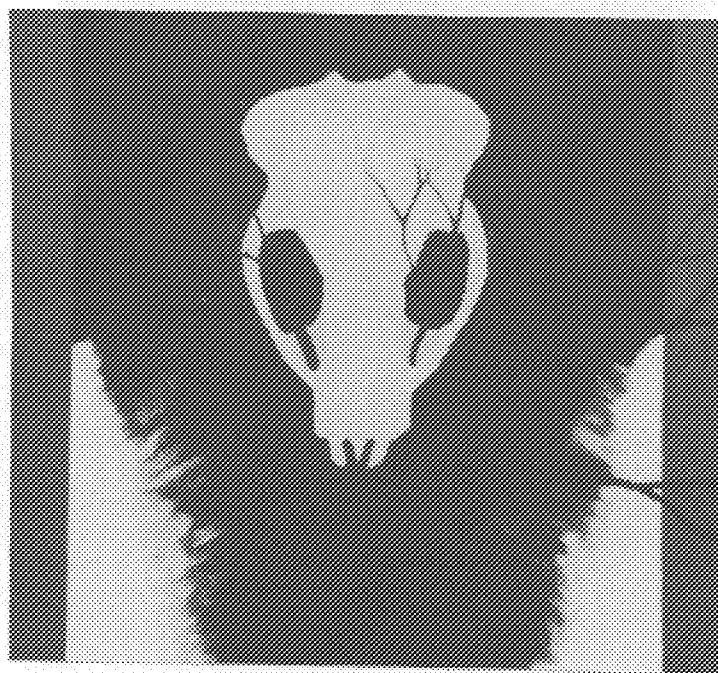


Fig. 5 "Bucky, You're Outta Here"(1994) by Ken Wentworth

My favorite is Dan LaVelle's "*Cereal Killings*" (Fig. 6) after Goya's "*3 May 1808*". The main figure in the original massacre scene is replaced by Cap'n Crunch. Dan says,

"I changed the painting by not having quite as many people in it. Also, instead of having the man in the white shirt I changed him into Cap'n Crunch, because he is going to be executed, for making crunch berries. My message is about all the senseless killing today. I was going to make it a drive by, but I couldn't get the car right. On the top of the canvas I made it look like someone's summer vacation filmstrip."

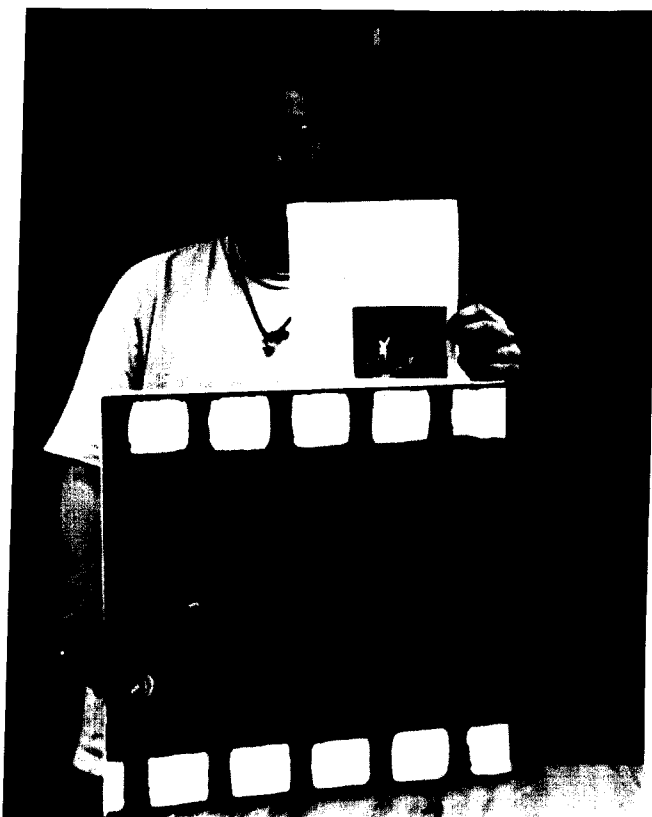


Fig. 6 "*Cereal Killings*"(1994) by Dan LaVelle

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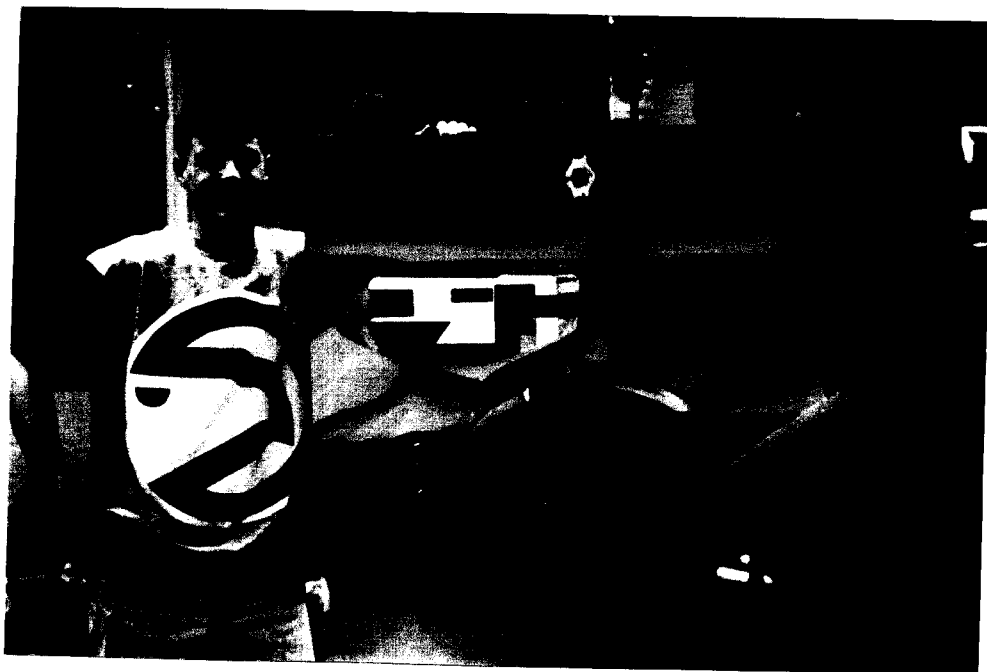


Fig. 7 "Utopia"(1994) by Lewis Pagel

The paintings shown in the proceeding figures and described by their creators have varying degrees of Funk content. Students research information about the original artist, explain the intent of references he or she is making, and report his or her knowledge of the painting styles and works being used. This is explained in the evaluation/critique session at the end of the unit.

Adapting Funk concepts in drawing and printmaking is being explored for the 1995-96 etching unit. Because our curriculum is limited I can only cover some media and methods every other year. Though the lithographic process is not a current media option for us, the historic background of Daumier's lithographs will easily translate into etchings. A continuation of socio-political commentary started with this year's paintings will be helpful in creating prints. I have also found a near



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perfect reference in the work of Warrington Colescott.

While a Professor of Art at UW-Madison, Colescott completed a series of watercolors, drawings, etchings and lithographs that treat history with the same sense of twisted perspective the Funk artists revered. Colescott's unique artistic prints trace the life and times of several early printmakers. Included in these are Albrecht Durer portrayed as a tourist in Venice who has lost his bags. This print relates to the fact that Durer's prints were imitated and published; possibly from stolen plates. Other prints parody Rembrandt's financial difficulties, Ben Franklin's womanizing, Goya's war studies, Lautrec's as an entertainment of sordid characters, and Picasso's zoo visitation with minotaurs in cages, "*Picasso at the Zoo*" (1978)(Pl. 42). In his exhibition catalog (Colescott, 1979, p.1) he describes his work as "good, clean sport encompassing a variety of attitudes from homage to slapstick and points between".

