

The Art of WILLIAM EMBODEN
by Chevalier Tony Clark

<http://www.arttoartpalettejournal.com/2016/03/his-art-has-risen/>

Anyone seriously interested in contemporary art should have a copy of *The Art of William Emboden* by Tony Clark in their library. The dust jacket With his self portrait should intrigue anyone to look inside for more Fascinating images. His use of color in his paintings and water colors is Striking. His work in black and white imagery is equally as impressive. The cover of the book with gold stamped calligraphic characters attests to the quality and attention that went into production of this volume.

Robert Gustafson
Botanist/Art Collector

I always subscribed to the theory that “Art was Truth,” art the raw unfiltered reflection of truth – someone’s truth. I understood that might be my truth or the truth I ascribed to the artist, again my truth projected. Through William Emboden’s varied modalities of color, form and space coupled with Chevalier Tony Clark’s reflective, insightful prose and intimate familiarity with artist, I am taken on a journey and a revelation that art need not be controlled with meaning rather experience and hopefully one of transformation, momentary or otherwise. Pretty primal but often lost in trying to find meaning or in present lexicon, translation.

The Art of William Emboden while suitable for the quintessential “coffee table book” - is so much more in what you get and give over and over again. A journey to the subconscious and conscious, the sublime and the frivolous, it is a book that stimulates what feels like all the senses (okay maybe not smell). I found my rich experience reading and viewing the book akin to how I feel when having dinner and conversation with good friends at a favorite restaurant in a cosmopolitan city; a sense of familiarity, culture, expectation (minus the pretense) yet never knowing what will present itself and occasionally having to step back from the table. It is evident the brilliant compilation of work and narrative is borne out of a passion, and knowledge for art; and a dance only Emboden and Clark could choreograph.

Melinda Travis
Psychologist/Art Collector

William Emboden's art is astonishingly aural, vibrant with the harmony of profound intellect and sensual persuasion. This collaborative retrospective, written with Tony Clark, Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, is quite literally a polymath's journal of the whole human experience. It is original, inquisitive, forceful, fanciful, full-throttle, elegant and exciting.

Inspired by *The Eternal Return*, and with a poet's ability to shape and re-direct our attention away from the mundane to the sublime, the artist transcends reality by seeking

something that lies beyond the scene. He listens in one burst of color after another. The starting point might be a Russian horse, a strand of kelp, a scrap of paper, a massive symphony by Messian or the delicate touch of Da Vinci's hand. In the process, he creates his own inner system of notation, like a visual James Joyce, to express the ineffable, mysterious wonder of it all.

Each work by this artist is dense with ideas, cultural reference, diversity and stimulation and reveals his consummate knowledge of style and medium. The text is rich with context and the plates pop off of the page. The impasto seems almost three-dimensional, so clear is the print.

William Emboden's commanding synthesis of art and science, history, philosophy and culture reveals a deep and abiding love of life. It is nothing short of brilliant and his intimate understanding of Leonardo's drawings alone will take your breath away.

Ann Gresham
Soprano and music scholar

A beautiful book full of art that I have never seen and wish I had. The text by Mr Clark opens a world into an artist that I did not know and made me wish to understand more the deep complexities of this artist. I was struck by the oeuvres of Mr. Emboden and how his art has followed, unencumbered by outside influences for most of his career. His expansive interests and techniques not be influenced, for the most part, by the need to sell his art or follow the standard gallery laden path that most artists must follow.

A beautifully written book that helps bring to light the works of William Emboden!

Todd Williamson
Artist

Love the book! There's a lot of heart in it to be sure and it's a pleasure to get acquainted with W.E. Congratulations!

Padrick Bentley
Artist

The Art of William Emboden is a bound curio of exemplary works spanning a full half-century by a remarkably versatile and prolific artist, with keenly written and uniquely insightful companion text by Chevalier Tony Clark.

Works from each of the five decades are intermingled with a robust assortment of recent works (2011-2015); many of which are his finest. The book is handsomely assembled with attention to

detail, and is exceedingly enhanced by the fine copy photography of Dave Gardner. The unapologetic dust jacket, featuring a 2015 self-portrait, evokes a psychedelic mania befitting the man who (literally) wrote the book on hallucinogenic plants (*Narcotic Plants*, 1980, Macmillan Company, New York), and calls to mind this passage from James Joyce's, *A Portrait of the Artists as a Young Man*:

"His brain was simmering and bubbling within the cracking tenement of the skull. Flames burst forth from his skull like a corolla, shrieking like voices: -Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell! Hell!"

I agree with renowned artist Peter Shire, whose intro to the book simply and succinctly describes William as "love," but I would also add that Emboden is: mischievous, mysterious, rebellious and provocative.

In review of the works, I find myself in awe of their assuredness and the consistency with which he maintains that focus. And by assuredness, I mean that they appear devoid of the overwrought complexities that random abstraction sometimes has. One senses that he is unencumbered and without the burden of self-doubt in his process, even from the earliest pieces. The Buddhist term *vimāṇāsota* seems fitting, in that they have a pure 'stream of mind' sensibility to them.

Many of the works express a clear appreciation for Chinese calligraphy with its grid pattern, glyph verticality and starkness of line. But the gesturing that Emboden employs is more akin to a conductor's baton than a swishing bamboo brush. And indeed, his collage works smack of Dadaism and the Fluxus movement, but again, they are so deftly done that I could easily rank them as stellar examples of both. He is skilled to the point of mastery, but exhibits no desire to cloak himself in any one style.

His quasi-monoprint paintings are quite beautiful. He paints his lines (some so full and fat that the artist playfully refers to them as "caterpillars") on paper and then transfers that onto canvas. He lets them partially set before peeling off the paper to reveal striated mounds and compression marks; the fine detail of which is in sharp contrast to his solid, weighty forms.

Emboden has little interest in assigning his work any clear intent. Titles may offer insight to his general psyche more than they do the individual piece. No matter, such a declaration is immaterial- perhaps even detrimental- to the unrestricted universal enjoyment of the work. He merely acts as the facilitator- silently sending these works out, like tiny paper boats adrift in a sea of interpretation.

This book only scratches the surface on a mountain of material by William Emboden. With his playful aptitude, I am confident that more works will continue to be generated- drawn on napkins and the backs of envelopes to taunt canvases and stately pedestals. I look forward to Volumes 2, 3, 4 and 5.

j.Reto

Artist and Curator