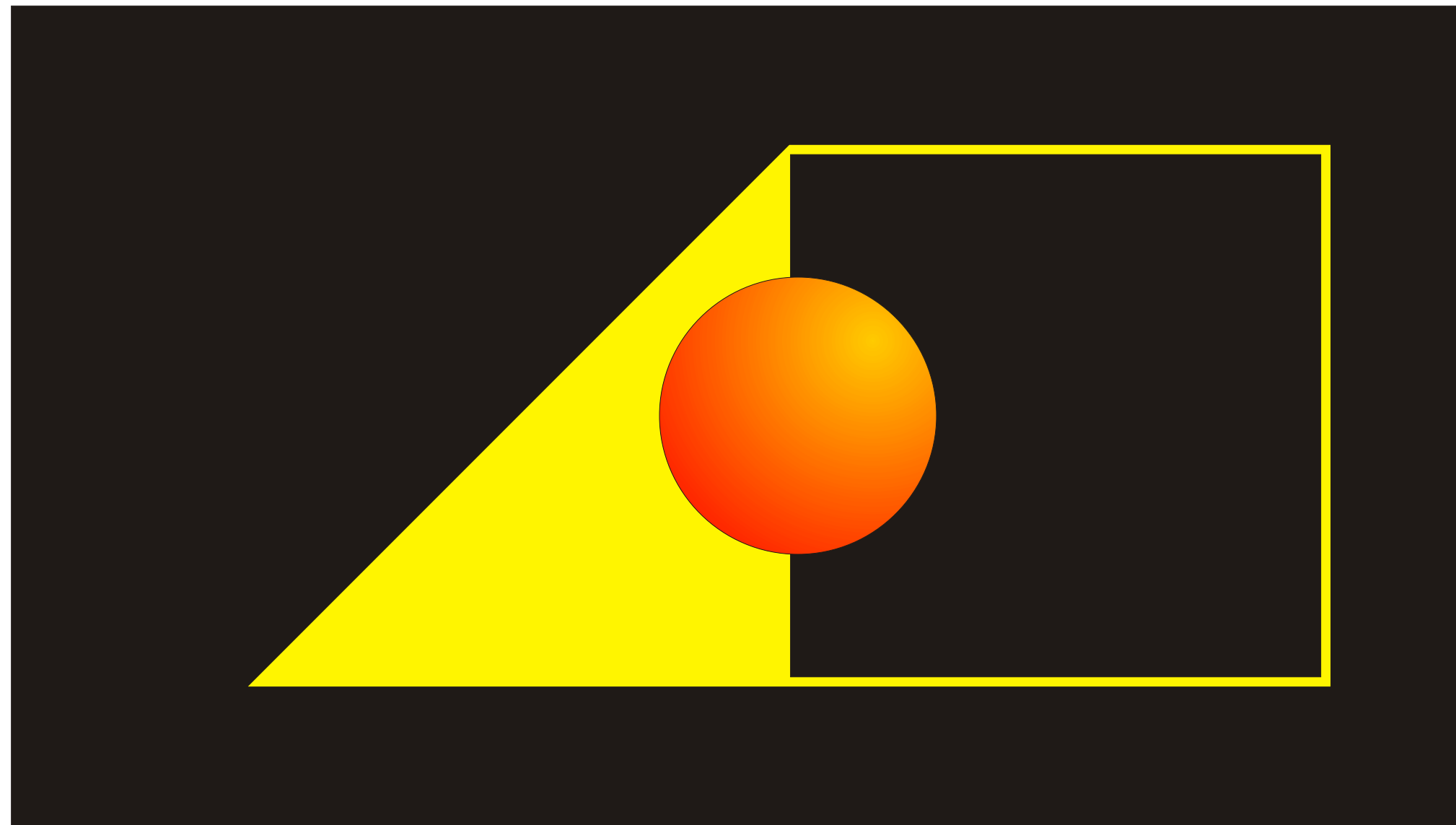


# Notes for Land of the Odd



**ED ZIERNE**



“I found myself or my artistic personality by looking over my earliest works. They rarely deceive. There I found something that was always the same and which at first glance I thought to be monotonous repetition / It was the mark of my personality which appeared the same no matter what different states of mind I happened to have passed through.”

