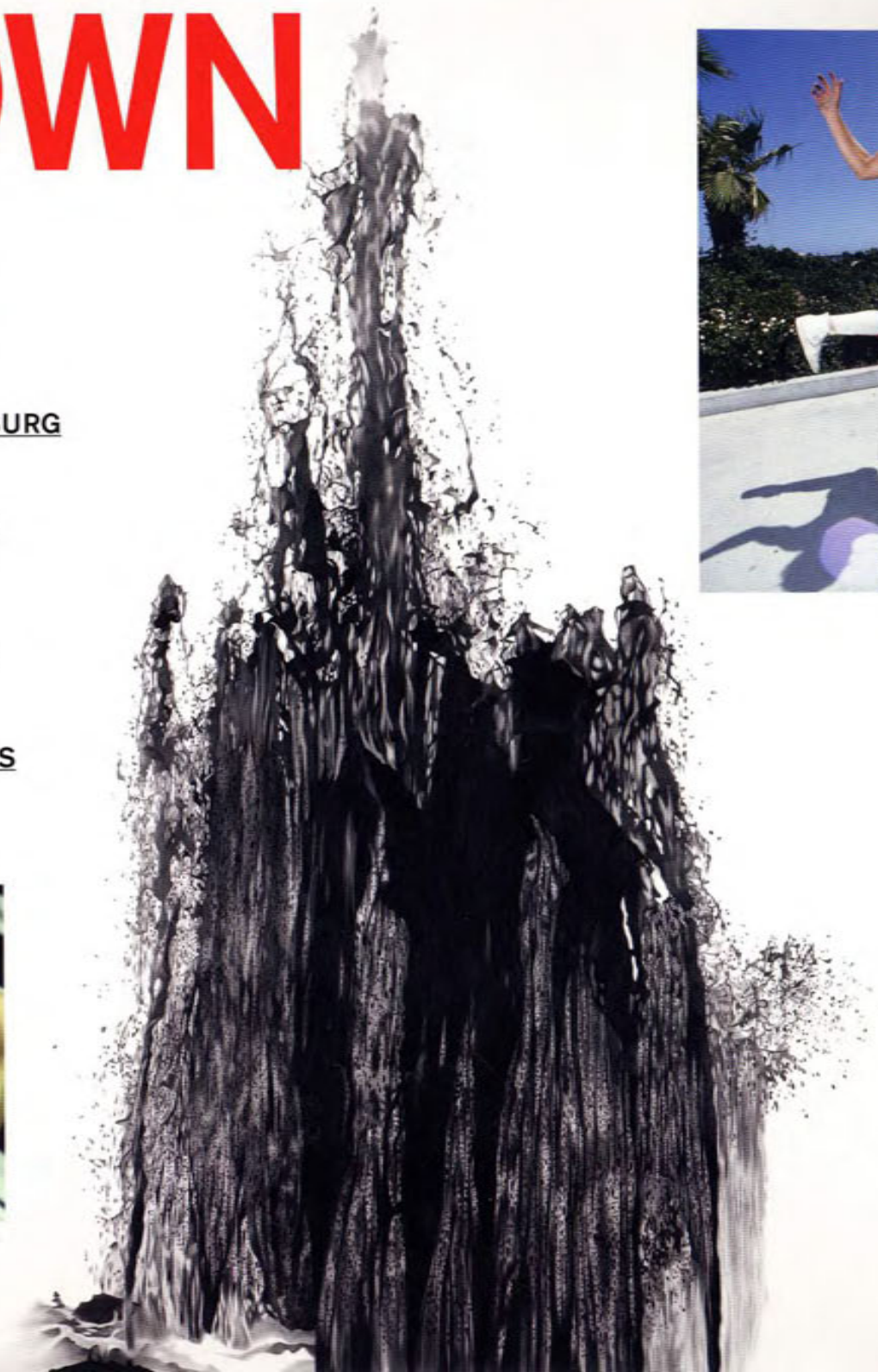


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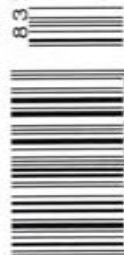
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TAME IMPALA
ALEX GROSS
STEVIE WILLIAMS
RAPHAEL ZARKA
PSYCHEMAGIK
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The New York Diaries

The breathtaking diagrammatic paintings Paul Laffoley (b. 1940) has created over the past 45 years are clearly enough to study and sink your teeth into – you could easily spend days mulling over the various references, concepts, and all the scientific and/or cosmological questions raised therein – and so in order to not overwhelm anyone even more, we asked the visionary artist and architect no more than one question: What were his initial plans when he first came to NYC in the early sixties before moving on into his infamous Visionary Cell in Boston? And though we certainly wanted to keep things short and crisp (so you've got more time to look at the images), and didn't expect him to give us the whole story, he eventually, in true Paul Laffoley style, did just that.

