

AVIARY

Selected Paintings
by Ken Wood



YELLOW MUG, PAINT BRUSHES IN CUP, PURPLE BIRD
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 20.5"

AVIARY

SELECTED PAINTINGS
BY KEN WOOD



PHOTO BY DIANE KITCHEN

EDITOR'S NOTE

It has been a pleasure to hold and consider Ken Wood's paintings, and to help place them in exhibitions, homes, and now, this book. Representing primarily his later work (ca. 1990's-2010's), you will find in this collection much of the contents of his studio as of 2016, alongside a number of other works gathered by family and friends.

In search of words to capture his experience of Ken's brimming studio, esteemed friend and colleague Carl Bogner posited an "aviary" of paintings among the possibilities. Bogner's fond remarks, instigated during the 2013 KSE Open Studios, resonated in the moment and delightfully resurfaced years later in my thinking about the collection. Yes, how apropos. Aviary. There we find a container as airy and charged as a boy's full butterfly net or hands cupped about a turtle or a toad. A place for study, observation, for careful pleasure in form and color and movement.

Ken's aviary was aflutter with astutely imperfect hand-made wooden canvasses, populated with birds and coffee mugs and hearts and circles and words and by countless hours spent mixing and matching often sublimely muted yet vibrant colors. These surfaces often reveal themselves as palettes, spaces for play and contemplation, sometimes quiet and wistful, absurd and abstruse, jokes to himself, gestures both plain and buried. What is the role of intuition, what is calculated? A broken yellow coffee mug glued and broken over and over again reappears, when anybody else would just have thrown it away and moved on. So many reoccurring motifs among the everyday, the mundane, the ephemeral, the abstract. And now, I only wish I had come to know this body of paintings so closely while Ken Wood were still available for meandering conversations about them.

AVIARY was compelled into being, slowly but surely, after the sudden wing beat of Ken's passing on a January Saturday in 2016. Probably well before we could fully breathe, we began sifting through the wealth of artworks that remain to help us reflect and honor his life. For Ken

Wood's memorial, no fewer than five different media inhabited the nooks and caverns of UWM's Kenilworth Studios, representing bits and swaths from perhaps 20 years of production: video performance pieces, a gallery of photo prints, hundreds of digital photos looping on projectors, a b&w16mm excerpt from his exquisite backyard portrait, Flora's Garden, and a soft deep gray wall of over 30 paintings.

Following a richly textured memorial exhibition and the intensive process of gathering and curating, there came a desire to share his paintings: original art objects destined to scatter to their respective homes. These works clearly deserve a wider audience – besides, how could we each hold and enjoy them all? A book, yes indeed. As a matter of preservation, we erred on the side of inclusivity, even sharing some clearly (or questionably) unfinished paintings. Please note, Ken rarely named or signed his work so most titles were constructed by others simply to aid identification in the book.

For those of us who embrace a supreme gratitude for having known and loved Ken Wood, we will savor holding the contents of this book in our hands. For others, we hope you take pleasure in meeting these varied and singular imaginings from the mind and soul of an exceptional human being. *Thanks, Ken.*

-Kati Katchever ...in company of Flora Coker, Carolyn Wood, Sarah Buccheri, Emir Cakarov, Dick Blau, David Witzling, Heidi Spencer

p.s. As of the publishing of AVIARY we hope to pursue the building of a little web repository for much of the other media wrangled by Sarah Buccheri and others, diligently compiled for Ken's memorial service and exhibition and, later, a memorial screening at UWM's Union Cinema.

So, keep an eye out for
www.KenWoodArt.net



RED AND BLUE BIRD WITH YELLOW MUG
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 17.5 X 26"



PURPLE BIRD AND LAVENDER BROWN BIRD CALLING
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 23"



SPHERES AND TWIGS
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 96 X 73.5"



BLUE BIRD WITH CIRCLES
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 9 X 13"



CROW WITH THREE PEARS
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 14 X 24"



PURPLE BIRD AND TOOTHFUL HEART
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 17 X 12"



BROWN BIRD WITH RED EYE AND SMILING HEART
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 18.38 X 13"



MALE NUDE AND BROWN BIRD (ABOVE)
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16.5 X 23”