{Matisse speaking as transcribed by Apollinaire ez} <sup>2</sup>

## BIOGRAPHY / OUTLINE

### EDUCATION

#### Art School

1967-69 **Bachelor of Fine Arts** - major field/painting  
Maryland Institute College of Art,  
1300 Mount Royal Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21217

1965-67 Corcoran School of Art  
680 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 20007 2707

#### College

1964-65 Andrews University  
Berrien Springs, MI, 49104, U. S. A.

Summer 1964 West Chester University  
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19383

1963-64 Columbia Union College  
7600 Flower Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912, U.S.A.

#### High School

1961-1963 Blue Mountain Academy **Diploma**  
2363 Mountain Rd, Hamburg PA 19542

Summer 1962 Saleve Adventist Institute  
(Institut Adventiste du Saleve)  
BP 74, 74160 Collonges-sous-Saleve, CEDEX, FRANCE.

1960-61 Colegio Vocacional de America Central  
Central American Adventist University  
(Universidad Adventista de Centro America)  
Apartado 138, 4050 Alajuela, COSTA RICA.

1959-60 Blue Mountain Academy, Hamburg, Pennsylvania





Pigmented Urethane Foam & bolt, 1969



Pigmented Urethane Foam & acrylic sheet & tube, 1969



Pigmented Urethane Foam & Vinyl, 1969



Pigmented Urethane Foam & Vinyl, 1969

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 1966 Bowie State College, Bowie, Maryland (1st Prize-Intaglio Printing.)
- 1969 "Corkery, Thompson, Wade, Zerne," Jefferson Place Gallery, Washington, D.C. (Director/owner Nesta Dorrance)
- 1970 "Art Now," University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa  
"Washington Room," Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Curator-Nina Felshin)  
"New Sculpture," Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Curator-Renato Danese/Director-Walter Hopps)
- 1971 "Washington Art," State University College at Potsdam and State University of New York at Albany, New York  
"Washington Artists," Madison Art Center, Madison, Wisconsin (Director-Cham Hendon)
- 1972 "Ed Zerne," Jefferson Place Gallery, Washington, D.C. (Director/owner-Nesta Dorrance)
- 1974 "Ed Zerne," Gallery 10, Washington, D.C.
- 1976 "Ed Zerne-Shooting Gallery 1," Rebecca Cooper Gallery, Washington, D.C.
- 1979 "10 Artists," Jack Rasmussen Gallery, Washington, D.C.  
"City Art 79," Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D.C.
- 1980 "David Staton-Ed Zerne," Jack Rasmussen Gallery, Washington, D.C.  
"International Sculpture Festival," W.P.A., Kahn Site, Washington, D.C.
- 1981 "Ed Zerne-Flotsam," Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.
- 1983 "The Eiler Collection...Now," Madison Art Center, Madison, Wisconsin
- 1986 "Jefferson Place Gallery Shows Again," 406 7th St., Washington, D.C.
- 1993 "Handmade Books," Main Street Gallery, Prince Frederick, Maryland (Director Nancy Collery)
- 2002 "Ed Zerne at District West Fine Art," 106 S. King Street, Leesburg, Virginia 20175 (Director Ruth Robertson)



Ceiling - Floor Slant, Canvas, Pigmented Urethane, wood, Foam, 1972

"We construct and keep on constructing, yet intuition is still a good thing. You can do a good deal without it, but not everything. 2 Where intuition is combined with exact research it speeds up the progress of research. Exactitude winged by intuition 3 is at times best. But because exact research is exact research, it gets ahead even without intuition, though perhaps not very quickly. In principle it can do without intuition. It can be logical: it can construct. It can build bridges boldly from one thing to another. It can maintain order in the midst of turmoil."

"In art, too, there is room enough for exact research, and the gates have been open now for quite some time. What was accomplished in music before the end of the eighteenth century has hardly been begun in the pictorial field. Mathematics and physics provide a lever in the form of rules to be observed or contradicted. They compel us a salutary necessity to concern ourselves first with the function and not with the finished form. Algebraic, geometrical, and mechanical problems<sup>4</sup> are steps in our education towards the essential, towards the functional as opposed to the impressional. We learn to see what flows beneath,<sup>1</sup> we learn the prehistory of the visible. We learn to dig deep and to lay bare. To explain, to analyse."