I really had no plan when I went to New York City to live for the first time, but I did have motivations. My first motivation was RAGE. I had just been "grand juried" out of The Harvard Graduate School of Design for being over-involved in my architectural design studies. My second motivation was CURIOSITY. For years my parents would bring me to NYC for short trips. My father's idea was to demonstrate to my mother the advantages of living permanently in a NYC hotel, which she did not want to do. So my mother always insisted that we stay at Tudor City (when it was a hotel complex). She did this to rub it in to my father for his failure to purchase a one-quarter interest in Tudor City when it was first offered. And she would have provided the money, which she brought to the marriage. Today with the building of the UN, Tudor City is worth multiples of billions of dollars. My curiosity was of a different nature rather than just money. Every time I went to NYC, I would receive a spiritual lift, it's like no other city I ever visited. It still works for me to this day. It was like watching one of my favorite movies such as "The Fountainhead" starring Gary Cooper and Patricia Neal. It was the story of an architect who got

kicked out of design school but spent his entire career in NYC, and finally became a success against all odds. It was the best story Ayn Rand ever wrote. I, of course, wondered how I would feel on my own in the Big Apple. What I discovered was that I became used to the speed of thought and deed of NYC and the fact that it contains more opportunities per cubic foot of space than anywhere else on earth.

Today most advanced urban areas resemble NYC. Even a little town like Portland, Maine has street façades that look like they were lifted right out of the West Village. When I came back to Boston for a visit, it was like entering a time warp. I had lost my place to go and the rest of the world had slowed to a stop. It took me 3.5 years of living continuously in Boston to recapture my "New York City Of The Mind," in the Lawrence Ferlinghetti sense. I lived twice more in NYC, but remembering what happened the first time, I would live within a very confined space (one of the 18 sections of NYC). The old cliché that, "New York City is a great place to visit, but I would not live there" turns out to be true. Once there, you have no place to go!

My third motivation was the seeking of ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE. Every once in a while in your life you run across someone who is absolutely wrong about everything. Even in our relative world this is true, but the absolute in The R.W. is of an inverse nature. That is often the reason why most people do not believe in positive absolutes, except for committed politicians or faith healers. Since in college I was accused of being one of these "inverse absolute knowledgers," I myself carefully watched for their characteristics. It was my uncle John who fit the pattern. (I often wondered if it ran in families). He was an architect whose career did not bear close examination, for reasons, which I will not go into right now. When I walked into his office I realized that he had already heard of my fiasco at Harvard. He held up one hand with fingers open. This is the universal sign for Stop. His first words to me were: "You cannot work here." His second words were: "I have no advice for you, except you should grow a beard and get married." Neither of which I have ever done. But on his desk was a copy of the latest issue of *Progressive Architecture*. That was a magazine that no longer exists. On the cover was an article about an architect that was never mentioned at Harvard or anywhere else that I know of. It was an article about Frederick J. Kiesler, who in his youth was the youngest member of "De Stijl" and later worked at Bauhaus. In New York City he was a member of the permanent avant-garde known as "Mr. Space Man." He was also a "Ladies Man" despite his size: He was 4 feet 10 inches

tall. He always said he was the proof "that size does not matter," especially when you design "egg"-shaped houses. My uncle was noticing how my eyes were bulging out like a 1940s cartoon character, or those of Jim Carrey in *The Mask*. Then speaking in such a voice hoping to disguise his wrath, my uncle said, "Under no circumstances should you ever try to meet that nut."

