

Flat ~ Work

1964
to
2004

ZAK'S - Pick 



Tools for Drawing

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SOME THOUGHTS ON THIS BOOK...

FLAT~WORK - *Zak's Pick* is organized in chronological order, from now to the beginning in 1964. Even though I began drawing in grade school, until entering the University it was only a curious past time. The black and white drawings from the University days are mostly ink on cloth with some white acrylic and ink. These *keepers* were literally one in a hundred or more from drawing binges, they somehow survived the many moves that 7 years of college life required. Another test of preference has been that these images have stayed on the walls while making space for new works, some for decades.

There is a gap in the drawings, in the 70's I ran two businesses, built a family cabin and raised teenage kids. That left only time for *how to do it* drawings for my craft. During that period I pushed the craft into art doing creative wood work and hand made homes. The 80's brought a renaissance in art, drawing leading the way. First the *Spirit Tree* series, then, on its heels, the *Moraine* series. In the first series I learned how to segment the landscape into pieces connected with relation to the other parts, then the sensuous forms of the Moraines along the upper Madison and Yellowstone rivers. The voluptuous forms together with strong lines of ditches, fences, cliffs, and river banks lead to a long series.

Another set of interruptions - divorce, mistress, loss of property and a near fatal accident washed me into constructing a mega-home in Missouri. Exhausted, I wandered home to Montana and, a well head of creative energy pent up in the *terrible years*, began breaking loose. The *Three Trees* series followed by the *Cartoon series* combined with 7 years of stone and steel sculpting ensued. Drawing and pre-drawing for the flat work and stone work has been a major period of creative living, 97 thru 04. This latest period has lead to the publishing of the first *Useful Art* book in 2002, and the *Processes* book, 2004. And now this publication, *FLAT~WORK - Zak's Pick*, 2005, during which I have invested a great deal of time and resources into my studio.

Drawing has definitely allowed me to stay in the game of making art, even while doing a job. It gives me the opportunity to explore an upcoming work for days or weeks while shuffling time to get into the studio.

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Photo and computer credits: Photography, graphics and layout by Chad Trettin.


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Dance at Split Mountain, 2003, 17 x 23", is one of the Cartoon Series 2002 - 2003. These colorful Zak~Land fantasies actually pushed my painting skills to those of a painter. The segmented scape and drawn portions maintain the status of drawing. These are Cartoons in the true sense of the term - cartography of my fantasy Zak~Land, preparatory drawings. It is great to see a tree dance for joy in a cataclysmic landscape.



Snag, 1998, 8.5 x 10.5", is out of the *Lone Tree Series*, 1998 - 2001. I was working as a Project Engineer on a hospital, drawing in the early morning hours and weekends. One image leading to the next. Several of the lone trees have qualified as *keepers*.

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Tropic Montana, 1998, 10.5 x 13.5", another of the *Lone Tree* series, is a response to my geology studies. The coal beds originated 500 million years ago when Montana was on the equator. It was a wet geological time period, rich in fauna.



Prairie Tree, 1998, 12.5 x 8.5", also from the *Lone Tree* series, is a response to my love for the High Line or Missouri Breaks country. I camp out there on week long *drive abouts* during holidays. This image captures the wind and space that the western edge of the Great Basin has. Sitting up there, I feel like I can see the Mississippi river off in the horizon and value the sparse life forms of the northern desert.

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Three More Trees, 1998, 13.5 x 10.5", was the last of this series, and just before the *Lone Tree* series. A very happy image...could be a gathering of trees, gossiping about tree things?

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Three Trees, 1997, 15 x 11.5", is a series I began on my return to home in Montana, after the terrible years. My urge to create was as strong as it had ever been. I began with the techniques I had developed in the *Spirit Tree* and *Moraine* series. This time with a lyrical sense of figurative forms for trees in a Zak~Landscape.

