

A work of art must never be an object but rather a product of ideas. From this I draw upon the statements of Composer Franz Joseph Haydn who explained the goal of his music was to create honest and integral works of art. Haydn was also the first to recognize the changing roll of the artist in relation to the art being created. His famous quote came at the private premiere hearing of Beethoven's 3rd symphony later to be known as Eroica. "Beethoven has put himself at the center of his art and music (art) is forever changed" For me this is the key criteria for making art. It first must have the integrity of being honest and it must revolve around my experiences and thoughts.

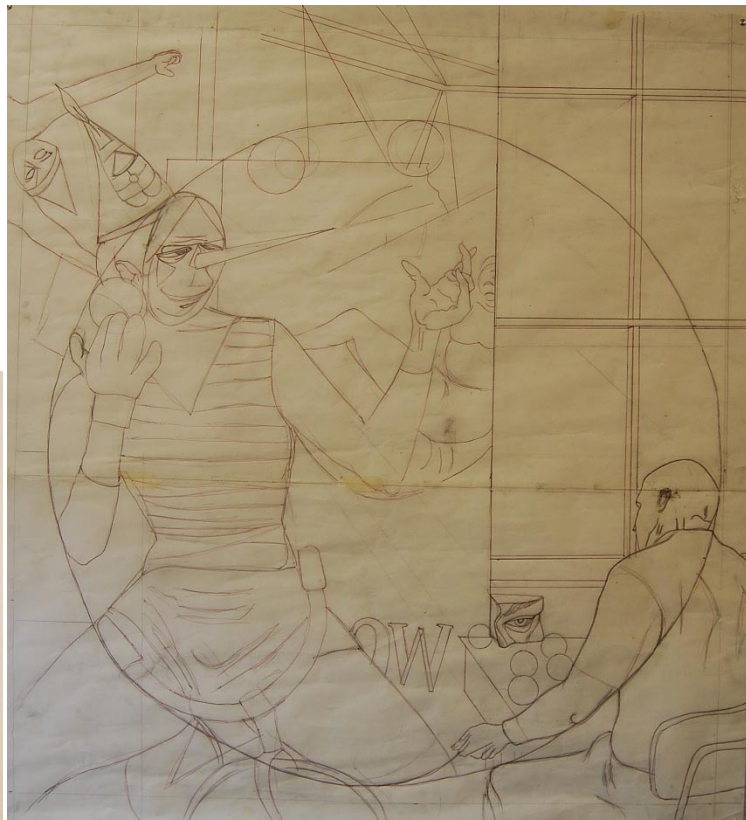
The start of Night Journey, the Amazing Juggler painting begins with two gifts. The first gift was received at the age of 16 by receiving a scholarship to take studio art classes at the Des Moines Art Center, Iowa's largest Art Museum. It was during my classes there I first encountered the most peculiar work of Yasuo Kuniyoshi's The Amazing juggler. The second gift from a very good friend was received on my 60th birthday which was a postcard of the painting The Amazing Juggler by Yasuo Kuniyoshi.



Receiving the Post card was as if I heard a song that I first heard long ago and was immediately transported through time and space to the moment I first heard the song or in this case first saw the painting. The next thought was how do I paint this moment of remembrance? How do you combine the objects of form with the formlessness of thought and time?

The most immediate solution comes from Swann's Way the first volume of Proust's novel In Search of Lost Time. When I reached the end of Swann's way I realized that Proust had created a perfect circle in his writing and he left me where I started at the beginning of the volume only beginning/continuing again with new characters of a different generation.

The subject of the painting must be a circle and all images must conform to the circle.



The painting was painted by Kuniyoshi in New York City in 1952 and was purchased by the Des Moines art Center where it is on display. In New York City I am remembering a painting I encountered in Des Moines Iowa. I was struck with how clearly I could see myself in front of this painting and a part of this painting. I am tethered to the past through memory and memory cuts through or dissolves time to a present moment.

The circle structure is symbolic of time because there is no beginning and no end and represents infinity. I combine the circle with my studio series which has become a vehicle to create overlapping realities. With the studio I can overlap the painting in Des Moines to the city of New York and the artist in New York to the painting in Des Moines. By using my studio motif I can establish the relationship of a great work of art to a student of the arts. I am sitting in a student's chair at a student's desk contemplating and remembering a work of art. My experience of remembrance and contemplation of the work of art becomes part of the life cycle of the painting and I must become part of the circle. It is the painting's life that is continuous or infinite and it is my relationship with the painting that is finite. What is real about the painting is the relationship will continue through others and so it is real and my experience is only momentary in the life/reality of the art. The painting created in thought/the dream becomes real and the artist and the viewers become the intangible dream.

Kuniyoshi's painting; my remembrance and interpretation of the painting must now conform to the idea of the circle structure.