Back home I told my parents of my intention to leave for NYC. My father immediately went into a tirade about there being no gravity. My mother took me aside and explained that it was his way of distracting me from leaving home and him. She added he always had a fear of being abandoned by his father who would often leave for NYC without warning. "You had better get up early, and go to South Station and get a train to NYC. And leave it to me to convince him that you are nothing like his father." Before I went to bed I packed the smallest suitcase I could find, and added my mother's mad money of \$1,000 to get started and went to sleep. But of course I couldn't. It was April and sap was beginning to rise and so did I when it was 5:30a.m. The buses in my hometown were starting to run. By 6:00a.m. I was in Harvard Square and on the subway train to South Station where I had just enough time when I got there for an orange juice and a bottle of milk. By 7:00a.m. I was sitting in my seat, buying my ticket and drifting off into "Blessed, Blessed Oblivion" of the train ride that lasted five and a half hours. I was awakened abruptly by a lurch and the conductor shouting "Grand Central Station New York, everybody off, last stop!"

I picked my way through the crowds and since it was lunchtime, I went directly to the Oyster Bar in honor of my father and the fact that he brought me here so many times before. He loved raw oysters and since it was April and it still had an "R" in it I figured I was still okay, but just in case I ordered oyster stew. In those days they made the stew with heavy cream and at least 16 fat oysters. Now that was a tasty lunch smothered in real oyster crackers.

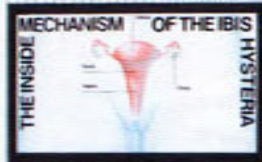
A couple of years later my father would die from eating oysters out of season. At the bank where he was president one of his colleagues who owned a cottage in Chatham on the Cape would offer him three free weeks next to the nearby oyster bed. At the end of the last week in August, he would stand next to the bed and when the oysterman would come around, my father would entice the man to sell him fresh oysters. Each time the man would explain that it was very dangerous to your health. These oysters are two years old and are to be shipped to "Oyster Bay" Long Island

FEMALE

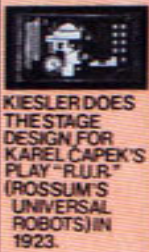
THE SEXUALITY OF ROBOTS

MALE

HUMAN BEINGS. TULPAS ARE ASPECTS OF THE PHYSICS OF CONSCIOUSNESS....



EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849), H.P. LOVECRAFT (1890-1937), ARTHUR CLARKE



(1917-2008), MARVIN MINSKY (1927-) BELIEVE THAT ALIEN ROBOTS ARE MOONS



MOONS ARE COSMIC TULPAS IN THE SAME WAY THAT SOULS ARE THE TULPAS OF

HOMAGE TO: FRITZ LANG, BRIGITTE EVA GISELA SCHITTENHELM, OVID, SIREN, KAREL ČAPEK, RUDOLPH KLEIN-ROGGE, THEA VON HARBOU, JULIEN OFFRAY DE LA METTRIE, ISSAC ASIMOV, CARLO COLLODI, FREDERICK J. KIESLER, WALT DISNEY, MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY, VENETIA BURNE PHAIR, APHRODITE.

Sexuality of Robots, 2009/2010
Acrylic, Collage and Letraset on Board
x 30 inches.

THE TIME MACHINE: **GEOCHRONMECHANE**: FROM THE EARTH

THE TIME MACHINE IS POSITIONED FOR OPERATION AT THE LIMIT OF THE NATURAL FRAME OF REFERENCE OF THE EARTH.

THE FRAME OF REFERENCE OF THE EARTH REACHES GEOSTATIONARY ORBIT ALTITUDE - 24,000 MILES ABOVE SEA LEVEL.

THE CHAKRA-PENDULA-TIME-OSCILLATOR

HOMAGE TO: H.G. WELLS, ALFRED JARRY, J.B.L. FOUCAULT, N.A. KOZYREV, HENRI BERGSON, J.W. DUNNE, F.J. TIPLER, GEORGE VAN TASSEL, R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER

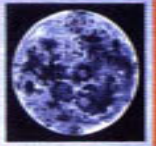
Chronmechane: The Time Machine from the Earth, 1990
 graph in colored inks, with corrections by the artist in colored pencils
 entry acid-free rag, Edition of 75
 er: 32 x 32 in. / 81.4 x 81.4 cm, Image: 28 x 28 in. / 71.2 x 71.2 cm

the Solitron, 1996-97
 Oil, Acrylic, Lettering, India Ink on Canvas
 8 1/2 x 73 1/2 x 3 1/2 in.



