

A Science of Life

WALTER QUIRT

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A Science of Life

Frederick Holmes And Company,
Gallery of Modern & Contemporary Art
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WALTER QUIRT: A Science of Life

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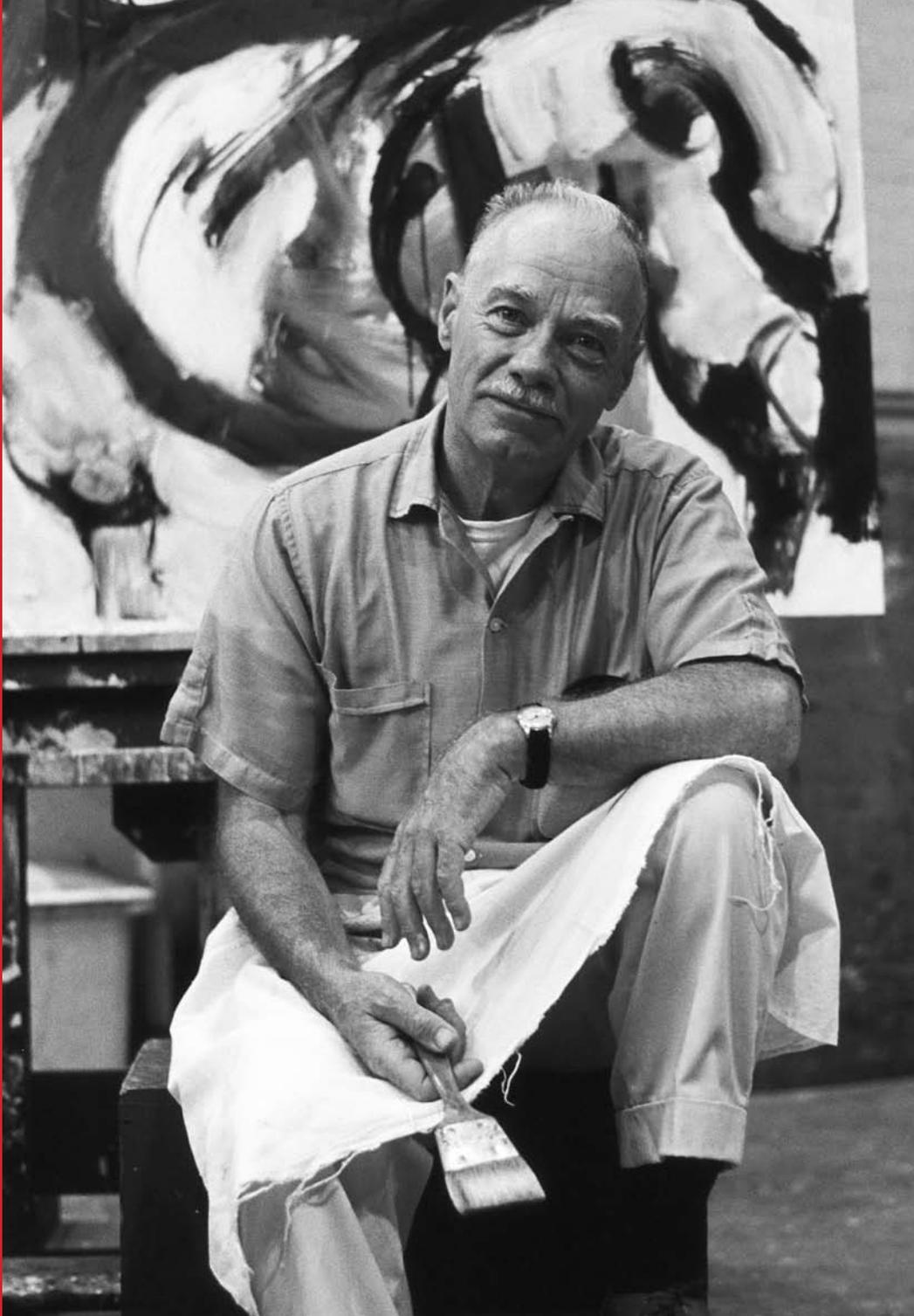
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FREDERICK HOLMES AND COMPANY
GALLERY OF MODERN & CONTEMPORARY ART

Front cover: *The Eyes Have It (detail)* 1957 Oil on canvas 50 x 36 inches (AFA No. 19)

Opposite: *Walter Quirt at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1959*



I am the only one who knows that art contains the principles for a science of life, that it always has . . .

—Walter Quirt, 1967

WALTER QUIRT (1902–1968): *A Science of Life*

Frederick R. Holmes

IN THE TELLING OF THE STORY OF 20TH CENTURY MODERN ART IN AMERICA, WE'VE all become familiar to varying degrees, of the same approximately twenty or so artists who comprise the overwhelming majority of the narrative—Pollock, Motherwell, DeKooning, Gorky, Rothko, Davis, et al. It's only when we scrape aside this surface layer of the familiar, mining the strata beneath, that we discover the untold or forgotten stories. Often the stories are of those artists who perhaps enjoyed a momentary flare of critical or popular success and then as a result of personal life decisions, their inner demons, or simply being casualties of an often fickle art world, faded into obscurity. But seldom is there a case of an artist of both significant critical and popular accomplishment throughout most of his career, who in that same telling, posthumously becoming little more than a footnote.

In the fall of 2014, I got a phone call from my friend and former gallery colleague, Travis Wilson. In 2012, the same year I'd relocated from San Francisco to Washington State, Travis had also left the gallery where we'd been working. Whereas I'd opened my own gallery in Seattle—Frederick Holmes And Company, Gallery of Modern & Contemporary Art—Travis became an independent curator in the Bay Area and had begun looking for intact art-historic estates of important, if often overlooked, artists. He established himself immediately with the discovery of two significant living painters for whom he coordinated individual exhibitions that were met with enthusiastic reviews. But his call to me in 2014 was about an historic estate that would forever impact our lives.

"Fred" he began, "I'm crossing Wyoming in a Penske truck and guess what I've got in the back?" "I don't know, buddy, what?" I replied. "Walter Quirt—I've got twenty-five paintings from the estate of Walter Quirt!" And like nearly everyone who's been introduced to the name for the first time these last three years, I asked, "Who the hell is Walter Quirt?" To which he laughingly replied, "Google him and call me back!" Within two minutes I was back on the phone with him and had only two words: "I'm in!" From that point on we began a collaboration of curator and gallery, and one of the first important curatorial surveys of Walter Quirt's work in nearly half a century was opened in Seattle, in April 2015.

In the catalogue published in tandem with the exhibition, *Walter Quirt: Revolutions Unseen*, Mr. Wilson recounts, "Several years ago I was flipping through the volume *Abstract and Surrealist Art In America*, written by Sidney Janis. In its pages I came across an image of a painting entitled *The Crucified* (1943) (p.5) by Walter Quirt and was taken aback. I remember emphatically saying to myself, "Who is that? Who is Walter Quirt?" At that time I could not have known the journey that awaited me as I have tried to answer that question."



The Crucified 1943 Oil on canvas 30 x 50 inches

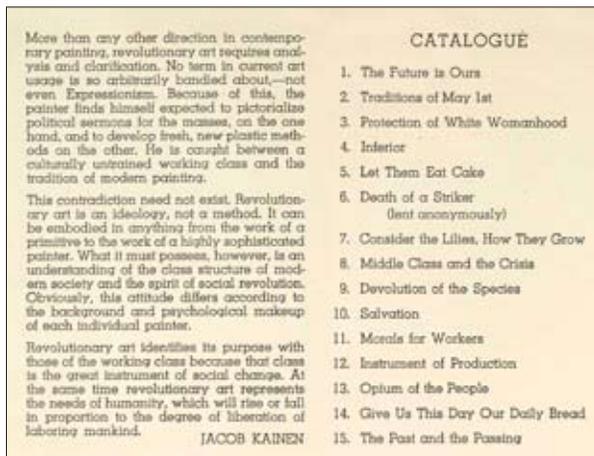
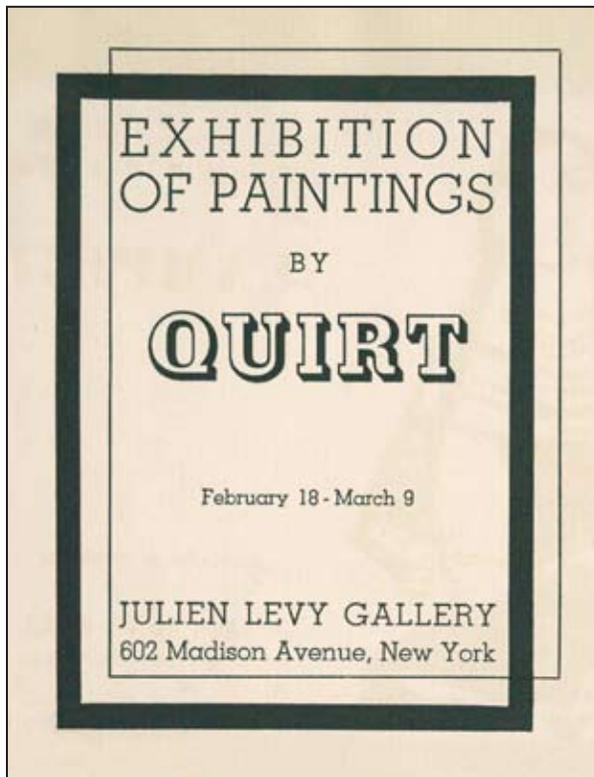
Abstract and Surrealist Art in America was considered one of the most important books of its day in its comparison of the intellectual movements of the European avant-garde and an emerging generation of American Moderns; that American painter being what Janis described as “a maker of a new world.”

That painting, *The Crucified* by Walter Quirt, printed as a black and white plate was on the opposite page facing a color plate of a painting entitled *She-Wolf* (1943) by an artist, who in Janis’ estimation represented, like Quirt, an emerging American avant-garde movement: Jackson Pollock.

New York 1929–1944

Walter Quirt began his career initially as a student in 1921 at The Layton School of Art in Milwaukee, where by 1926 he was teaching drawing. It was during this time that he also became engaged with social activism, labor and class struggle. He enjoyed some regional success with his watercolors—he couldn’t afford oil paints—being exhibited in Milwaukee and even the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1929 he relocated to New York and quickly became acquainted with a small group of painters including Stuart Davis, Abe Rattner, Raphael Soyer, Louis Guglielmi and other members of a growing American modern movement.

The 1930s were, of course, a time of great social, political, and cultural upheaval and many artists’ work reflected the times. After World War I and the carnage witnessed by so many, there was a growing ideology among artists, intellectuals, and writers—both in Europe and America, influenced by Russian Constructivism, Suprematism, Futurism, and the increasing visibility of the Surrealists—that Modern Art could change society—the world—making it better through a radical change of consciousness. Growing up in a small, working-class mining town in Michigan, Walter Quirt was also keenly aware of the economic, civil, and racial inequities in American



Catalog cover and pages from *Exhibition of Paintings by Walter Quirt, at the Julien Levy Gallery, New York, 1936*

society when he arrived in New York and increasingly his paintings, drawings and writing began to express these sympathies.

As a WPA painter, Quirt became bored and frustrated with the Social Realist style, prevalently favored by the arbiters of the Federal Arts Project. By the mid-1930s he began integrating European Surrealism into Social Realism. It was then that he found critical success with a solo exhibition in 1936 at the Julien Levy Gallery simply titled, *Exhibition of Paintings by Walter Quirt*, comprised of fifteen small scale paintings described by several critical reviews as “revolutionary.” With the exception of Alexander Calder and Man Ray, who were largely associated with the European avant-garde, and Joseph Cornell, Julien Levy hadn’t shown much interest in American artists. His was one of the few galleries in New York exhibiting Surrealism—Max Ernst, Salvador Dali, Man Ray, Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, and René Magritte. In the press release announcing Quirt’s first solo exhibition, Levy wrote, “Whenever a new and vigorous contemporary painter appears on the horizon the Julien Levy Gallery has always wished to present his work to the judgment of its public, and in this case presents its first ‘radical’ painter.”

Quirt’s first show was received in this ideologically “radical” milieu and praised as “Revolutionary Surrealism” (Jacob Kainen, *New Masses*, February 26, 1936), or dismissed as “propaganda.” Most however shared a favorable impression of the work best summarized here: “. . . Quirt is the answer to the critic’s prayer for an art which shall be somewhere between the preciosity of the surrealists . . . and the passionate articulations of causists who feel that no painting has value unless it is an instrument of social revolution . . . Quirt works, like Dali, with a darker palette to be sure, but with composition, arrangement, meticulousness of brushwork and sensitivity of coloring which are comparable. But imagine the Dali technique applied to pictures . . . and then think of it flavored

with the mural style of Orozco, if you possibly can. The results are as you must see for yourself, superb.”—Emily Genauer, *World Telegram*, February 27, 1936.

This was the first of several shows with Levy that would galvanize Quirt’s reputation as a pioneer of a movement later deemed, “Social Surrealism.”

Quirt remained with Levy until 1940, at which time—always restless and excited about experimentation and new Modern theories—he moved on from Social Surrealism exploring an eclectic array of Abstract, Surrealist, and Cubist styles, yet each with his distinctive aesthetic imprimatur. This was an exciting time for many American painters who, while deeply self-conscious of the European avant-garde, were also trying to shake off its influence in their work in an effort to find their own uniquely American “language.” For Quirt, while diving deeper into varying styles of abstraction, the work nearly always retained one piece of connective, humanizing thread—the centrality of the figure. By 1944, through a succession of both gallery and museum shows, Quirt was well known and highly respected by fellow artists and gallery dealers in New York. “There was a relatively small group of well known American painters in New York during WW II, and Quirt was one of the most influential.”—Professor Peter Selz, 2015. It was in 1944 when Robert Coates, critic for *The New Yorker*, and the man who coined the term “Abstract Expressionism,” in his enthusiastic review of Quirt’s solo show with the Durlacher Brothers Gallery—the same exhibition where the aforementioned *The Crucified* was being presented—exuberantly proclaimed, “Walter Quirt is one of the most impassioned artists alive today!”

