Rediscovering Paul Hultberg

Abstract Expressionism in Enamel

Moderne Gallery

Foreword

Robert and Joshua Aibel

Co-Directors of Moderne Gallery

Moderne Gallery is proud to celebrate the legacy of Paul Hultberg with the first large-scale exhibition of the abstract expressionist enamel work by this multi-disciplinary artist since his death in 2019.

"Rediscovering" has been a major part of our work at Moderne Gallery since 1985. In the early years of the gallery, we would receive inquiries from people who wanted to sell their "used furniture." Imagine our surprise when we discovered that the callers were referring to the masterful work of one of the most important designers and woodworkers of the 20th century, George Nakashima. Learning that so many people would merely dismiss these important works, as "used furniture," we then made a commitment to promoting the recognition and legacy of George Nakashima's central role in design history.

We soon learned that Nakashima was one of many studio crafts artists who were, at the time, overlooked. Moderne Gallery moved its focus to helping promote deserving, underappreciated artists in areas such as wood, ceramics, metal, fiber, etc. Initially, we dealt primarily with the work of major historical artists (such as Estelle Halper and Wharton Esherick). The craft movement, however, had an enormous impact on contemporary culture. By extending our search for work by extraordinary living artists, like David Ebner, Miriam Carpenter, John Eric Byers, Ryo Toyonaga, and others, we wanted to demonstrate the breadth of craft life.

This brings us to *Rediscovering Paul Hultberg (1922-2019): Abstract Expressionism in Enamel.* Hultberg was acclaimed as one of the most progressive artists working in enamel in the mid to late twentieth century. An award-winning film, "Reflections," was made about him in 1966 by George Ancona, and that same year he had a solo show at The Museum of Contemporary Crafts (now MAD). He was prominently included in the seminal traveling exhibition, "*Objects USA*" in 1969 and had major public commissions all over the US, including Busch Gardens and the Pan Am Building. His last major work was comprised by sixteen colorful 4 ft. x 5 ft. enamels on steel for the Metromedia lobby in NYC.

Hultberg retired with a high profile and a major level of respect for his artwork. However, his work somehow faded from the history of the craft movement and of the art world, perhaps due in part to his retirement and a move to France with his wife, Ethel "Sky" Hultberg (an artist in her own right). Given Moderne Gallery's commitment to "rediscovery," Hultberg is the ideal subject for a show at the gallery. This exhibition intends to re-establish and extend Hultberg's recognition in the craft and art worlds. *Rediscovering Paul Hultberg (1922-2019): Abstract Expressionism in Enamel* showcases the full breadth of the artist's storied legacy showing both his pioneering work with enamel as well as a collection of early prints and drawings and later portraiture works on canvas.

"The exhibition has been designed to give a comprehensive understanding of Hultberg's work - from early drawings through to important works like *Dallas Diptych* and *Hieroglyph* we wanted to tell the story of not only Hultberg's career in enamel but also his incredible legacy as a seminal figure in the abstract expressionist movement in America. This is also the first time we have had the opportunity to take full advantage of our new gallery space after moving in late 2019, it's an exciting time for Moderne Gallery. We're incredibly honored to be able to enter this new chapter with such an important exhibition"

- Joshua Aibel
Co-Director of Moderne Gallery

Paul Hultberg
Abstract Expressionist Enamelist
By Alan Rosenberg

Enamel has been known since antiquity and its appeal, then and now, lay in its rich visual and tactile qualities: its jewel-like colors and glossy-smooth surface. Paul Hultberg (1926-2019) took this traditional craft medium and spread enamel broadly and even brashly over wide fields of copper and steel, just as his abstract expressionist peers did in paint on canvas. Where once it was delicate, Hultberg made enamel bold. Enamel had traditionally reflected light in its mirror-like surface: Hultberg played smooth against rough surfaces in planes that glisten with explosive color, but also absorb and exude darkness like a celestial black hole.

Paul Hultberg was born in Oakland, California and studied painting and printmaking at the University of Southern California and Fresno State College. In the 1940s, he traveled to Mexico, where he learned to dig in the earth for natural pigments and explored the latest synthetic paints while working in the atelier of Jose Gutierrez, an innovator in artistic media who experimented with artistically viable paints that could withstand outdoor conditions. Hultberg's exposure to Mexican mural practice had a lasting influence, showing that a wide audience could appreciate art if it was brought into their daily lives.

Hultberg spent a year stationed in Japan while serving in the U.S. army and by the early 1950's he was teaching painting and printmaking at the Brooklyn Museum Art School, where he began to experiment with enameling. Soon the school's director, Augustus Peck, asked Hultberg to establish an enameling program there. Hultberg pursued an experimental approach to the application of enamel, incorporating accidents and overplaying certain steps in the enamel crafting process. The application of heat to clean raw copper in advance of applying enamel results in the appearance of layers of firescale, an oxide that is usually scraped off. Hultberg realized that the irregular and organic appearance of firescale had artistic possibilities, providing color and pattern that could be preserved with a layer of transparent enamel and combined with various colored enamels in mutating degrees of opacity.

Hultberg took off in this unorthodox direction and the results are illustrated in fellow Brooklyn Museum School teacher Oppi Untracht's 1957 book Enameling on Metal. Hultberg's mastery of enamel application techniques including sgraffito, stenciling, and drawing fine lines with glycerin in a resist process is shown in photographs of the artist with works in process. Among the completed works shown are panel "Pines and Lake," in which the highly abstracted landscape has been painted free-hand in slush (enamel in water suspension) in high contrasts of dark and light on twelve contiguous steel panels. Copper panel paintings "Baroque City" and "Winter Hillside" display the artist's facility in creating conventionalized designs with depth via multiple layers of stenciled enamel.

In the mid-1950s Hultberg was the artistic force behind a commercial enameling venture in New York called Domesticrafts. Hultberg devised nearly a hundred different stenciled designs for enameled plates, bowls and small plaques that were mounted in boxes and compacts for cosmetics. During this period Hultberg did not limit himself to enamels, prints and paintings; he even designed textiles that were displayed at the Brooklyn Museum in 1952 in an exhibition titled "The Artist as Artisan." Augustus Peck stated to the New York Times that the exhibition was "based on the assumption that fine art is the source of all applied design; give the artist a technical skill and you will have an inspired artisan who will produce utilitarian objects"[1] Produce Hultberg did prodigiously: he estimated that Domesticrafts manufactured 45,000 pieces between 1953 and 1956.

By 1958 Hultberg was expanding to more spatially and commercially ambitious applications of enamel. In that year his "enameled metal for a permanent wall covering cemented into place--$24 a square foot" was featured by Betty Pepis in the New York Times. Pepis was a keen observer of even the most subtle trends in home design: her inclusion of Hultberg's "enamel wallpaper" supported her assertion that "stronger than ever is the trend to building decoration right into the architecture".[2] Reiterating the architectonic theme, the enamel tiles illustrated displayed a motif that suggests rows of arched windows and doors in an all-over abstracted design that could extend indefinitely.

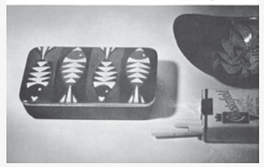
Hultberg received many commissions for large-scale public murals in enamel. A notable exterior installation was the "Stairway to the Stars," a four story open-air escalator commissioned by Anheuser-Busch in 1959 for their Busch Gardens complex in Tampa, Florida. Hultberg adorned the sides of the moving stairway with colorful prismatic enamel panels. Shoppers at the Abraham & Strauss store in Huntington, New York were exposed to Hultberg's art in the form of forty wall sculptures. Executives, office workers, and

Paul Hultberg
at work in his studio.
1969

Paul Hultberg
"Dancing Couple," 1948.
Acrylic on Canvas

Paul Hultberg
Cigarette Case for
Domesticrafts, 1953

Paul Hultberg
"Stairway to the Stars,"
Escalator for Busch Gardens, 1959



passersby encountered Hultberg's monumental forty-five-foot mural in enamel on aluminum for the Alcoa Corporation in midtown Manhattan.

While executing these public commissions, Hultberg continued developing expressionistic effects in more personal large-scale works. The artist's fascination with the chance effects of oxidation was consonant with his entire approach to enamel as an art medium based on "indirect" application, much like that of printmaking. In 1960, his studio work was featured as the cover story of the March-April issue of Craft Horizons; there he explained that:

the printmaker has a taste for indirect effects, not like the painter, who makes a stroke and there it is--paint. In print making it is a matter of doing something that does something else: scratching the plate, wax resist, acid, all kinds of texturing and multiple printings. In enamels, also, the techniques are indirect. You have the enamel as a granular, sand-like pigment. The problem is how to get this where you want it. It doesn't handle like paint. The firing changes its color and texture. As in print making or ceramics, you don't know exactly how it will come out.[3]

Hultberg also likened the exploitation of unplanned effects to the organic evolution of nature itself: "I'm trying to use the same processes that occur in nature in order to get a wider vocabulary of expression"[4]. In this effort he was inspired by Japanese art, declaring in the article that "Michelangelo was the earliest influence upon me and Korin screens the latest!"[5] Korin Ogata, the founder of the 18th century Rinpa school of Japanese painting revolutionized Japanese art through both the studied informality of his aesthetic sensibility and his radical methods. Korin's signature technique of mixing ink with metallic pigments on gold leaf, called tarashikomi ("dripping in"), has been described by John T. Carpenter, in his study Designing Nature: the Rinpa Aesthetic in Japanese Art:

tarashikomi creates various gradations of ink diffused with a discrete area of the painting surface. Since it is impossible to predict how the ink will spread after it is applied to a damp area, the artist voluntarily surrenders to the whims of nature and the physical properties of the ink and pigment.[6]

The use of chance and fortuitous accidents as a means of composition and creation is an important part of 20th century art practice and is the flip side of modernism's emphasis on rationally ordered design. As early as 1917, Jean Arp created his groundbreaking "Collage with Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance" in which scraps of colored paper were torn up, then tossed on the floor, revealing an impactful composition that the artist had been unable to achieve through the conscious use of will. The surrealist "discovery" of chance techniques strongly influenced the post-war generation of American artists working in an abstract expressionist vein. American mid-century action painters carried on Arp's experiments with automatism ("the performance of actions without conscious thought or intention."). What in 1917 was barely accepted as art became the prevailing mode of celebrated artists such as Jackson Pollock and Adolph Gottlieb. Hultberg was a participant in this revolution, both in his studio and in the gathering places of abstract expressionists, Greenwich Village's Cedar Tavern and the nearby San Remo bar, favored by writers and poets. It was at the latter in 1949 that Hultberg met Ethel Lutsky, to whom he became engaged three weeks later, the beginning of a lifelong partnership.

