



THE PSYCHEDELIC SUN

AND OTHER DRAWINGS BY JACAEBER KASTOR

OPENING AUGUST 23 2019 AT 5:00 PM • ON DISPLAY UNTIL OCTOBER 8

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Jacaeber Kastor: Psychedelic Sun

By Carlo McCormick

In turns perplexing, disorienting, wondrous and utterly beguiling, Jacaeber Kastor's drawings make you look, look again and then still more, trying to find your way in their miasmic magic until at last, well, you discover the special pleasure of being truly lost. And when you think you're done, when you've decoded the esoteric and abstract, conjured all the forms and meanings from these oceans of latency, answered the call of otherness as if it were the sphinx's riddle- turn the work or flip your head, around and around, because there is no single perspective to read Kastor's psychedelic topography: it is an entwined and constantly unfolding omniverse that has no right side up or upside down.

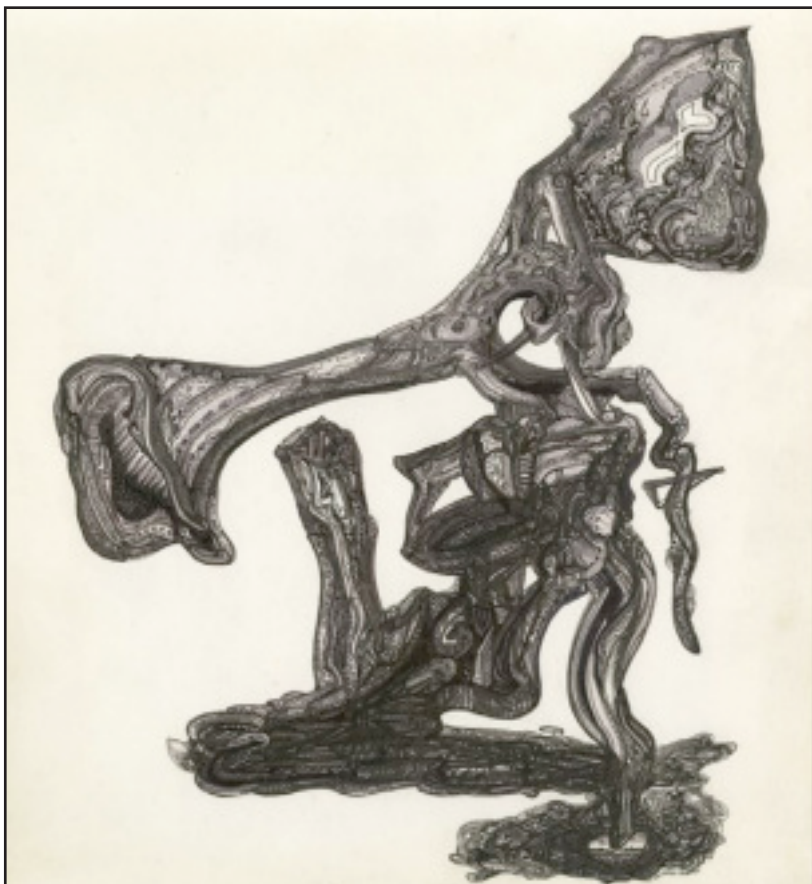
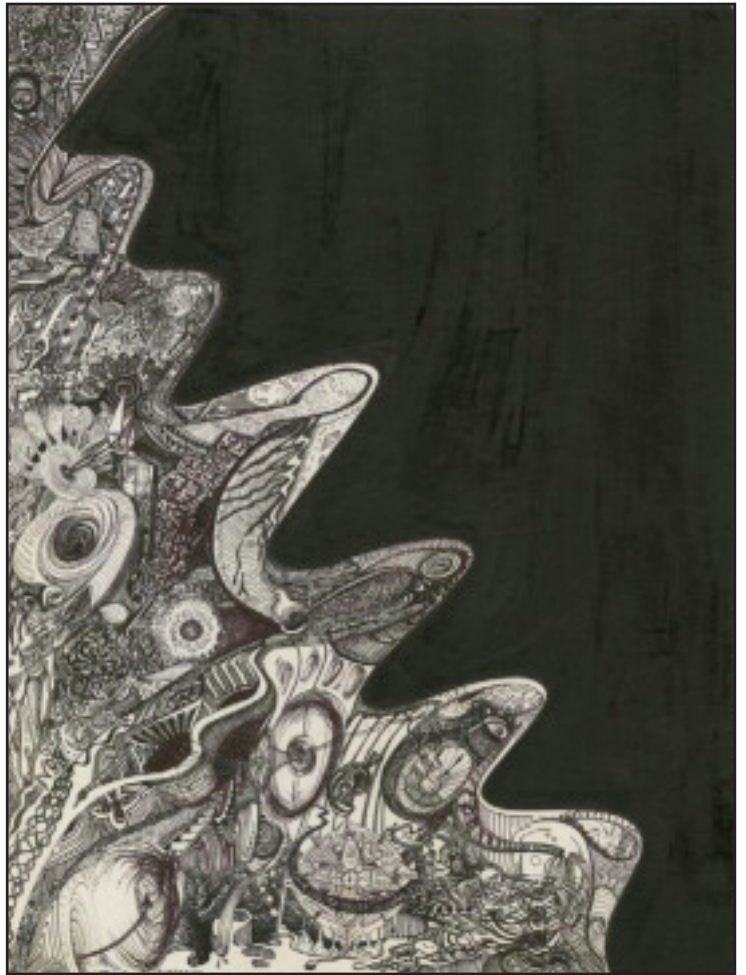
If, in the course of your wanderings through Kastor's meandering poetics of line and space, you come across the unexpected, the oddly familiar or the impossibly alien- for indeed you surely will, quite possible all at once with overwhelming simultaneity- and you ask yourself how did you even come to get here, you might also ask how indeed did this artist arrive at just such a place himself. Make no mistake about it, Jacaeber Kastor is an intrepid voyager of body and mind, an adventurer without destination or designation, a man without return for even when he has somehow been there before he understands it as different, everything nuanced with the subtle shifts of imperceptible change, actuality always just beyond the tiny grasp of appearance, reason or replication. His art, like the convolutions of a restless mind guiding the inspired hand of uncertainty, is the tracings of a mind-traveler, a map to the nowhere that is everywhere, something so personally idiosyncratic that it marks a shared commons where likeness meets in a zone of compatible dissimilarity.

