

Richard Huntington

Richard Huntington was the art and theater critic at *The Buffalo News*, from 1985 to 2007. In addition to wide regional coverage of art, including major exhibitions in Buffalo and in Toronto, Ontario, he has covered international exhibitions in New York City, Los Angeles, London, and Venice. His reviews and articles have appeared in such art periodicals as *ArtNews*, *High Performance Magazine*, and *Art New England*. He is the author of "Seymour Drumlevitch," the catalog for the Albright-Knox Art Gallery's 1988 exhibition, and a number of other catalog essays. In 2007, he received the Associated Press First Award in Criticism. From

1982 to 1985 Huntington was director of the visual arts program at Artpark, the outdoor sculpture park in Lewiston, NY. In 1996, he was the MidAtlantic Arts Foundation Critic Resident and, in 1994, the Visiting Critic at the Kennedy Center for the Arts, Washington, D.C.

Recent solo exhibitions include "Spanish Lesson," at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery's Collectors' Gallery (2008) and "Halo By Mondrian," in the JR Konstallen, Linkoping, Sweden, (2007). In 1999, "Beauty Rules," was presented at Mercer Gallery in Rochester, NY. Huntington was also part of a number of group exhibitions including: "Drawing Conclusions,"

New York Gallery, New York City, (2004); "Stories Without Words," Rockefeller Arts Center, Fredonia, NY, 2003; and "In Western New York Biennial," Albright-Knox Art Gallery, (1979.) In 1976, he was the recipient of a New York Council on the Arts Artist-in-Residence award. Huntington, who taught studio art on the university level for ten years, has lectured widely on art. He has taken part in the 1984 Land Marks Symposium at Baird College and was a lecturer at the Open Air Sculpture Symposium held in Wakefield, England in 1983.

Richard and his wife Wendy currently split their time between Buffalo, NY and San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

EDUCATION

1965 Master of Arts, Humanities, State University of New York, University at Buffalo, NY.

1961 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting, Syracuse University, NY.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1985-2007 Art and (from 1999) Theater Critic, *The Buffalo News*, NY.

1982-1985 Visual Arts Director, Artpark, Lewiston, NY.

1978-1982 Art Critic, *Courier-Express*, Buffalo, NY.

1970-1972 Gallery Director, Hartmann Center Art Gallery, Bradley University, Peoria, IL.

1968-1973 Associate Professor of Art, Bradley University, Peoria, IL. (Interim Chairman, Art Department, 1971)

1965-1968 Instructor of art and art history, Murray State University, KY.

GRANTS/AWARDS/RESIDENCIES

2007 Associated Press, First Award for Criticism.

1996 Critic Residency, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, Delaware Center for Contemporary Art, Wilmington, DE.

1994 Visiting Critic, Kennedy Center for the Arts, Washington, D.C.

1984 The James Carey Evans Memorial Award in Painting, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 40th Western New York Exhibition, Buffalo, NY.

1980 Page One Critic's Award, International Newspaper Guild, Washington, D.C.

1976-1977 Artist-in-Residence Printmaking Residency, New York State Council on the Arts, Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, NY.

1971 Illinois Painters II Grant, Chicago Arts Council, IL.

SYMPOSIUMS/LECTURES/PANELS

1986 Selection committee, Works in Progress Program, Maryland State Arts Council, Baltimore, MD

1985 "Foundations and Non-Profit Organizations," Texas Sculpture Symposium, Dallas, TX.

1984 "Mass Media and Public Sculpture," Land Marks Symposium, Baird College, Amandale-on-the-Hudson, NY.

1983 "Sculpture Installations at Artpark," Collections in the Open Air Symposium, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, England.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2008 "Spanish Lesson," Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Collector's Gallery, Buffalo, NY

2007 "Halo By Mondrian," JR Konstallen Gallery, Linkoping, Sweden.

2004 "Drawing Conclusions," New York Gallery, NY.

2003 "Stories Without Words," Michael C. Rockefeller Arts Center, State University of New York, Fredonia, NY.

2000 "Executive Doodles," Art Dialogue Gallery, Buffalo, NY.

1999 "Beauty Rules," Mercer Gallery, Rochester, NY.

1996 "Artists at Play," Burchfield-Penney Art Center, Buffalo State College, NY. Irene Leach Memorial Exhibition, Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA.

