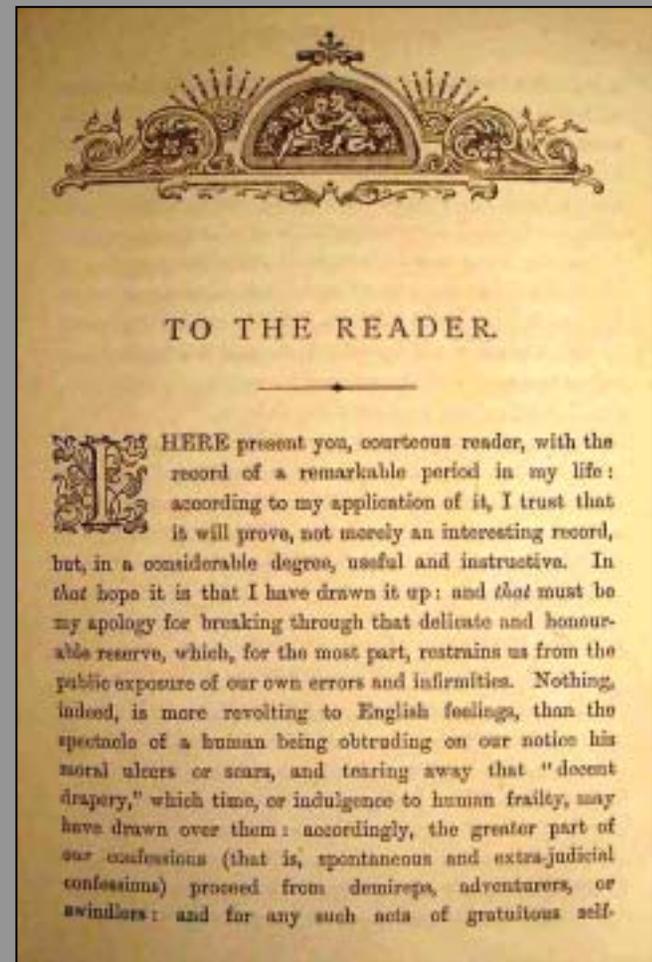
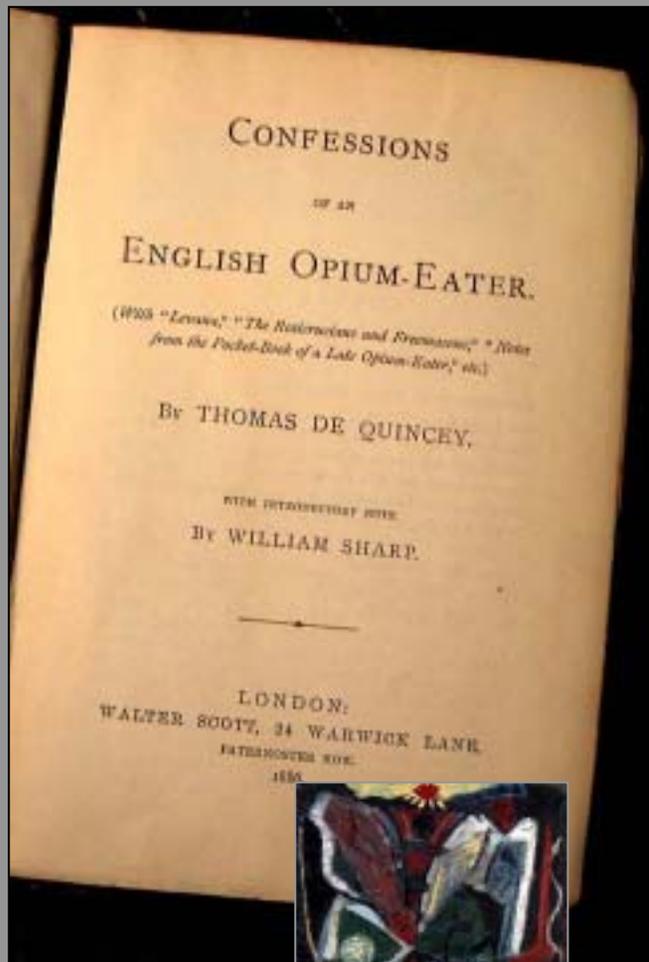


my work—sources and memories

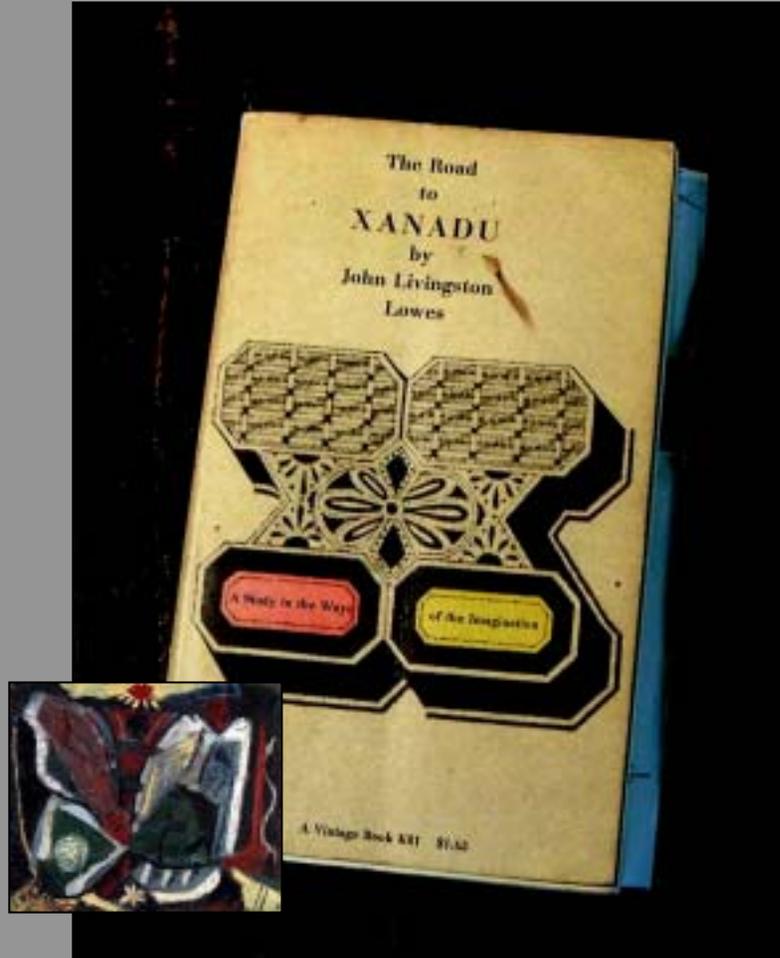
Fred Martin
October, 2003





before beginning—

I remember Thomas De Quincey from the course in 19th Century English prose literature I had to take to get my teaching credential because it was the fall of 1950 and my wife was pregnant and I had to get a job. And, in the old copy I found, was De Quincey's request to the reader, a request I reproduce here on my own behalf...



I remember John Livingston Lowes' *The Road to Xanadu* because its torn out chapter headings and fragments of sentences are scattered through a lot of my early 1960's collages; and what I propose to do today in my small way for my work is what Lowes did in his large way for Coleridge: to follow the ways of my imagination as over the course of more than half a century I have made in art a surrogate for my body, mind and soul.



And I remember these two paintings of Ryder's
—The Forest of Arden and Moonlight Marine—
because they were the first “art” paintings I ever had.

I think I was a Junior in high school; my mother had a subscription to the Ladies Home Journal, and John Walker (then Director of The National Gallery in Washington) each month selected a painting for reproduction in the magazine. I cut these two out, had them framed and kept them in my room all through the University and in my house for all the years since.



my work—sources and memories

Fred Martin
October, 2003

1947-48

My memories are of what Erle Loran,
Henry Shaeffer-Zimmern,
Glenn Wessels, James McCray, and
Margaret O'Hagan taught me.