ABSTRACT WITH BLACK, BLUES, GREEN, WHITE (BELOW)
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 22 X 28”



FEMALE NUDE WITH CROSSED LEGS (ABOVE)
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 36 X 24”



PINK BIRD WITH CIRCLES
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 13 X 16"



THE THE
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 13 X 19"



FEMALE NUDE WITH OUTSTRETCHED LEGS
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 20 X 26"



BROWN BIRD AND EYEBALL

PAPER AND ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 17 X 25.5"



HALF CIRCLE ON MUTED BROWNS, PURPLES, BLUES
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 30 X 42"



GREEN EYE AND GRAY CYLINDER ON PINK
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 12 X 19.5"



RED BIRD WITH BLACK WINGS
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 13 X 24"



COWS IN SKY (ABOVE)
 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 16 X 36"

RENTERS' INSURANCE (OPPOSITE, ABOVE LEFT)
 ACRYLIC AND PAPER ON WOOD, 13 X 20.5"

ABSTRACT WITH GRAYS, BLUES, AND YELLOW (OPPOSITE, ABOVE RIGHT)
 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 32 X 43"

GRAY CIRCLES WITH MUTED PURPLES (OPPOSITE, BELOW LEFT)
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 17 X 27"

BULLSEYE (OPPOSITE, BELOW RIGHT)
 ACRYLIC AND PAPER ON WOOD, 20 X 25"





TWO YELLOW MUGS WITH FISH LURES
ACRYLIC AND PAPER ON WOOD, 19 X 25”



DEER AND SALAMANDER
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 12.5 X 24"



MULTICOLORED ABSTRACTION WITH YELLOW, BLUES, GREENS, PURPLE
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 11 X 14"



BLACK BIRD CALLING WITH YELLOW PATCH
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16.5 X 20.5"



BLUE DANUBE WITH MUGS
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 23.75"



AMERICAN KESTREL WITH MUG
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 24"

CAT IN WIND (LEFT)
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 26 X 20"

BEN AND ELISE (RIGHT)
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 34 X 30" (DECEMBER 1983)









YELLOW OUTLINE BIRD, YELLOW CIRCLE ON MIDNIGHT BLUE (ABOVE)
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 19 X 32"

MAN IN SPACE (OPPOSITE)
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 24 X 22"



GOLD AND BROWN BIRD AT TWILIGHT
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 12 X 15"



DARK BLUE BIRD IN FLIGHT
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 20"



PALE GREEN BIRD IN FLIGHT
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 20 X 29"



PURPLE-BLUE BIRD IN FLIGHT
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 19 X 28"





GREEN FROG (ABOVE)
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 15 X 20"

OW HEARTS WITH STACK (OPPOSITE)
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 66 X 80"



HEY
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 19 X 25"



YELLOW MUG
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 12.25 X 17"



UNFINISHED WITH YELLOW MUG (ABOVE)
 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 24 X 42"

TWO YELLOW MUGS WITH LEAF AND CIRCLES (LEFT)
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 10 X 15"

BILLY GOATS GRUFF (OPPOSITE)
 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 24 X 23"







MULTICOLORED NUDE (ABOVE)

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 24 X 36"

WHITE FLOWERS WITH FOLIAGE IN VASE (OPPOSITE)

ACRYLIC OR OIL ON CANVAS, 18 X 16"





**FEATHERLESS HEADLESS
CHICKEN CORPSE AND
CROW**

ACRYLIC ON MASONITE
BOARD, 12.5 X 24.5"



THE PAINTER

ACRYLIC ON MASONITE
BOARD, 14 X 24"



ORANGE PEAR WITH WHITE SIDE AND GREEN SIDE
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 15 X 19"



GOLDEN PEAR AND MULTICOLORED SPLOTCHES
ACRYLIC AND PAPER ON WOOD, 18 X 26"



**ABSTRACT WITH BLACK, BLUE,
GRAY, TWO GREEN MARKS IN
CENTER (ABOVE LEFT)**
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 24 X 17"



**PURPLE ABSTRACTION (ABOVE
RIGHT)**
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 36 X 47"

**ABSTRACT WITH BROWN, GREENS,
YELLOW (BELOW RIGHT)**
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 10 X 14"





RED BIRD

ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 19 X 32"