A comparison between the painting and the drawing illustrates how the Kuniyoshi's painting is altered to fit the structure of the circle. The head is tipped back so the mask and hat reinforces the contour of the circle. The upper body is angled to the left and the shoulder and arm are rounded to continue the circle contour. The handle bars of the bike are moved to continue the circle contour and reshaped into a half circle to reinforce or create the plastic rhyme of repetition of circles throughout the composition. A leash is attached to the handle bars that continue the circle to the hand of the observer. The arm of the observer continues the circle through the back of the head. The continuation of the circle is unresolved through the studio window but is resumed through the placement of the balls being juggled.



The above two figures are added to the Kuniyoshi side of the composition with the figure on the right strengthening the circle. Reading from left to right and labeling them Zeitgeists the figure on the left is how I looked in high school and

the one on the right is how I looked when I encountered the painting in middle age. It is also my normal posture when looking at paintings. The decision was made to underpaint the figures in tones of gray as they would likely appear in dream without color.



In this stage of the painting you can see their placement as well as how they will be imbedded in to the Kuniyoshi painting or as I think of them as Zeitgeists (time ghosts, memory) you will see that three of the four juggling balls are in place but not fully resolved. The painting is still in dialog and in transition. A painting must

not be completely formed in its inception. It must be an open dialog subject to revision as it progresses.



Since this is my painting of a remembrance of Kuniyoshi's painting I am free from direct copying and am free to just paint and also include my interpretation of the original painting. I added a stronger sense of light to add more form in the juggler figure and to add more contrast against the twilight of the Cityscape and artist's studio. In the Kuniyoshi painting the artist created a symbolic circus scene. The clown/juggler is an adult fool that is often associated to our bellicose leaders who hold political or ruling power. The mask worn does not conceal but reveals the true identity of the character behind the mask. It portrays the character as

sinister and evil while the Pinocchio nose labels him as a liar and deceiver. I have now changed one of the balls to the earth to show how carelessly they jeopardize the lives and existence of all on our planet. In the background of the circus you see the acrobat tumbling out of control and the woman with distraught expression riding the runaway elephant. The tent of the big top is falling and its structure and sky is revealed. I use this open part of the painting and architectural structure of the tent to overlap and join the structure of the studio window and the twilight sky of New York City. Kuniyoshi's painting was painted in 1952 during the height of the Cold War and the fear of world annihilation. In 2011 the city has changed many times and our fears of violence and destructions have changed. To show the impermanence and change of the city that has move through both space and time I have painted the city in gray tones, over painted it in sky and scraped it back to ghost images twice followed by one transparent painting in color followed by a warm tone transparent painting of the city. The cityscape now contains the ghosts of the burning World Trade Centers with the smoke now forming part of the circle structure. I am now overlapping the two realities of the studio/cityscape into the reality of the Kuniyoshi painting. The fourth ball of the juggler is now the moon behind the moving/vibrating ghostly empire state building and the smoke crosses the moon drifting through the window into the Kuniyoshi painting and engulfing the earth/juggling ball. The brightness and shrill colors of the Kuniyoshi painting represents the dawning of American world dominance and abuse of power in contrast to the twilight cityscape wounded at the twilight of American power and influence.

The last piece of the composition puzzle is how should the studio and I maintain the tension naturally occurring in Kuniyoshi's painting and the contrasting opposition of the cityscape/window. The solution comes from Picasso in a painting where he paints the model/subject of the painting but leaves the artist of the painting in the nonexistent/unfinished state of the drawing. It is the subject of the painting that is important and not the artist. I am present but not of a permanent substance in comparison to Kuniyoshi's painting or the idea and reality of my own painting. The images of me in the Kuniyoshi painting are not real as well. They are constructed from the substance of memory and do not exist

outside of me. The string that is attached to the bicycle handle is actually coming from the hand of the figure on the left, continues to the hand of the middle figure which is overlapped by the hand of the figure at the desk on the right. The remembrances are all connected directly to me and I will pull them away as I am projecting in my portrayal of self/future nonexistence.

The overall tone of the studio and cityscape is dark and blue which is opposite of the overriding orange tones of the Kuniyoshi painting. On the table there are 4 balls and each consists of opposite colors. Opposites are what the artist must juggle in creating a painting. The fifth sphere next to the eye is a bubble which is the traditional symbol of the brevity of life. The eye is the primary sensory organ of the visual artist and is the only organ of the body that is unchanging through life. The visual artist lives through the eye and all hope of eternal remembrance rest upon that eye but another eye will take its place.

The appeal or power of this painting rests in the genius of Kuniyoshi's painting. What I hope to accomplish in this work is the universal experience of remembrance expressed through a personal experience. I do not claim the authorship of Kuniyoshi's image but I can express my gratitude that Kuniyoshi's Ideas continue to live, change and always be relevant and real.