Hultberg's blending of Japanese ideas into contemporary art and craft found confirmation amongst a like-minded group of artists when he and his family moved to Rockland County, New York, in 1954, to join the Gate Hill Cooperative, a creative community which had been founded a few years earlier by faculty and students from Black Mountain College, the experimental art school in North Carolina. Gate Hill's 116 wooded acres stimulated the creativity of artists, composers, writers, and film-makers, including Karen Karnes, Sari Dienes, M.C. Richards, David Tudor, Stan VanDerBeek and John Cage. Cage became well-known as the leading advocate for the use of chance in the creative process for his radical musical compositions, which grew out of his study of Zen Buddhism, the Chinese I Ching system of divination and the influence of surrealism. At Gate Hill Hultberg utilized chance as a design device when determining the placement and color of 108 copper panels that comprised a 24-foot long mural he created for the exterior of the studio of architect Paul Williams, the co-founder of the Gate Hill Coop and designer of the houses there: Hultberg's compositional and chromatic decisions were made by picking numbers randomly from a telephone book.

Paul Hultberg
12" x 12"
Enamels on Copper,
1965

Paul Hultberg
"Albany VI"
Enamel on Copper
1972

At Gate Hill Hultberg designed and built his own furnace that allowed him to work on ever larger sheets of copper, in excess of 60 inches, over which he spread enamel in calligraphic and explosively expressionistic passages. In 1960 he contemplated his own work, noting: "the brush work here also retains the character of stroke--pressure, length, speed, area--a sense of kinetic forces pressing outward"[6]. His works of the 1960s and 70s are notably akin to Japanese screen paintings in their horizontal format, with organic imagery spread across multiple copper panels. Recalling the earth pigments of his Mexican sojourn Hultberg's palette tended strongly towards the tones of the natural environment: rich brown, vibrant orange, brick red, with the golden glow of the sun and the dark black of night.

By the mid-1960s Hultberg was recognized as a major contributor to the vitality and growing intersection of art and craft in America. His art works were exhibited at both the 1962 and 1964 World's Fairs, in Seattle and New York, respectively. In the catalogue to the 1962 "Adventures in Art" exhibition Gervais Reed explained the premise of the display:

[The] situation in American art and the American crafts today does not lend itself to conventional categories or limiting themes. The creative minds of our time are breaking down the old fences and opening new paths for us to follow. One of the oldest and strongest of these fences has been the one dividing the "fine arts" (painting and sculpture) from the "minor arts" (everything else). Today this division is becoming blurred. The "fine" artists are producing works which straddle the line (Is Burri really a painter? Is Baj? And what about Cornell?), while on the other side the "minor" artists are moving out in great numbers, producing things in traditional craft media which can not be evaluated, or even described in traditional craft language, things which are not "Good Design," which transcend function and go beyond decoration. The result of all this has been the growth of a category between categories, a world between worlds. It is, for the most part, a silent, almost invisible world. The influential periodicals don't report it, the great museums haven't found it.[7]

Reed described Hultberg's blurring of boundaries:

Enamels are expected to be little plaques (usually cute little plaques), pins or ash trays. Hultberg's enamels are actually large, lyric paintings, murals, in fact, executed in nearly indestructible material and having a physical richness which is completely absent from other contemporary paintings. His work is the result of prolonged technical experiment, mechanical inventiveness and the application of modern technology to an ancient craft.[8]

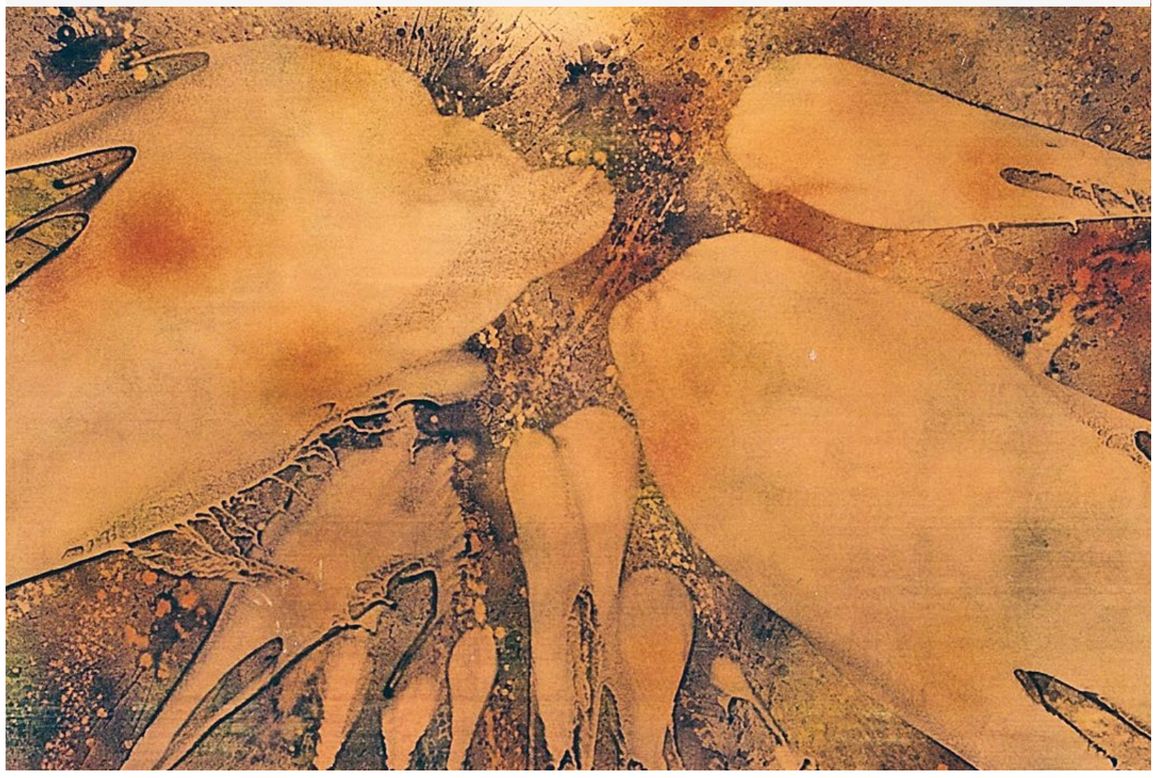
At the New York World's Fair, Hultberg's studio practice was documented in "The American Craftsman" a photographic exhibition of five of the most outstanding craftspeople working in the United States at that time, presented by the American Craft Council in the Pavilion of American Interiors. The photographic essays showed Hultberg's enamels and how they were made, alongside John Mason's ceramics, fiber art by Alice Parrott, silver holloware by John Prip and furniture crafted by Sam Maloof.[9]

In the mid-1960s Hultberg's art was the subject of a series of prestigious one-man exhibitions. His 1965 show at the venerable Boston Society of Arts and Crafts, consisting of large works and a group of new small square-foot panels, was lavishly praised in an evocative review by ceramist/critic Harriet Goodwin Cohen which appeared in the September/October 1965 issue of Craft Horizons:

The magnificent textures, luminescent colors and superb economy of means are something that every person in this country concerned with enamels--from individual craftsmen to industrial designers--should see and take note of. . . . by partially leaving fire scale and contrasting various oxidizing effects he incorporates the flame into his work, and thus justifies what he does in enamel rather than merely emulating painting in another medium.[10]

Cohen went on to laud Hultberg's "genius for color and his brilliant ability to make subtle, sometimes startling juxtapositions of hue and value. His colors are striking, salient but not quite jarring." Invoking the art versus craft debate Cohen lamented, and rejected, the conventional desire to label the work as one or the other:

If the show suffered at all, it was perhaps because the observer wished very much to pigeonhole the work and, finding it impossible, was tempted to reproach Hultberg for his evasiveness. If we could



Paul Hultberg
"Earl"
Acrylic on Canvas
1987

find a "meaning" (voice quavering with quotes and italics), might that not clinch the art or decoration argument, at least for Hultberg? What a silly quibble when confronted with so much of such magnificence.[11]

In 1966 the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York, the most prestigious venue in the field, presented a one-man show of Hultberg's new small enamel on copper panels. In the brochure published to accompany the exhibition Elizabeth Breckenridge wrote that

The artist recognizes and accepts the power that the forms of nature have over his work. The time of day, the seasons, light, sounds—all these contribute directly to the state of mind and being that are translated and transformed in his effort to create art with a "feeling of place" about it. Yet only a few of his panels have a definable landscape figuration; they seem rather to embody the feeling of natural phenomena—the events of light and space, the very rhythms of creation are caught in these luminous, shimmering surfaces.[12]

This high-profile exhibition brought new scrutiny from the art world. The review in the April 1966 issue of Craft Horizons, by Lawrence Campbell, a painter and critic associated with the Art Students League, a bastion of academicism, revealed the reviewers's own aesthetic myopia:

The regrettable thing about these works is that craft does not fuse with art. Also, they are not large enough for their images to carry effectively and not intimate enough in their imagery to function at their actual scale. This is the result of a medium which tends, by its very nature, to depersonalize the artist and emphasize that of the craftsman. As artist Hultberg is a sensitive mannerist of Abstract Expressionism. It is this sensitivity which suffers here. The question one must ask is central: should enamel try to produce effects proper to painting? Can the dribbly, runny, fat-lean, shiny-dull, blotty, almost edible nature of painting be translated into a medium which imposes a shiny metallic quality upon every surface? [. . .] Any extension of a medium's proper terrain sacrifices art at the altar of craft. To enjoy art one must be unaware of craft.[13]

Despite the confusion his work engendered in the entrenched art world, Hultberg persisted in his vision and produced some of his most powerful work in the late 1960s and early 70s, continuing in the rich expressionistic vein that he was committed to exploring. Writing in the March 1972 issue of Art News of his show that year at Lee Nordness Gallery in New York, Gretchen T. Munson described the artist's latest "colors in the orange-rust spectrum" and "amoeba-like shapes which look like collapsed jellyfish or sea anemones," although she noted, "better in color and composition are his earlier fractured, imaginary landscapes where action takes over from poetic attempts."[14] Another exhibition that year, at the Seattle Friends of the Crafts Gallery was reviewed in the August issue of Craft Horizons by Jack Stoops who reported on Hultberg's "Rorschach-like forms" that "appear with gentle gradations in color and intricate textural passages. Hultberg often achieves a lyrical free quality and the color is unusual in luminosity."[15]

In 1969 a major new direction in Hultberg's work was revealed in a new large-scale multi-paneled mural, made for the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel C. Johnson, who endeavored to gather the ultimate assembly of the best American crafts of the time. In this they were guided by Lee Nordness, a visionary New York curator and dealer who shared Hultberg's indifference to the tiresome, insoluble art-craft debate. Hultberg's 48 by 84 inch mural, titled "Johnson Together," inaugurated a striking new interest in the power of primary colors: lipstick red, royal blue, and pure bright white, contrasted with the autumnal tones that had been the hallmark of his work until that time. The Johnson Collection was unveiled in a traveling exhibition which originated at the Smithsonian Institution under the title, "Objects: USA," documented in a book of the same name which, as its protagonists desired, is the definitive document of American crafts in the 1960s.

Following on this new chromatic direction Hultberg produced a body of work in the 1970s and '80s in porcelain enamel on large steel panels, featuring broad, smooth, placid lakes of bright primary and secondary colors, that were bold yet soothing, and kindred to the Color Field painting that had emerged amongst painters such as Jules Olitski and Kenneth Noland. These panels present a rather startling late evolution towards art as both calm and exultation; joyous yet meditative.

