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Of **Dogs** and  
**Other People:**  
The **Art** of **Roy**  
**De Forest**

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
**Michael Duncan**

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# Valley of the Dots: The Early Years at UC Davis

**When chairman Richard Nelson** invited De Forest to join the staff of his fledgling art department at UC Davis in the fall of 1965, it was not for any of the qualifications typical in academia such as art-world renown or artistic compatibility. Harvey Himmelfarb, who taught photography in the 1980s, explained: “The faculty was made up, very deliberately, of artists who were as different from each other as possible in their ideas about art and their approaches to art . . . . The idea was to expose students to as many ways to make art as possible, and let them find their way.”<sup>63</sup> Most instructors, including De Forest, did not have a great deal of teaching experience, and that, too, was Nelson’s intent. Fellow teacher Ralph Johnson described the “mavericks” at Davis as being like horses with “some training” but not “conformed” to that training—in other words, as he said, “untried.”<sup>64</sup>

The risk paid off, largely because of Nelson’s uncanny ability to recruit independent-minded, exceptionally original artists with powerful personalities who did not shy away from spirited debate (in De Forest’s view, “arguing all the time” was “the basis of the department”).<sup>65</sup> By the fall of 1965, when De Forest arrived, Nelson had put together a team of talent that included Arneson, Tio Giambruni (who had set up one of the first bronze foundries in a university department in 1963), Ruth Horsting, Neri, Roland Petersen, Dan Shapiro, Thiebaud,

and Wiley, with guest lecturers William Allan, Elaine de Kooning, DeLap, Joseph Raffael, and Peter VandenBerge. His less celebrated successor Richard Cramer would continue to develop Davis’s stellar art department after Nelson retired from chairmanship in 1966, hiring full-time and visiting instructors such as Jeremy Anderson, Bailey, Robert Bechtle, Gordon Cook, Van Deren Coke, Claire Falkenstein, Robert Frank, David Gilhooly, Ralph Goings, Mike Henderson, Marilyn Levine, Peter Saul, Cornelia Schulz, Shaw, Smith, Leon Polk Smith, Franklin Williams, and Paul Wonner in the late 1960s and 1970s. — Having brought together such an extraordinary group of artists, Nelson and Cramer gave them a degree of freedom unheard of in state universities, dispensing with bureaucracy and encouraging an exclusive focus on art-making and teaching. As Bruce Nauman, a student at Davis in the mid-1960s, recalled (in Peter Plagens’s paraphrase): “Any campus mail, such as forms to be filled out, schedules of committee meetings, etc. . . . should be tossed unopened into the wastebasket. Nelson would cover those matters for them.”<sup>66</sup> This laissez-faire attitude is confirmed by Petersen, who acknowledged, “Our department meetings were usually in the hallway as we walked by one another.”<sup>67</sup> And teachers could develop curricula any way they chose since Nelson’s was an avowedly “anti-syllabus philosophy.”<sup>68</sup>

63 Roy De Forest with King, Port Costa, California, 1967. Courtesy Estate of Roy De Forest, promised gift to Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution



The combination of free-spirited, creative individuals in such an open atmosphere proved a combustible mix, leading to a highly innovative and truly singular chapter in American art history. Despite the participants' avowed "contrariness," as Arneson described the general attitude of his cohorts, the period roughly between 1965 and 1975—extending beyond the Davis campus to include artist-teachers from Sacramento State along with a handful of Chicago transplants—has all the earmarks of a movement: the camaraderie, collective excitement, and

momentum; consensus among the artists that together they were breaking barriers and charting new ground; attendant accretion of legendary anecdote and lore; and even a manifesto, which De Forest wrote himself.<sup>69</sup> As Johnson put it, coming to UC Davis in the 1960s was "like catching the right boat at the right time. This place took off."<sup>70</sup> Poet and musician David Zack, who had come to the Bay Area from Chicago, went so far as to report in the British journal *Art and Artists* that by 1969, the artists there were in the midst of a "tremendous renaissance."<sup>71</sup>

64 Robert Arneson, exhibition poster for *Here We Go Gathering Nuts in May*, Candy Store Gallery, 1973. Collection Carl and Susan Landauer

In order to get a handle on this extraordinary collective burst of creative energy, several art historians have advanced labels, primarily Peter Selz's term "Funk Art," taken from the show Selz organized in 1967 for the University Art Museum (now Berkeley Art Museum).<sup>72</sup> The chief problem with Selz's nomenclature has been its connection to "funky," a term used as early as the 1950s by Smith's gang (Deborah Remington, co-founder of the Six Gallery, bears the honor of having called one of her quirky paintings, *Phunky*, in 1956), and later artists associated with the Beat Generation, such as Brown and Conner.<sup>73</sup> In Selz's show, the Beat contingent was represented by Conner's signature nylon-stockinged assemblage, *Snore*, 1960, as well as Brown's scruffy *Fur Rat*, 1962, and a couple of De Forest's early assemblages of the same vintage, which the artist insisted were "pre-Funk."<sup>74</sup> Matters became muddled because these works were hung next to abstract, polychromed sculpture fashioned from industrial materials, typified by Robert Hudson, William Geis, and the sleek later work of Jeremy Anderson. In addition to the confusing premise and inconsistent checklist, the *Funk* show was limited to sculpture, prompting James Monte to organize a counterpart exhibition of paintings in San Francisco at Hartnell Studio Gallery called *The Grotesque Image*, which for obvious reasons did not stick. Other terms occasionally used for De Forest's clan have included Marcia Tucker's "Bad Painting," Thomas Albright's "Mythmakers," and Whitney Chadwick's "Narrative Imagists," which have not had the staying power of "Funk."<sup>75</sup>

None of this packaging was really necessary. It is rare for artists to come up with a label of their own, but the Davis group did, calling themselves "Nut Artists." It worked because essentially the style was a non-style, and the concept was idiosyncrasy, pure and simple. In De Forest's words, the Nut Artist is "an eccentric, peculiar individual" and Nut Art "a squirrel in the forests of visual delights" (fig. 64).<sup>76</sup> Fortunately, an early firsthand account of the origin of the Nut Art movement, written during its

Here we go gathering Nuts in May



germinal period, survives in an unpublished manuscript by Zack, the self-proclaimed "Nut chronicler." The "facts about the discovery of Nut are perfectly clear to me," Zack wrote, because "I happened to be there at the time." The year was 1969.

In Roy De Forest's purple house under the golden hills of Port Costa, California. By the shores of broad Carquinez Strait, on a sultry August afternoon when searing winds from some distant dusty desert were hissing sternly of great grey rains to come. Roy, Maija [Zack, aka Woof, later Peeples-Bright], Dave Gilhooly, Clayton Bailey . . . and I were sitting around a wooden table, looking out the window at some horses [and] drinking Swan Lager Beer. . . . They'd been doing a lot of work lately. Maija had started a painting [with] a pattern of very complicated beasts, smiling. Dave had begun work on his series of large cookie jars illustrating the Frog History of the World . . . . Bailey was just getting into burping bowls and also at work on a series of clay trumpets with his traditional grub-nose critter appearance. Roy as usual was starting another period, having found a new road lined with glittering gold and purple and bronze and a very peculiar red [and] I'd been writing *Woofy Tales* . . . . What we need's a new art movement, I may have said. At that moment Roy's mother Oma came up with a round tray full of open brown bottles of Swan Lager, plus some vegetarian bacon crisps. Everyone said Nut Art at once. Nut Art was born.<sup>77</sup>

65 Roy De Forest, cover of *Nut Art* exhibition catalogue, California State University, Hayward, Art Gallery, 1972. Photo courtesy Jack Ford



So apparently, De Forest's eccentric mother, much loved by his friends and something of a mother hen to her son's flock, played a key role in providing a name for the movement. Another version places the birth of Nut Art at Bailey's Dairyville Café, where members came up with fictitious names like Doggy Dinsmore for De Forest, William Twigg for Harold Schlotzhauer, and Dr. Gladstone for Bailey.<sup>78</sup> Peeples-Bright believes both versions are correct and that the movement's development "happened at various stages," adding, "We even schemed and planned at various dinners at Japanese restaurants in San Francisco shared with Roy [and] Gerald Gooch, who typically ate three orders of shrimp tempura."<sup>79</sup>