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Ditch Line I, 1990, 7.5 x 6" (shown life size) began the *Moraine series*. I became fascinated with the sensuous forms the eroded moraines evolved to around the upper Madison and Yellowstone rivers. These sensuous forms combined with the lines created by ditches, fences, cliffs, and river banks became the subject of a long series. A collection of these pieces were in a one man exhibit at the Museum of the Rockies in 1989-90.

ZAK'S - Dick 



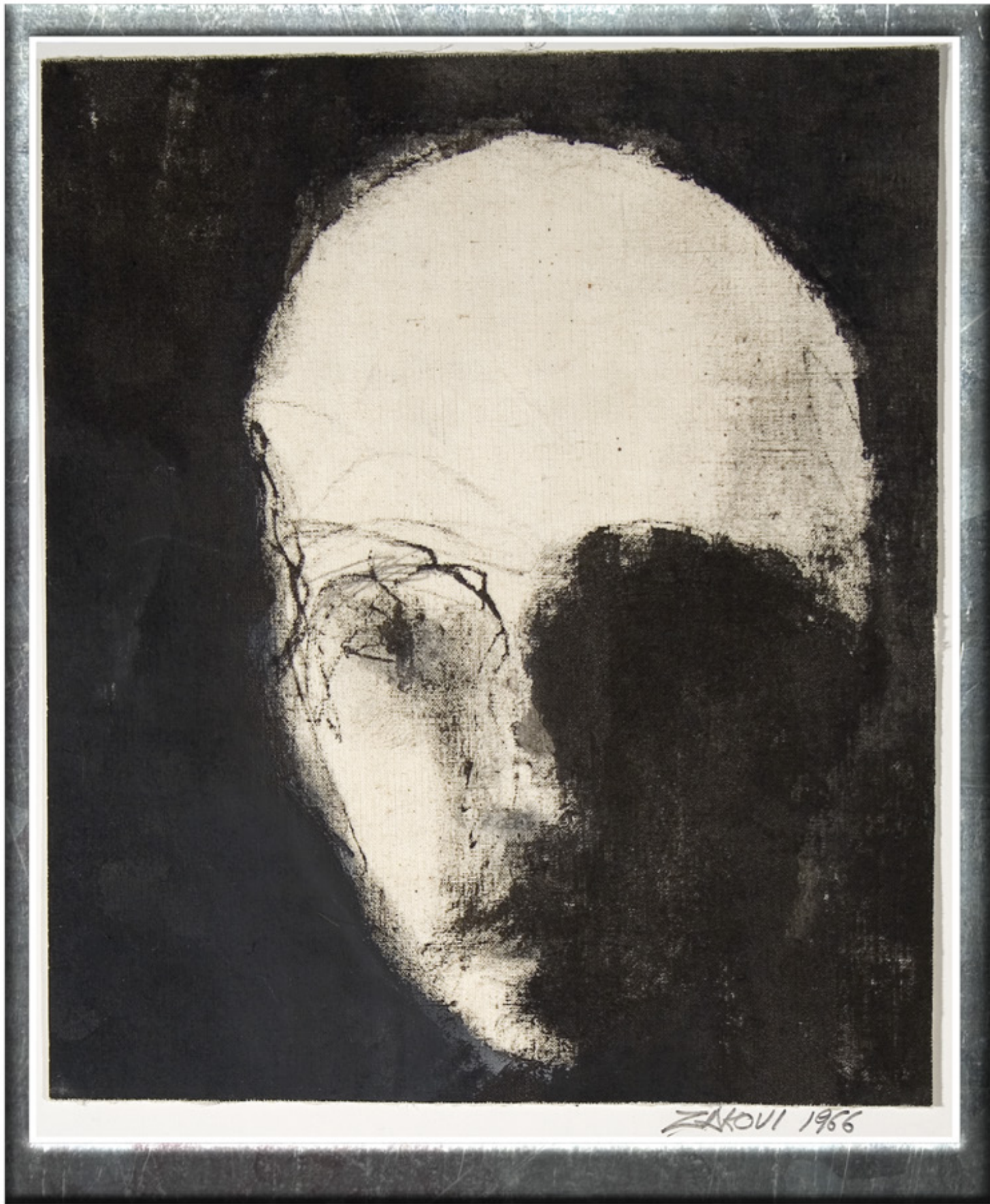
Study, 1998, 9 x 11.5", is from the *Spirit Tree* series, 1984 - 88. This was an awakening period for my creative juices, after the arduous 70's as a wood worker and contractor. I began cutting up the landscape into segments and using large areas of raw cloth as subject. I worked each part of the landscape in isolation, each part relating to the next by color and texture.