The Hill of Dreams, 1947



Untitled, 1948

My sources were...

Sheldon Cheney, Vasily Kandinsky,
Arthur Machen's *Hill of Dreams*,
Albert Ryder's *Forest of Arden* and *Marine*,
Lao Tse and Morris Graves' *Snake with Stars*

A lost painting by Clark Hobart
of a flower, a waterfall and the moon

My goal was images of man and woman and finding out how to live

January 1950

I married Jean Fissette



Untitled, late 1948-early 1949



Untitled, late 1948-early 1949

My goal was images of man and woman and finding out how to live

I remember the first times I tried to make their images in late 1948-early 1949

—I was soon to be married—

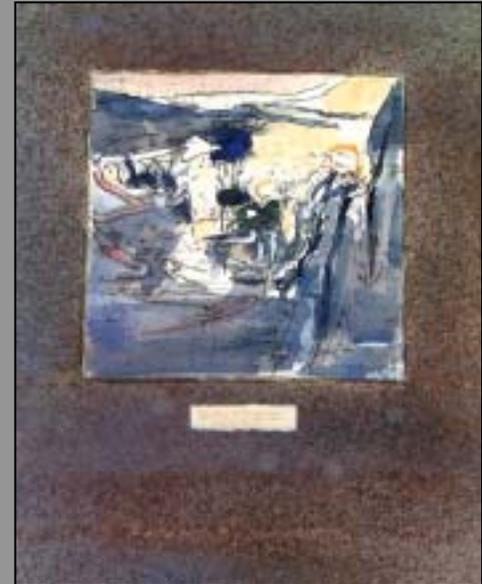
and I thought they might live together like this.

Now it's more than fifty years later, and I still think so.

Spring-Summer-Fall 1948

My Sources

were David Park, Mark Rothko
and Clyfford Still



I remember

David Park

“If you don’t do it for yourself, why do it?”
...and, what to do when you don’t know what to do...

Mark Rothko

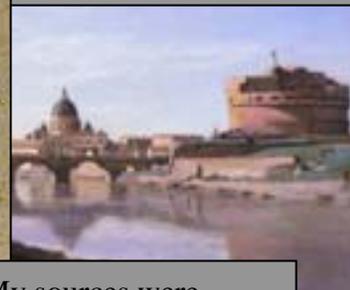
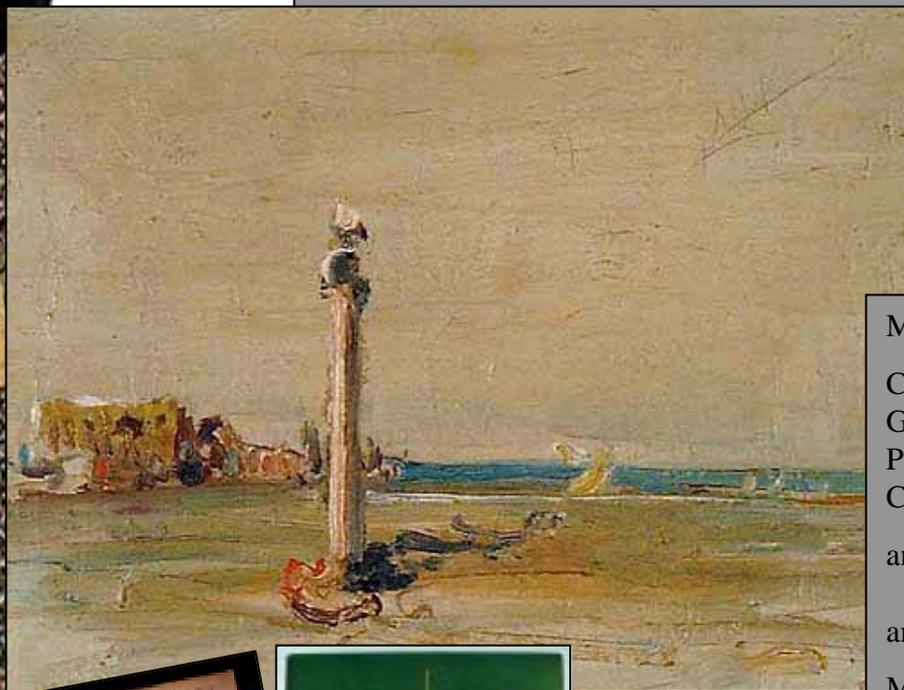
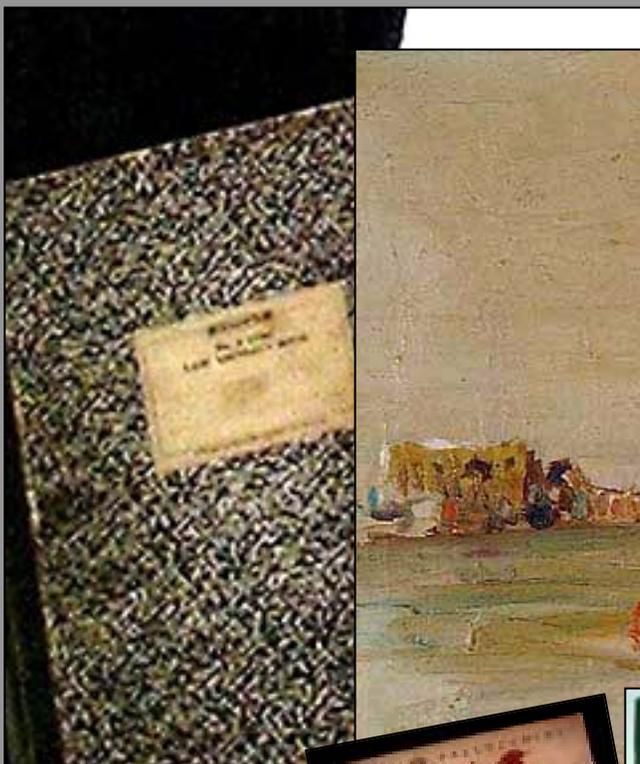
“Seek the Unknown...”
(mine was different than his.)

Clyfford Still

“This art has power for life and death; you are responsible.”
(I still believe it.)

1953-55

My goal was the city of the oldness of the senses in time—Venice—
and the city of the light of eternity—Rome.



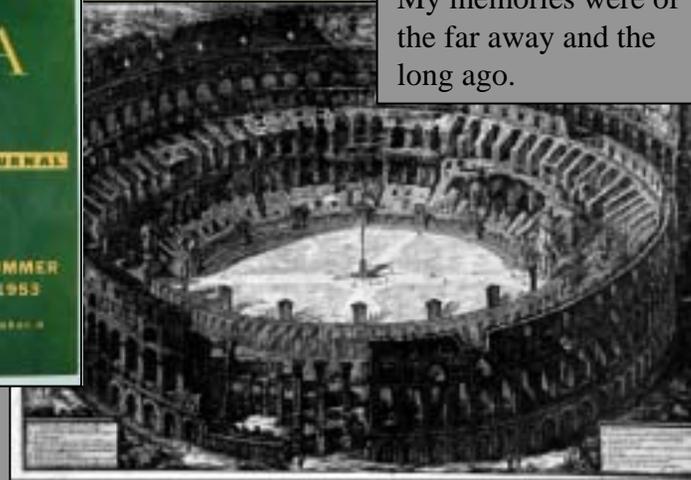
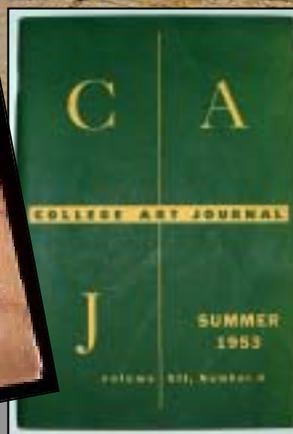
My sources were...