Zack, who taught at the San Francisco Art Institute in the 1960s, went on to write a series of articles in national and international magazines, generally anonymously, describing the movement. Other than remarking on the artists' egalitarian ethos as opposed to the elitism of "stuffy developments in the East and South" (the latter meaning L.A. Finish Fetish), Zack was careful to focus only on the distinct achievements of the artists and their "joyous, rampant individuality."<sup>80</sup> From inception, membership in the group was open-ended; as Bailey remarked, Nut Art "can be brought out in nearly everybody. Nut is folk. It is the mad genius in all of us."<sup>81</sup> Recognizing Henri Rousseau, Antoni Gaudí, and Simon Rodia (builder of the Watts Towers) as forerunners, and "all the primitive eccentrics working in the small towns in Kansas and Louisiana" as kindred spirits,<sup>82</sup> the artists who eventually exhibited under the Nut Art banner included more than twenty: Arneson, Bailey, Victor Ceramski, Robert Cumming, Lowell Darling, De Forest, Jack Ford, Gilhooly, Gladys Nilsson, Jim Nutt, Peeples-Bright, Linda Renner, Saul, Harold Schlotzhauer, Shaw, Irvin Tepper, Chris Unterseher, VandenBerge, Williams, Karl Wirsum, and Zack. Between 1969 and 1973, there were several exhibitions,<sup>83</sup> the most important being the show Bailey organized at California State University, Hayward in 1972. De Forest designed the cover for the catalogue (fig. 65) and wrote the first statement, which many consider the movement's manifesto, a playful *mélange* of quotes attributed to fictional characters like the "mangy sheepdog from Lombardy," "obscene hyena," and "horse of a different color," referring to the effervescent stallion pulling the carriage through the Emerald City in *The Wizard of Oz*. The consensus among De Forest's cast of assorted miscreants was that the Nut Artist was a supreme and unfettered individualist, "creating art as a fantasy with the amazing intention of totally building a

miniature world into which the nut could retire with all his friends, animals, and paraphernalia” in other words, “a ‘completely fitted out’ phantasmagoria.” De Forest even presented himself as a figment of his own imagination, signing his manifesto, “Written on this day of our Lord April 12, 1972 by Ralph (Doggy) Dinsmore, intimate friend and confidant of De Forest.”<sup>84</sup>

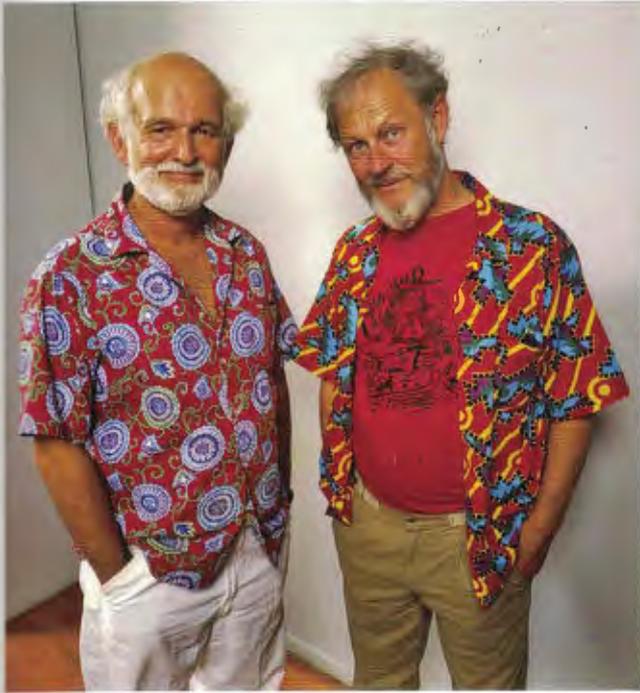
The single-mindedness with which these artists explored the depths of their imaginations to forge uniquely personal visions did not develop all by itself. As previously noted, individuality had been the credo of Beat-era artists as a response to the restrictive McCarthy era. But while for most of the country the hysteria of Joseph McCarthy’s anti-Communist witch-hunts had largely died down by 1954 after the Senate hearings, the crackdown on “Un-Americanism” (a catch-all for any seemingly deviant behavior) had only begun to expand in California, where the arms and space races were heating up. As the geographical frontline for the Cold War, and hence the recipient of more than \$150 billion in federal money for research and development of weaponry, the paranoia surrounding the secrecy of the state’s growing military-industrial complex led to a draconian curtailing of individual liberty far exceeding that of McCarthy.<sup>85</sup> As classified documents from 1946–70 reveal, under California’s own state-run California Un-American Activities Committee (CUAC), no organization or institution—not even the Girl Scouts—was immune to investigation, and art and culture were at the very top of the list.<sup>86</sup> All of this would contribute not only to the Free Speech Movement in 1964, but also to a groundswell of social justice movements exploring identity politics, as well as the Human Potential Movement, launched at Esalen in Big Sur. By the end of the 1960s, the mantra “Do Your Thing,” so central to Bay Area artists since the 1950s, had become a bumper sticker for mass consumption.

It would be difficult to find a candidate more suited to lead the cause for freedom of expression among Bay Area artists than De Forest, who was, by virtue of his

unusual background and personality, already one of the region’s arch eccentrics when he arrived at Davis. VandenBerge recalled his impression of De Forest in 1965 as a bemused “impish gnome” with a continuous smirk, a weird, sardonic sense of humor, and a “curiosity about everything.” One of the first things VandenBerge noticed was De Forest’s wacky attire—“totally the opposite of what the styles were in the 1960s”—usually a bowtie, often polka-dotted, with a wildly contrasting plaid shirt or colorfully patterned sweater, and occasionally saddle shoes with argyle socks.<sup>87</sup> VandenBerge’s conclusion was not unusual among his peers at Davis when they first met him: “I thought, my God, this guy is from another time period. . . . He doesn’t belong here.”<sup>88</sup> Even De Forest’s meandering musings, sprinkled with arcane literary and philosophical references, could leave friends baffled. After knowing him for several years, Art Schade observed, “Talking with Roy defies description—and gravity.”<sup>89</sup> As De Forest’s wife explained, “He wasn’t trying to confuse anyone, he was just wired differently.”<sup>90</sup> De Forest’s idiosyncrasies, however, were hardly off-putting; those who knew him well counted him as one of their most generous and dedicated friends. Arneson became particularly close and seems to have picked up De Forest’s sartorial flamboyance (fig. 66). As a tribute to his affection and admiration, Arneson’s first of a series of busts of friends was *Roy of Port Costa*, 1976 (fig. 67).

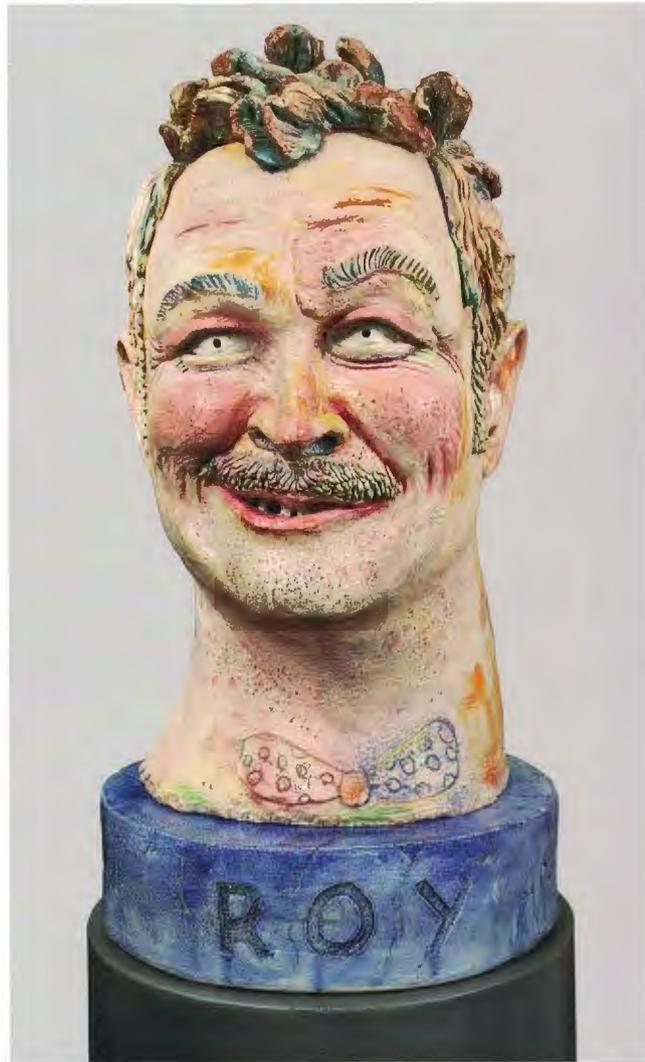
One of the most remarkable aspects of the confederation of individualists who called themselves Nut Artists was their intensity of camaraderie and exchange, which fostered a greater cohesion of sensibility than the artists would have liked to have admitted, notably a conflation of high and low, in technique and content, as well as a tendency toward humorous fantasy. In Gilhooly’s estimate, “the whole thing wasn’t a bunch of famous artists but a bunch of best friends.”<sup>91</sup> Thirteen years junior to his teachers De Forest and Arneson, Gilhooly’s remark is telling. Regardless of resumes, the general feeling was that instructors and students were “works in progress,”