CERAMICS AND MIXED MEDIA

3-D media, both ceramic and mixed are the mainstay of the Funk artist. The students at Edgerton High are exploring many applications of this "tongue-in-cheek" style. The 3-D studio has being converted into one large art installation. Over the last ten years, our administration has allowed us to alter the space in a variety of ways.

A simulated "Cave of Lascaux" (France) was constructed between the two art studios by four senior girls. The latest plan is to expand this cave by making a transition to a present day cave...a subway tunnel complete with subterranean

plumbing to simulate the stalactites, trash barrel stalagmites, current graffiti visuals, and a simulated subway train car with '70's styled art. The door will open into the darkroom. (Fig. 8)

The space above one of the counters in the 3-D studio has been converted into a wall mounted shelf storage unit for still-life objects, texts and our museum collectibles. A false fire place takes up the center area with individual bricks made with each have some visual reference to the words brick or block...the orange one with the clock face is the "Stanley Kubrik" and the Charlie Brown brick is of course the blockhead. Within the hearth revolves a rubber chicken on a motorized spit in front of electric fire logs. (Fig. 9)



Fig. 8 Cave Replica (1987)

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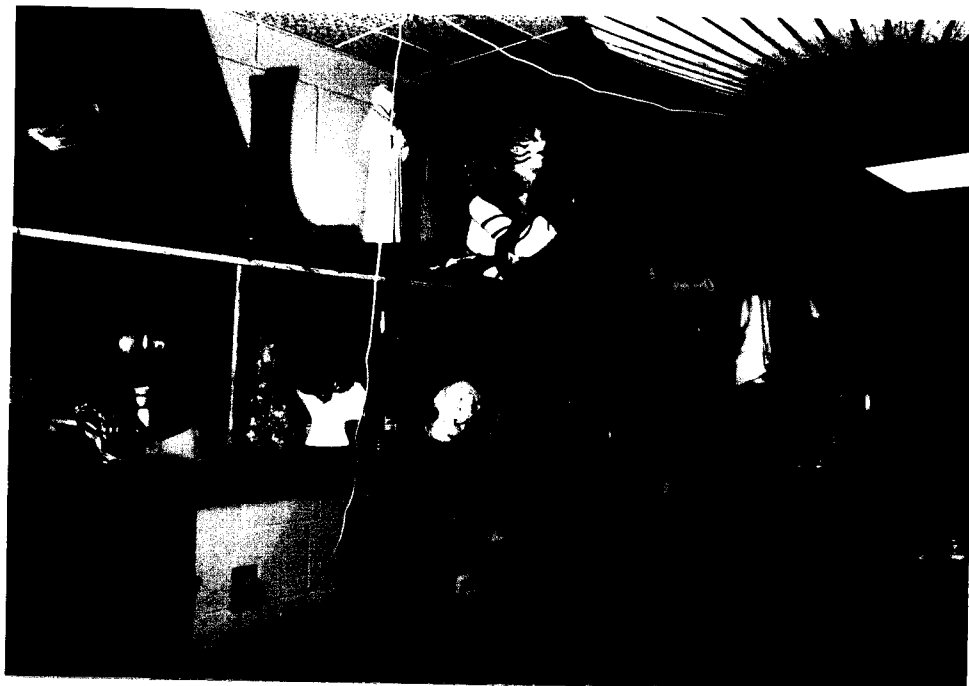


Fig. 9 Wall Installation (cont. from 1988)
 "Mus`ee des Refus`es"

Our most recent work, like the other site specific pieces, is a shrine to pop culture. As of this date, my students and I have built a series of Gothic arches that encompass a central figure, a slip-cast pop "icon" that takes the form of a kitschy troll headed St. Francis placed inside a porcelain toilet bowl...an obvious "bathtub Mary" take-off. Also, inside the bowl is a drawing of a Super Bowl stadium, the seat is fir-covered...inspired by Meret Oppenheim's Dada work *"Luncheon in Fir"* (1936)...and sits on top of a 3-D version of the Home Shopping Club logo. An actual functioning T.V. displays Home Shopping Network programming.



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Neoclassical columns support the sides of the arches. The columns are covered with pop imagery collage...Bingo cards, Slim-Fast labels, headlines from The Star and The National Enquirer, etc. Copper bas relief Ho-Chunk Casino coins attached to the face of the shrine will soon be joined by our "collector edition" ceramic plates (Fig. 10,11).

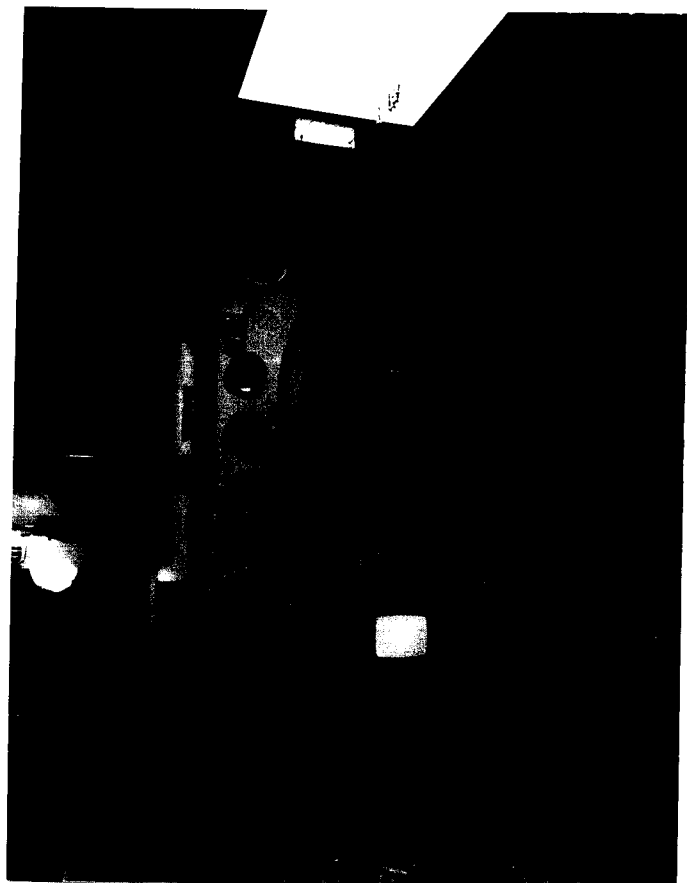


Fig. 10 Shrine to Pop culture (cont. from 1994)

Inspired by the kitsch merchandising found in the Sunday supplements, students are creating collector plates with the images of Barbie, cutesy baby seals and, of course, Elvis.