Canaletto
Guardi
Piranesi
Corot

and Venice and Rome

and writing

My memories were of
the far away and the
long ago.



1956-58

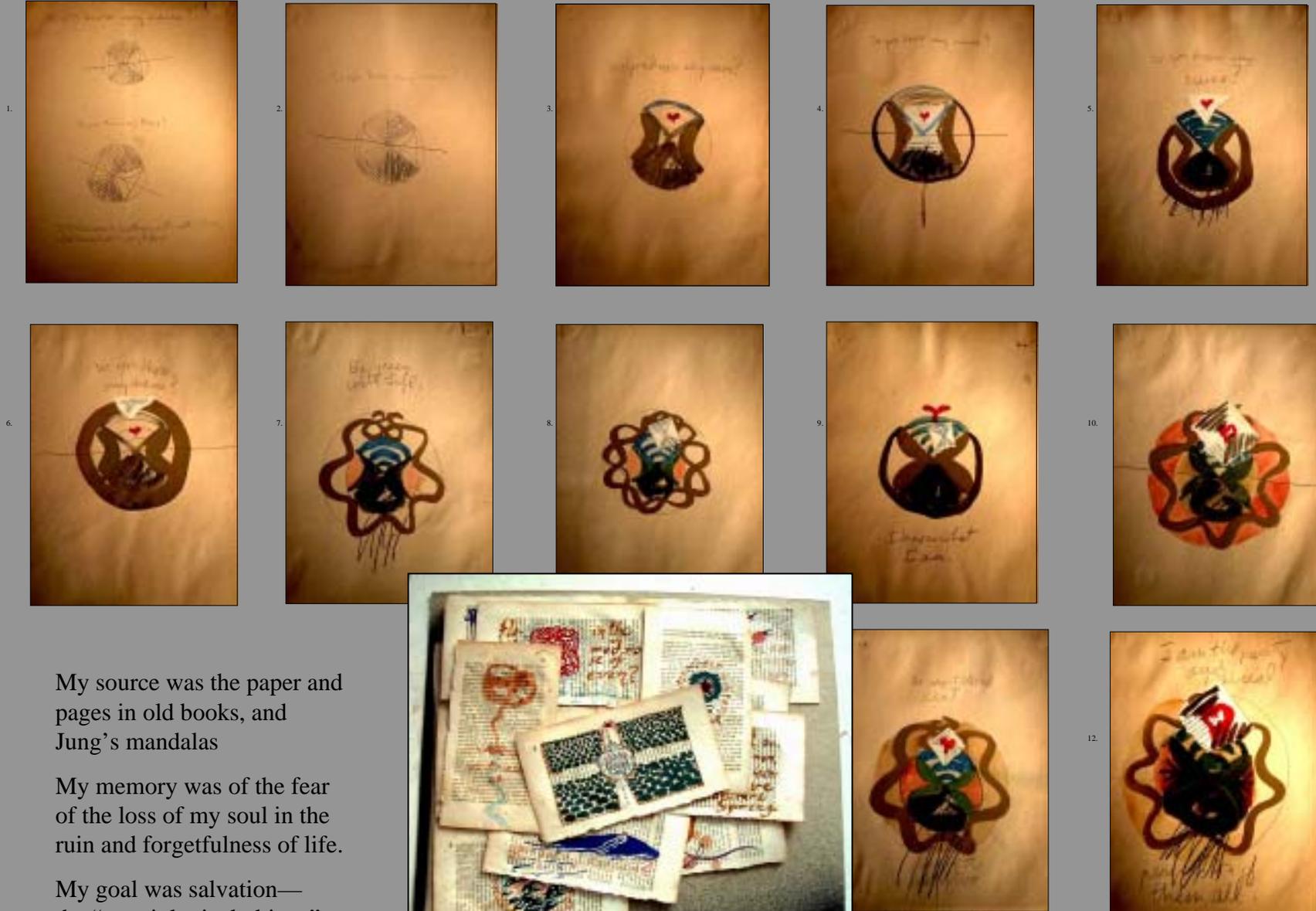
My source was the horror of the ruin of
old San Francisco

My memory was the despair and guilt
over the rot in myself.

My goal was to say in paint what I
could feel in my body.



1958-59



My source was the paper and pages in old books, and Jung's mandalas

My memory was of the fear of the loss of my soul in the ruin and forgetfulness of life.

My goal was salvation—the “soteriological object.”

1960

I made some 2500-3000 small collages during 1958-1961. When a few years ago I looked into a folder of them marked "1960-Autumn Stuff, Majolica, Goodbye Betty May, and Some Dark Summer Stuff," the first collage in the folder showed the phallic...

"There must be a message written upon the gold bar of Heaven"

The message was my phallic sign of Self.



1960

*There was another collage
said the aesthetic...*

“from December of 1959:
The imagery of the last few
days—crepuscular: dim
skies strewn far with lamps
golden and flaring. Thus
may I see how in that time
(if it were now as it had
been or may in some future
be) I might walk upon long
streets and stop to paint the
distances of the eye—gray,
rose, and golden with
necklace of old and yellow
gems and other diamonds...

“Great Journeys in the
Afternoon”



1960

*There was a third collage
that told of loss...*

“GOODBYE, BETTY
MAE

Goodbye, Betty Mae.
On down the drain to
nothing
With you now.
And fully, without
Memorial.
With your father, too.
And with your mother, lost
long twenty years back.
You're on down the drain
To nothing with now.
Goodbye
Betty Mae.

LUXAETERNA
&
LUELLAAPT's

*And then some words
falling out of the central
darkness...*

“You're on down the drain
To nothing with now.
Good bye,
Betty Mae.” ...



1960

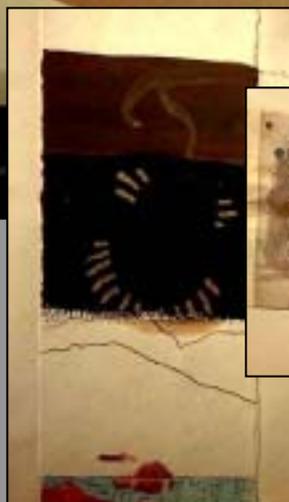
After looking in the folder, I wrote in my notes—

“What my work was (is) about, it’s right there in this folder... The phallic, the aesthetic, and the lost.

“First, the phallic—that first collage in the folder: with my sign marked across the gold of heaven, on its way from earth to sky and God.

“Second, the aesthetic—
Day after day, the old slow closing up of the world (ivory, incandescent) there on the other side of the horizon—dim now and dark and dull with rose.

“Third, the loss—Betty Mae lost in the shuffle and failure of the years.



1960

“And so my work then and now is about the horror of loss I cannot bear—

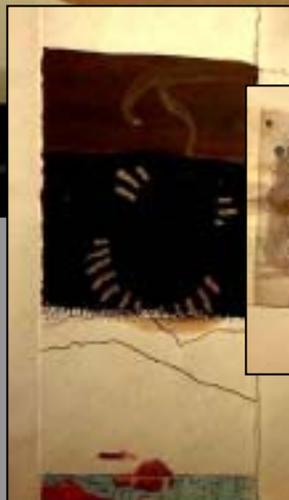
“The loss of the phallic: all the life force that has driven me since I was a child...

“The loss of the aesthetic, all the sensuous memories heaped in me...