THE FORMULA: 1. TIME, 2. TELECOM, 3. ENTROPY, 4. MOVEMENT, 5. HORIZONTALITY, 6. BASE MATERIALISM

ID QUOD INFERIUS



QUICKSILVER



SULPHUR

PERPETUAL STILLNESS (COAGULA)

THE FIXATION OF MERCURY

(SOLVE) PERPETUAL MOTION



COLDNESS

MODIST LIFE



HEAT

DRYNESS

MAGNETISM = FLUXIONS

POLARONS = ELECTRICITY

THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE SOLITRON IS THE MOBIUS SEAL OF SOLOMON

THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE SOLITRON IS THE MOBIUS SEAL OF SOLOMON

THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE SOLITRON IS THE MOBIUS SEAL OF SOLOMON

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THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE SOLITRON IS THE MOBIUS SEAL OF SOLOMON



EVIL = MAGNETISM OF GRAVITY



THE NIGHTMARE

THE POSSIBLE PROGRESS OF THE SOLITRON FROM THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO THE FINAL PHYSICAL FORM OF THE SOLITRON

THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS
1. THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	2. THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	3. THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	4. THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	5. THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS
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16. THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	17. THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	18. THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	19. THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS	20. THE SOLITRON'S PROGRESS

THE OPERATION OF THE SOLITRON



THE DREAM OF THE ARCHITECT



ELECTRICITY OF LEVITY = GOOD

SICUT QUOD SUPERIUS

THE FORMULA: 1. ETERNITY, 2. TELEOLOGY, 3. SYNTROPY, 4. PULSATON, 5. VERTICALITY, 6. EXALTED SPIRITUALITY



*The Physically Alive Structured Environment: The Bauhauroque, 2004
India Ink, photo-collage, and vinyl lettering on acid free board
31 1/8 x 31 1/8 in.*



*Mind Body Alpha, 1989
Oil, acrylic and vinyl lettering on canvas
73 1/2 x 73 1/2 in.*

for two more years. But my father would never listen and a year and a half later he would be dead from advanced cirrhosis of his liver. At his deathbed his attending physician would keep asking me what I did to make my father drink so heavily. I told him my father never drank anything but tea, coffee, and milk. It was the oysters that got him. The doctor never believed me or my mother.

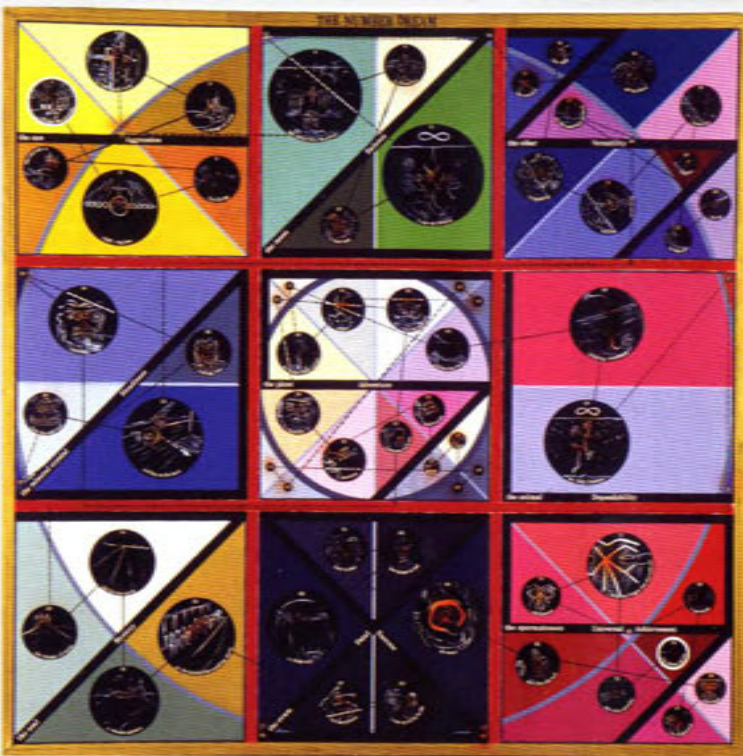
Suddenly I was out on East 42nd Street and I went in to a magazine shop and bought the latest issue of *Art News* and hailed a cab going south on Fifth Avenue. When we got to 34th Street the cabbie turned right. He knew where I was going. We crossed town between Eighth and Ninth Avenues and the driver did a u-turn in the middle of the street so he ended up in front of The Sloan House (the local YMCA). I asked the driver, "How did you know where I wanted to go?" His answer was brief. "I've seen them come and I've seen them go just as fast. But they all enter the City starting at The 'Y.' And I noticed you have a copy of *Art News*. You're just another starry-eyed kid thinking your going to make it here. Well, good luck and thanks for the 'fin'." I checked in and was sent to a room on the 10th floor where I could see the top of The Empire State Building. I started to sort things out. Since I was