Growing up in Berkeley in the Sixties, son of an artist and art teacher from the abstract expressionist tradition whose legacy we might consider in Kastor's penchant for the dissolving figuration into swirling abstractions, Kastor's emerging vision further benefitted from a formative exposure to the ideas and sensibilities of the counterculture and drug culture around him. Add to this some years as a competitive skier in Squaw Valley, various physical labor jobs on both coasts including construction, house painting, plumbing and working in a ship yard, a stint studying at the venerable San Francisco Art Institute and a number of years practicing Buddhism and meditation at a Zen center, and you have the fecund ground for the flower garden of this artist's fertile growth. All this life experience however is almost secondary to the informal but deep artistic training Kastor got when he decided that if he was going to have to support his art with a day job- a certainty because he realized early that his work was too slow and laborious as well as not so commercially minded to make a living at- he would do so by opening a gallery.

Jacaeber Kastor opened his gallery, aptly named Psychedelic Solution, on a busy thoroughfare of New York City's fabled West Village in 1986, and over the next decade curated a stunning game-changing series of shows featuring some of the most important visionary and psychedelic artists, including H. R. Giger, Rick Griffin, Robert Williams, Lee Conklin, Robert Crumb, Joe Coleman, Wes Wilson, Alex Grey, Vaughn and Mark Bode, Victor Moscoso, Mark Motherbaugh, Alton Kelley, Paul Mavrides, Stanley Mouse, Spain Rodriguez, Gilbert Shelton, John Van Hamersveld, S. Clay Wilson, Jonathan Shaw, Pushead and Axel Stocks to name but a few. Though many were already legendary in the underground for their work in popular culture from posters and album cover art to comics, tattoos, surfing and custom car culture, for most it was among their very first exhibitions in a gallery context, and for the many important West Coast artists in his roster, Kastor largely introduced them to the New York art world and media, exposing them to artists, collectors, critics and curators that would help establish these renegade voices to the fine art establishment. Beyond its capacity for sustaining many significant artists at a point in their career when widespread popular interest in them had waned, Psychedelic Solution was a primary education in what else art could be for generations of visual outlaws.

