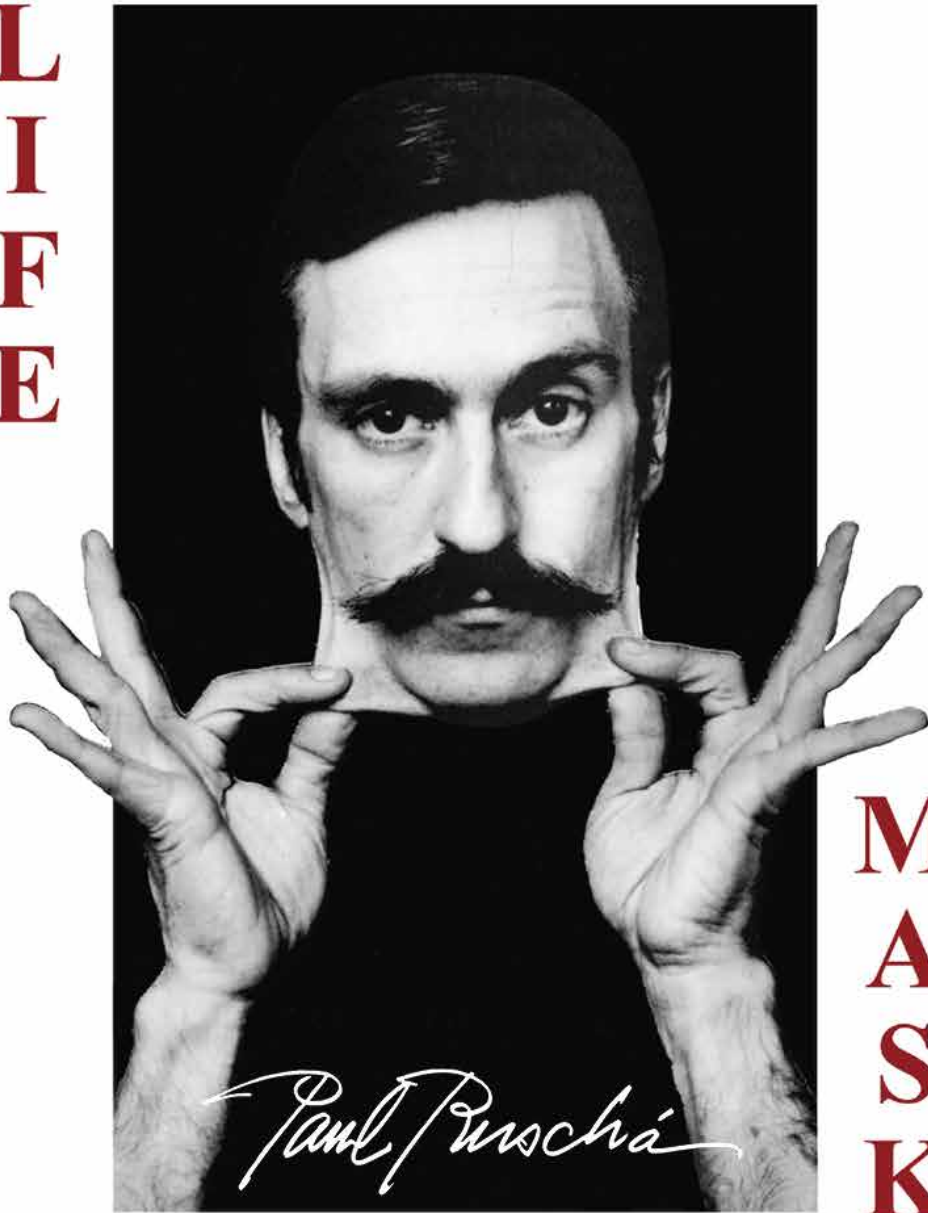


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Paul Puschá

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Self Portrait at United Artists ~ 1978
Paul Ruschá age thirty-five

This catalog accompanies the exhibition:
“Paul Ruschá LIFE MASK”
October 19, 2024 - October 18, 2025
Affeldt Mion Museum - Winslow, Arizona

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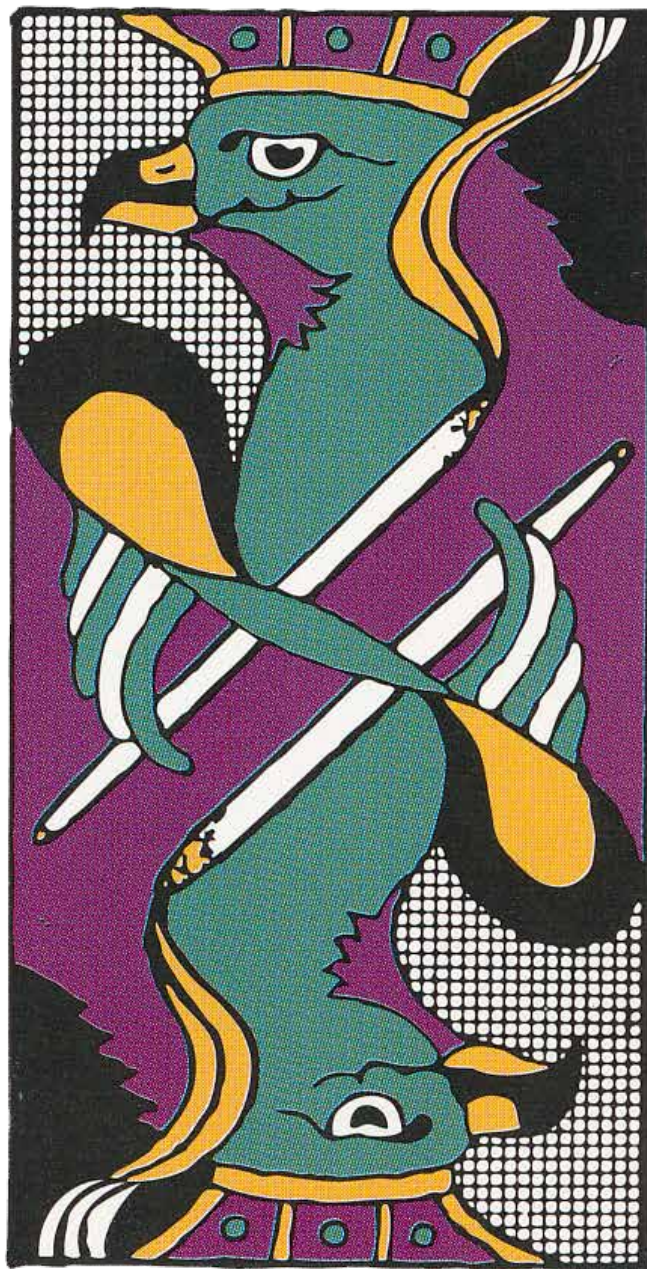
Paul Ruschá
LIFE MASK

Dedicated to the memory of Eve Babitz
“Without you I’d be nothing!”

October 19, 2024 - October 18, 2025
Affeldt Mion Museum - Winslow, Arizona

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THE KING *of* BUZZARDS



THE KING *of* BUZZARDS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

07
Introduction

09
A Note from Ed

11
Foreward

13
Calligraphy

19
Paintings

27
Social Tensions

31
Plastic Paintings

35
Vacuforms

37
Assemblages

43
Stuff Magazine

47
Miscellany

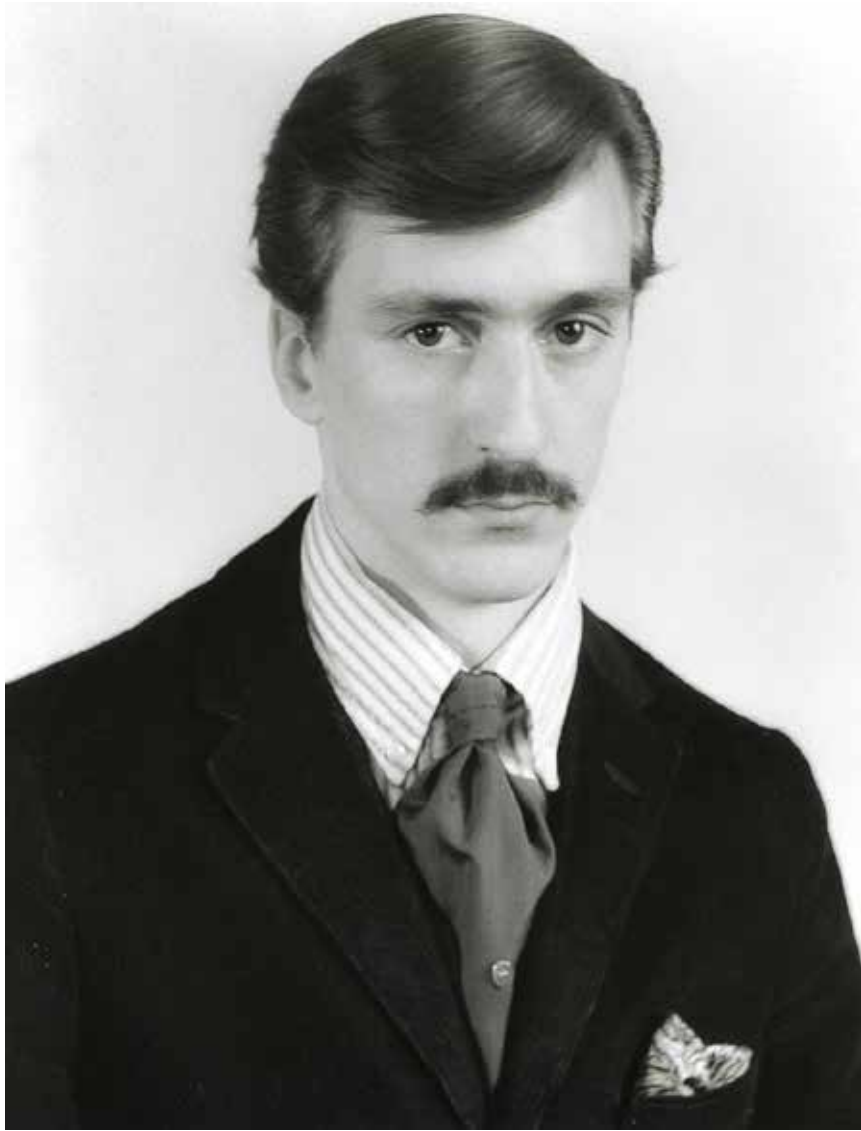
53
El Gran Garage

55
Full Moon

57
Portraits of Paul

65
In a Nutshell

77
Acknowledgments



Paul ~ 1964
Photo: Ed Ruscha



INTRODUCTION

I find it hard to believe that this exhibition has finally been completed and now ready for prying eyes to ponder. Living and compiling the materials for this show has taken several decades to assemble, but most of that time it has been fun to find, and to discover the many mediums I've chosen to use as such, for drawings, painting, and photography, and of course, collecting the obsessive numbers of gathered items, including my baseball cap collection, wristwatch collection, fountain pen collection, typewriters, hairdryers, vacuum cleaners, and plastic point-of-purchase refuse, and so much more. I hope you enjoy the show and will continue to check out the upcoming works of local artists at Affeldt Mion Museum.



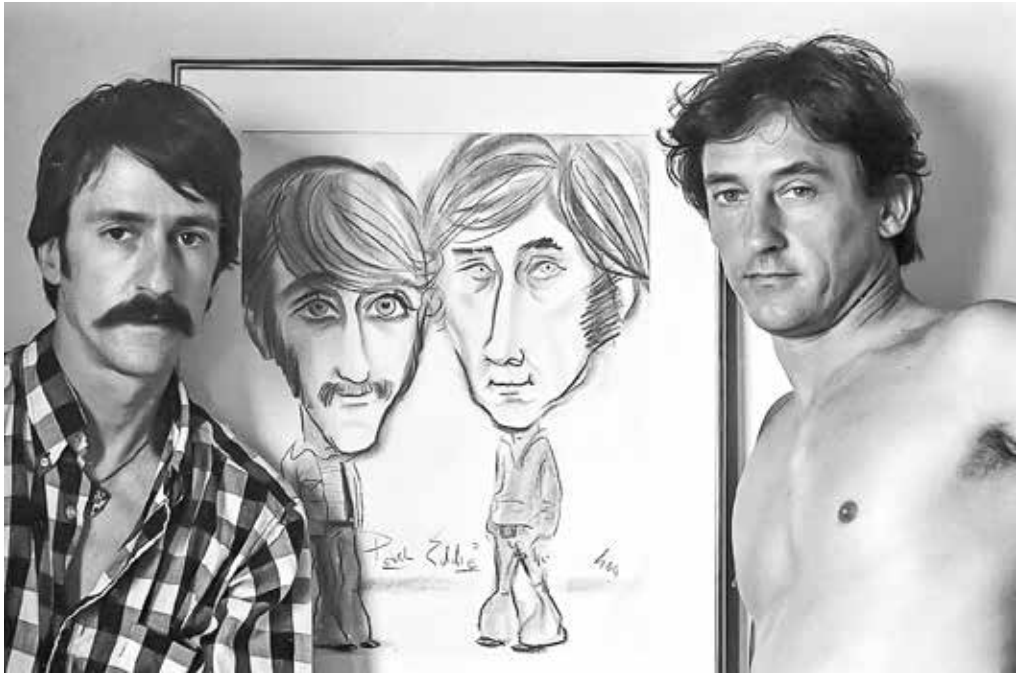
Paul Ruschá LIFE MASK

LIFE MASK explores the many facets of artist Paul Ruschá, from his calligraphy and photography to his paintings and transformative creations made from everyday objects. Paul sees art in everything, including what many might disregard, like the random product stickers that cover every inch of his kitchen cabinets or the plastic packages he turns into sculptures through his photographs. Paul is an artist, a muse, a raconteur, and a collector, not just of art, but of moments. He sees to the depths of people in those silent gaps between conversations and brings them to life in the flourish of his calligraphy pen. He is the kind of man who will dance with reckless abandon and thrill in outrageous antics and clever turns of a phrase. His unselfconscious *joie de vivre* comes through in the art he makes as well as the art he collects and the stories he tells. Perhaps that is why he has been the subject for so many artists over the years.

For Paul, there is no joy in life without art, whether creating or collecting.

If the name Ruscha sounds familiar, Paul is indeed brother to world-renowned artist Ed Ruscha. Paul has documented Ed's work full-time for more than thirty years. But Paul is also an intensely creative and independent thinker with a lifelong curiosity to explore a vast array of mediums. We hope, in this overview exhibit, to provide a glimpse into the artful creations of the extraordinary Paul Ruschá.

- Affeldt Mion Museum



Paul and Ed next to their 1969 Olvera Street caricatures
Photo: Shelby R. Paoli, Maracaibo, Venezuela ~ 1977



Paul and Ed at Ed's Gagosian Gallery opening in Rome, Italy ~ 2014
Photo: Susan Haller

A NOTE FROM ED RUSCHA



Years can blow by without thinking much about the circumstances of your family.

But Paul, he's me Bro.

One jolly instance that came to mind started in Cusco, Peru in 1977. Paul and I were visiting our sister in Venezuela and decided on a side trip to see the wonders of Machu Pichu. After this unforgettable sight we settled for a few days in Cusco enjoying the effects of chewing and drinking tea from coca leaves. The day before leaving we visited a local market where Paul bought a pillow-sized pile of coca leaves. The vendor charged more for the plastic sheet it was displayed on than the leaves themselves. Paul intended to bring all of this back to the U.S.A.

I had my dreaded fears and doubts.

On arrival in Los Angeles the customs form asked if you were carrying any plant material. My Bro checks "NO" while carrying the leaves inside his jacket. I yelled at him that he's carrying contraband in the form of vegetable matter and that he'll never get away with it. He'd better say "YES" and deal with the consequences. Coca leaves were certainly listed as an illegal narcotic and punishable as such. So I said, "Paul, you can't claim you're not carrying vegetable matter through customs!" Tense milliseconds ticked by as we waited at the entry point in Los Angeles. I pass through. Then Paul hands in his customs form with his jacket looking like a Michelin Man. Whew! Miraculously they wave Paul through without an issue and we both find ourselves out on the street. Tail between legs, in a low tone without irony I ask him, "Hey Paul, can I have some of those leaves?"