1944–1966 Post New York

Whereas most of Quirt’s contemporaries remained in New York after World War II, and some successfully climbed the ladder of critical and commercial success with the support of now legendary gallerists, Peggy Guggenheim, Betty Parsons, and (later) Sidney Janis, Walter Quirt left New York in 1944. The WPA/FAP government stipend providing a subsistence living for many professional artists—creating paintings, murals, and sculpture for federal buildings, train stations, post offices, and more—was terminated in 1943. The following year his wife Eleanor announced the happy news to him that she was pregnant. Walter felt the responsibility of supporting a family took precedence over his still ascendant career. So, like many artists of that period, he began teaching—initially at the Layton School of Art, Milwaukee; then the University of Michigan, East Lansing; and ultimately in 1947, at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

It was in Minneapolis, far from post-war New York and the powerful wave of Abstract Expressionism with its attendant media storm of hyperbolic praise and criticism as well as growing commercial profit, that Quirt observed the triumphs and tragedies that consumed many of his contemporaries. It’s also fair to say that Quirt, an irascible, fiercely independent artist, had by the time of his exodus irritated a few dealers by refusing to follow any advice or comply with the whims of the market. Developing a “signature style” that would make his work more identifiable and marketable, was anathema to his self-image as a theoretician of art as much as painter. A favorite anecdote recounts an afternoon when Peggy Guggenheim arrived in his studio unannounced and after a brief



Head 1948 Oil on canvas 26 x 22 inches

introduction imperiously dismissed a group of works in the studio while expressing her favor of another grouping. She offered him a solo show with the caveat he was to produce an equal number of paintings in the style of the latter grouping. Quirt, still very much the anti-capitalist and not one to be told what to paint or for whom, viewed Ms. Guggenheim and her offer as a Faustian bargain. Forcefully refusing her offer, he also told her never to enter his studio again without an invitation. His close friend, Stuart Davis, with whom he maintained an exchange of correspondence for years, teasingly quipped that Quirt had left New York "just ahead of the hanging party."

And yet through numerous gallery and museum shows, Quirt remained a powerful, if personally

less visible, presence in the City, remaining a still critical figure in the enfolding canon of American Modern. As the years passed, the artist was now free of financial constraints thanks to his teacher's salary. Less ideologically strident, Quirt's work became less about social progress and increasingly aesthetically progressive. It was also in the early 1950s, feeling isolated from the community of artists, intellectuals, and friends in which he'd once held such a prominent, respected role, when he began drinking more heavily, perhaps due to this same sense of isolation; and it showed in some of the work. His palette often became predominated by grays and muted tones of mauves, blues, ambers, and black. The overall mood of the figures was pensive, and often seemed alienated from the world around them like in *Doubt* (1952) (p. 17), *Dilemma* (1953) (p. 19), and *Pensive Girl* (1952) (p. 34). Yet he was simultaneously able to transcend this more somber mood and create work that was remarkably joyous and even whimsical such as *Woman With Bare Feet* (1953) (p. 35), *Fun* (1950) (p. 17), and *Road With No Turn* (1952) (p. 18).

Still a fearless experimenter, he retained a reputation in New York as working on the leading edge of American Modern. Between 1938 and 1959, Walter Quirt was included in no less than seven *Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting* juried shows at The Whitney Museum of American Art. Along with Quirt, this last *Whitney Annual* in 1959 included work by important contemporary artists such as Kurt Seligman, Hans Hoffman, and Jimmy Ernst. Between 1942 and 1965, his paintings were also included in six various group exhibitions produced by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

Following his inclusion in the 1958–1959 *Whitney Annual*, he was given a retrospective in 1960 by The American Federation of Arts with a grant from the Ford Foundation, which toured for two and a half years, exhibiting in seventeen cities and venues. Critic Robert Coates, still an enthusiastic supporter of Quirt's work, wrote the essay for the retrospective's catalogue, asserting that Quirt's "paintings have grown larger in size too . . . and his color has become freer. Certainly there are suggestions of Willem de Kooning's tribal figures in his *The Eyes Have It* (catalogue cover) . . . though from the date . . . what would seem to be indicated is something in the way of parallel development rather than an influence." See AFA paintings, pp. 14–30.

Between the late 1950s through the mid–1960s, Quirt remaining true to form, delved into a variety of subjects and styles. According to Robert Coates, "Quirt expanded his use of the counter-curve in compositions and brushstrokes . . . from 1957, explaining in his essays that he equated this motion with positive non-aggressive energy: 'The psychological purpose of the counter-curve is to transform physical objects endowed with aggression into love. . . . There is only one energy in art. It is Aggressive Energy. When this energy is released competitively it is symbolized in art by the diagonal line. When released non-competitively the diagonal line plays a subordinate role to the S-shaped curve, symbol for feeling.'"—Excerpt from *Walter Quirt*, 1960 retrospective exhibition catalogue.

In her essay for the catalogue *Walter Quirt: A Retrospective* (the 1980 posthumous exhibition sponsored by the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis), guest curator Mary Tolwley Swanson wrote, "Sudden stylistic changes in his compositions were unimportant to Quirt in the forties and early fifties, since he wrote that his main goal was to study and reveal man's relationship to nature and society. . . . The counter-curve, the more civilized linear element according to Quirt, was often

found as a basis for paintings from the late fifties through the mid-sixties. Critics reacted favorably to Quirt's facility with a brush in his exhibition at the Duveen-Graham Gallery in New York, January 22–February 9, 1957.”

This period is predominated by abstract “monumental figures” in varying configurations—examples can be found in *Horses* (pp. 54–59)—and abstract landscapes largely inspired by Lake Harriet (pp. 60–62), a recreational lake near the family home that Quirt used to visit and enjoy watching people picnic, playing games, swimming or sailing. In 1961, a new series of experimental works also began to emerge, *Use of White* (pp. 48–51); bold, abstract figurative paintings with aggressive, long thick black diagonal or vertical lines, applied in single, staccato-like strokes, juxtaposed against fields of varying tones and whites. What we know of Quirt from this period, the mid–1950s through the 1960s, is that his single-mindedness about the value and importance of line was such that he would even occasionally abandon color altogether, and with one brush and two cans of paint—black and white—force himself to bear down and focus on its prominence in the painting, such as in *Horse*, 1959 (p. 56).



Walter Quirt with his wife Eleanor and their sons, Jon, Andrew, and Peter, 1959

indeed, he saw it as art's duty and the artist's mandate. In a letter written to his sister, Leila, in 1962 from San Miguel de Allende, he stated, “A basic theoretical problem in art is to so unite the social tempo with Nature's Time that one arrives at the Timeless, a quality in Time that is independent of both.”

Five years later, while in the Yucatán for the final time—now under the auspices of The Yucatán Project—he wrote Leila again emphatically asserting that “. . . art contains the principles for a science of life, that it always has . . . I assure you, the next science will be art . . . that is the use of principles in energy in art applied to social problems.”

Approximately fifteen months after making this prediction, Walter Quirt passed away from cancer, on March 19, 1968.

Like many other Modern painters, Walter Quirt made several trips to Mexico, drawn by the primitive topography, its history, its people and culture; the last of these being between December 1966 and February 1967. He spent these three months in the Yucatán, Mexico, working on what could have become recognized as one of his most remarkable achievements had he lived a little longer: *The Quirt Hypothesis*. See *The Yucatán Project and The Quirt Hypothesis*, pp. 70–76.

Although Quirt had long before abandoned explicit “social revolution” in his varying styles of painting, he never really abandoned his theory of art as capable of stirring or raising consciousness;

THE RETURN OF WALTER QUIRT

An important American painter, nearly forgotten for decades, is being rediscovered.

By John Dorfman

Reprinted with permission from *Art & Antiques Magazine*, and John Dorfman, Editor-in-Chief, originally published November 2016

FAME IS FICKLE, AND AN ARTIST CAN SLIP OUT OF ART HISTORY FOR REASONS THAT HAVE little or nothing to do with art. Case in point: Walter Quirt. By the early 1940s, Quirt had a built a national-level reputation, both for his painting and for his spirited defense of modern art as a writer and lecturer. In 1943, Robert M. Coates, art critic for *The New Yorker* (and coiner of the term “Abstract Expressionism”) called him “the most impassioned artist alive today.” In 1944, Quirt was included, alongside Jackson Pollock, Arshile Gorky, and William Baziotes, in Sidney Janis’ *Abstract and Surrealist Painting in America*, a landmark book that mapped the landscape of the avant-garde at a pivotal moment.

However, that same year, worried about making a living, Quirt decided to leave New York for Milwaukee to take a teaching job and then remained in the Midwest until his death in 1968. Relocation to a place that was peripheral to the art world certainly did Quirt’s future fame no favors, but far worse was a near-total lack of posthumous exposure. Except for a retrospective in 1980 at the University of Minnesota (where he had taught for two decades) and a smaller show there four years earlier, there were no shows at all until 2015 because Quirt’s widow, Eleanor, chose to keep his work private, within the family. The effect of 35 years of absence was that Quirt came close to disappearing from the art world’s collective memory.

The situation was salvaged after Eleanor Quirt’s death, when the artist’s sons decided to bring his work back to public view, through Seattle dealer Frederick Holmes And Company. Holmes and San Francisco Bay-area independent curator Travis Wilson have spearheaded the return of Walter Quirt, together organizing two major shows—a 30-work retrospective in May 2015 titled *Walter Quirt: Revolutions Unseen* and, exactly a year later, *Walter Quirt: Works on Paper, a Curated Survey of Paintings on Paper, 1956–1964*.

Moving through many styles and theories of art over the course of his career, Quirt always remained true to the ideals that fired his youth. Born in 1902 in Iron River, Michigan, a poverty-stricken mining town, he worked in mines and lumber camps as a teenager while showing a precocious talent for drawing. Radical politics was in the air in the 1920s, as the country was convulsed by strikes, and Soviet Communism inspired many workers and intellectuals. In 1921 Quirt entered the Layton School of Art in Milwaukee, where he not only studied drawing and painting but became a local union organizer. Having gained recognition for his art through exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Milwaukee Art Institute, Quirt decided to make the move to New York in the fateful year of 1929.

The Depression years, while unkind to art commerce, were profoundly stimulating to socially conscious art, and Quirt plunged in. By 1931 he was the secretary of the art division of the John

Reed Club, an important Socialist organization; his associates there included Social Realist artists such as Raphael Soyer and William Gropper. Like them, Quirt believed that art had a mission to depict the situation of the workers and the poor and to advocate for justice. He published political-themed drawings in highbrow radical magazines such as *Art Front* and *New Pioneer*, as well as more populist political art, such as a comic strip for the Communist newspaper *The Daily Worker* titled *Jim Martin*, which chronicled the ongoing travails of a young labor organizer.

By the mid-1930s, Quirt had moved on into Surrealism, a recent import from Europe. In fact, he was one of the first American artists to work in a Surrealistic mode, soon to be followed by Louis Guglielmi, James Guy, and David Smith. They called themselves “Social Surrealists,” meaning that while they embraced automatism as a creative technique and no longer adhered to realism, they still intended to deal, more or less explicitly, with contemporary social and political problems. Quirt was denounced for abandoning Social Realism in favor of Surrealism, but in fact Surrealism had always been profoundly political. André Breton and his followers were leftists and conceived of Surrealism, in both literature and art, as a revolutionary instrument with the power to destroy bourgeois society from the inside out, taking the psyche as the front line in the battle for freedom and justice. Quirt’s objection to Social Realism from a political point of view was that it was “dumbed down” and insulted the intelligence of the very people it was supposed to be appealing to.

Quirt’s new work got him an exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York, which championed Surrealism, but it didn’t pay the bills. Seeking gainful employment, Quirt went to work in 1935 for the WPA’s mural program, where he stayed seven years, absorbing influences from contemporary Mexican mural masters such as Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco. Quirt’s greatest achievement for the WPA was a panoramic mural in New York’s Bellevue Hospital, *The Growth of Medicine From Primitive Times*, which combined Surrealism and history painting on a grand scale. He completed it in 1937, the same year that he publicly debated Salvador Dalí at MoMA, attacking the Spaniard’s brand of Surrealism as politically imbecilic. This earned Quirt few friends and much criticism. In 1941, he published an essay titled “Wake Over Surrealism, With Due Respect for the Corpse,” in which he articulated a need to move beyond Surrealism but affirmed the usefulness of automatism in art-making.

Quirt’s work from the early ’40s is incredibly dense and powerful, seeming to explode from the canvas while at the same time drawing the viewer into a multicolored maelstrom of emotions and fractured images. Quirt, an enthusiast of Freudianism, was psychoanalyzed during this period, and his work shows him sounding the depths of the unconscious. While its use of line and color was basically abstract—in fact, with its sense of furious freedom very much foreshadowing Abstract Expressionism—Quirt’s early 1940s work was still figurative. In *The Crucified* (1943) (p. 5), the central figure of Christ (who has an eerie smile on his face) and the figures who surround him (including a Deposition from the Cross group) blend into the curving ribbons of color that envelop them. In *Compulsion to Anger* (1944) (p. 13), a graphic representation of a mental state, the human figures are reduced to faces that emerge from the tangle of curving colored stripes, only to be swallowed up again, as if they were drowning in a sea of psychic forces. In *Shipwrecked* (1943), that experience of sinking is more literally depicted, but still within the context of Quirt’s special technique.



Compulsion to Anger (detail) 1944 Oil on canvas 30 x 50 inches

After his move back to the Midwest, Quirt changed his style again. The later '40s saw him painting more abstractly, in linearly-defined geometric patterns of color including a lot of white. These paintings are somewhat reminiscent of Stuart Davis, who was a great friend of Quirt's. Starting in the early '50s, his technique became looser and brushier, as if taking a new direction in the old search for freedom. The energetic curves persist, but they manifest themselves in a new way, a more gestural one. The compositions are less dense, sometimes quite open and airy—a single figure over a wash of color, and in some works even the colors are attenuated, almost to monochrome. The lone figure is often a woman or a horse; Quirt had strong childhood memories of horses, and they seemed to connote freedom and joy to him.

After briefly teaching at the Layton School of Art, where he had been a student 20 years before, and at Michigan State, in 1947 Quirt got a teaching position at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, where he would remain until his death. He showed his work at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis during the '50s and had a traveling retrospective, sponsored by the Ford Foundation, in 1960–62. While his youthful dreams of revolutionary Socialism were disappointed, he never abandoned his belief that art has a mission to change the world for the better. Late works like the luminous abstraction *Quiet Dreams* (1958) (p.39), . . . exude a sense of deep peace and contentment that is diametrically opposed to the palpable anger of the wartime paintings. Quirt's desire to bring about social change and psychological transformation was also expressed through his teaching of countless students over the years.

