

A Vision Cut Short

"Of the mature, seasoned and genuine painters ... who have been working in the nonobjective mode for some considerable years, one who strikes me consistently as being of major size and substance is Sidney Gross ... These are extravagant words because they are meant to be. Gross is a superb artist. His soul and mind and heart are in these works." - Bernard Schiff - *NY Post* - Bernard Schiff was the editor of *Smithsonian Magazine*

Early Years

Like most young artists during the Depression, Sidney Gross' early style was influenced by the social realism encouraged by the WPA. By the time he was twenty, he was painting distinctively urban surrealism, while producing critically admired portraits. Early on he experimented with various forms of abstract expressionism, including what one critic called amorphism and at his premature death was working disciplined expressionistic forms set against hard edge geometric fields of color.

Sidney was born February 9, 1921 in New York to Morris and Esther Gross. He began painting at age 11 while attending PS 30 and made his first sale, a sketch of Huey Long, to the Patterson Morning Call when he was 13.

While Gross was a student at Evander Child's HS in the Bronx, artist James Newell began work on his landmark WPA commission "Evolution of Western Civilization," a series of murals in the school's library, begun in 1935 and completed in 1938. As art editor for four years of the school's national prize-winning magazine, *The Bridge*, Sidney Gross must have been one of the students Newell describes, who "stopped to ask questions and inform each other about the art process and the meaning of each section. They recognized events, criticized the knot in the cowboy's scarf and the proportion of the mechanic's hand." Sidney's works (fig#) that appeared in *The Bridge* show the influence of James Newell, (two of them are in Smithsonian collection). They also depict the bleak times, images of the lingering depression and the clouds of impending war.

Author and activist Grace Paley (1922-2004), a year younger than Sidney, was a student at Evander Childs High School during these years, though she graduated a year before him. She described those years:

"Laurence Stallings's great warning book, *The First World War*, ... ends with Hitler, Mussolini, Ataturk and Stalin in powerful shooting poses. The rest of the pictures of that terrible war made my friends and me sign the Oxford pledge never to go to war ... then it was 1937 and Ernest Hemingway, among other young Americans and Europeans, went to Spain. ... Germany and Russia experimented on the body of Spain with all sorts of new equipment they might need in a more serious war. In my high school, Evander Childs, we held many rallies and demonstrations. We wept for Spain and wrote poems."
New York Times - 1/25/98

Under the tutelage of his art teacher, Frances Taylor, he won recognition in a 1939 citywide art contest and garnered his first mention in the New York Times. His mother asked the following year to meet Miss Taylor, while his father "wondered about this woman who helps my son to complete monstrosities."

Art Students League

In 1940, he was one of six national winners in a competition sponsored by the Art Students League. He attended there on scholarships from 1939 to 1942 by receiving the Schnackenberg Scholarship when his first grant expired.

At the League he studied under Jon Corbino, Arnold Blanch, Morris Kantor, and George Picken. His early work, already leaning that way, reflected the strong social realism of Corbino and Blanch, but his own sense of the surreal, the strong abstract compositions of George Picken, and the soon-to-come postwar explosion of abstract-expressionism seem to have had more lasting influence on the style, if not the content, of his later work.

In his first semester at the Art Students League, he wrote his Miss Taylor, that he has developed "a waterwash technique ... having all the precision and clarity of my oils. They smack of Blake in medium and execution." (figs #) These are remarkable and often surrealist

paintings that, while certainly reminiscent of Blake's *Jerusalem* and *Urizen*, are closer to Pieter Breughel the Younger with their dark vision, images of tortured naked humans that suggest the herding of Jews into the concentration camps. (fig #)

While still a student at the Art Students' League, Gross exhibited at the National Academy, the New York Watercolor Club *and* the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, indications of his talent and mastery. He found these years both fulfilling and challenging.

Working on a mural in 1940, he wrote that he felt "the same way I did when I received my first fire engine." He applied for an Edwin Austin Abbey Memorial Scholarship for Mural Study (\$1000 a year and up to \$3500 for three years), but it went instead to Sidney Simon (1917-1997). Another grant from the Art Institute of Chicago also did not materialize, but Sidney was proud that Corbino chose one of his paintings "as the most interesting character study of the term, hanging it in the student concourse." Artistically, he seemed excited and confident.

In his personal life, he wrote of his adolescent turmoil between his "libido", "states of indulgences" and a desire for "asceticism ... not the fanatic variety, the outgrowth of religious fervor" but "tempered by logic and a sense of humor." He had an intense interest in Freudian psychoanalysis that continued unabated for years. His paintings and writings demonstrated his intense social sense of justice. He mused about science and metaphysics and the insignificance of Man. In frustration, he ended one letter to Miss Taylor with this statement: "To hell with being considerate, with being practical and economical ... the only way anything accomplishes anything is by being egotistic, ruthless and damn selfish." It would appear, however, that he lived his life in denial of that creed.

Army Experience

Gross received his draft notice for the Army in 1941. It began a trying period for him, judging by his artistic reaction to the war and some of his surviving letters to his art teacher. His 1941 surrealistic lithographs, "Lamentations" & "Technological Directions" (fig #) in the Block Museum of Northwestern University show contorted human forms trapped in mechanistic torture. A number of artists applied for

Conscientious Objector status, and a Sidney Gross is listed in a list from the period in ACLU records.

In November 1942, he wrote Miss Taylor of a consciousness-altering experience. The result, he said was that "three weeks ago I was approaching in a most lethargic manner the absurdity of suicide. Today, in true strong fashion, I'm happier than I've ever been in my entire life." Although it was not clear what that experience was, he would later write of a dramatic epiphany on Christmas Day 1942 (see page 23). His third wife, Elaine kept in her collection two paintings (fig #) with clearly Christian iconography and several early abstracts seem to include crucifixes.

It appears, contrary to the resumé in the Smithsonian prepared by Elaine which lists his discharge as 1945, Gross was actually honorably discharged from the army in 1943 "because of a medical condition" after serving in the Maps and Charts division preparing training materials. The early indications of alternating depressions and states of elation seems to have followed him much of his life.

Marriage to Kay

The next year, Sidney married Kay and took a job selling art supplies for E.H. & A.C. Friedrichs Co., a major manufacturer of art canvas and boards, with stores on E. 28th, E. 43rd, and W. 57th streets, as well as in Newark. The upside of the job was it probably kept him supplied with materials to pursue his career through some tough years. Miss Taylor helped him with several loans and by buying several of his pictures.