In my memory I blotted out his response. Then I thought like I was talking to my parish priest, "He ain't heavy Father, he's my brother."

- Ed Ruscha



King of Hearts ~ 2009 ~ Daniel Lutzick
Inspired by Paul Ruschá's *Martyr for Love*
Repurposed layered plywood, shellac, galvanized tin, and oil paint
35-1/4 x 24-1/4 x 10-1/4 inches



FOREWARD BY DANIEL LUTZICK

When the Affeldt Mion Museum exhibit team first sat down with Paul Ruschá to organize *Life Mask*, there was a continual temptation to consider him in the context of a collector. His 2006 book and exhibit, *Paul Ruschá's Full Moon*, emphasized that role as a collector. In 2006, he bought El Gran Garage in Winslow, Arizona, and has since been an anchor of support for a small group of California expats referred to as the Winslow Studio Artists. His involvement with Pharmaka Art, the Noah Purifoy Foundation, the Winslow Arts Trust, and other arts organizations highlighted his support of emerging and lesser known artists. Paul has also built a collection of work by recognized artists through his affiliation with brother Ed Ruscha's studio, Western Avenue Productions.

I have known Paul for thirty-two years, and thought I had a good sense of his relationship to art. When this exhibit was first being organized, he had a storehouse in Culver City and places in Beverly Hills and Studio City, California, as well as in Winslow. As we sorted through the layers of work at each location, another story emerged. This story acknowledged Paul as the artist, a person immersed in various art scenes who was not only collecting work but also creating art to communicate his own particular view of the world.

These discoveries led us to focus on Paul's own work as the subject for *Life Mask*, and so began an almost archeological search through a massive amount of material for the content of this exhibit. With every flat file drawer we opened, every storage unit we searched, and every room in his three locations we viewed, we discovered layer upon layer of his work, and we learned the stories that led to their creation.

At times, the decisions regarding what would be included and what would be left to another exhibit were difficult. It turns out that my knowing Paul for over three decades only scratched the surface of his artistic history. The work in this show spans a period of sixty-two years, with the most recent work being created just days before the show was installed.

We invite you to step into the mind of Paul Ruschá as he shares the stories of a life filled with art.

- Daniel Lutzick

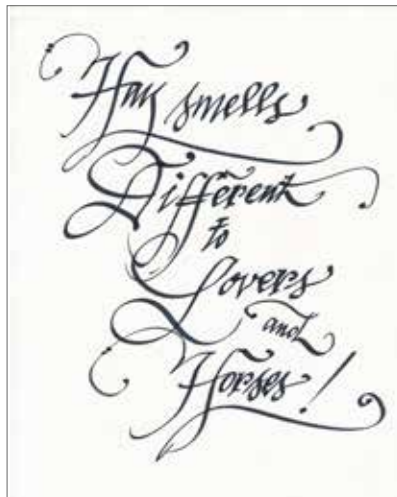


CALLIGRAPHY

Calligraphy has been the most consistent element in my life as an artist. I can do it almost anywhere, anytime, and I enjoy having that trick up my sleeve because it is always a surprise to those for whom I am doing it. I think that if the world is in a crisis and in a state of destitution, I'll be just like the Disney version of the old Aesop fable, "The Grasshopper and the Ants." In the Disney version, the Ants are working their asses off to ready themselves for winter while the Grasshopper just scoffs at them as he plays on his fiddle. At the end of the story, he's freezing to death in a winter storm, but the Ants take him into their warm inner chambers where they're partying and dining on their stored food, but they tell him that if he will play for them, he can stay throughout the storm and stay alive. I've always felt that I am like that Grasshopper, in that I will be an old geezer sitting at a card table on the sidewalk, writing people's names in flourished calligraphy, and I'll be paid enough to weather the winter of our discontent. (PS: Oddly enough, in the Aesop version, the Ants take the Grasshopper down into their chamber... *but they eat him!*)

HOW IT BEGAN

In the summer of 1964, I enrolled in classes at Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles. One of the courses was called "Lettering and Layout" and it was taught by Maury Nemoy, an exceptionally gifted artist who worked closely with the designer Saul Bass on many movie title images for film director Otto Preminger. "Man with the Golden Arm" and "Anatomy of a Murder" and so many more, were film-title letterings that Nemoy had created with Bass. When I had taken his class at Chouinard, Nemoy gave us a list of aphorisms by a Czech writer named Baron Stanislaw J. Lec, and we could choose the one we wanted to write in calligraphy with the pen we were assigned to use: an ink-filled Osmiroid. This fountain pen had screw-in nibs which were numbered, each with the width of the letter to be formed by each stroke.



Paul's Favorite Aphorism
by Baron Stanislaw J. Lec



Martyr for Love ~ Postcard No. 4 ~ 1975
Photo: Pierre Chanteau

I used that Osmiroid in Nemoy's class but put it away when I moved to New York the next year. I forgot about it until I moved back to Oklahoma City and went to work at Christopher's Restaurant where I was a waiter, and also designed their menus. Later, I was Maitre d' there and seated customers in the lakefront dining rooms where people who dined wanted to be seen. When one prominent couple had come for their anniversary, I broke out my Osmiroid and made a table sign that said, "*Reserved for the Johnson Party.*" The wife thanked me for the card and took it with them when they left. A week later when they came back, I didn't make a card for their table and the wife was disappointed and told me so. I thought about it and figured if they liked it, we had many other customers who were regular diners and they too might like to have their name card at their table. Those cards announced to the rest of the customers who had tables in that room that the couple with the table card must be pretty special. The presumption went well, and when I finally left the restaurant a few years later, I had amassed a box of reserved cards for over 100 regular guests which were used whenever they came to dine. It was the beginning of my career in calligraphy. Later, our chef had taken one of my menus to the White House, and I had done the Thanksgiving menus for the Governor of Oklahoma. When I moved to Los Angeles, I was asked to write the envelopes for the Americans who were invited to Princess Anne's wedding. I still love to write calligraphically, and usually take my pens with me whenever I dine out at the local restaurants and write the scrolls which I give to my friends, and often to the waiting-staff who serve us.

The Turquoise Room

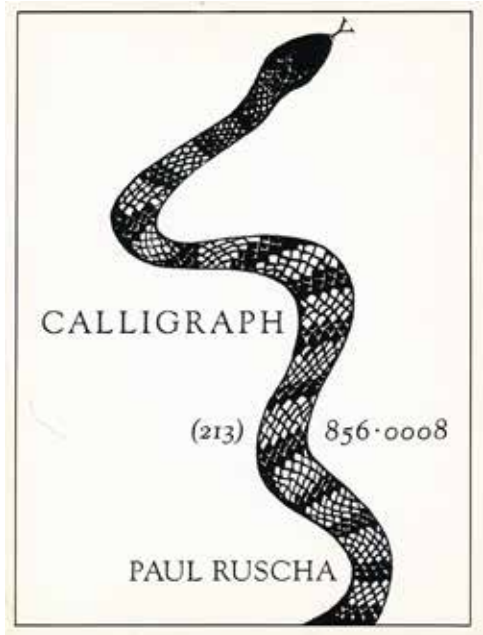
In 1970, I created my first postcard in a series to promote my calligraphy. That image showed me wearing mirrored contact lenses and a monkey fur coat: *Mirrors & Monkey Fur ~ Postcard No. 1.* The postcard was photographed by Oriel Lum, a Chinese waiter/photographer at Christopher's.

After moving to Los Angeles, I met Doug Metzler, the staff photographer for United Artists Records. We traded services: I did calligraphy for Doug's business card, and Doug photographed my postcards., including the signature image for this exhibit: *Life Mask ~ Postcard No. 3.* I'd been wanting to make this image for a long time, inspired by an Asian actress in an espionage series at a movie theater back in Oklahoma City during (or just after) WWII. She was so evil that she would go to her vanity table and look over a whole bunch of wigs and rubber faces which she would peel off the stand and press onto her face. Then when she'd done her international nastiness, she'd peel off her face and put it back on the stand in her boudoir and take off her wig and *voila!* The Asian menace was back to herself, and ready to wreak havoc all over again! Thanks to her influence, the *Life Mask* image came to be, with me peeling off my face.

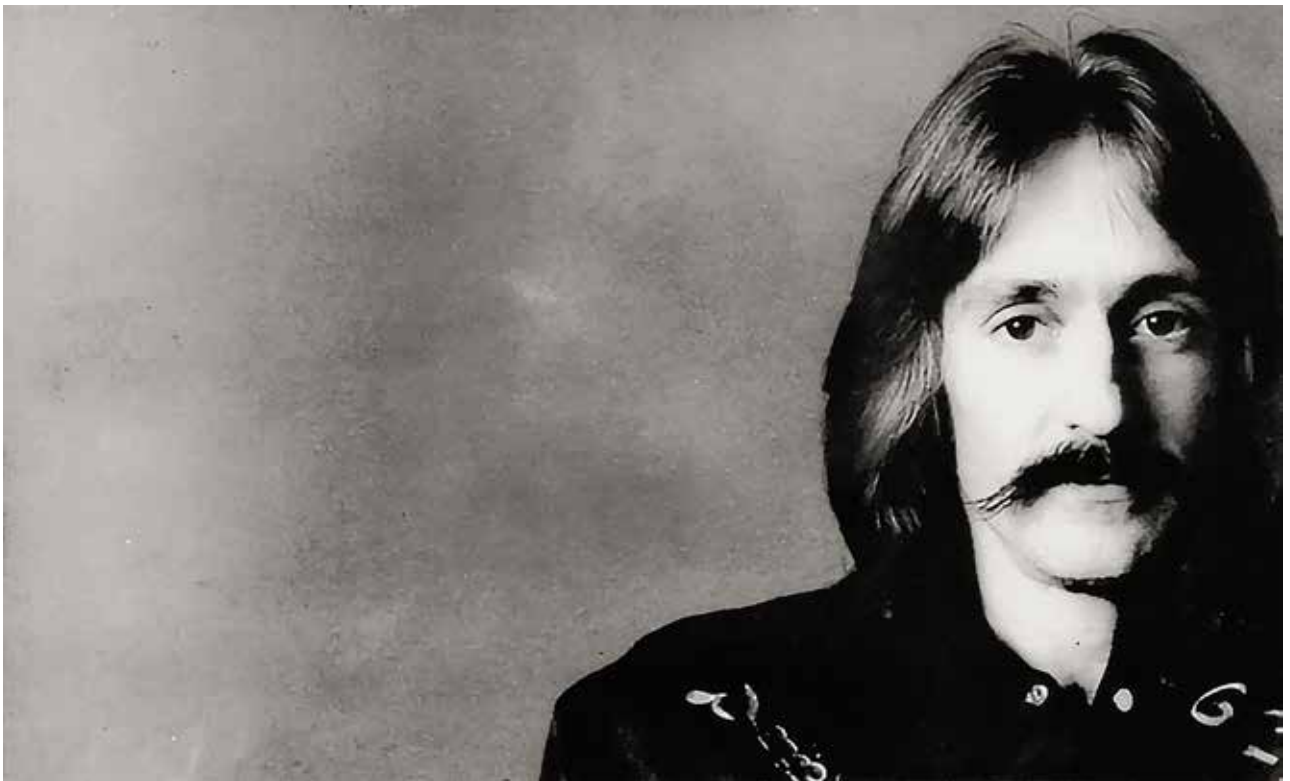
My favorite postcard in the series was *Martyr for Love ~ Postcard No. 4*, photographed by Pierre Chanteau under my direction. The inspiration came when I discovered I could cross my arms over my chest and match my elbows where they met to form a heart. I put an arrow through my arms into that "heart" and it was the look which I had always imagined. In addition to my postcard images, Pierre also did some shots of me, and some of me with my long-time girlfriend, writer Eve Babitz, to whom I dedicate this exhibition. May she rest in peace where she has been interred in her mausoleum near "The Sheik" ~ Rudolph Valentino. Pierre now lives in Paris, and his wonderful photograph of Eve can be found on the cover of Lili Anolik's biography of her: *Hollywood's Eve.*



Mirrors and Monkey Fur ~ Postcard No. 1 ~ 1970
Photo: Oriel Lum



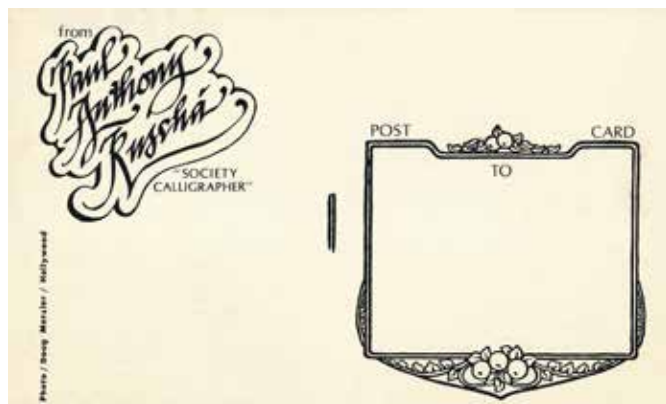
Ad in *The Workbook*, California Edition



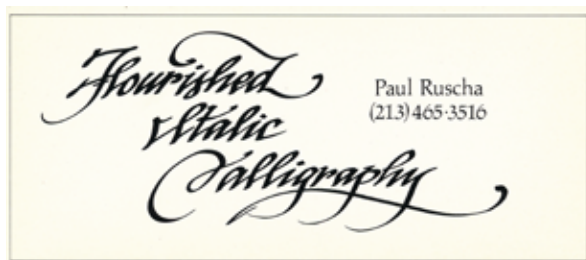
Society Calligrapher ~ Postcard No. 2 ~ 1974
Photo: Doug Metzler



Paul Ruschá with Praying Hands in Raleigh-Durham Cemetery ~ Postcard No. 5 ~ 1977
 Photo: Gary Register



Postcard No. 2 ~ Back



Ad in The Workbook, California Edition



Life Mask ~ Postcard No. 3 ~ 1976
 Photo: Doug Metzler



Symbolic Alternatives ~ 1974
Acrylic and ink on canvas
65 x 65 inches
Collection: John and Robby Mazza



Self Portrait ~ 1977
Photograph with *Symbolic Alternatives*



I found out that I was color-challenged when I was in grade school and painted a Canada Goose lavender. The teacher, who had given me special privileges as an artist, went berserk when she saw my painting and the color I chose. The rest of the class were happy I had been reprimanded and sent back to my seat chastised, and it made me quite leary of making art again. But I went on through my early school training and stayed with art. I enjoyed what I had to come to produce. Throughout my schooling, I was always on the heels of my brother, Ed, as he had already made a name for himself and was winning awards for his graphic designs. It was presumed that if he was as good as he was, then I must be a good artist, too. Sometimes that worked to my advantage, but often it didn't, and I had to find my own way to the kind of art I would develop for myself.

As I had started out painting birds, I continued to do so, but in the 1960s my brother Ed had a show of his surreal bird and fish paintings and I figured he'd covered that subject a lot better than I, so I didn't begin painting birds again until the 1970s, starting with *Symbolic Alternatives*. In that painting, I changed the spots on a deck of playing cards from Hearts, Diamonds, Spades, and Clubs to *Ducks, Doves, Buzzards and Bluejays*. Ed chose to show that painting at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in an exhibition titled *Artist's Choice*. I followed that work with a few more paintings of birds in the 1970s and then I switched careers, learned photography, and began to shoot my own images of public gatherings and situations which I had originally called *Social Anxieties*, but then changed to *Social Tensions* (pp. 26-29).

For Ed's birthday on December 16, 1980, I painted over a loose piece of fabric an odd *Portrait of My Brother as a Cavedweller*. I wasn't inferring anything nefarious about him, or that he was vampiric, but it just turned out that way and thus, I let sleeping bats hang.

I had also painted a little 10 x 8 inch work in a fancy frame called *Self-Portrait as Kirk Douglas Portraying Vincent van Gogh in 'Lust for Life.'* At least it looked like that to me when I still had a beard. In 1979, I was also just beginning to test my ability to paint on Plastics (pp. 31-33).