1995 "Refiguring the Figure," Creative Artists Workshop, New Haven, CN.

1993 "(Rube) Goldberg Variations," Olean Art Gallery, Olean, NY.

1990 "Four Arts Society Annual," Palm Beach, FL.

1984 "40th Western New York Exhibition," Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY.

1979 "In Western New York Biennial," Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY.

1978 "Fragment of an Opera," Fulton Gallery, NY.

1977 "Art Lessons," Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, NY.

PUBLICATIONS

1995 "Wit in Force, Figures Talking to Each Other," (exhibition review), William Zimmer, *New York Times*, April 30.

1989 "Tyrone Georgiou: Uneasy Architecture," (author, exhibition catalogue), Burchfield-Penney Art Center, Buffalo State College, NY.

1988 "Seymour Drumlevitch," (author, exhibition catalog), Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY.

1985-2004 *ArtNews*, *High Performance Magazine* and *Art New England*, various exhibition reviews published.

Exhibition Checklist All works collection of the artist, unless otherwise noted.

Sympathy for the Devil, 1970, acrylic on pieced canvas, 65½ x 68½ in.

Cojeev-cho, 1971, acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in.

Ormuz Misaligned, 1971, acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in.

Blue Flurry, 1972, lithograph, artist proof, no edition, 25 x 33 in.

Blue Nude, 1973, acrylic over lithograph 25 x 33 in.

On Comes the Don (Giovanni), 1973 + 1993, acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in.

Vase for D, 1977, acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in.

Chair I, 1978, ink and acrylic on paper, 33¼ x 30 in.

Chair 2, 1978, ink and acrylic on paper, 33 x 25 in.

Necessary Bowl, 1979, charcoal on paper, 23¼ x 33½ in.

Vase with Bar, 1979, charcoal on paper, 25 x 33 in.

Vase/Nose, 1980, charcoal, pencil & pastel on paper, 33 x 25 in.

Fear & Trembling with Initials, 1982 + 1986, acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in.

Fear & Trembling with Heraldic Devices, 1986, acrylic and collage on paper, 30 x 28 in.

Fear & Trembling 1, 1987, acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in.

Flower, Boy, Dog, 1987, acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in.

Death and the Maiden, 1987, acrylic on paper, 31 x 42 in.

Thinking Dog, 1987, acrylic on paper, 30 x 33½ in.

(Rube) Goldberg Variations: Dishwashing Machine, 1992 + 1999, acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in.

(Rube) Goldberg Variations: Screen Door Closer, 1992, acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in. Collection of Edmund and Cheryl Cardoni, Buffalo, NY.

(Rube) Goldberg Variations: Canoe Propulsion, 1992+2005, acrylic & pencil on paper, 25 x 33 in.

Beauty Rules: Use Restraint, 1995, acrylic in canvas, 44 x 42 in.

Beauty Rules: Dressing is Particularly Important, 1996, pencil and acrylic on paper, 43 x 31 in.

Beauty Rules: Nervous Hands, 1996, acrylic on paper, 43½ x 31 in.

July: The Spilled Ketchup, 1997, acrylic on paper, 43 x 31 in.

Beauty Rules: The Evolution of Loveliness, 1997, pencil & acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in.

March: Bad Dog, 1997, acrylic on paper, 43 x 31 in.

Whereabouts Unknown: Max Beckmann, Reclining Woman, 1999, acrylic, pencil & collage on paper 25 x 33 in.

Lines from Novels: Tom Jones, 2000, Pencil on paper, 25 x 33 in.

Whereabouts Unknown: Vaillard, Woman Hiding Her Face, 2002, oil on canvas, 24 x 36 in.

Whereabouts Unknown: Max Pechstein, Der Raucher, 2002, pencil and acrylic on paper, 33 x 25 in.

For your pleasure, some very fine paintings, 2003, acrylic on paper, 33 x 25 in.

Mondrian/Millet, 2003, acrylic on paper, 31 x 43 in.

Thus I Passe By And Die, 2004, acrylic on shaped wood, 48¼ x 50 in.

Thus I Passe By (Poem by Robert Herrick), 2005, digital print assemblage, 25 x 33 in.