66 Robert Arneson and Roy De Forest, photographed by Jim McHugh 1988. Jim McHugh Artist Archives



as Wiley's student Peeples-Bright put it, minimizing the usual faculty-student hierarchy and fostering a robust intergenerational exchange.<sup>92</sup> Faculty and students alike maintained an open-door studio policy, so that anyone was welcome to drop in to see what an artist was doing. The building known as TB-9, where the foundry and kilns were located, thus became a focal point of activity for artists of any experience or persuasion interested in trying their hand at sculpture or watching other artists work. De Forest not only invited his students to faculty gatherings, but also went out of his way to exhibit with them and promote their work. "He was incredibly generous," said Deborah Butterfield, speaking also for her husband, the sculptor John Buck, both of whom took classes with De Forest and remained lifelong friends. "You always felt welcome at the table that was art."<sup>93</sup> Along with Buck and Butterfield, a number of artists benefited from De Forest's spirited teaching, including Robert Brady, Christopher Brown, Gilhooly, Steve Kaltenbach, Irene Pijoan, Nauman, and Shaw. The collaborative ethos that permeated the

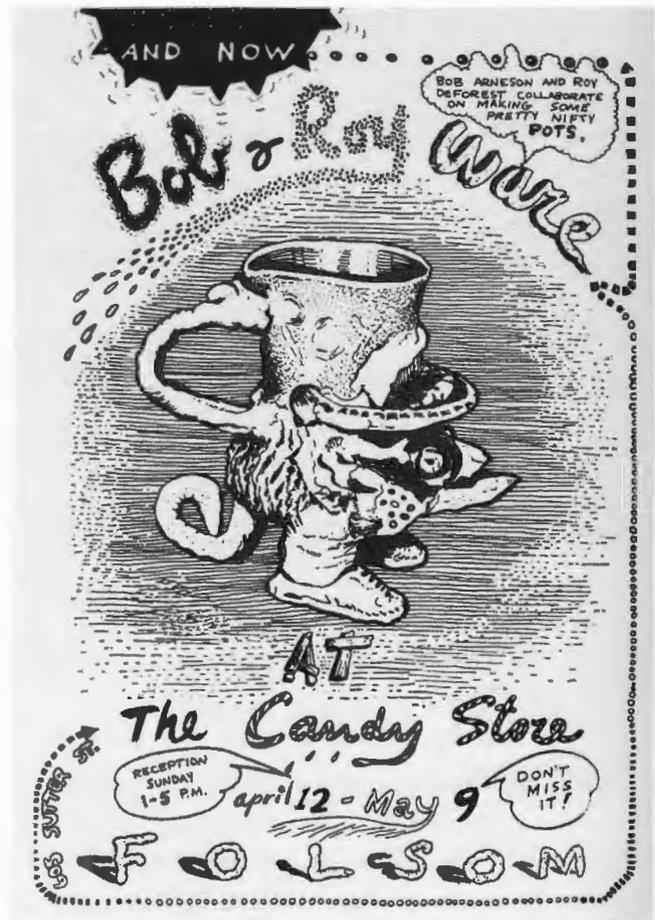
67 Robert Arneson, *Roy of Port Costa*, 1976. Glazed earthenware; 34 x 18 3/4 x 18 3/4 in. Maxine and Stuart Frankel Private Collection. Image courtesy Estate of Robert Arneson



school meant, as VandenBerge remarked, "it didn't matter who did it first, it's what you did with it. There were no secrets."<sup>94</sup> Open borrowings of equipment, techniques, motifs, and formal devices were as much an integral part of the group culture as collaborations. Instances of this communal ethic abound, including many collaborative artworks De Forest produced with each of Arneson, Bailey, Williams, and Saul (figs. 68 and 69). Wiley, in particular, enjoyed engaging others in communal work, as in the case of his black friction-tape ball, which he rolled

through the streets, inviting bystanders to add to its heft as a "Movement to Blackball Violence."<sup>95</sup>

Although much has been made of the self-contained environment that UC Davis and Sacramento State provided, these campuses were hardly the only places the Nut Art artists congregated. Adeliza McHugh's Candy Store Gallery in the valley town of Folsom provided another hub of activity, where exhibition openings were not polite receptions but parties, with attendees packed into the tiny bungalow and spilling out onto the street (fig. 70).<sup>96</sup> In fact, Arneson contended that the entire Nut Art movement grew out of the gatherings at the Candy Store, where the Chicago contingent—Nilsson, Nutt, and Karl Wirsum—exhibited while teaching at Sacramento State, mingling together with the Davis artists on a regular basis. The gallery drew passersby expecting to buy fudge or saltwater taffy (in fact, McHugh originally opened the store to sell almond nougat candy), but also art aficionados from as far away as Los Angeles, most famously Vincent Price, who wrote an article for *Barron's* magazine extolling its innovative art.<sup>97</sup> A German tour guide in the 1970s named three must-see places in Northern California: Yosemite, Mount Shasta, and the Candy Store Gallery.<sup>98</sup> A couple sleepy towns along the shores of the Carquinez Strait became popular destinations after De Forest bought a house in Port Costa in 1964, and several years later, Bailey refurbished the historic Dairyville Café in nearby Crockett, which featured life-sized freakish critter-people in the window and sitting at the soda fountain. In 1970, Bailey (aka the preeminent scientist, Dr. George Gladstone) moved next door to De Forest in Port Costa and established his roadside Wonders of the World Museum, where tourists came to view his "excavations" from the "Bone Age," meticulously crafted ceramic renditions of such oddities as the Giganticus Erectus Robustus, a creature endowed with a double-jointed penis that served as a natural birth-control device, as well as elaborate tableaux in which mad doctors could be



seen performing bizarre operations like transforming a patient's legs into sausages.

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that for De Forest and his crew, the most influential locus of exchange was the Rainbow House at 908 Steiner Street in San Francisco (fig. 71), which Zack and Peeples-Bright had purchased in the spring of 1965 and transformed into a monument to proto-psychedelia.<sup>99</sup> The pre-earthquake Victorian, with its vibrant, polychrome colors and ten-foot-long crocodile climbing up its façade that Gilhooly fashioned out of fiberglass-coated papier mâché, made a fitting rendezvous for De Forest and his fellow mavericks. The interior of the house was even more riotous, with