Hultberg's new color field direction culminated in one of the defining works of his career in 1986, when he was commissioned by John Kluge to create an immersive installation in the headquarters of Metromedia in New York. The result was "Apple Dapple," in porcelain enamel on steel, comprised of sixteen 4 by 3 foot panels, covering the sixty foot perimeter of the company's reception area. Pigment, poured and pooled on steel, evoked colored clouds of sky-blue, putty pink, marigold yellow, and earthy reds and browns, with bright white emerging and blurring the distinctions between foreground and background. Some viewers of "Apple Dapple" may see signs and symbols in the artist's bold calligraphy, while others simply enjoy the view of a colorful topography: a map of the artist's unadulterated joy in colors and shapes.

Following the apotheosis in enamel of "Apple Dapple" Hultberg returned to painting. Although he left the Gate Hill Co-Op in 1960 he remained in Rockland County where, in 1966, he joined the faculty of the State University of New York—Suffern. He was appointed Professor Emeritus there in 1993. He is fondly remembered by his students, among them Kjeld Tidemand-Johannessen, who reminisced recently:

Hultberg's class was informal but serious, everyone focused on their own projects as he quietly interacted with us. He was soft-spoken, intensely curious about everything and a bit reserved at first. His enamel work cast a spell with their elegant compositions, the almost metallic colors and the tactile feel. A balancing act between the deeply felt and private and a fascination with industrial materials and processes.[15]

The 50th anniversary of Objects USA has given new audiences the opportunity to view Hultberg's art: Johnson Together was exhibited in "Objects Redux" at the Racine Art Museum in 2019. Hal Nelson and Bernard N. Jazzar, curators and founders of the Enamel Arts Foundation, describe Hultberg as "among the most audacious artists working in the 20th century enamels field; his use of unorthodox application and firing practices proved inspirational to a generation of enamelists seeking new ways to explore this time-honored medium."[16]

At the time of his death at the age of 93 Hultberg and his wife Ethel Sky, had been living for some years in retirement in the South of France, in a picturesque village setting that is the envy of anyone who believes that the ultimate creative undertaking is the art de vivre. Paul Hultberg lives forever in his art, and enamel is much like life: paradoxically fragile and easily broken if mishandled but durable and very long-lasting when treated well.

[1] Betty Pepis, "Museum to Show Utilitarian Items," The New York Times, 5 September 1952, 17.

[2] Betty Pepis, "Traditional Reigns, Built-In Sets the Trend," The New York Times, 21 September 1958, SMA10.

[3] M.C. Richards. "Paul Hultberg: the Enamel as Mural." Craft Horizons, March/April 1960, 28.

[4] Richards, 29.

[5] Richards, 32.

[6] John T. Carpenter, Designing Nature: The Rinpa Aesthetic in Japanese Art. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012.

[7] Gervais Reed, Adventures in Art, Seattle: Century 21 Exposition (Seattle World's Fair), 1962, 83.

[8] Reed, 83.

[9] "The Studio Craftsman Observed," Craft Horizons, May 1964, 100.

[10] Harriet Goodwin Cohen, "Letter From Boston," Craft Horizons, September/October 1965, 47.

[11] Cohen, 47.

[12] Elizabeth Breckenridge, Enamels by Paul Hultberg, New York: Museum of Contemporary Crafts, 1966.

[13] Lawrence Campbell, "Paul Hultberg" [exhibition review], Craft Horizons, April 1966, 42.

[14] G. T. M. [Gretchen T. Munson], "Paul Hultberg" [exhibition review], Art News, March 1972, 16.

[15] Interview with the author, June 2020.

[16] Interview with the author, June 2020.

Chance Operator: Paul Hultberg's Aleatory Aesthetics

By Glenn Adamson

"They have gotten *big*." It doesn't seem like the most incisive of critical comments, perhaps. But when the poet and potter M. C. Richards made this observation of Paul Hultberg's enamels, in an article published in *Craft Horizons* in 1960, she put her finger on something. Size, in this case, very much mattered. Richards was thinking, in part, of a pair of panels, each six feet wide and eight feet high, that served as the doors to an exhibition of enamels held at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York, the previous year. In this context of this display – which included both historical examples from the medieval and renaissance eras, as well as other contemporary American makers such as Kenneth Bates, Karl Drerup, and June Schwarcz – the nature of this achievement was unmissable.[1] This medium had, for centuries, been dimensionally constrained, and hence oriented to precious *objets d'art.* Hultberg was reinventing it, on self-evidently ambitious terms. As Richards put it: "Hultberg's enamels are not the little jewel-like miniatures one sometimes associates with this craft. His surfaces are the more original expressions of an artist who mixes the visions of painter, print maker and adventurous inventor."[2]

As regular readers of *Craft Horizons* would have immediately grasped, Richards was positioning Hultberg as the latest in a series of breakthrough figures. Peter Voulkos, in ceramics, and Lenore Tawney, in fiber, had recently been singled out by *Craft Horizons* as avatars of a new era for craft media. [3] Like them, Hultberg had arrived at a potent combination: masterful skill in his discipline along with a willingness to break all its rules. Voulkos's skill at the potter's wheel was unsurpassed, and Tawney a structurally inventive weaver. But what made their work important was the introduction of totally contrary impulses, a disruption and recombination of the canon. Hultberg, similarly, embraced the visual possibilities of firescale (the oxidization and discoloration of the copper substrate, usually cleaned off the surface), as well as complex and unpredictable interactions of sgraffito and acid etching. As Alan Rosenberg aptly observes in a recent biographical study of the artist for *Metalsmith* magazine, Hultberg's repertoire was based in an "overplaying [of] certain steps in the enameling process."[4]

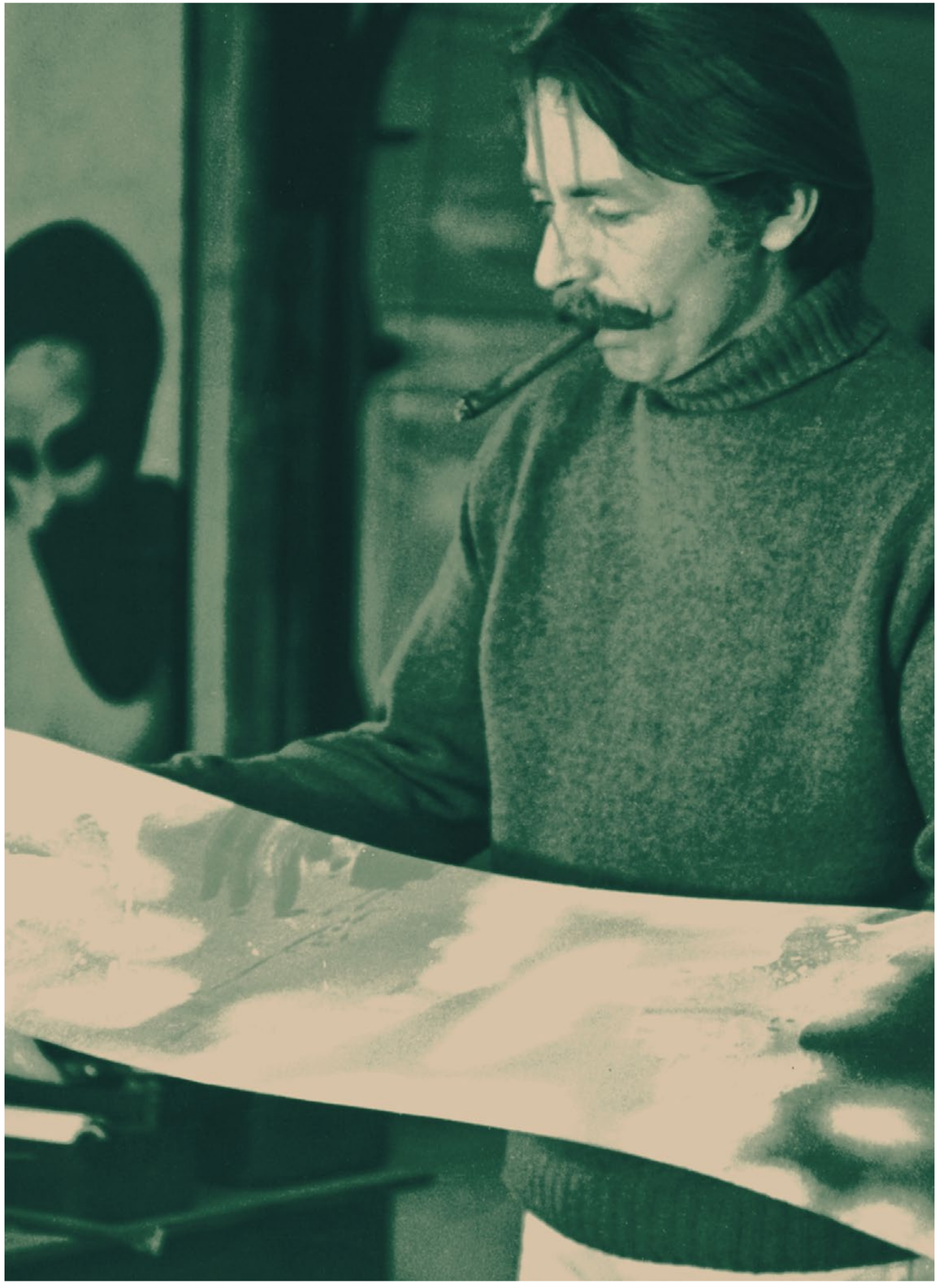
Richards positioned Hultberg's medium-specific innovations and exaggerations in relation to another, still more significant breakthrough: the triumph of American avant-garde painting in the years immediately after World War II. Noting Hultberg's "emphasis on the brush stroke," she described him as expressively deploying his enamel colors accordingly to the variables of "pressure, length, speed, area—a sense of kinetic forces pressing outward." [5] This was a clear allusion to the core principles of Abstract Expressionism, an idiom that has often been invoked in relation to Voulkos and Tawney, but is more obviously pertinent to Hultberg. Gestural, abstract, polychromatic, organized on a flat plane, and – yes – *big*, there is very little to distinguish his work from contemporaneous painting, apart from its materials.

Yet Richards, perceptively, went still further, implying that Hultberg was more than a follower of Abstract Expressionists. He was drawing on the same sources as they did, but also forging his own parallel development. Most importantly, she described Hultberg not as a painter, but specifically as a maker of *murals*. This term, now little used and relatively innocuous, was deeply charged circa 1960. It was associated, most proximately, to the Mexican muralists, among them Diego Rivera, José Orozco, and David Siqueiros.[6] Hultberg had studied at the Instituto Politécnico Nacional in Mexico City in the late 1940s, and there worked in the atelier of José Gutierrez – an associate of Siqueiros, who helped him develop a modern technical apparatus for the realization of his outdoor murals, including early synthetic paints, spray guns, photographic projectors, and movable scaffolding.[7] This experimental atmosphere clearly had an influence on Hultberg, and upon his return to the USA he briefly worked as a muralist in this specifically modern sense of the term.