In 2010, I participated in a game of "Telephone," but with paintings. Laura Hipke and Shane Guffogg put together a collaborative project of 49 artists called *Circle of Truth*. Shane made the first painting, then blindly sent it to the next artist along with a blank canvas. The receiving artist then needed to find the "truth" in the painting and make their own on the provided blank canvas. They would then blindly send to the next artist, who would find the truth and make their own painting, and so on and so on. I created canvas #16. The painting I received gave me the sense of careening in an uncontrolled path of unfinished fate. That falling made me recall the delicious taste of love; that dreamy sense of falling through space—which led me back to my love of ducks. And so *Falling Ducks for Circle of Truth* was born. Within the canvas, I incorporated a plastic vacuum bubble (more on those on page 35). Brother Ed closed out the project with painting number 49. The entire exhibition of all the paintings have been shown for many years and are still in circulation at museums around the country.



Be My Bird ~ 1975
Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 40 inches
Collection: Eve Babitz Estate



Card Shark ~ 1975
Acrylic on canvas, 30-1/2 x 29 inches
Collection: Steve Wood



Untitled Raven ~ 1976
Acrylic on canvas, 39 x 29 inches
Collection: John and Robby Mazza



Sober as a Judge's Signature ~ 1980
Acrylic on canvas, 33 x 22 inches
Collection: Steve Wood



Dead Ducks Falling - Circle of Truth #16 of 49 ~ 2010
Ink-stamped letters, acrylic, and ink on canvas
with vacuform bubble, 20 x 20 inches
Collection: Paul Ruschá



Portrait of my Brother as a Cave Dweller ~ 1980
Acrylic on cotton fabric, 58 x 48 inches
Collection: Ed Ruscha



*Self portrait as Kirk Douglas Portraying
Vincent van Gogh in "Lust for Life" ~ 1991
Acrylic on plastic, 10 x 8 inches
Collection: Randy and Laura Hipke*



King of Ducks
Enamel Pin ~ 2010



Solitaire for Addicts ~ 2010
Playing Cards

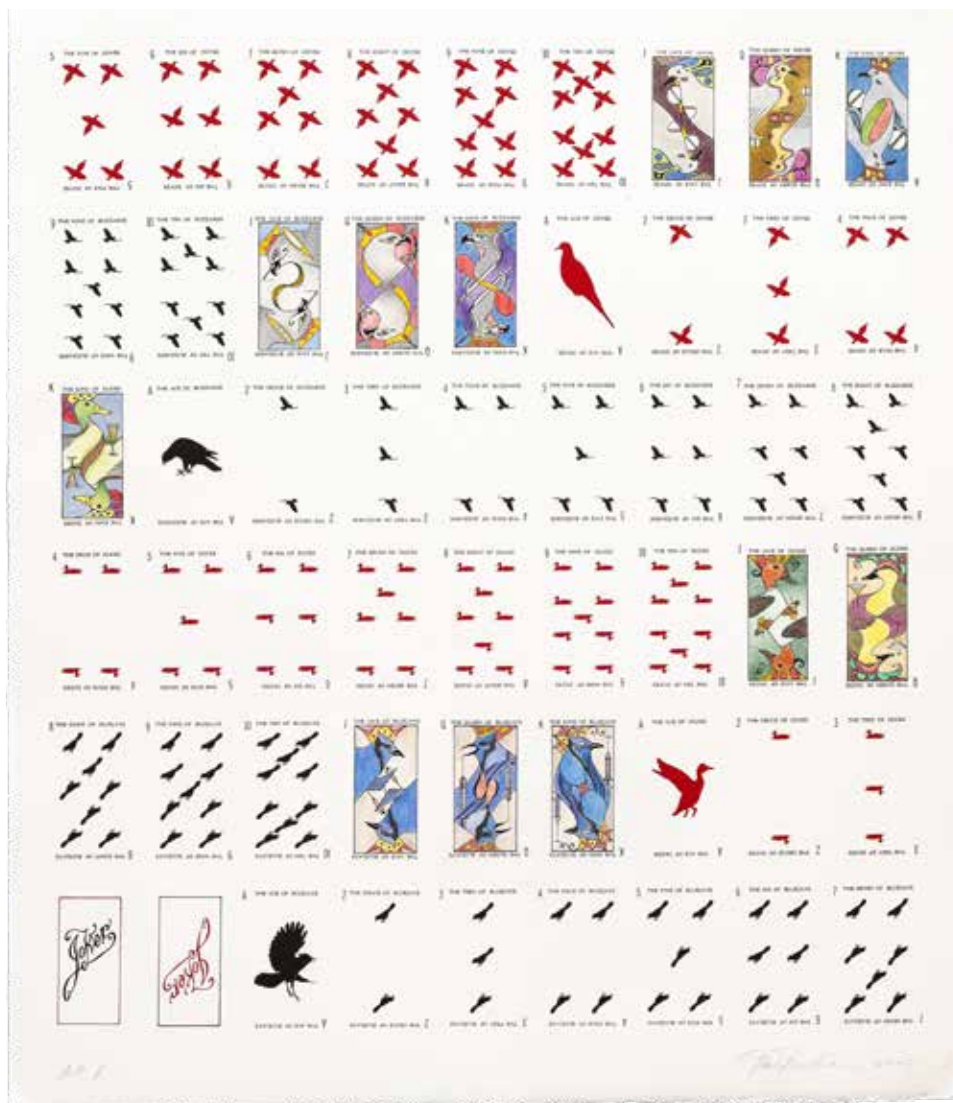


Solitaire for Addicts Wooden Box ~ 2010
Special Edition Playing Cards

SOLITAIRE FOR ADDICTS

My sister Shelby showed me how to play solitaire when I was six years old and I was hooked from then on. It's much worse today because I can play many different layouts on the computer or my cell phone, and it doesn't take all that time to lay them out as when playing with a real deck of cards.

Back in 1969, though, thanks to my love of solitaire, I reimagined a deck of cards to include birds. I drew them, then later, I painted them. In 2010, artist Laura Hipke and her husband Randy helped me turn my drawings into actual decks of cards people could play. They were the guardian angels of my project, and added so much more than I had expected of it.



A Different Deck ~ 2009
Two color lithograph with hand-coloring, 26 x 23 inches
Printed at Hamilton Press, Venice CA



SOCIAL TENSIONS



In 1974, I met Doug Metzler, the staff photographer of United Artists Records. A girl that I was seeing, Susan Doukas—who was working for him as a studio assistant—introduced us and we three shared some funny times together. Doug asked me to design his business card. I did, but I changed his name to read *Doug Deeply* which he loved. In turn, he shot photos of me for my postcards which showcased my calligraphy. He had another in-house assistant, Pierre Chanteau, who was the publicity photographer for UA and he was also the darkroom printer for Doug. I spent time in the darkroom with Pierre and learned how to develop film and print it. I was fascinated by the process and when Pierre decided to leave UA and open his own studio in New York City, and then later in Paris, Doug said that I should take Pierre's job and become the new publicity photographer. Bob Cato was the Art Director for UA and because he really liked my brother's art, he gave me the job. I earned as I learned, but I never cared to shoot the many bands who were on the UA label because I am somewhat agoraphobic, and didn't like the bands' adoring crowds. Yet I did my best, which wasn't that good in my estimation.

What I did like was to shoot social situations. In most of my photographs, there was a circumstance which incorporated some element of tension, and often anxiety showed on the faces of my subjects. I really liked that dynamic, and shot many gatherings throughout the 1970s. These photos were later in a show titled *Four Views of L.A.* at the Windward Gallery in Venice, California. in 1979.









PLASTIC PAINTINGS

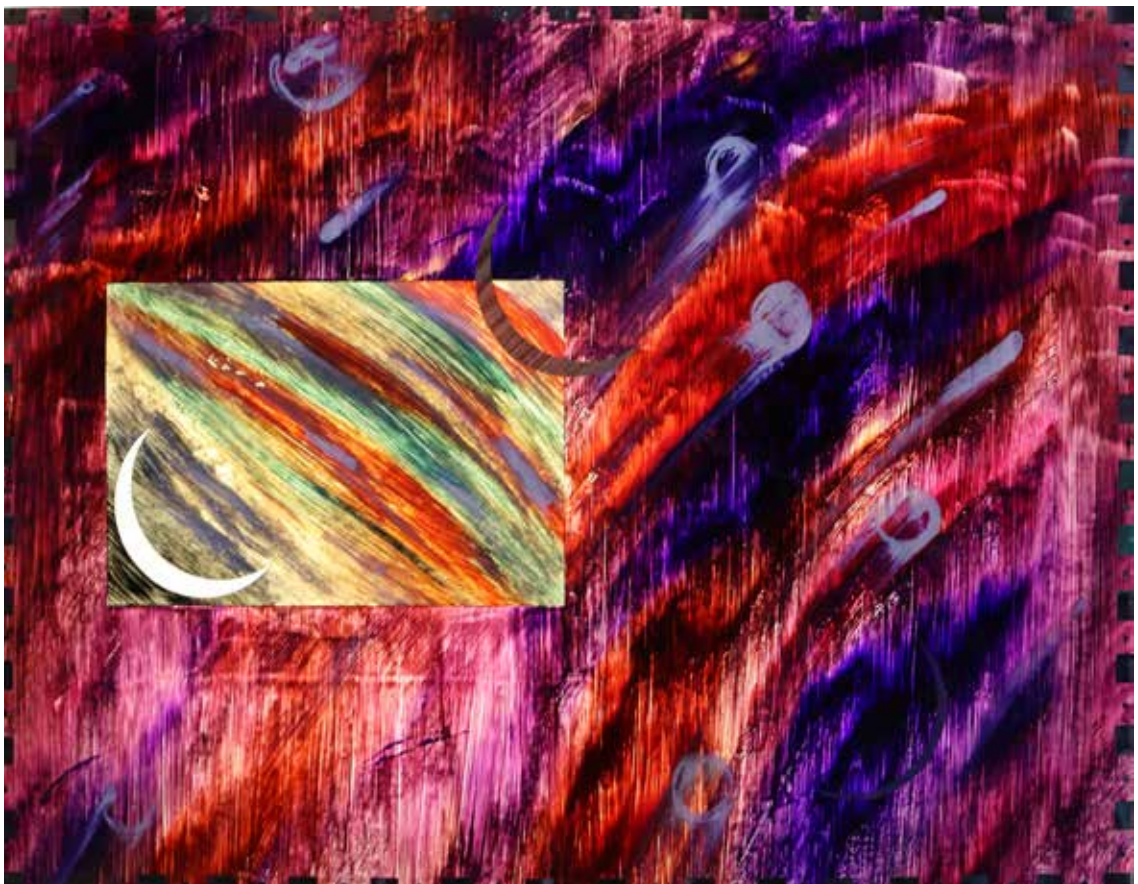
During the time I worked at the graphic arts annual, *The Workbook* (starting in 1980), I discovered that all the pages sent to Japan to be printed were on acetate sheets which, when returned to the office, were eventually thrown away. I kept all the 30 x 40 inch sheets after peeling off the taped-on working images and then had transparent plastic sheets on which to paint my acrylics.

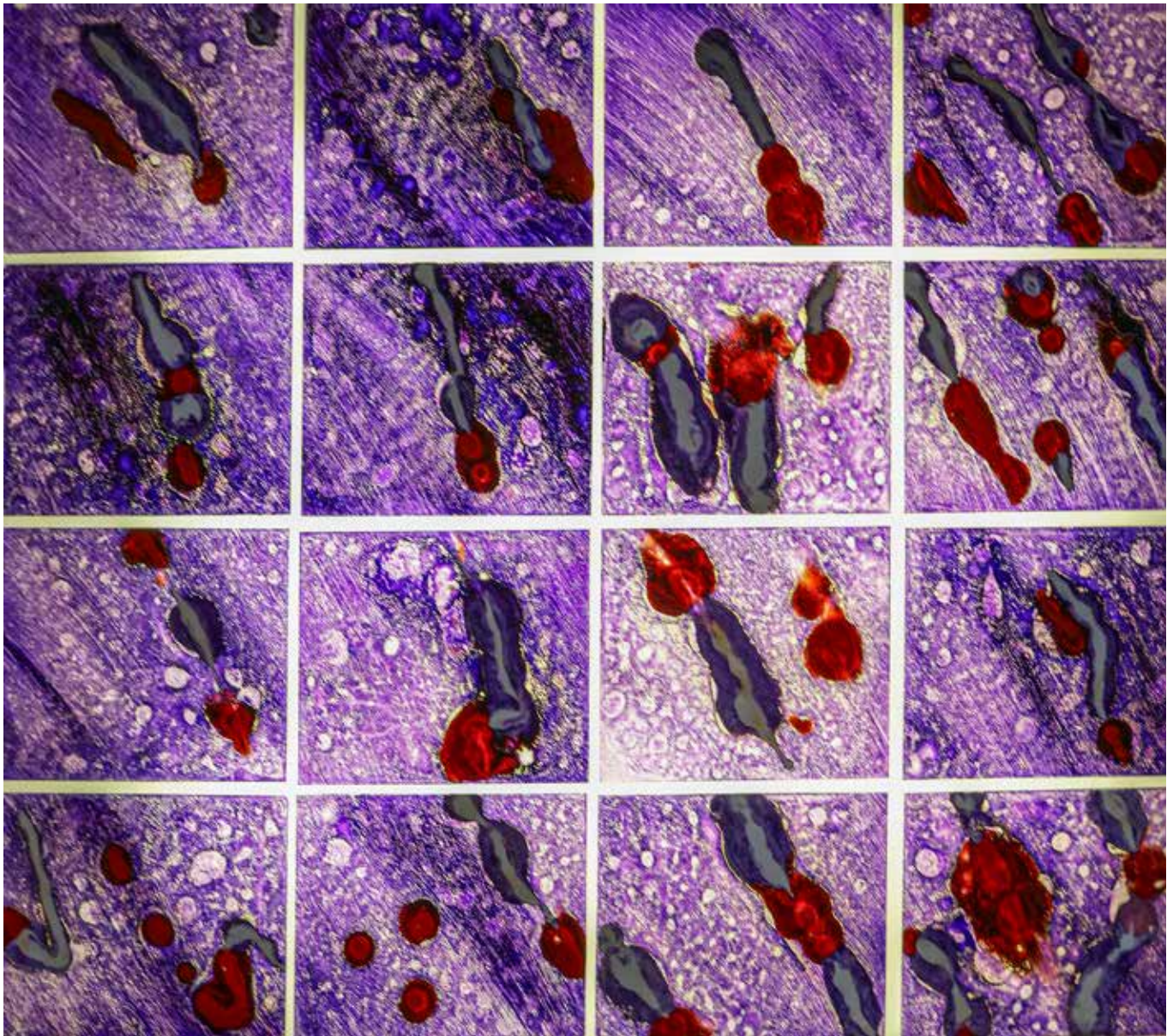
I quickly discovered how fun it was to paint on these sheets. After painting, the plastic sheet was flipped over. The image was still there, but no impasto was visible, just the smooth image of my original intent. On that smooth side, I chose to incorporate mylar crescents, like moons, and several other plastic, shelf-liner purchases which added texture to my paintings. I really had a wonderful time working for my one-man showing at Steve's House of Fine Art (SHOFA) gallery at the top of Larchmont, down the street from the Paramount Pictures entrance. I sold several of the large works and even more of the 8 x 10 sandwiched paintings.

Among the variety of plastic paintings in this current exhibit is a work called *Rainbow of Pain* stemming from an earlier car accident. This mixed media piece shows the printed x-rays of my head and neck, including a plastic 10 x 8 to show the blood red color in the mainly black and white imagery of the work.



Rainbow of Pain ~ 1981
Mixed media
20 x 15 inches





Detail of *Untitled Lightbox* ~ 1982
Commissioner: Jeff Smith
Acrylic on acetate, 21 panels, 8 x 10 inches each





VACUFORMS

Beginning around Y2K, I started to see a plethora of plastic, bubble-faced products at the check-out lines in the stores where I shopped. When I purchased one, I discovered that some were nearly impossible to open unless I ripped the plastic apart.

But then, I began to notice how much I liked the sculptural elements of what I called “vacuforms” and I found myself carefully taking apart the showcase wrapping from the point-of-purchase locations so I could save them for some later use in my art.

A few years later, I had collected hundreds of the vacuforms, and I began to shoot them in my El Gran studio in a little blue booth that I’d purchased at some close-out shop. I began to print the images of them, and I was fairly satisfied with the outcome of my efforts. Many friends thought I was crazy to stop them from ripping into the products they’d just bought, as I had wanted to carefully open each case and save the plastic vacuform that had protected their product.