"We learn to look down on formalism and to avoid taking over finished products. We learn the very special kind of progress that leads towards a critical striving backward, towards the earlier on which the later grows. We learn to get up early to familiarise ourselves with the course of history. We learn cogent truths on the way from causes to facts. We learn to digest. We learn to organise movement through logical relations. We learn logic. We learn organism. As a result the tension between us and the finished product eases. Nothing exaggerated tension inside, behind, underneath. Passionate only deep within. Inwardness."

Paul Klee, *The Thinking Eye* <sup>3</sup>



Foam Flow, Colors Running Against Planes, Pigmented Urethane Foam & Steel Rods, . . . 1970



▲ Suffolk Sheep Gun (out of holster), wood, aluminum, mixed media 1973-76



▲ Suffolk Sheep Gun (holstered), wood, aluminum, leather, sheep skin, mixed media 1973-76



▲ Invitation, Photo Patzi Temples 1976  
▼ Long Pig Gun, Walnut, Aluminum & Bolts 1976



My father taught me never to point a gun (real or toy) at anyone unless I intended to kill them. Next he taught me that I was not to kill (murder). He was quite emphatic and even when we were given toy cap pistols the rule was enforced.

The intensity of his belief came from an experience with handguns in his childhood. A schoolmate had a pistol given to him by his father, a Brooklyn, New York civil servant who was in charge of disposing weapons that were confiscated by the police. This father would take some of the weapons home, file off the firing pin and give them to his son as playthings.

They played “cops & robbers”, “cowboys & indians” with these “disarmed” weapons. At some point loaded shells were obtained and the games took on another level of reality; loading the pistols, pointing them at the intended targets and finally pulling the trigger. There was a level of pride in the “toys” and other children in this Brooklyn neighborhood envied the status of these “toys”.

Dad had been given/loaned one of the “toy guns” and had loaded it. Throughout the day they played Cops & Robbers aiming the weapon and pulling the trigger with the muzzle of the gun in their friends ribs. At some point Dad had gone to the YMCA and was playfully pointing it at two friends across the gym floor. This time when he pulled the trigger the weapon fired, belching smoke and a speeding bullet across the room. It was merely by accident that the bullet lodged in the wall and not in the body of a friend.

The gun has become a symbol of freedom and protection for some, but for many of us it has become a symbol for the destructiveness of a momentary rage and a lifetime of hurt.

ez note<sup>4</sup>



Untitled (feather painting), 1970's



Untitled (feather), Madison Art Center (completed, never installed), late 1970's / early 1980's



"David Staton-Ed Zerne" Installation, Jack Rasmussen Gallery, 1979



Folded Painting, privated collection

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Don & Nancy Eiler, John Lintner, Sam Gilliam, Franklin White, Rob Dudley,

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1969 Paul Richard, Four Washington Artists Poised For Flight, The Washington Post, June 29.  
Benjamin Forgey, With It Minds At The Jefferson Place Gallery, Sunday Star, July 13.
- 1970 Renato G. Danese, New Sculpture, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Catalog from the Corcoran Gallery of Art  
Paul Richard, Sculpture at the Corcoran, The Washington Post, October 18.
- 1971 Washington Art Catalog from shows at the State University College at Pottsdam and the State University of New York at Albany.  
Washington Artists, Catalog from a show at the Madison Art Center in Madison, Wisconsin.
- 1972 Paul Richard, Art Transformed, The Washington Post Jan 8
- 1975 Benjamin Forgey, D.C. Roundup, Art News, January
- 1980 Reports from Washington, Art in America, November
- 1983 Trent Meyers, The Eiler Collection...Now, Catalog from the Madison Art Center.



Untitled, (painted construction) circa 1979

**There is only one reason to make, exhibit and collect art: Art says something.**

This work is about perception, experience and the visual manifestation of a product from the senses. The work begins with a "perception about something," and frequently along the way other possibilities crop up. Art in the end is not a mechanical process but a human discipline.

