



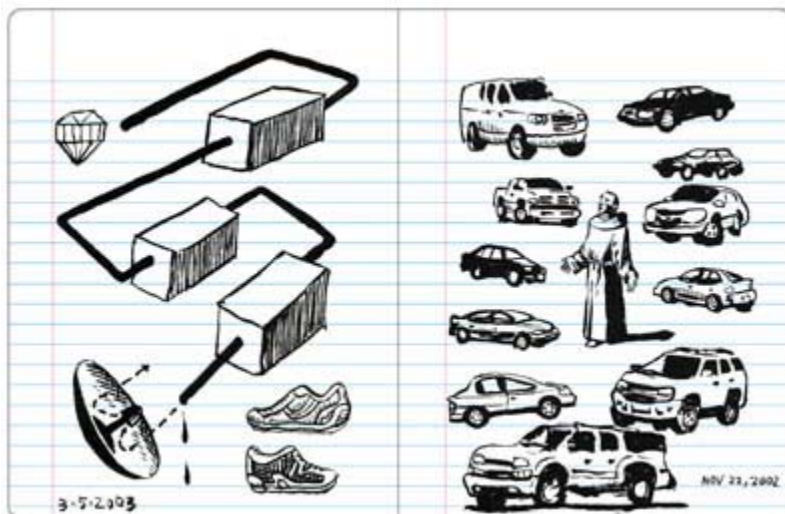
CENTER for MAINE CONTEMPORARY ART

Composition 101

April 19, 2003 www.artsmaine.org

An exhibition where thirty-seven artists transform the infamous composition booklets dreaded by school students everywhere into inspired works of art.

Kenny Cole's "World Book 1966"



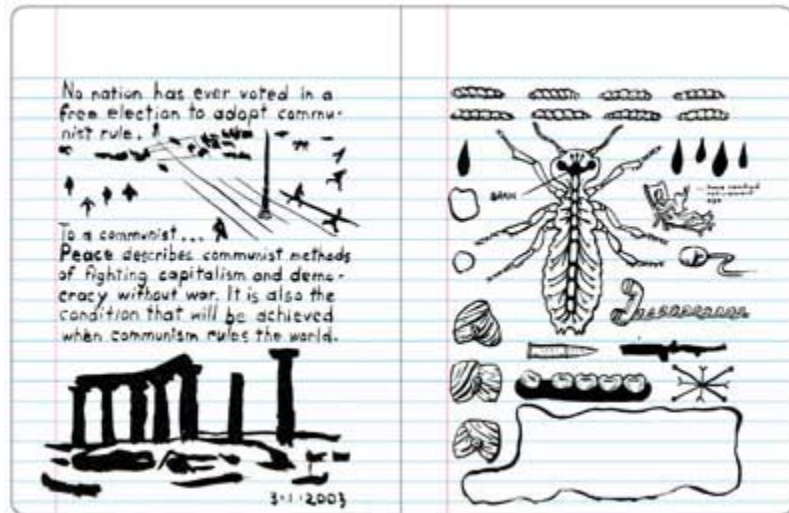
The CD!

My composition book: "World Book 1966" is a project that I completed in March of 2003 as part of a group exhibition at the Center for Maine Contemporary Art, where I essentially filled a composition book

with ink drawings. Now I have created a cd containing high-resolution jpeg images of every page; formatted as double page spreads. Each image has been scanned and graphically separated from the composition book page's

blue and red lines, which were then re-designed as crisp and clean graphics. The original composition book ink drawings were naturally very highly contrasted and as a result reproduced quite well onto the graphically enhanced blue and red composition lines. The result is a clean graphic representation of an image that is clearly excerpted from a composition book.

What makes this project more than just a collection of reproductions is that these images are the only opportunity to see this composition book as if the book itself had been carefully disassembled. Each page has been paired with its opposite page in the composition book.



This introduced the element of chance, producing results similar in spirit to the ambitions of the early surrealists. I had no idea as I created each page what its opposite page would be and as I put together the facing page prints I was delighted with the way that the chance juxtapositions informed each individual drawing.

The cd is an opportunity for the viewing public to own all 100 drawing reproductions and to print as many of these images as they wish as often as they like. Each reproduction has detailed information below the image regarding title, date, etc. and is formatted to print on 8.5" x 14" paper, making it easy to print out on a home computer.

Exhibition Statement:

I began this project by filling my composition book with drawings from what I thought would be my own vast repertoire of symbols and imagery, only to find out that I was beginning to repeat myself beyond my own comfort level by page 12. That's when I turned to this 1966 World Book Encyclopedia set that a friend had recently unburdened themselves of and given to our family. One man's trash is another man's treasure and I hoped I could appropriate imagery complimentary to my style in the form of 60's type ink illustrations. I was not disappointed and the set became my companion from October 2002 through March 2003 each morning as I worked for a short time before setting off to work.

I began to realize as I both wrote and drew in my composition book that I was looking back in time, actually to a year when I myself was only 8 years old and was most likely doing school work in a composition book not unlike this one, and even consulting an encyclopedia not unlike this one. Old books are quite fascinating in this respect; they enable us to explore streams of thought that have lost their correctness. A good example of this is on, page 61 of my composition book, which depicts an atomic explosion with the moniker: "A milestone in the history of mankind". Even though it was a milestone, we just don't say that anymore! Other streams, I thought, we might actually want to revive, such as on my page 24: "a nation...must not spend so much on defense that it bankrupts the rest of its economy".

I have chosen to present my composition book in two ways; first as the book itself so that viewers can simply page through it as a chronological diary of sorts and second as sets of facing pages, as if the book had been carefully disassembled. This second way of seeing my composition book explores the arbitrary element of chance, producing results similar in spirit to the ambitions of the early surrealists. I had no idea as I created each page what its opposite page would be and as I put together the facing page prints I was delighted with the way that the chance juxtapositions informed each individual drawing.

What I liked about this project was that it enabled me to establish a new process in which I could format my imagery as a kind of "stream of consciousness rebus". In other words the process became a kind of visual writing and as a result I discovered new value and meaning in some older imagery; both my own and our culture's, and in turn created a great deal of new imagery to add to my repertoire.

Kenny Cole, April 2003

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