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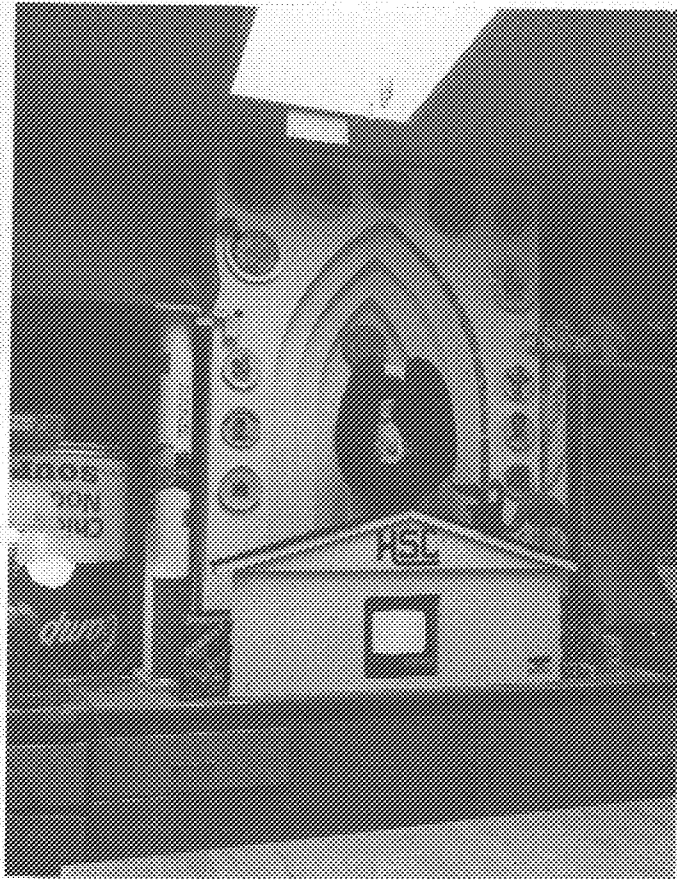


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Fig. 11 "Collector" plates (1995)

Chris Lund is making a casting of a yard flamingo to pursue a new incarnation (Fig. 12). Other Funk images will be emerging from Justin's castings of plastic fish that will find their place as wall trophies, Tina's antique milk bottles and milkglass vases and my own *"Newt Descending the Staircase"* (Pl. 44).



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Fig. 12 Flamingo casting
Chris Lund

Students have produced their own versions of unlikely Chia Pets. Using earthenware clay and their creative minds, the world now has the "*Taranchia*" spider by Stephanie Ward (Fig. 13), the moldy bread Chia, the Chia moldy cheese, the Chia salad and my own Cuban revolutionary, "*Chia Guevara*" (Pl. 45, and cover). Our Agriculture department supplied us with the alfalfa seeds needed.



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Fig. 13 "Taranchia" (1992)
Stephanie Ward

Incidentally, Brian Mantei, my "crazed computer junkie", has produced his own parody of my Newt sculpture using the MacIntosh Computer and the Video Spigot software (Fig. 14).

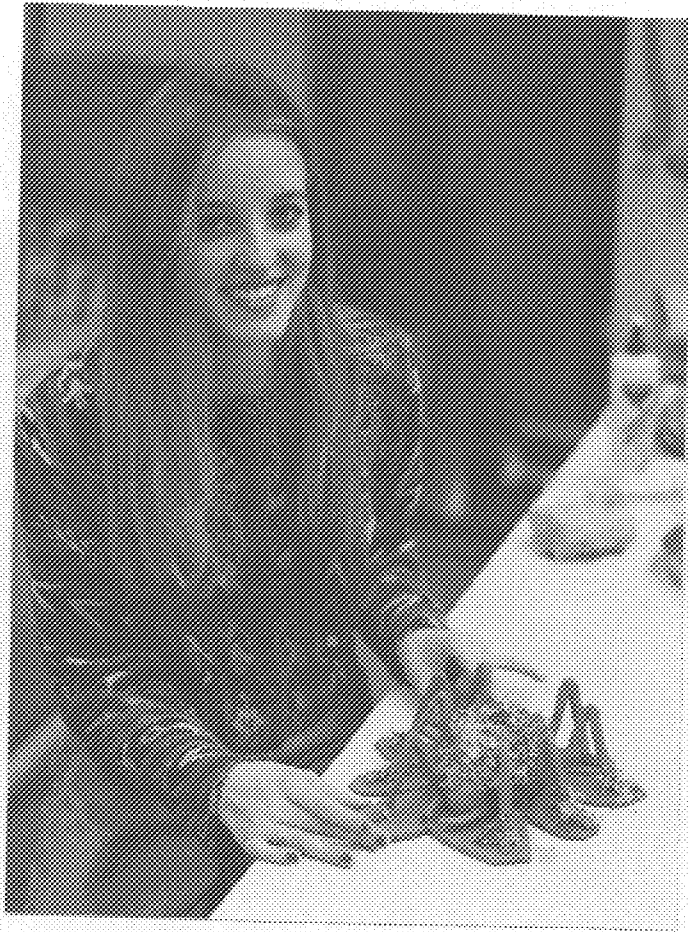


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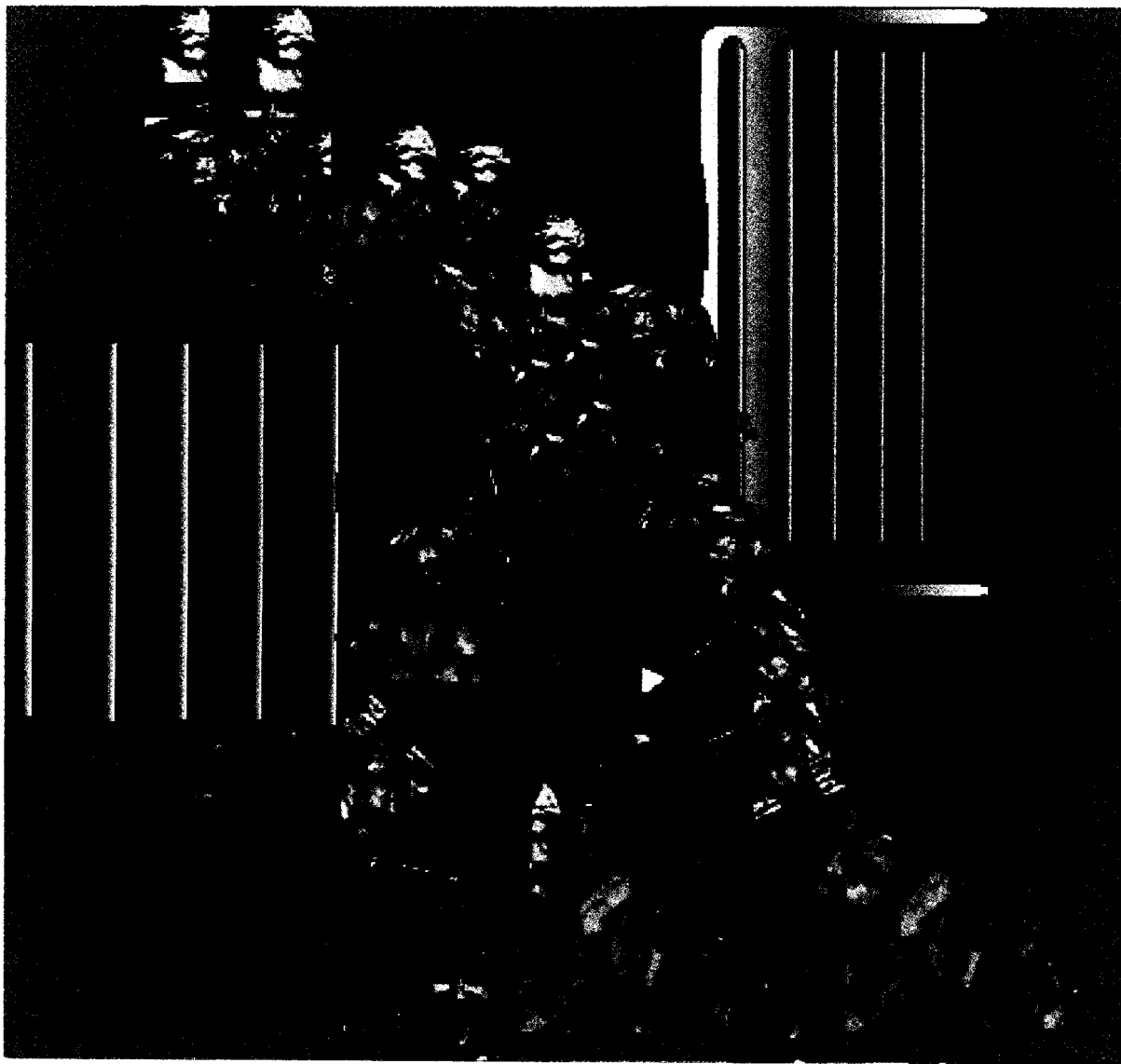


