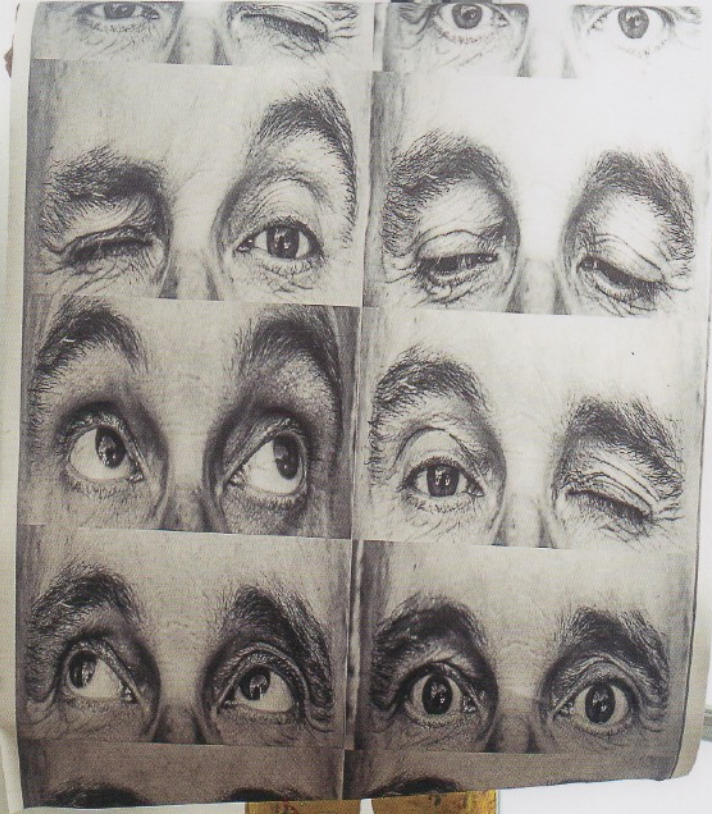




celebrating local makers

ASHEVILLE MADE

August 2019



EYES ON ABSURDITY

Randy Shull, Pink Dog,
and the Importance of
Staying Weird

MEL BENNETT'S MENAGERIE / PLAIN TALK WITH THE "HAPPY ASS" / NINETY YEARS OF WOODCARVING

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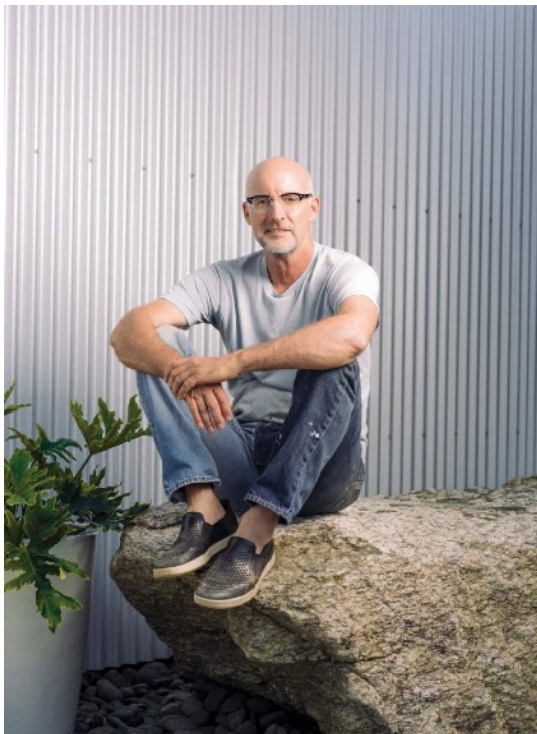


ASHEVILLE MADE

July 26, 2019

Art Entrepreneur Slips Absurdities Under The Bar

by Tom Kerr



With his partner, Hedy Fischer, Randy Shull steers Pink Dog Creative, a vividly painted complex of art studios and retail spaces in the River Arts District they founded in 2009. For three decades, Shull has explored the relationships between architecture, painting, landscape design, and furniture making. He and Fischer are well known as contemporary-art collectors, especially work from Latin America; Shull's own pieces are numbered in prominent collections, including New York's Brooklyn Museum, Atlanta's High Museum, and the Renwick Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.

You've contributed so much to the arts community since moving here in 1991.

I'm just trying to raise the bar. Hedy and I travel enough that we see other great places, and you can't live in all of them. So we bring some of what we learn back here. What we brought first was the color from Mexico, where we live part of the year.

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Rigid Ooze, 2019 ink jet and acrylic on panel



Divided Square, 2019, Acrylic on panel

Tell me about your current exhibit.

One of the cool things I'm doing is, instead of a catalogue, I'm doing a fan deck, like you see at a paint store. It has 80 cards, representing an image and three details of each piece. Some of the pieces have photos of my eyes embedded in them. The viewer is looking at the painting and it's looking back at you, so it's cyclical. This is my first foray into hybrid photography and painting. I like the idea of these collisions of different mediums. Even after 30 years, I'm still figuring out what I want to do next. It's exploration: travel through the reality of your own work. You keep asking "What if?" — and it keeps moving you forward to the next place.

Did I see recycled hammock material in some of your new paintings?

Yeah. A hammock is the physical embodiment of the need for reflection. In Mexico we take siestas in hammocks that the indigenous people there weave. The hammocks last about a season. I have a piece of old hammock in my hand right now. You can't even recognize it when it's painted. And it takes a lot of paint.

Soaks it up?

Yeah, the absurdity of painting a hammock! I had an art teacher who said if it's not absurd, it's not art. Remember the toilets in the window of the plumbing store downtown? [Rogers Plumbing was at 52 Biltmore Ave. until the early 2000s.]

I loved those! A storefront window of pastel toilets on full display.

That was more interesting than any of the stuff that was in galleries. Everyone says the artists are the pioneers here. I think it's the plumbers and electricians.



Shull's large-scale work, including this installation, reflect vivid tropical palettes from his world travels