A wonderful group of undated sketches depict a young Sidney at work, probably between 1945 and 1952. They are somewhat clumsy, captioned ink drawings, likely by Kay, paint a happy picture of their marriage, for none depict her, and all capture intimate moments. Kay was a subject of several his paintings, often in "his chair", smoking or reading. (figs #) In the drawings he is clearly quite young and almost gangly with a full head of hair, quite different than the man in the photos a decade later. What comes through in the group is the picture of a wife supportive of her husband's determination to make a living at a demanding and often disappointing way to make a living.

Many of the drawings have descriptive, often humorous titles. In sheer number, the most common subject is Sidney at work, sometimes in his favorite easy chair, sketching or working on a large canvass on an easel, sometimes "Sidney working in the studio sitting on the painting chair," a wooden kitchen chair. Other captions for her drawings include: "Mr. Gross gets engrossed ... Sidney & the muse at work ... Sidney building his dreams again, ... grinding paint ... working on Childrens Song."

There's a hint of frustration when she titles one diptych "Marvin's Speedgraphic intrudes on a Sunday breakfast" and when she titles one sketch of his working: "Saturday Nite Fling!" Or when she titles another drawing "Sidney reading to delay a Sat Nite bath." But her appreciation for his work comes through in so many drawings of the artist "We're both getting tired, but don't give up ... looking at a night's work ... Now let's see what I've painted."

Sidney apparently had got a commission to illustrate a book, for Kay refers to it in several titles, in one case "drawing a wheelbarrow detail for Childrens Song," probably the title.

Their apartment was on the top floor of 55 West 95th St. They looked out on the roof from "our kitchen & privy". From the roof, not directly accessible from the apartment, they had a view of the city skyline beyond. Their living room, "our most lived in room with a couch cover I actually managed to sew up myself" (actually a double bed doubling as a couch), was also probably their bedroom. His studio, though an archway, was more likely, in the architect's mind, intended as a bedroom. The radio and a double gourd bottle that figure in several of his early paintings (figs #) are clearly depicted. An adjacent large room served as Sidney's studio. Kay drew a lot of details of the rooms and studio, of "Sidney's Easy Chair waiting for him" or occupied a Sidney "stop[ping] for a Bailey tune" or taking "time out for coffin nailing" – smoking.

They both smoked; one of Sidney's portraits shows his wife, hair up in curlers curled in that chair enjoying a cigarette. They apparently drank prodigious amounts of coffee. One drawing depicts them "all jumbled up" in the Jumble Shop in the West Village, a storied Tea House and taproom (and former speakeasy), that Simone de Beauvoir described

in *America Day by Day* as looking “almost European with its red tiled floor and its quiet little tables arrayed along the walls. You can eat and drink there all night.” There’s a drawing of them in a fancy railroad dining car, and drawings of interactions with friends, including a number of drawings of a woman named Marion.

Eventually, Gross rented studio space in the village, but Sidney never gave up the apartment. After Kay died, his third wife Elaine called the apartment building home until 1999, though, at some point, she moved to a smaller unit. She died in 2009, just short of 40 years after Sidney’s death.

Auspicious Beginnings

In 1945, he was hailed as a “new exhibitor at Contemporary Art.” The officers and trustees there wrote, “The intelligence and imagination seen in Mr. Gross’ work give promise that he is worthy to be added [our] roster of artists.”

Gross received excellent reviews in the *New York World Telegram* and *Art News*, whose critic wrote: His paintings “are annealed by a nervous and electric quality that is most interesting ... highly sensitive and competent ... The landscape 'Abandoned' is remarkable for its haunting suggestion.” His prices ranged from \$75-350. Margaret Breuning, the following month, headlined her story: “Gross Rings Bell” and wrote that he “has in the popular phrase ‘got something’.” She seemed pleased that he showed “not a trace of influences” from his teachers at the Art Students League, “but appears decidedly on his own in his imaginative designs and tactful use of luscious pigment.”

The *New York Times* distinguished art critic Howard Devree wrote of that first show: “Sidney Gross gives evidence of estimable qualities, including imagination and a real sense of paint ‘feel.’ Still in his early twenties, Gross is busily assimilating a mixture of rather diverse styles.” Devree assessed his portraits as “honest and well individualized. There are good movement and rhythm in his forms.” His conclusion was that Sidney Gross “has his own vision, however, and, already, no mean equipment for future development.” His surrealist imagery, often executed in watercolor, incorporated almost organic urban decay anticipating descriptions of science fiction writer Philip K. Dick and cinematic landscapes of Ridley Scott.

The *Art Digest* critic and Devree cited Gross' emotive and expressive "Derelict" and "Ecce Homo," which in a later review, Devree noted, "is a bitter comment on the chaotic antagonisms of today." Gross made "The Critic's Pick" in the *Telegram's* 'This Week in Art,' where the critic was Emily Genauer. John D. Morse in *Magazine of Art* included him in his list of the "Top Ten Critics' Selections" that included the distinguished company of Henry Moore, Jacob Lawrence, and Robert Motherwell.

The same year The *NY Times* critic Edward Alden Jewell praised Gross' "Victory 1945," which was purchased by the Whitney Museum. That painting was widely reproduced.

Moving past the war as a theme, his "Forms at Dusk" were singled out from a One Man Show in 1946 at Contemporary Arts by Devree who wrote, Sidney Gross "puts forth new claims to consideration as an artist with something to say and with steadily increasing facility in saying it. He is not to pigeonholed as a practitioner of expressionist, surrealist or a practitioner of abstraction, nor yet as a romantic realist, although there is a blend of all of those in his recent canvasses."

Of The "El to Erewhon," he said Gross "has something of the mordent quality that Butler would have acclaimed." He lauded 'Technological Landscape' and 'Manhattan Landscape.' They were "satirical impressions of a cock-eyed world." He described Interior as "tender and nostalgic."

The range of Gross in that exhibit was revealed in the review's next observation, "'The Dance,' a smaller picture combines color with calligraphic statements and is strident, bizarre and strident." 'Skating Rink' (fig#) appears to have been part of this exhibit. "Gross makes use of color with instinctive, but incidentally decorative effect. If you study many of his works in his varied styles, one thing is clear ... he likes big strong upthrusting design." While most of his early work showed the influence of the concurrent trends in the art world, all of it revealed his distinctive signature vision.

Magazine of Art devoted a full page to the exhibit. Their critic wrote:

"What first took my eye at last year's exhibition was the paint itself. It didn't look as if it had come out of a tube. It had subtlety and a richness of texture that suggested 16th century Venice instead of 20th century America. And color ... approached El Greco. Later I learned that its similarity was no accident ... What is also clear is that Sidney Gross at 25 knows pretty well what he wants to say and has found the right way of saying it. ... To have achieved even the beginning of such a union of form and content so easily and so early holds definite promise for the future."

