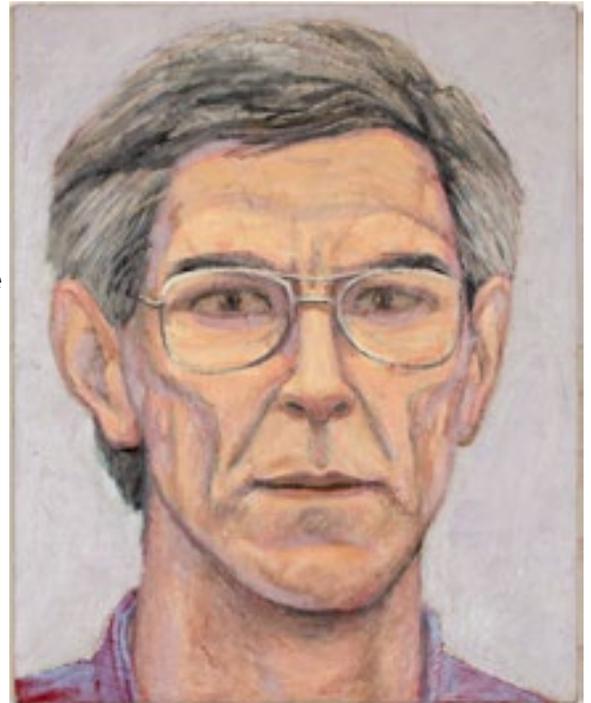


≡≡≡ A LEGACY OF OPPORTUNITY

BY ELDRED HUDSON
CHAIR, DEPT OF ART & ART HISTORY

//////////////////// The UNC Charlotte Department of Art & Art History is honored to celebrate this collection of compelling work by Professor Emeritus Rod MacKillop, generously bequeathed to us by Rod's longtime colleague, friend, and fellow artist, Eric Anderson. Both Eric and another colleague, Professor Emeritus and art collector Gary Ferraro, share an enduring admiration for their friend Rod's work, which led them to initiate this wonderful opportunity to help fund student scholarships in Rod's memory. We are grateful for their vision and tireless efforts and look forward to supporting the artistic development of studio art majors for years to come.

As one of five units in the College of Arts + Architecture, the Department of Art & Art History is committed to providing classroom experiences that encourage our students to rigorously explore ideas and to take creative risks, as they respond to an ever-changing and oftentimes challenging world. We are equally committed to providing opportunities for students to establish pre-professional studio practice outside the classroom and to advance their work through creative research and public exhibition. Lastly, the Department highly values and supports faculty instructors whose own professional practice and research consistently strengthen their teaching - a commitment that coincides perfectly with the example Rod set for his students during his lifetime of influential teaching.



The generous financial gift from Rod's family, and the revenue generated from the sale of his work, will have lasting significant impact on the lives of many emerging creative artists in our Department - individuals who, upon graduation, will become our future art advocates and art makers. To date, the combined contributions made in Rod's memory will surpass all other individual scholarship resources supporting our majors. Please consider joining these efforts by purchasing an original artwork by Rod. Your purchase will enrich your own collection, support the arts, and help deserving students develop strong visual voices to contribute to the collective art world and society at large. //////////////////////////////////////

benefitting student scholarships

LIVE AUCTION

1

Man in a Green Suit '83

W 20" H 24" *acrylic*

VALUE \$1700
OPENING BID \$935
BUY IT NOW n/a



2

Box #9 '77

W 21.5" H 23.5" *acrylic*

VALUE \$700
OPENING BID \$385
BUY IT NOW \$595

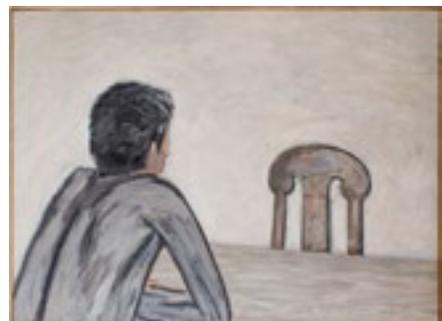


3

Empty Chair unknown

W 60" H 44" *acrylic*

VALUE \$1500
OPENING BID \$825
BUY IT NOW \$1275



4

4 Piece Self-Portrait '88

W 26.25" H 104"