When I thought about showing the vacuforms, I wanted a plastic frame with a clear plastic face to house each printed image.





Dinner for Dubya ~ 2005
El Gran Garage, Mixed media assemblage



Dinner for Donald ~ 2020
Fred Jones Jr. Museum, Mixed media assemblage



ASSEMBLAGES

In the main room of El Gran (my sometime home and studio in Winslow Arizona) you'll find an octagonal table with white linens, white china, and settings of silverware, surrounded by gleaming white toilets, with place cards written in calligraphy naming the guests. I always thought that it would be much easier to have dinner and then to defecate without having to get up and wait for a bowel movement hours later. The first time I assembled this tableau was at the Contemporary Arts Foundation in Oklahoma City, in the summer of 1970.

The title of that original tableau was *Dinner for Doris*. My choice of intention was to invite guests who were at odds with one another in the current news of the day, like Doris Day and Charles Manson who was intending to kill Doris' son, Terry Melcher, but he sent his murderers to kill Sharon Tate and her friends, instead. Also on the guest list were Andy Warhol and Valerie Solanis who had shot him over a dispute in The Factory, his studio. Then there was lovely Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis who had bested the opera star Maria Callas by winning the Greek shipping magnate Ari Onassis in marriage. Eldridge Cleaver, then Black Panther party leader, was chosen to sit at the same table as Lester Maddox a died-in-the-wool Southern segregationist.

This was the first of three Dinners which followed the same theme of tension between celebrities in news. The second tableau—the one presently at El Gran—was created in 2005 and named *Dinner for Dubya* because I was flummoxed by what a bad president George W. Bush was for eight years. His dinner partner was Saddam Hussein, also Condoleezza Rice and Osama Bin Laden, Tom Cruise and Brooke Shields, and finally Karl Rove and Valerie Plame who filled out the at-odds octet. Dan Lutzick had remade the intended dinner table as an octagon, which better placed the eight toilets around the settings. It was first shown at Bert Green Fine Art, then at Pharmaka Gallery in downtown Los Angeles in 2005.

The final recreation of the Dinner series was made at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art at Oklahoma University in Norman Oklahoma. The year 2020 table was titled *Dinner for Donald* and was intended as a tongue-in-cheek swipe at then President Donald J. Trump, whose dinner-opposite was Hillary Clinton with a stand-in of Stormy Daniels in case Hillary didn't show. The other "guests" were Mitch McConnell and Nancy Pelosi, Jimmy Kimmel and Kellyanne Conway, and Bill Maher and Eve Babitz.

That tableau is now part of the museum's permanent collection.

SELF PORTRAIT ON TARGET

In 1965, I made *Self-Portrait on Target*. I had kept all the wisdom teeth the tooth fairy and my dentist had taken from my unwilling mouth and used them in the assemblage, along with various other little items that put together what I considered a portrait of myself at that time. My face can be seen in the empty case of a wristwatch which I had found and saved because I had accumulated many watches from thrift shops. I had removed the timepieces and filled them with a series of photobooth shots I'd taken where I made a series of faces like Surprise, Anger, Happiness, Scowling, Laughter, Crying, Skeptical, Fury, and more, and when I'd wake up in the morning, I'd select one of them to show how I felt that day and put it on my wrist. I called them "watches" because I'd watch them, but they didn't tell time. It was my own attempt at making personal jewelry.



Self-Portrait on Target ~ 1965
Mixed media assemblage
18 inch diameter
Collection: Randy and Laura Hipke

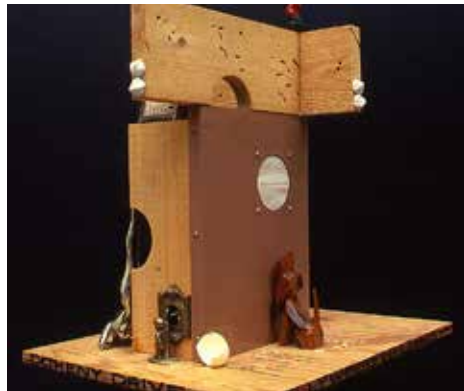


The Priest ~ 1982

Hand-carved wooden Japanese netsuke (2-1/2 in.) in styrofoam packing material (10-1/2 x 7-1/2 x 3-1/2 inches) with cactus barbs

THE PRIEST

Sixty years ago, I bought a little Japanese netsuke at an antique shop. I loved that it was labeled *The Priest*. The hand-carved figurine was dressed in the traditional robes of a Franciscan, but it had the head of a wolf. That intrigued me, as I had known a few priests who might as well have had the heads of a wolf. Anyway, I found a perfect Styrofoam showcase for it, and in each corner, I had inserted a cluster of cactus spines.



High Capacity for Diablo ~ 1988
Mixed media on plywood
Built on 24 x 30 inch platform



Snow White Jeopardy ~ 1989
Mixed media on plywood
Built on 12 x 18 inch platform

Back in high school, I had found a lot of leftover wood from a construction site. My best friend and I brought them to my backyard to assemble into what I called my *Lunch & Love Seat*. I have no photographs of it, but when I had assembled the wood, the piece of furniture was a love seat that could seat two opposing lovers, and if I flipped one of the seats, it could become almost a desk where the sitter could eat one's lunch by themselves. That sculpture hung around for a few years, and finally my mother decided it was time to use it for firewood.

I loved to create assemblages from a plethora of materials I put together in some small tableau that could be viewed from all sides. Two works which sadly don't exist anymore are *High Capacity for Diablo* and *Snow White Jeopardy*. The first one I wanted to be in the show was stolen from the owner, and the second one was lost somewhere in storage. They can be seen on the opposite page.

I made another series using Barbie doll busts I'd found at Pic 'N' Save. They were made by Mattel and were only busts of Barbie, so her owners could redo her hair style. The unusual thing about it was that it looked just like Nicole Brown Simpson, and you could turn her head on its axis to work on styling her hairdo. The odd thing was that there was a diagonal slash across her neck which made it look like how her former celebrity husband, O.J., had murdered his wife. I called each bust the *Nicole Barbie* and painted "Nicole" on the bodice of each bust in a puffy, pink paint. Barbie was wearing an off-the-shoulder frilly dress. Most of those friends I'd given busts to were horrified that I had painted where the neck turned with red fingernail polish which made it look like blood. I do not believe that any of the busts have survived my morbid attempt at gallows humor, but I truly liked how they represented such a horrible episode in the tragedy of our American lives.

(*A loosely connected digression...*) When I was in high school, I bought a snake from our biology teacher and took it home. But first, my friend Bill Wiley, who had also had purchased his snake in a box from the same teacher, had walked home with me to our favorite drugstore where we always bought a coke float before going home. We sat at the counter, and I had the snake in the sleeve of my shirt, but when I reached for a straw it opened the cuff and the snake slithered all the way down the counter in front of people on stools who screamed and fell off backwards and all hell broke loose as I grabbed my snake and made for the front door. The pharmacist vaulted over his station and chased us out of the store, and it was several weeks before we returned for another coke float. Anyway, why I mention it, is because my snake, named Samson, had a vice grip so strong you'd have thought it was a boa constrictor. I kept him in a glass terrarium, but at night he would escape and I worried that I'd step on it, so I had a long piece of arty driftwood which hung over my bed and I placed Samson onto the piece of driftwood. He would slink back and forth along the length of it and he'd try to drop down but would find it was too gravitational for him so he'd stay on the driftwood all night. At least that's what I thought, until one morning I woke up with Samson flicking his tongue at my face. I freaked out and took him to a tall box I had in the backyard and because it was now a warm Spring, it became his new home. When I reached in to put a bowl of water in his box he suddenly snapped on my finger. That scared me, but when my friend, Terry McVeigh, came over to see my snake, we transferred Samson to the top of the picnic table and the snake slithered off the table, down between the bench and the ground, and went straight into the earth never to be seen again. We searched the whole backyard for him, and were completely astonished when he never turned up!

THANKSGIVING

1981

CHRISTMAS

Michael Masterson
PURVEYOR

TURKEY FEVER

ANTHONY Poulby



Turkey Fever ~ 1981
Stuff Magazine, Volume 32
Photo: Michael Masterson

In 1981, I made a series of full-page images for *Stuff Magazine* which I called *Body Works*. These were what I called the photographs of me in various positions, like the *Life Mask* and the *Martyr for Love*. The *Rainbow of Pain* is another body shot from X-rays. And yet another was a contortion image of my *Spider Shot*.



One of the *Body Works* images was a photo of my ass with tucked-in arms called *Turkey Fever*. A good friend, Michael Masterson, had shot it for me to use for a page in *Stuff Magazine*. My ass did in fact look like an uncooked turkey, and my tucked-in arms looked like the trussed-up legs of a baking bird. It was for the Thanksgiving issue.

Retirement Policies, my first spread for *Stuff*, was dedicated to my father, who was an insurance auditor. The images were of me sleeping alone, sleeping with a man, sleeping with a woman, and sleeping with a man and a woman in a *menage-a-trois*. We were all nude in the photographs, but tastefully posed on the bed.

The Kiss of Life and Death was a series of photos which were taken from the “Rescue Breathing” posters in the USA, and the Australians’ name for the same procedure who call it “The Kiss of Life.” In my series, I am looking upon first a man, then a woman. The man was the *Kiss of Life*, and the woman became the *Kiss of Death*. I used the man (York Knowlton, who had been a photo assistant on a shoot I was working on) for the *Kiss of Life*, and the woman was Annie Kelly, the model and wife of the world-class photographer Tim Street-Porter. Annie was posed in a deathly pallor, as was I, but York and I were quite tan when I had kissed him back to life.

My final full-page horizontal image for *Stuff* was called the *Isadora Duncan Dada Death Club*. That was a photo of my navel which, when a white dot was applied to the inner knot, it looked just like an eyeball with lashes and mascara above it. My hand was next to the navel, to give it context for size, and it was a peculiar photo because the hair on my stomach was oddball and distracting.



Retirement Policies ~ 1981
 Stuff Magazine, Volume 30
 Photo: Stephen Ellison



Isadora Duncan Dada Death Club ~ 1981
 Stuff Magazine, Volume 34
 Photo: Pierre Chanteau

First Aid
THE KISS OF LIFE AND DEATH
 Special Matter in the American National Red Cross Form #347

THE KISS OF LIFE



PANEL 1: Open the airway to the victim's lungs by lifting the neck with one hand and tilting the head back with the other hand.



PANEL 2: Pinch the victim's nostrils to prevent air leakage. Maintain the open airway by keeping the neck elevated.



PANEL 3: Seal your mouth tightly around the victim's mouth and blow in. The chest should rise.



PANEL 4: Remove your mouth from the victim, release the nostrils and listen for air escaping from the lungs. Watch for the victim's chest to fall.

Repeat the last three steps 12 to 15 times per minute.
 Continue the Kiss of Life until medical help arrives or breathing is restored.

THE KISS OF DEATH



PANEL 1: Close the victim's airway by seizing the neck with one hand and pushing down on the top of the head with the other hand.



PANEL 2: Pinch the victim's nostrils to prevent the inhalation of air. Maintain closed airway by tilting the chin toward the chest.



PANEL 3: Seal your mouth tightly around the victim's mouth and suck all of the air from the victim's lungs. The chest should sink.



PANEL 4: Without releasing the nostrils, remove your mouth from the victim's to listen for an attempt to gasp or breathe. Watch for the victim's chest to rise.

If necessary, repeat all four steps again, but do not remove your mouth after The Kiss unless all signs of life have ceased.
 Should help arrive, stop the procedure and disappear.

Model: Anne Kelly, Assisted: Steve 11/18/84, 1984

Make-up by: Grant Mudford

Model: Grant Mudford, Assisted: Steve 11/18/84, 1984

Photography by: Grant Mudford, Assisted: Steve 11/18/84, 1984

© 1984 by First Aid Press, Inc., Assisted: Steve 11/18/84, 1984

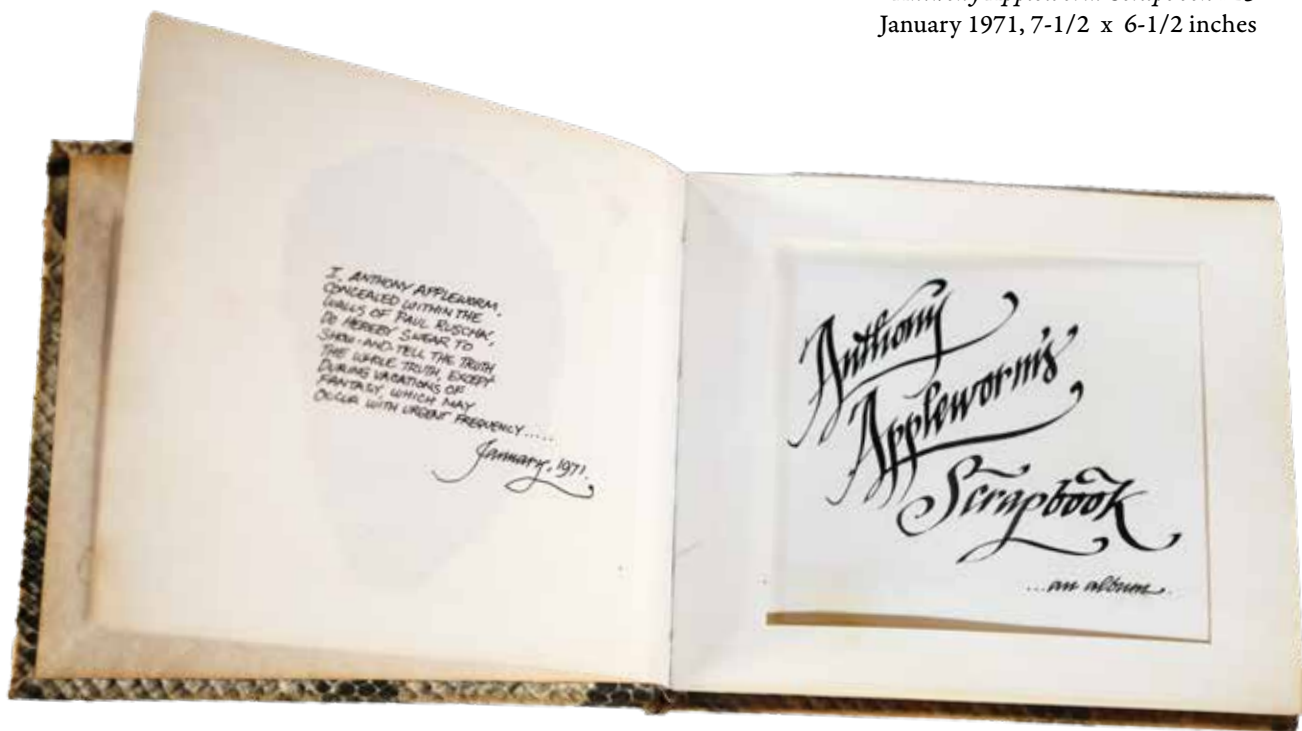
The Kiss of Life and Death, for the Madras and Eve Models

I, ANTHONY APPLEWORM,
CONCEALED WITHIN THE
WALLS OF PAUL RUSCHAK,
DO HEREBY SWEAR TO
SHOW-AND-TELL THE TRUTH
THE WHOLE TRUTH, EXCEPT
DURING VACATIONS OF
FANTASY, WHICH MAY
OCCUR WITH URGENT FREQUENCY.....

January, 1971.

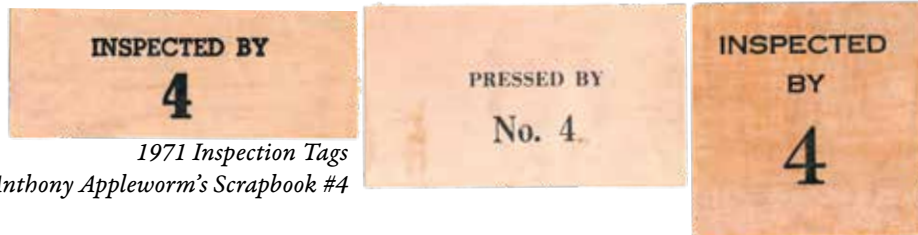


Anthony Appleworm Scrapbook #25
January 1971, 7-1/2 x 6-1/2 inches



MISCELLANY

I am fascinated by things many people disregard as trash, but I seem to find endless uses for them in my art. What most people would discard, I save, and I think about how I can use those items in creating interesting things to look at. In 1970, I began to assemble my collection of inspection slips which were usually found in new clothing, or in various products like ticket stubs or receipts. I found the first one in 1959 when I'd bought a new shirt and it had a little slip of paper in the pocket on which was printed "*Inspected by No. 37.*" I was captivated by wondering what the person who put that in my shirt was like. At that time, they were just a number.



