Drawings

The hand (cover) is a self-conscious act of drawing while watching oneself draw. It is about the power of concentration necessary to see and to create simultaneously. Does the eye and muscle coordination already possess the knowledge of the line before the mind understands? Does one's finger recoil from touching the hot object before the mind registers pain?

This type of drawing for me suggests the power of the self-reflexive act. A balance exists between acute observation and expressive invention.

The Chicago Tribune Late Entry Competition (2) is more about figure-field manipulation, but also has devices found in later drawings.
Le-Kaf, Tunisie (1996) resulted from the desire to capture the essence of what was a daily walk that was the beginning of a new and intense experience at the start of my Peace Corps service, following graduation from architecture school. It was freshly drawn from the accumulated memories of walking down the N1 in this exotic and romantic landscape, as soon as the door to the house was closed and paper could be found. The immediacy of memory was essential to distort the compositional devices; silhouette, sky, Minaret, and electric tower into an organized structure. The panorama of the evening sky confronts the one-point perspective of the path down to the town center and the vertical vanishing points of the tower connect the distant sky and rocky foreground. It is almost a five-point perspective or fish-eye view.

In the Cornell Series (4-6), fantasy still-lifes are made combining "objects trouvées" (keys) and images of the city, all done in place. The club stationery has a wonderful tooth, a rice yellow other color and a vertically centered logo. A curious formal resonance exists between the drawing of Le-Kaf and the far more analytical contour drawing that certainly was not conscious.

The travel sketches (7-10) are done from memory within 24 hours of visiting a site. They try to capture the spatial experience and the essential compositional characteristics of a given place. The lake drawings (11-12) are done in place.

The Kay Biscayne drawings (13-21) are similar to the Cornell drawings in that contour and line are the means of constructing space and narrative. Too many meetings have provided the material for studies of coffee cups and glasses. Even mundane objects define the space around them, or in them, as it were. Some are escapist fantasies.
The SM Life of 1974 is in debt to Bogue and Giri. The picture plane is cut, joined and paired with the table leg producing a narrative with the compose across the cut.

Seeing the Tintoretto paintings in Venice were a shock, as the manipulation of the forms, subject matter and overall compositions struck a chord. I immediately went back to the apartment and drew an "homage."

The Madoquen of 1989 is a diptych with the central figure as column.

The first SM Life of 1994 is both constructed and open ended, more puritan than not, more about transparency, marriage of contour and formal juxtaposition.

The second SM Life of 1994 is a fantasy, more Tunisian than not.

Murals

Teaching in Vicenza in the summer of 1975 I experienced the tradition of frescoes and narrative scenes of the good life by the 16th century Northern Italian masters. The complementary and mutually supportive use of painting and architecture was a motivation not to be resisted.

The first mural project in Charlottesville was to "correct" a living room wall that had an opening that was too large and which made furnishing the room very difficult. Objects in the room were incorporated into the scene to change the scale of the room and force a new set of relationships with the space. At the same time, work was started on the Library of Anaesthesiaology at the University of Pennsylvania. It so happened that the context created a similar frontal condition as the living room and the solution took on a three-dimensional representation similar to the painted mural. This approach was similar to that of Paladio at the Palazzo Chiericati in Vicenza, by literally framing the landscape by his architecture or pointed by G.B. Zelotti at the Villa Carlotta.

The second Charlottesville mural was one of a mannerist exercise "a la Giulio Romano." The space was very difficult, with a very low ceiling, an awkwardly placed and scaled fireplace and a dead end circulation from which there was no escape.

The third set of murals was for the dean's secretary, named Rose in the Syracuse University School of Architecture. Since the school has an Italian program in Florence, is located in the Finger Lakes district in upstate New York and was a program that was about spatial definition in architecture, the murals use three types of space making illusions: Chinese layering, cubist depth cues and one-point perspective.