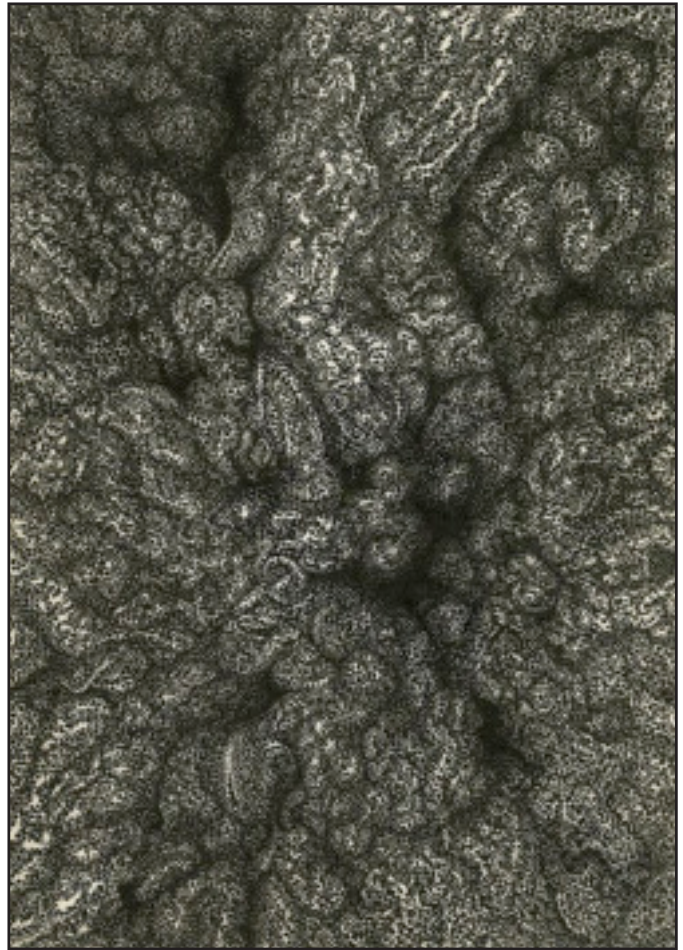
For all that Psychedelic Solution did for so many artists, and for all it did for a myriad of like-minded heads that appreciate this work despite- or because- how it somehow still resists authoritative ratification as fine art, it perhaps quite incidentally did even more for Jacaeber Kastor as an artist. At the time this was far from apparent. The little loft he built as a drawing studio perched atop his gallery grew over time somewhat abandoned as the demands of running such an enterprise slowly consumed all his waking hours. Over the last few years of the gallery it lay fallow, constituting one of the more extended "fruitful gaps" as he refers to them, periods in which he was not so much practicing his craft as learning by exposure and osmosis. Having sold off his modest business empire in 2004, and being what we might politely call a retired gentlemen of leisure who can spend his time drawing entirely for himself without consideration of audience or sales, we see now a decade and a half later the fruits of his gap. Here, stripping away the graphic emphasis of his former masters who worked largely in popular commercial media, and delving into the nuanced line-work that made their art so inherently trippy, Kastor articulates those inchoate spaces where what is knowable ebbs into the dreamscapes of unfettered imagination. The effect is mesmerizing, as if the entire history of psychedelic aesthetics were put into a juicer, producing a distillate of many minds and countless hands working as none, an amalgam that is perfectly pure.

WAVEY EDGE (trippy-fill)
ballpoint ink on backingboard
11-1/2 x 8-3/4"
signedX2
2014, 8, 2015, 8