Jackson Pollock was strongly influenced by the Mexican muralists as well, particularly Orozco and Siqueiros. It is no coincidence that his legendary breakthrough into "all-over composition," executed for Peggy Guggenheim in 1943, was simply entitled *Mural.* As art historian Romy Golan has argued, such architecturally-scaled paintings and kindred media, such as photocollages, tapestries, and mosaics, had been politically inflected in the 1930s across Europe and the Americas.[8] Whether they were deployed by Mexican socialists, Italian fascists, American painters in the service of the Federal Art Project, or by Pablo Picasso in his great *Guernica,* murals marked a conspicuous departure from the standard easel painting. They were not commodities, but collective experiences. Often made by groups of artist-artisans working as a team, they were also meant to be seen not in splendid isolation in a museum or gallery, but by groups of people, in public.

In the postwar American context, these political implications of muralism were somewhat muted, but by no means absent. By the 1950s, it was obvious that craft had little chance to contend with industry, as a way of actually getting everyday goods made. It was the era that mass production truly triumphed, with wartime production levels converted smoothly into the manufacture of consumer goods, an

Paul Hultberg
at work in his studio.
1969



Jackson Pollock
"Mural"
1943

John Mason
Blue Wall
Glazed Ceramic
1959

unprecedented volume of stuff. Critics – and there were many of them – found this situation to be dismaying, a victory of quantity over quality, of superficiality over substance. Richards was among the most influential of these voices. In her widely read 1964 book *Centering: In Pottery, Poetry, and the Person*, she described herself as "a question-asker and a truth-teller," and advised a practice of spiritual connection: "An act of the self, that's what one must make. An act of the self, from me to you. From center to center." [9]

Richards herself had little interest in economics. Her focus was not on how best to make a living, but how to make the best life. But others associated with the studio craft movement, more practically minded, shared her reservations about America's postwar culture as shallow and alienated. From this perspective, it was imperative to find new roles for skilled artisans: perhaps by making industrial prototypes or serially fabricated products, infused with human integrity (the "designer craftsman" ethos); or perhaps by furnishing sacred contexts, where the machine-made would feel out of place.[10] Public art was a third possibility, and this was the context in which murals came into play. While their work was rarely explicitly political, craftspeople embraced large scale not just to express their own personal ambition, but as a way of occupying space in an otherwise conformist culture.

Hultberg was a leading exponent of these tendencies. In the 1950s, he operated as a "designer craftsman" through his company Domesticrafts. Sharing a workspace with Ka Kwong Hui (best known for his later collaboration with Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein, and like Hultberg, a teacher in the Brooklyn Museum's art program), he turned out large quantities of enameled bowls, plaques, and boxes, as well as panels that could be mounted on furniture. He also made architectural murals, which were also serially produced in that they were made of many panels, adding up to a whole composition. This modular approach was the obvious way for studio-based practitioners to achieve large scale and was pursued by many other artists at this time, among them John Mason, Voulkos's close associate, whose *Blue Wall* (1959), twenty-one feet long, was arguably the purest of all incarnations of Abstract Expressionist ceramics; and Doyle Lane, whose expansive and luminous tile walls were somewhat similar in effect to Hultberg's enamels of the same era. (Images: John Mason, Blue Wall; and Doyle Lane, Mutual Savings and Loan Mural, 1964, Huntington) Another was Frans Wildenhain – former husband of Marguerite Wildenhain, and like her a product of the Bauhaus – whose work M. C. Richards discussed in a further article in *Craft Horizons,* published in 1962. This essay, headed "The Architectural Mural/Ceramics," can be read as a sort of pendant to her profile of Hultberg. Despite the difference of media and style, she found similar dynamics at work: "drawing is the beginning and the end of everything, and his architectural walls have evolved, in the impression of this writer, out of a steady growth principle which starts with the moving hand." [11]

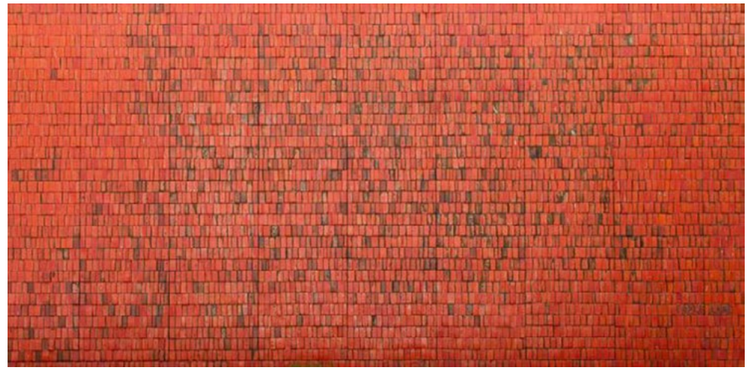
Wittingly or not, Richards was here reprising an influential description by the poet Nicolas Calas, describing the Surrealist principle of automatism: "one has the impression that the objects have been produced by a rhythmical movement of the arm and hand." [12] The Surrealists employed this principle both in writing and in visual art, encouraging an undirected, dream-like creative state. The idea was to break free from the constraints of the logical mind, and tap into the more potent wellsprings of the psyche. The famous "Exquisite Corpse," in which multiple artists contribute elements to the same composition without seeing the work of the others, was a parallel tactic. New York painters discovered these ideas in the Museum of Modern Art exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (1936), and embraced them wholeheartedly. Pollock's drip paintings were, among other things, an almost literal exemplification of automatism. His non-rational traceries, if they depict anything at all, depict the overlapping, undirected pathways taken by the active mind.

In Hultberg's medium of enamel, normally a slow and multilayered process, would seem a total mismatch with automatism and the "action painting" it helped to inform. But not the way he did it. A 1966 film of Hultberg working shows how he dropped and sifted the sand-like enamel on to the surface, or dripped water from a brush (a technique very similar to Pollock's) to make splashed patterns for the enamel to adhere to.[13] When he had a one-man show at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts the same year, critic Elizabeth Breckenridge noted that he had been developing techniques to work as quickly as possible:

...the technical process can be completed in minutes. Working swiftly and in an apparently effortless manner, Hultberg sifts and scatters the powdered glass into water-patterns splashed at random on the plate. Although he exercises the right of choice over the colors and qualities of the enamels, and knows roughly how the elements he selects will work together, the artist enjoys the sense of risk which stems from the fact that he cannot foresee the final form until the plate has been fired and it is too late to change.

This is an evocative description, quite similar to descriptions of Pollock working. But the last point was perhaps the crucial one. Richards had quoted Hultberg as saying that the enamelist is "not like the painter, who makes a stroke and there it is—

Paul Hultberg
Sgrafitto and
Acid Etched Enamel on Copper,
c. 1970



Doyle Lane
"Mutual Savings and Loan Mural"
1964
Ceramic Tile

Paul Hultberg
"John Cage Xmas Card"
6' long
1956

paint... As in print making or ceramics, you don't know exactly how it will come out."[16] Yet Hultberg realized that these mediating steps were also compatible with automatism. The unpredictability of the medium, particularly the way that colors and compositions take on a life of their own when the piece is kiln-fired, was in fact an exciting extension of the principle.

He seems to have come by this insight by way of his friendship with John Cage, the great avant-garde composer and theorist. Ethel Hultberg recalls that she and Paul met Cage in 1948, and moved to the Gate Hill Cooperative in 1956 partly because he was already living there. Gate Hill, also known as "Stony Point," or simply "The Land," was an early counterculture commune. Located in in Rockland County, New York, it was founded in 1953 by Paul and Vera Williams, who had been students at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. This famed experiment in progressive pedagogy was just entering its terminal decline (it officially closed in 1957), and Gate Hill became a natural refuge for figures associated with the school. An astonishing cadre of avant-gardistes gravitated to join them, among them Cage and his partner Merce Cunningham; pianist David Tudor; film maker Stan VanDerBeek; sculptor John Chamberlain; the potters Karen Karnes and David Weinrib; and Sari Dienes, another craftsperson who made architecturally scaled murals, in her case with glass, wood, and concrete. [17]

M. C. Richards lived at Gate Hill too, and it was through the community there that the Hultbergs came to know her. They also associated with many others who did not live at Gate Hill, but passed through at various times – a veritable who's who of American progressive culture and politics at the time: artists Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Marcel Duchamp, Jean Dubuffet, and Nam Jun Paik; film makers Maya Deren and Stan Brakhage; Beat poets Allen Ginsberg and Michael McClure; *Craft Horizons* editor Rose Slivka; even John Lennon and Yoko Ono.[18] If there was one common interest across this broad group, it was the continued search for an authentic expression, freed from the restrictions of conventional form. For many of them, as for Hultberg, automatism was the portal, and Cage was the man who held the key. [19]

Cage had by this time become fascinated with "chance operations," as pioneered earlier by Duchamp and the Surrealists. He was making his musical compositions according to coin tosses and the ancient Chinese divination manual, the *I Ching*. [20] For him, this was a way of radically departing from the limited perspective of individual taste, and embracing the full possibilities of a given technique or medium. Ultimately, he also conceived it as a path to personal transformation, very much along the lines that M. C. Richards was advocating. "I use my work to change myself and I accept what the chance operations say," he explained. "The I Ching says that if you don't accept the chance operations you have no right to use them. Which is very clear, so that's what I do." [21]

The Hultbergs were close with Cage. Ethel recalls that they all shared a car, and had breakfast together "most mornings." It was at the breakfast table, in 1956, that they planned a remarkable document of the moment. As part of a fundraising initiative for one of Cage and Cunningham's dance recitals, the Hultbergs had approached their friend Jack Lenor Larsen, the weaver and textile designer, and asked him to make a donation. As a way of contributing to the effort, he commissioned them to create his Christmas card that year (in addition to all his other activities, Larsen was one of the twentieth century's great mail correspondents). This led naturally to a creative conversation with Cage. They eventually settled on a long, folding composition, with large lettering – GREETINGS JACK LENOR LARSEN INCORPORATED printed in green using wood type on newspaper. (image) The interaction between the bold letters and the randomly selected newspaper underneath made for an open-ended, ever-changing composition.