The *Tribune's* critic Emily Genauer headlined her story "Gross is Arresting," also citing 'El to Erewhon.' He received excellent press in publications as far away as Toledo, Ohio.

Gross' most laudatory review was probably the three-page spread in *Pic Magazine* which was headlined: "A Guy, a Brush, and a Future / Sidney Gross, 25 Year-Old Veteran, Hailed by US Art Critics as a Painter of Assurance," exclamation points unnecessary. Gross was "a recently discovered diamond," a seer who "before the war ... painted what the ravages of war could do to humanity." Crumpled up, this article appears in some of post war paintings. (fig#) The author went on, "He foretold the possibility of an atomic force in an early triptych." Four of his works were reproduced for readers, no small coverage in those days.

Art Digest, however, gave a mixed review of the same show, noting his paintings now sold from \$100-400. The next month the same magazine quoted Gross who said of 'Rooftops,' which was to receive much press over the years, "I tried to detach the idea from reality, physically as well as aesthetically. It is from this period, that we date his meticulous muted semi-abstracts of construction. It became a world unto itself resting in infinite space." The same sentence appears in one of the artist's small sketchbooks. Most important, Critic Ralph Pearson agreed that he succeeded. And, parenthetically, likely the view from this privy window and rooftop vista.

1946 - 'To the Left'

The 1946 Whitney included works by Gross that leaned "decidedly more towards the left," according to the *NY Times*. Their permanent collection now boasted two Gross paintings: 'Victory' (1945) and

'Oasis' (1956). Other group exhibits included Mark Rothko. Reviews listed him with Morris Graves, Gwathney, Gropper, Evergood, Hirsch and Philip Gustin, Pollack and others, as artists commenting on the depression, the war years and the post war years not yet known as the cold war.

Gross soon moved beyond a decidedly grim vision of man's place in the universe. In 1948, he earned two notable *NY Times* entries. Critic Aline Louchheim spoke of the "promising Sidney Gross ... discovering a new, romantic beauty in the city." She contrasted him and a few others with the "hundreds who sought to indict the ugliness of the city" (and earned themselves the name of the Ashcan School) "... who deliberately propagandized the squalor of the city and the humdrum effects of its life." (fig #) Critic Howard DeVree cited his work in an article entitled "Courbet the Vital."

From Abraham to Palestine

Gross' undated papers reference several mural proposals and the style of several of his paintings (figs. #) related to possible murals seems to date to the immediate postwar period.

Although his reaction to World War II and his body of work draws little on his Jewish heritage, an undated draft of a "Description & Continuity of a Proposed Mural" reveals his narrative imagination and hints at his scholarship. The undated oils, clearly from around 1950 (figs #) appear related to this proposal. Whether he received the commission, much less completed it, is unclear. The scale of his proposed work was large. He proposed "a heroic theme – a personal evaluation of Jewish History from Abraham to Palestine condensed to fit the allotted space." Following are snatches of that proposal:

"The mural begins with Abraham rising out of the emptiness of idol worship, idols based on the Syrian male Sphinx, Egyptian goddess Sekhmut and the Hittite god Teshub. We move into Egypt with Rameses II, the Pharaoh of the Exodus. The Moses section with the tablets of law, move[s] directly into Solomon, the era of Israel's greatest power.

"The most desperate hour I've combined with the actual fall of the temple, the equally crushing blows dealt it by its external enemies and

its own corrupt kings and aristocracy. The synagogue symbol is from a 14th century Spanish Hebrew manuscript. Grand Inquisitor Thomas de Torquenada burned over 2000 heretics and imprisoned and ruined 100,000 others, most of them marranos, the group moving toward the burning. The symbol of the Ghetto follows, barred and bolted by heavy chains. The Cabala section depicts a condensation of symbols: Amulets against the Evil Eye, 17th century paper amulet, the ten Divine Attributes (Spheres), a signature of Solomon Maleho with pennant of Messianic redemption and a sequence of cryptic word symbols. The French Revolution extoll[ed] reason above dogma, the rights of man, freedom of conscience. That liberated the Jew from their Ghetto prison.

The second side begins with an intimation of the Great Synagogues which began to flourish everywhere. At the height of Jewish Intellectual accomplishment, the two great figures of our time, Einstein & Freud. The rest we know too well. At this apex of Civilization, the Nazi horror arrives. I have used a symbol of the furnaces against the benediction symbol and now the prelude to Palestine, the shekel of liberation Theodor Herzl. The soldiers are a symbol of the Haganah along with the Hasidic recruits, a defense army.

"We now move to the tillers of the soil, the development of a farming community.

"In both sides of the industrial section, I have placed symbolic 'immigrants'. In front of the ever growing development, I have placed Weizman and Ben Gurion.

The Talmud says about the Torah – 'It is not the Torah of the Priests, not the Torah of the Levites, nor the Torah of the Israelites, but the Torah of Man. Its gates are open to receive the righteous nation which keeps the truth and those who are good and upright in their hearts."

His large depiction of the Golum and Jewish priests, as well as his montage canvasses depicting basketball players, workers and jet fighters are not dated, but are likely from the late 1940s to early 1950s. (fig#s) His early Art Students League "Blakean" work, a fascinating painting depicting Mary & Joseph (fig#), as well as several abstractions of the crucifixion (fig#), as well as extensive interest in more mystical religions and experiences mesh with his fascination with

Freud and the nature of the universe.

1947 - 'Luminous, mottled color'

The next year, Gross added "semiabstract scenes in luminous areas of mottled color" to his annual solo exhibition at the Rehn Gallery. A NY Times reviewer wrote, "Gross takes urban drab industrial scenes, street corners, buildings and mechanical paraphernalia and instead of literally reporting them, he uses them as points of departure for his pieces of embroidery in paint, made up of glowing colors that coat his willful shapes," (fig #) although he added that "Gross has a curious fuzzy technique."

The same year his work appeared in the annual invitational exhibit at the Carnegie Institute where his work was cited as "especially well represented." His work was included in the first Hallmark Greeting Card Company contest. Although they did not give his work an award, critic Aline Locheim argued it deserved one in her review. He was also awarded a Tiffany Fellowship.

1949 - Surrealism Abstracted

His painting entitled "The Boat" was included in the 2nd annual Exhibition of American Painting #45 in their catalog. In the accompanying biographical note, his dual scholarships and his inclusion in three museum permanent collections was noted.