acrylic

VALUE \$4500

OPENING BID \$2800

BUY IT NOW \$3900



5

Shadow '06-'07

W 32" H 42"

acrylic

VALUE \$1500

OPENING BID \$825

BUY IT NOW \$1275



6

Sleeping Man

'76

W 60" H 46"

acrylic

VALUE \$1350

OPENING BID \$750

BUY IT NOW \$1150



7

Self Portrait

'00

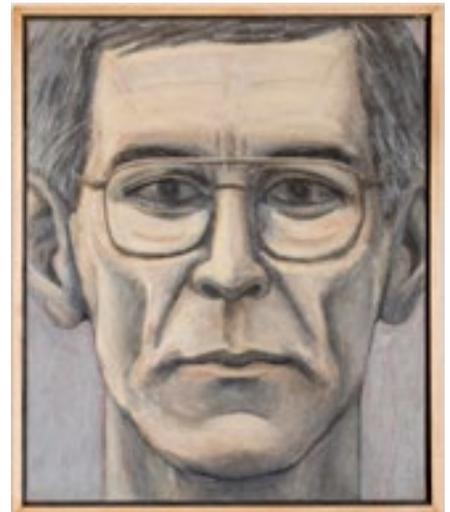
W 20" H 24"

acrylic

VALUE \$1100

OPENING BID \$605

BUY IT NOW \$935



8

Box #3

unknown

W 16" H 18"

acrylic

VALUE \$750

OPENING BID \$425

BUY IT NOW \$640



9

Hedge

'01

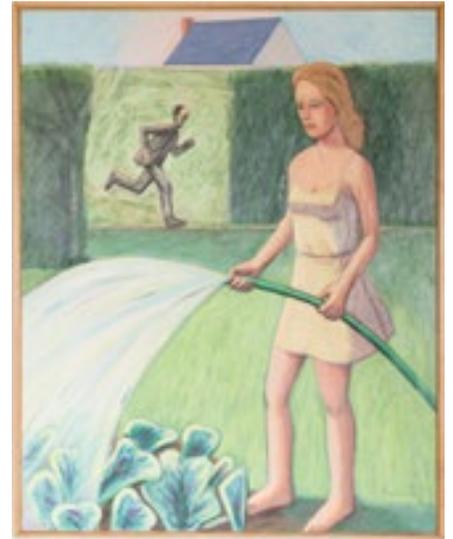
W 48" H 60"

acrylic

VALUE \$2500

OPENING BID \$1375

BUY IT NOW \$2125



10

House #2

'80

W 91.5" H 73.5"

oil on linen

VALUE \$4000

OPENING BID \$2200

BUY IT NOW \$3400



SILENT AUCTION



3 Men on
an Escalator

W 22"
H 24"

VALUE \$1100

OPENING BID \$605

BUY IT NOW \$935

acrylic



House of Memory
and Desire

W 49"
H 46.5"

VALUE \$2200

OPENING BID \$1210

BUY IT NOW \$1870

acrylic on masonite



Grey Nude

W 16"
H 20"

VALUE \$500

OPENING BID \$275

BUY IT NOW \$425

acrylic



Man with
Yellow Tie

W 24.25"
H 28.25"

VALUE \$700

OPENING BID \$385

BUY IT NOW \$595

acrylic

benefitting student scholarships



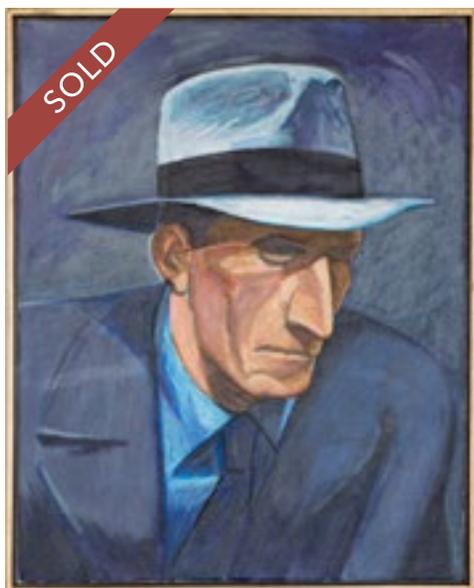
Swan Dive #3 W 11.25"
H 15"