“The loss of all that the heart holds—and the loss of all that the heart holds is the loss of everything.

“Yes, I cannot stand that kind of loss. Yet, it is inevitable and absolute for all people and all things. Vincent Van Gogh said, ‘What does it matter if a man [he was speaking of painters] dies, because another rises in the same place?’

“Yes, another does rise, but he is not me.”



1964-5

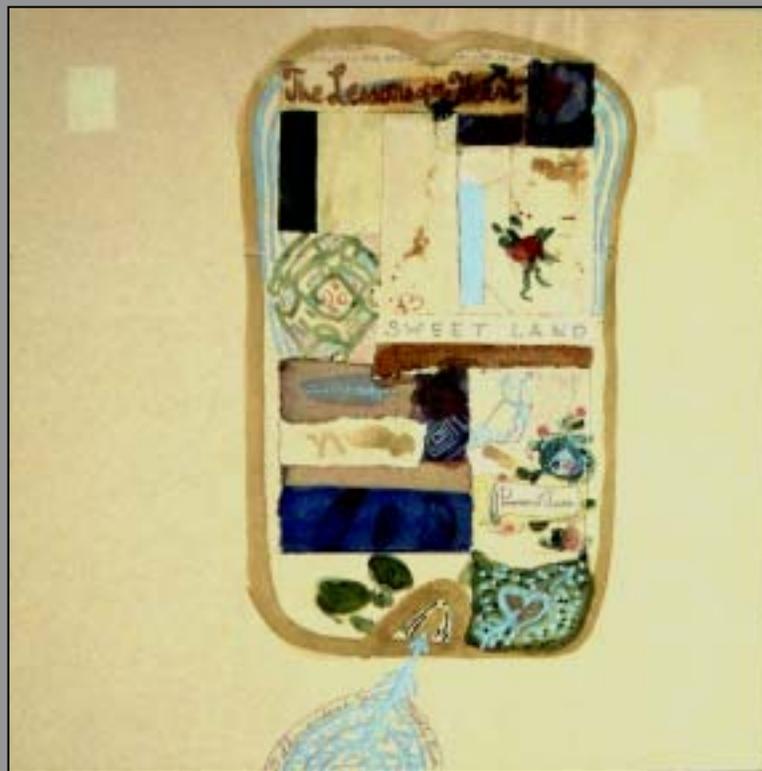


The source was images of man and woman; the goal was me trying to find out how to live.

Mother America...
Venus Genetrix, the mother of us all.
From Thy pool of autumn light
across Thy fair fields and the orchards rich with fruit,
beyond Thy golden rainbow hill
flies Joey A.

1964-5

Sources and memories...



The source was images of man and woman; the goal was me trying to find out how to live...

with The Lessons of the Heart
and the mighty river pouring through me always
to enter the Sweet Land

1964-5

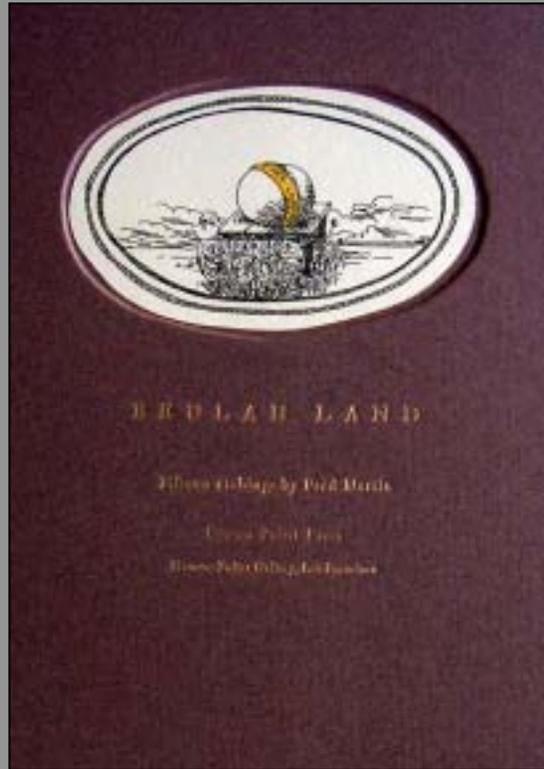
Sources and memories...



The source was images of man and woman; the goal was me trying to find out how to live...

in the little gray house in the greenwood grove
with the sunset and the circling stars
where the urn overturned pours forth the waters of life.

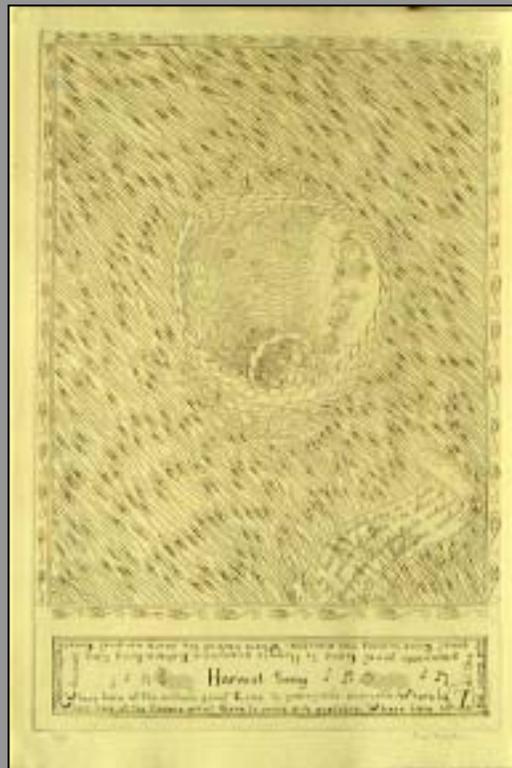
1966



*The source was images of man and woman and my memories of Sonoma and my Aunt Sadie and Uncle Jack.
The goal was me trying to find out how to live...*

All the themes of the collages were fulfilled here
in Beulah Land, the happy place where the good
go to rest after death, just outside the final gates
of Paradise and the loss of self
in oneness with God..

1966

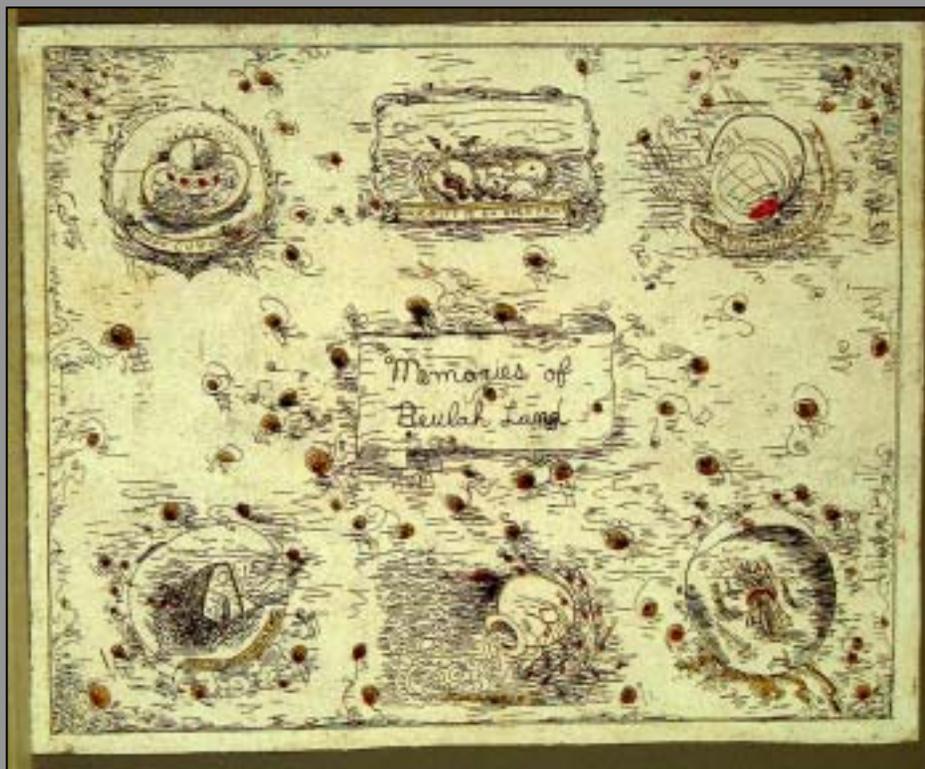


*The sources were memories of Aunt Sadie's crockery, Uncle Jack's harvests, and a song of Peter, Paul, and Mary.
The goal was images of man and woman and me learning how to live.*