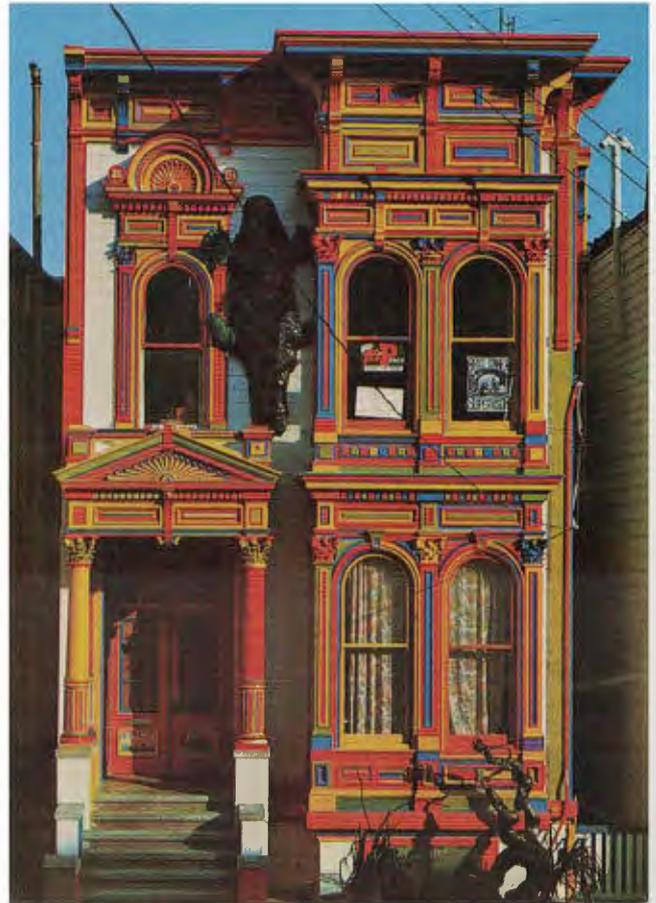
69 Roy De Forest in collaboration with Peter Saul, *Cats versus Dogs*, 2006. Color lithograph, edition of 15; 22 x 30 in. Estate of Roy De Forest

70 Candy Store Gallery artist stable, Folsom, California, 1987. Back, left to right: Roy De Forest, Robert Arneson, David Gilhooly. Front, left to right: Maija Peeples-Bright, Adeliza McHugh (gallery owner), Peter VandenBerge. Collection of Maija Peeples-Bright



walls and ceilings covered with Peeples-Bright's "Beastie" murals, swarming with countless animals (fig. 72), such as "a Penguins Barking up an Eel-tree room" and a "Beast Volcano Bedroom"—all presided over by the Zacks' dachshund-cocker-spaniel mutt, Woof W. Woof, whose portrait visitors encountered in the entrance hall (they also had a cat named Funka W. Puss, a gift from Neri). Woof, whose name became Peeples-Bright's pseudonym, had an entire library devoted to him featuring slogans such as "Woofers of the World Unite." One drunken night, with De Forest in attendance, the Zacks decided to establish a teacherless "Woof University"—complete with Peeples-Bright's hand-painted "WU" sweatshirts—a silly name for a serious endeavor: to create a forum for discussion, poetry readings, musical performances (David played the cello), and even art exhibitions (from 1969 to 1970, Adeliza McHugh established a "Candy Store West" branch there).<sup>100</sup> The most important role the Rainbow House played was to provide a place for interchange of ideas between the Davis-Sacramento artists and their counterparts in San Francisco. In the mid-late 1960s, regular visitors included—in addition to De Forest's gang from the valley—San Franciscans Anderson, Brown, Conner, Neri,

71 Rainbow House postcard, 1967. Image courtesy of Sandra L. Shannonhouse



Hedrick, DeFeo, Gerald Gooch, Norman Stiegelmeier, and Zap cartoonists R. Crumb and S. Clay Wilson.<sup>101</sup>

Given that Zack and Peeples-Bright had made dogs central to their art before De Forest began teaching at UC Davis (Gilhooly also had created ceramic portraits of various dogs, including the Zacks' Woof W. Woof, as well as a great range of exotic creatures), it seems reasonable, particularly with open borrowings a commonplace at the time, to ask how such a precedent affected what would later become De Forest's consuming obsession. At most, we can surmise that he was encouraged by their example. Evidently, a David Hockney painting featuring a dog also inspired him during a trip to London in 1969.<sup>102</sup> However, to the extent that any artist can truly be called *sui generis*,

72 Majja Peebles-Bright, *Beast Map*, c. 1965–66. Oil on canvas;  
55 1/2 x 72 in. Crocker Art Museum, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Norman O.  
Jones, 1981.58



De Forest certainly was, absorbing influences in a slow, accretionary manner, much like Wiley's rolling tape ball, according to magnetic forces uniquely his own. Canines had long been fundamental to De Forest's inner being; he had drawn and loved them as a boy. In the mid-late 1950s, his class notes indicate a thematic preoccupation with dogs (as well as aquariums and colliding planets). According to Walter Hopps, before James Newman established the Dilexi Gallery, De Forest had even suggested opening a venue in San Francisco called the Dog Sled

Gallery, for which he would build "a fine, bleached Eskimo dog sled out front on a pole for the sign."<sup>103</sup>

Though De Forest's famous dogs would not feature significantly in his work until the close of the 1960s, his first years at Davis proved among the most productive of his career thus far. That De Forest's subject matter and style during this period came from pop-culture sources allies him with East Coast Pop artists such as Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and James Rosenquist. Certainly, De Forest had long been aware of their work, writing to

the Los Angeles manager of the Dilexi Gallery in 1962 that he had “been watching with interest the activity over the Lichtenstein and Rosenquist exhibitions,” hoping that their example might “open up a consideration of a lot of other things that no one would have looked at eighteen months ago.”<sup>104</sup> But Pop art, in spite of its high-spirited vernacular figuration, ultimately catered to the formalism of New York’s tastemakers with a neutral, anonymous content taken from commercial sources in a manner that rarely strayed from Greenberg’s admonition that “advanced” art’s mission was “to identify itself with its material vehicle, with paint and canvas, surface, and shape.”<sup>105</sup> In Los Angeles, Ed Ruscha and Joe Goode toed this aesthetic line along with the Finish Fetish sculptors of the 1960s, whereas orthodox Pop art never really caught on in Northern California. Of the Davis artists, Thiebaud came closest to Warhol with his serial images of mundane foodstuffs of Americana, such as hot dogs, pies, and ice cream cones, though he rejected New York’s appropriated flat surfaces in favor of the rich touch of the artist’s brush and painterly, three-dimensional modeling.

By contrast, De Forest and Arneson, who together spearheaded the Pop direction of the Nut Artists at Davis, expanded debased subject matter and techniques well beyond the contemporary mass media to include a limitless range of sources for content, and, in Arneson’s case, took the vernacular into the precincts of extreme vulgarity. Both artists also drew liberally from Surrealist-inflected fantasy, bringing the quotidian into the realm of the bizarre with a vengeance. It was vitally important for Arneson and De Forest to avoid the trap of formulaic solutions. Cognizant of the reductivist tendency even among certain first-generation Abstract Expressionists, whose creativity devolved into repetitive trademark images, both preferred to work with abundance—an abundance of subject matter as well as color, shape, and texture.

The year 1966 was something of an *annus mirabilis* for the wildly innovative canvases De Forest produced. In these first truly figurative paintings, he explored a

number of novel compositions and treatments of space, all with his now characteristic twist-off dots. *Scrapbook of Mordecai Brown*, 1966 (fig. 73) is still in his aerial mode, but the subject can no longer be construed as a landscape seen from above. This painting is a tribute to the baseball pitcher known as “three finger Brown.” In a rare explication of his work, De Forest noted that Brown could “throw a ball with three stumps for fingers” and was graced with “probably the greatest most wicked curve in history,” concluding, “This is a painting about his life.”<sup>106</sup> Despite De Forest’s assertion, the painting leaves much to the viewer’s imagination. There is little incident or action to convey the Brown’s biography other than the thrust of a “stump-fisted” arm reaching into the painting from the lower left. De Forest does indeed provide many trails for the eye to follow, suggesting passages in the baseball player’s life, but those trails are only littered with abstract signifiers of travail, such as zigzags, spiky lines suggesting barbed wire, forms suggesting grenades, booby traps, and leafless trees.