VALUE \$550
OPENING BID \$300
BUY IT NOW \$470
acrylic on paper



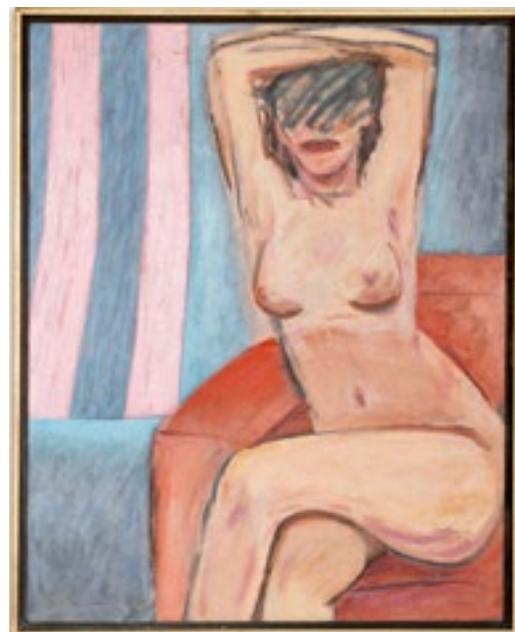
Gray Figure W 18.25"
H 22.75"

VALUE \$150
OPENING BID \$85
BUY IT NOW \$130
acrylic on paper



Hat Man W 24"
(After Edward Hopper) H 30.37"

VALUE \$1250
OPENING BID \$690
BUY IT NOW \$1065
acrylic



Veil W 24"
H 30"

VALUE \$1200
OPENING BID \$660
BUY IT NOW \$1020
acrylic



Untitled **W 36.5"**
H 29.5"

VALUE \$1200
OPENING BID \$660
BUY IT NOW \$1020
charcoal & acrylic on paper



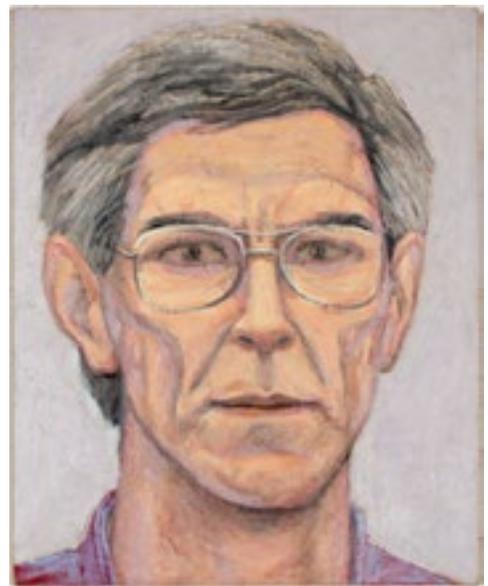
Power Tie **W 22"**
H 30"

VALUE \$600
OPENING BID \$330
BUY IT NOW \$510
charcoal on paper



Untitled **W 22"**
H 30"

VALUE \$700
OPENING BID \$385
BUY IT NOW \$595
acrylic & charcoal on strathmore



Untitled Self Portrait **W 16"**
H 20"

VALUE \$900
OPENING BID \$495
BUY IT NOW \$765
acrylic



Untitled

W 22.5"
H 30"

VALUE \$500

OPENING BID \$250

BUY IT NOW \$385

collage & charcoal on paper



Floating Man and
Moon Skull

W 54"
H 40"

VALUE \$1600

OPENING BID \$880

BUY IT NOW \$1360

acrylic



Spirit Bodies

W 48"
H 60"

VALUE \$2100

OPENING BID \$1155

BUY IT NOW \$1785

acrylic



Running Man

W 17"
H 24"