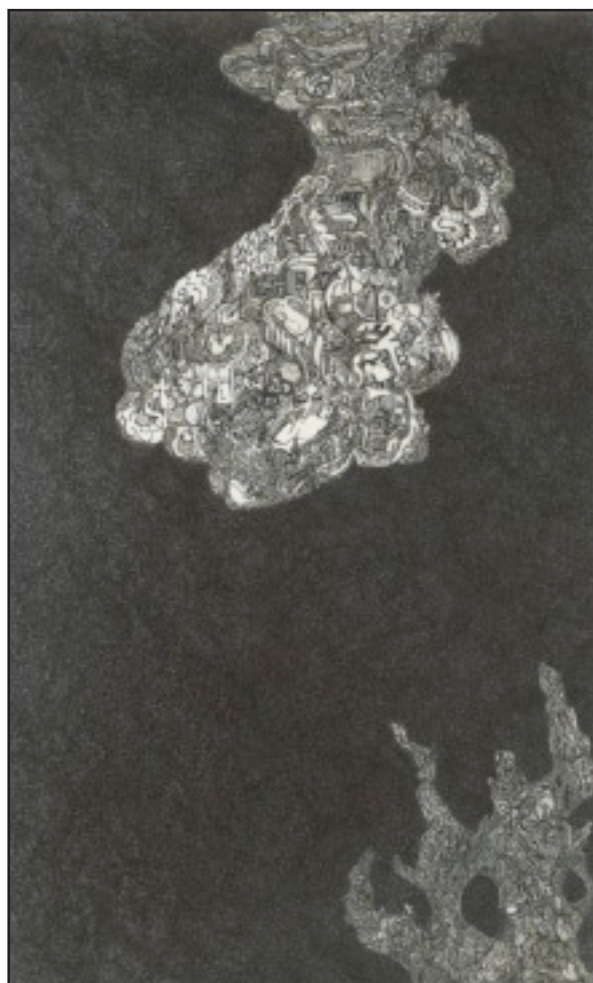
TRANSFIGURATION
ink on paper
10-7/8 x 10"
2015,7-8

DISSOLUTION-CONNECTIVITY,
ink on paper
7 x 5"
signedX1
360° orientation
2015,7-11



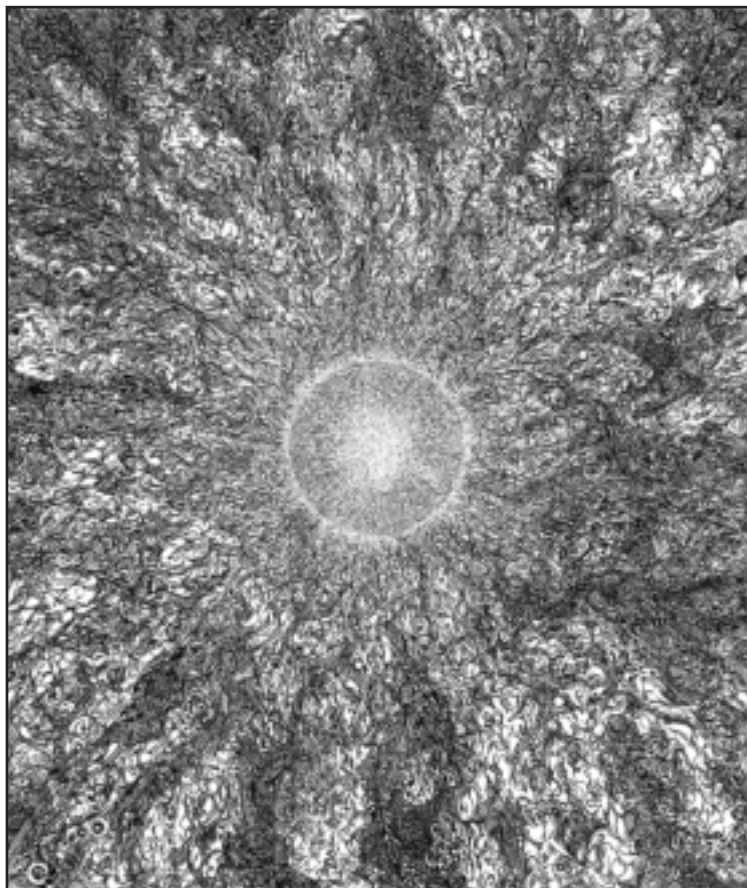
SPECK
ink on paper
12 x 9"
signedX2
360° orientation
2015, 9-11

GOOD BONES
 8-1/2 x 7-1/2"
 (360° orientation)
 ink(black & white)
 white acrylic paint on paper
 signedX1
 2015, 12