"The great artist," wrote Quirt, "is one who faithfully follows his impulses, who vigorously and courageously peels off layer after layer of restrictions, prohibitions, and inhibitions. This takes courage, for it automatically means suffering." In his art, in his career choices, and in his willingness to express unpopular opinions, Quirt had that courage, and he suffered. But he also found great joy, which he was able to put into his paintings.

The time has come to reconsider the work of Walter Quirt.

—Professor Peter Selz, *Revolutions Unseen* catalog, 2015



Separate Worlds 1942 Oil on canvas 40 x 50 inches (AFA No. 3)

SELECTED PAINTINGS

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS

1960–1962

. . . I am a linear artist and so for me the line is far more expressive for my purposes than is heavy pigment. . . . For me the line, wide or narrow, soft or hard, and the crystal clear edges of forms are exciting because they are unequivocal in their architectural assertions, the line I have developed for my purposes derived from nature, in particular from the branches of trees, they being dissonant in their aerial gyrations and so structured as to have innumerable points of tension.

—Walter Quirt, from a letter dated 1959, reprinted in *Walter Quirt* retrospective catalogue, 1960

American Federation of Arts: *Walter Quirt*

IN 1960 A RETROSPECTIVE OF THE CAREER OF WALTER QUIRT WAS SPONSORED BY THE American Federation of Arts with a grant from The Ford Foundation Program in the Humanities and Arts. "A nonprofit organization founded in 1909, the AFA is dedicated to enriching the public's experience and understanding of the visual arts through organizing and touring art exhibitions for presentation in museums around the world, publishing exhibition catalogues featuring scholarly research, and developing educational programs."—AFA mission statement.

Between 1959 and 1960 the AFA produced a series of touring retrospectives honoring many of the most important American Modernists of the time, including Milton Avery, Carl Morris, William Pachner, Abe Rattner, and others.

The retrospective *Walter Quirt*, exhibited forty-two oil paintings completed between 1939 and 1959, including the seventeen paintings in this section and on this catalogue's cover. Each painting was assigned an original AFA catalogue number, listed here with the painting's title, and most still bear the original museum stamp from the exhibition. In addition, an undetermined number of various framed works on paper, predominantly acrylic on paper, were also shown.

Between March 1960 and March 1962, the retrospective traveled through seventeen cities and public or academic venues including the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota; the Kresge Art Center, Michigan State University, Michigan; Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences, Indiana; Albany Institute of History and Art, New York; Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Michigan; and the Milwaukee Art Center, Wisconsin.

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts Director, Alfred P. Maurice, stated in 1960, "An outstanding exhibition because it affords the opportunity to assess change and growth in an artist's work."

An exhibition catalogue accompanied the retrospective, written largely by prominent arts writer and critic for the *New Yorker*, Robert Coates; the same critic who in 1944, had described Quirt as ". . . one of the most impassioned artists alive today!"

Coates was no less enthusiastic in the catalogue. In closing his essay, Coates' critique of the now mature and seasoned painter, Quirt had through experience and experimentation ". . . achieved something close to true monumentality."



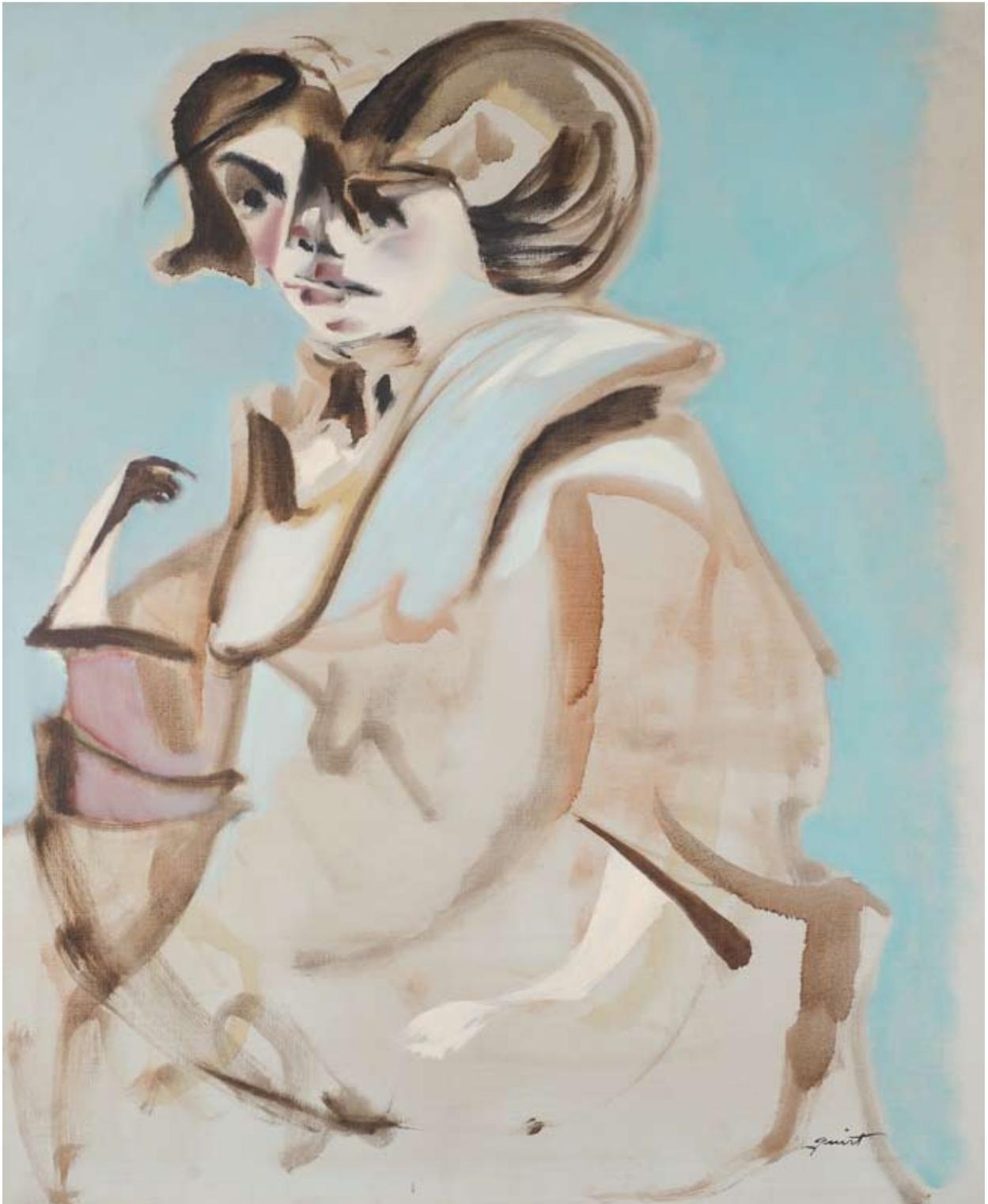
Fun 1950 Oil on canvas 38 x 23 inches (AFA No. 9)



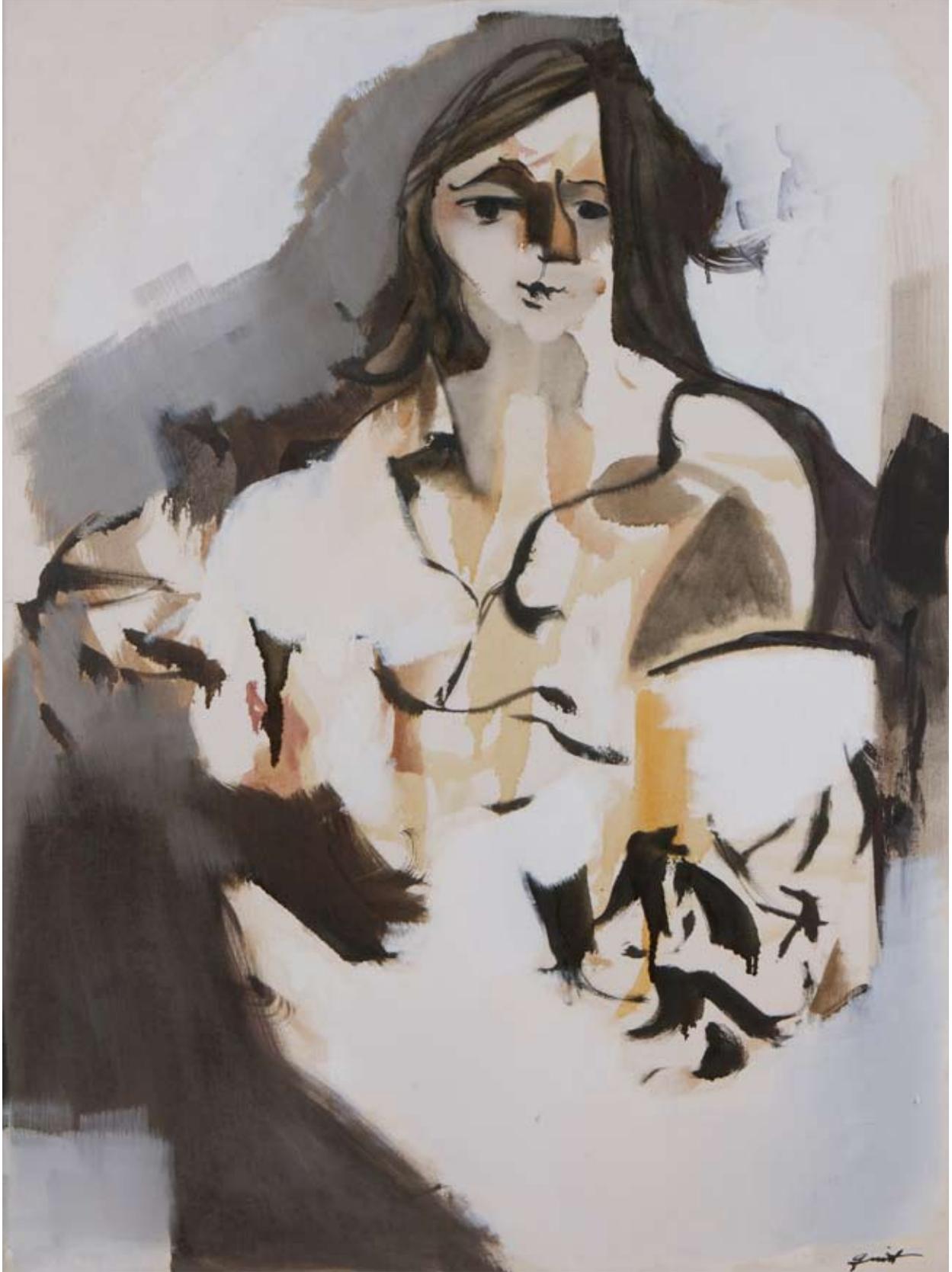
Doubt 1952 Oil on canvas 36 x 24 inches (AFA No. 11)



The Road With No Turn 1952 Oil on canvas 36 x 40 inches (AFA No. 12)



Dilemma 1953 Oil on canvas 40 x 30 inches (AFA No. 13)



White Light 1953 Oil on canvas 40 x 30 inches (AFA No. 15)



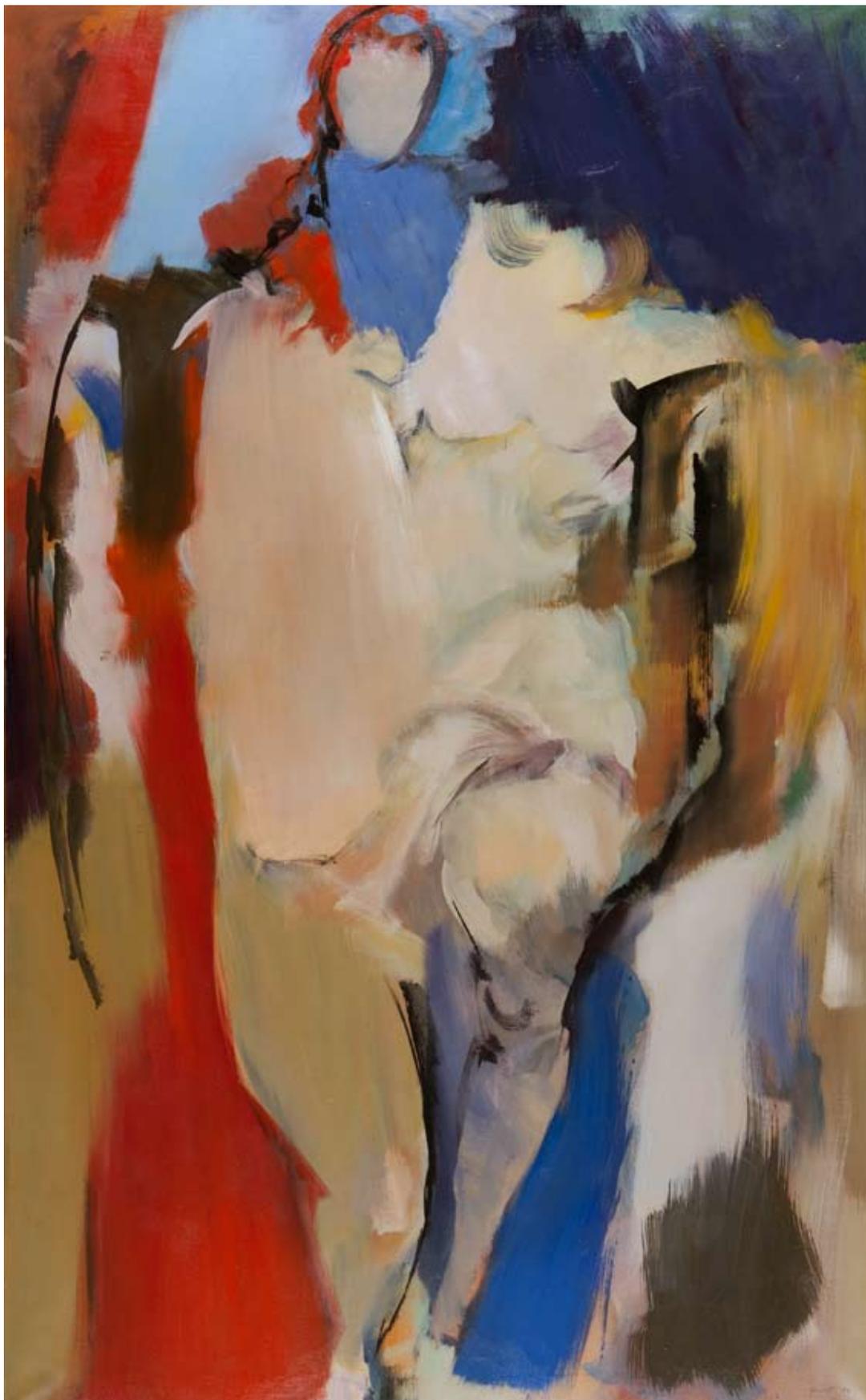
Agrarian Dishabile 1955 Oil on canvas 50 x 40 inches (AFA No. 17)



Double Indemnity 1956 Oil on canvas 38 x 44 inches (AFA No. 18)



Portrait of a Nervous Woman 1958 Oil on canvas 36 x 30 inches (AFA No. 31)



Woman of Sorrows No. 1 1958 Oil on canvas 66 x 41 inches (AFA No.35)





Drawing Canvas 1958 Oil on canvas 40 x 50 inches (AFA No.25)



Green and Lavender Horse 1959 Oil on canvas 56 x 50 inches (AFA No.37)



Horses and Man 1959 Oil on canvas 50 x 58 inches (AFA No. 38)



Lone Cowboy 1959 Oil on canvas 50 x 58 inches (AFA No.39)



Race Against Time 1959 Oil on canvas 60 x 49 inches (AFA No. 40)

SELECTED PAINTINGS

1942–1964

Walter discussed scale and tempo, the energy of the painting, and the speed of the lines. He wrote well about the psychological aspects of art. I've never met an artist who saw art in the same manner as did Quirt. He had a fine analytical mind. His own paintings and drawings were surrealistic and fanciful, very skillfully and carefully done.