De Forest frequently called himself a storyteller, an artist who, as he said in a 1985 lecture, was “interested in discursive painting—painting that tells a story that you can follow, but not too clearly.”<sup>107</sup> When De Forest spoke these words, he was showing a slide of *Scrapbook of Mordecai Brown* to a group of students, and as he paused for a response, the audience broke into extended laughter. Clearly, De Forest expected his reference to a narrative approach to induce ironic hilarity. This point must be made at the outset of any discussion of De Forest’s figurative paintings because whatever story lies within them, it never follows a traditional plot sequence, one episode following the next with a beginning and an end. Nor can they be understood as shuffled, overlapping snapshots in time, unless one is willing to think in terms of the multiplicity of data and metaphor in collage. There is typically a journey for the viewer in a De Forest painting, but the very essence of his work—taking a page from Beat assemblage—is for that journey to be in flux, filled with references that are

73 Roy De Forest, *Scrapbook of Mordecai Brown*, 1966. Acrylic on canvas; 62 x 60 in. The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, gift of the Estate of Moses and Ruth Helen Lasky, San Francisco Harlan B. and Marshall P. Levine, trustees, 2005.147.1



74 Roy De Forest, *Stranded on the East Coast*, 1966. Polymer paint on canvas; 66 x 62 in. Private collection



75 Roy De Forest, cartoon of woman and bottle, c. late 1950s. Ink on paper; 3 x 5 in. Estate of Roy De Forest



obscure and often private, and dependent upon the audience's personal response. A better word for De Forest's narrative impulse is not "discursive" but "dispersive," as in modernist novels by James Joyce and William Faulkner, in which protagonists and situations are juxtaposed as if from differing viewpoints simultaneously and containing multiple allusions.

Dating from the same year, two paintings, *Stranded on the East Coast*, 1966 (fig. 74), and *Silas Newcastle Goes Down* (see fig. 61), each strike out on radically new spatial tactics. In the former, De Forest has abandoned the aerial view and now brings his figures up to the picture plane laterally. Perhaps this painting can be read as autobiographical since De Forest found New York's competitive infighting contentious but interesting. There is a great deal of interaction taking place here, some of it confrontational, between tiny black-silhouetted figures populating

cartouches and stagelike friezes, figures that bear a striking resemblance to those found in the urban apocalyptic paintings Chicago artist Roger Brown produced a decade later.<sup>108</sup> In fact, silhouettes had appeared as early as De Forest's first post-Abstract Expressionist work and can be seen in his cartoons of the late 1950s (fig. 75).

One of De Forest's more obscure paintings, *Silas Newcastle Goes Down*, from 1966, refers to a late nineteenth-century Catholic church in the city of Newcastle, England, called the Church of Saint Silas. This unremarkable sandstone edifice sits on the Tyne River, an industrial thoroughfare for a town famous for its coal production. Judging from the painting's rubbery, smoke-belching pipes (which together vaguely recall a steamship), De Forest apparently was having fun with the phrase, "bringing coals to Newcastle," meaning a pointless pursuit, and perhaps in this context, a



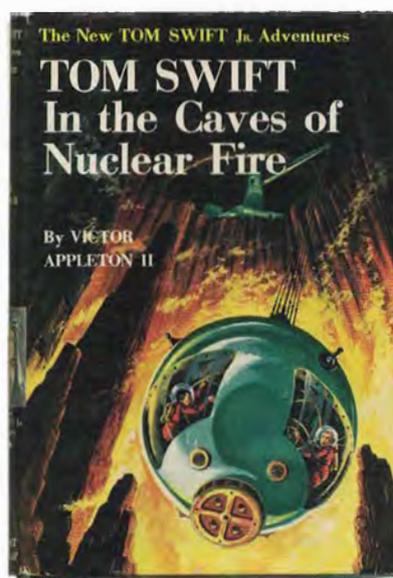
76 Roy De Forest, *Tom Swift and his Airplane Dirigible*, 1966. Acrylic polymer on canvas with glitter; 71 x 58 in. Collection Brian A. Gross

longue-in-cheek jab at the “saintly” devotion of the out-of-the-mainstream artist.

Other paintings from this period are more overtly literary in origin, flouting the anti-narrative imperative espoused in the East and embracing a broad range of lowbrow sources from swashbucklers to detective stories. *Tom Swift and his Airplane Dirigible*, 1966 (fig. 76) falls squarely within one of De Forest’s most enduring themes, the fiction genre of “boy’s adventure.” First published in 1910, the Edward Stratemeyer Syndicate produced one hundred titles on the adventures of Tom Swift, already old-fashioned when De Forest supposedly read all forty as a teen, and vintage when he repurchased them as an adult. The early novels featured a boy character who sounded very much in spirit like De Forest: a homeschooled inventor and mechanic who dreamed up and built fantastic machines like the “electric rifle” that saved his life in *Daring Adventures on Elephant Island*, 1911, the giant projectile-launching cannon that blew a tunnel leading to underground treasure in *The Hidden City of the Andes*, 1916, and the flying boat that landed the boy in the Arctic in *Castaways of the Giant Iceberg*, 1923. De Forest’s Tom Swift painting, like most of his work, does not directly quote from the series but rather draws from a compilation of sources: two of the books on make-believe dirigible aircrafts, neither bearing the title De Forest gave his painting, and a Cold War classic, *Tom Swift in the Caves of Nuclear Fire*, 1956 (fig. 77).

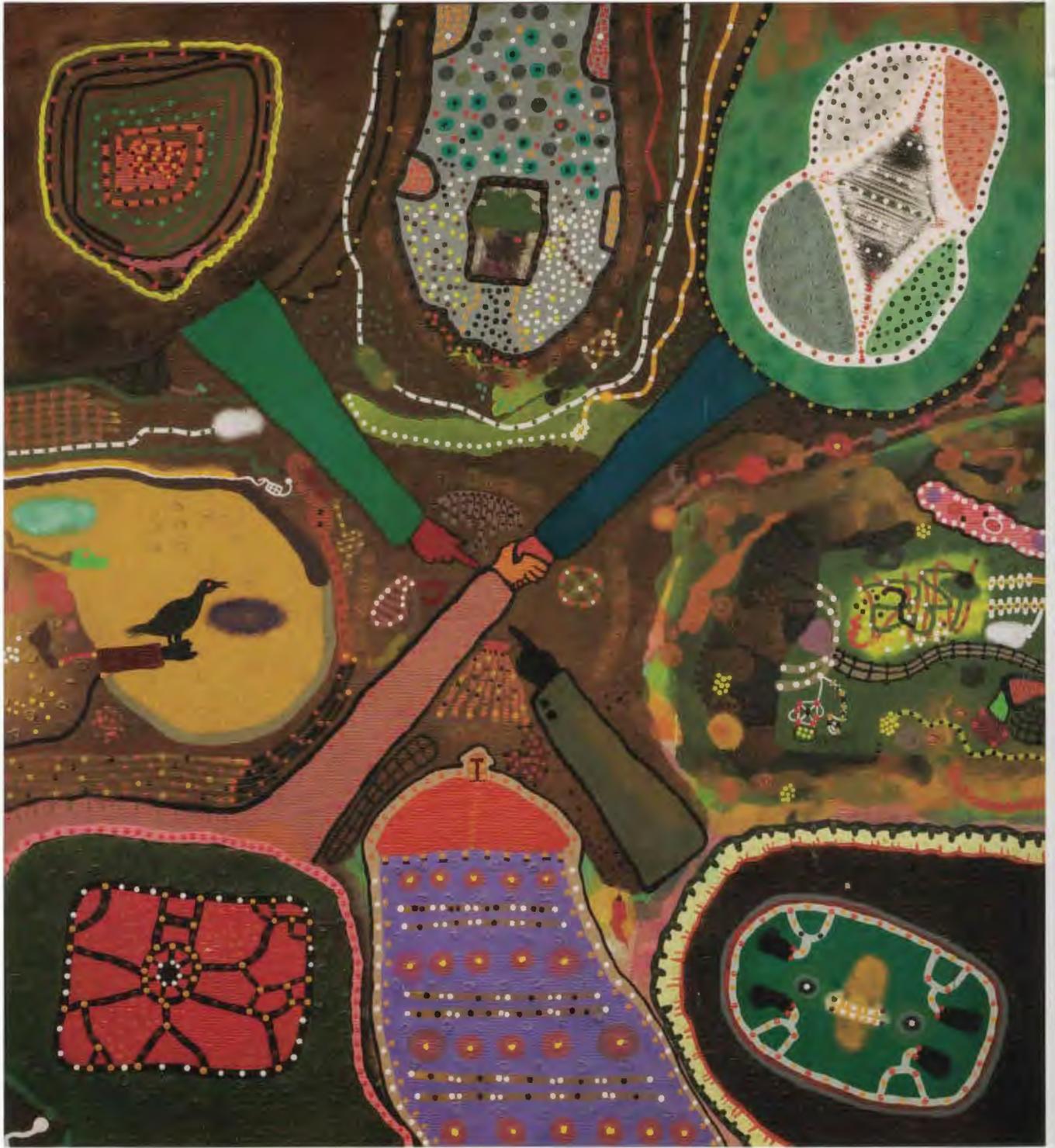
*Crossroads* (fig. 78)—another major work from 1966—also found its inspiration, by De Forest’s own account, in popular media, here a B movie of the same title. According to De Forest, the film “is about a San Francisco detective who catches a very rich, young heiress when she presumably murders her boyfriend.” After chasing her to Bali, “he falls in love with her, of course” and “takes her back to San Francisco and proves the butler did it.” This story, De Forest rather prosaically explained, “generated the thought processes which generated this painting.”<sup>109</sup> Yet *Crossroads*, essentially composed