PEAR SHAPES ON RED
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 17.5 X 24"



HALF A HEART
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 14 X 24"



AMERICAN CHESTNUT
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 24"



**ABSTRACT WITH BLACK, PURPLES, AND
WHITE STREAKS (ABOVE LEFT)**
ACRYLIC AND PAPER ON CANVAS, 29 X 41"

**ABSTRACT WITH REDDISH BROWN
(BELOW LEFT)**
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 18 X 25"

**WHITE ON BLUE ABSTRACTION (BELOW
RIGHT)**
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 34 X 48"

**MALE TORSO WITH BOVINE HEAD
(OPPOSITE)**
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 66 X 76"









ORANGE NO (ABOVE)
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 22 X 31"

PURPLE SALAMANDER AND CIRCLES (OPPOSITE)
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 14 X 15"





ROMAN EMP (ABOVE)
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 10 X 27"

**MULTICOLORED ABSTRACT WITH
 RED SQUARE LEFT, YELLOW MARK
 BELOW (RIGHT)**
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 22 X 30"

N O (OPPOSITE)
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 21 X 24"







RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD SCREECHING RED (ABOVE)

ACRYLIC AND PAPER ON WOOD, 24 X 33"

THE NEW YORK TIMES (OPPOSITE)

ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 20 X 23"



RED, PINK, BROWN CIRCLES
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 14 X 24"



**DARK BIRD WITH YELLOW EYE AND
CIRCLES**
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 24"



ERECT PENIS, EYE AND SCRIBBLES
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 24"



C'MON
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 22.75 X 31.25"



GRAY BIRD WITH PURPLE HEAD
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 15 X 24"



MAMMY

ACRYLIC AND PAPER ON WOOD, 18.5 X 28"



13
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 9 X 13"



DARK BIRD WITH YELLOW WING
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 14 X 19"



YELLOW HAND WITH RED MUG
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 18 X 24"



DARK BIRD WITH RED EYE AND PURPLE PENIS
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 12 X 19"



ROBIN AND NO. IN CAVES
ACRYLIC ON WOOD. 12 X 17"



PALE PEACH BIRD IN FLIGHT (ABOVE)
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 17.5 X 27.5"

R AND ORANGE HEART (OPPOSITE)
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 23 X 25.5"





5 AND 50
 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 12 X 16"



DARK BIRD AND BLACK CIRCLE WITH RED FLARE
 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 12 X 16"



BRANCHES
 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 13 X 18"



BRANCHES (DETAIL)
 ACRYLIC ON CANVAS



PURPLE BIRD ON SNOW
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 8 X 10"



BROWN BIRD WITH EGG SHAPES
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 12.5 X 16.5"

ROBT
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 12 X 17"



PEAR SHAPES ON PURPLE
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 18 X 24"

BROWN BIRD WITH PURPLE EYE
AND GREEN MARK
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 14 X 17.5"



CURLICUE
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 16 X 23"





TEAL-BLACK BIRD WITH GREEN EYE, BLUE BRANCH
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 21"



BLACK BIRD FLYING, GREEN OPEN CIRCLE
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 19 X 28"