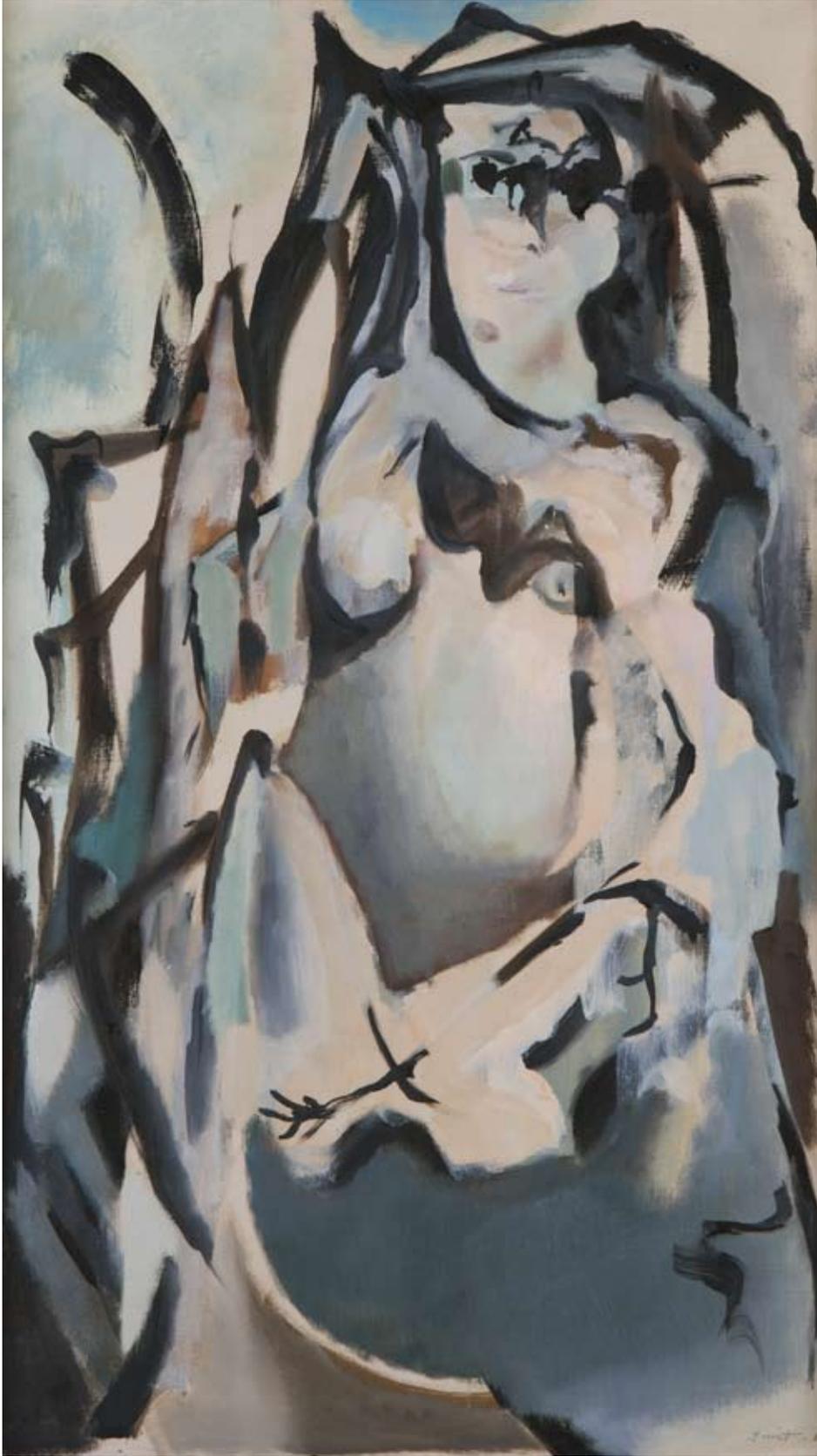
—Romare Bearden, *Walter Quirt: A Retrospective*,
University of Minnesota, 1980



Natures' Children 1942 Oil on canvas 40 x 48 inches



The Damned 1944 Oil on canvas 33 x 34 inches



Pensive Girl 1952 Oil on canvas 36 x 22 inches



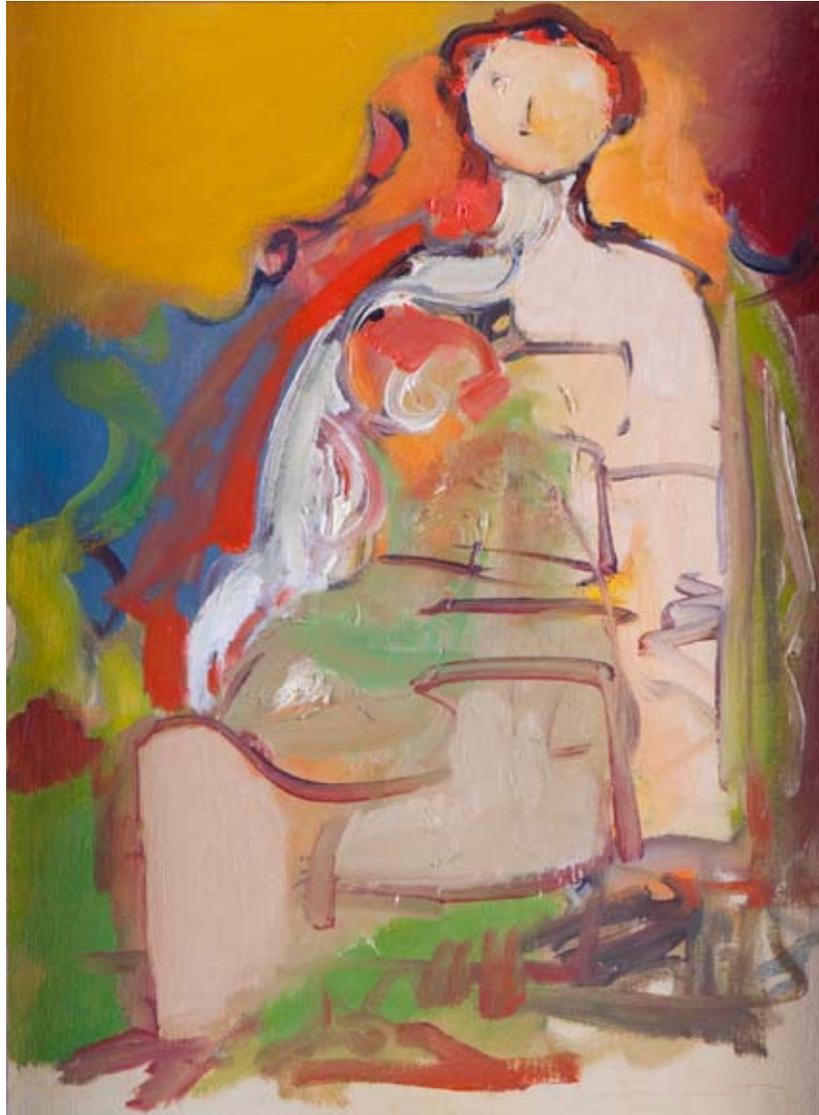
Woman With Bare Feet 1953 Oil on canvas 38 x 26 inches



Untitled 1957 Oil on canvas 26 x 16 inches



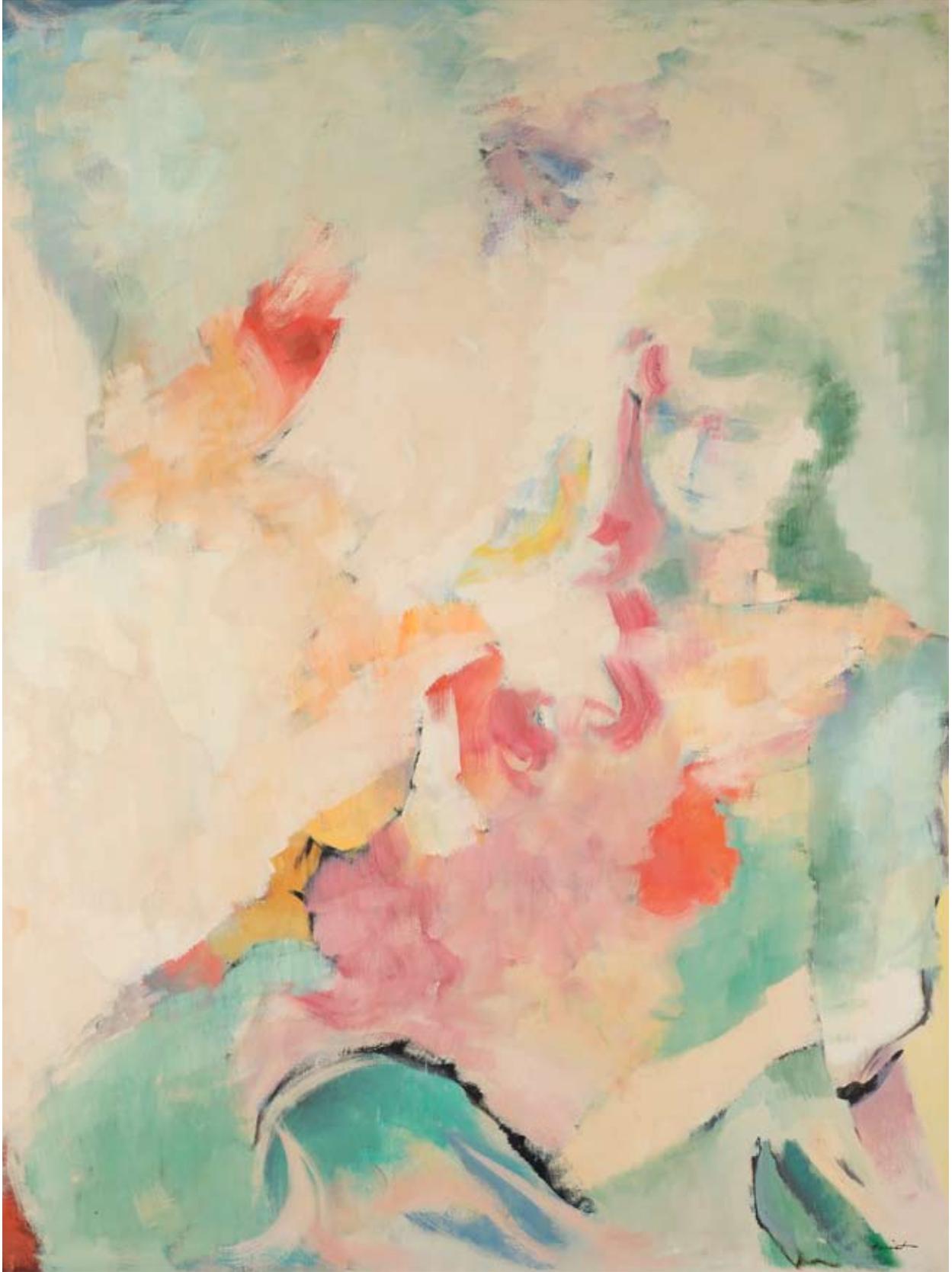
Impervious 1954–62 Oil on canvas 50 x 30 inches



Little Series 1964 Oil on canvas 16 x 12 inches

Quirt spent a lifetime exploring, balancing the energy in aggression and the energy in love, balancing the energy in society with the energy in nature . . . he sometimes painted the tragic, other times the playful, joyous aspects of human life, always with profound concern, always with optimism for a continuum of life and a progression.