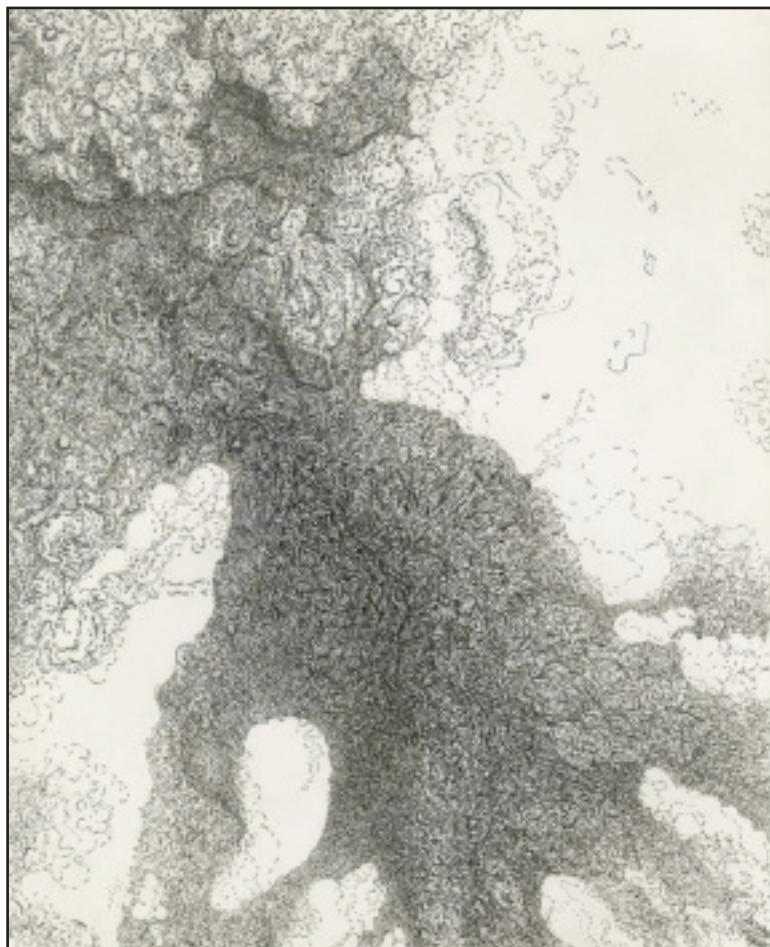
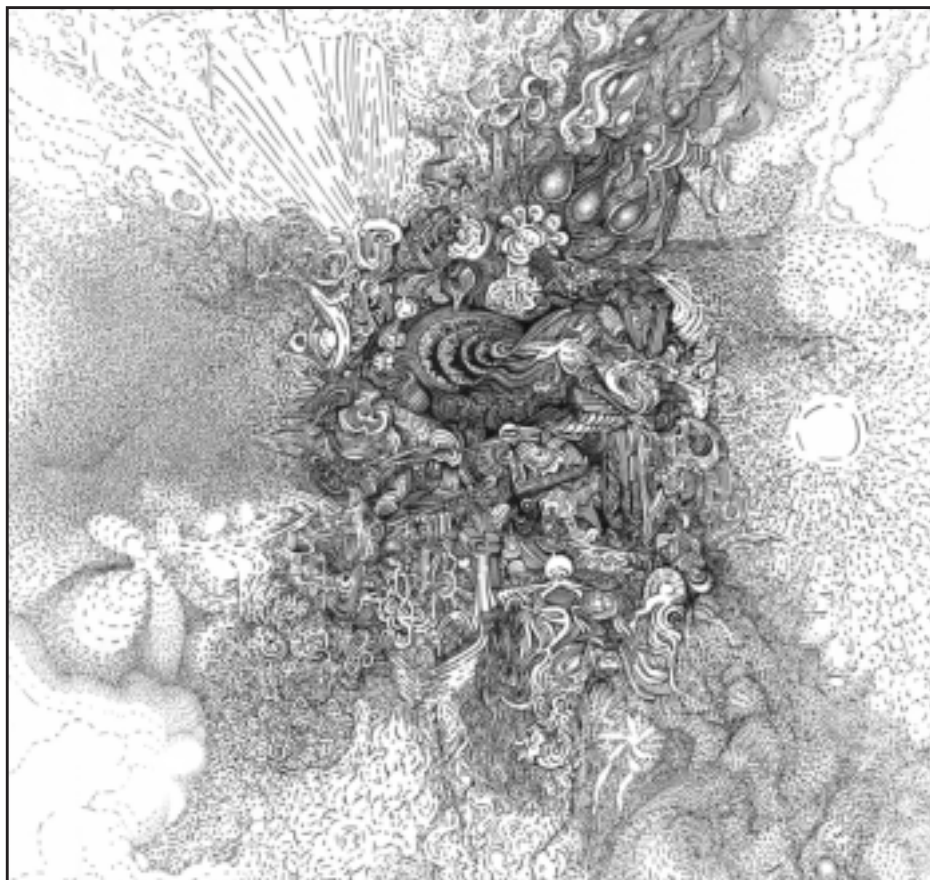
PASSING THOUGHTS
 ink on paper
 17 x 10-1/4"
 signedX2
 180° orientation
 2016-17