Rectangles with shapes that are organic and almost fluid seem like a relic from the past. Thinking about the world and how it is primarily an organic environment that we see: figures, trees, earth, leaves, clouds...leads one to the conclusion that the primary geometric presences that are part of our lives are manmade.

Once painting "left the wall" for the canvas the organic world was confined by the painting rectangle. The early work began by challenging that assumption in various ways:

1. Breaking out of the rectangle using an organic shape (based on figurative drawing)
2. Suspending shapes/bags/objects off the painting rectangle
3. Suspending the painting rectangle from an organic shape (foam)
4. Using rectangular solids & organic shapes created biomorphic forms as "solid spatial paintings"
5. Biomorphic planes with light as total environments
6. Large scale biomorphic forms as "solid spatial paintings" & "Interior space paintings"
7. Mirror illusions / curved mirrors
8. A re-examination of the vocabulary

The rationale for that work is representative of how I see the world. The whole range of visual, emotional & intellectual experiences that we can have is the basis for the work.

Art is a personal experience. It does not require me to agree with all or even some part of the artist's experience. That experience is the artist's. Other artists' experiences provide me with insight about their creative experience and their views of the world. We have a collective view of art & we have individual views of art. The individual views of art and more specifically the "odd works" that show an artist shifting & experiencing the world in a new way interests me.



**Art Is Not About Style. Art Is About Substance**

The series, Chaos, Myth & Creation is an examination of some of the visual aspects of a several mythologies. Some of the works have both contemporary references as well references to "ancient mythologies"

It is increasingly difficult for an individual to have a broad understanding of our existence in this universe. That is at the root of the search. This work is a link between the metaphysical and the real. The major dilemma of our time is that our collective view of reality does not match our explanations of our existence. In addition there is a broad range of beliefs concerning these issues.

Discoveries change our perception of the world. Some discoveries change our ways of seeing so incrementally that we never notice the shift in perception. Humans in space changed the way that we understand the visual effects of gravity. It changes our window into the universe. The window is further changed by discoveries of stars being born & planets that are new to us. The shift from an earth centered flat plane to earth as a tiny ball in a vast space is a radical shift in our perception. The picture that Moses, Plato, Muhammad...had of the world is gone but their references to human experience are just as valuable today as they were at the time they were expressed. In our perception of the world today we now have an understanding of particles that are sub-microscopic and these particles are as complex as our solar system. At the other end of our perceptual framework is the picture of a limitless universe. We look out from this universe to other systems and witness the birth and death cycle of solar systems. A micro-vision and a macro- vision that was not possible for our ancestors.

The series, Line Crossings is an examination of a boundary and an object on that boundary. It is as if one cut away a small piece of the wall and the canvas with a shape that crosses over that boundary. Both sides of the line are painted - Which is wall? And which is painting? Which is positive? Which is negative? in this environment it doesn't matter. Faced with such a choice on the sea, in the desert or beyond the limits of earths gravity such a choice could be the difference between life and death.



Line Crossing #33, Acrylic on board, mixed media, Image Area 11"X14" Complete Work 16"X20"



Line Crossing #34, Acrylic on board, mixed media, Image Area 11"X14" Complete Work 16"X20"



Line Crossing #29, Acrylic on board, mixed media, Image Area 22" X 28"



Line Crossing #28, Acrylic on board, mixed media, Image Area 22" X 28"



Line Crossing #30, Acrylic on board, mixed media, Image Area 22" X 28"

CABANNE: What determined your choice of readymades?  
 DUCHAMP: That depended on the object. In general, I had to beware of its “look.” It’s very difficult to choose an object, because, at the end of fifteen days, you begin to like it or to hate it. You have to approach something with an indifference, as if you had no aesthetic emotion. The choice of readymades is always based on visual indifference and, at the same time, on the total absence of good or bad taste.

CABANNE: What is taste for you?  
 DUCHAMP: A habit. The repetition of something already accepted. If you start something over several times, it becomes taste. Good or bad, it’s the same thing, it’s still taste.

CABANNE: What have you done to escape taste?  
 DUCHAMP: Mechanical drawing. It upholds no taste, since it is outside all pictorial convention.