77 Cover, *Tom Swift in the Caves of Nuclear Fire*, 1956. Photo courtesy of private collection



of four arms reaching toward each other to create an X-formation, evinces little connection to the story. In fact, the painting has been interpreted as expressing “social concerns” reflecting interracial harmony due to the differing colors of the hands.<sup>110</sup> Though tempting to wonder if De Forest is pulling our leg, it seems more likely that some aspect of the film, such as the notion of double-crossing, is at the painting’s core. As Schade put it, De Forest “delights in not being able to have his code broken. . . . He’d come up with things that were impossible and then he’d just twist them slightly.”<sup>111</sup> This work is a good cautionary for viewers seeking to interpret De Forest’s art as narrative in any traditional sense.

Friends who knew him well do not dispute that De Forest gleefully culled from pulp fiction sources, particularly in the late 1960s and thereafter on occasion throughout his career. Zack went so far as to call De Forest “a great master of the pulper,” perhaps “the world’s foremost pulper painter.”<sup>112</sup> Within De Forest’s oeuvre of pulp-fiction-inspired work, *Recollections of a Sword Swallower*, 1968 (fig. 79) stands out as a brilliant example of the genre. The painting takes its subject from author Daniel P. Mannix’s classic of Americana, *Memoirs*



78 Roy De Forest, *Crossroads*, 1966. Latex on canvas; 69 x 58 ¾ in.  
Private collection

Roy De Forest, *Recollections of a Sword Swallower*, 1968. Polymer  
glitter on canvas; 62¼ x 62¼ in. Crocker Art Museum. Purchase  
funds from the Maude T. Pook Acquisition Fund, 1972.25



80 Joe McHugh, *White Rabbit*, 1967. Poster printed by East Totem West, Mill Valley, California. Original art by Joe McHugh, owner and founder of East Totem West

of a *Sword Swallow*, 1964, the story of a traveling freak-show magician. The highlight of Mannix's memoir tells of his Houdini-like talent for appearing to swallow whole rats, elaborating with relish the time he was unwittingly given city rats rather than his usual docile lab rats and yet managed, against all odds, to pull off the trick. Zack makes the trenchant point that De Forest's painting does not narrate the story of Mannix, but plays the role of the pulp-magician himself. "Like the best pulpsters," Zack wrote, De Forest's paintings "convey a complex poetic vision of the real worlds. . . . The details move a viewer wildly from point to point. Yet each element is interesting for itself, and seems to connect in some way with what's around it. More pulpier yet, each of De Forest's paintings makes you wonder what the hell he can possibly do next. He seems to develop steadily, year by year, in complexity of images, richness of allusion, brilliance of color, funniness, sheer virtuoso technique."<sup>113</sup>

*Recollections of a Sword Swallow*, with its shimmering glitter and electric, eye-stinging spectrum of purples, greens, oranges, reds, and pinks—colors, as Zack observed, "that no one but a Mexican Indian would have used twenty years ago"—fits well within the burgeoning psychedelic aesthetic of the Bay Area's counterculture, as a comparison to contemporaneous poster art makes clear (fig. 80). In fact, a painting with a similarly bright palette made headlines in the *San Francisco Examiner* in the spring of 1967, just before the Summer of Love. A front-page article entitled "Art Startles Cops" described the ruckus that occurred when San Francisco's chief of narcotics asked his secretary to select an artwork for the city's Hall of Justice, and she returned with De Forest's *Hunter's Secret*, 1967.<sup>114</sup> Reportedly, the enraged police chief shouted, "Get that damn thing out of here—it looks like a road map of the Haight-Ashbury District," further speculating that the "hunter's hand" resembles "the hand of an undercover agent" and "the rest looks like pills."<sup>115</sup> Similar interpretations have endured, as when *New York Times* critic Roberta Smith described the "bright, staring



eyes" of De Forest's creatures as looking as if they had ingested "hallucinatory substances" and compared his dots to "LSD tabs."<sup>116</sup>

In truth, as Smith herself has noted, De Forest's dreamlike imagery and high-keyed palette presaged San Francisco's counterculture. Certainly, as we have seen, his taste for chromatic intensity appears to date back to his childhood in Yakima.<sup>117</sup> In his art, a propensity for bright color began in the 1950s, well before the rise of drug-induced psychedelia, which even in San Francisco's underground first only appeared in posters and comix after Ken Kesey launched his first acid tests in late 1965, becoming a full-blown sensibility around 1967. Moreover, De Forest's friends remained relatively aloof from the counterculture. Although some artists smoked pot at the Rainbow House in colorfully glazed ceramic pipes Gilhooly and Bailey made for the occasion, De Forest abstained after a catastrophic incident recounted by his close friend Ford, in which he gobbled up a plate of brownies spiked with a liberal dose of THC, and while driving across the Bay Bridge envisioned that he was at the wheel of a boat, with the concrete parting like water before him. After that, he stuck to his Swan Lager. Asked if De Forest ever tried

81 Roy De Forest, *Who, Who*, 1968. Polymer on canvas; 72 x 72 in.  
Collection of Peter and Beverly Lipman



hallucinogens, Ford said he “wouldn’t know what an LSD tab looked like. No, Never.”<sup>118</sup>

Whether De Forest exchanged ideas with the underground comix artists is another question, though again, his interest in cartooning also dated to the 1950s. But the rubbery, undulating forms outlined with comic-book contours that begin appearing in works such as

*Silas Newcastle Goes Down* may owe something to the Zap comix artists who visited the Rainbow House, just as they influenced Saul, who De Forest met in 1967. Interestingly, the sausage-shaped dirigible hovering over bulgy spotted forms and comic-book-style streamers flying overhead in *Who, Who*, 1968 (fig. 81) have much the same feel as the style and imagery in *The Yellow Submarine*,