PSYCHEDELIC SUN
 ink on paper
 17 x 14"
 signedX1
 360° orientation
 2016-17



OMNIPPLICITY
 ink on paper
 17 x 14"
 signedX3
 360° orientation
 2017, 7

WRINKLE
ink on paper
13-3/8 x 14"
signedX1
360° orientation
2018



ETHEREAL MASS
ink on paper
8-3/4x7-1/8"
signedX2
180° orientation
2018, 2-6

Jacaber Kastor Bio

Mid 50's - Mid 60's

• Consciousness Expansion • Mother Abstract Expressionist painter, art teacher. Family friends mainly artists, musicians and physicists (We lived near the Bevatron and my dad was at Cal) • Amongst my myriad interests and activities, there was often a thread of arts and craft involvement. • Growing up in Berkeley of the 1960's. Early exposure to counter-culture, spirituality-mysticism, cannabis, psychedelics, folk music, coffee shop intellectuals. • Art Output • Mother was a serial doodler, continually covering the family desk pad with abstract drawing (while on the phone). I picked up the habit, contributing to those densely covered collaborative drawings.. And managed to save a few. • Traffic patrol boy. Hit by a car (1965) I spent a good deal of time bedridden, with drawing becoming a favorite pastime. Elaborate topographical landscapes with settlements, etc. • Collecting • Serial collector tendencies from an early age, collected Many things of aesthetic interest, most of which gave way to collecting Psychedelic Art, in the form of posters and handbills from the many psychedelic dance venues that proliferated in the Bay Area of the mid-late 60's. • Quest to get closer to the source of this art, this trippy space, led to deeper exposure to the music, events and people, of this scene.

Mid 60's - Mid 70's

• Creative Endeavor • 65-72, learned pottery making, set up pottery studio in our garage, gave lessons & sold work. Made candles at home which were sold at Provo Park free concerts. Learned printing at school, lost wax casting/art metal techniques.. Made jewelry. Craft & Handy type skills enjoyed. • Consciousness Expansion • Several extremely influential experiences with Psychedelics. • Consciousness Expansion • Decision to move from Lake Tahoe and quit ski racing as a career. • Consciousness Expansion • Years spent at Lewis & Clark College, UC Berkeley. • Art Output • Decision to focus on art as a career. • Art Output • (1975) 2 public exhibitions of my drawings in Berkeley: Hoeffner Gallery, and the Buttercup Bakery Café • Art Output • Juried work accepted in 1976 and 1977 San Francisco Art Festival. • My artwork of this period had a decidedly Surrealist feel to it, and was often dreamlike symbolic images inferring concepts that defied direct depiction, or defied definition. Symbolic mash-ups. • Creative Endeavor • Changed my name, as a sort of art experiment, essentially to defy definition.