Quite apart from the broader art historical import of this document – Rauschenberg, who seems not to have been involved with the Christmas card, would go on to use newspaper extensively in his paintings and Combines, and for similar reasons – it is also an early indication of Hultberg's own engagement with aleatory form generation ("aleatory," meaning random, is etymologically derived from the Latin word for dice). For a project at Gate Hill – a 24-foot-long mural for community co-founder Paul Williams – he arranged the enamel panels he had created according to numbers picked randomly from the phone book. (image) Perhaps more importantly, he seized on the idea that technical aspects of enamel could be used as randomizing factors, like Cage's coins or the I Ching. He not only embraced greater speed but greater uncertainty, plunging into an extreme version of what British design theorist David Pye would soon call the "workmanship of risk." [22] In 1966, he described his process like this:

I often apply the unfired enamel (a sand-like material) to the copper in a manner reminiscent of the way sand is affected by the forces of nature—that is, by gravity (dusting, throwing, dropping); by wind (blowing); by erosion (scratching, pushing, pulling) by water (dribbling, splashing); or by a combination of these... I feel that this mimicry of processes, rather than the artful delineation of surfaces, allows me to work as abstractly as nature and yet evoke many of those emotions which

Paul Hultberg
"Johnson Together"
Enamel on copper
1969

constitute our response to the visible world and that often give us a feeling of 'place.' [23]

Hultberg here states a position poised between Pollock's famous claim, "I don't paint nature, I am nature," and the equally famous verb list that Richard Serra composed in 1967-68: "to roll, to crease, to fold..." These two quasi-manifestos seem antithetical; against Pollock's grandiose presumption of an internal sublime, Serra simply presents the facts (or better to say, acts) of the matter. But Hultberg seems to have intuited that chance operations, once channeled through the specific vocabulary of his medium, could achieve a result that was equally expressive of personality *and* process. In the 1966 film, he speaks of the metal sheets he used as a substrate as having already had a life before he got to them: "There are already markings of a kind, sometimes you can use what's already happened to the copper." He might even base one of his forms on the reflections of the studio environment: "it's picked up what's around you. Including yourself."[24]

Another way of putting this is that Hultberg transposed the inherent formula that always inheres in craft – individualism plus technique – into the artistic concerns of the day. And his work bears this out as much as his words. Toward the end of the 1960s, New York gallerist Lee Nordness and Paul Smith, director of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, invited Hultberg to participate in the bellwether exhibition *Objects: USA*.[25] He responded with *Johnson Together* – the title alluding to the family company, Johnson Wax, which had funded the project – a four-by-seven-foot composition composed of discrete panels. (He also made a related work, about half the size, and called it *Little Johnson.*) The composition recalls that of a Japanese screen in the *rimpa* style originated in the seventeenth century by Ogata Kōrin, whom Hultberg had mentioned to Richards as an inspiration. Particularly in the context of *Objects: USA*, which was replete with potters informed by Japanese precedent – foremost among them Toshiko Takaezu, whose work featured similar splashed effects to those Hultberg employed – *Johnson Together* would have communicated a strong connection to East Asian ink painting. It was like seven scrolls hung side by side.

Yet this specific historic reference was certainly less important than the work's more conceptual implications. The seven panels in *Johnson Together* individually resemble the dramatic abstractions of Clyfford Still, with dramatic rifts of color floating against contrasting areas of textured bare copper. The overall effect, as in Still's work, is of a vast landscape, craggy and untamed. This is an American painting, then. But one that has been conceived in very unusual terms. As so often in his work, Hultberg exploited an apparent technical constraint of enamel as an opportunity for chance operations: the limited size of each panel, which normally cannot exceed the dimensions of the kiln. Here too he had expanded the possibilities, working out a means of firing his panels on a rolling track above a series of burners.[27] Even so, there was a limit to the scale that Hultberg could achieve, which directly determined the width of the panels used in *Little Johnson.* Rather than conceal the seams, he used them as a compositional device. The panels seem to slide in and out of alignment with one another: in some areas there is formal continuity, most strikingly in the work's upper central passage, where a broad patch of bare copper stretches across two panels, then transitions smoothly into black. Similar junction-points occur all over, with contours connecting and then unexpectedly diverging, exactly as in a Surrealist exquisite corpse. But just as often, the shapes collide with one another in an apparently random fashion. This is Cage's aleatory principle at work: chance operations, applied in a unique context.

The expansive horizontality of *Johnson Together* – it has the proportions of a cinema screen – bears comparison to the experimental films being made by Gate Hill habitués like Stan Brakhage and Stan Vanderbeek, in which abstract imagery is similarly connected through apparently random jump cuts, in a cascading montage. Filmmakers of that moment often physically manipulated their celluloid, scratching or painting on to it. In Hultberg's work, too, accidental effects penetrate the very substance of the work. He applied his enamel colors in response to a pre-existing visual pattern in the copper, established through preliminary acid etching – an automatist process. A finishing touch is supplied by the baking of the enamel, which creates a sort of dark halo of oxidization, the colors delineating their own contours in a variable fashion. Hultberg of course had mastered such effects by now, but he chose not to control them so much as unleash them. The effect is somewhat akin to the later *Abstrake Bilder* of Gerhardt Richter, made using a long flat squeegee that pushes the paint across the surface in a semi-controlled, semi-arbitrary manner. (image) In these paintings and in Hultberg's enamels, it is impossible to say of any given mark whether it is intentional or not. Artistic agency is thus held in suspension, operating dialectically with the free play of happenstance.

In the 1970s and '80s, Hultberg's work evolved into a more "hard-edged" style, in keeping with prevailing currents in contemporary painting. This approach still made room for the aleatory. Ellsworth Kelly, who had pioneered the idiom years previously, derived some of his first compositions from the fall of shadows on stairs, then went on to arbitrarily arrange squares of color into grids. Other hard-edge painters like

Paul Hultberg
"Little Johnson"
1969
Enamel on copper

Paul Hultberg
"Apple Dapple"
Enamel on Steel
1986

June Harwood also embraced chance operations, beginning their compositions with found images or random spills of paint. The difference was that they purged their work of gesturalism, emphatically defining contour and silhouette.

This is what Hultberg did, too, not so much a departure from his previous methodology as a clarification and distillation of it. His late masterpiece *Apple Dapple* (1986) was commissioned for the Manhattan offices of a company called Metromedia, just then shifting from radio and television to film production; the title perhaps alludes to the New York City context. Like *Johnson Together* it is four feet high, but almost ten times wider, fully sixty feet across. The composition is generally more contiguous, with forms smoothly transitioning from one panel to another, though this effect of continuity is offset by spacing between the panels. The palette is high 1980s, and may well prompt thoughts of the decade's music videos or graphic design (coincidentally or not, the forms look like they could have been generated using an early software program, like MacPaint). Look past the period vibe, though, and Hultberg's longstanding concerns are still evident. There is enough suggestion of a landscape, here, to give the "feeling of place." Nonetheless, the image field is populated by free-floating forms that seem to have landed somewhat arbitrarily, as if scattered by the wind.

One topic remains: why is Paul Hultberg not much better-known today? Given the evident seriousness and quality of his work, and the privileged position he had at the beating heart of the American avant-garde, it is difficult to understand his relative obscurity. The most obvious explanation is medium: for all his intelligent engagement with contemporaneous painting, his chosen discipline of enamel seemed to occupy a space apart. Like many other artists associated with the postwar craft movement – ceramists like Voulkos and Takaezu, weavers like Tawney, and the other great enamelist of his generation, June Schwarcz – he found himself categorized within a "minor art" genre. (That he also worked as a printmaker made little difference, for it too was understood as a secondary field.[28]) Then too, his investment in public art may been a hindrance. The currency of the mural as a typology waned in the 1960s and later, with the rising power of commercial galleries – who had little use for a permanently installed, architecturally-scaled art work, no matter what it was made from.

A final hurdle to recognition may be the very subtlety with which Hultberg responded to the ideas around him. It is all too easy to look at his major works, like *Johnson Together*, and misunderstand them as just latter-day Abstract Expressionism, apparently disconnected with the conceptual tendencies that were emerging in the late 1960s. In fact, though Hultberg was drawing on the "action paintings" of the previous generation, he was also engaging with the pressing issues of the moment: aleatory aesthetics, the primacy of process, and an interrogation of artistic subjectivity. He did so in his own way, stylistically distinct from the post-industrial aesthetic pursued by Serra, the Pop-inflected collage of Rauschenberg, or the more obviously calculated approach of someone like Sol Lewitt. Perhaps only in retrospect is it easy to see the connections between all these practices. Does it seem unfair and unfortunate that what gave Hultberg's work its value – materiality, civic-mindedness, and radical openness – are precisely the things that have limited his reputation? Assuredly so. But as Hultberg knew well, art is not ultimately validated by any external account. It is a matter of exploration and discovery, or, as M. C. Richards put it, adventurous invention. He built his career on that principle, and never wavered. It is one thing he never left to chance.

[1] Enamels (New York: Museum of Contemporary Crafts, 1959). See also Bernard Jazzar and Harold Nelson, Little Dreams in Glass and Metal: Enameling in America, 1920 to the Present (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

[2] M. C. Richards, "Paul Hultberg: Enamel as Mural," Craft Horizons 20/2 (March/April 1960), 29, 32.

[3] Conrad Brown, "Peter Voulkos," Craft Horizons 16/5 (September/October 1956); Margo Hoff, "Lenore Tawney: The Warp Is Her Canvas," Craft Horizons 17/6 (November/December 1957)

[4] Alan Rosenberg, "Paul Hultberg: Abstract Expressionist Enamelist," Metalsmith 40/4 (2020). The present article attempts to build on this foundational study by exploring Hultberg's wider art historical context.

[5] Richards, "Paul Hultberg," 29, 32.

[6] On this movement see Barbara Haskell, et al., Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2020).

[7] "Mural Painting: Heart of The Artistic Rebirth of Mexico in the 20th Century," Artes De México 5/6 (Dec. 1954), 138.

[8] Romy Golan, Muralnomad (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[9] M. C. Richards, Centering: In Pottery, Poetry, and the Person (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1964). On Richards see Jenni Sorkin, Live Form: Women, Ceramics, and Community (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[10] Key exhibitions exploring these two possibilities were Designer-Craftsmen USA, Aileen Osborn Webb's first major initiative, presented at the Brooklyn Museum in 1953 and touring thereafter; and The Patron Church, held at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in 1957-58. Hultberg was included in an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum in 1952, The Artist as Artisan. Organized by the museum's affiliated art school, where Hultberg was teaching, it is an intriguing precedent for the better-known Designer-Craftsmen USA.

[11] M. C. Richards, "The Architectural Mural/Ceramics: Frans Wildenhain," Craft Horizons 22/4 (July/Aug. 1962), 24.

[12] Nicolas Calas, Confound the Wise (New York: Arrow Editions, 1942), 244.

[13] George Ancona, dir., Reflections: The Imagery of Paul Hultberg Enamelist (American Craftsmen's Council, 1966).

[14] Elizabeth Breckenridge, Paul Hultberg: Enamels (New York: Museum of Contemporary Crafts, 1966), n.p.

[15] Quoted in Richards, "Paul Hultberg," 30.

[16] Ethel Hultberg, letter to Robert Aibel, [date?]

[17] M. C. Richards, "The Bottle Gardens of Sari Dienes," Craft Horizons 22/5 (September/October 1965).

[18] Ethel Hultberg, letter to Robert Aibel. She also names, among other associates, writers Denice Levertov, Robert Creeley, Joel Oppenheimer, LeRoy Jones (later Amiri Baraka), Robert Duncan, and Gregory Corso; composers Karl Heinz Stockhausen, Luigi Nono, Pierre Boulez, Morton Feldman, and Toshi Ichiyanagi (first husband of Yoko Ono); jazz musicians Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry; political activist Bayard Rustin; and artists Karel Appel and Pierre Soulages. The creative connections continued even in the next generation: in 1980, the Hultbergs' son Jesse formed a band called Three Teens Kill 4 with David Wojnarowicz, who went on to become one of the leading lights of the New York underground art scene.

[19] On Cage and the Gate Hill community, see Mark Davenport, "Paul Williams: The Cage Mix," Journal of the Society for American Music 14/2 (May 2020).

[20] On Cage's use of chance operations see Louis Menand, The Free World: Art and Thought in the Cold War (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021), 246.