Where have all the flowers gone?
Gone to young maids every one.
Where have all the young maids gone?
Gone to young men every one.
Where have all the young men gone?
Gone to soldiers every one.
Where have all the soldiers gone?
Gone to graveyards every one.
Where have all the graveyards gone?
Gone to flowers every one.

Yes, we all die but the flowers come again.

1966



The goal was images of man and woman and me learning how to live...

The Poppy Cup

The Pomegranate (her gift an open fruit)

The Cornucopia of the Western Sky

The Little Gray Home

The Urn Overturned

The Sheaf of Gathered Grain

1967



The sources were Beulah Land and images of man and woman; the goal was me learning to live...
and how to paint big, like the big boys did—and do

1968



The source was a corn-husker I had found; the image was of its terrible toothed wheel, and the story was of man and woman and me learning to live...

1968



The source was to find a way beyond the “folksong” form of Beulah Land. The memory is of an afternoon when I saw a half-nude man come up out of Lake Merritt. There were high white cirrus clouds above his head. That night, I made “My Scotch Grandfather Fucks Earth and Sky.” In the months after, my goal was to make painting after painting of the renewed power of my sexuality...

1968



and my name was Johnny America, and this was my self portrait as a still life

1970



And remember the folder of collages of the phallic, the aesthetic, the lost?

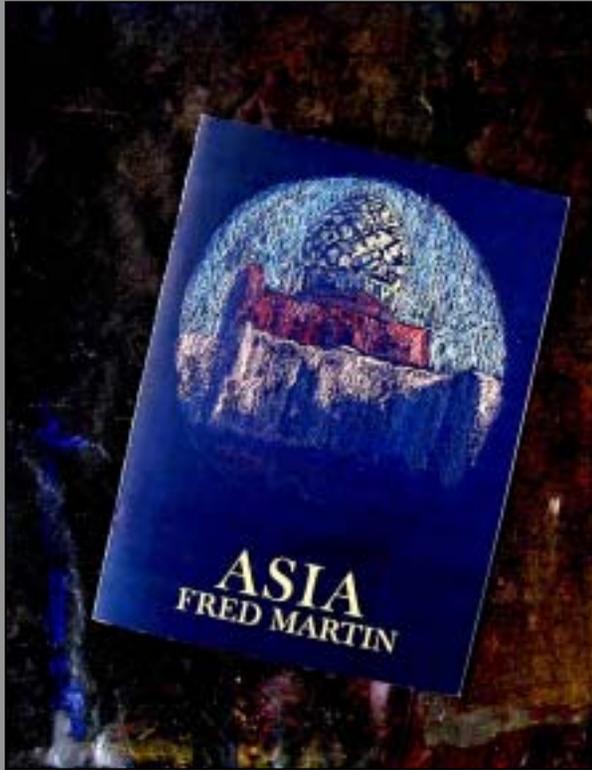
The 18 x 18 in. collages—*Mother America, Lessons on the Heart and The Little Gray Home*—had shown me how to live as husband, father and builder.

The big paintings had shown me how to live in the fullness and power of my sexuality.

And these pastels showed me how to live in the streaming of the senses—an aesthete.



1972

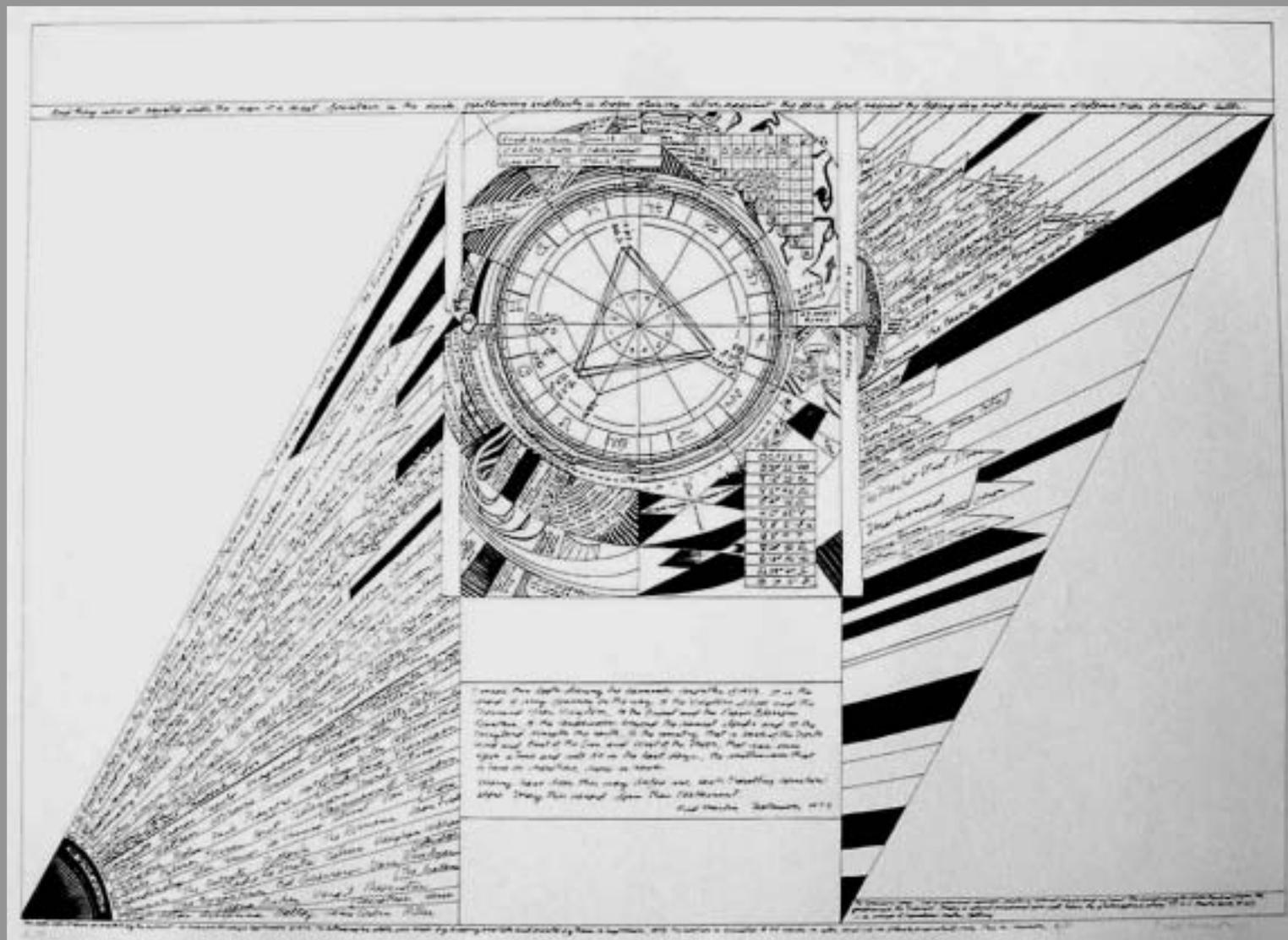


Asia, the catalog of the exhibition of my travel pastels
San Francisco Art Institute, 1972



A Travel Book, written and illustrated from my notebook of Asian travel
Arion Press, San Francisco, 1976

And so I took a trip across Asia and around the world,
and made its images as jewels fallen from the necklace of eternity,
and later made story of my journey as a journey of the soul to wholeness.