CABANNE: You constantly defended yourself against the realization ...  
 DUCHAMP: ... of making a form in the aesthetic sense, of making a form or a color. And of repeating them.

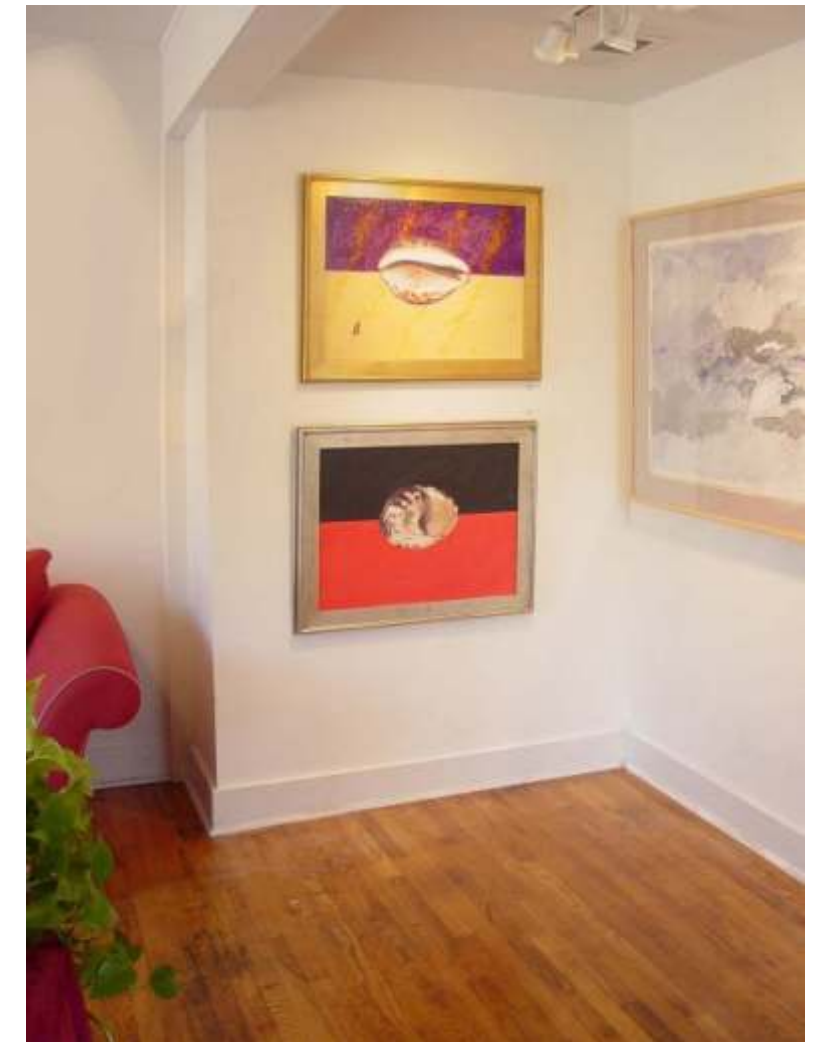
CABANNE: It’s an antinaturalist attitude, which you nonetheless exercised on natural objects.  
 DUCHAMP: Yes, but that’s all the same to me; I’m not responsible. It was made, I wasn’t the one who made it. There is a defense; I object to responsibility.

CABANNE: You continued elaborating the “Large Glass,” with the “Three Malic Moulds.”...  
 DUCHAMP: No, there were nine of them.  
 CABANNE: Right. But you started by making three. Almost at the same time as the “Three Standard Stoppages,” and perhaps for the same reason.  
 DUCHAMP: No, at first I thought of eight and I thought, that’s not a multiple of three. It didn’t go with my idea of threes. I added one, which made nine. There were nine “Malic Moulds.” How did they come? I did a drawing, in 1913, in which there were eight—the ninth wasn’t yet there. It came six months later. The idea is amusing because they are molds. And to mold what? Gas. That is, gas is introduced into the molds, where it takes the shape of the soldier, the department-store delivery boy, the cuirassier, the policeman, the priest, the station master, etc., which are inscribed on my drawing. Each is built on a common horizontal plane, where lines intersect at the point of their sex. All that helped me realize the glass entitled “Nine Malic Moulds,” which was made in 1914-1915. The mold side is invisible. I always avoided doing something tangible, but with a mold it doesn’t matter, because it’s the inside I didn’t want to show. The “Nine Malic Moulds” were done in lead; they are not painted, they are each waiting to be given a color. I denied myself the use of color: lead is a color without being one. This is the kind of thing I was working on at that time.