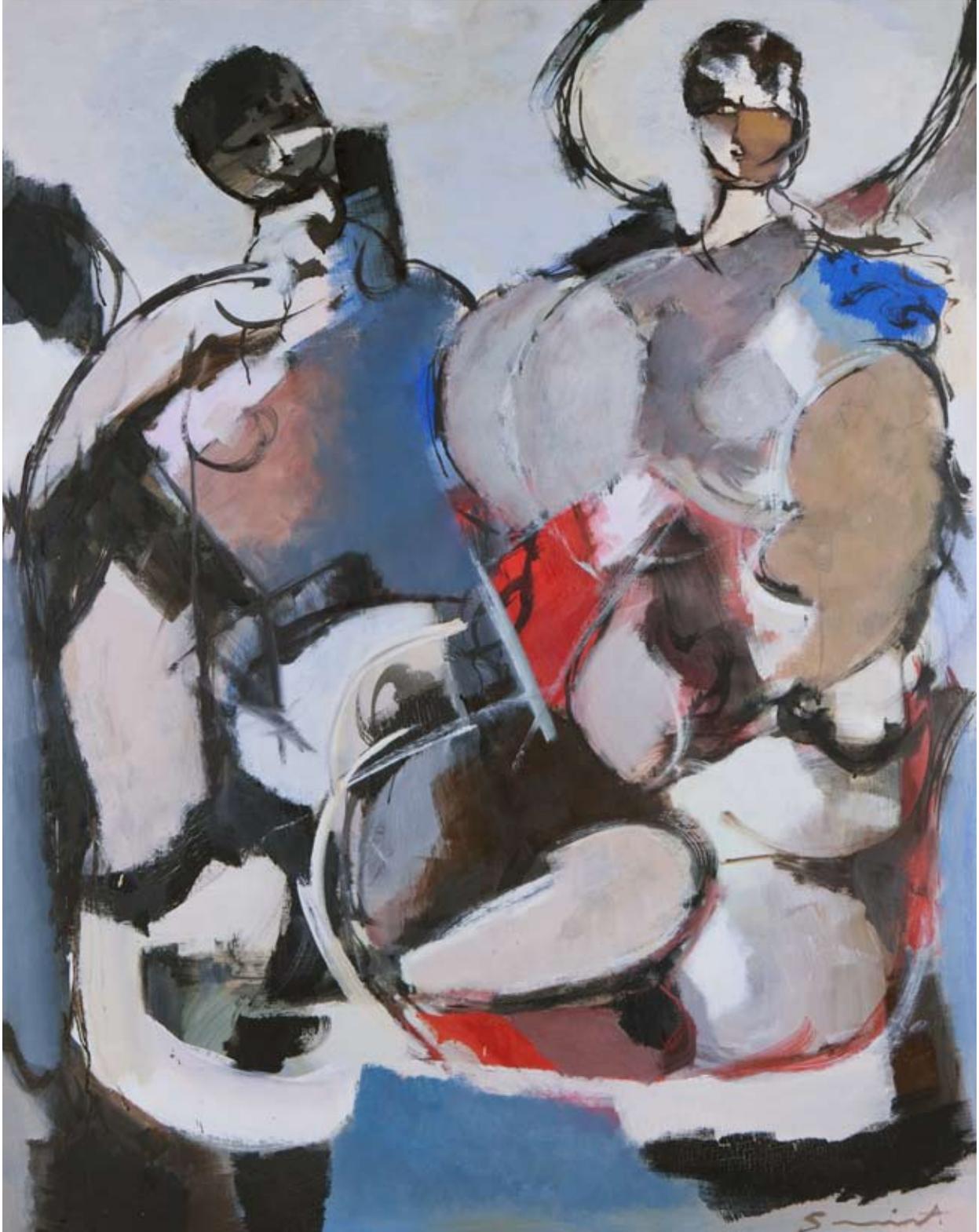
—Eleanor Falk Quirt, June 1979



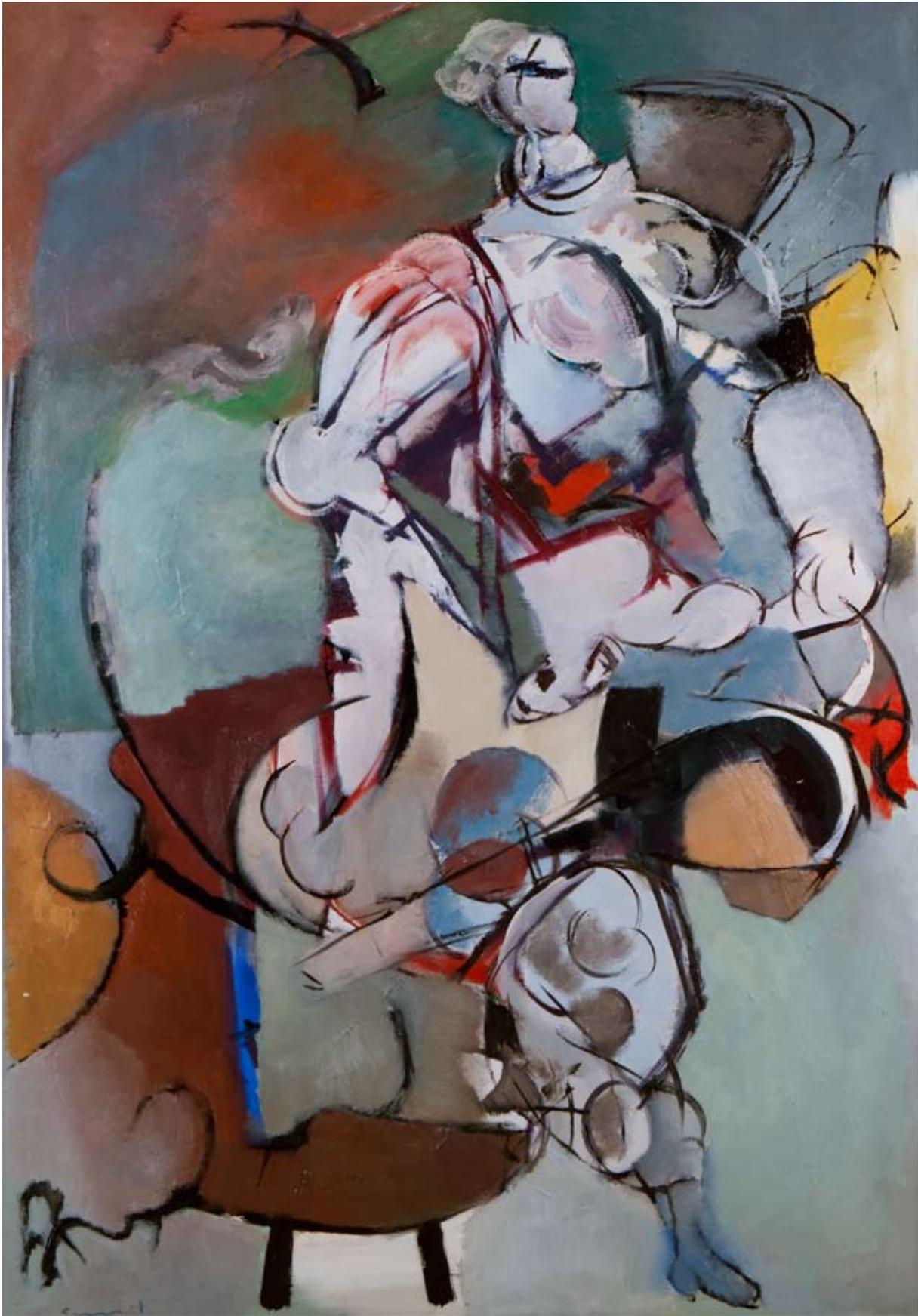
Quiet Dreams 1958 Oil on canvas 50 x 38 inches



Standing Invitation 1958 Oil on canvas 50 x 30 inches



Tree of Hope 1958 Oil on canvas 50 x 40 inches



Grand Pose 1958–60 Oil on canvas 70 x 40 inches



Female Figure 1960 Oil on canvas 40 x 28 inches



Figure 500 1960–61 Oil on canvas 58 x 42 inches

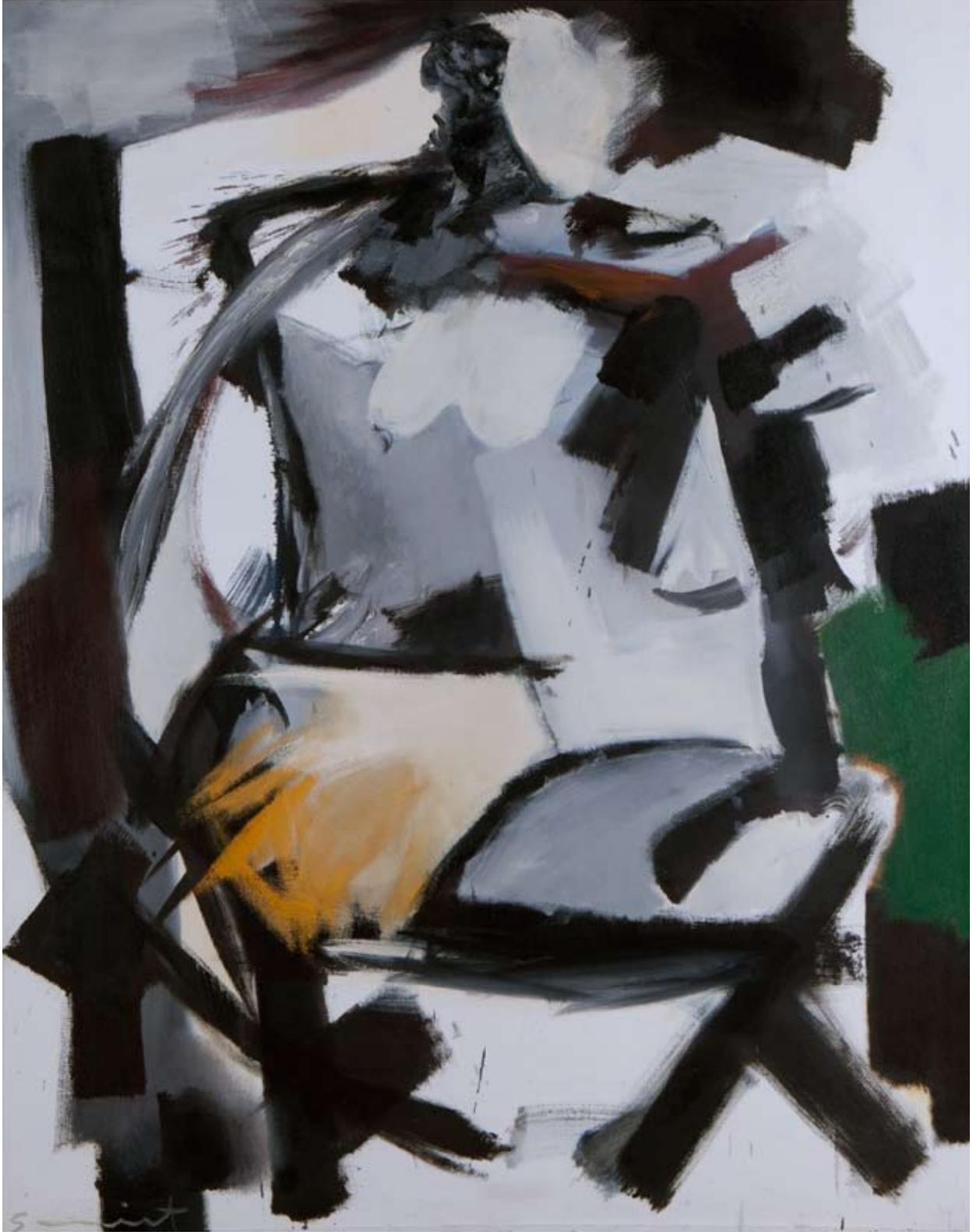




Woman 1961 Oil on canvas 28 x 18 inches



Figure No. 232 1961 Oil on canvas 40 x 50 inches



Use of White, Seated Figure 1961 Oil on canvas 50 x 40 inches



Use of White, No. 11 1961 Oil on canvas 28 x 36 inches

I hate painting for the sake of painting. I mean working on a canvas, filling in areas just because they're there to be filled in. Writing it, really, instead of painting it.

—Walter Quirt



Signature



Use of White, No. 20 1961 Oil on canvas 36 x 28 inches

Opposite: *Use of White, Black Force* 1961 Oil on canvas 51 x 40 inches



There 1962 Oil on canvas 62 x 50 inches

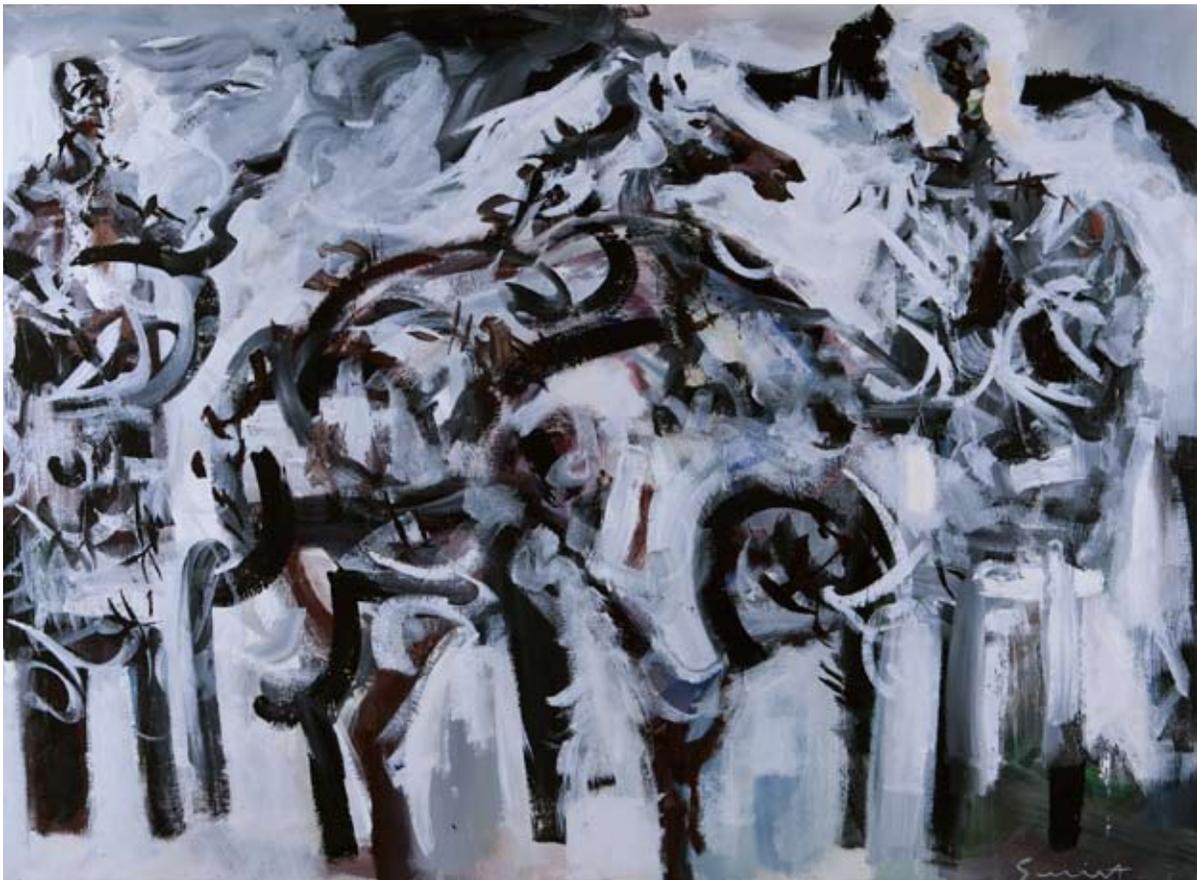


Past and Present 1962 Oil on canvas 62 x 50 inches

Horses

THE HORSE IMAGE APPEARED TO BE A VEHICLE FOR QUIRT'S BRUSHWORK, AND Eleanor Quirt recalled that her husband had a group of photographs of horses in motion by the 19th century American photographer, Eadweard Muybridge. The commas, nervously defining the first horses painted late in 1958, became confident bold lines. . . . A more restrained calligraphic line depicted the monumental figures, which were enveloped by areas of tans and colored greys.