And to sum it up, I had a retrospective exhibition at the SFMOMA in November-December 1973. I wanted a special “catalog”—an art-piece, I called it *Liber Studiorum*—the Book of the Studio. This is the final plate. It shows my influences (beginning with my birth-chart), so that art historians won’t have to guess or argue. The Museum published a more normal catalog using another of the plates from the *Liber Studiorum*.

Fall 1973-Spring 1975



Catalog for my retrospective at SFMOMA in 1973



And there are old prints of the wheel of fortune where whoever is on the way to the top will soon be on the way to the bottom. By the time my retrospective at SFMOMA took place, the Directorship of the museum had changed and mine was not the direction the new Director planned to go. And no magazine put me on its cover, and no gallery rushed to sell my work. My career as an artist was now on the down side of the wheel. And my other career, as the Director of the College of the San Francisco Art Institute? During the ten years I had been Director, we had become the only fine arts school in the US; had started the only fine arts, “personal” film department in the US; had doubled the enrollment (from 500 to 1000); had built a new building to house it all and survived the Summer of Love and the crazy hippies and even Kent State. And then in the spring of 1974 a new Board decided we needed a new direction, made me a Vice President and hired a new President whom I had known and detested for years. I left SFAI in June 1975 to focus on nothing but my art... as if I were some kind of manufacturer hunkering down on a core business.

1975

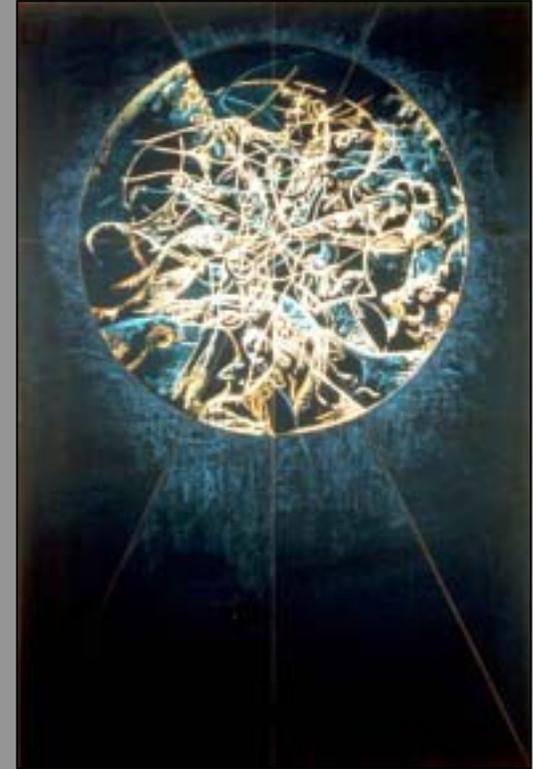
Sources and memories...



The Lilies of Shah Tahmasp
all are pastel on board, 60 x 40 in.



Afghanistan



Venus, the Germ of Metal Star

I felt my life was in ruins. And for art, the same. I made a painting I liked—*The Lilies of Shah Tahmasp* (he was an aesthete if there ever was one)—and then another painting that I hated. I saw that the reason I hated the second painting was that I had begun with a couple of concentric circles and no thought of spatial placement or harmony. I remembered Glenn Wessels telling me about Jay Hambidge and *Dynamic Symmetry*, found the Hambidge book in the SFAI library along with Tones Brunet's *Secrets of Ancient Geometry*—and found John Michell's *View Over Atlantis* in an airport news stand—and began to seek to make an art of pre-established harmony to establish a harmony in my life.

1974



Ray of Light in a Mosque



Cosmos



Saturn



Earth



Mars



Venus, the Germ of Metal Star



Conjunction Jupiter/Uranus



Untitled



Untitled



Winter Solstice

Sources and memories...

Astrology and my high school term paper and Ed Guerero and Morris Graves and the search for a pre-established harmony—

1975-6...
A Travel Book



Source: my travel in Asia

Memories: a soul's journey

Goal: a book like a box of jewels, spilled.

1977-1979



Self Portrait as Astrological Man, also Sea-Man
1977, watercolor on paper, approx. 60 x 40 in.

The sources were the Monroe Institute and “Brain-buzzing,” Charles Tart and my collection of books from metaphysical bookstores. The memories were of “Astral Travel, ” and the goal was a renewal of my contact with “the mythic.”

1977-1979...

source from "brain buzzing"



Black Redmon

Both 1977, watercolor on paper, approx. 60 x 40 in.