Fig. 14 "Newt Descending a Staircase" (1995) by Brian Mantei

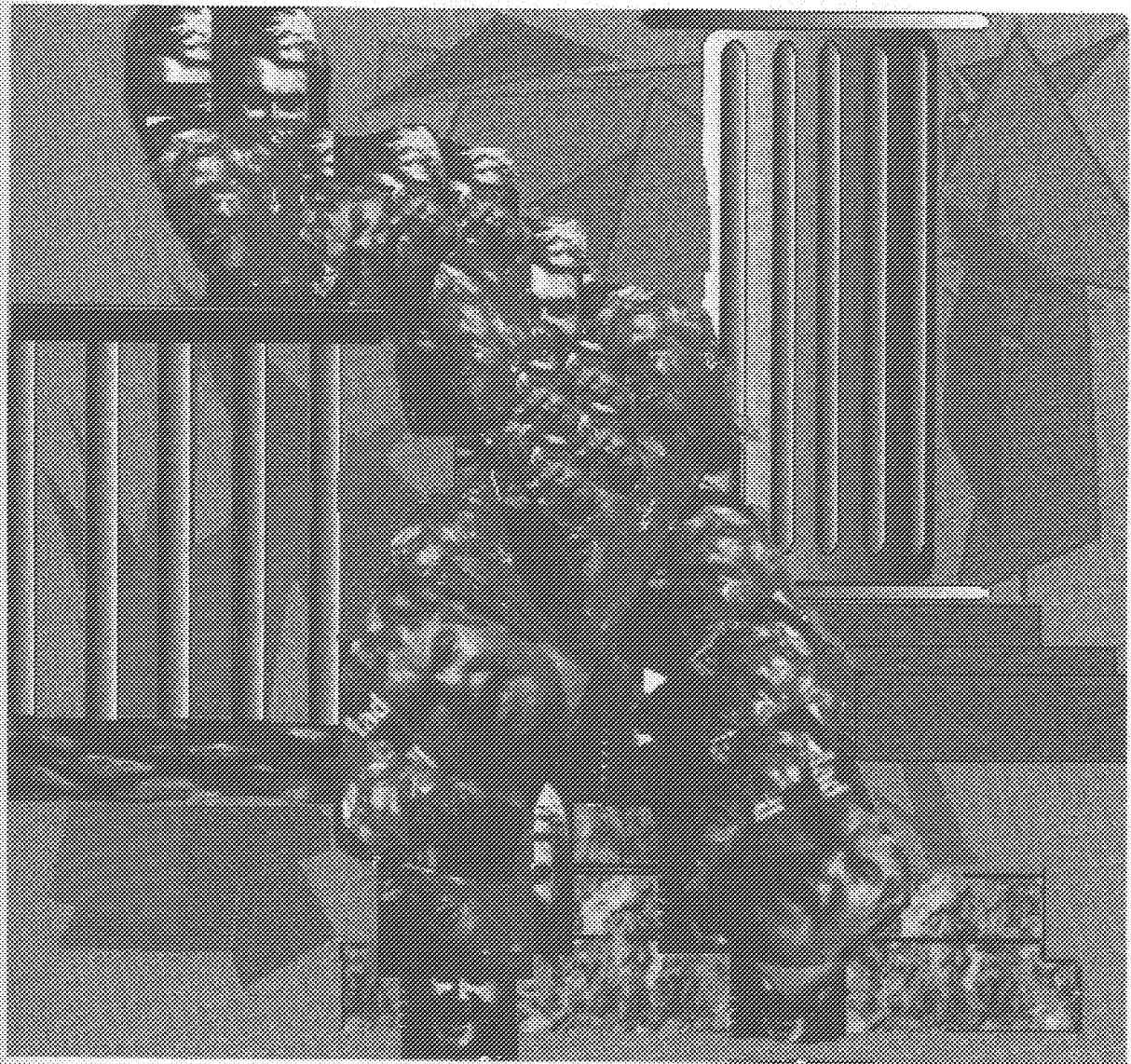


Fig. 14 "Newt Descending a Staircase" (1995) by Brian Mantel

Finally, the Mus'ee des Refus'es is the name we give our collection of world artifacts. The authentic museum objects are based on an idea by Clayton Bailey in his "Wonders of the World Museum" described in Chapter 2. Paul Schott and Ken Wentworth are building (discovering) the lost nose of the Sphinx (Fig. 15). This is a life-size construction slated to be mounted above the potter's wheel in the 3-D studio. The piece is being constructed using a series of wood panel cross sections that have been mathematically proportioned from a modeling clay maquette. The surface will be formed of wire mesh, paper mache and sand mortar. Research for the project will be mentioned in the next section.



Fig. 15 "Nose of the Sphinx" progress
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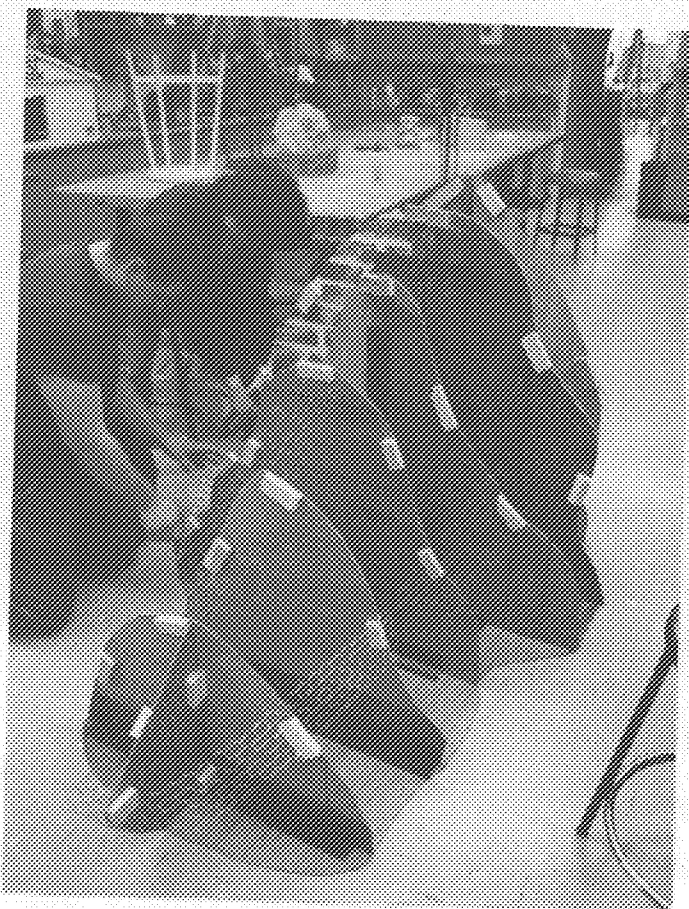


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Justin Mazuk has produced the Oldenbergesque giant can of Spam, "*Bay of Pigs Commemorative Spam*" (Fig. 16). The otherwise perfect enlargement of the original lunch meat made popular in WW II, Justin's cold war version has little pink pigs floating in the seascape of the shore of Cuba. It is currently on display near our cafeteria lunch line. Our school cooks enjoy it, but have placed a disclaimer memo near the sculpture stating that no Spam is used in the hot lunch program.