[21] John Cage, Conversing with Cage (New York: Routledge, 2003), 215. Rose Slivka later interviewed Cage and Richards: "Lifecraft: John Cage and M. C. Richards Talk on Work and Worth," Craft Horizons 38/8 (December 1978).

[22] David Pye, The Nature and Art of Workmanship (Cambridge University Press, 1968).

[23] Paul Hultberg, artist's statement for The American Craftsmen's Invitational Exhibition (Seattle: Henry Gallery, University of Washington, 1966).

[24] Ancona, Reflections.

[25] The show was organized by material, and he was one of only eight artists included in the enamels category. Hultberg's entry in the book was largely given over to a reprint of Elizabeth Breckenridge's above-cited essay from his 1966 Museum of Contemporary Crafts exhibition. A short prefatory note echoed Hultberg's ideas: "he sifts and scatters the ground enamels into random patterns which reflect and embody the orderly chaos of natural phenomena." Lee Nordness, Objects: USA (New York: Viking, 1970), 33.

[26] Interestingly, these copper areas somewhat resemble Andy Warhol's later Oxidization Paintings (1977-78) – colloquially known as "piss paintings," because they were made by urinating on to an untreated copper plate. This hilarious send-up of expressionist macho aesthetics looks a little different when we include Hultberg's work as a precedent; in a less brazen way, he had already modulated the action painter's gesture into a less ego-oriented key. The Hultbergs knew Warhol, too, associating with him at Max's Kansas City, a jazz club called the Five Spot, and via their shared acquaintance with Rauschenberg and Cunningham.

[27] The process can be seen in Ancona, Reflections. This 'open-air' firing raises the sheet to about 1500 degrees Fahrenheit, which also warps it. After firing Hultberg flattened it with a heavy rubber roller.

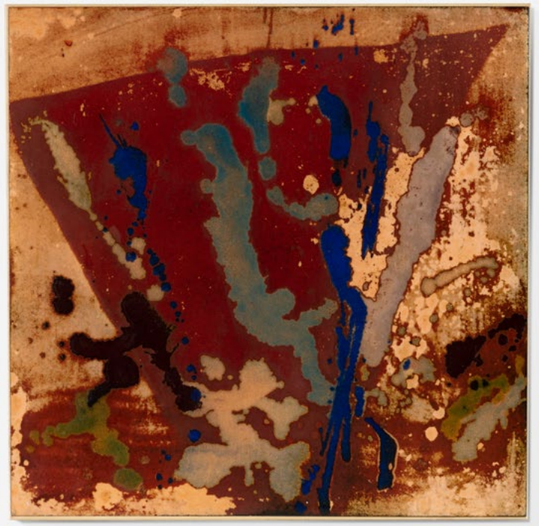
[28] Hultberg's day job was as a printmaking instructor at Rockland Community College, of which he proudly said: "This may be the best-equipped print shop of a school of this kind in the country." Nora Kerr, "Etching A Place in Artists' Hearts," The Record [Rockland], January 25, 1968.

1
Untitled
c.1960s
6”x11.5”
Enamel on copper

2
Untitled
c.1960s
7”x12”
Enamel on copper

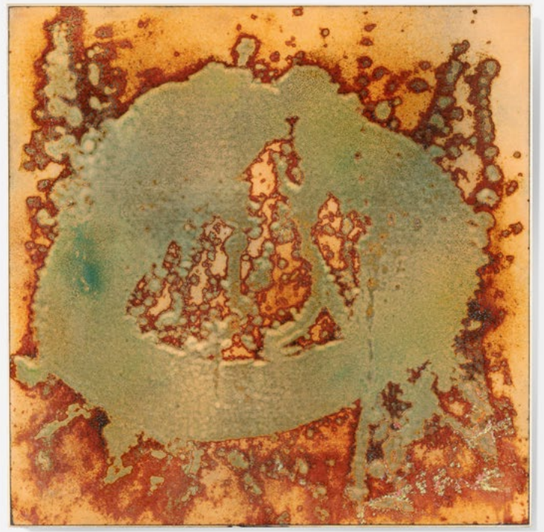
3
Untitled
c.1960s
7” x 12”
Enamel on copper

4
Untitled
c.1960s
7”x12”
Enamel on copper

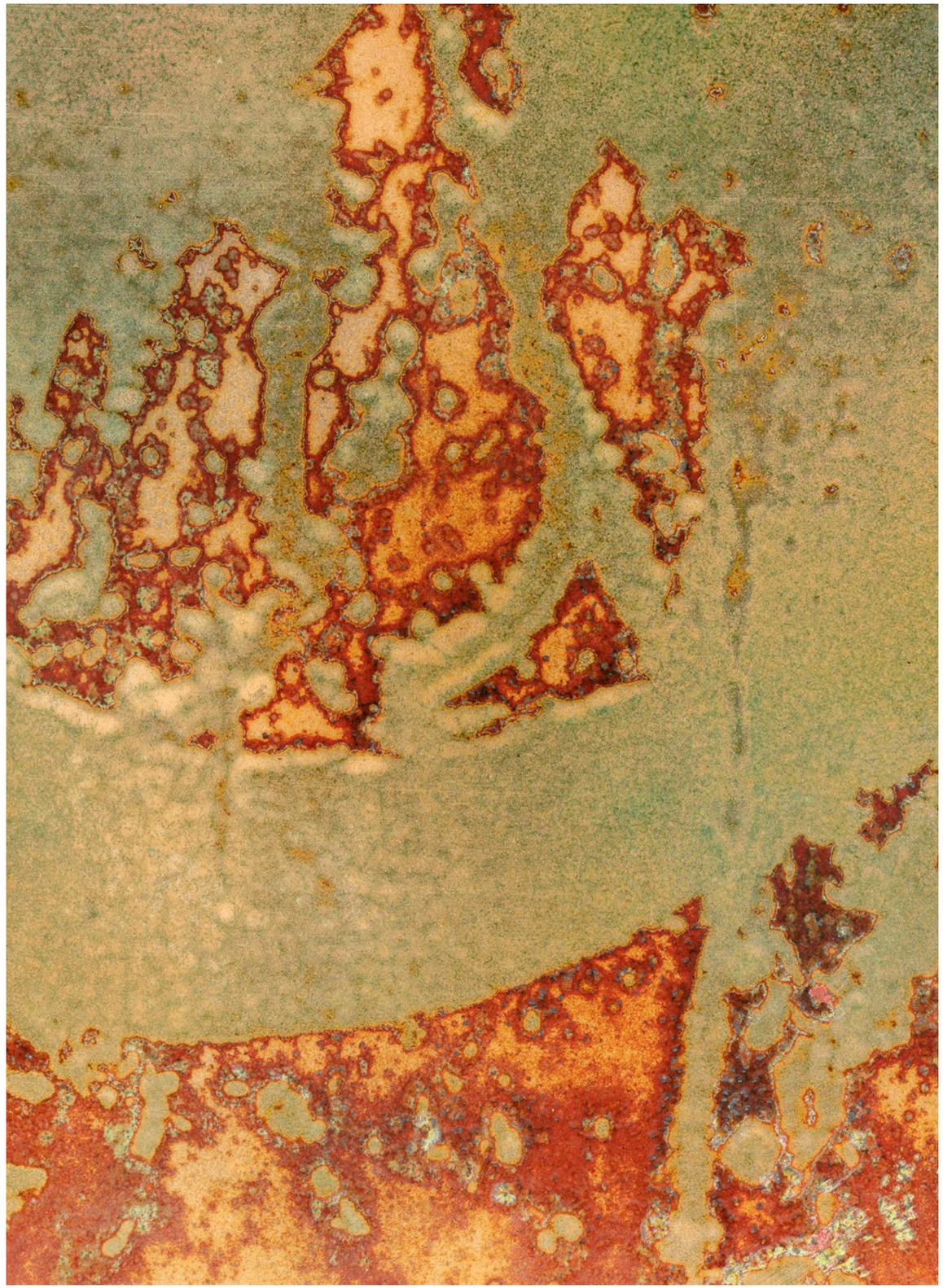


5
Untitled
c.1960s
11.5”x 11.5”
Enamel on copper

6
Abstraction
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper



7
Between
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper



8
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

9
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

10
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

11
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

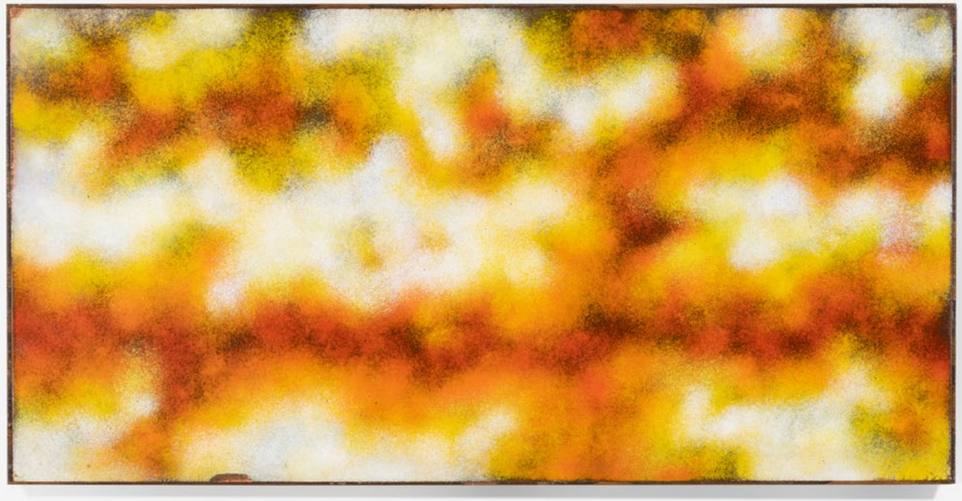
12
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x12”
Line drawing, enamel on copper

13
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x15”
Enamel on copper

14
Untitled
c.1960s
12.25”x18”
Enamel on copper

15
Bull
c.1960s
12”x19”
Enamel drawing on copper

16
Untitled
c.1960s
14”x20.25”
Absract enamel on copper



17
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x24”
Enamel on copper

18
Untitled
1966
16”x18”
Enamel on copper

19
Drifts
1966
16”x18”
Enamel on copper

20
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x24”
Absract Rorschach, enamel on copper

21
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x24”
Stenciled enamel on copper