going to be here for a long time I had better look for a place to stay and some kind of a job. I felt stuffy in room 1013, so I opened the two side-by-side windows and looked out. From the sidewalk there was someone looking up at my windows, but I did not pay attention to him.

Now back to work. I was looking for artists to cold-call to help give me advice. In my room was a telephone, and there was a Manhattan phone book. Thumbing through *Art News* I made a list of people to call. But the only artist who actually had his phone number listed was someone named Andy Warhol. So I called him and explained my situation and my desire to work for Kiesler. Between every other sentence I had to endure listening to one of his pet phrases "Oh how marvelous", about 15 times, and another phrase, "Big and beautiful," used adjectively. And then he said, "Oh Wow! I just remembered I do have an opening right now in my 'outfit.' Would you like to work for me in exchange for a place to sleep?" "Yes," was my answer. But before I could ask him what I would be doing, he continued with instructions to meet him at The Allan Stone Gallery. "Do you know it?" Answering to him in the negative, he continued, "Well, it is at 5 East 82nd Street on the second floor near The Met." I responded

by saying, "Do you mean the Metropolitan Opera?" "No, you dummy, it is The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Don't you know anything? I am going to an opening that I am in. Bring some stuff for me to see; I will be there in two hours." Fortunately I brought along a big paper bag with some samples of my ink drawings that I was doing for Mirko Basaldella (the sculptor in residence at The Carpenter Center at Harvard) and a small model of a factory that got a lot of interest, before I was told to destroy it by one of my teachers. I put all that stuff in my now empty suitcase. Just then I heard a loud knock on my door. Opening it I recognized the person who was looking up at me from the street. Thinking fast I said, "I did not know that peeping toms made house calls in New York?" Flustered by my remark, he still pursued his anti-suicide speech. He worked for The Y as a counselor for the building "headshrinker," and realizing I was older than he, he offered to call the "Big Guy." I assured him that I was not a "jumper." If I was going to do that I would go off The Empire State Building like the rest of the "suckers." I have just arrived in The City and I have a job offer, and I am late to the initial meeting uptown. Before I left for The Allan Stone, I realized that I had taken my first bite of The Big Apple.

The Number Dream, 1968
Oil, Acrylic, Ink and Lettering on Canvas
73 1/2 x 73 1/2 inches



The World Self, 1967
Oil, Acrylic, Lettering on Canvas
61 1/2 x 61 3/8 in.



- part 2.

By the time my cab pulled up to East 82nd Street it was almost 5:00p.m. I ran up to the second floor so as not to be late. But inside the main gallery space, it was packed solid with New York's Finest Culture Vultures. It was advertised as one of the first "Pop Art" shows in the city. I then asked some guy if he could spot Warhol for me in the throng. "Oh, that bitch, he never comes on time and mostly never comes." Breathing a sigh, I realized I was not late. Then some smart-aleck smelly long-legged girl shoved me out of her way, saying, "The train station is 40 blocks south of here." This was a reference to the fact that I was walking around with a suitcase. She then went back to screaming and waving her hand wildly in the air above her head in order to attract the attention of all the other nearby women. This, of course, was the cultural forerunner of today's phenomenon of a crowd of close packed people silently texting each other, while believing that overt conversation is the equivalent of injecting each other with social "thalidomide."