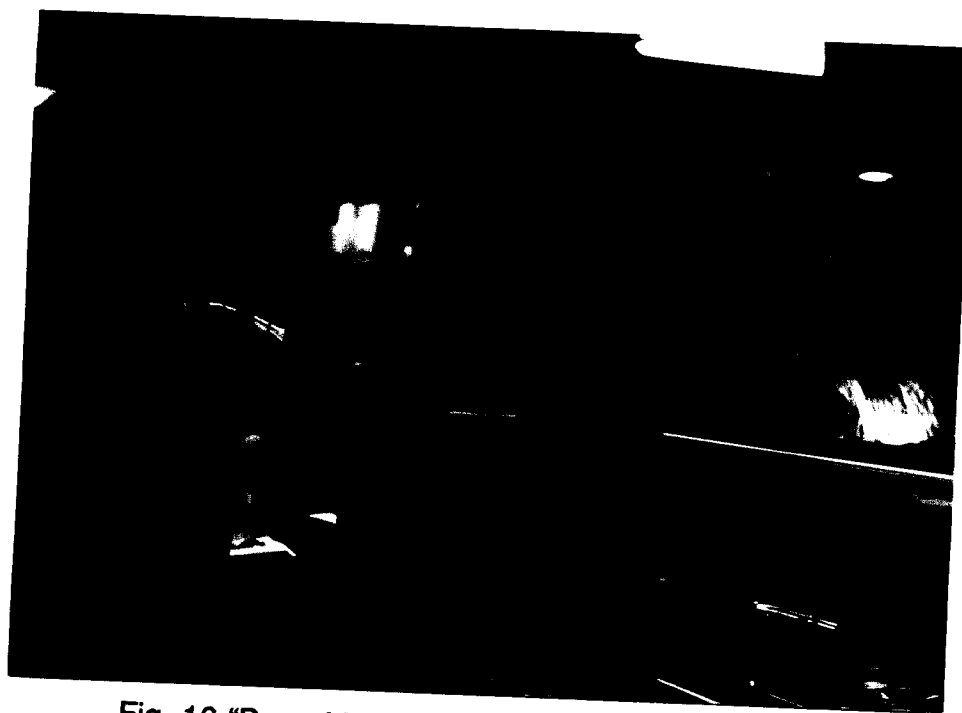


Fig. 16 "*Bay of Pigs Commemorative Spam*" (1995)
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Other work continues with the rebuilding of the "original" Flux Capacitor from the film "*Back to the Future*" Aaron, Mike and Eric brought in the video and freeze framed the segments needed for study and are assembling found objects and constructing a wooden housing made to look like the famous metal box that transported Michael J. Fox in the time travel movie.(Fig. 17)

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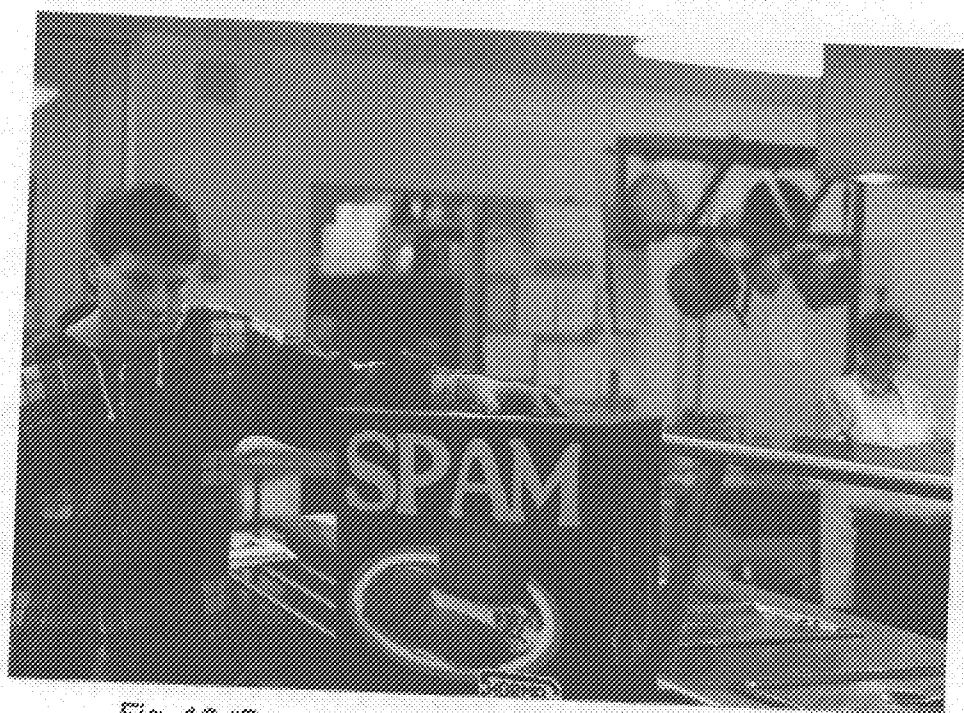


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Fig. 17 "Flux Capacitor" (in progress)

Other proposed projects include the menu from the Last Supper, "Thumbs of Steel"...a video for kids that use toy thumb wrestlers, Scooby Snacks, Adam's navel lint, the White Rabbit's pocket watch, E.T.'s bike basket, Forest Gump's sneakers and the "actual" V.W. hood from Herbie the Love Bug.

These projects are such a success that students come in many extra hours to work on them. Some are making more than the one piece required and some of the E.A.S.L. (Edgerton Art Students League) students are joining in...personally I have "found" the letters of transit used in the movie "Casablanca".



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METHODS

The production of student works whether 2-D or 3-D are based on the art history aspects of the Basic Art Course Curriculum. At the high school the first course requirement includes an over view of art media, methods and concepts from the cave paintings of 15,000-20,000 B.C.E. to the present representations of the current era. Each Basic Art student completes a research unit either alone or in cooperative groups that yields just three basic units of information: how can the work of the style or period be recognized, of what was it made, and what is unique about it. Each student or group draws two topics, one each from a list of premodern periods or styles and modern / postmodern styles.

Subsequently, Art II, Art III, Art IV, and Photography courses continue on that base as dictated by the of each level unit. Students have recognition skills and research experience that help to promote more significant products.

The work is coordinated with our Library Media Center specialist Kathy Rohde. Ms. Rohde is an invaluable resource herself. Having recently completed her Masters Degree in Resource-Based Teaching, she has the necessary skills to accomplish the goals of us both. More specific research methods will be explained in the Presentation of Task section.

Most of the student products I have described have been the work of second through fourth level artists. They have been able to build upon the base of knowledge gained in Basic Art by applying that information in a 1990's postmodern context.

SLIDE SHOW AND DISCUSSION

The introduction of each unit is done with a reflection on what they should know to date. I also try to set the parameters of our goal so that we do not exclude that important tie with the past. In an attempt to promote a work that does more than just reuse the ideas and styles of the past verbatim I usually begin with visual examples in both slide and print formats that go that step beyond group identification. Those works challenge the viewer for thoughtful interpretation. In the Funk experiences I have been able to bring in or produce with them, my own work. The discussions that always accompany these presentations are much more lively when the students have that connection that I can provide with respect to my own personal work and those experiences I have outlined here, artists I have known, and with whom I have worked.

This document contains most of the specific Funk Art resources I use. Other data is researched on a need-to-know basis. I present works of others explaining the time contexts, the influences and the intent of the artist. How the artist "fits" into the scheme of art history is an important aspect for students to understand so that their own work may have a similar relationship.

DISPLAY ACTUAL WORKS AND EXPLAIN

When I display my work or work on a piece with the students I find that they can relate to problem solving. Also, because so many people are now believed to be visual, kinesthetic learners, the more demonstrations relying on these approaches the more likely it is that you can reach than using verbal, auditory

approaches. In some cases, I can relate or show the stages of production. As I mentioned earlier, work continues on a piece I call "*Newt Descending the Staircase*". Since this work began, students have brought in photos for me to use and have given me suggestions on how to finish it. It's great to see the roles reverse in the teacher-student relationship.