Conversation segment Cabanne & Duchamp<sup>5</sup>



▲ Ruth Robertson, Director, District West Fine Art



Installation photo at District West Fine Art ▲



Installation photo at District West Fine Art ▲

“What is music? What is poetry? What is mythology? All questions on which no opinion is possible unless one already has a real feeling for these things. That is natural and obvious enough. Not so, however, our feeling in the case of the last named. Only the greatest creations of mythology proper could hope to make clear to modern man that here he is face to face with a phenomenon which “in profundity, permanence, and universality is comparable only with Nature herself.” If we want to promote a real knowledge of mythology, we must not appeal at the outset to theoretical considerations and judgments (not even to Schelling's, from whom the quotation in praise of mythology comes). Neither should we talk overmuch of “sources.” The water must be fetched and drunk fresh from the spring if it is to flow through us and quicken our hidden mythological talents.”

“But here too there's many a slip between the cup and the lip. True mythology has become so completely alien to us that, before tasting of it, we would do well to pause and consider not only the uses and dangers of mythology... but also our possible attitude towards it. We have lost our immediate feeling for the great realities of the spirit and to this world all true mythology belongs lost it precisely because of our all-too-willing, helpful, and efficient science. It explained the drink in the cup to us so well that we knew all about it beforehand, far better than the good old drinkers; and we were expected to rest content with our knowing better or even to rate it higher than unspoiled experience and enjoyment. We have to ask ourselves: is an immediate experience and enjoyment of mythology still in any sense possible?”

C. KERANYI<sup>6</sup>

***Ninth strophe.***

The nineness, which has come from the primal water ,  
assembles itself,  
when it sees you,  
great in fear,  
Lord of Lords,  
who has created himself,  
he is the Lord.  
Those who were blind,  
he illuminates,  
to lighten their countenance in another (new) form.  
Their eyes shine, their ears are opened,  
every body is clothed, as soon as he (the sun god) shines.  
The heaven is made of gold and the Nun from lapis lazuli,  
the earth is sprinkled with malachite when he rises in the heaven.  
The gods can see and their temples are opened.  
Men begin to look and to see through him.  
All the trees rise before his countenance,  
they turn towards his eye,  
and their leaves unfold.  
The scaly creatures leap in the water ,  
they come out from their pools, for love of him.  
The sheep and cattle skip before his presence.  
The birds dance with their wings.  
They (all) observe that he is in his good time.  
They live by seeing him as their daily need.  
They are in his hand, sealed with his seal,  
and no god can open them but his majesty.  
There is no one who acts apart from him,  
the great God, life for the nineness.

From **The Hymn of a Thousand Strofes**, an ancient Egyptian text<sup>7</sup>



"the earth was a deserted palce, a ruin and the face of the abyss was dark"



Pontus



"so all the gods were made and his nineness was completed"



1. Untitled {the golden egg floats}



Lightening bolt, raspberries and feathers



Cosmic Egg - Greek

a giant egg fell into the Euphrates  
 fish pushed it to shore  
 where the doves sat down and warmed it  
 it hatched  
 out came Venus  
 later called the Syrian Goddess (Ashtaroth)  
 Hyginus, Fable 197

From a Latin text by Hyginus, c. first century B.C. / A.D.,  
 Taken from traditional Near Eastern sources dating back to c. 1400 B.C. <sup>8</sup>

THE ORIGIN OF EARTH

took snow or ice  
 -'twas underneath his throne-  
 & dropped it on  
 the waters  
 then they became congealed  
 earth's crust was formed from it  
 (they say)  
 "he tells the snow  
 "be earth"

From the Hebrew text Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, c., A.D. 150. <sup>9</sup>