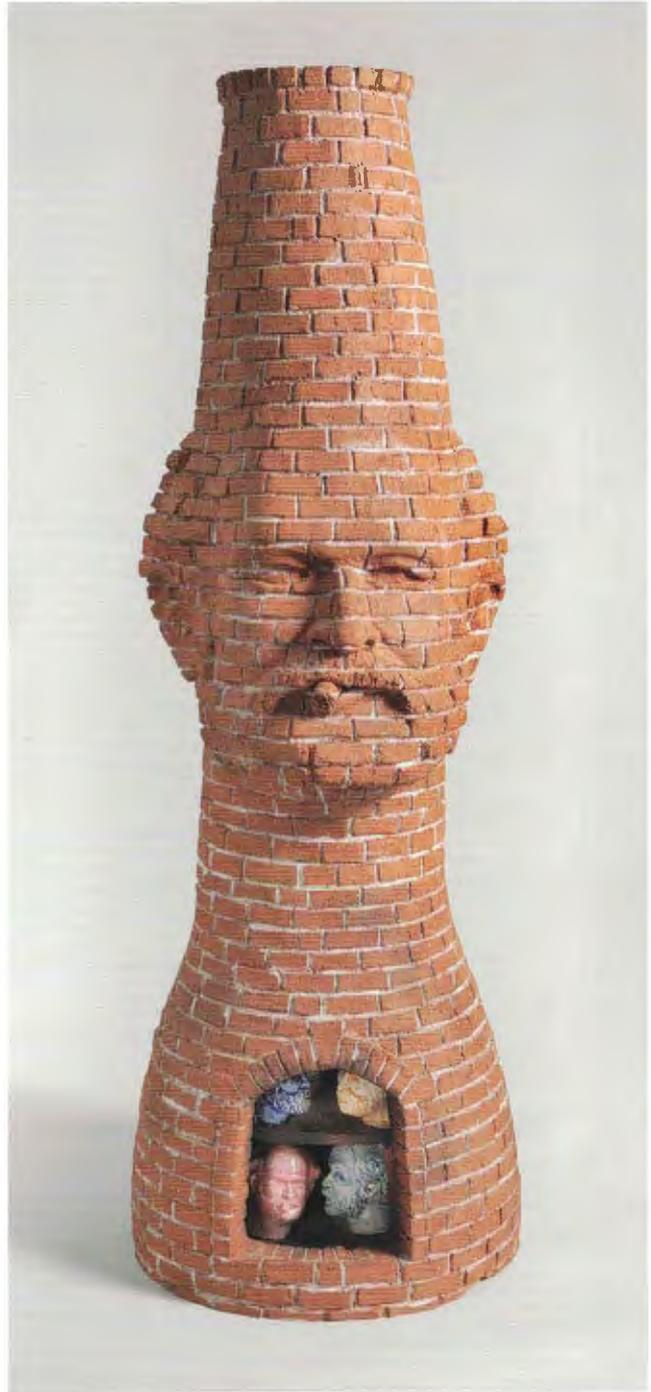


82 Roy De Forest, *Steamer to the Interior*, 1969. Acrylic polymer on canvas; 73 1/8 x 68 3/4 in. Sandra L. Shannonhouse

83 Robert Arneson, *Kiln Man*, 1971. Glazed ceramic; 36 1/8 x 12 5/8 x 13 1/4 in. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Joseph H. Hirshhorn Bequest Fund, 1998

the Beatles' animated comic fantasy released in 1968, though De Forest had been laying the groundwork for his vision for years, even down to his own version of the film's villainous Dreadful Flying Glove with pointed finger recruited by the Blue Meanies to destroy Pepperland.

Cartoon motifs also appear in De Forest's germinal painting *Steamer to the Interior*, 1969 (fig. 82), most obviously its "speech bubble," which serves as the compositional fulcrum, accompanied by another related device uniquely De Forest's own: the trails projecting from his characters' eyes. In this pivotal work, De Forest announces a number of key themes that will absorb him for the remainder of his career, most importantly the dog, making its first appearance as a leading character rather than a bit-part actor. The figure-in-the-window is another motif De Forest will explore in later works, gathering new layers of meaning as time goes on. And the anthropomorphized brick structures, here in the shape of a head, is yet another theme De Forest introduces, one that he will share with Arneson, whose best-known example is *Kiln Man*, 1971 (fig. 83). Finally, there is the steamboat, emblematic of De Forest's leitmotif of the imaginative journey, quintessential in Western literature from Homer to Kerouac. In subsequent iterations, the theme will take on multivalent readings, one of which is the process of creating art itself—the voyage inward, as the title of *Steamer to the Interior* suggests.



- 49 Quoted in Bruce Nixon, "Looking at De Forest," in *Roy De Forest* (Davis, Calif.: John Natsoulas Press, 2004), 44.
- 50 James Newman recalled that, "the term was Roy's." Email, January 26, 2016.
- 51 Wallace, "Tracing a Source Line," 1960.
- 52 The length of time De Forest lived with his mother is disputed by Marchant and Robie, but there is ample evidence that, as Pershing put it, "Roy lived with his mother until she lived with him" in the early 1970s.
- 53 According to Strohl, "some friends claim that [Oma] was too overbearing and that the many faces on his dogs are portraits of his mother." Strohl, "A Biography of Roy De Forest."
- 54 According to Jacobs and Pershing, Oma became a Rosicrucian, frequently visiting the Rosicrucian museum in San Jose (interview, May 8, 2008). Bailey remembered that Oma had "little 'beings' and Indian spirits to protect Roy when he went out of the house." Email, September 20, 2015. Robie recalled that when Oma moved to Sacramento shortly before getting married, "she declined two apartments, saying they had ghosts," quieting down only after moving into "one that had never been lived in." Telephone conversation, September 10, 2015. However, Marchant states that she was unaware of Oma's mysticism. Emails, April 26, 2014, and February 14, 2016.
- 55 Wiley, interview, September 9, 2015. Books in De Forest's library after his death included *Encyclopedia of Black Magic; History of the Devil; Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art; The Earth Spirit; Mirror of Alchemy; The Grail's Quest for the Eternal; Spirit Being and the Sun Dancers; Tarot; Astrology; and Palmistry*. List, September 2007, De Forest Family gift to AAA.
- 56 Bailey, email, September 23, 2015.
- 57 De Forest stated emphatically that his beginning in sculptural painting came from Cornell, saying "I particularly remember a box of his with parrots." Quoted in Meredith Tromble, "A Conversation with Roy De Forest," *Artweek* 24 (June 3, 1993): 14.
- 58 Destroyed by fire; slide in De Forest family promised gift to AAA.
- 59 Humphrey, *Roy De Forest*, n.p.
- 60 Julien Levy, quoted in Irving Sandler, *The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970), 52.
- 61 "Lecture by Roy De Forest," 1985.
- 62 A critic described *Robin as the Batman* as "a stylized bird-shape with feathers ruffled, wings flustered out, bowed red legs, and beady, red 'double eyes,' topped by a Vat 69 bottle with the 'baton' cork sticking up through the frame!" Polley, "One Man Show," 1962.
- 63 Press release obituary, <http://www.news.ucdavis.edu>, accessed May 22, 2007.
- 64 Johnson, quoted in *Painters at UC Davis* (Davis, Calif.: Richard L. Nelson Gallery, University of California, Davis, 1984), 8.
- 65 Interview by Matteson, 2004.
- 66 Peter Plagens, *Bruce Nauman: The True Artist* (London: Phaidon Press, 2014), 22.
- 67 Petersen, quoted in *Painters at UC Davis*, 8.
- 68 Johnson, quoted in *Ibid.*, 7.
- 69 Arneson, quoted in Susan Landauer, *The Lighter Side of Bay Area Figuration* (Kansas City, Mo., and San Jose, Calif.: Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in association with San Jose Museum of Art, 2000), 6.
- 70 Johnson, quoted in *Painters at UC Davis*, 9.
- 71 David Zack, "Californian Myth-making," *Art and Artists* (July 1969): 27.
- 72 Peter Selz, *Funk* (Berkeley: University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1967).
- 73 For a reproduction of Remington's painting, see Joan Marter, ed., *Women of Abstract Expressionism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2016), 141.
- 74 De Forest stated in a questionnaire for Selz's *Funk* show in 1967 that he was "Definitely Pre-Funk." Dan Nadel, ed., *What Nerve! Alternative Figures in American Art, 1960 to the Present* (Providence, R.I.: Rhode Island School of Design, 2014), 155.
- 75 See Marcia Tucker, *Bad Painting* (New York: The New Museum, 1978); Thomas Albright, *Art in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1945-1980* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 230-51; Whitney Chadwick, "Narrative Imagism and the Figurative Tradition in Northern California Painting," *Art Journal* 45 (winter 1985): 309-14.
- 76 *Nut Art* (Hayward, Calif.: California State University, Hayward, Art Gallery, 1972), n.p.
- 77 David Zack, "Basic Art," unpublished manuscript, c. 1971, 120-21. Robie expressed doubt about the beer in Zack's story (email from Robie to Marchant, February 14, 2016), but while that may have been the case earlier with her children, Maija Peeples-Bright insisted: "Oma was most comfortable with drinking and would serve beer, wine, and mixed drinks." Email, February 14, 2016.
- 78 Bailey, email, September 20, 2015.
- 79 Peeples-Bright, emails, February 14 and February 15, 2016.
- 80 Zack, "Californian Mythmaking," 29.
- 81 Bailey, quoted in *Nut Art*, n.p.
- 82 Zack, "Nut Art in Quake Time," *ARTnews* 69 (March 1970): 40.
- 83 Though there were apparently more Nut Art exhibitions, I have only been able to document three: *California Nut Artists* at the Dauphin Robert Albreaux III Gallery (1969); *Nut Art* at University Art Gallery, California State University, Hayward (1972); and *Here We Go Gathering Nuts in May* at the Candy Store Gallery (1973).
- 84 *Nut Art*, n.p. A slightly modified form of this statement appears in 1974 in the San Francisco Museum of Art's retrospective catalogue.
- 85 See Susan Landauer, "Countering Cultures," in Peter Selz, *Art of Engagement: Visual Politics in California and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
- 86 California Un-American Activities Committee reports, California State Library, Sacramento; see especially "Fourth Report of the [California] Senate," 1948, 69.
- 87 Dilexi Gallery, unpublished manuscript containing memories and tributes, 1969. De Forest family promised gift to AAA. This manuscript is filled with descriptions of De Forest's eccentric behavior and manner of dress.
- 88 VandenBerge, interview, July 18, 2008.
- 89 Dilexi Gallery, unpublished manuscript, 1969.
- 90 Marchant, conversation, August 5, 2015.
- 91 Gilhooly, quoted in interview with Strohl, September 11, 1982, in Strohl, "A Biography of Roy De Forest," 85.
- 92 Peeples-Bright, interview, July 19, 2008.
- 93 Butterfield, "A Tribute to Roy De Forest," San Francisco Museum of Art, September 18, 2007.
- 94 VandenBerge, interview, July 18, 2008.
- 95 John Fitz Gibbon, "Sacramento!" *Art in America* 59 (November-December 1971): 82.
- 96 Schade, interview, September 24, 2015.
- 97 Vincent Price, "Way Out Art Found Way Out of the Way," *Barron's* (March 16, 1988).