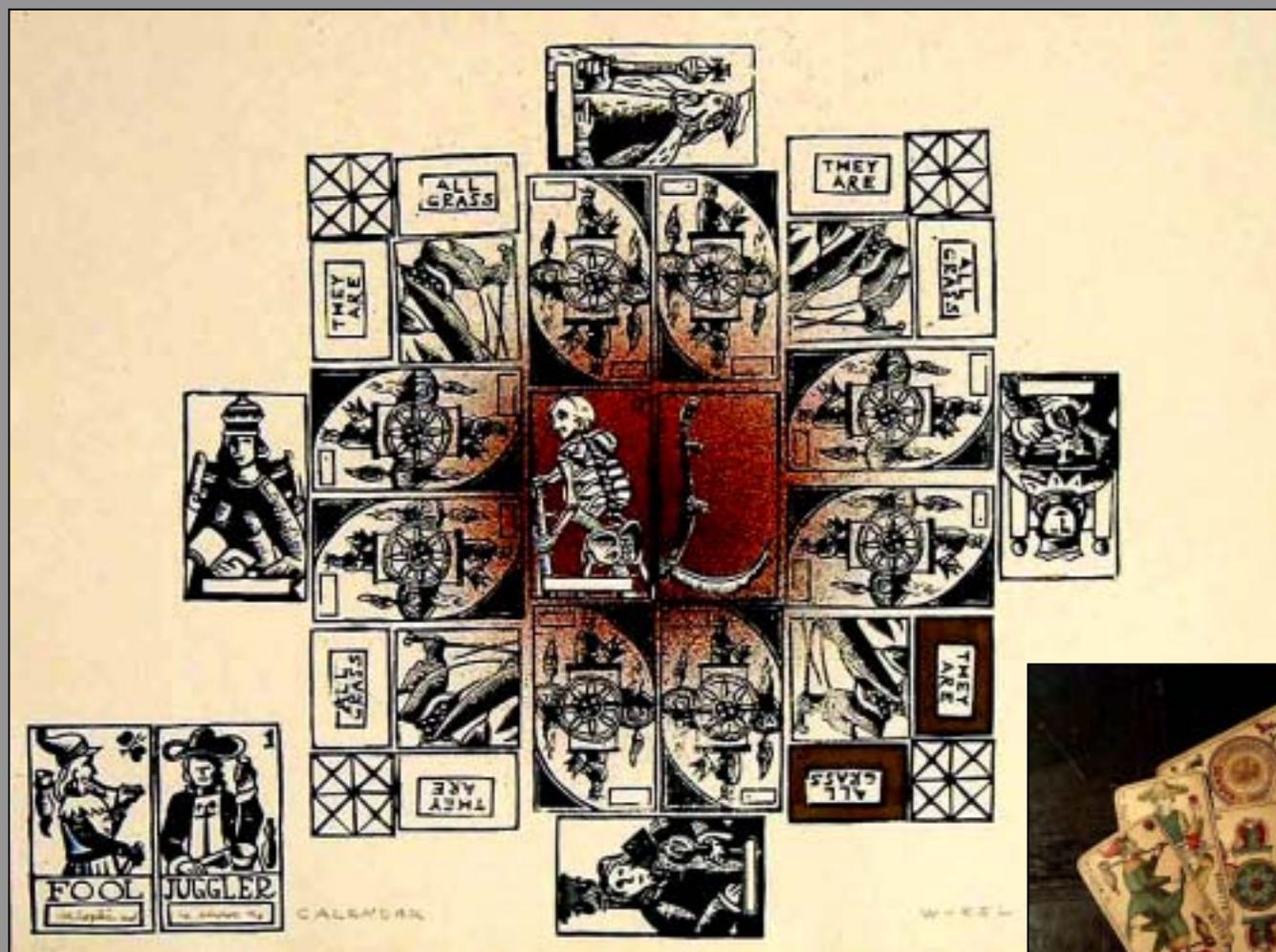
Ikarion II

1977-1979



*From An Antique Land, pub 1979,
and a collage from the talk to accompany the book.*

1980



The source was an old Tarot deck, the memories were of many others, and the goal was to renew my imagery by learning and using an objective, anonymous system of archetypal images.

1981



The goal was to be a professional artist, to “make stuff.”

Left: a watercolor from “The Tarot of the Italians”

Center: a monoprint from “Scenes from the Birth of Venus”

Right: a monoprint with drypoint and chine colle of “all the pre-established harmonies”



Self-portrait as Herm, monotype, 60 x 44 in.

The source was the classical Greek and Roman herm; the memory was my identification with the nature and function of that ancient sign; and the goal in the world was to make a self portrait as the required gift to the publisher's husband...

1981-82



*A Snake of Stars, August 10, 1981
Watercolor, 60 x 40 in*



*Untitled, August 27, 1981
Watercolor, 60 x 40 in.*

July 28, 1982



The Life of Grass I, The Scythe. July 28, 1982. [Catalog # 65]

Sources: the cultural history of the earth, and images of a scythe among the poppies in the grass.

Memories: man and woman and Beulah Land and death.

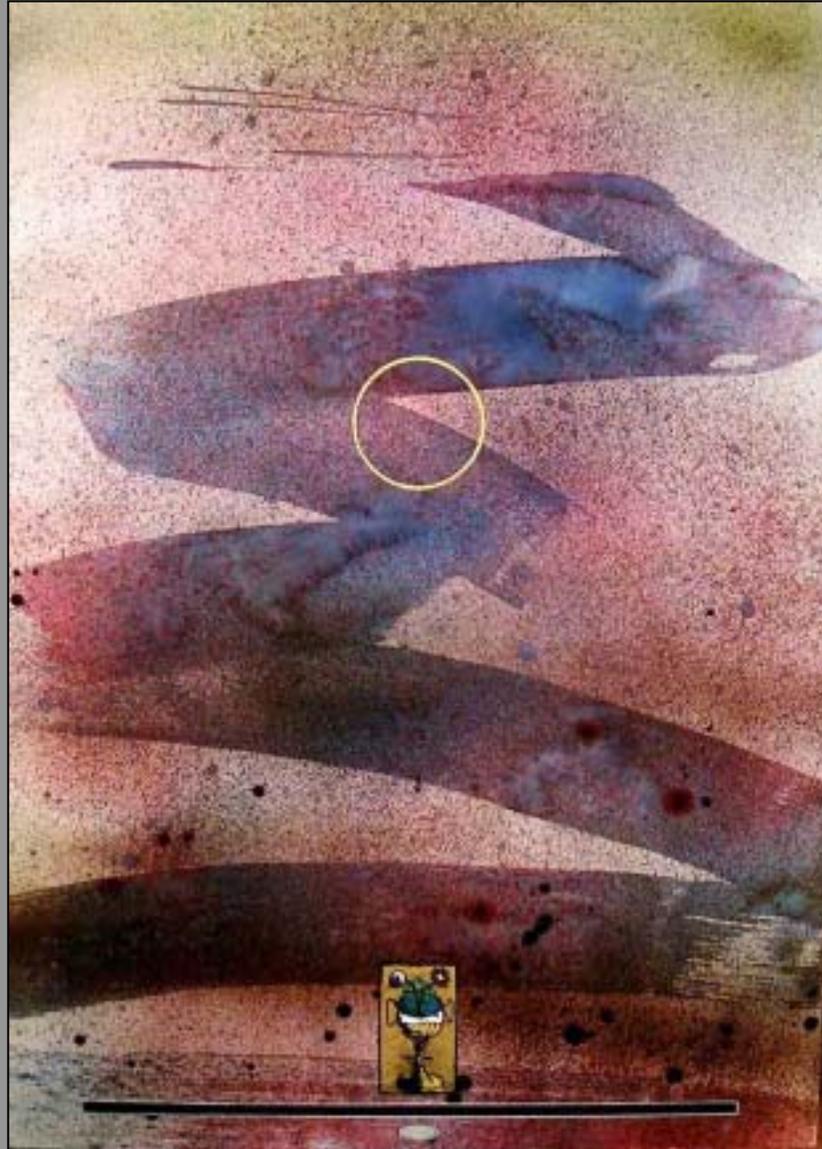
Goal: to get a cheap thrill.

July 31, 1983



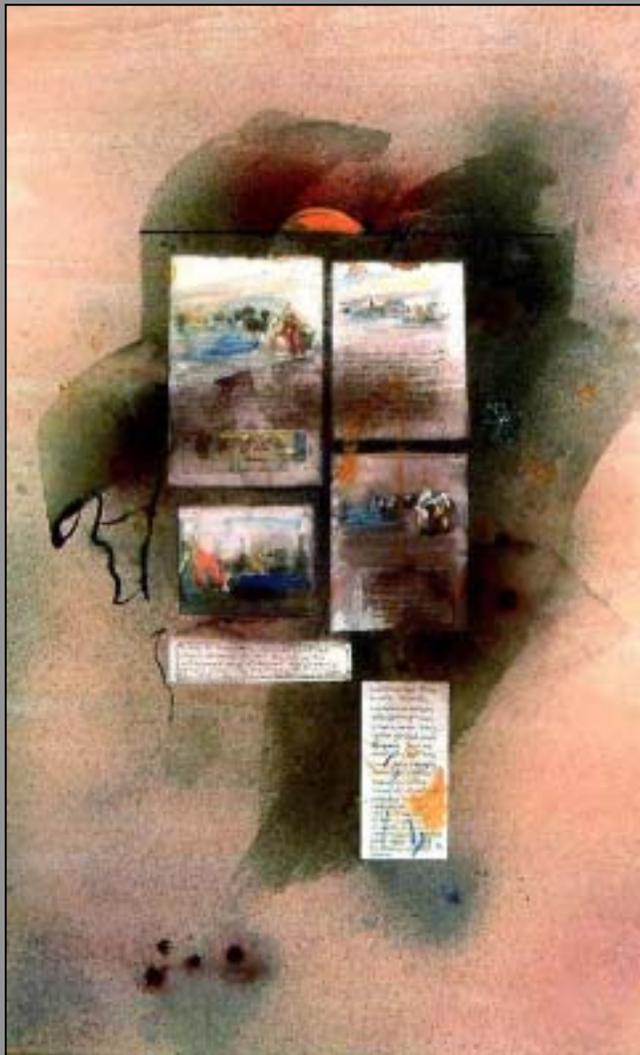
Sources: old Tarot cards and illness
Memories of the pre-established harmony...
Goal: health
Result: The valley of the shadow—

December 29, 1983



*Sources: The Ace of Cups in the Tarot, the gold ring of eternity, and death.
Memories: of Kandinsky's "Violet, a cooled-red both in the physical and spiritual sense,
possesses an element of frailty, expiring sadness...the color of mourning."
Goal: Farewell*

1984-1992



*It Was In Those Years Of Childhood, December 30, 1985.
Both are watercolor with collage, 39 x 24 ½ in.*



Venice' Last Lesson, January 26, 1986.