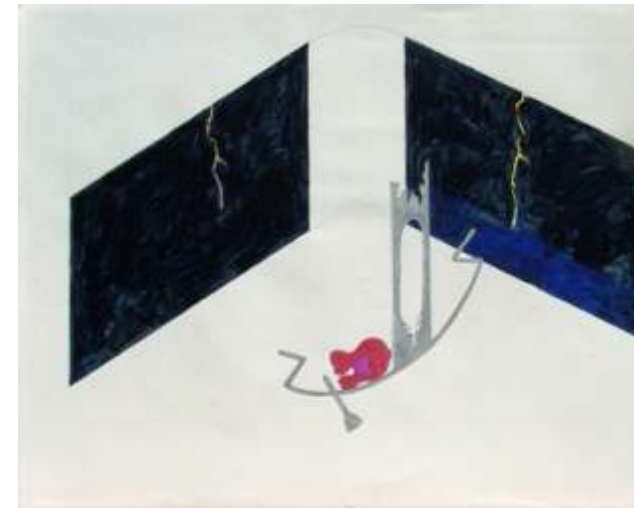
BURNING ICE, BITING FLAME; that is how life began. <sup>10</sup>

In the south is a realm called Muspell. That region flickers with dancing flames. It seethes and it shines. No one can endure it except those born into it. Black Surt is there; he sits on the furthest reach of that land, brandishing a flaming sword; he is already waiting for the end when he will rise and savage the gods and whelm the whole world with fire.

In the north is a realm called Niflheim. It is packed with ice and covered with vast sweeps of snow. In the heart of that region lies the spring Hvergelmir and that is the source of eleven rivers named the Elivagar: they are cool Svol and Gunnthra the defiant, Fjorm and bubbling Fimbulthul, fearsome Slid and storming Hrid, Sylg, Ylg, broad Vid and Leipt which streaks like lightning, and freezing Gjoll. Between these realms there once stretched a huge and seeming emptiness; this was Ginnungagap. The rivers that sprang from Hvergelmir streamed into the void. The yeasty venom in them thickened and congealed like slag, and the rivers turned into ice. That venom also spat out drizzle an unending dismal hagger that, as soon as it settled, turned into rime. So it went on until all the northern part of Ginnungagap was heavy with layers of ice and hoar frost, a desolate place haunted by gusts and skuthers of wind.

Just as the northern part was frozen, the southern was molten and glowing, but the middle of Ginnungagap was as mild as hanging aii on a summer evening. There, the warm breath drifting north from Muspell met the rime from Niflheim; it touched it and played over it, and the ice began to thaw and drip. Life quickened in those drops, and they took the form of a giant. He was called Ymir.

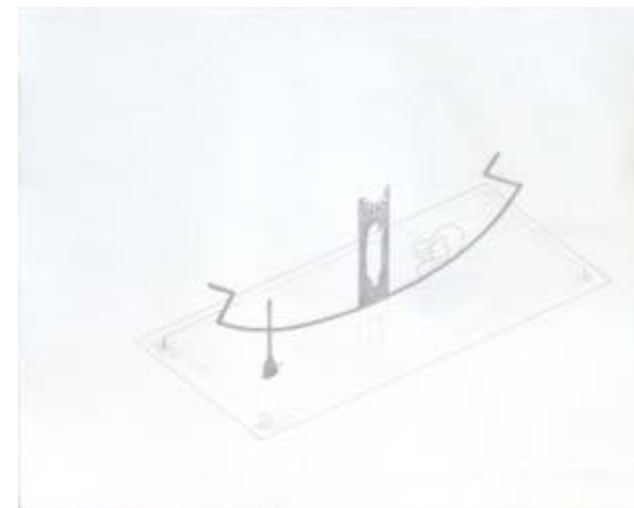
The Norse Myths, Introduced & retold by Kevin Crossley-Holland, Pantheon Books, New York 1908  
 (published in England by Andre Deutsch Limited)  
 ISBN 0-394-50048 hardback,