'Cityscape' in the collection of the Jewish Museum is dated 1949 (fig #) and helps date that style which included Train Wreck and the two undated examples (fig #s). Gross was clearly working on several styles in the first years after the war. What is remarkable is that all his styles, short-lived though they might have been, were critically and artistically powerful.

His bold ink sketches of construction (fig #) and the waterfront (fig #) from a portfolio preserved by his third wife likely date from this year.

1950 - 'Near-Abstract'

Stuart Preston wrote of Gross' 1950 exhibit which focused on New York City: "In his new near-abstract work at the Rehn galleries, Sidney Gross comes close to creating prefabricated paints. Precisely defined, perfectly abstract pieces of bright, mottled color fit together, like parts

in a jig-saw puzzle, into designs that represent with conviction landscape and still life. The resulting patterns are vigorous, flat and unemotional. Their abundance of straight and right angles at the joinings of color sections gives them a rigidity that is not displeasing."

His show "On the River" was illustrated and drew applause from fellow artist-critic Belle Krasne. The same year, his painting "Altar" was included in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *American Painting Today*, an important cataloged exhibit. His career futures seemed assured.

1951-2 - 'Urban Abstractions'

In 1951, through the Hassam Fund, the American Academy of the Arts & Letters added one of Gross' urban abstractions to its permanent collection, the first of two such purchases. His work continued to appear in invitational exhibitions in a number of venues, including the National Academy of Design. His 1952 painting 'Reflections' can be seen today in the permanent collection of the Butler Institute. The artist described his technique as "a complex structure of transparent glazes" over a "white lead ground."

His solo show of images from the docks of New York City and Brooklyn produced memorable colorful abstractions of tugboats (fig #), docks and workers. A group of his sketches (fig #) for these paintings are a minor works of art on their own. The forms of his strong dramatic, almost calligraphic, abstract compositions from this period underlie his color (fig#). The Butler Institute of American Art has over small 200 ink & watercolor drawings, wood and linoleum blocks also probably from this period.

His work, even as it metamorphosed into new approaches, continued to rate plaudits from the *NY Times*. Of his 1953 exhibit, Preston said, "All is calm, all is dusky in Sidney Gross' discreet, mysterious and beautifully painted abstracts ... as little susceptible of exact interpretations as cloud forms or the face of the moon ... the pictures are gratifying to the eye ... a slowly moving kaleidoscope of autumnal moods." The In Brief comment described them as "of unusual refinement." His luminous colors, labeled by other critics as "emotional", "feverish", "banked like fires" are always described as tempered, "subject to the discipline of design." (fig #)

A group of calligraphic sketches are dated 1952 (fig #). The Butler Museum has a large collection of similar sketches and prints. A group of small unstretched oils date from the same period. (fig#)

1953 - Corcoran exhibit

Frank Rehn, whose gallery, founded in 1858, was best known for promoting artists like Edward Hopper, Charles Burchfield and Reginald Marsh, had taken the young artist under his wing. Miss Taylor wrote in a undated note, probably from the late 1940s, that "Mr. Rehn told me what faith he had in Sidney's work and that whether it sold or not he would keep right on exhibiting it. I don't suppose that elderly man is at the gallery now, but his kind should live forever." Rehn provided Gross with a regular venue for solo shows even as the artist moved into abstract expressionism, but Rehn suffered a stroke in 1953 and died three years later. Gross' loyalty to the gallery was a major factor in the disappearance of his work from pantheon of major works of his period. John Clancy, the gallery director, continued to promote the gallery, and to a degree Sidney Gross, but eventually, with no heirs, the gallery closed in the 1970s.

Meanwhile, the editors of *Contemporary American Painting & Sculpture* (1953) listed Gross, noting that his work "was already in the permanent collections of the Whitney ... Princeton University and the University of Georgia." The same year the Corcoran accepted 'Moves in Blue' for the invitational exhibition.

1954 - 'Uneasy Reaction to our Age'

Gross's style continued to metamorphose. His contribution to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art exhibit in 1954 was "an arresting semiabstract reaction to our uneasy age and its problems," according to Devree. The artist's statement in the Rehn catalog read: "New levels of suggestions here come as a result of the closer connection between science and metaphysics. A vast, mysterious, ordered universe opens before us ... I've tried to synthesize cerebral and emotional elements constant."

The same year, the Whitney Museum purchased his painting 'Woven Orbit,' and Sidney won the Hassam, Speicher, Betts and Symons Purchase Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters for a still life. Carlyle Burrows in the *Tribune* noted "his uneasy reaction to

our age " in his pieces in the Audobon Artists Exhibit.

Outlining the crowded 1956 season, the *NY Times* reporter included Sidney Gross among seven "Well Known Americans and Cezanne."

1958 - Amalgamation of Styles

His style had matured showing "a marked advance," an amalgamation of two distinct trends in contemporary art, the juxtaposition of energetic abstract expressionist designs set against geometric fields of color. Dore Ashton of the *NY Times* wrote, "They are large controlled abstractions in which dense gray-black and earthen tones provide the matrix for burning red, black, blue."

That year, he participated in the Annual Exhibition of the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors. He also won the Grand Prize at Art/USA and \$500 for his painting 'Promontory,' rating illustrations in several publications including a mention in *Time Magazine*. Only seven paintings were honored out of over 1500 shown and many more submitted. His solo exhibit at Rehn Gallery that year included a number of paintings lent by private and museum collections. He began to teach classes at the Art Students League.

1959 - 'Explodes like Stormy Waves'

The following year brought a rash of solid reviews including ones from the *NY Times*, the *Tribune*, *The Arts*, and *Art News*. The *NY Times*: "Massed, broken color rolls, crashes and explodes like stormy waves against the rocks. Visually these complexly handled ideas make an impressive appearance." A critic in another paper wrote, "His paints have a structural pulse whose regularity attests to an unchanged development."

1960s - Maturity

Of his 1960 painting in the Butler Art Institute (fig #), given to the museum years later by the Art Students League, curator Carl David wrote:

"Combining abstract elements with his unique spatial perspective, the artist allowed his forms to float against a solid background, while presenting to the viewer a central formal element of harmoniously placed color, simultaneously separated from and integrated into it.

"Composition #10 is an extraordinary embodiment of this technique ... The vertical drip marks provide the illusion of upward movement, cross-cut by a small but emphatic window of blue sky with a wisp of white cloud, which contrasts to the lush greens of the central form. This is supported by the intrusion of black diagonals, which form yet another composition within the subject.

