EDUCATION AND INFLUENCES

1956-1965

My education began in New York City at Cooper Union Art School. We were required to take courses in Architecture and Graphic Design as well as in Sculpture, Printmaking, Drawing and Painting. We were also required to take a number of courses in two dimensional and three dimensional design. It was very rigorous and many of these courses were taught by Europeans who were directly associated with the famous Bau Haus School of design in Pre-War Germany. I came to appreciate the analytical approach to design taught by my instructors. At the same time, I was in New York City when Abstract Expressionism was in vogue. Some of my painting instructors were A&E painters and in the city I had contact with many artists practicing this style and was influenced by them, and so I was torn in two different directions very early in my schooling in New York. If you counted all the influences that the many museums had to offer, then you could be split many other ways as to style. The museums and galleries contributed greatly to my education.

Another part of my education was graphic design, lettering and advertising art in general. This was practical and learned both in school and in actual working experience all through my school years. I still enjoy calligraphy. My graduate study at Yale University School of Art was much the same as my undergraduate study at Cooper Union. Josef Albers had been Chairman of the Art School up to the year 1963 when I began my education there. His influence was still very strong so once again I received a big dose of the rigorous Bau Haus approach to design but also more influence from abstract expressionists. Pop art was just beginning to gradually have its effect. Optical art also.

At Yale University Art History began also to overwhelm me, as it never had before except from museum visits in New York and Philadelphia. It was a very large art history department with many specialty areas taught by very distinguished professors. I began to backtrack and consider how I might incorporate features of Cubism and Constructivism into my abstract expressionist painting. Increasingly my work became more geometric and soon I was embracing minimalism and then optical art for quite a number of years following my graduation from Yale School of Art.

Then after a number of years I began to do more and more figurative work, much of, which was analytical, suggesting Cubism to a degree. But then I began to yearn for the looser freer application of paint; the figurative work and landscape work became more expressionistic and remains so up to the present. Overtime and to this day all that I have learned and absorbed finds its way into my work. The German expressionists hold my attention because of their spiritual yearnings and strong images expressed boldly and in vivid color relationships like the French Fauves of the late nineteenth century. I guess that what I’ve absorbed will somehow through the work process be utilized and become something uniquely my own. I hope this is true. I think it is.

My aims are positive-to share my knowledge of art through teaching and to exhibit my created works for the pleasure of those who enjoy images. I believe this is what God intended to have me do on earth.