Untitled Study for 2 painted surfaces, mirror & sculpture



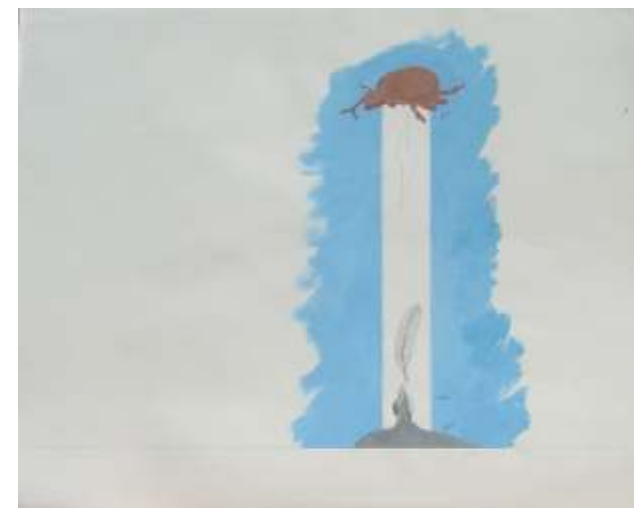
Untitled {ocean, lightening bolt}



Untitled Study for fountain / sculpture



2. Untitled {the golden egg floats}



Untitled Study for an Obelisk



Efu Ra Travels Throught the Night

ENDNOTES:

1.

Painted in the class of Roaul Middleman at Maryland Insitute College of Art. I walked into Middleman's class accidentally...that is I walked into the wrong classroom in a few minutes as class began I realized that it was the wrong class. In just a few minutes of listening to Middleman I decided that I would like to be in his class. I took a number of smesters of drawing & painting from Middleman and while I ended up going a different direction I enjoyed that fact that he tied art history to the act of making art. There were times that he read from Apollinaire, Baudelaire or something else that was relevant. Above all else his class was taught with intelligence.

2.

Page 101, Section VII APOLLINAIRE'S INTERVIEW, 1907  
*Matisse, His Art and His Public*, Alfred H. Barr, Secker & Warburg 1951  
The Museum of Modern Art, ISBN 0-87070-469-9,  
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 74-81656

3.

page 69 8.Exact experiments in the realm of art, *The Documents of Modern Art*, Vol, 15  
Paul Klee: the thinking eye, *The notebooks of Paul Klee*, edited by Jurg Spiller.George Wittenborn Inc.,  
1st edition 1961, 2nd revised edition 1964, Translated by Ralph Manheim from the German edition, "Da Bildnerische Denken"  
(Benno, Schwabe & Co., Basle, 1956  
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 60-15445

4

Story told to me by my father, Dr. G. Edward Zerme, MD.

5.

Page 48 & 49, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, by Pierre Cabanne  
*The Documents of 20th Century Art*, translated from the French by Ron Padgett,  
General Editor Robert Motherwell, Document Editor Bernard Karpel, Managing Ediot, Arthur A. Cohen, Viking Press, New York Third printing May 1976  
*Entretiens Avec Marcel Duchamp*, Editions Pierre Belford 1967  
ISBN 670-27207-8 (hardback)  
Library of Congress catalog card number 27-83255

6.

PROLEGOMENA, BY C. KERANYI

Essays on a Science of Mythology, myths of the Devine Child and the Divine Maiden, revised  
edition, By C.G.Jung and C.Kerenyi, Translated byR.F.C.Hull, Harper & Row, New York &  
Evanston, 1949, 1959, 1963

7.

From **The Hymn of a Thousand Strofes**, *an ancient Egyptian text*

8.

Co-edited & translated with introduction and notes by Charles Doria, Harris Lenowitz, preface by Jerome Rothenberg;  
*Origens, Creation Texts from the Ancient Mediterranean*, Anchor Press Doubleday 1976 ISBN 0-385-01922-X, Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 74-18844  
Page 125

9.

Co-edited & translated with introduction and notes by Charles Doria, Harris Lenowitz, preface by Jerome Rothenberg;  
*Origens, Creation Texts from the Ancient Mediterranean*, Anchor Press Doubleday 1976 ISBN 0-385-01922-X, Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 74-18844  
Page 127

Hyginus, Fable 197

A Latin text by Hyginus, c. first century B.C. / A.D., taken from traditional Near Eastern sources dating back to c. 1400 B.C.

From the Hebrew text Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, c., A.D. 150.

Text: Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, ed. Zisber and Halter

Text Hyginus, Fabulae (Rose, ed.)

10.

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