1971 Inspection Tags
Anthony Appleworm's Scrapbook #4

Several years later, after I had amassed many numbered slips, I found one in a box of shoes that read: "*Inspected by Antonia Salamone.*" That put a name on the slip which made me wonder what Antonia looked like. I kept collecting these slips for final use in a book I titled *Anthony Appleworm's Scrapbook*. There were 33 volumes of these unique scrapbooks and I had them bound in a faux snakeskin by my tailor, Mr. Robertson, a Scotsman who was from Edinburgh. They sold for \$33 each and I premièred the books on Valentine's Day, in 1971. For the opening, the owners of Christopher's Restaurant had sent me a dozen fancy cakes, each iced with a date from 1959 through 1970 to match the times I'd collected the slips. I also made little drawings in each of the books, but I had attached several inspection slips to the pages with rubber cement, only to regret my choice of glue. Later it dried out and many of the slips fell out and were lost, or needed to be replaced.

To the present day, my eyes are caught by small slips, like parking stubs, receipts, and claim checks. I just can't stop myself from hanging onto them for future deliberation.



PAUL RUSCHA
DISCOVERS
DADA
!

PAUL RUSCHA
FINDS
DADA
NUDE

PAUL RUSCHA
LOOKS AT
DADA
UNDRESSED

PAUL RUSCHA
CARESSES
THE VIRGIN BODY
OF
DADA

PAUL RUSCHA
REVIVES
DADA

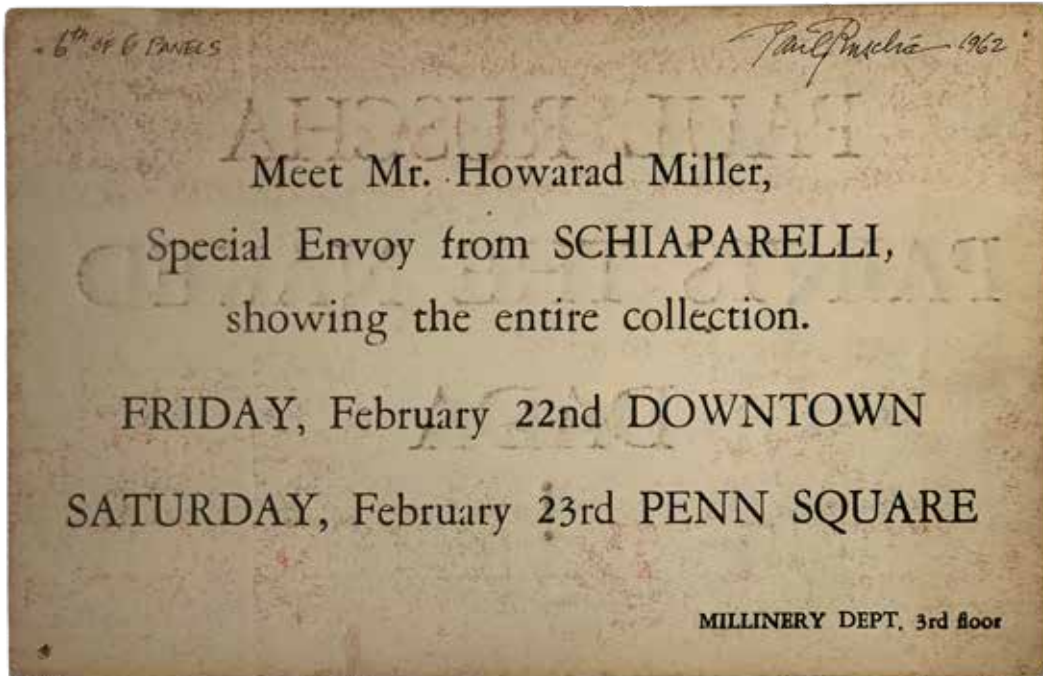
PAUL RUSCHA
PAINTS THE NAKED
DADA DADA

EVEN
MY
MOM
LOVES
DADA



DADA CARDS

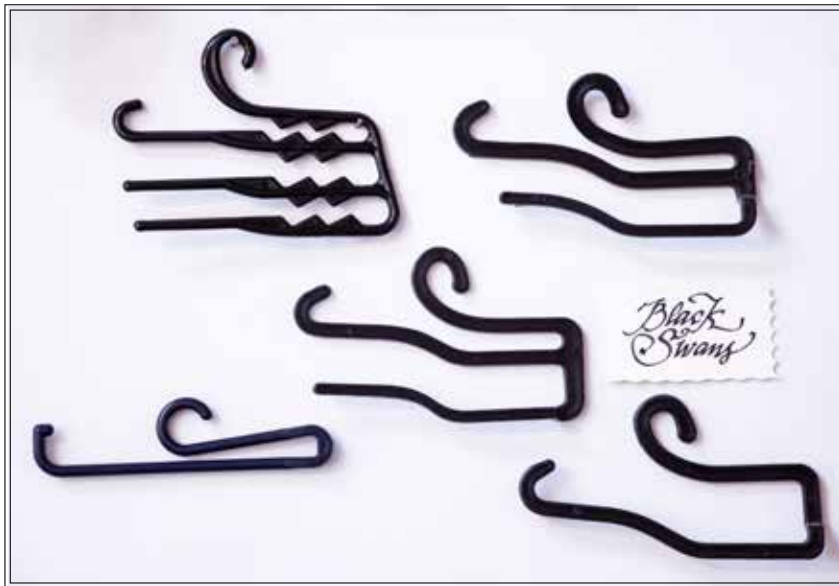
In 1962, I read the autobiography of Man Ray, which had come out the year before, and I was enthralled with the art movement Dada. I had been working in the display department of Rothschild's Clothiers in downtown Oklahoma City, and I was printing the letterpress cards for the windows. When a display came down and the display cards were thrown out, I'd save them and print what I wanted on the back of each card.



The first batch I'd printed on 5 x 7 inch cards were as follows:

d a d a
is dadalive?
is dadadead?
what does dada do?
dada doesn't
dada isn't
dada is
dadaism
D A D A

Then I made the seven 7 x 11 inch cards you see on this spread.



THE KITCHEN AT EL GRAN

On the doorway to my bathroom off the kitchen in El Gran Garage, are several plastic sock-holders which have hooks that hang them from racks in stores where men's socks are sold. I began to keep them, not knowing for what reason, except that they looked to me like black swans-a-swimming. I secured them to the wall and they're still there as if they're swimming into my bathroom. There is also a large, curvy, iron C-wrench which looks just like a centipede, and I have also tagged it with a sign in my calligraphy. At Habitat for Humanity in Flagstaff, I bought a steel blade—not for the blade but for its plastic container for my Vacuform project (p. 35). The blade goes onto some kind of cutter, but that stainless item looks just like the head and beak of an exotic bird to me. On the same wall, a small aluminum hand-saw (without a blade in it) became an Anteater about to lick up a drawing of an Ant.

THE KITCHEN AT LANDALE

I was not satisfied with collecting inspection stickers any longer (although I admit I continue to do so to this day). Instead, I began to put stickers onto my kitchen cabinets, and they are continually added to on a weekly basis. I am showing these doors which have earthquake proof latches on them from when there was a 6.7 Richter scale tremor, and it destroyed many of the dishes in my cabinets. There is a long crack in the ceiling of the kitchen showing seismic damage, and I wrote above that crack : *St. Andreas' Fault: Earthquake Damage Zone: Studio City Chapter.*







EL GRAN GARAGE

In 1994, when my friends Allan Affeldt and Tina Mion asked me to go with them to Winslow, Arizona to check out a hotel which they might want to refurbish, I said okay. We drove there from LA and arrived at night, when all we had were sleeping bags to use on the dusty floors of this long-ago-shuttered hotel named La Posada, designed by Mary Colter, an architect for the Fred Harvey company. At that time, it was owned by the Santa Fe Railway as their division headquarters, and I wondered how in the hell Allan and Tina were going to turn this turkey of a hotel into a bird of paradise? But they—along with founding partner and now Special Projects Manager, Dan Lutzick—did. And the hotel is still going strong, with all their rooms nearly filled to capacity.

When I first saw El Gran Garage, the interior house, along with the laundry room/doghouse, had just been completed by Keith Mion (Tina's brother) who was a master carpenter and had restored some of La Posada's rooms. John Gross, El Gran's previous owner, had commissioned Keith to build habitable structures inside his building, just across the street from La Posada.

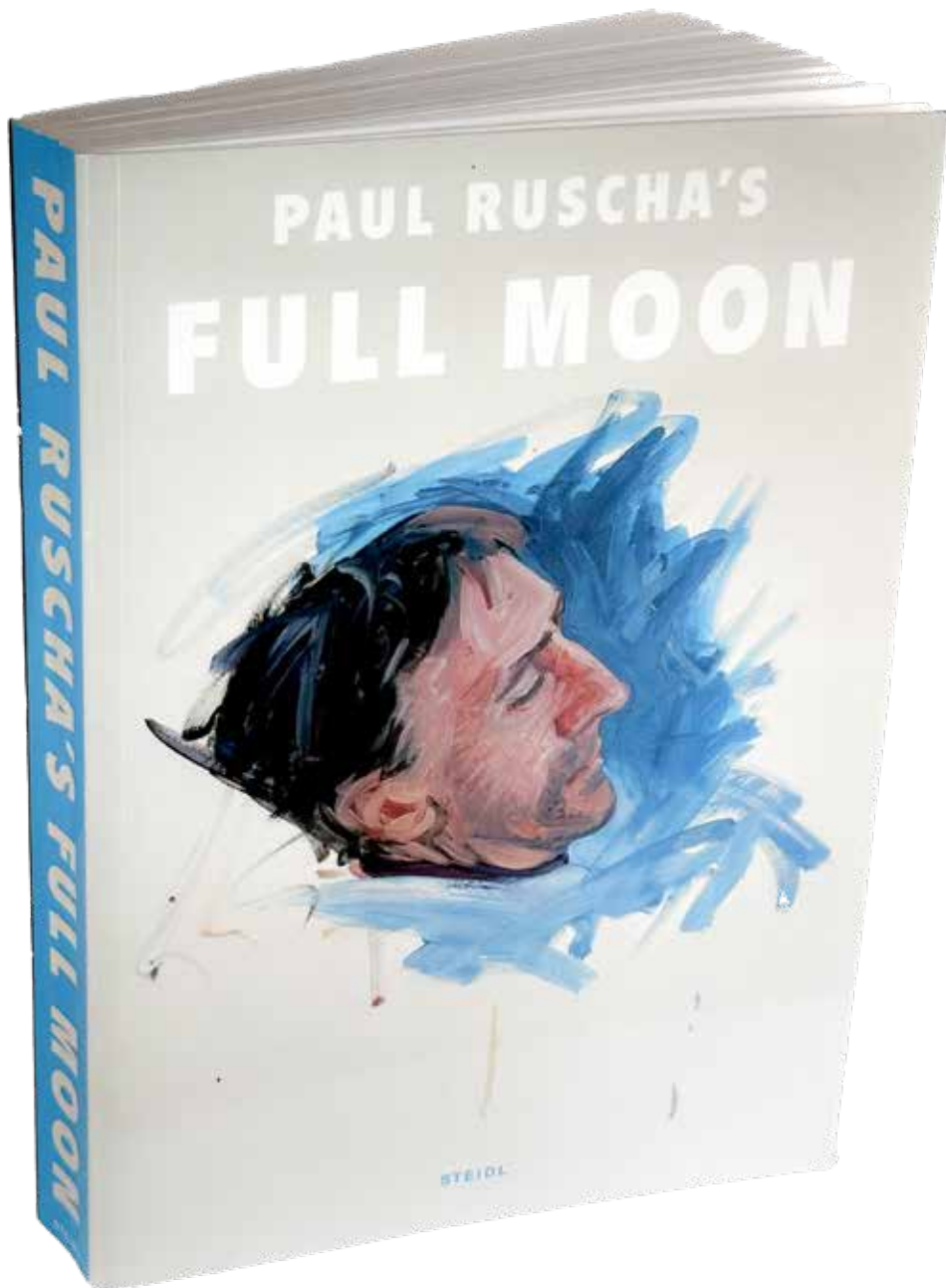
John lived there for several years but passed away in 2005. I then purchased the bow-truss building from John's daughter, Clover, who lived in California. Later, I had Keith Mion build out two wing extensions to accommodate my office and a TV den. The main house is composed of glass-paned doors encircling the whole house, 450 panes in all. His 170-square-foot doghouse, I turned into a guest house with a shower and toilet.

El Gran Garage is an 8,000 square foot industrial space which I love. I display my *Dinner for Dubya* in an area which Dan encircled with old glass-paned doors from the defunct El Garces Hotel in Needles, California. I try to spend a couple of weeks a month in Winslow with our core group of friends: Al and Tina; Dan and Ann-Mary Lutzick; John Suttman and Joan Harden; and Brian and Lori Law. This group is always a welcome relief from the few friends I have in Los Angeles, which often take me a long time to reach because the town is so spread out.

El Gran is also a great space for showing my collections.

In 2014, I had a *Day of the Dead* event at El Gran and showed all of my favorite skeletal artworks by Sandra Yagi, Scott Siedman, Bruce Richards, Laura Hipke, John Scane, and Clive Barker. Also occasionally for *Day of the Dead*, Dan and Ann-Mary will open their house and studio, Snowdrift Art Space, and I contribute by doing the names of the guests deceased loved ones in calligraphy, and those names then go into the various crèches and tributes that Dan has assembled at Snowdrift.

During the span of the *Life Mask* exhibition, El Gran Garage will be used to showcase other elements of my collections, to be seen in scheduled private tours.