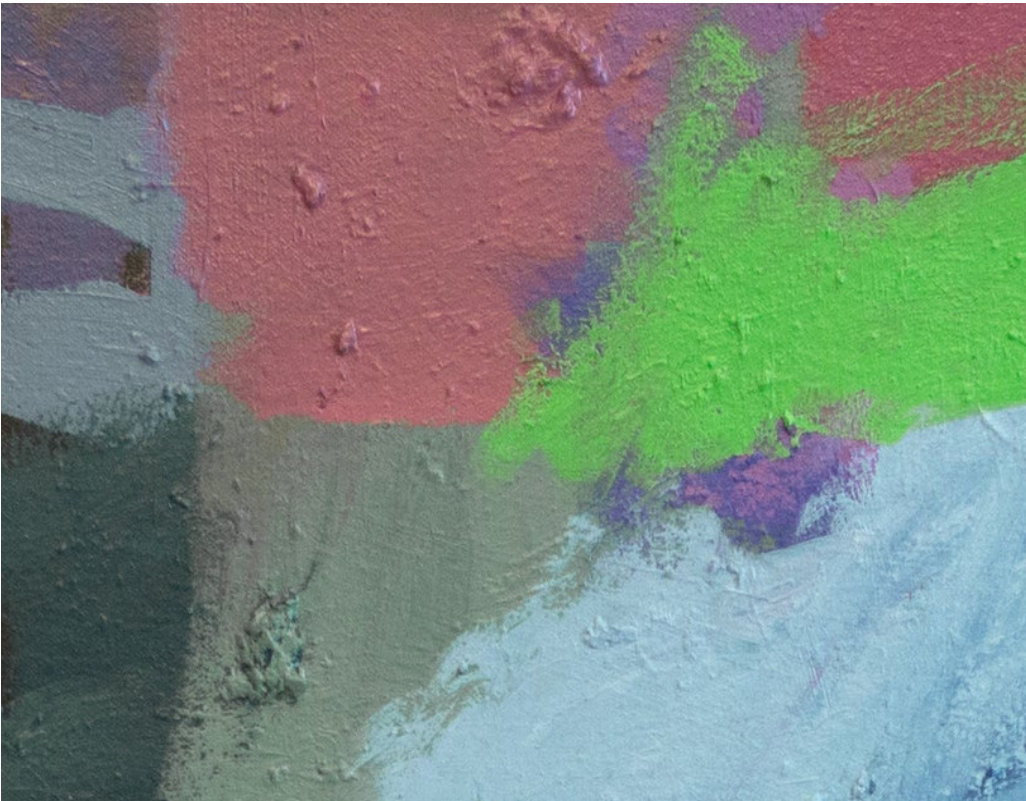


THE TEMPTATION OF OFFICER MARTIN
ACRYLIC ON MASONITE BOARD, 11.5 X 17.5"

MALE TORSO AND MAGENTA LIPS (RIGHT)
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 21”

**ABSTRACT WITH BLUES, PINKS, PURPLES,
GREENS, REDS (BELOW RIGHT)**
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 24 X 31”

**ABSTRACT WITH BLUES, PINKS, PURPLES,
GREENS, REDS (DETAIL, BELOW LEFT)**





PURPLE BIRD WITH YELLOW EYE IN FLIGHT
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 20"

BLACK BIRD, HEART AND HUMAN EAR
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 18 X 12"





**GREEN LEAF AND SQUARES
(LEFT)**

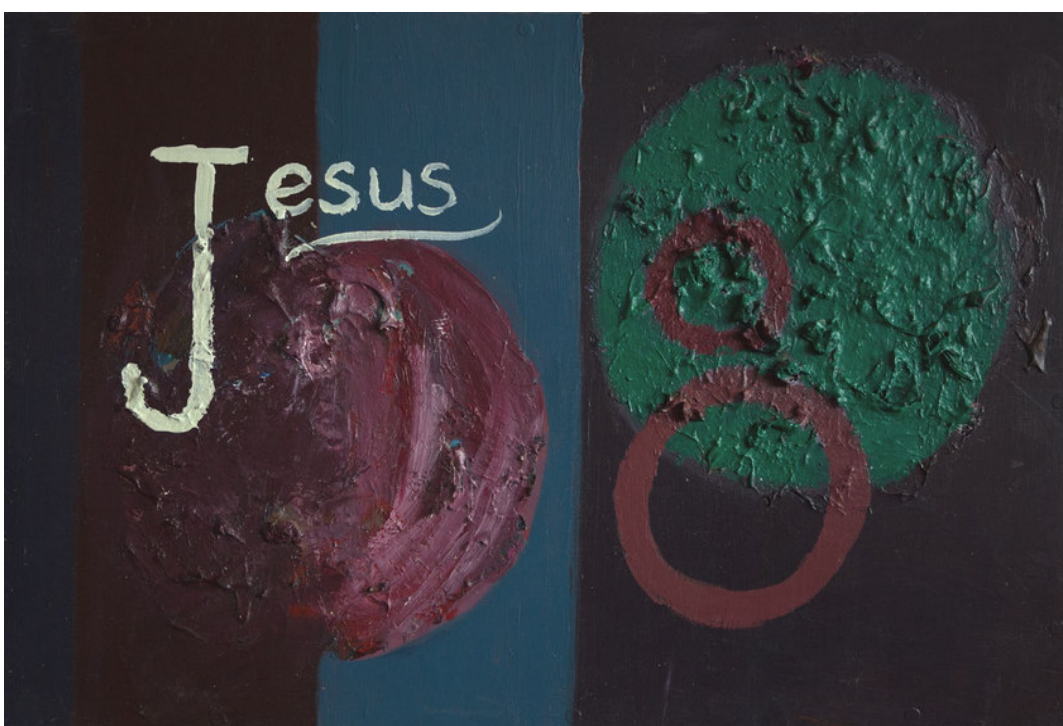
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 14 X 24"