VALUE \$100

OPENING BID \$100

BUY IT NOW \$135

lithograph



ART

W 22.25"
H 20.75"

VALUE \$175
OPENING BID \$95
BUY IT NOW \$150



Tennis Player

W 16"
H 18"

VALUE \$475
OPENING BID \$260
BUY IT NOW \$405



Untitled

W 7"
H 9"

VALUE \$225
OPENING BID \$125
BUY IT NOW \$190



Untitled

W 23"
H 28"

VALUE \$450
OPENING BID \$245
BUY IT NOW \$385



Untitled

W 18"
H 24"

VALUE \$150
OPENING BID \$85
BUY IT NOW \$130



Untitled

W 22.25"
H 30"

VALUE \$150
OPENING BID \$85
BUY IT NOW \$130



House #1

W 20"
H 16"

VALUE \$475
OPENING BID \$260
BUY IT NOW \$405



Untitled

W 11"
H 15"

VALUE \$350
OPENING BID \$190
BUY IT NOW \$300



Untitled **W 11"**
H 15"

VALUE \$250
OPENING BID \$135
BUY IT NOW \$210



Untitled **W 22"**
H 26"

VALUE \$450
OPENING BID \$245
BUY IT NOW \$385



Untitled **W 21"**
H 27"

VALUE \$325
OPENING BID \$180
BUY IT NOW \$280



Untitled **W 11"**
H 15"

VALUE \$250
OPENING BID \$135
BUY IT NOW \$210



Untitled

W 11.5"
H 15"

VALUE \$300

OPENING BID \$165

BUY IT NOW \$255



Untitled

W 19"
H 24"

VALUE \$150

OPENING BID \$85

BUY IT NOW \$130



Untitled

W 7"
H 10"

VALUE \$300

OPENING BID \$165

BUY IT NOW \$255



FOOTBALLERS



W 12"

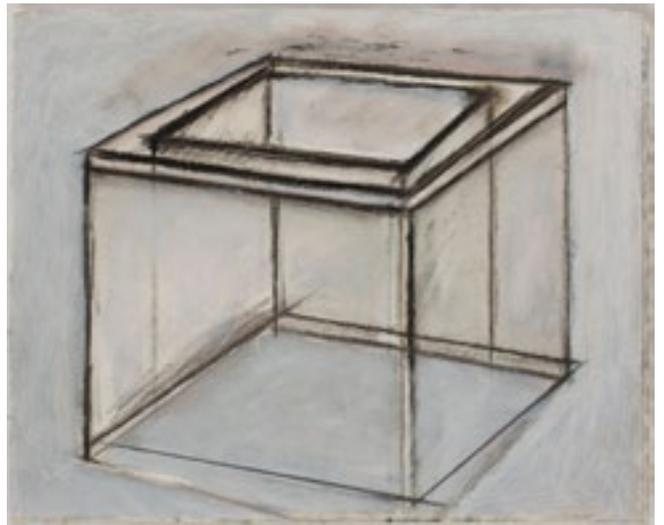
H 16"

VALUE \$750/set

OPENING BID \$415

BUY IT NOW \$640

BOX SERIES



W 13.5"