Angel in His Realm, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30 in.

Hoof, hand, Still Life, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 40 x 24 in.

Class Struggle (The Leg), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 36 x 24 in.

Mussolini in Love, 2008, oil on canvas, 70½ x 48 in.

Little Picassoid Princess with de Kooning Backdrop, 2008, oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.

TOPSPIN

Artists of the Buffalo/ Niagara Region

The museum's Tops Gallery—dedicated to the exhibition of work by local and regional artists—presents the **TopSpin** series. **TopSpin** features a broad range of visual expressions, varied in media as well as message, and focuses mainly on new and emerging artists.

TopSpin is made possible through the generous support of Tops Friendly Markets, LLC.

TOPS



This Exhibition is made possible, in part, through generous support from the New York State Council on the Arts.

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RICHARD HUNTINGTON

Thus I Passe By—Selections from 1970-2008



Opening reception with artist talk Sunday, September 21, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

The Castellani Art Museum and Richard Huntington will host an open house at Richard Huntington's studio at 701 Seneca Street, 7th floor on Sunday, October 19, 4:00-6:00 p.m. Please contact Michael Beam at 716-286-8286 or mjbeam@niagara.edu to RSVP for the artist studio open house.

Curating the Critic

As the barometer for the regional art scene for twenty-two years, Richard Huntington has been privy to an exceptional array of movements, styles, and artistic explorations. From his unique position as a respected authority on our region's art, he has, over the years, provided educated insight into the area's artistic heritage. Recently retired from his position as art and theater critic at *The Buffalo News*, Huntington has now refocused on his own artistic endeavors, which in the past have been secondary to his critical ruminations. With this new focus comes a considerable challenge—how to introduce the *artist* Richard Huntington to all of us who know the *critic* Richard Huntington. Many of us have seen his work over the years but, because he has shown mostly outside Western New York, many may not be aware of the substantial scope of his total output. The exhibition has been organized into categories that focus on the artist's major stylistic periods from the previous three decades, culminating with a selection of his most recent works on canvas.

Triangles (1970s)

Toward the end of the 1960s, Huntington began working on large format canvases pieced together with a central canvas framed by adjoined, upward-facing U-shaped canvases. The image in these



On Comes the Don (Giovanni), 1973 + 1993, acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in.

works often consisted of a single, aggressive centrally located triangle supported by a solid bar of color below. The triangle was chosen, Huntington said, because "it was a steady form with a magnetic center." A series of asymmetrical compositions using the triangle were purposely arranged to be slightly off balance, as though seeking an elusive harmony but never quite achieving it.

Cartoons (1980s)

In 1982, Huntington left his position as Buffalo Courier-Express art critic to become visual arts director at Artpark. Inspired by his new environment, he moved from pure abstraction to



Flower, Boy, Dog, 1987, acrylic on paper, 25 x 33 in.

cartoonish appropriations, as he freely experimented with elements of drawing, painting, and collage. Successfully combining fragmented imagery, text, and

lettering, he began to think in terms of themes and subject matter. As Huntington said, "For the first time in twenty years, I allowed the human presence to roam through my art." The inventive mixture of partial figuration set in an abstract environment was a rewarding period of growth. Cartoon imagery has continued to appear in his work, including his most recent paintings.



Thinking Dog, 1987, acrylic on paper, 30 x 33½ in.

The cartoons evolved into overtly satirical work with the *(Rube) Goldberg Variations*. Rube Goldberg (1883-1970) was a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist, a sculptor, and a writer whose famous "inventions" depicted fantastically difficult ways to accomplish simple, everyday tasks. Hybrids of machine movements with flexing elements that relied on unlikely actions and reactions—think *The Mousetrap Game* released by Ideal in 1963—



(Rube) Goldberg Variation: Canoe Propulsion, 1992+2005, acrylic & pencil on paper, 25 x 33 in.

the cartoons were "symbols of man's capacity for exerting maximum effort to accomplish minimal result." Huntington takes Goldberg's "machines" and adds his own painterly, expressionistic elements that the artist says "makes them somehow comic and tragic, all at once."



July: *The Spilled Ketchup*, 1997, acrylic on paper, 43 x 31 in.