Bennett Schiff of the NY Post, later to become the founding Art Editor of *Smithsonian Magazine*, raved in a long article in 1961:

"Of the mature seasoned and genuine painter – true artists I am speaking of - who have been working in the nonobjective mode for some considerable years now, one who strikes me consistently as being of major size and substance is Sidney Gross ... There is a concentration of what I must call – paying proper respect to the words -- a noble beauty; they are works of heroic force. Gross' colors are magnificent ... They activate sensation and emotion; they stimulate thought and, connection and feeling ... These are extravagant words because they are meant to be. Gross is a superb artist ... able to give form and shape and visual materiality to the mysterious processes of the soul."

His paintings from this year marked a change in his style. The *NY Times* critic complained that his new work was "bereft of any poetic or natural suggestions," but the critic in *Arts Magazine* said, "The size and Baroque sweep of them make standing near them as physically exciting and unnerving as a carnival ride."

The caption to his 1962 painting on permanent display at the Art Students League reads "In the 1940s, Gross used jewel tones and stylized forms to portray the docks and industrial scenes of New York City. By the early 1960s, he had forged a unique visual language that combined hard-edge and gestural abstraction, still in bold colors."

His 1963 one-man exhibit in Provincetown rated significant publicity. Two of his 1959 paintings are included in the permanent collection of the Provincetown Art Museum, an untitled abstract and Engram #4, "a definite and permanent trace left by a stimulus on the protoplasm of a tissue," according to SF author Ron Hubbard (whatever that means).

His annual exhibit at Rehn Gallery was of "paintings that had gone into public collections before being exhibited in New York" including, the Corcoran, Baltimore Museum of Art, Washington Gallery of Modern Art, and art collections of Columbia, University of Illinois, and Morgan State College. It is likely that his wife was ailing in this period, and that his production of new work was diminished. Although we have recorded a number of paintings as 1960 and 1961, none of the paintings we have seen are dated 1962 or 1963.

Meanwhile, he enjoyed solid press in the Baltimore Sun as a result of a gift of one of his paintings to the Baltimore Museum. He also began teaching at the University of Maryland.

Kay Gross Dies

His wife Kay died in 1964, and it marked one of the few years he did not have a solo exhibit. If his earlier depressions and notes about suicide are any indication, it must have been a difficult year for the artist. Peter Manso relates an incident from a Norman Mailer party at his East End house: "Alcohol didn't entirely blur the focus on art. At another gathering, the painter Sidney Gross began throwing furniture around because of an unresolved argument over Soutine." In earlier years, he likely attended parties at Mailer's home in Provincetown, probably with his wife.

It was perhaps during this year that he refined his most distinctive contribution to the second generation of Abstract Expressionism, the dramatic juxtaposition of knots of energetic, kinetic color and blacks against strong geometric areas of complimentary color, stated goals in his lecture notes for his classes at the Art Student's League, where he had become one of its most popular teachers.

1965-66 - Chaos & Order

His 1965 show was "in memory of my beloved wife Kay. Whatever these, or the paintings I've made for twenty years, are ultimately worth, their creation was always so intimately connected with her, that I have to regard them as ours."

Commenting on Gross' 1966 painting 'Solar Rendezvous' in the *Wichita Museum Catalog* (1988), Howard E. Wooden wrote:

"Gross added a new dimension by introducing a hard edged quality to splintery and irregular multicolored forms ... a chaotically-organized cluster of small, brightly-colored interlocking shapes ... In sharp contrast is the more orderly arrangement of the structure at the right that appears to be energetically charged and, like a rocket, soars upwards linking the massive black area in the lower register of the canvas with the pure white space above, unbroken but for the delicate orange and blue diagonal bars ... One of the most significant stylistic achievements of Sidney Gross ... was his extremely sensitive ability to harmonize the opposing romantic and classical poles of expression that for many centuries have dominated Western thought and the character of Western art."

Wooden called Gross "one of the most accomplished exponents" of Abstract Expressionism. Artist Helen Thomas, then studying at ASL with him, described his use of a quick drying mixture of a medium of oil paint that enabled [the artist] to work swiftly ... in Gross's class I did come to realize that the color of a layer of paint can be different in different surroundings."

On the personal side the recent widower married the socially prominent Juliana Penn, a marriage that was to be short-lived.

1967 - 'Intellect Tempered by Emotion'

Noted critic John Canady reviewed Gross' winter 1967 solo exhibit of innovative combinations of "sections of abstract-expressionist paintings within or against hard-edged geometrical schemes" a somewhat mixed review. "His results vary from effective synthesis to unsatisfying compromises."

Jeanne Parks in *Arts Magazine* headlined her preview: "Expressionist UFOs in Gross, Exhibit Tomorrow" and added, "Intellect tempered by emotion and extended by cosmic realization infuse ... Sidney Gross' recent paintings." Some writers speculated that Gross sought an artistic expression to parallel the space age, the artist most likely took inspiration from Carl Jung's book *Civilization in Transition*. Gross quotes Jung in the catalog for his exhibit:

"UFO is a symbol consisting not only of archetypal forms of thought but of instinctual elements as well ... It does not appeal only to man's

conscious technological fantasies, or to his philosophical speculations, but strikes deep down into his 'animal nature.' This is what we expect a genuine symbol to do; it must affect and express the whole of man."

Based on his copious notes on ancient and contemporary myths which survive, Sidney Gross consciously strove to find and incorporate 'genuine' symbols for his entire career.

Gross left Art Students League and accepted a tenured position as Associate Professor of Art at the University of Baltimore. There, Gross became embroiled, apparently almost immediately, in an impassioned defense of Morton Grossman (b. 1926), the accomplished watercolor and painting teacher who was dismissed, apparently for political reasons. Gross' papers in the National Archives contain several, heavily emended drafts of his statement before the faculty committee.

1968 - Notes on a Book

In 1968, one of his most consistent supporters, Dr. Julius Lempert, died. Gross continued painting, teaching and writing, splitting his time between Baltimore and New York. Several of his UFO paintings are dated this year.

His lecture notes and comments by his students indicate he was working on a book on *Color and Aesthetic Concepts* based on Wilhelm Ostwald's Color system and the work on color theory by his fellow artist Josef Albers. Sidney's extensive writing, mostly in longhand, on the relationship of physical science and psychology and art suggest that a book on that relationship, too, was in his future.

1969 - 'The Bardo Triptychs'

An extensive review in *Art News* 1969 show, "The Bardo Triptychs," notes that "'Bardo' comes from the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* [Bardo Thodol] and is used by the artist to convey the 'state of highest awareness' hopefully experienced by the viewer as he gazes at the afterimage of the hard-edge shapes projected on the white band." Another *Art News* review reflected that "calligraphy, geometry and the void were ... held together by suave, hot color schemes." Ironically, bardo is the lamaist word for the time between death and rebirth.