—Mary Towley Swanson, excerpt from *Walter Quirt: A Retrospective* catalogue, 1980



Horse No. 107 1957 Oil on canvas 36 x 50 inches



Horse No. 711 1959 Oil on canvas 40 x 60 inches



Horse 1959 Oil on canvas 42 x 50 inches



Horse No. 11 1959 Oil on canvas 29 x 34 inches



Untitled 1959 Oil on canvas 48 x 66 inches



Evening II 1961 Oil on canvas 36 x 42 inches



For Sale, No. 2 1961 Oil on canvas 28 x 34 inches



Horse No.7 1961 Oil on canvas 15 x 18 inches



Blue Grass 1961 Oil on canvas 15 x 20 inches

Lake Harriet Series

AS WALTER QUIRT ENTERED THE EARLY 1960S, HE FOUND HIMSELF INCREASINGLY drawn to a recreational lake near the family home, Lake Harriet. There he would quietly observe people swimming, boating, playing games, or enjoying a picnic. This became a great source of inspiration for the artist and the *Lake Harriet Series* became an important part of the artist's oeuvre. These depictions of people engaged in the joy of socializing and recreation outdoors bring to mind the work of another radically innovative painter of the century before, Georges Seurat (1859–1891). *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of Grande Jatte* (1884–1886) or *Bathers at Asnieres* (1884), executed in Seurat's revolutionary style, "pointillism," captured the sedate gentility of French society outdoors. Eighty years after Seurat, Quirt found similar inspiration at Lake Harriet; now painted in the bold Expressionist style of the modern American era.

—Frederick R. Holmes, 2017



Lake Harriet Series, Untitled 1962 Oil on canvas 30 x 40 inches



Lake Harriet Series, Sporting Life (detail) 1964 Oil on canvas 50 x 76 inches



Lake Harriet Series, Untitled 1964 Oil on canvas 24 x 30 inches

SELECTED WORKS ON PAPER

1958–1967

Walter Quirt drew with his brush whether working on canvas or paper. Strokes ranging from broad bold lines, to greyed washes, to nervous commas formed the bodies of racing horses and seated figures. The facile calligraphy used in drawings and paintings was a planned process for compositions of both forms of art.

—Mary Towley Swanson, *Walter Quirt: A Retrospective*, University of Minnesota, 1980

WALTER QUIRT: Selected Works on Paper

By Travis Wilson

Independent Curator, 2015–2016

WALTER QUIRT'S FOCUS ON PAPER DIDN'T BEGIN UNTIL LATER IN HIS CAREER. HE was in many ways freed by the spontaneous nature of working on paper and his work became more gestural as he said goodbye to the intense political canvases of the depression and war years.

Work on paper was never the primary focus of Quirt's work until the advent of acrylic paint in the mid-1950s. He preferred not to use watercolor as the pigments changed color when they dried and had a tendency to fade over time; oil paint was not an option as it would saturate the paper while never drying completely. Acrylic presented the perfect medium for working quickly in a spontaneous manner while still being permanent.

As Quirt delved ever deeper into working on paper, an improvisational line presented itself. This line would go on to influence not just his paper works, but his oil painting as well.

As Quirt progressed, his use of curvilinear lines to evoke gregarious feelings increased, and he adopted specific recurring themes in his paintings, most notably the horse, bull, and standing or seated figures. Initially he used color sparingly while focusing on the rich tonality of black and white, explaining, "I find myself getting too deep into color, and then the only way out is to forget about it entirely and let color come in again when it wants to."

In addition to numerous gallery shows, Quirt was given a one-man exhibition of his works on paper at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in 1952, followed by a 28-piece painting show in 1955. Both of these shows included several examples of his work on paper.

As he entered into his fifth and final decade as a working artist, Quirt had a retrospective show sponsored by the Ford Foundation and circulated by the American Federation of Arts in 1960–1962. This comprehensive show was well received and included at least twenty examples of his works on paper. This placed Quirt on the vanguard of American art while also clearly defining his considerable role in American history. The show, coupled with his recent appointment to full professor at the University of Minnesota, provided him with the kind of professional edification that few artist-teachers ever know.

The early 1960s marked a return to the brilliant colors Quirt had favored in his past work, and he began *The Lake Harriet Series* of paintings and works on paper. His walks to nearby Lake Harriet allowed him to observe the simple acts of joy engaging those around him, including biking,



Untitled/Reclining Figure 1958 Oil and ink on paper 22½ x 29 inches (sheet)

sailing and camaraderie among friends. In the studio he would use his prodigious understanding of humanity to distill these joyous emotions and depict them in his work. “I like people,” he’d say. This understanding of the human condition is clear in several pieces . . . painted in the bold, Abstract Expressionism he’d embraced by the late 1950s—many mirroring the artist’s love of Jazz and its intuitively spontaneous process. His incredible production in painting and writing during these final years was mirrored by numerous exhibitions of his work in museums and galleries alike.

Upon discovering this collection of previously unseen works on paper, we begin to realize that these are in many ways the paintings that never were—they are in fact the last epic act in his legacy.



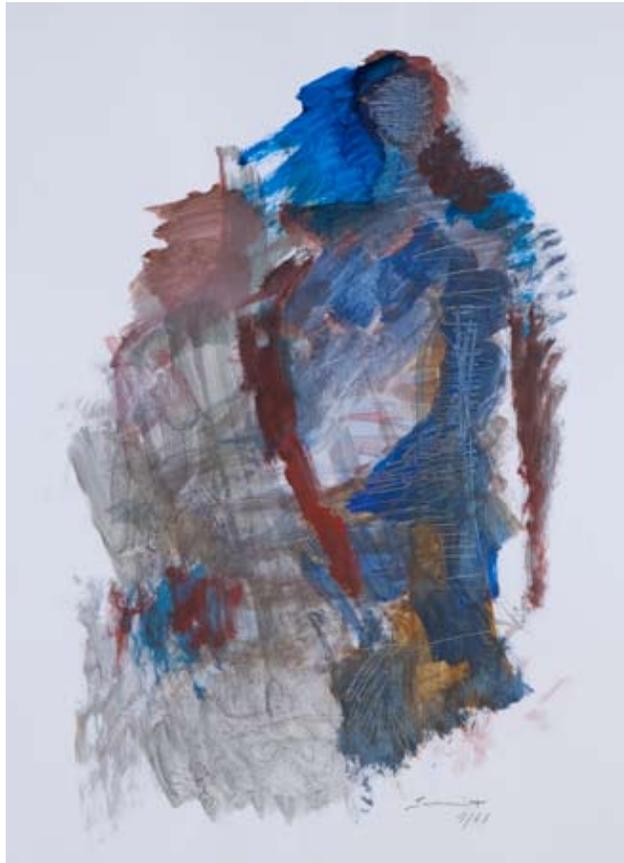
Untitled/Black and White Horse c.1959–63 Acrylic on paper 25 x 30 inches (sheet)



Untitled/Woman in Black c.1960–64
Acrylic on paper 30½ x 25½ inches (sheet)



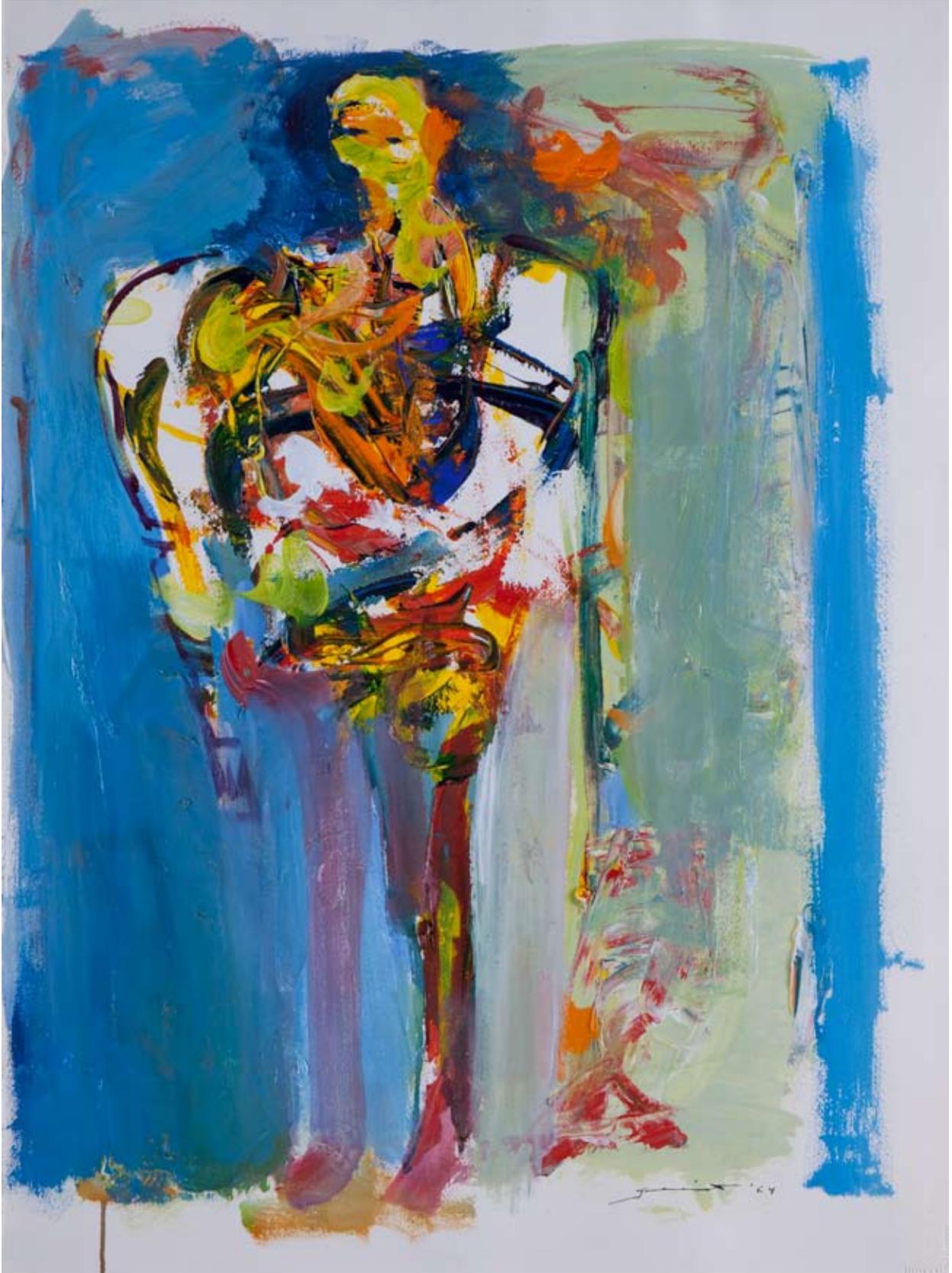
Untitled/Abstract Figure c.1960–63 Acrylic on paper 35 x 23 inches (sheet)



Untitled/Blue Figure 1961 Acrylic on paper 29 x 23 inches (sheet)



Untitled/Seated Figure by Window 1964 Acrylic on paper 23 x 33½ inches (sheet)



Untitled/Blue and Yellow Figure 1964 Acrylic on paper 30 x 22 inches (sheet)

The Yucatán Project and The Quirt Hypothesis

"The basic goal of this project was to measure whether or not individuals do, in fact, have specific linear preferences. The assumption of the "Quirt Hypothesis" followed if this measurement was available, one could then isolate the essential temperament-factor found in each individual's personality make-up. On a broader basis the test, it was assumed, would measure the general social temperament and suggest the directional-wants of that particular society."

—Excerpted from *Field Report: Field Impressions and Experimental Findings*. Jack L. French, Graduate Student, University of Minnesota, Department of Studio Art, March 13, 1967

IN 1964 A THREE-YEAR grant from the Ford Foundation was awarded to a coalition of American universities—The University of Illinois, The Hogg Foundation and University of Texas, Harvard University, Yale University, the University of Chicago, the City University of New York; and later University of California, Irvine, as well as the Universidad Nacional de Mexico—to conduct a series of field studies in the Yucatán region of Mexico. The purpose was to study the indigenous people and involved the various departments of each university, relating to the academic disciplines of anthropology, linguistics, psychology, child development, culture, and art.

NOVEMBER 22, 1966

'U' ART PROF TO
GIVE VISUAL TESTS
IN YUCATAN PROJECT

For further information, contact:
LORIS FENICK

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

Minneapolis—A unique educational experiment in which artists will work with behavioral scientists to achieve a better understanding of primitive people will be shared by a University of Minnesota art professor and a graduate student in art this winter.

Painter Walter Quirt, professor of studio art, and his student, Jack L. French, a graduate-student painter originally from Seattle, Wash., will spend the University winter quarter in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, designing and giving visual tests to the Mayan residents of the village.

"The tests will be designed to visually determine taste preferences in art—based on preferences for dominant vertical, horizontal, diagonal, simple-curve or ogee-curve lines—among various social levels," Quirt said.

"The behavioral scientists of such disciplines as psychology, sociology, linguistics, genetics and the business fields will interpret the results as they apply to their specialities."