22
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x24”
Enamel on copper

23
Untitled
c.1960s
12.25”x24”
Stenciled enamel on copper

24
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x24”
Enamel on copper

25
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x24”
Enamel on copper

26
Untitled
c.1960s
12.25”x24”
Stenciled enamel on copper

27
Moon Drip
1966
18”x24”
Enamel on copper

28
Moon Dog
1966
18”x24”
Enamel on copper

29
Untitled
Undated
24”x18.25”
Enamel on copper

30
Untitled
c.1970
24.5”x18.5”
Enamel on copper

31
Imagine a Messenger
1965
18”x36”
Enamel on copper

32
Untitled
c.1960s
29”x24”
Absract Rorschach, enamel on copper

33
Untitled
c.1970
30”x24”
Enamel on copper

34
Erosions of the Sea
1972
30.5”x24.5”
Enamel on copper

35
Coastal Drain
1972
30.5”x24.5”
Enamel on copper

36
Untitled
c.1970
31”x24.5”
Enamel on copper

37
Exploding Snow
1968
24.5”x36”
Enamel on copper

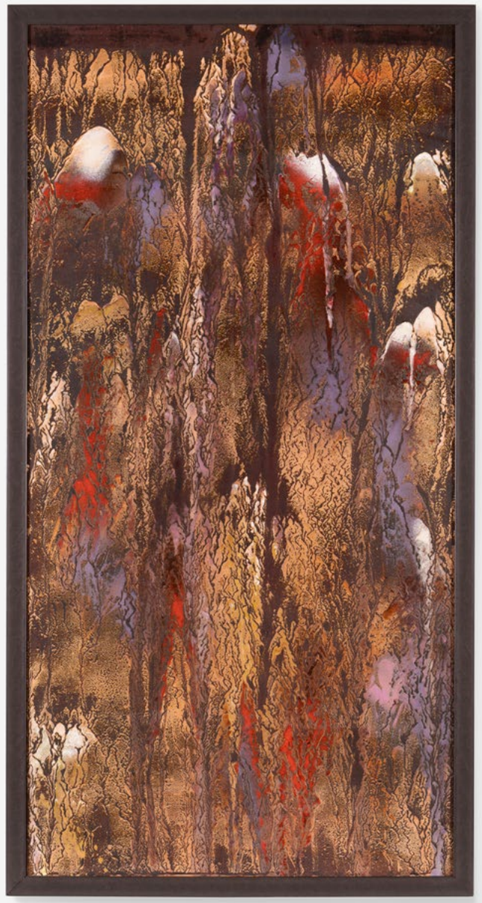
38
Medium Message
1968
24.5”x36”
Enamel on copper

39
Found Horizon
1972
24”x47.25”
Enamel on copper

40
Little Fault
1972
48” x 24.5”
Enamel on copper

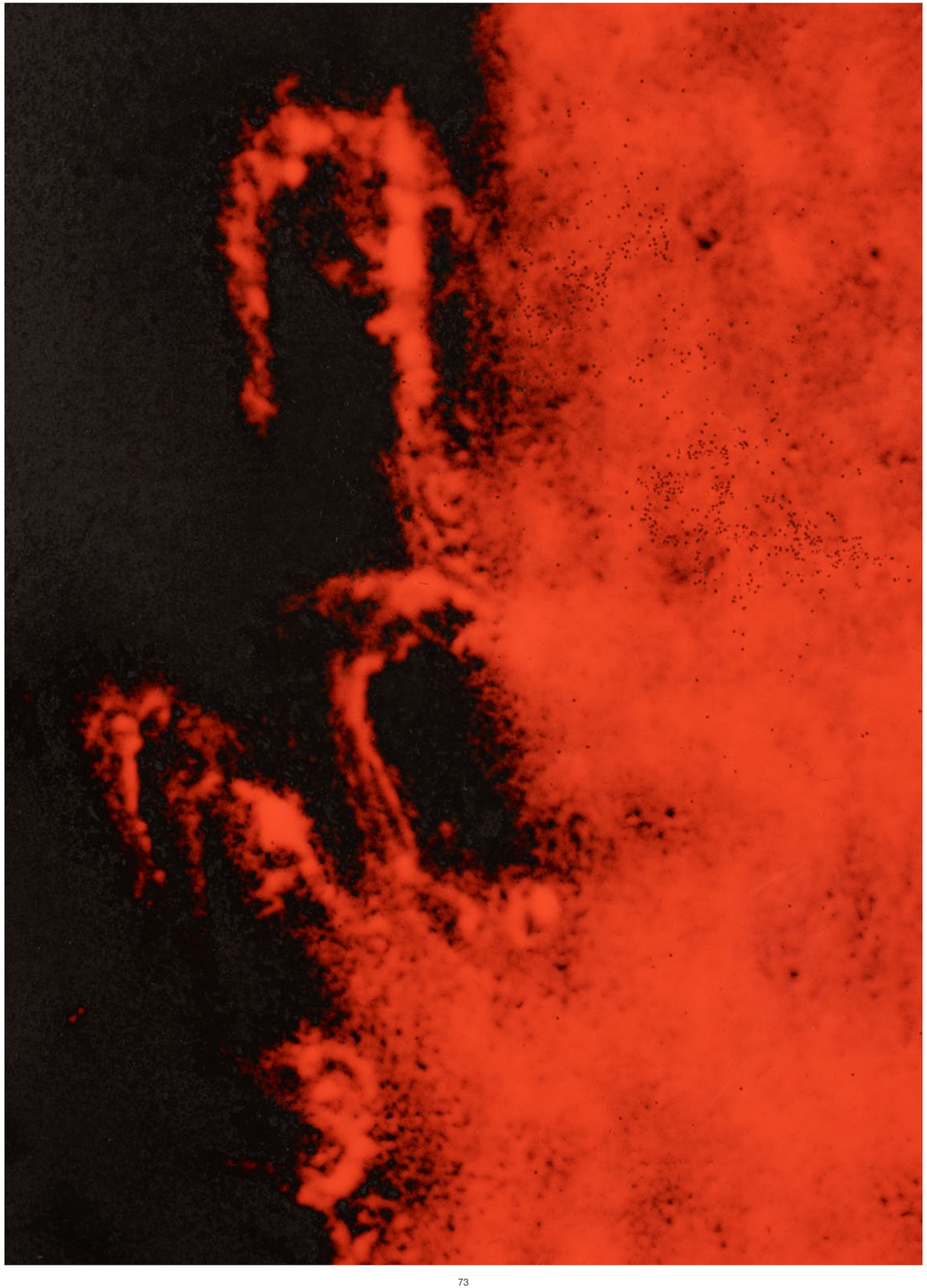
41
Albany IV
1972
24”x47.25”
Enamel on copper

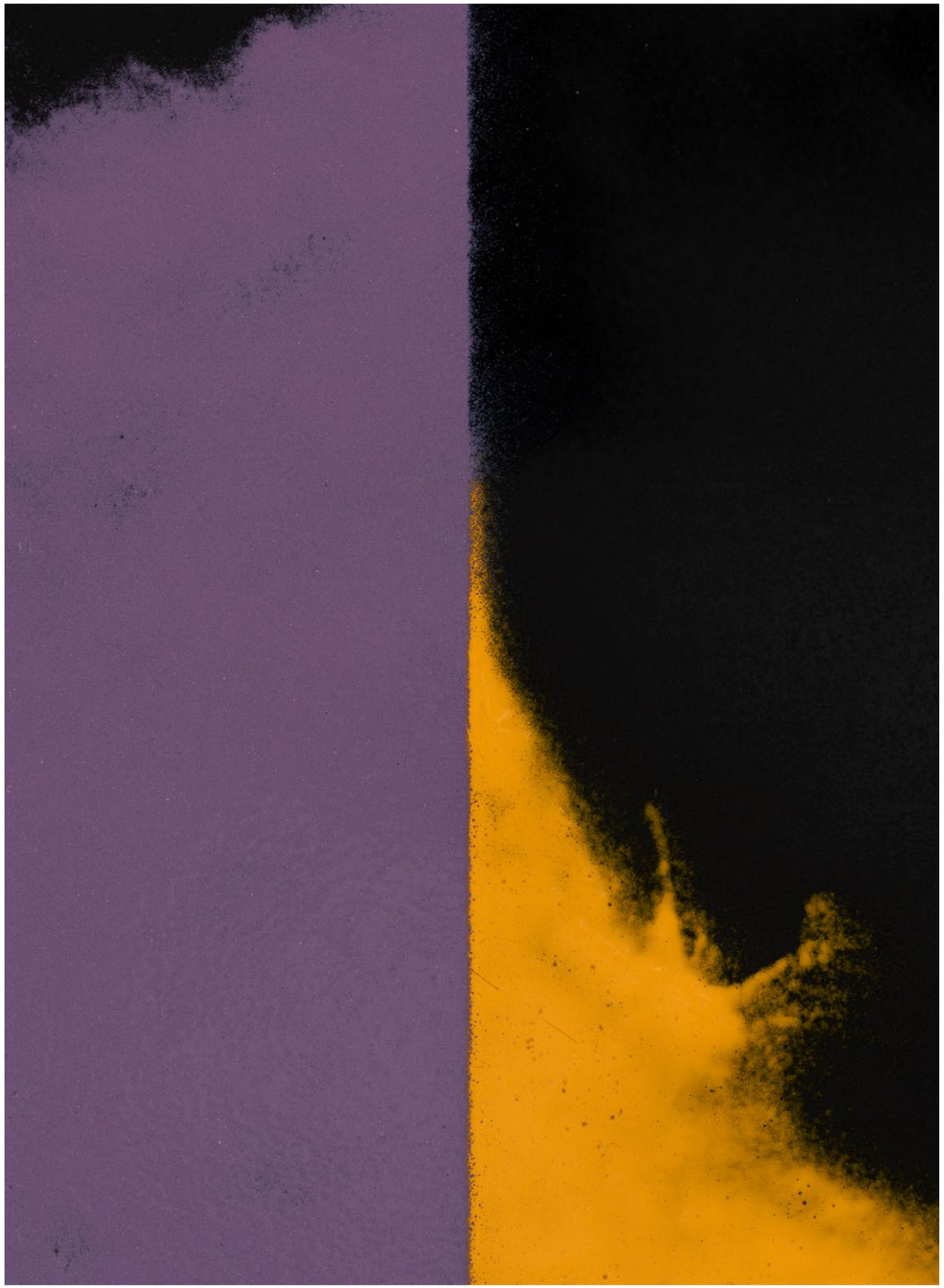
42
Erosions of the Sea II
1972
48”x24.5”
Enamel on copper



43
Forest of Faults
1972
48"x24.5"
Enamel on copper

44
Untitled
undated
35"x37"
Enamel on steel





45
Untitled
undated
37.5"x38.5"
Enamel on steel

46
Pastures of the Sea
1971
24.25”x60.5”
Enamel on copper

47
Hieroglyph
c.1958
84”x24”
Enamel on copper

48
Falling
1983
60”x35”
Enamel on steel

49
Dallas
1958
58.5”x37.5”
Enamel on steel

50
Apple
1986
60”x39”
Enamel on steel

51
Little Yellow
1960
42”x60”
Enamel on steel

52
Khaki
1962
60”x42”
Enamel on steel

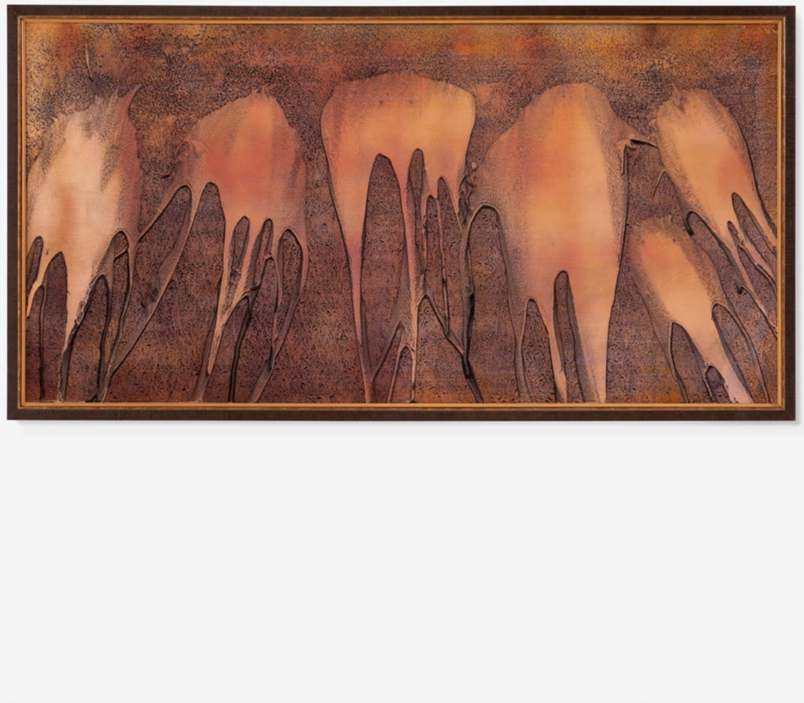
53
Landscape with Boat
undated
44”x60”
Acrylic on canvas