ZAK'S - Dick 



Arroyo, 1967, 9.5 x 11", is a response to the southwestern desert country. I was camped out at Paolo Soleri's Cosanti Foundation in Phoenix. For a break in studies with Paolo I would go into the washes north of Phoenix and draw. This image survived the living out of my car and the many trips a student takes. It is about the raw energy life forms have in the intense heat and dryness of the stony desert.

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Head Study, 1966, 7 x 8.5". During graduate studies, my drawing sessions ran 5 to 12 hours each. In these drawing sieges one of 50 or 100 drawings would turn out to be a *keeper*. I was drawing for the sake of line, light and dark form - studying draftsmanship.



Lady, 1965, 7 x 7" (shown life size), is one of the best drawings I've ever done. It was so early in my career that I attribute it to fate, rather than skill. Ink wash is a great media to learn drafting. Often an image pops out and changes the course of the drawing event, as it did here.

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Chickens, 1965, 10.5 x 8.5", another student drawing. I recall a discussion about Japanese Zen monks standing like chickens and acting like them before drawing them. These, I just made up. I never pursued drawing animals so it's an isolated image, but a good one.

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Alone, 1964, 8.5 x 11", from my studies at the San Francisco Art Institute, an intense period of drawing and struggle with representational and expressionistic images. This piece is an effort to control the brush and wood quill, with ink. In the late 60's I studied with two great mentors in drawing - Bob Dewesse and Alvin Light. These guys worked with me hard, a great learning period. *Alone* is a great example of ink brush work, I am glad it survived the years.

ARTIST'S REFLECTIONS

Doing this collection has focused my thoughts about drawing. For me, drawing is the way into every craft and art form I have pursued. Shop drawings for furniture and cabinets; Architectural drawings for homes; sketches on stone with chalk; and finally the hundreds of pre-drawings for sculptures and flat work. This selection of all time favorites spans forty years, what a delight to have been creating for four decades! I am convinced the greatest thing an artist achieves over a long career is his visual vocabulary, and that enables the knowledge of beauty.

I had some great mentors in my University days. Class room and studio drawing from models and landscapes, with the luxury of intelligent critiques, is a great way to learn the discipline of drafting. However, my greatest teacher has been the free hand mechanical drawings - the problem solving, *how you going to do it* sketches that proceed each task. Visualizing before it's there and studying the composition and forms before doing the flat work.

Using drawing as an everyday tool to make a living gives a new perspective. It is not an artsy activity, mysterious and obscure. Drawing in this light is simply using different language to explain how a task could be best performed, to work out problems in advance. Through the years I have had hundreds of employees. The best way to communicate how to build something is to have and do drawings, together with jargon. On the tougher items, like a roof, explaining very quickly with an isometric sketch the *how to do it* debugs it and gets an image of the task into mind.

I've taken it several steps further in my own work, where I use drawings to study different combinations of jointing the materials. How to let one material into the other while enhancing the form or graphic. I get a glimpse of how the shape will real in steel or stone and make changes as needed. In flat work I often draw the shape dozens of times prior to working on cloth, getting to know the shape and what I like about it, then how it will work with the sky shape or tree, etc.

The *how to do it* sketches help me sort out the best way to connect metal to stone. To study the steps needed to fabricate a sculpture prior to beginning. To visualize the sequence of constructing things.

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