Four U.S. universities—Chicago, Alabama, California and Minnesota—will take part in the experiment sponsored by the Ford Foundation in association with the University of Merida and the National Museum of Mexico City.

The Yucatan project will be directed by Professor Frederick L. Strodbeck of the University of Chicago sociology department and will have its headquarters at Merida, Quirt said.

The graduate students from the four universities will be supervised by professors from their own institutions and will work with the behavioral scientists in devising, administering and interpreting the tests. They will be responsible to a field director and will make weekly reports to him as well as keeping daily diaries of their activities.

Professor Quirt and French will leave for Yucatan early in December.

University of Minnesota press release for the Yucatán Project

In 1966, the University of Minnesota announced it was joining this study and sending Walter Quirt (then professor in the Department of Studio Art), and accompanied by graduate student Jack L. French, to "spend the winter quarter in Merida, Yucatán, Mexico designing and giving visual tests



Yucatán Study, Three Subjects 1967 Pen and ink 22 x 30 inches (sheet)

to the Mayan residents of the village.” “The tests will be designed to visually determine tastes in art—based on preferences for dominant vertical, horizontal, diagonal, simple curve or ogee-curve lines—among various social levels,” Quirt stated.

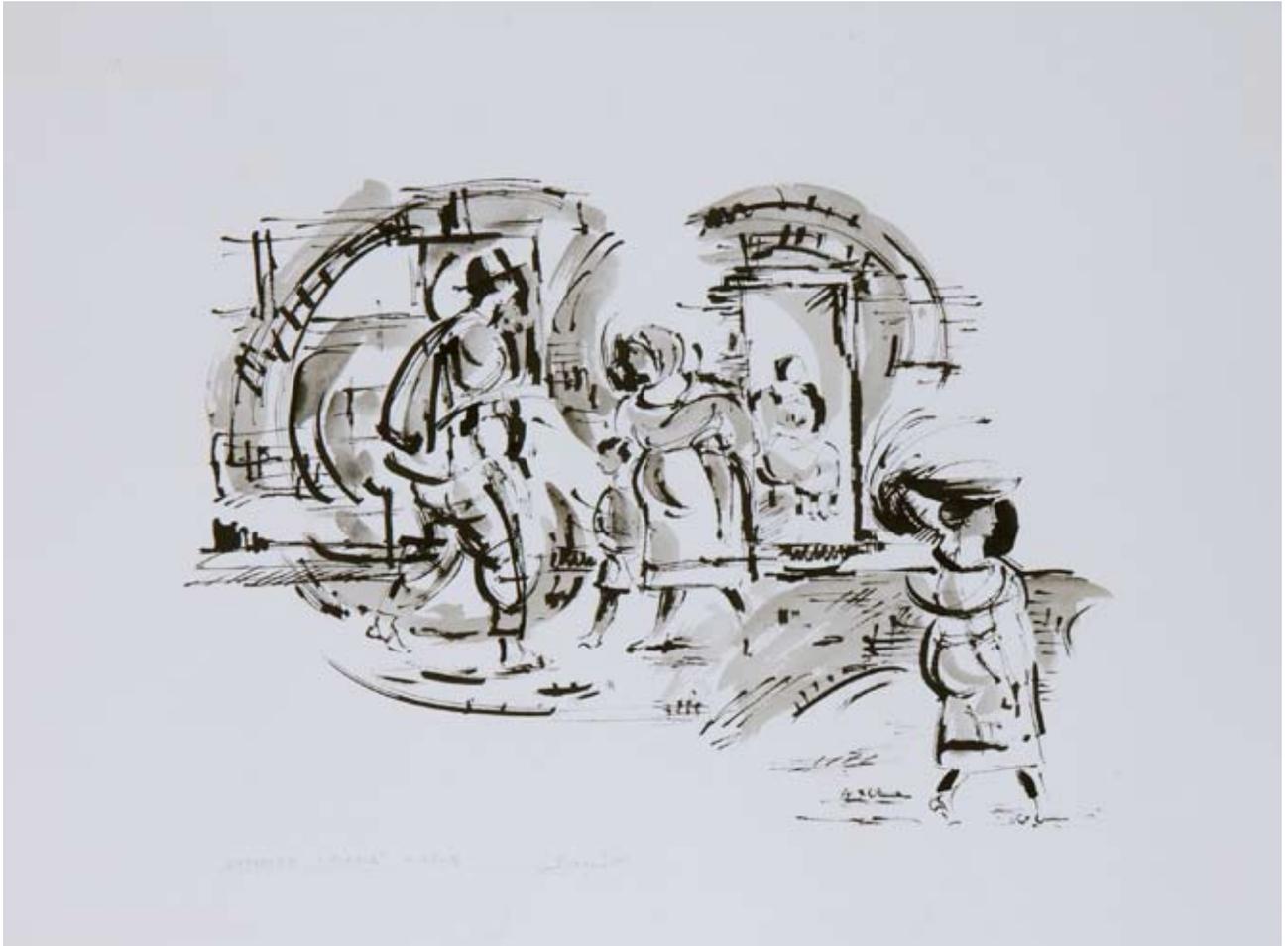
It was a fascinating theory—that one could infer from a cultures’ or individual’s preference of the dominant line in their architecture, crafts, art, dress, etc, an implied dominant attitudinal perspective of their environment and reality—a theory Quirt had been exploring since the early 1940s and lectured extensively on in his classes.

Shortly after their arrival in the village, Quirt and French realized that due to the unseasonably humid climate, oil painting was impractical so Quirt turned to a series of drawings as his testing materials. “By mid-term the professor had hit upon an image which communicated the contradictions we were finding in Ticul. By a complex inter-relationship of figure and ground; of linear movement and resisting movement; and of image to abstraction, he had successfully stated an element of reality found in Ticul. A figure would present itself as a Mayan woman, then break away into a nonentity—swaying back and forth between something physically definable and something displaced and indefinable.”—Jack L. French / Field Report 1967.

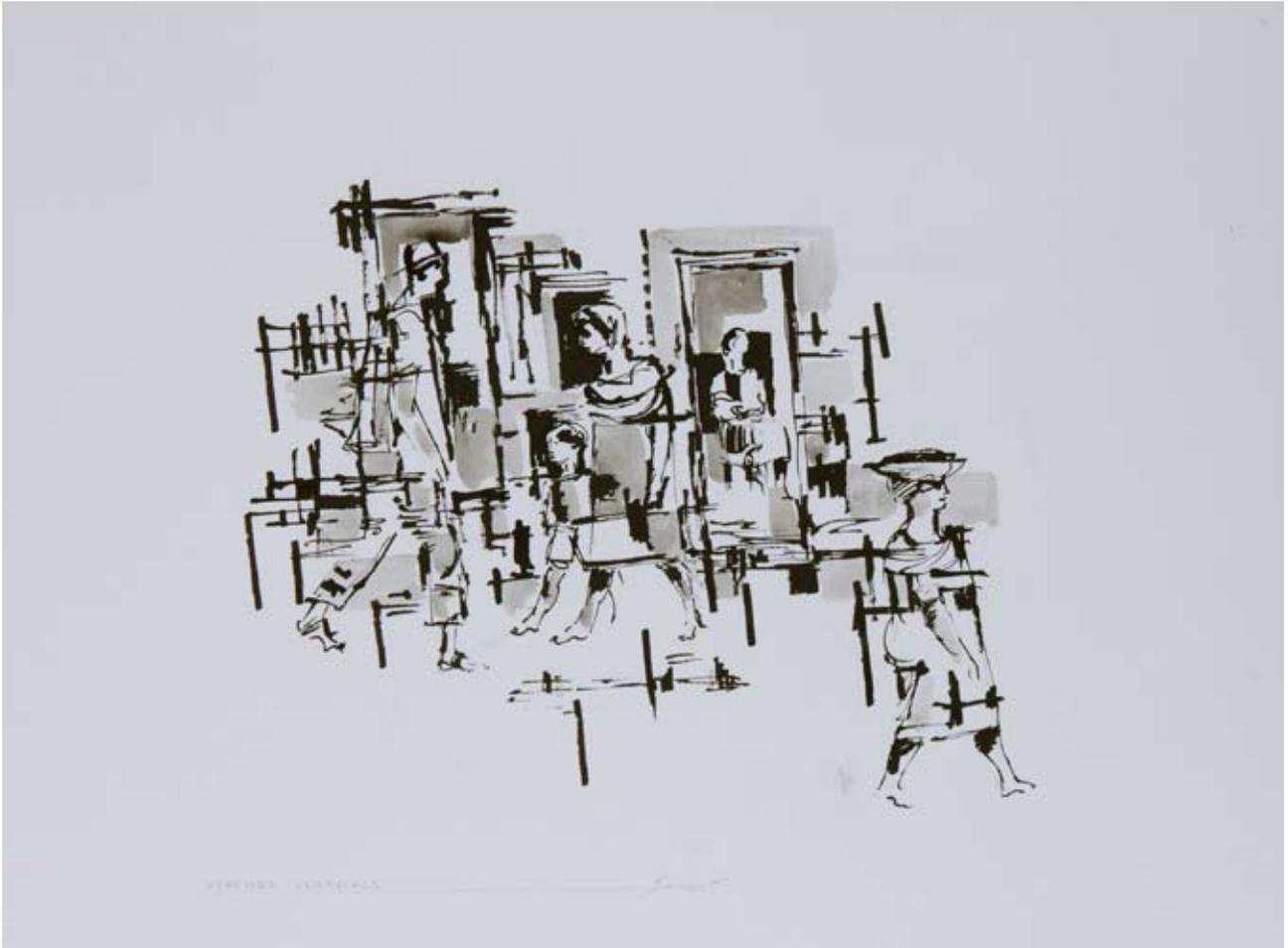
In January 1967, Quirt developed a severe case of amebic dysentery. Still determined to complete his study, but tired and ill, he wrote to his sister, Leila, “In a way I have botched up my opportunity. I have used it to write art theory. I’m dragged out, exhausted and frustrated, unable to stop because success seems tantalizingly close. I could put all my belongings in the bags under my eyes, and maybe I will. I have done some drawing, but interest in putting down theories has become so obsessive that even that has gone by the boards. But that is something I can always do following a period of assimilation of possibilities, and do it as well at home as here. But I know I am the best living theoretician on art. Don’t ask me how I became such, since I am not the most intelligent or well informed. But I am the only one who knows that art contains the principles for a science of life, that it always has, and I know how to reveal them. Articles, prepositions, verbs and whatnots are barriers I seem unable to hurdle, so that the difference between what I know and how to express it is as vast as the Mexican countryside. But I assure you that the next science will be art . . . that is the use of principles in energy in art applied to social problems.”

The quarter ended and Walter Quirt returned to his family in Minneapolis in February, 1967, still suffering from dysentery. In March, Jack French filed his final field report and in May, Eleanor Quirt, along with the six department heads involved in the Yucatán Project, received a letter from the Ford Foundation terminating any future funding of their studies. After his return to Minneapolis, Quirt was diagnosed with cancer and he died in 1968.

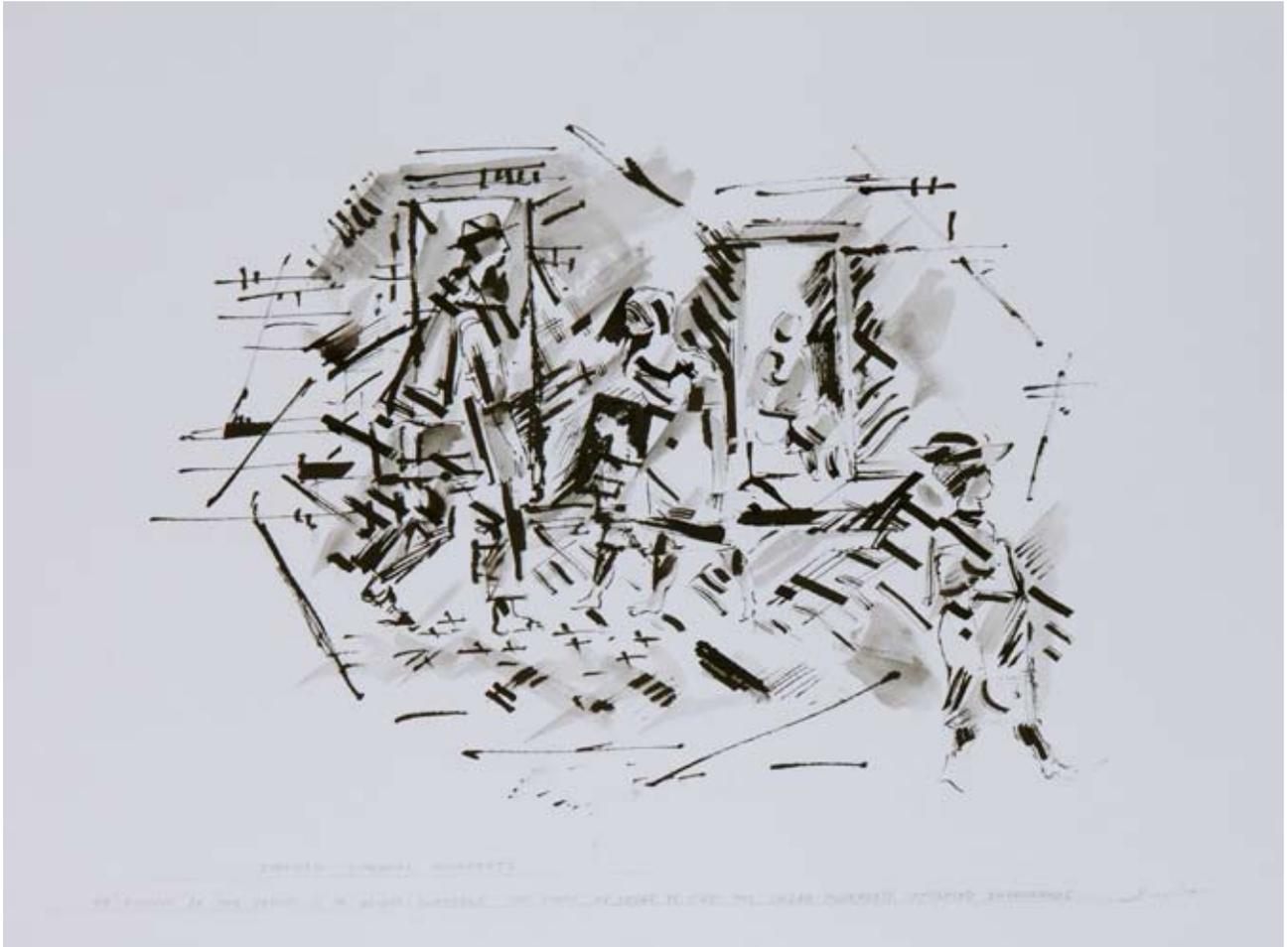
These pen and ink drawings are the five remaining from a total of nine (referred to in Mr. French’s 1967 field report) Quirt used in his research for the “Quirt Hypothesis” in examining the Yucatán people’s line preference, and by inference their perspectives, predicated on the dominant linear styles of the same image of an open air market drawn in these four differentiated styles—Simple Curves, Stressed Diagonal Movements, Stressed Verticals, Stressed S-Shaped Curves.