In 1969, Sidney married his third wife, Elaine August. Sometime in the

1940s, according to Elaine's own account, she had first met Sidney (she was in early stages of dementia, so she also said they got married then and he died a year later). His new wife was active in Jewish philanthropy, interested in art, and an advocate of social issues. As a member of the New York Collegiate Chorale, she had met Marian Anderson, who was also photographed with Sidney. She was described as a "patron of the Art Students League" where Sidney had long taught. Given the personal pain in Sidney's last few years, it is possible he turned to an old friend. In any event, Elaine became Sidney's third wife. The two paintings he gave her as a wedding gift are joyful, almost playful abstractions. She kept them through her long life (fig #s)

If Sidney Gross was moving to a newer synthesis of the several movements in modern art that resonated in his work, it was not to be. He died suddenly and unexpectedly a few months after his marriage on November 17, 1969. Elaine told her stepdaughter and others that he had committed suicide, but the death certificate indicates heart attack, as does a 1985 letter from Sidney's physician. In any case, he died alone in his Chelsea Hotel studio at the age of 48. He is buried in Mount Ararat Cemetery in Farmingdale, NY. where ironically he reportedly met Elaine years earlier, and where 40 years after his death, Elaine was also buried.

He was survived by wife Elaine and two sisters, Mae ('Mazie') Gross and Sylvia Kaplan. He had no children. Elaine helped organize the half a dozen retrospective and memorial exhibits that followed his death, but, in fairly short order moved on, leaving no one to nurture his estate or reputation. She did, however, document much of her first husband's career and its successes and donated many of his papers and sketches to the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian. In time, she donated over 100 of his paintings and many drawings to the Art Students League, which, unfortunately, is not an exhibiting institution, and so most remain in storage, as do many of his paintings in museum collections.

She went on to marry retired NYPD officer Lawrence Richman, took his name, though they lived in New York on 95th street, perhaps in Sidney's old apartment. She returned to her first love, her singing. Elaine August died in 2009.

Assessing his Place in Art

Bernard Schiff, quoted in full earlier, considered his talent "as being of major size and substance ... works of heroic force ... magnificent ... superb." He used "extravagant words because they are meant to be."

Critic James Mellow assessed this "veteran painter and teacher" as "a talented and disciplined artist whose works possessed solid virtues – fastidious craftsmanship and an emphatic gift for construction." He praised his figurative work as "refreshing and somewhat whimsical", noted his "tightly controlled version of abstract expressionism" and concluded that Gross "differed from his contemporaries in that ... he attempted a kind of amalgamation of these two contradicting modes." He admired most the UFO series.

As one of the last critics in his era to pass judgment, Mellow said that "even artists with popular reputations pass after their deaths into a limbo from which they are only rescued in time." He added that a critic confronting a whole career without the benefit of time, offers "judgments and prejudices [that] may help to bury an artist whose life's work deserves better."

One of Sidney's paintings that hangs in the Art Students League includes the following comment on his art: "In the 1940s, Gross used jewel tones and stylized forms to portray the docks and industrial scenes of New York City. By the early 1960s, he had forged a unique visual language that combined hard-edge and gestural abstraction, still in bold colors."

From the beginning of his career, his sorties into social realism, his Blakean surrealism, his almost Renaissance approach to realism, his tapestry-like use of muted colors in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and the rich colors and movement in mature abstractions drew high praises. Always Gross's use of color was precise and conscious. In his mature work, Gross separated himself from many of his fellow Abstract Expressionists in his subtle use of color and color fields against which his expressionist slashes and thrusts vibrated. Artist Helen Thomas, who studied under Gross, said, "In reflecting over Western painting since the turn of the century, particularly with reference to the use of color, I feel that Abstract Expressionism left an unfortunate legacy: a

rather limited palette resulting from an unpremeditated selection of color.”

Hiatus to Obscurity

Unlike some of his contemporaries (like Adolph Gottlieb, Mark Rothko, and Jackson Pollack) whose work was carefully managed by their children, wives and/or dealers after their deaths, Gross work was not really managed and his visibility diminished.

As indicated earlier, his widow helped organize several memorial exhibitions, in Baltimore; New York; Provincetown, RI, Essex, Ct, and The Hague in Amsterdam, but she remarried, picked up a stepdaughter, and her beloved Chorale became her focus. They performed with Paul McCartney, Leonard Bernstein and other well known musical lights. In 1985 the Gertrude Stein Gallery appraised the Grosses and later provided a venue for at least one more solo exhibition.

His principal gallery, the Rehn gallery, had already lost its second generation owner, who died in 1956, moved and changed names several times over the ensuing years, eventually closing in 1981 when Clancy who had purchased the name from Rehn’s widow died. Even had the gallery survived, its reputation was not in its limited stable of abstract expressionist artists, but rather in the important talents of a number of late 19th and early 20th century masters, whose estates were active. Ironically, Frank K. M. Rehn’s adoption and promotion of the young Sidney Gross may have played against his future reputation.

Sidney Gross’ shortened career produced a body of strong and memorable work that still touches chords it did during his lifetime. He, himself mused that it took “20 years for the public to catch up with the artist.” Gross preached humility before the universe. Man tamed the perceived anarchy of the natural world and produced cruel urbanization for many in peace time and outright destruction in war time, a crueler chaos than the world of “Nature, red in tooth and claw.”

Gross explored the cruelty of man, war, urban decay in the idiom of the 1930s, in his surrealist works of WWII, and, I believe, his later abstractions explore the dynamics of his earlier work in symbolic color and movement.

Of his last works, Mallow complained that in his "panels of expressionist painting and panels of hard-edged forms separated by fields of pure white – there was no resolution, only a simple confrontation." I agree with his assessment of those works of his last year, the Bardo series. They embody bits of his early style with an intellectual concept and color theory but, to my eye, fail to achieve his vision. I suspect that Gross may have known that, and, if he did, it may have contributed to considerable stress of his last three years.

Had he lived, he might have created a synthesis that really worked, as he had several times in his brief career. He had taken the lessons of the social realists and developed a powerful surrealist twist, taken that and provided a vision of urban decay that offered hope, taken that to create abstractions of urban shapes and structures, and took that to his strong expressionist paintings of the mid 1950s to the early 1960s. His UFO and Probe series began to juxtapose his abstract movement and forms against fields of color, work that some critics, myself counted as one, declared his best.

As we consider the changes globalization has forced on society and the natural world from an early 21st century perspective, maybe there is no resolution, only confrontation.