Mid 70's to Mid 80's

• Consciousness Expansion • San Francisco Art Institute, New College of Calif. resulting in Bachelors degree in Wholistic Health. Extensive studies of Iridology and Herbology, Nutrition. • Consciousness Expansion • Overarching interest in spirituality, mysticism, philosophy.. Search for enlightenment. Went to listen to many gurus, spiritual teachers, spent extensive time at Esalen, ashrams, communes, etc. Extremely productive period artistically. • Consciousness Expansion • Gradual subsiding of constant quest for enlightenment with residency and practice at San Francisco Zen Center. • Art Business • Realization that I was too obsessed with detail, ergo a slowly producing artist and not economically viable. • Creative Endeavor • Decision to make constuction work my main business, and do art as a pastime. It seemed honest, enjoyed the craft of it, and badly needed to earn more than selling my artwork was providing. • Consciousness Expansion • Decision to break out from Bay Area spiritual womb, enter the belly of the beast, the “real” world, with move to New York City. • Art Output • Realization that I was too tired after work to actually make much art. • Collecting • Massive resurgence in my collecting of psychedelic posters, leading to contacts with the artists and producers, and assorted aging heads. • Consciousness Expansion • Realization that construction work, though lucrative by this point was Not the road I wanted to be on. Equipment theft, libalites and injuries diminished my interest. I had been plumbing for a construction group that mainly handled wealthy artist's lofts, and met many influential art people. • Creative Endeavor • Writing • Press credentials from writing gig (as NY correspondent) for ZIG ZAG (UK music magazine), allowed me “inside” access to myriad events, scenes, movers and shakers. • Creative Endeavor • Short span playing in a band, intense partying and socializing in the music and club scene, expanded my network in Manhattan. This was a period of excesses. • Art Output • Drawings I did during this period, took a decidedly biographical-psychological turn, and as always, with great detail. • Art Business • Decision to make ART my career again, even if it entailed something other than my own artwork. Perception that in Manhattan, creatives seemed to be highly regarded and having all the fun. • Idea of importing the art that I loved to New York city as a business. Decided to work and save towards opening a gallery. I envisioned a place with a shop in front that sold psychedelic paper collectibles to help subsidize the art, so I could afford to take chances with which artists I showed. I also felt this would put me in the center of the world I loved for collecting purposes. This was before an internet, and this would give me exposure to art and paper at an unparalleled level. • Art Business / Collecting • Started making trips back to Calif with more frequency, collecting and investing in inventory for the future business.

Mid 80's to mid 90's

• Art Business • Opened my gallery Psychedelic Solution. Named after liquid LSD. It was based on the idea that many of the genres of art and culture that had distinguished themselves over the last 20 years (many considered alternative or outside the mainstream business of the art world), had all either emanated from, or been influenced by the High Psychedelic period of the mid 60's. Different as they all might seem at this point, they were a related family I felt. The series of shows I put on, was designed to imply this. At the very least it would intermingle the fans and artists of these genres.

• Art Business • Opening exhibition was Rick Griffin, who took up residency in the gallery for weeks. Robert Williams as our 2nd show, Wes Wilson as the 3rd.. pretty much sealed the deal.. The reputations of these artists and the desirability of New York City as a place to have an exhibition, virtually assured that every artist I contacted jumped at the chance to have a show.

- Art Business • MTV having started up a network, decided to have a news segment. Lacking much content beyond the obvious music news, they latched onto Psychedelic Solution as some of our artists had music industry related work, or were musicians, such as Mark Mothersbaugh of Devo. They started running news about our shows on a fairly heavy rotation, which blew us up nationally, increasing interest and our mailing list from several thousand to over fifty thousand within months. Openings started to be packed and things got BUSY. Press coverage of all types increased. We became influential a bit.
- Collecting • I became a minor cultural entity, which allowed me access to more art, more collections, more contacts.. This led to what had been my collections, turning into ARCHIVES, with many of the subjects I documented becoming the most extensive gatherings of material in the world. Preservation and housing of materials, databasing etc increasingly time consuming. As an example, I had one employee who was dedicated solely to Jimi Hendrix vinyl acquisitions. My travels looking for material became extensive.
- Art Output • The 1986 artwork for what was to become the gallery logo was perhaps the last of my symbolic work. Towards the later 80s my work started getting optical, and transmutational. • Short lived art studio.. Built an elevated office-cubical where for a time I was able to turn out a number of increasingly trippy drawings including a totemic artwork, used for the poster of the 1988 group show 'Sumer Solution '88'. But once again struggling with running the gallery, my art went to the back-burner and the space became a bookkeeping office. 1987 had a drawing in a group show, 'Retrospectacle' at San Francisco Art Commission Gallery.
- Art Business • Psy-Sol publishing. Printed over 50 posters for the exhibitions, and as commercial enterprise; publishing some classics that had gone out of print by some of the artists we handled.
- Creative Output • Got married (Althea) and had a baby (Tiki), 1992.
- Art Writing • Columnist for Wes Wilson's magazine 'Off The Wall' (91-95), mainly focused on psychedelic rock concert poster art & culture. Further, I gave Wes my contacts and helped him start up the Hall of Flowers, rock poster convention in SF (1992-94), being it's first supporter and largest booth-holder. • Publisher (and a contributing writer) of a booklet on Stanislaw Szukalski (1989) Song of the Mute Singer.
- Art Business • Arrested in Mexico (1990) with Carlo McCormick, Leo and Raven Mercado, Prem Dass and a host of Huichols on trumped up charges of conspiracy to export Peyote, while in Tepic picking up artwork from Cristobal Gonzalez for his upcoming Huichol Yarn Painting exhibition.