Paul Ruschá's Full Moon Book
Published by Gerhard Steidl ~ 2006
Cover Art: Larry Brooks ~ 1987

FULL MOON

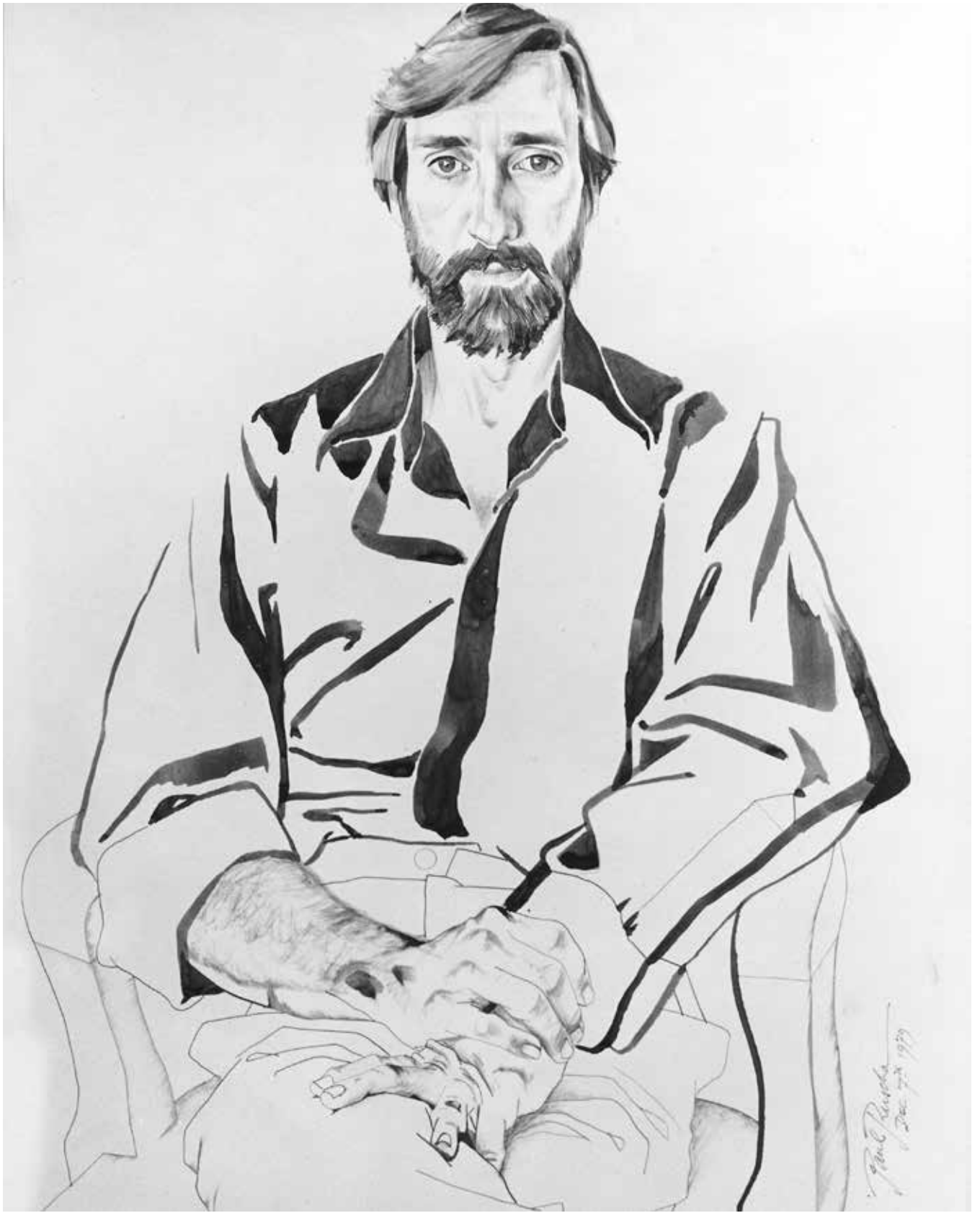
As I mentioned in the *Stuff Magazine* chapter, my ass was the page I'd chosen to present to the art community. It later became the title of my catalog for the Pharmaka Gallery exhibition in 2005 of my collection of art and ephemera. I was going to write just a few words about the show and the work of my friends, but when I was at a meeting with Gerhard Steidl, who had published along with Gagosian Gallery the catalogues raisonnés of my brother's career, Gerhard said that he'd like to publish and print my book, which I'd named *Full Moon*.

I finished the final chapter in January 2006, and was going on press in Germany to oversee the proofs of the book. When I got to Steidlville and was ready to proof the text and images, I found that they had chosen a different image for the cover. Instead of my *Turkey Fever* ass image, it was Larry Brooks' painting of me asleep and the title had been modified to include my name, *Paul Rusch's Full Moon*. I liked how the portrait on the cover looked, so I approved it. They did use the image of my ass opposite the title page, so I had a chance to write an inscription and sign the book.

I had my first book signing at the late Dagny Corcoran's bookstore in the Pacific Design Center on Valentine's Day in 2006, and it was a successful event. Later, my ex-wife had another signing for me at her home in Beverly Hills, and we reconnected for the second time. Our first wedding was on my sister's birthday, September 1, 2003, and our second wedding was on July 29, 2006. She always wanted me to write another follow-up to *Full Moon*, but until this small catalog, I have not written anything else of length.



Paul and printer/publisher Gerhard Steidl, 2006
Photo by Dan Lutzick



1979 Don Bachardy Portrait

PORTRAITS OF PAUL



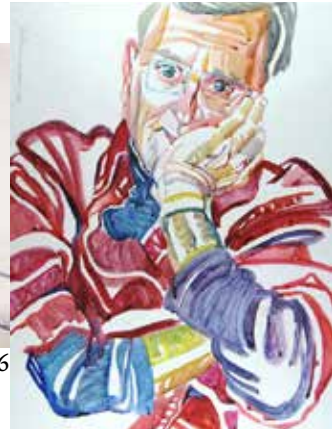
There are several portraits of me by many different artists in my building, El Gran Garage. The portraits probably came to light when I created my first postcard, *Mirrors and Monkey Fur*. Every photo of me thereafter became the basis for yet another postcard which I used for promoting my calligraphy.



1975



1986



2005

DON BACHARDY

When I moved to L.A. in 1973, my brother had the great portrait artist, Don Bachardy, do a drawing of me for my birthday. Don suggested that we meet every year and do a series of birthday drawings, and this did happen where I sat for him until the late 20-teens. Sitting for Don in his studio in Santa Monica was always a treat, even if it sometimes took a lot of stamina to stay as still as possible. After he had drawn or had painted my eyes, he would let me relax them, and then work on the rest of the image. Often, I would fall asleep while he worked on his usual two-hour sitting. Sometimes he would paint several different portraits, up to five in an afternoon, and would then have me sign each one. A couple of times I posed for him nude, and I pitied him for having to paint my irregular body for that long. I always looked forward to the sittings. Don is one of the first chapters in *Full Moon*. My favorite portrait is the one, opposite, he did of me with a beard in 1979.

LARRY BROOKS

Larry Brooks is an artist who had asked me to sit for him because he was doing a series of paintings of artists' faces in the Los Angeles community. I had agreed, but when we began the sitting, my narcolepsy kicked in and I fell asleep. That didn't stop Larry, and thus, he painted me in repose. The result was an image which looked like a martyred saint, and it became the cover of my book, *Full Moon*.



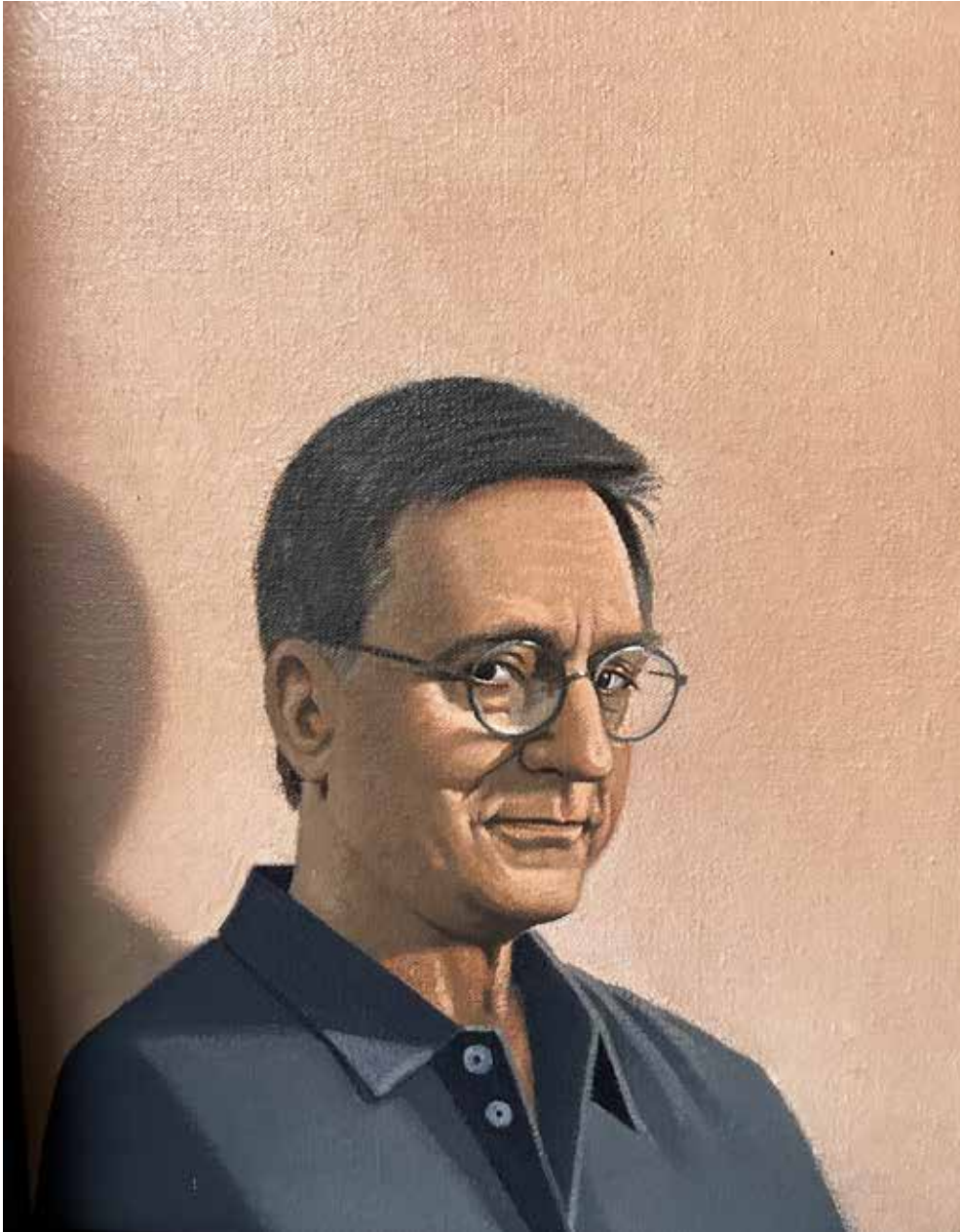
Portrait of Paul at 50 ~ 1995
Tina Mion, Oil on wooden cabinet door
39 x 22 inches

TINA MION

Tina Mion has been a good friend since 1991, and I have loved her art from when I first paid a visit to her L.A. studio with artist Shane Guffogg. Tina has always captured the true inner workings of her subjects, and she wanted to paint a portrait of me after I'd turned fifty. I'm glad she caught my apprehension of that decade in one of her works painted on cabinet doors which she frequently uses. I am always happy that she married Allan Affeldt, as he is her champion and loves every paint stroke she has ever put onto her remarkable body of work. And I couldn't agree more!

VONN SUMNER

Vonn Sumner had done several inimitable paintings of which I love to look at in El Gran and in Studio City, but the one he did of me, which I gave to Ed for his birthday, is a favorite. I saw a show of Vonn's paintings and was surprised to see my own portrait in all its skepticism. I don't know how, but he sure captured the doubtful expression in my scrutinous face.



Cabal (PR) ~ 2017
Vonn Sumner, Oil on linen
20 x 16 inches
Collection: Ed Ruscha



Paul Anthony (Paul Ruschá Angel or Devil) ~ 2009

Laura Hipke, Oil painting on linen
21 x 30 inches



The Angel Paul Ruscha ~ 2014-2017

Laura Hipke, Oil painting on linen
12 x 16 inches



LAURA HIPKE

Laura Hipke was an artist in the Pharmaka firmament, and her work has always captured my interest. I have several paintings of hers, and she has painted a few portraits of me as well. She captured the “angel or devil” nature of my being and has also painted me (ahem) with a saintly halo over my head. Both Laura and her husband, Randy Hipke have worked on my Different Deck of Cards and completed so many facets of that project. It’s a great pleasure to work with them whenever possible. They’ve made some pretty great bird-silhouette T-shirts for me, too, always surprising me with more than I could hope to feature. Their wooden nickel still makes me chuckle when I give one to those who sign my guest book in El Gran Garage.

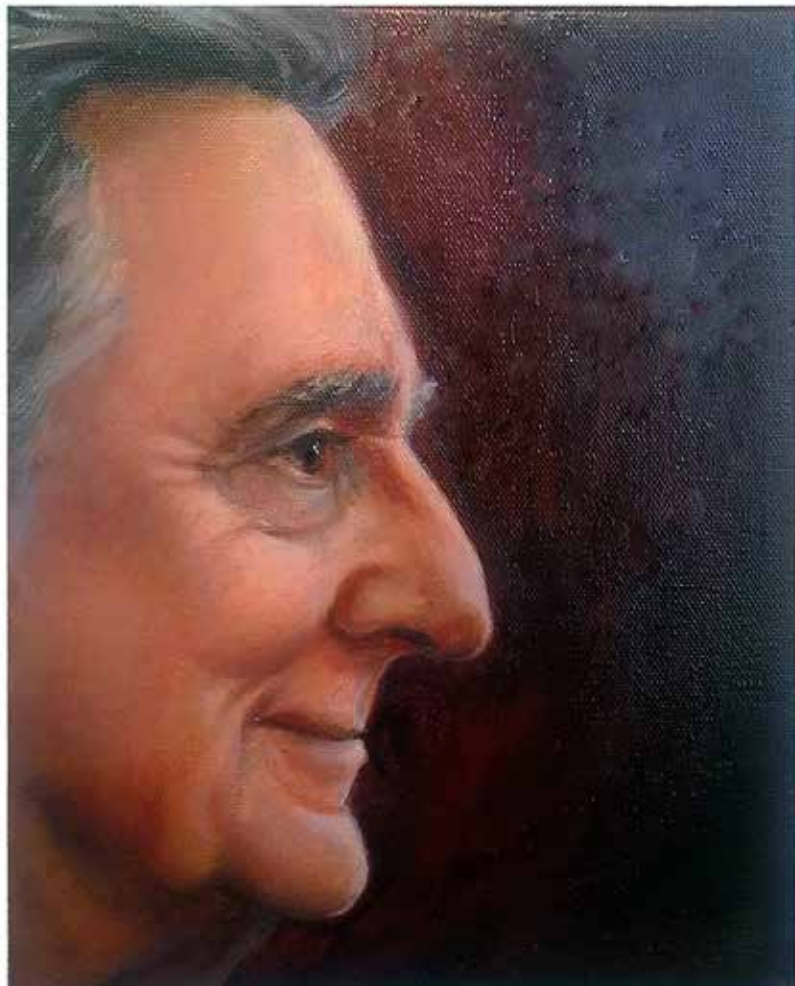


Paul at 50 ~ 1993
Shane Guffogg, Oil on canvas
16 x 12 inches

SHANE GUFFOGG

Shane Guffogg also painted my portrait for my fiftieth birthday. Later, he was working on a series of artist profiles and painted mine as well.

I probably have more of Shane's paintings than of any other artist. He was an assistant in my brother Ed's studio when I first met him there in 1989, and we then worked together for a few years. He now exhibits his wonderful paintings in some of the world's greatest capitals. His calligraphic ribbons are my favorites. He wrote the foreword to *Full Moon*, and he is a chapter in that same book, too.



Paul in Profile ~ 2012
Shane Guffogg, Oil on canvas
10 x 8 inches

LLOYD ZIFF

I have a favorite photograph by the late, great art director and photographer, Lloyd Ziff. It shows me in the jungle in Venezuela, dropping into a river pond where several boys are watching me jump. I had held onto a huge vine before I let go to make my entry, and it was so much fun that I tried it again, but this time I held onto TWO vines to help me make my entry. Before I attempted the second try, a small boy surfaced in the only spot where I could drop into the water, but not wanting to injure the kid, I decided the only thing I could do was to swing back toward the tree, holding onto the vines. I crashed into the tree and slid down the bark with the skin of my body shredding as I fell the length of the tree. The boys were shouting and seemed angry instead of feeling sorry for me, and I was told that they were mad that I had used TWO vines instead of one. I was taken to a clinic in the jungle and treated for my wounds and I recovered slowly hoping that I wouldn't come down with a bad case of jungle rot.



Paul in Flight ~ 1977
Lloyd Ziff, Gelatin silver print



Paul in Desert Burn-Out ~ 1989
Brad Fowler, Color proof sheet

BRAD FOWLER

There is a series of blown-up 35mm frames which made up a complete picture of me gazing across a burn-out in the high desert above my brother's house. A woman who had thrown a barbecue party in the area above Pioneertown on the Fourth of July, stupidly threw out her ashes the next morning, and then left for town. Of course, the ashes weren't doused with water first, so the embers began to burn hundreds of acres of high desert vegetation which also included the property that I was observing. This photographic panorama was taken by Brad Fowler, another fine art photographer and friend who would go with me to the desert nearly every summer toward the end of August.



Eve Babitz and Paul ~ 1976
Photo: Elisa Leonelli



Paul in Sunglass Shadow ~ 1975
Photo: Pierre Chanteau

PAUL RUSCHÁ: IN A NUTSHELL



A chronology of the curious life and career of Paul Ruschá.