- 88 Victoria Dalkey, "Eye for the Unusual: Adeliza McHugh Changed How Sacramento Sees Art," *Sacramento Bee*, November 2, 2003.
- 89 Peeples-Bright wrote that she was entirely unaware of the "hippie scene" when she and David bought the Victorian. She recalled that by fall, 1965, they had selected several bright colors of marine enamel and invited neighbors and passersby to help paint the house. Peeples-Bright said: "I was a bit taken aback when Adeliza McHugh called me the first 'hippie.'" Email, February 14, 2016. On the Rainbow House, see *Saturday Evening Post*, September 21, 1968; *Art and Artists* (July 1969), and Jerry Carroll, "A Beastly Victorian," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 27, 1968.
- 100 Peeples-Bright, interview, July 19, 2008, and emails dated September 27, 2015, September 29, 2015, and December 8, 2015.
- 101 Peeples-Bright, email, December 4, 2015, and conversation with Ford, December 2, 2015.
- 102 Tromble, "A Conversation with Roy De Forest," 14; interview by Tsujimoto and Nelson, 2003.
- 103 Dilexi Gallery, unpublished manuscript, 1969.
- 104 De Forest, letter to Rolf Nelson, co-owner of the Dilexi Gallery in Los Angeles, c. 1962, Dilexi Gallery records, 1957-71, reel 1101, frame 410, AAA.
- 105 Quoted in Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 106.
- 106 "Lecture by Roy De Forest," 1985.
- 107 *Ibid.*, audio.
- 108 Marchant, email, April 26, 2014.
- 109 "Lecture by Roy De Forest," 1985.
- 110 Cecile N. McCann, "De Forest's Adventures," *Artweek* 5 (April 27, 1974): 16.
- 111 Schade, interview, September 24, 2015.
- 112 Zack, "Basic Art," 144.
- 113 *Ibid.*, 144-45.
- 114 *Ibid.*, 147.
- 115 "Art Startles Cops," *San Francisco Examiner*, April 20, 1967.
- 116 Roberta Smith, "Roy De Forest," *New York Times*, December 2, 2005; obituary, "Roy De Forest, 77, Painter of Colorful, Comic Scenes," *New York Times*, May 23, 2007.
- 117 Smith, "Roy De Forest" (obituary; see above).
- 118 Ford, conversation, December 2, 2015.
- 119 Butterfield, "A Tribute to Roy De Forest." Butterfield's eulogy described De Forest's "three rings" as "color, form, and content," but in a subsequent interview, she spoke of these levels as composed of formalism, imaginative subject matter, and philosophy. Butterfield, interview, September 23, 2015.
- 120 Athas, quoted in Daphne Athas and Marianne Ginges, *Gram-o-rama: Breaking the Rules* (iUniverse, 2007), 140.
- 121 Quoted in *Nut Art*, n.p.
- 122 Schade, interview, September 24, 2015.
- 123 Marchant, conversation, August 5, 2015.
- 124 "Lecture by Roy De Forest," 1985.
- 125 Interview by Matteson, 2004.
- 126 Schlotzhauer, email, August 20, 2015.
- 127 Zack, "Basic Art," 148.
- 128 Notes for "Dog Tail Lecture," n.d. De Forest family promised gift to AAA.
- 129 In the questionnaire De Forest filled out for Selz's *Funk* show in 1967, he listed Mondrian as one of the artists he considered himself "most closely allied" along with Gilhooly and Neri Nadel, *What Nerve!* 155.
- 130 Interview by Matteson, 2004.
- 131 John Fitz Gibbon, "essay," in *Roy De Forest* (Davis, Calif.: Natsoulas/Novelozo Gallery, 1990), 25-26.
- 132 Interview by Matteson, 2004. "Interior logic" is a term De Forest learned from Hassel Smith.
- 133 *Ibid.*
- 134 Unidentified clipping, c. 1977, archives of the Crocker Art Museum; Schade, interview, September 24, 2015.
- 135 Schade, interview, September 24, 2015.
- 136 Buck, interview, January 28, 2016.
- 137 In undated teaching notes, De Forest used the term "visionary" as the ability to "put together, to create." De Forest papers, AAA.
- 138 Clipping, n.d., archives of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.
- 139 Quoted in Amerson, "De Forest on De Forest," n.p.
- 140 Marchant, email, April 26, 2014.
- 141 Statement, *Roy De Forest*, n.p.
- 142 Quoted in "Di Rosa Interview Series: Roy De Forest," *di Rosa Preserve*, 2002, [www.dirosapreserve.org/deforest](http://www.dirosapreserve.org/deforest), accessed January 19, 2005.
- 143 Fitz Gibbon, *Roy De Forest*, 27. This was repeatedly pointed out by contributors to Dilexi Gallery, unpublished manuscript containing memories and tributes, 1969, De Forest family promised gift to AAA.
- 144 Marchant, email, April 26, 2014; conversation, August 5, 2015.
- 145 Quoted in Kim Minugh, "Artist-Professor Roy De Forest Dies at 77," *Sacramento Bee*, May 22, 2007.
- 146 Schade, interview, September 24, 2015. Schade owns the painting. It appears on the checklist for De Forest's retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Art but was not reproduced.
- 147 See David Zack, "San Francisco," *ARTnews* 68 (September 1969): 24.
- 148 Peeples-Bright, interview, July 19, 2008.
- 149 Peeples-Bright, conversation, 2014.
- 150 "Dogmatic" was an ironic term De Forest frequently used to describe his art.
- 151 Marchant, interview, April 27, 2015; conversation, August 8, 2015.
- 152 Schade, interview, September 24, 2015.
- 153 Bailey, email, September 20, 2015.
- 154 VandenBerge, interview, July 18, 2008.
- 155 Interview by Tsujimoto and Nelson, 2003.
- 156 Berg, email, December 31, 2015.
- 157 Tromble, "A Conversation with Roy De Forest," 14.
- 158 De Forest stated: "It is, I think, absolutely necessary that painting be personal and private. It should be a primary, universal manifestation that is derived from . . . personal viewpoints and experiences." Quoted in *Painters at UC Davis*, 10.
- 159 Tromble, "A Conversation with Roy De Forest," 14; Albright, *Art in the San Francisco Bay Area*, 243; Kramer, "Smutty Jokes by Sophisticated Yokels," *New York Times*, October 28, 1973.
- 160 Fitz Gibbon, *Roy De Forest*, 17.
- 161 Quoted in Alexander Fried, "Exhibits that Show How to Tell Chinese Trees from De Forest," *San Francisco Examiner*, January 15, 1961.
- 162 Jacobs and Pershing, interview, May 9, 2008.
- 163 *Ibid.*
- 164 Ford, interview, December 14, 2015. Ford also emphasized the importance to De Forest's "Nut Art" of a satirical book chronicling an expedition to the South Seas, in particular the "Filbert Islands" and its "nut" culture: Walter E. Traprock, *The Cruise of the Kawa: Wanderings in the South Seas* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921).