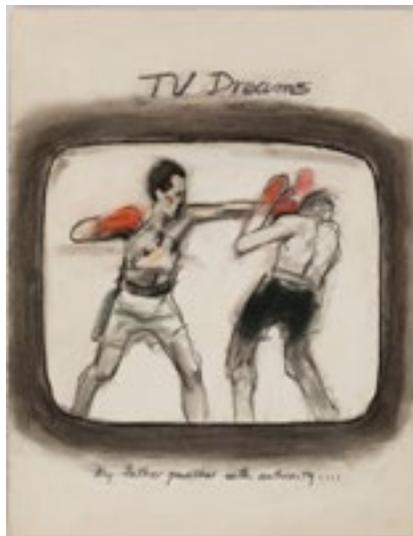
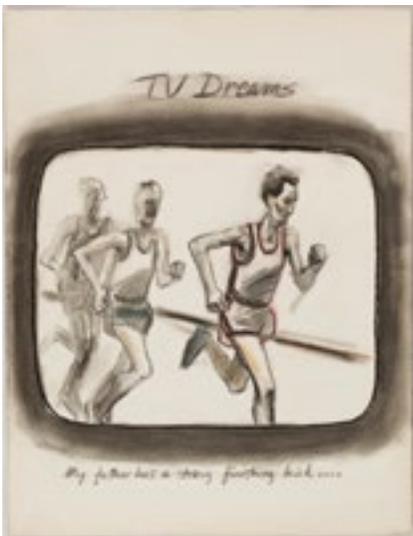
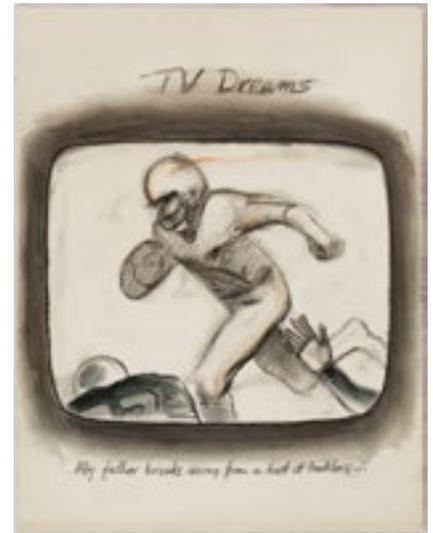
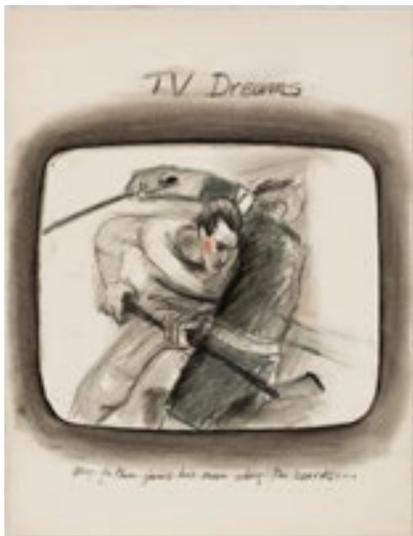
H 10.75"

VALUE \$325/set

OPENING BID \$180

BUY IT NOW \$280

TV DREAMS

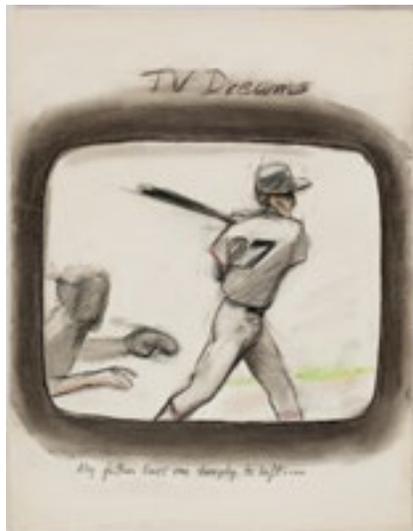
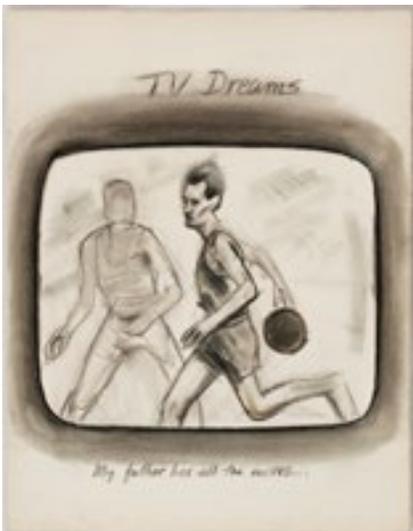


W 11"

H 14"

VALUE \$375 ea/2450 for set

OPENING BID \$205 each



silent auction

benefitting student scholarships



SYMBOL & PSYCHE:

THE ART OF ROD MACKILLOP

© 2018

BY DR. LILI CORBUS

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR EMERITA

////////// Rod MacKillop's artworks demonstrate an inquisitive spirit and personal quest for contemporary signs of meaning that evoke feelings of longing and desire, as well as alienation and estrangement. Seen here collectively, the works establish his unique development of symbols, wry social commentary, and skillful technique.