Paul at Knott's Berry Farm ~ 1953



Paul at Fifteen ~ 1958

Photo: Ed Ruscha

1942 – 1960

1942

Paul Ruschá was born on the first anniversary of Pearl Harbor: December 7, 1942, at Saint Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City to Edward Joseph Ruscha III, an insurance auditor, and his wife Dorothy Driscoll Ruscha. Paul joined sister Shelby Leonora Ruscha (September 1, 1936) and brother Edward Joseph Ruscha IV (December 16, 1937).

1947

He enrolled in kindergarten at Hawthorne Grade School, then continued for six more years until the 7th grade at Taft Junior High, then at Classen Junior-Senior High School from the 8th through the 11th grade.

1948

In addition to his love of his dog, Daisy, and for collecting rocks, the young Paul enjoyed participating in theater at school. He joined a children's theater group in downtown Oklahoma City, and he took piano lessons, but when he had to perform at his first concert, he refused to sing the *Funny Bunny*, and only played it. Since he hated to practice, he gave up his piano career.

1949

The family traveled by car to the West Coast to visit their mother's parents, Patrick and Leonora Driscoll, who lived in Boulder Creek, California. It was their first trip through the Western U.S. ~ something he would continue throughout his life, coming and going from Oklahoma City to the West Coast and Los Angeles.

1951

Paul loved art from the moment he became conscious of what art was. He believes it is due to the awesome stained glass windows at St. Francis, their parish church in Oklahoma City. With his budding art talent, his fourth grade teacher, Gladys Cooper Lair, let him use a private art room at the back of the class where he could hide away and work on paintings. Since Paul loved birds, he began work on a painting of a Canada Goose. The teacher raved about the work-in-progress until Paul painted the Goose lavender. The teacher flipped out, and his classmates were secretly thrilled with his reprimand. While the technical end was exceptional, she did not appreciate Paul's color option. Paul, however, saw nothing wrong with his choice of colors, because in fact, he did not see color normally. He was (and is) mostly color blind.

1958

Paul's mordant view of the world came while recovering from a car accident. He suffered back injuries, but the young driver—trying to impress a girl with his skills behind the wheel—was killed. Paul recovered, but was faced with the start of permanent, scoliosis which figured in his later works of art.

In the fall of 1958, his brother Ed's friend Mason Williams (of "Classical Gas" fame) got called for Naval duty and told Paul he should take his job at The Record Shop. Paul did so, but unlike his peers who grooved on rock-n-roll and bubblegum pop, Paul loved classical music, especially the work of Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Shostakovich. While dabbling in college, he worked there through 1962.

1959

After a 33-year career as Auditor-in-Chief for Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company, Paul's father retired from his job in October 1959.

On July 1st, when Paul was 16, his father died at home in Paul's arms of a stroke. Up until his father's death, Paul had been attending public school but switched to Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School, a decision spurred by guilt. From the time he started kindergarten, his devout-Catholic father would ask, "Son, would you like to go to the Catholic school this year?" Paul would always reply, "No!" Ed and Shelby's mistreatment at the hands of the nuns had caused their mother to pull the older siblings out of the Catholic school and enroll them in the public school, where Paul attended thereafter until his father's death. To honor his father's wishes, he joined his friends at the much smaller Catholic school to finish the last year of his high school education. It wasn't until his time at Bishop McGuinness High School that he found his acting chops, playing supporting roles in plays and then eventually playing leads, like Ernest Worthington in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

On August 1st, exactly a month after his father's death, a close friend was killed in a car accident. This series of deaths would show up later to inform his work in the *Isadora Duncan Dada Death Club*.

1960

Paul graduated from Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School in Oklahoma City, and to this day, he retains friendships made during those years of public and private schooling.



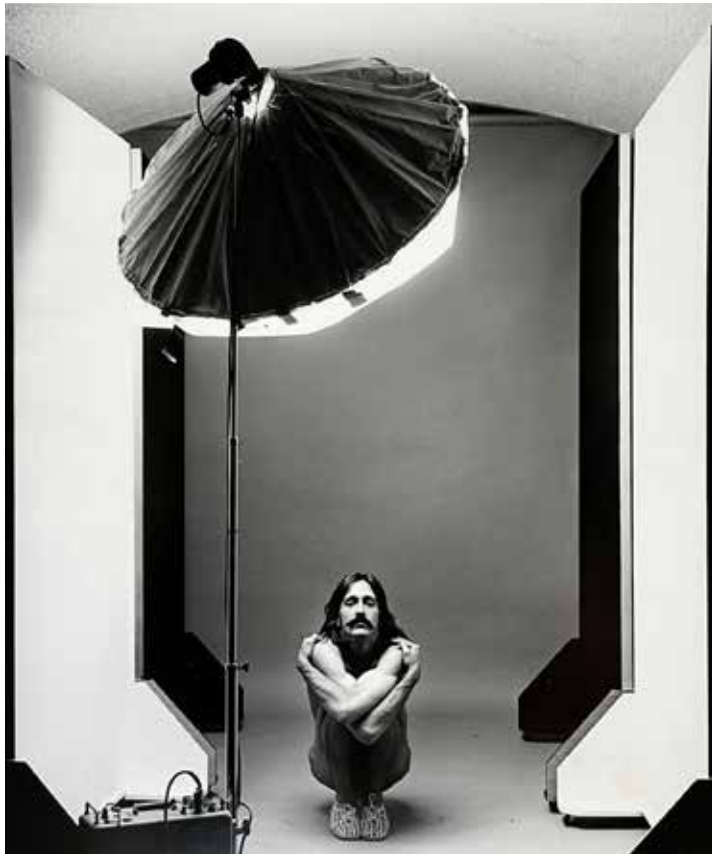
Paul at Eighteen in Rome Airport ~ 1961
Photo: Ed Ruscha



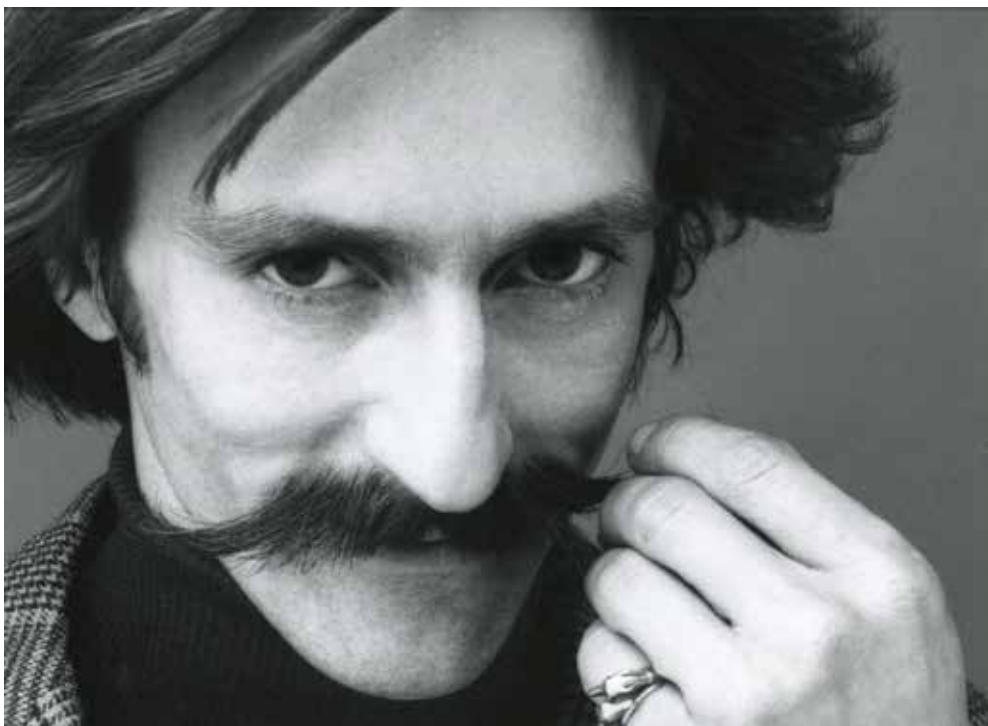
Paul in Vestal Avenue Studio/Apartment ~ Echo Park ~ 1964
Photo: Ed Ruscha

1960 – 1970

- 1960** After graduating high school, Paul enrolled in Central State College in Edmund, Oklahoma, but lasted only one semester. Instead, he moved to Los Angeles where his brother Ed lived with the Students Five, a group of Oklahoma boys who attended Chouinard Art Institute. In L.A., he worked to earn money for a trip to Europe with Ed and their mother, Dorothy. He found a job at the Southern California Music Company, just off Pershing Square in downtown Los Angeles, where he sold records.
- 1961** Paul, Ed, and Dorothy boarded the Bremen II, a ship bound for Europe, thirty years after their father had taken his German mother to Europe in 1931 on the Bremen I. The trip was supposed to last six months, but after a month and a half, Paul wanted to go home. He missed his girlfriend who was graduating, and he wanted to be there—only once home, even his girlfriend found his choice to leave this trip-of-a-lifetime absurd. So much for love.
- 1962** Paul tried college again, but once more, lasted only a semester. He circled back to his love of classical music and got a job at an FM radio station where, from eight p.m. to midnight, he created his own playlists of orchestral music and broadcast them in Oklahoma City. That career came to an end when one night he left an audio pot with a hot mic open. Not only did the melodious notes of his classical tunes cross the airwaves, so too did a conversation he had with a fellow show host: a conversation about sex. He was encouraged to find work elsewhere.
- 1963** In August, Paul again returned to L.A. to live with his brother Ed, who was beginning to make his name as a fine artist and showed at the most avant garde art house, Ferus Gallery. Later that fall, Ed was offered a job by Henry Hopkins, a curator at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, renting out tape-recorded Acoustiguide sets pertaining to the exhibition of Mexican Masterworks. Ed didn't want the job because he wanted to paint, so he gave it to Paul, who did. Paul loved the work, and the work loved him. He continued this work at LACMA, which was at that time in Exposition Park, and he stayed through the show's run in 1964.
- 1965** In January, Paul was transferred by Acoustiguide to the Metropolitan Museum in New York City, where he met Jackie Kennedy and the ambassador from India. He lived in the West Village at 96 Perry Street. with a journalist who wrote for the NY Times, John Kifner, an ace reporter. Though he made only \$45 a week at the Metropolitan, he decided that museum work was for him. Five months later, Rolf Nelson, an art dealer/gallerist and brother-in-law to architect Frank Gehry, asked Paul to come work for him as a docent for a two-month showing of California artists' works at Macy's Department Store in NYC, a job he thoroughly enjoyed because the pay was so much better.
- In July, Paul returned to Oklahoma City and joined the first Oklahoma City Film Festival at the Art Center that summer. During his sister's September 1st birthday dinner at upscale Christopher's Restaurant, the bartender, who was a cousin of her Venezuelan husband, had suggested that while Paul was in town, he should wait tables at the restaurant. Paul went to work the next day, first as a waiter, then four years later as the Maître d' and he remained at Christopher's until the end of 1972. An incident at Christopher's prompted his lifelong path as a calligrapher, when he'd written a table card for a couple's anniversary. He went on to do menus and more for the restaurant and thus enabled his calligraphy business, such as he had done for the Governor of Oklahoma's Thanksgiving Dinner menu and place cards.
- 1967** Paul flew from Oklahoma City to New York City to meet his brother Ed (who had flown in from L.A.) to work on the layout for *Artforum Magazine*. Ed designed the magazine and Paul did the pasteup. He stayed with a girlfriend who lived at 61 Horatio St. in the Village, and several years later he camped out at her place when he was in New York for stopovers before leaving for Europe.
- 1969** Paul rented a studio in the Contemporary Arts Foundation in downtown Oklahoma City where he began work on designing a deck of playing cards by changing the spots from Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs and Spades to *Ducks, Doves, Buzzards and Bluejays*. He did a print of the layout of cards several years later called *A Different Deck*.



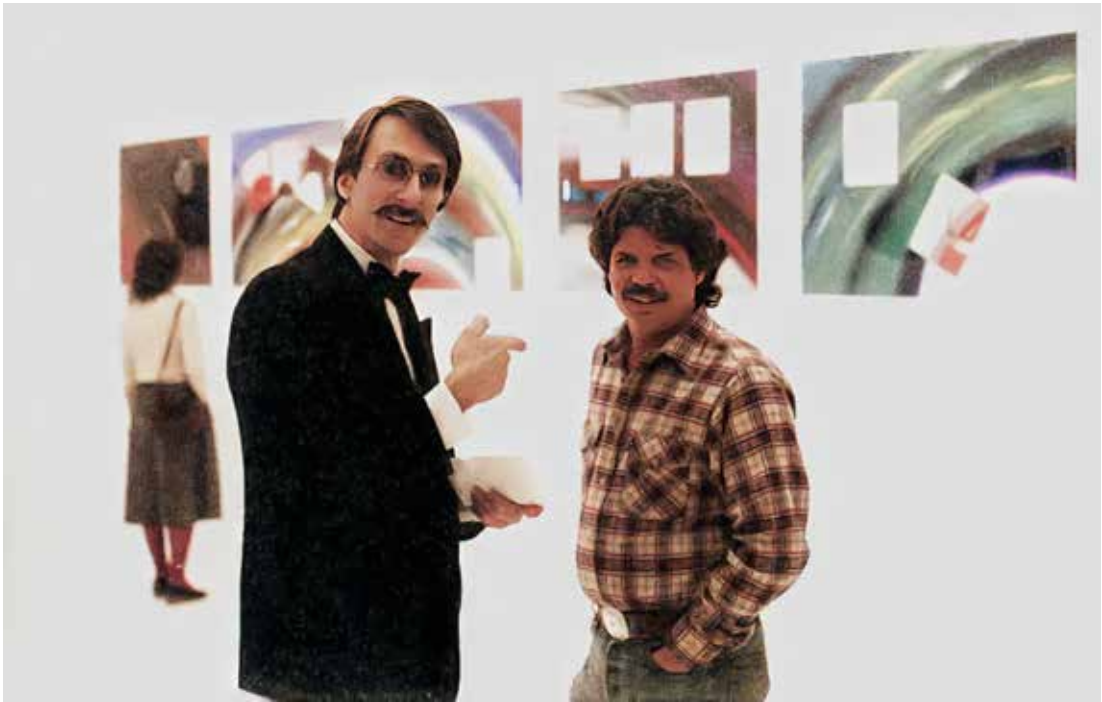
Paul's Favorite Sandals ~ 1974
Photo: Doug Metzler