JESUS (BELOW LEFT)

ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 24"

**2 OVALS ON BLACK WITH
GRAY, BLUE, GREEN SQUARES
(BELOW RIGHT)**

ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 24 X 36"





BIRD WITH WHEELS AND PEGS
ACRYLIC AND PAPER ON WOOD, 16 X 24"



BLUE BIRD MOSTLY WITHIN TEXTURED CIRCLE
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16.5 X 24"



PURPLE BIRD WITH YELLOW HALO
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16.5 X 24"



GREEN LEAVES AND ASPARAGUS
PAPER AND ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 13.5 X 18"



ABSTRACT WITH GREENS, 5 DARK PILLARS
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 35 X 27.5"



BLUE AND BROWN BIRD WITH HALO
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 13.5 X 18"



GREEN ABSTRACTION
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 24 X 36"



DRIFTWOOD STILL LIFE (ABOVE)
ACRYLIC OR OIL ON CANVAS, 18 X 24”

BLACK BIRD IN WINTER THROUGH A WINDOW WITH BLUE PANES (OPPOSITE)
ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 9.5 X 11”







GRANDMAS CLUBBING BUNNIES (ABOVE)
 ACRYLIC OR OIL ON CANVAS, 24 X 43" (MARCH 1984)

TIGER WITH 2 MONKEYS IN TREE (OPPOSITE LEFT)
 INK AND PASTELS ON PAPER, 24 X 12"

TIGER WITH 1 MONKEY IN TREE (OPPOSITE RIGHT)
 INK AND PASTELS ON PAPER, 24 X 12"



KEN-DINSKY WITH BRIGHT LIGHT
ACRYLIC OR OIL ON CANVAS, 29 X 18"

KEN-DINSKY
ACRYLIC OR OIL ON CANVAS,
32 X 18" (1982)







TWO LAMPS STILL LIFE (ABOVE)
 ACRYLIC OR OIL ON CANVAS, 19 X 26"

GRAY PEAR SHAPE AND NO ON PINKS (OPPOSITE)
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 16"





YELLOW BIRD WITH 4 TRIANGLES (ABOVE)
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 20.5 X 28"

BLACK BIRD WITH RED EYE AND PINK PATCH (OPPOSITE)
 ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 16 X 18"



DONNY AND CINDY
PASTELS ON PAPER, 14 X 19"



BLACK BIRD IN WINTER THROUGH A WINDOW WITH RED PANES

ACRYLIC ON WOOD, 9.5 X 12.5"

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Ken Wood (1959-2016) was born Thursday, May 7, 1959 in Ypsilanti, Michigan, the youngest of six children. Ken was quietly attentive to his environment, noting its details with care and insight. At an early age he revealed an offbeat, quirky sense of humor and an unusually perceptive eye for the world of nature he discovered around him. For example, when he was eight years old, he identified a Polyphemus moth in his backyard. Such habits of close observation surely influenced his development as a visual artist.

From 1982 through 1986 he attended Herron School of Art and Design at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Upon completing the BFA degree from Herron, Ken received the coveted Evan Lilly Scholarship in Painting. Later, he worked for The Garland Guild out of Indianapolis, contributing to various projects around the Midwest, including restorative painting of the Wisconsin State capitol.

In the early '90s Ken began his studies in film with the graduate program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM), ultimately earning an MFA in Film production. While pursuing these studies he joined the staff of the UWM Film Department, distinguishing himself as expert in the details involving motion picture camera operation and repair. In the mid 2000's, he also began teaching for the Film Department, a role he grew to cherish and at which he was beloved.