PRESENTATION OF TASK

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER SUBJECT SEARCH

Continuing with the experiences outlined in the last section, students are often expected to research aspects of a project either formally with the aid of Ms. Rohde, our media specialist, or by making trips to locate sources in or out of the building.

During a typical Resource-Based learning unit Ms. Rohde and I will plan the time needed to reserve the L.M.C., coordinate mutual goals, set up learning stations, plan training groups, produce worksheets, and borrow sources from other institutions through the inter library loan system. As mentioned, most of the artists have successfully completed Basic Art standards and thus have had experience with computer catalog access, computer encyclopedia search, printing hard copies of data, L.M.C. organization, check out procedures and periodical access.

Most students used the above procedures while producing the art history parody paintings and some when producing the objects for the "Mus`ee des Refus`es". In the "Nose of the Sphinx" work being produced by Paul and Ken we all learned more about the mystery as well as some uniquely interesting facts that will help to make a more "authentic" artifact. It was, after all, some fanatical

Muslims in 1380 C.E. who chiseled away at the nose, the Mamluks used it as a target for their guns and the aging Napoleon officers who climbed to the top toasted victory with brandy. (Billard, 1978, p. 87) The plan was to include some chisel marks, shell damage, and brandy stains.

In the case of Funk Art relationships, students first determine their parameters. Does the idea have connections with other topics real or implied? This will dictate the strands of research needed. Data and visuals that relate then can be assembled.

The approach they intend to take usually is the result of personal brainstorming or may be further formed in the discussion stage. Is the position positive, negative, indifferent, humorous, straight, bizarre, politically correct, or some form of reinvention? Works with similar approaches can be of some use once the position is determined.

STUDENT OUTLINES TO THE GROUP

THE PROCESS AND THE PRODUCT

At this stage the student artist will explain his or her idea in some detail. By showing original sketches as well as other visuals on which the work is based, the student will outline how the piece will be made, and indicate what the final product is likely to look like. The intent or meaning of the piece follows along with the description of the physical object. Justin, for instance, would explain the connection between World War II and Spam, what pun is at work when he uses the Bay of Pigs references, and what his personal interest is.

Students will use traditional design principles or explain why they are purposely not being used, explain the quality of material handling or degree of

craftsmanship planned, and the style or styles being used or alluded to. Again, Justin would tell the group why his piece is like and unlike traditional Pop Art, why he chose to work accurately and use correct proportion.

DISCUSSION AND GROUP INPUT

The teacher helps students clarify their intent and goals while the group has the task of offering suggestions. This step has helped to turn otherwise "thin" ideas into more elaborate, deeper manifestations. It is not usual for many people to have the very same answer for a given idea...the first thing that comes to mind is often the same for many. A round of group brainstorming can get the idea beyond this shallow, simplistic beginning. I promote a healthy exchange of thoughts between student artists while work progresses. As in my own work, changes and adjustments are made that are impossible to foresee in the initial presentation. This student cooperation does not center on suggestions for visual changes alone, but recommendations of media selection and use, sharing tool handling skills and helping one another locate objects needed.

STUDENT PRODUCTION

Studio space is developed to suit the project size, complexity, and other needs. The arrangement of the 3-D studio takes on different forms dependent on the unit of study. Available storage space is divided and assigned according to need. Some of the larger parts are stored in other parts of the building. Ken and Paul are storing "the nose" project next door, backstage.

Safety and procedural subjects are addressed. These include proper and economical material and tool use, studio organization and layout, and work and clean up schedules. Because of the fact that there are so many different projects going on at one time, all involving varied media, sound organization is a key factor. Each studio session begins with a statement by each artist or group as to what they plan to accomplish that day, what aid they will need, questions they need answered, and any revelations they have made that may be of interest or benefit to the group. This practice is especially helpful in those instances when a substitute teacher is filling in.

Time limits and deadlines are varied with the complexity of the task. Adjustments are often made with respect to the start of the next unit of study. When warranted some projects have taken on large blocks of time; our "Lascaux" cave took four senior girls the best part of a quarter to complete. This is somewhat uncommon. Students seldom have to learn how to use specialized tools like a hammer drill, have plans approved by the principal, and have the production monitored by the maintenance supervisor.

Most of the time spent in actual construction and assembly of parts involves the technical and physical manipulation of tools and media. Aesthetic judgments are often compromised by the student's ability or inability to control the process. The degree of "polish" or attention to the detail of surface has a direct relationship to the student's experience. For many, these art constructions are the first time some tools have been used. Cooperative learning models have had some positive impact on the various skill levels among the group. I have found the spectrum of experience to run from none to extensive. Some students work regularly with the materials and tools involved, while others can't figure out how to operate an

electric drill. I actually had a student tell me that the drill bit I gave them would not work in the drill because the "hole" in the end of the drill was too big. They had no clue that the chuck was adjustable and that tightening it involved using a chuck key.

Both the students and I are usually extra proud of our products given the technical and aesthetic distance the students traveled from conception to fruition.

DISPLAY AND CLOSURE ACTIVITIES

Culminating activities range from the ubiquitous group critique and traditional in-house thematic group display to individual written essay justification or one-on-one oral critique followed by individual show space arrangements. During the school year all artists have the option of submitting works for juried exhibits sponsored by local and regional organizations and institutions.

Group critiques include a printed guide that students use to enter their comments on each work within the group. Each artist writes about and verbally supports their own work as well as that of the other participants. Though the main activity centers around the oral feedback given by students concerning their own work and that of others, the written guide allows me to check everyone's understanding and to get more students involved in the evaluation process, not just those normally vocal few who can dominate the discussion. It also allows those who are uncomfortable with openly expressing their opinions an opportunity to be heard without the possible animosities that can be generated. The guide can also include a vocabulary list that encourages students to use germane terminology in both oral and written responses. Through witnessing and reading student

responses I can get a fairly clear impression of each artist's grasp of the units's intended goals. Once students realize that they are accountable, and that they are expected to justify their work within the parameters of the stated goals, they have of a tendency to take their work more seriously.

Art works that are produced within a classroom thematic unit are displayed in prominent locations throughout the school buildings as a group. Some of which find their way into a more formal space such as special display cases in the administration wing of the building, on the walls and tables of staff offices, lounge areas, and individual classrooms. Some become part of the district's permanent collection and are matted and framed for designated areas. Those works selected for special purposes are chosen by external appointees, the students themselves in a kind of "People's Choice" voting process, and by individual staff members who approach either me or the students individually.

The works produced for the "Mus'ee des Refus'es" referred to in the media section of this chapter and the other permanent site-based works are obviously installed within the studio space. This work, like some of the work selected for the district collection, allows the artists the opportunity to make a kind of permanent mark within the building. It provides a form of ownership that contributes to a positive social environment.

Some individual critiques, small group critiques, and written essays are done when students are working more independently, as in the advanced sections, and their work does not follow a large group unit concept. Special space locations and display area organization are part of the task for these more independent students...I mentioned earlier how Justin arranged to have his giant can of Spam displayed in the hot lunch kitchen area. When some of the advanced work borders

on the edge of our school's code of social acceptability, students arrange an audience with the principal, Mr. Jeff Gibson. In these cases Jeff has the ultimate rite of censorship and decides if and where the piece can be exhibited. Periodically we, Jeff and I, elect to display some relatively controversial work and allow the students and staff a forum to express pro and con responses. Some work is displayed knowing full well that it's presence will generate notes and memos of displeasure and disagreement. This has provided for a healthy exchange of values through which all involved increase their awareness of artistic issues.