Mustachioed Paul ~ 1976
Photo: Pierre Chanteau

1970 – 1980

- 1970 Paul's first exhibition during that CAF period, was *Dinner for Doris*, a round dining table with all-white linens and silver place settings surrounded by gleaming white toilets. Place cards identified the diners, like Doris Day whose "dinner partner" was Charles Manson. Manson had intended to kill Day's son Terry Melcher, but he ended up having Sharon Tate and her friends murdered instead. The toilet tableau intended to show eight names who were at conflict with one-another in the news including Jackie Kennedy Onassis and Maria Callas; Valerie Solanas because she had shot Andy Warhol; Eldridge Cleaver and Lester Maddox.
- That same year, Paul also created his first postcard in a series which promoted his calligraphy. That image showed Paul wearing mirrored contact lenses and a monkey fur coat: *Mirrors & Monkey Fur ~ Postcard #1*. The postcard was photographed by Oriel Lum, a Chinese waiter/photographer at Christopher's.
- 1971 Anthony Appleworm was the nickname Paul was given when he lived and worked in the Big Apple. Thus, Paul's second show was titled *Anthony Appleworm's Scrapbook* ~ 33 volumes of drawings, collages, and inspection slips he'd collected since 1959 when he first found one in a new shirt he'd purchased. On it was printed *Inspected by #37* ~ and that collection of assembled slips were pasted into faux-snakeskin books which were hand-bound by Paul's Scottish tailor. The volumes sold for \$33 each.
- 1973 After eight years at Christopher's restaurant in OKC, Paul decided to permanently relocate to Los Angeles to work for his brother Ed in his Hollywood studio. On the "Half-Christmas" (a Paul-ism referring to June 25th), Paul made his final move to L.A. In addition to assisting in Ed's studio, Paul was asked by an actor-friend who had to go to New York, to take over his part in a bit of acting at Port's Restaurant, where he played the role of the Maitre d' in *Schubert's Last Serenade*. He formed several important friendships during this first year, including with artist, author and "L.A.Woman," Eve Babitz, an on-and-off again relationship that continued for over 30 years. A graphic designer/photographer Lloyd Ziff, whom he met during a party at Candice Bergen's house in Beverly Hills, then introduced Paul to actress Susan Doukas at a subsequent birthday party. Both Lloyd and Susan were told by Elaine Grove—who had gone to McGuinness High School with Paul—that if they ever met him, they'd probably become best friends, and they did. Through Susan, Paul met photographer Doug Metzler, the staff photographer for United Artists Records. They traded services: Paul did calligraphy for Doug's business card, and Doug photographed Paul's postcards to showcase his calligraphy.
- 1974 Paul began photographing his next series of post cards, including *Society Calligrapher ~ Postcard No. 2*. He painted *Symbolic Alternatives (for a solitaire addict)* - an acrylic and ink on canvas, which was shown at LACMA's Artists' Choice exhibition in 1975. He continued to paint other bird paintings during this period.
- 1975 Photographer Pierre Chanteau, Doug's photo assistant and publicity photographer at United Artists, taught Paul his darkroom techniques, and Doug suggested that Paul apply for Pierre's job when Pierre moved to New York to open his own studio. Paul then worked as Doug's assistant and he became the publicity photographer for United Artists and Blue Note Records from 1975 until 1976. He created his fourth postcard, *Martyr for Love*, which Pierre Chanteau had photographed at Paul's direction.
- 1976 Paul created *Life Mask ~ Postcard No. 3*, photographed by Doug Metzler. From late 1976 until the mid-'80s, Paul worked as a freelance photographer, doing work for Lloyd Ziff, the art director for Rolling Stone, New West Magazine, Vanity Fair, House and Garden, Conde Nast Traveler, and more.
- 1977 Paul created his fifth Postcard, *Praying Hands Monument*, photographed in the Raleigh-Durham cemetery in North Carolina by Gary Register, who had replaced him at United Artists Records. They stayed friends for many years and Paul was Gary's best man at his wedding to Joanie Gosse that summer. For several years, Paul went to Silver Plume, Colorado to stay with them and for ten years, he designed the posters for the Silver Plume Melodrama.
- 1979 Paul finished the face card illustrations for the deck of playing cards he'd begun creating in 1969, entitled *Solitaire for Addicts*. He was also in a show of photographers at Windward Gallery in Venice, California titled *Four Views of L.A.*



Paul and John Mazza at Paul's opening at SHOFA ~ 1981



Self Portrait ~ 1997
Photo: Paul Ruschá

1980 – 2000

- 1980** Paul went on staff at The Workbook, a graphic arts annual, verifying the listings of photographers, illustrators, and designers. He loved the work environment and enjoyed the job, which he kept for a whole decade.
- 1981** Paul conceived and photo-directed several pages for *Stuff Magazine*, including ***Retirement Policies***, photographed by Stephen Ellison; ***The Kiss of Life & Death***, photographed by Grant Mudford; ***Isadora Duncan DaDa Death Club***, photographed by Pierre Chanteau; and ***Turkey Fever***, photographed by Michael Masterson.
- Paul painted a series of abstract acrylic paintings on 30 x 40 inch and 8 x 10 inch sheets of acetate plastic. These works were shown in Steve's House of Fine Art (SHOFA) gallery in L.A in December.
- 1989** Paul bought his first home in Studio City, California, where he still lives. His kitchen reflects his ability to see art in everything, with kitchen cabinets covered in stickers found on common products. His home showcases his collection of art from over the years, showcasing emerging artists to established ones.
- 1990** During his time at *The Workbook*, the publisher shifted Paul to distribution, wanting him to travel to New York and Chicago to sell to different bookstores. Paul was not a salesman. After returning from Chicago, he told his brother Ed how much he hated the work. Ed said, "Why don't you come to work for me?" And he did. Paul photographs and archives all of the work of his brother, artist Ed Ruscha, at the studio in Culver City, California; work he still continues to do.
- 1992** Paul met a girl, a fellow artist, brought to the studio by Ed's studio assistant, artist Shane Guffogg. Her name was Tina Mion. Ed and his friend, artist Joe Goode, were quite impressed by her. Tina joined Paul's *Sunday Painters' Club*, which Paul formed with artist Tulsa Kinney as a way to generate art for a show of artists who had jobs during the week, but painted on Sunday. They were to have produced 52 works of art for the year and then have a show of the selected paintings. Tina was the only one who finished, having painted a series of U.S. Presidents based on the deck of American Presidents cards.
- 1994** Tina introduced Paul to two people who would become significant parts of Paul's life. It happened at her wedding. The two people were Allan Affeldt (her soon-to-be husband) and Daniel Lutzick, and both remain Paul's closest friends.
- Early on the morning of January 17th, Paul was shaken awake by the 6.7 magnitude Northridge earthquake which rattled his Studio City home and left a big crack in the kitchen ceiling. Instead of patching the damage, Paul instead made it art. Along the jagged crack, Paul wrote in Calligraphy: ***St. Andreas' Fault: Earthquake Damage Zone, Studio City Chapter***. The quake threw Paul out of bed onto his head, and all his earthquake survival supplies were strewn across the room. Doors were blocked by fallen furniture, and his glasses were nowhere to be found. Thoroughly pissed off, he took the earthquake personally.
- 1994** Allan and Tina asked Paul to accompany them to Winslow, Arizona to check out an old railroad hotel which was then used by the Santa Fe Railway as its headquarters. The hotel opened in 1930, designed by architect Mary Colter, but closed in 1957. Allan wanted to restore it to its former Fred Harvey glory. Paul thought they were crazy to want to restore such a sadly-maintained building, but Allan put his skills together and in 1997, he acquired the hotel and reopened a few rooms. Allan, Dan, Tina, and her brother Keith Mion, worked diligently to restore and reopen the building to its former, respectful standing in Winslow, and because Interstate 40 had replaced and nearly made the Route 66 town a ghost town, it put the village back on the map.
- 2000** Paul went to Göttingen, Germany to work on press for the Smithsonian catalog of his brother's show at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C. The famed press was Steidl Verlag, and its infamous, infuriating-but-wonderful publisher, Gerhard Steidl, began printing the first of many books of his brother's career: the *Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Volume One through Volume Seven*, to be printed throughout the next twenty years. Gerhard Steidl also works with Ed Ruscha on special projects, including the *Then and Now* book (2004) and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* book designed by Ed. Paul continues to go to Germany to see the completion of these projects in Steidville, Gerhard's publishing empire.



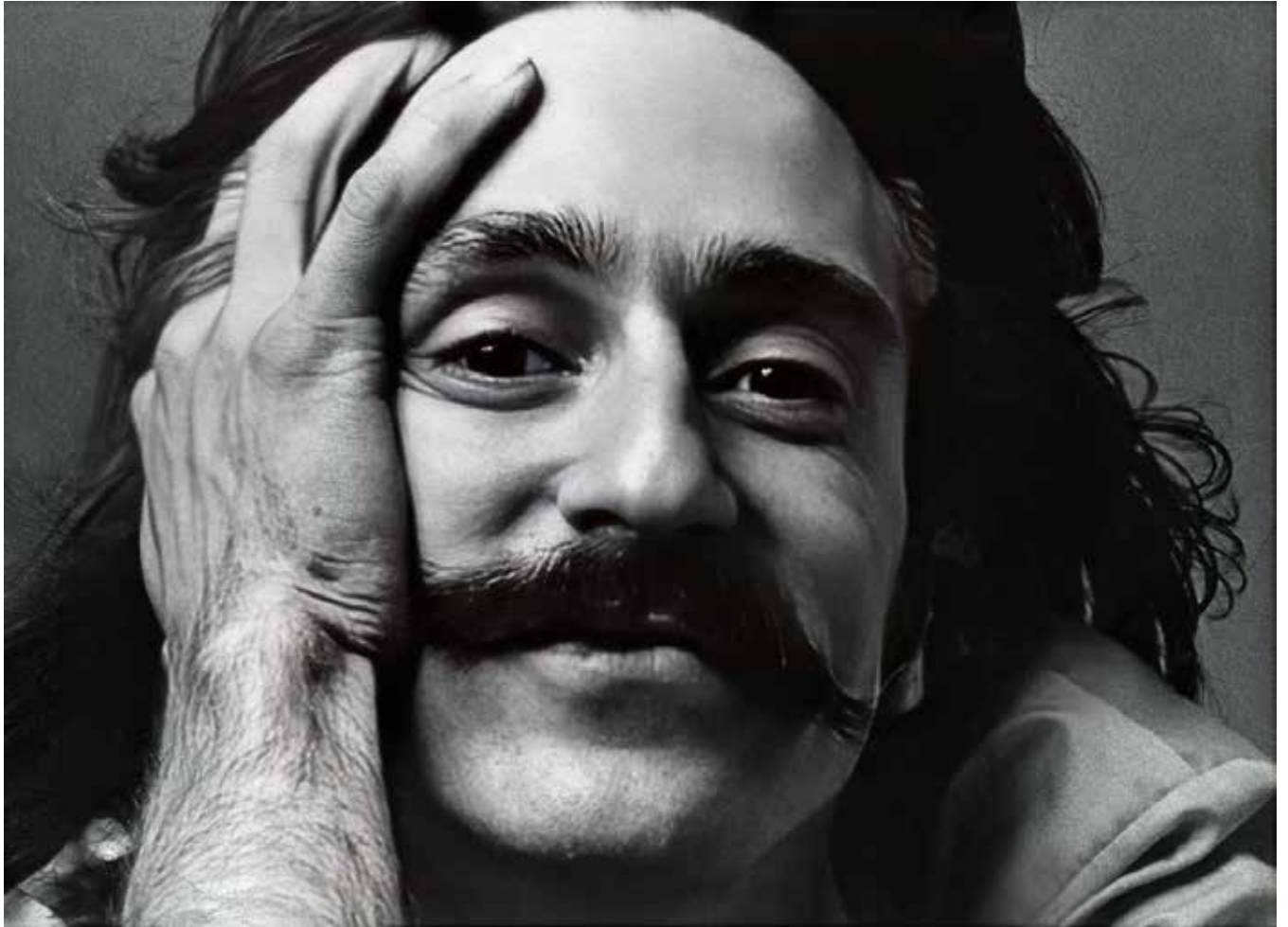
Shortly after purchasing El Gran ~ 2006
Photo: Dan Lutzick



See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil ~ 2010
Photo: Paul Ruschá

2002 - 2024

- 2002 Paul began photographing *Vacuforms*, a project twelve years in the making, creating photographic images from the plastic, point-of-purchase packaging that would normally be thrown away.
- 2003 Paul married Ulrike Kantor, the Beverly Hills gallerist to whom he had been engaged a few times in the '80s and '90s. She was the one who suggested Paul was a "Sunday painter" and that he could never compete with the fame and fortune of his brother, Ed.
- 2005 Paul created *Dinner for Dubya*, first shown at Bert Green Fine Art in downtown L.A. It was an octagonal dinner table setting with surrounding toilets ~ the second reenactment of his 1970 tableau, *Dinner for Doris*.
- Paul began writing a catalog for a show of his personal art collection at Pharmaka Gallery. The working exhibition catalog expanded to a 263-page book. His show of the same name opened at Pharmaka in downtown L.A. from, September 17 through November 12.
- Paul and Ulrike divorced.
- 2006 In January, *Paul Ruscha's Full Moon* was printed at Steidl Verlag in Germany. and on Valentine's Day, Paul began a series of book signings.
- Paul bought an historic building in Winslow, Arizona: El Gran Garage, originally a Standard Oil Garage. El Gran is a bow-truss building with a glass house and guest house built inside for John Gross by Tina's brother, Keith Mion. It now serves as Paul's part-time home, studio, and gallery featuring his many collections.
- Paul and Ulrike oddly remarried. They remained married until her death of COVID in 2021 at the age of 88.
- 2014 Paul hosted a Day of the Dead Exhibition at El Gran Garage, featuring pieces from his collection, including *The Alphabet*, by Rebecca Gray Smith, which is a suite of 28 skeletal etchings created over a 25-year period that examine premature death in the modern world. Her *Numbers* suite of etchings followed. All of the exhibited works deal with the Day of the Dead celebration via the Catholic Church on November 2nd, which was the date of his father's birthday in 1891.
- 2017 *Circle of Truth*, a traveling art exhibition curated by Laura Hipke and Shane Guffogg debuts. *Circle of Truth* is described as a visual game of "Telephone." The first painting, created by co-curator Shane Guffogg, was delivered along with a blank canvas to the second artist in the Circle, yet the second artist was not given the identity of the first artist. The only instructions were to find "Truth" in the first painting and then use the blank canvas to create a work of art in response and send it onto the next artist participating in the project of 49 canvases by 49 different artists. Paul created painting #16 in the series and his brother Ed was the final artist, #49 in the *Circle of Truth*.
- 2020 In March, the pandemic closed down nearly everything in the world and Paul retreated to El Gran Garage and to the room named for his brother Ed in La Posada Hotel. It was there he consumed his Tina-Mion-prepared-dinners while he watched *Jeopardy* and *Wheel of Fortune* on TV. The COVID scare died down a few months later, and after a series of vaccinations, he returned to L.A. to resume his work in his brother's studio.
- Paul's *Dinner for Dubya* tableau was featured in the OK/LA exhibit at Fred Jones Jr. Museum at Oklahoma University in Norman, Oklahoma. The exhibit featured work from the four original artists who had moved from Oklahoma City to Los Angeles, including Patrick Blackwell, Joe Goode, Jerry McMillan, and Ed Ruscha. It was the 60th anniversary of the first show those four artists had exhibited at the Oklahoma City Art Center in the summer of 1960. Paul and Mason Williams, brother and Okie friends of the other artists, were also invited to join the original artists in the anniversary show at the museum on the OU campus.
- 2024 Paul continues to travel between Winslow Arizona and Studio City California, and still, at age eighty-one, goes to work nearly every day at Ed's Culver City studio, documenting his brother's work. Paul also continues to create, seeing art in things that other people might disregard.



Paul ~ 1975
Photo: Pierre Chanteau



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I must thank several friends who were most instrumental in putting together this exhibition at the Affeldt Mion Museum:

First, I have to thank Allan Affeldt and his wife, the artist Tina Mion. They are the main reason I am in El Gran Garage, across the street from their historic hotel, La Posada. I love them for inviting me to show my work in their museum.

Mostly, I must credit Lori Bentley Law, the director of the museum, who helped usher me along, with her many video interviews of friends and family, and her endless photographic documentation and graphic design of this catalog. She was entirely professional in hanging this show and her husband Brian provided a good eye for any questions she had about choosing the art to hang.

Then, there is my friend Daniel Lutzick, who is the greatest overseer of my domain in Winslow. He has been most helpful in adding his often-infallible eye in knowing what-to-put-where in this exhibition, as well as in El Gran. Dan also has a Popeye forearm and is a strong guy who can move just about any immovable object in the way. His wife, Ann-Mary, is also a godsend because she keeps me chowing-down on her chocolate croissants and café au laits on weekends.

My longtime friend, Steve Wood, is an invaluable backup to keeping both my places in Winslow and in Los Angeles running smoothly, and he shares his two Sheep-a-doodles, Layla and Nigal, with me to my delight.

My brother Ed, who is probably the best answer to why I can afford to spend the time I do in Winslow. I have loved him since birth, and cannot thank him enough for having kept me busy for many years with his great art, and his active studio life.

Susan Haller, Ed's studio manager and longtime friend, is eternally helpful in balancing my workload at the studio when I'm in Winslow, and is ready for me when I return to Los Angeles.

I must appreciate aloud, my supportive friends Shane Guffogg and Laura Hipke for their ever-present help in remaining good friends over the years and adding to the exhibition with their portraits of yours truly.

I must also appreciate all those who contributed to Lori's *Life Mask* video and have added their comments on knowing me for so many years: in Oklahoma City, my sister, Shelby Paoli, Rea Baldrige, John Brandenburg, Norman Thompson, Sylvia Kathryn Price-Fanning, and Steve Wood; in Dallas, Kay and Mike Barnes; in Los Angeles, Laura Hipke, and Susan Haller; and in Strathmore Shane Guffogg. My thanks as well to any who were interviewed after the printing of this catalog.

Paul Ruschá



LIFE MASK

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