Beauty Rules (1990s)

The series *Beauty Rules* and the related pinup work parodied the relationship of male artists working with the female figure. The pinup or glamour girl of the mid-twentieth century was a stylized objectification of the romanticized female depicted in the nude—or close to it—by past artists who excused or camouflaged the sexual nature of these depictions by making

them goddesses or mythological characters. “In my images, the woman is attempting to follow the rules of how to be glamorous and sexy in the traditional Hollywood manner through the injunctions of a beauty culture author, former strong man, and silent film star by the name of Joe Bonomo,” Huntington stated. Bonomo’s absurd rules are written directly on the works and juxtaposed with an illustration of a woman attempting to conform to these dictates. This series ultimately becomes a satire of a particularly sexist period in American culture.

New Work (2000s)

Most recently Huntington’s work has been influenced by folk sources, no doubt from time spent acclimating to his secondary residence in Mexico. Folk angels and Holy Virgins, along with cartoons gleaned from Spanish language books, are combined with forms derived from Willem de Kooning’s late work, “those ribbony paintings,” as Huntington describes them, “where line is worked and reworked until the famous de



Mussolini in Love, 2008, oil on canvas, 70½ x 48 in.

Kooning speed is slowed to a static webbing or armature.” A new cartoon-derived group of paintings, titled *Mussolini in Love*, introduces emptied-out voice balloons in calculated combination with highly simplified figures. Huntington’s *Thus I Passe By* series of a few years back are, in the artist’s words, “mock memorials for one who has departed and left behind

Upon His Departure Hence

Poem by Robert

Herrick

Thus I

Passe by

And die:

As one,

Unknown,

And gon:

I’m made

A shade,

And laid

I’ th’ grave:

There have

My cave.

Where tell

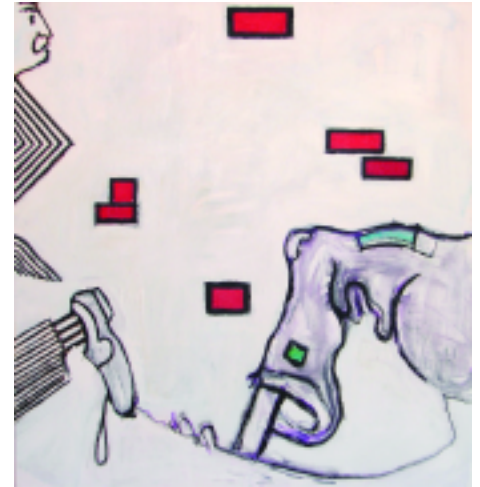
I dwell,

Farewell.

women who mourn with an eye toward their own appearance and with an apparent emotional emptiness.” These works smoothly reference the off-handed tone of casual goodbyes in Robert Herrick’s (1591-1674) poem, *Upon His Departure Hence*.

Michael J. Beam

Curator of Exhibitions and Collections



Class Struggle (The Leg), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 36 x 24 in.

Artist Statement

In the almost four decades covered in this exhibition, I produced, at one time or another, big geometric abstractions, painterly abstractions, hand-lettered pieces, and cartoon-based work. Occasionally, I took forays into precise realism and often would pursue a kind of figuration that had German Expressionism fighting it out with Abstract-Expressionism. Lately, I’ve embedded folk-inspired figures in a complex of biomorphic shapes derived from the late Willem de Kooning paintings. I’ve also been revisiting cartoons as a source of serious painting. I suppose there’s no real point in trying to find connectives among these widely varied approaches. Nonetheless, all the works came out of a consciousness that—barring a few digressions into utter artistic panic or aesthetic barrenness—I like to think has held to some essential core that tenuously links these disparate works.

Art has a way of compressing time, at least for the artist involved. Though the dates may say otherwise, these works don’t seem all that old to me. When I work an edge with my pencil or spread a field of color with my brush, it doesn’t feel particularly different whether I’m painting a flat triangle or an angel’s puffy cheek. Whatever the approach, I’m always playing with flatness and illusion (no matter how infinitesimal it might be) and am on an endless quest to reconcile my innate awkwardness with the majestic harmony of the great art of the world. That’s the grand thing about making art: You put on paint, draw a line, or paste a scrap and the payback is immediate. Joy is in the making. And sometimes that’s enough.

Richard Huntington, 2008