*The sources were the pictures in my family's living room when I was a child,
the memories were of the Venice of my imagination when I was a young man,
and goal was to use the method of the pre-established harmony to save those memories
before they be lost forever in my own death.*

December 30, 1991-January 1, 1992



*Sources and memories: the ashes of all the remained of Beulah Land
Goal: to save the last poppy before the end
and to mark with a sunflower the hope for renewal in eternity.*

December 1992 to now...



Source: I married Stephanie Dudek in December 1992.

Memory: Images from the small collages of 1959

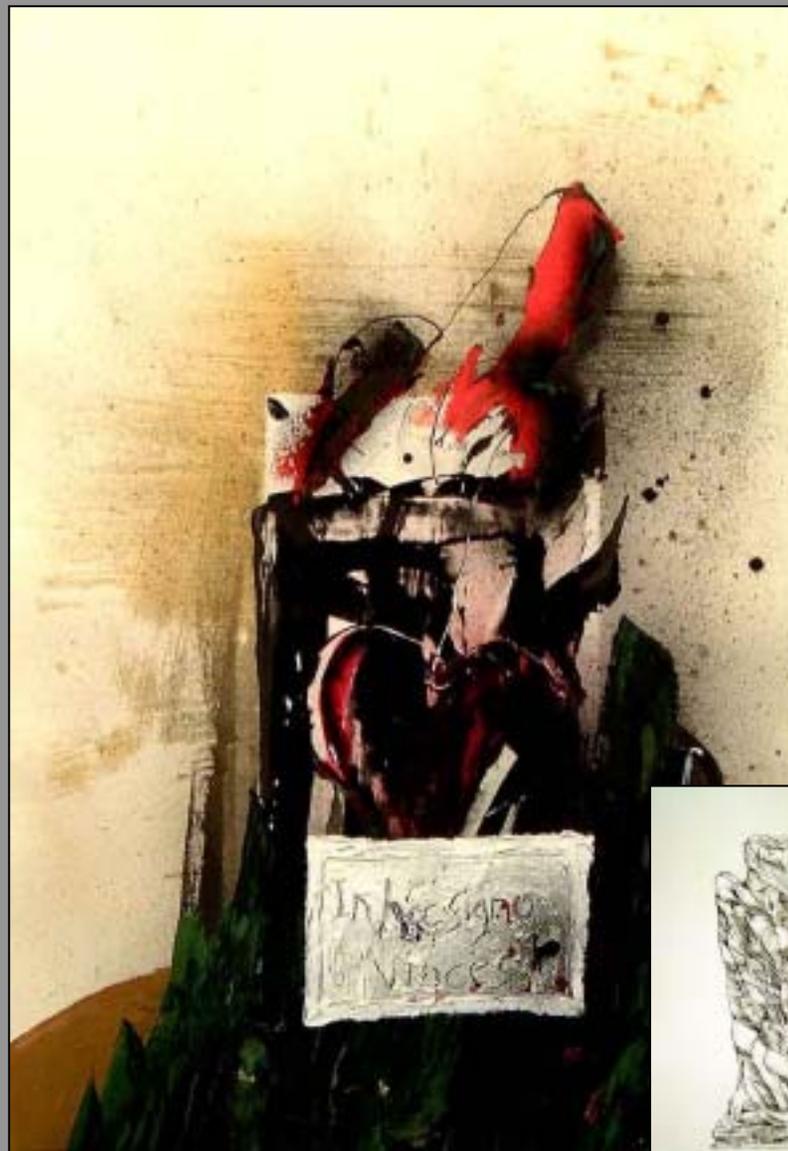
Goal: to say the power resurrected in me by marriage.

December 1992 to now...



Sources and memories: Titian's "Sacred and Profane Love"

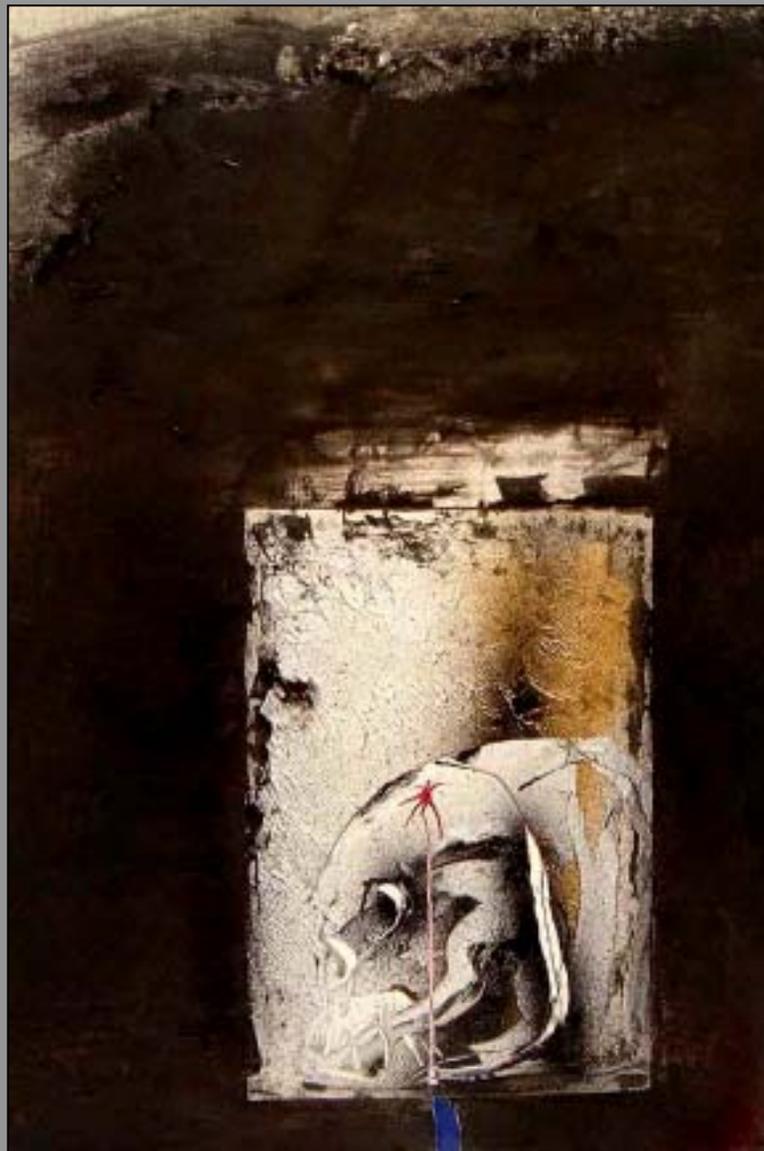
Now



#5, July 2003

Self Portrait, 1981

Now



#7, July 2003



...and so I have told some of what I know
of my sources and memories and the ways of my imagination
from the Forest of Arden that is the Paradise wilderness of love,
and the Moonlight Marine of the solitude at the core of each of us,
through all the ways that I have sought from then to now
to make in art the surrogate of my body and mind and soul.

my work—sources and memories

Fred Martin
October, 2003