Yucatán Study, Simple Curves 1967 Pen and ink 22 x 30 inches (sheet)



Yucatán Study, Stressed Verticals 1967 Pen and ink 22 x 30 inches (sheet)



Yucatán Study, Stressed Diagonal Movements 1967 Pen and ink 22 x 30 inches (sheet)



Yucatán Study, Stressed S-Shaped Curves 1967 Pen and ink 22 x 30 inches (sheet)

EPILOGUE 1968–2017

TODAY, DECADES LATER, POLLOCK, DAVIS, RATTNER, BEARDEN, AND OTHER CONTEMPORARIES of Walter Quirt, have become ensconced in the narrative surrounding the development of Modern Art in America. Quirt on the other hand, following his death in 1968, in spite of what had been a critically successful career, slowly faded into the haze of history. Some of this was due to post-Modern America's cultural inclination of toppling the past in order to elevate the new. But much of the responsibility for Quirt's ignominy in today's world was due in no small part to his widow, Eleanor. Grief-stricken after her husband's death in 1968, she made the fateful decision to keep her husband's work close to her and her family, seldom allowing it to be publicly presented or sold. With the exception of three exhibitions at The University of Minnesota, Minneapolis between 1968 and 1980—the last being *Walter Quirt: A Retrospective*—the paintings and drawings remained largely out of sight over nearly half a century and his legacy slowly slipped off the radar of the public.

Still, he wasn't entirely forgotten. In MoMA's 1999 publication on Jackson Pollock—considered by many to be the definitive tome on the artist—co-editor and art historian, Pepe Carmel, wrote, "Quirt may be virtually forgotten today, but in 1944, he and Pollock seemed like promising young artists of comparable importance."

In 2005, nearly forty years after his death, Walter Quirt's 1935 painting, *The Future Is Ours* (which had been included in Quirt's first 1936 Julien Levy solo show) appeared in a survey of American Surrealism, *Surrealism USA*, along with two of his fellow contributors to Social Surrealism, James Guy and David Smith. *New York Times* critic, Roberta Smith singled out Quirt's canvas stating it's composition ". . . recasts a group of American farmers, sailors, and soldiers as menacing xenophobes and gives its famous title a selfish ring that resonates today."

In September 2017, a painting featured in the exhibition *Blind Spot: A Matter Of Perception* at the Massillon Museum in Canton, Ohio inspired a new symphonic composition. Joseph Tolonen, an award winning composer affiliated with the Cleveland Institute of Music's Composer Fellowship program, wrote "Paroxysm" in response to Quirt's painting, *Abstraction* (1952) created 65 years earlier.

Approximately a decade after Eleanor's passing, Walter and Eleanor's three adult sons, Andrew, Peter, and Jon, have inherited their father's estate. It was these three brothers that Mr. Wilson contacted after seeing that black and white plate of *The Crucified* in *Abstract and Surrealist Art in America*, and who granted Wilson curatorial management of the collection, thus beginning this remarkable journey. All three being retired and semi-retired, their overwhelming concern has little to do with capitalizing on their father's work for monetary gain and everything to do with seeing Walter Quirt's legacy restored to whatever extent we can together.

And now, in 2017, three years after receiving that phone call from Travis Wilson, two important gallery shows, a private exhibition at Seattle's prestigious Rainier Club, and several positive reviews, I've become exclusively responsible for the art-historic estate and the re-establishment of a market.



Walter Quirt with his students at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1959

As more and more of the artist's history and contributions have surfaced, particularly this past year when upon making the decision to publish this catalogue, I realized there was still much history to research, unearth, and share. As a result, I find myself engaged daily in a silent, contemplative conversation with the spirit of the artist.

Sharing this conversation with others—whether those who stroll through the gallery simply to gaze and admire or those whose interests are the discovery of that next great collecting opportunity—is a highly satisfying, step-by-step mission of education and discovery. Ultimately, my goal is to see his work more prominently exhibited again in American museums.

This exhibition, the gallery's third comprehensive public presentation, coincides with what would have been Walter Quirt's 115th birthday. It is indeed an honor to present this special exhibition catalogue and this extraordinary group of paintings and drawings, dating from 1942 to 1967, in Seattle, Washington.

I'm deeply grateful to my friend, Travis Wilson, without whom Quirt's legacy would likely have still remained largely hidden; the Quirt brothers: Andrew, Peter, and Jon, and their families for their trust and ongoing support in the further telling of their father's life; and the gallery's supporters and Quirt collectors who've become an integral part of our success to date.

Like his sons, I am forever committed to seeing Walter Quirt's legacy reestablished as a prominently recognized chapter, rather than the footnote it had become, in the still-being revealed strata of American Modern Art history, and what he had so idealistically hoped art to be: "*a science of life.*"

CHRONOLOGY

- 1902 Born on November 24 in Iron River, Michigan
- 1921–23 Studies at the Layton School of Art, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- 1924–28 Becomes full instructor at the Layton School of Art
- 1926–28 Exhibits watercolors at the Art Institute of Chicago and the New York Watercolor Club
- 1928–29 Studies as guest at the McDowell Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire
- 1929 Moves to New York City in the fall and begins attending John Reed Club Arts Section meetings
- 1930–32 Draws illustrations and writes articles for the *New Masses*
- 1931 Marries Martha Pearse
- 1932 Becomes secretary for the John Reed Club Arts Section
- 1935 Joins rolls of WPA/FAP with position of Artist; also starts psychoanalysis under Dr. Margaret Fries, continuing through 1938
- 1936 Has first one-man exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery, February 18-March 11
- 1937 Sits on panel at symposium, "Surrealism and its Political Significance" with Salvador Dali; enrolls in the WPA/FAP mural project; paints mural *The Growth of Medicine from Primitive Times* for Bellevue Hospital
- 1939 Divorces Martha Pearse; marries Eleanor Falk
- 1944 Leaves New York in the summer; son Andrew Quirt is born; teaches as instructor at the Layton School of Art, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1944–45
- 1945 Becomes assistant professor at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan; wins Cranbook Prize at the *Michigan Artists Exhibition*
- 1947 Begins teaching at the University of Minnesota as assistant professor
- 1948 Son, Peter Quirt is born
- 1952 Son, Jonathan Quirt is born
- 1956 Becomes associate professor at the University of Minnesota's Art Department
- 1959 Appointed as full professor at the University of Minnesota's Art Department
- 1960–62 *Walter Quirt*, a retrospective begins in conjunction with the American Federation of Arts
- 1963 Spends quarter on leave from the University of Minnesota, in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico
- 1964 Spends winter quarter as an artist-in-residence at the Wichita Art Museum, Kansas
- 1965 Spends winter quarter on leave from the University of Minnesota, in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico
- 1966 Takes part in exhibition, *The Landscape as Interpreted by 22 Artists*, at The Minneapolis Institute of Arts
- 1967 Spends winter quarter on leave in Mexico; becomes ill with lung cancer
- 1968 Dies of lung cancer March 19 in Minneapolis, Minnesota

EXHIBITIONS

One Man Exhibitions

- 1936 *Paintings of Walter Quirt*, Julien Levy Gallery, New York, February 18–March 11.
- 1939 *Drawings of Walter Quirt*, Julien Levy Gallery, New York, November.
- 1942 *Recent Paintings by Walter Quirt*, Pinacotheca Gallery, New York, February 23–March 14.
- 1943 *Walter Quirt*, Associated American Artists Gallery, New York, March 29–April 17.
- 1944 *Paintings of Walter Quirt*, Durlacher Brothers Gallery, New York, April 3–29.
- 1945 *Paintings of Walter Quirt*, Durlacher Brothers Gallery, New York, October.
- 1947 *The Artist, Nature, and Society*, St. Paul Gallery, St. Paul, Minnesota, May.
- 1949 *Quirt, Three Periods, 1943–1949*, University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, April 4–22.
- 1951 *Walter Quirt*, New Gallery, New York, November.
- 1955 *People in Motion*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, November 6–December 25.
- 1957 *Walter Quirt*, Duveen-Graham Gallery, New York, January 22–February 9.
- 1959 *Quirt–58*, University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, January 6–26.
- 1960 *Walter Quirt*, touring exhibition sponsored by the American Federation of Arts, 1960–1962.
- 1961 *Watercolors and Drawings by Walter Quirt*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, February 19–March 19.
- 1962 *Recent Paintings by Walter Quirt*, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, June 6–July 15.
- 1963 *Walter Quirt*, Greer Gallery, New York, October 1–19.
- 1964 *Walter Quirt*, Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, Kansas, February.
- 1966 *Walter Quirt*, Kramer Gallery, St. Paul, Minnesota, April.
- Walter Quirt, Drawings*, University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, May 10–30.
- 1967 *Walter Quirt*, Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario, October.
- 1968 *Walter Quirt Memorial Exhibition*, University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, April 10–28.
- 1976 *Use of White*, University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
- 1980 *Walter Quirt, A Retrospective*, University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
- 2015 *Walter Quirt: Revolutions Unseen*, Wilson Art Service, Sandra Lee Gallery, San Francisco, California.
- Walter Quirt: Revolutions Unseen*, Wilson Art Service, Frederick Holmes and Company, Seattle, Washington.
- 2016 *Walter Quirt: Works on Paper, 1956–1964*, Wilson Art Service, Frederick Holmes and Company, Seattle Washington.
- 2017 *Separate Worlds*, Summer 2017, The Rainier Club (Private Exhibition), Frederick Holmes And Company, Seattle, Washington.
- Walter Quirt: A Science of Life*, Frederick Holmes and Company, Seattle, Washington.

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 1926 *Sixth International Watercolor Exhibition*, The Art Institute of Chicago, May 3–30.
- 1928 *1928 Annual Exhibition*, New York Watercolor Club and the American Watercolor Society, New York.
- 1929 *Ninth International Watercolor Exhibition*, The Art Institute of Chicago, May 2–June 2.
- 1933 *The Social Viewpoint in Art*, John Reed Club Gallery, New York, March.

- An Expression in Art of the World Crisis*, John Reed Club Gallery, New York, October 13–November 11.
- Fall Exhibition Against Fascism*, John Reed Club Gallery, New York, December.
- 1936 *American Artists' School Exhibition*, American Artists' Gallery, New York, December.
- 1938 *1938 Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, November 2–December 11.
- 1940 *1940–1941 Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, November 27, 1940–January 8, 1941.
- 1942 *Trends in American Painting of Today*, The City Art Museum of St. Louis, Missouri, March 6–11.
- 1944 *1944 Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, November 14–December 12.
- 1945 *Contemporary American Paintings*, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, February 22–March 18.
- 1945 Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, November 27, 1945–January 10, 1946.
- 1946 *Annual Exhibition for Michigan Artists*, The Detroit Institute of Arts, November 12–December 15.
- Abstract and Surrealist Art*, The Art Institute of Chicago, November 6, 1946–January 30, 1947.
- 1947 *Seeing the Unseeable*, Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, January–March.
- 1950 *1950 Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, November 10–December 31.
- American Painting Today*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, December.
- 1951 *Forty American Painters, 1940–1950*, University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, June 4–August 30.
- Third Biennial Exhibition of Paintings and Prints from the Upper Midwest*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, October 28–December 30.
- 1952 *Contemporary American Painting*, College of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Illinois, Urbana, March 2–April 13.
- 1955 *1955 Annual Exhibition of American Art*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, January 12–February 20.
- 1958 *1958 Annual Exhibition of American Art*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, November 1958–January 4, 1959.
- 1959 *Twentieth Century Art of the Western Hemisphere*, Downtown Community School, New York, April 16–19.
- Seventeenth Annual Artists West of the Mississippi*, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, March 15–May 3.
- Faculty Exhibition*, Tweed Gallery, University of Minnesota, Duluth, April 26–May 24.
- 1961 *Drawings U.S.A.*, St. Paul Gallery and School of Art, St. Paul, Minnesota, November.
- 1962 *Faculty Exhibition*, University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Spring.
- 1966 *The Landscape as Interpreted by 22 Artists*, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, April 2–May 4.
- Faculty Show and Sale*, University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, April.
- 1966 Biennial of Painting and Sculpture*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, September 27–October 30.
- 2005 *Surrealism USA*, National Academy Museum, March; and Phoenix Art Museum, June.
- 2017 *Blind Spot: A Matter Of Perception*, Massillon Museum, Canton, Ohio, September.

COLLECTIONS

Addison Gallery of American Art, MA

Des Moines Art Center, IA

deYoung Museum, CA

Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, MN

George Walter Vincent Smith Museum, MA

Georgia Museum of Art, GA

Henry Art Gallery, WA

Kresge Art Museum, MI

Massillon Museum, OH

Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, MO

Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN

Minnesota Museum of Art, MN

Museum of Art at Brigham Young University, UT

Neuberger Museum of Art, NY

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA

Smith College Museum of Art, MA

Smithsonian American Art Museum, DC

The Columbus Museum, GA

The Museum of Modern Art, NY

The Nelson-Atkins Museum, MO

The Newark Museum, NJ

The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, NY

The University of Michigan Museum of Art, MI

The University of Minnesota Gallery, MN

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, CT

Walker Arts Center, MN

Whitney Museum of American Art, NY



Untitled c.1959–63 Acrylic on paper 35 x 23 inches

FREDERICK HOLMES AND COMPANY

GALLERY OF MODERN & CONTEMPORARY ART