As I was making my way to the next gallery room where I was told contained lots of "Andy's" paintings, I actually saw someone I recognized:

It was "Verushka," the top German model and part-time countess who was rumored to be so tall that she had to be brought down to earthly size by having two inches of ankle bone removed from each leg. And that is why she always had colorful leg wraps to disguise the scars. How I knew this was the result of my mother's reading habits. She was a faithful reader of *Vogue* magazine, as well as *Lady's Home Journal*, *House Beautiful* (started by the famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright), and *Reader's Digest*. My father would never allow what he called "cheap trashy junk" in the house. Since she subscribed by mail she would receive them by post and have them read before my father came home each night. Her stash was hidden away in the back of closets she knew he would never frequent. But I was different. Being a natural snoop and an only child I found out what she was doing. And enjoyed years of reading my favorite magazine after school, *Vogue*. I always thought the images of women were much more beautiful in *Vogue* than in *Playboy*. This led me to pursue elegant and stunning European women for the rest of my life.

Inside the next space I noticed it was surprisingly clear. This was the result of the gallery director who was shepherding "suckers" (prospective clients) around the

room. He had a clipboard and a pen for taking notes. I was getting tired of looking like a dude in my Brooks Brothers suit holding on to a suitcase. So I decided when I thought no one was looking I would simply place the case up against a wall right under a light bulb mounted on the wall going off and on, entitled "Flash In The Pan" and moved back into obscurity. When the man with the clipboard passed by "The Light Bulb," saying to his client, "This is by a popular Ukrainian artist who went blind from staring at American light fixtures and then committed suicide. This is an entry from our Chicago affiliate, and I am not allowed to reveal his name until after purchase (translation: the guy could not pronounce the name)." "Uh ha," was the response from the mark, but he added, "What is the price of this interesting old suitcase below?" I thought this was a jibe at the fact that in another room every thing in it made you think of an antique shop. Without stopping the director spoke faster than an interchange between Rush Lymbauh and Stephanie Miller, "Now this piece is by an emerging artist who has been heavily influenced by the famous Dadaist Marcel Duchamp, who worked a lot with suitcases. Notice how "Vokabon" (this was a reverse spelling of the name Nobakov) has simply let the handle turn toward the wall, transforming this old case

into a sculpture called 'Lonesome Traveler: homage to Roy Orbison'. The price is a mere \$7000."