The Teacher

Gross taught for years at the Art Students League, as well as at Columbia University from 1963-1967. In 1963 he also accepted a position at the University of Maryland. His biography in the 1967 ASL catalog concluded with this note: "Sidney Gross was an exceptionally popular Arts Student League instructor from 1958 to 1967."

Former students, two exhibiting artists, one in advertising, and two painting dealers recalled him fondly. All five described Gross as "inspirational" and one described him "as wild and dramatic" in his teaching methods.

In 1980, artist Helen Thomas wrote in the magazine *Leonardo* about her experience with Gross in 1966 until he left: "Under Sidney Gross ... I changed from representational painting to the style of Abstract Expressionism ... exhilarating for me."

Memorial services following his tragic death took place in New York and Baltimore. In both cities his students took special pains, organizing an memorial exhibit at the University of Maryland, while the Art Students League donated a painting in his name to the Butler Institute of American Art.

In one eulogy, a student said, "In my light will always be reflected my teacher. His message to me was always personal – show the I. He was a big example of optimism in a world where too many forget we are not machines. Professor Sidney Gross was the University of Maryland Art Department's most popular teacher."

Friend and fellow artist Leo Manso mourned the loss of "a force so rare in a mediocre and transient world.

The Man, the Artist

The young Sidney Gross, judging by his notebooks, must have been extremely intense, and subject to bouts of depression and elation. Apparently while still in high school, he copied the texts of an the exchange of letters between Sigmund Freud and the Lutheran pastor Oscar Pfister wherein Freud famously described himself as "a godless Jew."

The passage, however, which struck the deepest chord may have been this: "I have found little 'good' about human beings on the whole. In my experience most of them are trash, no matter whether they publicly subscribe to this or that ethical doctrine."

Gross, as a letter to his high school art teacher suggests, was deeply affected by the war:

"I took a long walk into the fields far from camp. The further I walked, the more remote was New York and all the life I had known before this now. When I no longer could see the camp, I lay down in a yellow field, a sweet smelling ochre, laden with wild life, rife with a million busy lives - filled with a great variety of trees. The land moved out, wild, far as I could see. The sky rolled around it, vast, full of wispy, cottony cloud. There was a warm sharp wind, bending the grasses. At times it seemed to be blowing through me as though I had for a

moment become one with the tall, stretching trees.

"I thought of my niece, her dolls, her strange attachment to a tiny piece of blue cloth that she calls her moony. Her private, personal, interpretation of this world lived in the minute – her game is as meaningful as ours, more so. I am playing some else's game, one that has nothing to do with the exaltation or salvation of the individual.

"The open racial prejudice, the cursing, swearing ignorance, the blind acceptance.

"Out there in the intuitive simplicity of a white shaggy hound; it capers and dances in the air you breathe, the wild joy, you have unknowingly hoped for, the permanent release. The rasp-like wind bends you, then - one with the grasses and wild life – lowers you into the sweet bed of this earth, with athletic ease.

"The crowded subway we must beware of hurtles you through a dark endless avenue, black with blind confirmation. The stations are all the same, full of weariness and the escapist games. Not to ride madly with the crowd going nowhere, but to walk alone, going somewhere! Into the earth, becoming the earth, winged and bodiless. You that lay there, a stranger to the earth, resting upon arms and hindsides aching in the lap of the War God - you have borne long enough the wraths of this huge farce? Opposite, alone, longing for the warm inside of it all. Panting for the flying field, the skyward, earthward, soulward planes - to highways unknown!"

- Camp Maxey, Texas – 12/25/1942

A small notebook filled mostly with sketches, customers' names, and art supplies opens with these words about his marriage in 1944 shortly after his discharge:

"This book has in its insides a material corporeal record of two people who have entered into the state of matrimony in the year of our lord 1944 in the midst of war and dread horror which has [unclear]ed the guts of a world before our eyes

His early extensive notes on art history meticulously record the dates of artists, juxtaposed with the dates of historical events, political

developments, philosophers, and starting in the Renaissance, composers, poets, science and discoveries.

'An Idea is Weightless'

All of the artist's words that follow are from the notes in the Archives of American Art, many from a symposium he gave on Color in 1968.

"I have always been concerned with the highly disciplined, relational esthetic solutions regardless of how my execution may have changed over the years. This does not mean intellectual as opposed to intuitional. I do not think the creative process is either-or, but both-and."

"This act of wrenching away an object or concept from its habitual associative context and seeing it in a new content is an essential part of the creative process."

"Gesture has no precise edges, no exact shapes, no filled forms. You must be able to feel it with your body. You should draw not what the thing looks like, nor even what it is, but what it is doing."

"Art does not emerge from theory. The natural tendency to play and to explore coupled with the necessity to deal with deep seated psychological problems is the raison d'être of the creative act."

"We know what art can turn into when it becomes propaganda. It is possible to make sociopolitical statements as an artist, as long as the work can hold its own as a formal entity. It is very difficult, but it has been done."

Most important for Gross was "COLOR: You can control space with color, space is color, color creates space."

"There are estimated to be 100,000,000 different color stimuli ... In order to use color effectively, it is necessary to recognize that color deceives continually."

"Psychologists have a field day with signs & symbols in the plastic arts, but have been strangely mute when confronted by color & music. Color defied most reductionist approaches because it is essentially, I believe, visionary and anagogic. It is a mind-expanding substance and my

feeling about it is reverential.”

“The line between fine and commercial art is no longer drawn. Pop art did this.”

“The space that isn’t objective becomes the important space in Oriental art ... They are concerned with the silences.”

On Art and Artists

Predictably, Gross admired those who paved the way for modernism, but his admiration for classic techniques infuses his paintings and his assessment of prior periods in the history of art acknowledged even the most radical modernists ultimate debt to those who preceded them.

He felt strongly about direction modern art was taking. “Picasso is so direct. If he wants to pull a window shade down, he pulls it down.” When “a critic said Matisse’s paintings look like they were done by a 6 year old and Matisse was ... flattered.”

Gross said of his near contemporary Jackson Pollock, whose work was “vilified as random nonsense, schizophrenic”, that Pollock’s work was “very controlled, lyrical and beautiful, almost like old masters.” Gross mused, “A room with a few specks of dust floating in the air is overcrowded - compared to the emptiness which we call a stand and on which my arms are resting ... This is the nature of reality in 1968. Who seems closer to the physiological world - Jackson Pollock or Andrew Wyeth?”

He admired others of his contemporaries: “DeKooning does the hide and seek painting. Rauchenberg uses a complex series of elements, and Kelly uses a minimal solution. Both get a solution and that’s the important thing.”