54
Winter Woods
undated
48”x66.25”
Enamel on steel

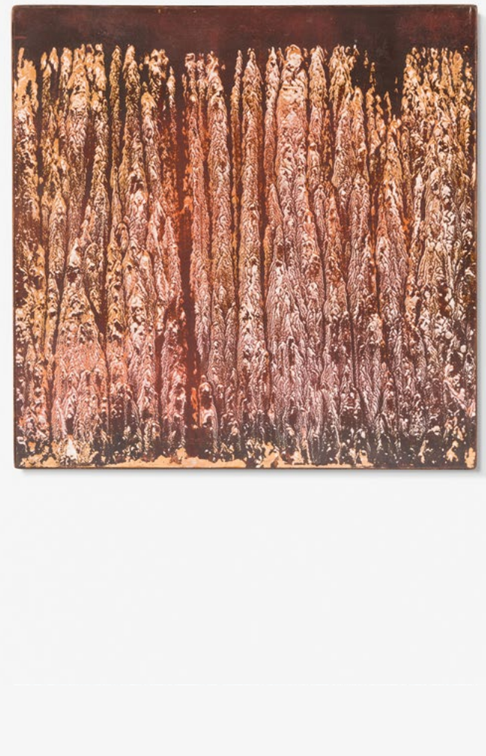
55
Albany III
1972
47.25”x72”
Enamel on copper

56
Giant Fault
1972
48"x72.5"
Enamel on copper

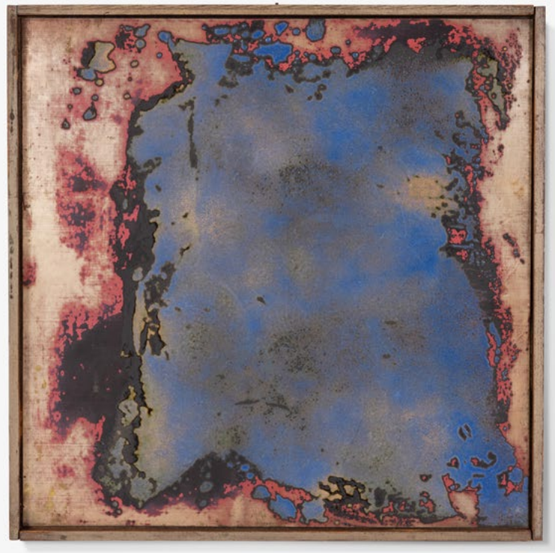
57
Diptych
1986
60"x78"
Enamel on steel



58
Albany VI
1972
24.5”x48.5”
Enamel on copper



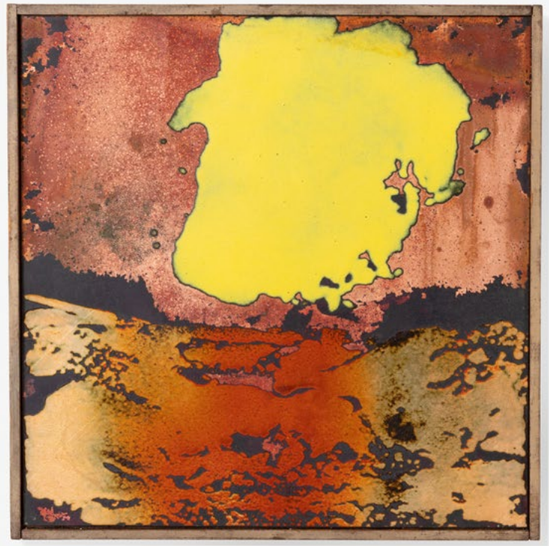
59
Eroded Coast
1962
24”x24.25”
Enamel on copper



60
Blue Lady
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

61
Boreas Blowing
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

62
Abstraction
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper



63
Abstraction
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

64
Abstraction
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

65
Abstraction
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

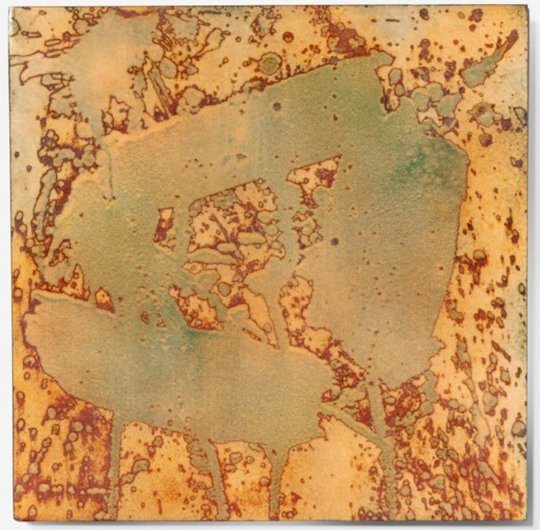
66
Abstraction
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

67
Abstraction
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

68
Abstraction
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

69
Abstraction
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

70
Abstraction
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

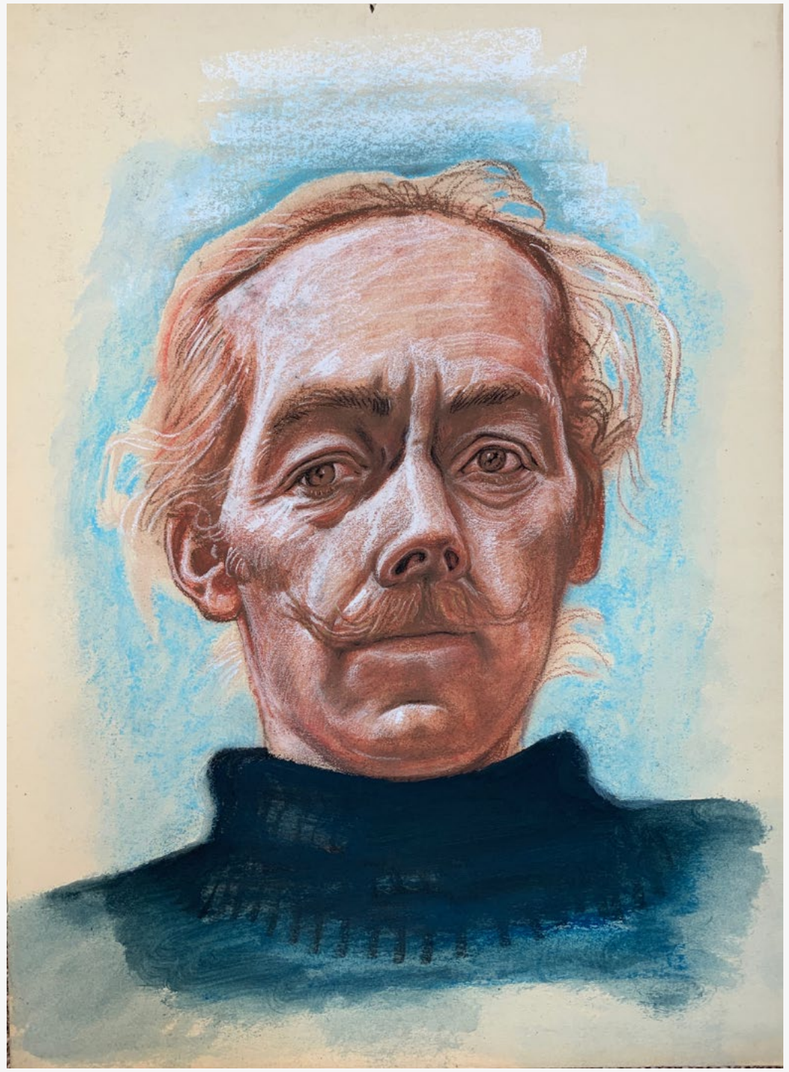


71
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

72
Untitled
c.1960s
12”x12”
Enamel on copper

73
Earl
1987
48”x72”
Acrylic on canvas

74
Aaron
1985
48”x84”
Acrylic on canvas



75
Self Portrait
c. 1970s
30” x 22”
Pastel on paper

Moderne Gallery Wishes to Thank

Michael Gruber, our very talented interior designer for over 30 years, designed the show with the care and highly developed aesthetic sensibility that he's exhibited throughout his career. As busy as he is, he's always makes time for us.

Christian Giannelli is responsible for all the great images of Hultberg's work. He made himself available to us whenever we needed him to take more photos, an almost never-ending process.

Michael J. Joniec, whose excellent photographs have been a large part of our visual identity for over 30 years. We're very pleased to have his beautiful photographs of "Little Johnson" grace the covers of this catalogue.

Neal Ashby (who designed the John Lennon postage stamp) designed the catalogue on very short notice. His design sensibility is the reason that the catalogue is so beautiful and easy to read. Neal and his business partner, **Patrick Donohue,** have maintained and improved our website. They're currently working redesigning the website for Moderne Gallery.

Alan Rosenberg (who introduced me to Lawrence Hultberg) and **Glenn Adamson** are both excellent writers and researchers. They wrote insightful and revelatory essays for the catalogue that truly help us to understand the historical significance of Paul Hultberg in the craft and art worlds.

Sarah Ferrall and her team at Camron PR have been nothing but stellar. They were totally committed to promoting this project, always available and a pleasure with whom to work.

Bob Tursack at Brilliant Graphics who managed to beautifully print our catalogue in what must be close to record time.

Samantha Romero, our gallery associate, who constantly helped us organize and research material for the catalogue – and do everything else that we needed in the gallery, always with a smile

Jake Kotarra was constantly moving furniture and organizing the warehouse. Without his total willingness to do anything that we needed, it would have been very hard to install this exhibit. In addition, he and **Mike Moran** built a wall in the gallery on which to display Hultberg's historic work

Ethel "Sky" Hultberg, Paul's widow, who generously provided us with invaluable information about their lives and work. Her recollections formed the basis of much of what we know about the circle of artists with whom they were friends and associates.

Lawrence Hultberg (Paul's and Ethel's son) was the driving force behind this entire project. If he hadn't been so devoted to Paul's work and legacy this amazing work would have languished for many years, if not forever. He chose, cleaned and made minor repairs to most of the works that are in the exhibit. He did so with great care and devotion.