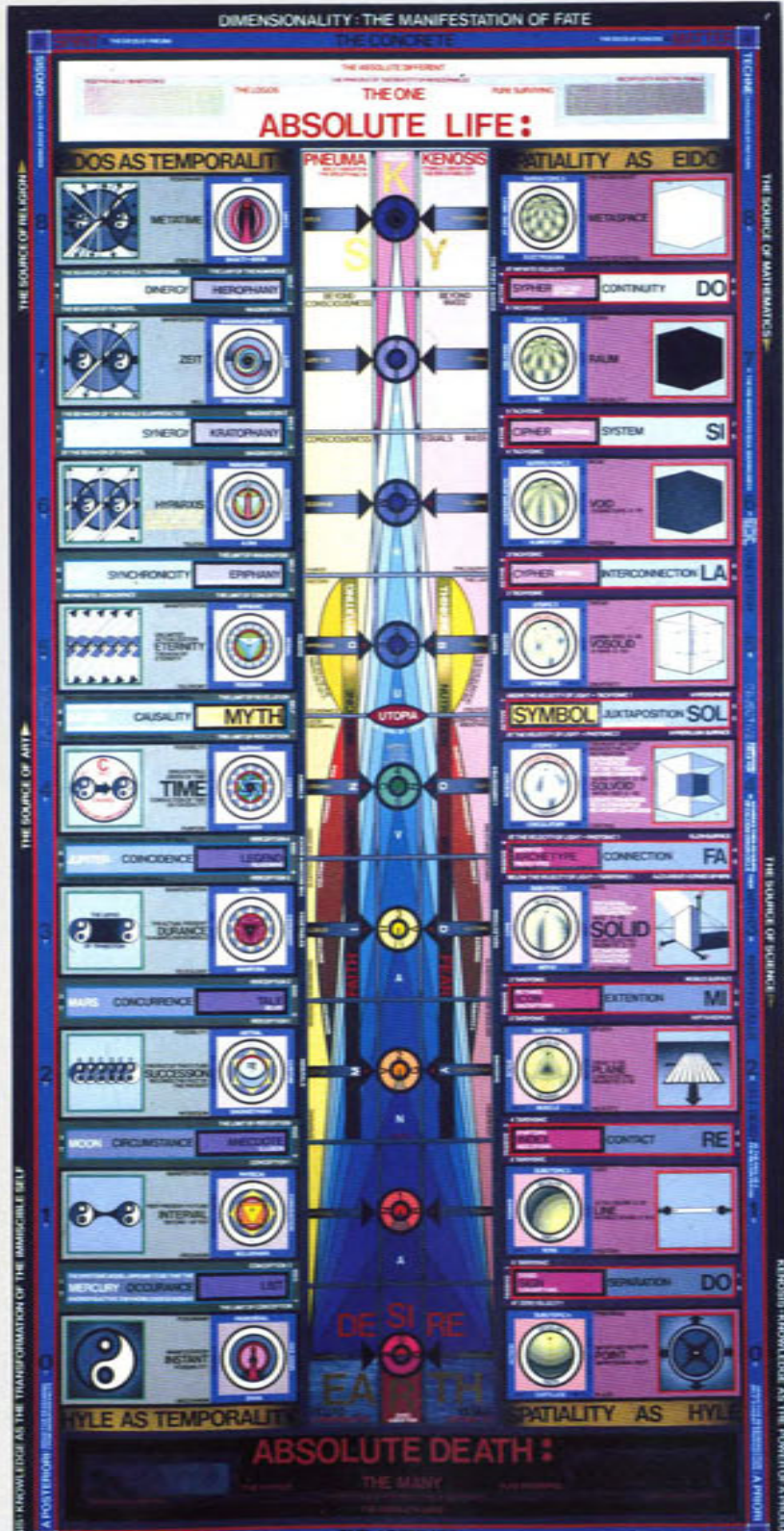
I thought to myself, "Holy shit, I have not been in New York more than four hours and already I have made a good portion of money." I started to advance forward to declare myself as "Vokabon" when a guy who looked like a cab driver looking for a fare who had stifled him in the crowd pushed me aside and began to shout out, "Stop, you fool, that is not in the show, it's just a stupid suitcase that someone brought in off the street and put there." He was pointing to me. At that exact moment Warhol entered the room, surveyed the situation and exclaimed with obvious glee, "Oh my God, I'm going to start working with suitcases tomorrow."

When the dust cleared "Andy" said that old geezer was Ad Reinhardt, one of New York's big art stars. But Warhol looked like a young-old man with his white hair himself. Later I found out it was a wig and he had a snap implanted in his scalp. Right then he looked like he had just crawled out from under a rock. Warhol gathered the very embarrassed Allan Stone and myself with my suitcase in hand. We all walked around the corner to Madison Ave. and into a coffee shop. Andy ordered a Coke, I had a tea, and Allan had a black coffee. After a few sips of our respective beverages, Allan said, "Well, let's see what is in your "mysterious" case." As I opened the lid, Andy stuck his nose right into the action. The top object was my "Light Industry" building that was to be built along Rte. 128, one of the circumferential highways around Boston. He pulled it out before I could stop him, and he exclaimed, "This is beautiful, you should start working with architectural models. No one has done that yet." I just nodded my head silently. (I never did.) Meanwhile Allan was removing about 37 ink on board drawings, sized at 20" x 30". He started admiring them for being renderings but with great feeling. Andy began to scowl at the word "feeling," and repeated what I read about him in *Art News*. He said, "Some artists paint what they feel, I, of course, feel nothing." With that everyone got up to leave. Allan went back to his gallery; Andy and I started to hail a cab. When one stopped I entered first. Andy was held back by three women who were hissing like cobras from Medusa's head. He said that they worked as fashion designers for *Vogue* and he used to follow them around for work. They now are just talentless fools trying to get back at me for becoming a big star. The cab went east on 84th and then up Third Ave. to 119th and back down Lexington St. to East 118th. We pulled up in front of what looked like a huge fire station that had been in a burn out. "This is my studio, but I am looking for something else." All during the trip I kept asking Andy, "What will I be doing for you?" All he would say was, "You will see."

Words: Renko Heuer

paullaffoley.net

Thanks to Douglas Walla at Kent Fine Art



Dimensionality: The Manifestation of Fate, 1992
Acrylic, Ink, Lettering on Canvas
1/2 x 49 1/2 in.