



Statement: *Richard A. Conroy* MFA

Thoughts that inspire:

If art is to nourish the roots of culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him.

John F. Kennedy

Art at its most significant is a Distant Early Warning System that can always be relied on to tell the old culture what is beginning to happen to it.

Marshall McLuhan

We humans are an extremely important manifestation of the replication bomb, because it is through us – through our brains, our symbolic culture and our technology – that the explosion may proceed to the next stage and reverberate through deep space.

Richard Dawkins

Where I hang my hat:

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Since the advent of modern art, artist (de) signers have assigned themselves the role to represent and critique the values, perceptions, and practices of their contemporary culture and then to create them "anew."

The idea of the avant-garde encapsulates this tripartite function. As a consequence of the first two functions, artist (de) signers are compelled to be ever-vigilant readers of our culture's constantly shifting horizons and of the semiotics systems that shape, signify, and organize the order in which we find ourselves at home. Once we identify these new agent forces at the forefront of the dynamics of cultural change, we then begin to create a corresponding set of symbols with which to communicate with our contemporaries. If this communication is to be effective, it is because the artist has image-in-ed, and then (re) presents these in-sights as poetic essences constituting our shared collective experience, both visual, and/or non-visual. This process is undertaken because we, as thinking, emotional, spiritual beings – as both a product and a producing of our historical time -- desire to be simultaneously informed about and bound by the meaning horizons that define our experience as we journey from birth to death.

As an artist, then, of late, I have found myself preparing a chronological sampling of my art making adventures that have spanned the adult decades of my life and in the process creating this website and its content. This site therefore is by default both an artistic chronology and an expanding web archive. While I was in the process of reviewing and sorting all of these little icon images displayed row upon row on my computer monitor, it seemed as if a stranger should rightfully lay claim as the author to all of these traces of experience, instead of me! "Why", I ask myself?

Sitting and whispering into my soul from behind my eyes, while I was engaged in reviewing these iconic images infused within and part of the illumination offered by my monitor, was a much younger inner

artist. He kept reminding me of my youthful vision, a vision that included the kind of art "I should make" if I were to be a "contemporary" within my era! My inner artist then began to recall all of those books that I read and hear all of those professors and their the endless does and don'ts that they each in his or her role as the high priests of art and design voiced with great conviction and that, in retrospect, qualify as my formal education. I hear, too, an ancient shaman insisting that I, like the snakes that lived in the mountains of my childhood, must shed my skin and renew myself.

At this point in time, then, I constantly find myself in the process of reviewing my life as it has unfolded. In doing so, I realize that I have slowly and unconsciously shifted my orientation to one in which I am gazing into a void, one in which there are neither goals nor transcendental destinations, one free of the reoccurring chants of the "must does and don'ts". Now there remains only a constant stream of simple questions, posing as curiosities, that continues to move me to explore through image making a deeper sense of my self, my relationship to my world(s), and my relationship to the visual and non-visual realms within each.

At this juncture, I also find myself exploring the endless variety of creation mythologies that have informed and enchanted all those participants within those incredible cultures that have preceded ours. They all were then, as I am now, consciously and unconsciously seeking and defining meaning throughout their respective journeys between birth and death. By exploring the magically poetic in theirs, it is my hope to find the means to poetically identify the magical that constitutes mine. As you review this site and the traces of my journey of insight that it offers, it is my sincerest wish that you may find traces of your own footsteps and a reminder that, unbeknownst to each of us, we have made, and will continue to make, this journey together.