He acknowledged debts to early artists and other traditions. “Bonnard was a great academic draftsman and his naiveté was deliberate ... Goya, El Greco, Tintoretto and Gruenewald are all dealing with illusionism,” and “Good art of the West is coming out of Oriental art and the signs and symbols found there.”

"The working artist," he said, "is never resting, always seeking, and demanding things from himself. He sells pictures, but in his studio, he is always an amateur," for the "dissatisfaction we feel with our last picture sends us into the next picture."

Gross noted the obvious: that for most of human history, artists depended on commissions from patrons, setting subject matter and even some details, and with it the obvious changes in the post war world, and the added burden and opportunity that gave to artists.

In our age, wrote Gross, "The artist no longer "necessarily aim[s] to please the customer," perhaps because "It takes a layman twenty years to catch up with what a painter is doing." At least, he noted, "The editor louses up the writer's manuscript, the maniacal conductor louses up the musician's masterpiece, but nobody touches the artist's picture!"

Permanent Collections

Albright Art Gallery

Allentown Museum of Art - 1967

American Academy of Arts & Letters - Childe Hassam Fund - 2 paintings

Baltimore Museum - 1961

Brandeis University -1956

Butler Institute of American Art - 1953, 1961, 2004

Walter P. Chrysler Museum - 1960

Colby College - 1958

Columbia University - 1962

Cornell University - 1958

Corcoran Gallery of Art - 1961

Israel Museum of Art - Jerusalem - 1965

Lempert Institute - 20 paintings purchased 1948-52

James Michner Collection - University of Texas - 1967

Morgan State College - 1961 - reproduction available

Norfolk Museum of Art - 1962

Northwestern University (Block Museum)

Oklahoma Art Center - 1968

Provincetown Art Museum -1969, 1985, 1989

Princeton Museum - before1953

Mt. Holyoke University - 1950
Michigan State University - 1960,1966
Norfolk Museum 1961
Riverside Museum - 1959, 1963, 1966
Standard Financial Corporation 1958, 1959, 1960
Smithsonian American Art Museum (3) 1975
Syracuse University - 1963, 1965
Washington Gallery of Modern Art - 1962
Whitney Museum - purchases 1945, 1946, 1955
Walker Art Center 1948?
University of Georgia - 1949
University of Illinois - 1959
University of Omaha - 1951
University of Maryland 1965
University of Rochester - 1966
University of Texas - James Michner Collection
date indicates when entered in collection

Selected Invitational Exhibits

Whitney Museum - multiple exhibits beginning in 1945
Armory Show - 1945
Brooklyn Museum - 1945
Metropolitan Museum of Art - 1950
Museum of Modern Art, New York - 1949, 1959, 1961
Carnegie Museum of Art - multiple exhibits beginning 1951
Corcoran Museum of Art - multiple exhibits
Pennsylvania Academy of Art - multiple exhibits beginning 1945
University of Nebraska
Institute of Contemporary Art - Boston - 1951
National Academy of Design - 1946, 1948
Toledo Museum of Art - 1947
Nelson Gallery - 1951
Albright Art Gallery - 1947, 49, 1951
Butler Institute of American Art - several exhibits beginning 1953
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts - 1949
Detroit Institute of Art - 1951
Milwaukee Art Institute - 1946, 1951
Joslyn Art Museum - 1954
Jewish Museum, NYC

Art USA - 1958, 1959
Hallmark Traveling Exhibit - 1949
Pepsi Cola Traveling Exhibit - 1945, 1946
Washington Gallery of MA - 1962, 1966
Des Moines Art Center - 1951
Isaac Delgado Museum - 1951
Federation of Modern Painters & Sculptors - annually from 1947-67
Audubon Artists - annually from 1949-67
American Academy of Arts & Letters - 1950, 1955, 1958
National Institute of Arts & Letters - 1967
Riverside Museum - multiple since 1957
Hallmark - National Tour - 1950-51
American Federation of Arts - National tour 1958-60
Hallmark - European tour - 1952
Brazil - Contemporary Arts - 1956
Puerto Rico - 1959
Frank Rehn Gallery, NYC - over 25 shows
Minneapolis Art Institute - 1946
Hillstrom Museum of Art, MN - 2007
Long Island Museum at Stony Brook - 2008

One Man Shows

Contemporary Arts Gallery, NYC 1959-1939
Tirca Karlis Gallery, Provincetown 1960, 1962
Frank Rehn Gallery, NYC 1949-1951, 1953-54, 1956, 1958-1961,
1963, 1965, 1967, 1969, 1972
Seasons Gallery, The Hague, The Netherlands 1977
Gertrude Stein Gallery - 2000
Davenport & Fleming Gallery 2007

Sidney Gross was listed in *Who Is Who in the East*, *Who Is Who in America* annually from 1957 to 1967, *Who Is Who in American Art from 1948 to 1969*, and, after his death, in *Who Was Who in American Art*. Essays about his work appear in *Master Paintings from the Butler Museum*, *Catalog of the Whitney Collection*, and in *Permanent Collection of the Wichita Art Museum* as well as in exhibition catalogs of various museums and his one man shows, and a more recently in a monograph for an exhibit in the 1990s.

Notes on this Monograph

It's hard to present an artist's work fairly dependent largely dependent on the public record which remains after his death, in Sidney's case, far too soon. We hope that those who stumble upon this obscure monograph, who may have known Sidney or can provide additional insight into his work will share your information or pictures. We'd love to start a dialogue, and we will continue to add to this biography on the web, until bite the bullet on a second edition of this work, at which time we will correct the numerous errors and update credits on any of the paintings included.

In the earlier print version of this biography, most illustrations are from over 200 slides taken of Sidney Gross paintings. We owe the recovery of those to Geoffrey Fleming, at this time director of the Southold Historical Society, to whom we also owe thanks for hours of downloading articles and proofing. We have gathered from several sources another 20 or so photographs of paintings, and a good number of original sketches. You can obtain a copy of that full color monograph with over 50 examples of the artist's work for \$10, by contacting us through our website LSDArt.com.

We are indebted to the fact that *New York Times* has digitally archived this period, and the summaries in *Archives of American Art* at the Smithsonian, as well as their micro-film records of many documents. More recently we owe thanks to the Pam Koob, curator of the collection at the Art Students League, who directed us to Susan Richman, the stepdaughter of Elaine Gross, and her partner Walter Spiegelman, and to Pat McCormick of the Butler Institute of American Art for encouragement and images of their collection of sketches and monotypes.

We beg indulgence for the condensations of Gross's words. As Sidney said, "The editor louses up the writer's manuscript."