For over fifteen years and the rest of his days, he maintained a studio in the UWM Kenilworth Building (KSE), where he worked on his films, photography, and paintings. His works continued to reveal his fascination with nature and his focus on fine, discrete detail. Throughout these years he kept a warm, modest, quietly affectionate home with his partner and companion of many years, noted actor Flora Coker. They married on Friday, December 22, 2000, and enjoyed an enviable life together ever after. -Marty Wood



PHOTO BY SETH FRANKLIN

In response to Ken's sudden passing in January of 2016, Carl Bogner shared the following with the Film Dept community:

"Hard to summon the words that make it believable, Ken such a generous spirit, such a crucial presence, that defined the texture of the Department. The basement of Mitchell seems impossible without him. Ken was a painter, a filmmaker, an ace technician, a patient instructor, someone deftly and warmly thoughtful in all his engagements. Which is to say that, among other things, he deployed his exquisite taste nimbly, had a handy and accurate moral compass, exercised with glee his sly and expert humor, and could, per Michael Walsh, make 'the best martinis!!' He was one of the best people you could talk to -- curious, open, funny, genuine. Rob Yeo alerted us of the news in an email that included, 'Ken was a long-time contributor to the success of our program, both as a filmmaking instructor and as Assistant Technical Director and his absence is deeply felt.' Our condolences to Flora and to his siblings and to Huck, pictured here with Ken, Ken the one on the right." - Carl Bogner

NOTES ON INDIVIDUAL PAINTINGS

see p.100



DONNY AND CINDY: When Ken and his cousin Tracy were young, their families lived far apart. Their brief times together usually came in summer at “the Farm,” their mothers’ childhood home. During their playtime they assumed characters named “Donny and Cindy,” for reasons understood by no one else. One of the Farm’s decorative features was a long-abandoned artificial pond. It was only a hole surrounded by paving stones and rocks, dry and empty by the time Ken encountered it. In this pastel, Ken portrays a scene with these two playmates and the pond as they must have imagined it once looked. Ken’s siblings called the painting “Donny and Cindy,” but no one knows whether Ken had a name for it.

see p.93



GRANDMAS CLUBBING BUNNIES: Ken’s paternal grandmother was visiting his parents’ home during a school break from Herron. She frequently expressed her irritation at a barking dog in a yard nearby. At some point she declared she’d “like to shoot that dog.” Ken was fascinated by that incongruous image – Grandma was in her late seventies – and he worked on several versions inspired by it. Eventually the grandmas appeared wielding clubs instead of rifles, and at some point, bunnies replaced the dogs.

see p.79



THE TEMPTATION OF OFFICER MARTIN: Most of Ken’s paintings are untitled. This painting, however, may actually bear a title bestowed by Ken. As reported by an art school friend, “Martin” was the name of a security guard at school whom Ken viewed unfavorably. The guard apparently became the subject of a brief series of “revenge images” - bearing similarly satirical names - strengthening the likelihood that Ken titled this one himself. Playing upon the guard’s tendency to linger in the studio when nude models were posing, “The Temptation of Officer Martin” is the only painting from the series whose location is known. Especially noteworthy in this painting is its evocation of the “Judgment of Paris” theme in Ken’s depiction of the models, elevating this work above mere revenge.

see p.29



BEN AND ELISE: A childhood scene of imaginary bliss, this painting was part of Ken’s work at Herron. At the time, his nephew and niece were about five and two years old, and he was fond of playing with them at family gatherings. Although he seems never to have assigned this painting a name, he mentioned on occasion that he was mindful of Ben and Elise, both while he worked on it and afterward.

CREDITS

Editors	Kati Katchever David Witzling Heidi Spencer	Assistance	Carolyn Wood Flora Coker Dick Blau Sarah Buccheri Emir Çakarož Marty Wood Priscilla Wood Lori Bica
Art Photography	Dick Blau		
Biography	Marty Wood Carl Bogner		
Anecdotes	Marty Wood	Additional Photos	Dick Blau Diane Kitchen Seth Franklin
Media Details	Carolyn Wood		



PHOTO BY DICK BLAU