Mid 90's to mid 00's

- Art Business • Stopped doing individual art exhibitions at Psychedelic Solution. Gallery turned into a showroom, then offices, and concentrated on retail sales in the store, mail order, eBay, and catering to heavy collectors. Taking the show on the road to various collectibles shows & conventions.
- Art Output • still on back burner.. Mainly in the form of smaller doodles, and small stoner escapes.
- Collecting • Continued obsessive focus on building completist sets of posters, documenting of certain artists & subjects (BG & FD posters, Rick Griffin, Jimi Hendrix, Acid Tests and early psychedelic events, Grateful Dead, psychedelic art, etc). Considered one of the top authorities and collectors in art and paper of this ilk.
- Art Writing • Finished the book "Bill Graham Presents: The Art of the Fillmore" (1997), art-writing continued with small jobs of liner notes, calendars, auction catalogs, etc. Used as a "consultant" and or guest curator in myriad projects.
- Art Writing • Early 2000's contributing writer for Juxtapoz, eventually being titled "Psychedelic Guru" on the masthead. What can I say.
- Art Business • Nov 2004 Psychedelic Solution gets bought out. Commercial inventory as well as Archives trucked away. Over 500,000 pieces of printed material and fine art are sold.
- Creative Output • The Ludlow Santo Domingo Library, Geneva gets donation of the front doors of Psychedelic Solution which are displayed at the (Mar 2005) grand opening. Our front doors were a collage of stickers I applied for 15 years or more.. Of course some anonymous contributions appeared, but it was pretty tightly "curated". Recently they have traveled to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Cleveland.

Mid 00's to present

- Art Output • After a short period of burn-out.. Drawings in three Fuse Gallery 'Draw' group-shows; 10/06 NYC, 2/08 London & 6/10 Mexico City, as well as one drawing featured in 2010 Draw book by Museo de la Ciudad de Mexico. Group show 10/07 at The Showroom, NYC.
- Art Business • Started brokering large estates/archives of work from artists, promoters, photographers, collectors.. But backed off after a couple years, as it was too stressful.
- Collecting • Realization that the urge towards consciousness expansion, was at the heart of what interested me in the first place.. And that psychedelic art was the heart of my interests. ART being foremost in my life.. I focused anew at building a new collection of paintings, drawings and print with an emphasis on "Trippiness". Eventually the emphasis clarified itself to be: American psychedelic art.. Late 50's to Mid 70's.. I have become obsessed with unearthing unknown artists, and stories.. Mapping the field.
- Art Business • Over-collecting and practicalities have led me to again buy and sell psychedelic fine art as opportunities arise. I seem to be a magnet for this art, so It affords me time to draw.
- Creative Endeavor • Appeared in documentary films: New Brow: Contemporary Underground Art (2009), Robert Williams Mr Bitchin' (2010), H R Giger Revealed (2010). Moderated a panel discussion at the Rick Griffin retrospective at Laguna Beach Art Museum (2007). Speaking engagements: Power point lecture on Psychedelic Art at Alex Grey's COSM (2014), and at the Grateful Dead symposium, 'So Many Roads', San Jose (2014).
- Art Output. My recent work concerns imagination in it's raw form, as a sort of prima materia, represented by trippy fill (psychedelic vision) as the "perceptual substance" of form. I've been manipulating trippy fill at various strata in a sort of non-academic survey of reality vis-à-vis my medium and you know, me. • My research documenting and collecting early psychedelic art, of course has influenced me greatly.