Youth Art Month shows are popular with our students. Our local March show is produced with the cooperative efforts of an Edgerton arts advocacy group called the Applefest Committee. Each year they sponsor fund raising activities that result in funding local art purchases for our community's public buildings and scholarships for three students for summer art workshops (e.g. Arts World, UW-Green Bay Summer Arts Studio, etc.). This group also encourages K-12 Artists to submit work for a juried show that is set up in the city's banks, clinics and professional office lobbies. This group also helps with the selection of work to send to the regional Y.A.M. show.

This year's (1995) local Youth Art Month Exhibit began with an opening reception held in the foyer of our new elementary school addition. The reception was open to the public and was well attended. As in the past, this formal attention given to our young artists is highly enjoyed by both students and parents. Students get some great public exposure and are recognized by the press. One of the Arts World scholarship winners played piano accompaniment for the evening. Our Applefest volunteers provided refreshments and helped the district art teachers and students with other arrangements. The event is just like "the real thing".

EVALUATION

STANDARDS AND GOALS ACHIEVEMENT

The closure activities described in the previous section provide the most of the information I need for my evaluation of student achievement. That, together with the initial goal setting outlined to the students throughout the methods and original presentation of the task, form the standards upon which students can focus and I can make my final judgments.

As in most evaluation, the person charged with the task of placing some degree of merit on the process, product and intellectual growth of another has to place value upon certain behaviors, expect a level of technical achievement, equate how the work relates to the intent of the unit of study and determine a method of rating knowledge gained.

Typically, I set a minimum standard for all aspects to be rated. Achievement below this base would result in some form of remedial work. The main method I have relied upon has three components. The first being the degree of appropriate materials handling. This places a rank upon the technical skill or craftsmanship. The degree of skill is based upon answers to questions like, if the the goal is neatness, is it neat? ; if the style or technique being emulated is expressionism, does it have expressionistic characteristics. In the case of a Funk Art product neatness in the usual sense is less important to its success than the stylistic directness evidenced in the handling of the media.

The second component measures the extent to which stated concepts were used or applied. For example, if the work was to include a Funk Art parody or satirical factor, does it? Does the work exhibit a connection to to the Funk Art

examples shown? For example, Paul and Ken's "Nose of the Sphinx" is direct spin off of Clayton Bailey's "Wonders of the World Museum" concept. During the critique this connection would be made. Both would be compared and contrasted.

Thirdly, I try to determine an acceptable level of conceptual understanding. Student work that is the result of significant thought and research will add to that degree of understanding. In the case to a historic parody reference to the original factors upon which the work is based can add valued depth and will promote higher level thinking skills.

In all three parts the degree of achievement or level of attainment are determined in the critique methods used in the closure activities. The discussion or essay will address the depth of thought. A work may function around a trite, simplistic pun or it may have deeper meaning, blunt or veiled innuendo, ironies or multiple levels of expression.

As in other disciplines, some evaluation must be done with regard to a student's process. Absenteeism, time on task, cooperation, social behaviors, economic use of materials, safety record, appropriate use of tools, and interpersonal relationships that may effect the learning atmosphere are factors all teachers must address in some form. I chose to determine two grades, one for process, one for product. The process grade would rate all the observable behaviors I just listed, while the product grade would be the sum of the standards and goals achieved. A final grade must be some average of the two with one weighted more or less or the same as the other dependent upon the need. In some groups, especially with younger students, the development of appropriate social skills can be a major mandate.

Some of the expected goals are inherent in the evaluation of the product's

degree of success. The transfer of an idea from the real to the abstract; how a historical event or previous art work can be moved to a new context, either through satire or parody, is one of the main goals of the Funk works described in the media section (page 52). Students are challenged to develop skills in a style or technique that may be quite new to them such as being able to differentiate neatness from control, or style from stylize. Stephanie's "*Taranchia*" is an example of how natural form is compromised for function and humor. In the work that is based on a previous historical event, students are expected to glean the needed background to not only understand the original context, but be able to find a way to express an attitude concerning that event that fits within the unit's thematic parameters. This is evidenced in Dan's description of his "*Cereal Killings*" (page 55).

Other general goals continue with this unit as in most others: continued emphasis on the understanding and application of art works and concepts present and past, applying interdisciplinary knowledge, expanding multicultural awareness, practice and development of media handling, achieving higher levels of thinking, exploring new methods of self expression, making value judgments, working cooperatively, time management, increasing skills in tool handling, exhibition experience, practice making appropriate choices and transfer of previous knowledge.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The roots of Funk Art are traced back through art history following three characteristic strands. Dada shares with Funk the challenge to push the definition of art including irreverence. This degree of outrage it achieves is a main claim to fame. It's fame being short lived, though intense while in bloom, ruffled many traditionalist feathers.

Political commentary and satire was a second strand linked to the work of Daumier and Goya. They are by no means the only important artists to raise our social conscience. Students have many other sources including the American artists Sloan, Levine, Benton and Segal; Mexican artist Rivera.

Completing Funk's definitive strands includes its connections with Claes Oldenberg. Though usually classified as a Pop Artist, Oldenberg's work has a uniqueness separating it, especially the outrageous conceptual works, from other art by placing the banal object into a humorous context.

Humor, no matter what form, remains the major quality that separates Funk Art from most other forms. As it's roots are some similarities to the work of Peter Saul and that of the Chicago Imagists (e.g. The Hairy Who). Like these artists, Funk promotes the dominance of the object and together exudes a baser humor.

Extensive documentation of the founding of the Funk movement are outlined from it's earliest counter culture beginnings in and around the University of California at Davis to the wildly funny "Frogology" of David Gilhooly and the more and less sophisticated works of Robert Arneson and his other students. The visual

qualities of all these set a standard establishing a style uniqueness yet does not distance itself from the realm of capable high school artists.

Bringing this subject into a personal context I explain how my undergraduate art work and the people I worked with form a foundation for this document. Some of the major and minor players in the Funk Art scene are some of those same people whose company I have kept and whose friendship I have made. UW-Whitewater personnel have had a major influence on my work and have given me the impetus for this thesis. Most notably, Clayton Bailey has inspired my own current directions and consequently those of my students.

More recently, from 1989 to 1995, the graduate work I have done at UW-Madison continues a theme I left on hold while teaching at Edgerton High School. Recently, I found renewed motivation to create art while simultaneously focusing on recent academic trends in education.

This thesis focuses on the application of Funk Art concepts in the high school curriculum; specifically at Edgerton High School, Wisconsin. Though this may sound like just another example of how art history can be interpreted for grade level students my aim is more ambitious. My work has three main aspects. One, through the inclusion of a wide range of topics I am showing how high school age artists can include significant content in their work. The methods incorporated here are: (1) straight art history study through resource based learning techniques coordinated with the school's Library Media Center specialist, (2) the transfer of existing knowledge including multicultural world history and current events by interdisciplinary team teaching, and (3) the creation of projects that incorporate the skills and equipment used by students and teachers from other courses. The key here is the direct application of knowledge, not just the accumulation of facts and

rote memorization.

Artists including Duchamp, Picabia, Man Ray, Goya, and Daumier are presented to assist students develop a sense of artistic freedoms such as art vs. antiart and the power of social and political comment and satire. An attempt is made to demonstrate connections among the art, artists and the times. These concepts are traced to the Pop and Funk artists of a more current era. Here students can see that although the times have changed the artistic freedoms are greater linking the content of art and the artist's conscience. Students are encouraged to put meaning and message in their work that is based on some issue - no matter how important, no matter how serious. It is also my hope that students are able to transfer of content from other disciplines such as science, social studies, music, and literature to art.