In 1993, when I was hired to teach art history at UNC Charlotte's art department, Rod was one of its senior painting instructors, having arrived 20 years earlier. His dry wit and quiet demeanor were welcome characteristics in a colleague, and his dedication to teaching was admirable.

Even now, almost two years after his death in 2016 from Alzheimer's disease, it speaks to Rod's commitment as an educator that he continually sought to create classes, programs, exhibiting opportunities, and, now, endowments benefitting art students. He was born into a family of teachers. As Rod wrote, when he was nominated for a teaching award in 1997, "I identify very strongly with my father's love of teaching [music], and the excitement that my mother felt teaching young children how to read for the first time is echoed in my own continued enjoyment of teaching introductory painting." He saw himself as both practitioner and educator, roles that continually reinforced one another.

Rod was born in Northampton, Massachusetts, on June 15, 1940, and grew up in the Boston area. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Tufts University (1961) and his Master of Arts from the Boston Museum School (1968). He taught throughout his life, first in Boston and then at UNC Charlotte from 1973 until 2003, when he retired. In Charlotte, Rod was represented by the Jerald Melberg Gallery in the mid-1980s and then by Hodges Taylor Gallery. He exhibited his work in group and solo shows at the Weatherspoon Art Museum in Greensboro, Alternative Museum in New York City, Asheville Art Museum, Raleigh Contemporary Gallery, Mint Museum of Art, and more. His work is found in the permanent collections of the Mint Museum, American Express Corporation, Duke University, and Asheville Art Museum, among others.

Rod absorbed many artistic genres and philosophies as he refined his own style, creating images that were vehicles for self-reflection and psychological inquiry. Some of his earliest work, with its curvilinear and coloristic style, recalls the Pop era of the 1960s, with an R. Crumb-like sense of lively caricature.

Friends remember Rod's interest in the Bay Area (California) painters of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Richard Diebenkorn, Wayne Thiebaud, David Park, and others. During a period in American art when non-objective abstraction was critically acclaimed, these artists brought the energetic brushwork of Abstract Expressionism to figurative subjects. Similarly, Rod explored the figurative tradition to create autobiographical images bearing emblems of contemporary life.

Neo-Expressionism in the 1980s also made a strong impression on Rod, including artists Susan Rothenberg, David Salle, Eric Fishl, Gerhard Richter, and perhaps most notably Robert Longo (who also explored the cultural significance of the suited business class of that decade).

In addition, the theories born of psychologist Carl Jung, such as archetypes, the collective unconscious, anima and animus, and the shadow, among other concepts, also sparked Rod's approach to painting and content.

Expressive brushstrokes and deft draftsmanship bring personality to Rod's subjects, many of whom are men. The suited males he painted in the 1980s and 1990s parallel the voracious financial world immortalized in Oliver Stone's 1987 film *Wall Street* and the character Gordon Gekko. The traditional male business costume denotes establishment and rank. The title of one piece, *Power Tie* (1991), with its monochromatic faceless man sporting a boldly striped tie, alludes to issues of dominance and authority via articles of clothing. In *Man with Yellow Tie* (1977) Rod seemingly blindfolded his subject like a victim to be executed, obscuring his eyes with splashes of yellows and reds.

Celebrated North Carolina artist Bob Trotman has also explored this territory of men at work. Trotman wrote to me that he remembers seeing Rod's paintings in the '70s and '80s; he noted the "solitary, anonymous men in suits, beautifully but sparsely rendered in strong light, hurrying, reflecting, and throwing themselves off buildings. They were a distillation of something I had felt but couldn't name, a sort of alienation that was also in The Talking Heads' "Once in a Lifetime": 'This is not my beautiful house. This is not my beautiful wife.' My sculpture *Swan Dive* (2001) was very much influenced by things I had seen in Rod's work."

