

HUDSON RIVER MUSEUM AND GALLERY GUIDE / SPRING 2014

FROM THE EDITOR BY DOUGLAS ADELFER



“Ralph Lewanda Wickiser (1910-1998) had a distinguished 70 year career as an artist, educator, and author which paralleled the odyssey of American Art in the 20th century.

When the young painter got to Woodstock in 1939 to study color lithography with Emil Ganzo, he was exploring figuration and abstraction. What he discovered was a sublime landscape populated by bohemian pioneers. Wickiser returned to the hamlet every summer, eventually building a house with a path to the studio he would walk for 50 years.

Having embraced pure abstraction by the early fifties, Wickiser was at the center of postwar modernism. Exhibiting widely in major museums and forming close relationships with the prominent neighbors and contemporaries. By the sixties he was painting photo-based nudes provocatively reflected in studio mirrors, expanding into abstract-representation during the next decade.

The painter retired to the country in the mid-seventies, free from the responsibilities of teaching, to create what would prove to be his signature style. He immersed himself in observation of light, as it shadowed his lawn, moved through his beloved apple trees, and reflected in the nearby stream. A consummate photographer, he employed the camera's lens in recording the elusive movement of light, to be interpreted in the studio through the painterly push-pull of form and color. In his last prolific decade, Wickiser completed a series of paintings that are remarkable in their transcendent contemplation of the inherent union of figuration and abstraction in nature.

“Ralph. L Wickiser, the Reflected Stream, the Early Years, 1975-1985” is currently on view at the Walter Wickiser Gallery in Chelsea. Three exceptional books chronicling the artist's noteworthy life are available.”

Right: *Compassion Theme - Yellow*, Ralph L. Wickiser, 1954, Oil on Linen, 90 x 73 in.

Street, assisted by cures, hardly able to croak his songs of equality, the millennial sang them for him. Feet dropped out, and ruined in long before receiving musical degree; the arrival of Timothy Leary at Harvard, to instigate a rainbow coalition for the revival of old songs and Clearwater, locally, and globally.

The events in the political arena we recalled last year, demanded more sober reflection. The commodified mediums of Polaroid, silkscreen, and super eight, defusing the continuum in a cacophony of information, technology, and previously marginalized forms of expression which displaced abstraction.

Like so many aspects of culture in the United States, the banjo is of African descent. The skin of our Hudson River homies five string bears an inscription transcribing a message he would broadcast until the last act: “this machine surrounds hate and forces it to surrender.”



Much of the infrastructure in the early days of the land of the free was built by slaves, who, in some states, outnumbered their masters, and proved the dilemma in the Jeffersonian vision of an agrarian society. Slavery is framed as the cause of our Civil War that so quickly followed independence, but was rather the linchpin of an economic conflict between the urbanizing northern states and the rural south.

The founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was born on the banks of the Housatonic River in Great Barrington, Massachusetts three years after the conspiratorial assassination of Abraham Lincoln. He proved an eloquent observer of the arrival of the modern age and voiced early concerns for its threat to the environment and lack of social equality. As an artist Du Bois sought the tradition of truth and beauty expressed through African American experience. The great migration of freed slaves from the rural south to northern cities propelled the search for functional bipartismism.

2013 brought us, as engaged citizens, the opportunity to acknowledge a number of profound anniversaries in the nation's story that emphasize the theaters of art and politics. Manhattan's art world reviewed the 1913 Armory show, at which the introduction of European modernism sparked an upswen sensation, fueled by Marcel Duchamp's referential ready-made's, heralding the suppressed avant-garde's storming of its figurative Academy, deployment to New York, and reconfiguration as the next status quo, abstract expressionism.

Until the resolution of this attack transparency will keep on hoarding "the single bullet theory."

We boomers revisited our own revolution that premiered with pop art's bang in 1960 30 years ago, announced by a soup can. The nucleus was

Coincidentally, 1963 also marked the death of W. E. B. Du Bois in Ghana where he had moved at maturity, finally taking Lincoln's suggestion that freed slaves self-deport to Africa, and proving his early point that he was "at Harvard not of Harvard."

The great migration of freed slaves from the rural south to northern cities propelled the search for functional bipartismism.