The second method involves the student's own thoughts and interpretations of the subject matter. Higher level thinking skills are employed to explore a contextual slant. Parody and satire being learned early in language arts classes become the foundation or structure around which students can build their art works. By being exposed to the irreverence of the Dadaists and the biting commentary of the social realists students can easily imagine ways that their own work can make a statement. The additional exposure to the work of Arneson, Saul, Oldenberg, and Warshina give students a view of how more contemporary issues can be handled. Students can interject their own pop culture connections, consumerism, and attitudes from their point of view. It's a great way to allow them to apply what they know and love in relative artistic freedom.

Thirdly, I find that the narrative humor inherent in the Funk art of Gilhooly and Bailey are perfect for the high school student's interests. Motivation becomes

less of an issue once you have recognized that most students are interested in anything humorous. On the other hand, it can be difficult to encourage the teenage artist to take anything seriously. The incorporation of humor and/or satire with the normal inclination to enjoy studio production can make for a great combination.

These art works have taken the form of famous painting parody, Bailey-like faux artifacts, and a camp revival of the "Chia Pet". Future printmaking units are being planned after the work of Warrington Collescott and Gilhooly-like mythologies.

Each type of work within the media units, painting, ceramics and mixed, is explained with some detail; sometimes student quotes are included. Even though the depth of understanding remains the weakest aspect of most student work, the ideas portrayed here have prospects for further exploration. It is my hope that this exercise will plant a seed for eventual thematic and stylistic directions as the student matures and when enrolled in more advanced courses.

The resulting products are displayed in a variety of settings with the most impressive being a complete make over of the Edgerton High School art studios. The "Shrine to Pop Culture", the brick wall installation, the "Mus`ee des Refus `es", and the "Lascaux Cave Replica" are all ongoing site-specific manifestations of the Funk Art aesthetic.

CONCLUSIONS

I have witnessed great success in utilizing the three aspects of content, satire and humor within the Funk context. Students consistently arrive at uniquely original solutions in their search for self expression. The usual fight against the

hackneyed clich'e, the redundant kitsch has all but disappeared. Students challenge each other to come up with new interpretations and bizarre twists of humor. The excitement level is more like that you would expect of an elementary age student.

The fact that even though the premise is humor the concept necessitates substance. Students learn more than to be just irreverent. Included is the historic research factor and the form of either parody or satire. Yes, students will create a strange interpretation or form a unique opinion surrounding a given subject, but in doing so will come to an understanding of the original event or topic. The mere knowledge of such an event or topic is embellished by a deeper understanding; the student artist forms a relationship, states an opinion, and takes a stand or interjects his or her values.

Students are finding out that some good clean fun can be had, and one can call it art. The fact that these young people have a hard time being serious about anything is reason enough to pursue Funk Art. I have found Funk Art to be infectious among the students. It's not uncommon for students to work many extra hours and produce more than just the required products. They have a great time while really being tricked into including the other two aspects rather painlessly.

Through rather extensive research into the realm of Funk Art and its connective influences and origins I have produced a significant body of useful resources for my unit presentations. Slides, bibliography, books, articles, the thesis document itself, and my own art works form a functional package the likes of which I wish I had for all units presented to my students.

A key element in the success of this venture, of course, is the personal interest that I can demonstrate through examples of my current work and the

anecdotal accounts I can relate to the students as a result of the contacts I have made with "real" Funk artists. My work and that of my students has a unique interrelationship that has evolved while I have been working with similar concepts concurrently with the high school students. Working within the same idiom has improved the teacher student rapport. When I relate my required work, my schedule, extensive research, deadlines, difficulties and the interrelationship between myself, other graduate students, and my teachers, my students can see in themselves a commonality of purpose and goal.

I have employed Funk concepts in student painting, ceramics, and mixed media units with very positive results. The methods described include traditional slide discussion, but with demonstration and display of my own work as a direct correlative. This, coupled with the L.M.C. resource based learning techniques and the group dynamics employed while processing ideas, helps to produce a strong unit plan and effective motivation.

Students have derived great pleasure in the production and display of their works. Many have received positive feedback from students and staff. During a recent open house and curriculum awareness program parents, students, and staff toured the art studios. Numerous participants were pleasantly surprised and impressed by the art that my students have produced. This uniquely original environment has become the object of personal pride among my students and a constant source of inspiration for all students and guests. Students have developed a positive sense of ownership in our studios and an internal comfort level which promotes an effective learning atmosphere.

LIST OF SLIDES - PLATES

1. "L.H.O.O.Q." (1919) Marcel DuChamp
2. "The Fountain" (1917) Marcel DuChamp
3. "Shrine to Pop Culture" (continuing from 1994) various Edgerton art students
4. "Bedroom Ensemble" (1963) Claes Oldenburg
5. "Fragments of Western Culture" (1972) Robert Arneson
6. "Guardians" (1991) Robert Arneson
7. "Guardians of the Secret" (1943) Jackson Pollack
8. "Mao Tse Toad" (1976) David Gilhooly
9. "Ducks Descending Staircase" (1991) David Gilhooly
10. "Donald Duck Descending a Staircase" (1979) Peter Saul
11. "Commemorative Troll Platter" (1992) Fred Maves
12. "Blowing Machine" (1971) Verne Funk
13. "Mr. Allexander Graham" (1972) Verne Funk
14. "Mrs. Alexander Graham" (1972) Verne Funk
15. "Chest Set" detail (1972) Verne Funk
16. "Events Under the Mount" (1969) Leanne Shrieves Stevenson
17. "Untitled" bathroom tile (1974) Leanne Shrieves Stevenson
18. "Mad Doctor's Experiment" (1974) Clayton Bailey
19. "'Giganticus Erectus Morainus" (1972) Clayton Bailey
20. "2-2" and "T-T" (1981) Clayton Bailey
21. "Walnut Box" (1964) H.C. Westermann
22. "Here We Are Again" (1978-79) James Nutt

23. "Yin and Yang" (1988) Ed Paschke
24. "Episodes" (1972) Leanne Shrieves Stevenson
25. "Breast Series" (1966) Fred Maves
26. "Episodes #19" (1972) Leanne Shrieves Stevenson
27. "Toxic Carp" (1992) Fred Maves
28. "Great Moments in Architecture" part 3,4,5, Three Pigs (1987) Fred Maves
29. "Pineapple Pitcher" (1988) Fred Maves
30. "Mama Casserole" (1988) Fred Maves
31. "Pickle Jars" (1988) Fred Maves
32. "Ollie North Third World Tea Set" (1988) Fred Maves
33. "Political Potatos" (1991) Fred Maves
34. "Country Radio" (1991) Fred Maves
35. "Troll Saint" (1994) (from "Shrine to Pop Culture") Fred Maves
36. "It's Money That Matters" (1994) Fred Maves
37. "The Awful Truth About the Grand Wizard" (1986) Fred Maves
38. "Portrait of George" memorial bust of Mayor George Moscone (1981)
Robert Arneson
39. "Rose and the Res. Sisters" (1983) Harry Fonseca
40. "Ozone Madonna" (1989) Bob Haozous
41. "Custer's Last Stand Revisited" (1980) Randy Lee White(horse)
42. "Picasso at the Zoo" (1978) Warrington Colescott
43. "Chia Guevara" (1992) Fred Maves
44. "Iguana Revenge" (1992) Fred Maves
45. "Roy's Techline T.V. Table" (1995) Fred Maves
46. "Newt Descending the Staircase" (1995) Fred Maves

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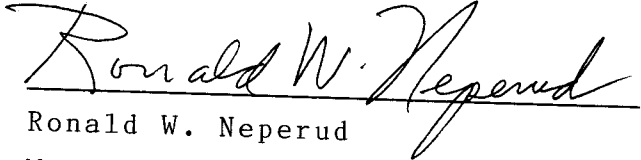
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**The complete slide set that accompanies
this document can be viewed in the
Art Education Office, 7231 Humanities.**

Approved by:


Ronald W. Neperud

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