

Pecha Kucha Night at the Fleming Museum

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On February 15th 2013 the Fleming Museum in Burlington Vermont put on Pecha Kucha Night Vol 9 - I chose to share some of my memories along side my sailing images. You can read my talk below, or see it on YouTube or at RETN.org whom I'd like to warmly thank for filming and editing this moment ... http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOe_f32MmlI&sns=em ... Enjoy.

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PECHA KUCHA 2013

In the 1970's my father, who was also a wine maker, created a hang glider called "Star Alps." He and my mother and a few close friends began flying; and sometimes as a treat, my Dad would fly over our school playground.

Once in a while on a very sunny day, as my grade school class was playing soccer, he would land in a nearby field; and we would all run to see this bright colorful triangle made of seams and parachute fabric that had just flown over us in the bluest of skies. We were all in awe. He had just glided from the height of the mountains to the valley floor.

There was a grace in the design of that delta, and a delight in the round stickers with bright colors he would give out. To this day I melt at the memory of his whimsy.

These sailing images you are seeing are reminiscent of that time in childhood, when one is carefree and filled with a profound sense of wonder.

The way these images came about was through a combination of events. I had been folding origami, and the meticulous folds of the peace crane delighted me. I was also inspired by the many bright colors in the origami papers.

One day, I wondered what the pattern would look like on the inside of the peace crane. So I unfolded the paper crane and to my surprise I found that the folds had created a beautiful star-like shape.

The pattern itself was simply lovely. It was almost like finding a perfect snowflake.

I wondered if I would be able to paint the paper to have the neck and wings of the crane come out in specific colors. So I reached for the nearby watercolor set and began delicately painting the spaces left by the folds. The little watercolor was so satisfying to me I never refolded the paper crane but simply kept the small piece of wrinkled paper as a memento.

And then the work began.

I began by folding watercolor paper to work around the issue of buckling I had experienced when wetting the Origami paper. I soon realized that the thickness of the watercolor paper did not lend itself to origami, but the folds created white on white shadows and triangular patterns that reminded me of sailing.

At that time in my life I was looking for a sense of freedom again, and memories of water, sun and wind came flooding in as the folded paper took on more and more intertwined sail-like patterns. It was only when I began very carefully painting between the raised lines that I realized the result reminded me of the white line Provincetown color woodcuts I had had the privilege of working with for many years. From 2000 to 2010, as well as being an artist, I had been the caretaker of an amazing art collection; and the Provincetown white line woodcuts of the 1920 and 30's were an integral part of the collection. The artists would create images by carving into a soft block of wood. Then they inked the wood; and with a spoon they pressed the paper as hard as possible into the painted blocks. Their printing process created stunning raised white lines. My first sailing images came in the late fall and early winter of 2011. My favorite is rich in deep purple hues, and much darker in tone than the others. I was surprised it felt so much like stain glass. It reminded me of a storm brewing.

My earlier images not only used watercolor, but wax crayon as well. This created an interesting texture and added to the feeling of open water. Strong winds appear to come across in the long diagonal formats.

For another image titled "Orange Sail", I used a deep dark red to color some of the white lines. I thought of Samurai swords and bloodlines, as well as sailing, while this image came to life.

These earlier images were mainly smaller in size, and had a distinctly different palette than the ones I created in the spring of 2012, when I changed palettes and included several different sets of blues, as well as a new orange, and a wonderful pink.

I love the way the relief lines formed a kind of electricity around the colors, and to suddenly be discovering this in my own work was a wonderful feeling.

Working in this way was very meticulous, and my hand stayed very steady through the process so as not to spoil the white lines. There was something slow and meditative about the rhythm. Eventually I began experimenting further, and the idea of sailing made way for other forms and folds.

One image on brown paper was once a little origami boat; and when I opened it up, I used colored pencils instead of watercolors. It reminded me of all the fish at the bottom of the sandy sea. I also loved the way the colored pencils picked up the texture of the tabletop.

The image titled "Rust" came about as I was working on my section for the

Renga, which is a group poem several of us created for the show "Exposed", which opened at Helen Day Art Center last summer. My lines read:

*Glorious Red Oak
as I bask in the torrent
your leaves fall as rain*

My parents loved discovering these sailing images; and through the retelling of memories, I came to learn that my mother in the early 1960's on a lake in Maine taught my father how to sail a "Sun Fish". They had gone out together, each in their own boat. She courted him by sailing circles around him and they married shortly there after.

I think that between the Sun Fish and the Star Alp Delta these images were simply meant to be.

Thank you

*You can read more about the world wide happening of Pecha Kucha here
<http://www.pechakucha.org>*

*You can also see the Fleming Museum who put on this wonderful event here
<http://www.uvm.edu/~fleming/index.php?category=events&page=pechakucha>*

*The entire Renga is printed in the catalogue for the show Exposed; for further information about the Renga contact the Helen Day Art Center
www.helenday.com*

*You can also find the video at
www.RETN.org*