Rod's image of a woman in business garb (*Swan Dive #3*, 1994) parallels Trotman's interests; in it she flies into enigmatic space, arms outstretched. In *Man in Green Suit*, Rod disfigured the businessman's face by cutting it in half and obscured it further with scratched lines. The looming figure's three-piece suit is dapper as he strides forward, toward the viewer, while grasping some dark amorphous form in his hand (a phone? wallet? gun?) In *Three Men on Escalator* (1987), faceless, suited men in black ties line up in an anonymous row like robots, clutching their briefcases. Certainly the pervasive corporate banking industry in Charlotte contributed to both artists' explorations of this theme.

Rod was interested in probing male gender roles and identity. "Artistically," he said, "my intent has been to explore aspects of male experience in visual form, just as many early feminist artists were doing with female experience." That scrutiny extended to his self-portraits, many of which are in this exhibit. One grey-hued acrylic captures the craggy geography of his face, an exaggeration of his own features. In his large self-portrait (constructed from four wood panels, 1988), Rod depicts himself in a boxy power suit, his hand resting suggestively on a super-sized tie, his face intently returning the viewer's gaze.

Male figures are often depicted running in Rod's work - to where, or from what, we do not know. But they rush, dash, and leap, not unlike artist Longo's businessmen and women falling and flailing in the 1980s. In Rod's work, we find different types of runners, in all media (lithography, collage, gouache, acrylics). Some jog in athletic gear; some are unclothed. One runner, *Shadow, Grad Running* (2006-7), is grimacing in his academic regalia. Yet another, in his archive, is in a clown's costume. Each speaks to the pace of modern life, conveying a sense of absurdity with quiet yet biting humor. They resonate with popular-culture film connotations, such as *The Running Man* or *Marathon Man*, or even the liquid metal robots that run relentlessly in the *Terminator* franchise.

Sports were important to Rod; as his friend and colleague Eric Anderson remembers, Rod admired athletes and their abilities. An avid jogger, Rod also enjoyed tennis, but basketball was his favorite sport. His interest in sports is reflected in many of the works in this exhibition. In his series of five drawings, *TV Dreams*, sports jargon takes on a frightening sense of violence in the subtitles he provided - "My father punches with authority..." (boxing), "My Father has a strong finishing kick" (track), "My father jams his man along the boards..." (hockey), etc.

Female subjects bring an additional level of complexity and tension to Rod's work. We found a small reproduction of Willem de Kooning's painting, *Woman I* (1952), in his files. Rod depicted a few similarly disquieting female figures, their faces often obscured by knots of blurred colors. While Rod's female subjects display less expressionistic brushwork and high-keyed color than those of de Kooning, they do carry a similar menacing vitality, a quality some feel evokes both reverence and fear of "the feminine." In *Grey Nude* (1986), we find a woman with her face cut in half, her form rendered with slashing strokes of neutrals, a hint of pink in the lips. *Veil* (circa 1996-99) depicts a colorful nude with most of her face obliterated by grey lines hatched over the surface. A few of Rod's female subjects are found in nature, gardening. In *Hedge* (2001) a woman intently sprays the yard (the hose's position suggestive of male anatomy), as a suited man runs in the background; it is as if they are oblivious to one another, in completely different worlds.

Male and female subjects unite in Rod's images of couples in positions of intimacy. *Untitled* (1990) offers viewers faceless figures in amorphous space; one form hovers, or jumps, on top of the other. Again, these forms seem to seek connection yet are separated. One wonders, is it a noble effort, or futile? In one drawing from Rod's archive, *Couple United*, the male figure's legs are spread open, while the female's legs are closed, poised on top of him, like a trapeze artist.

Spiritual aspects of life and love are referenced in a few of Rod's pieces, such as *Lovers and Spirit Bodies* (1990). He called these figures suspended in space "floaters." It is up to viewers to decipher their purpose. Are they in an alternate reality, dead, sleeping, or hibernating? Some figures seem to be flying, floating, in flux and yet still, as if in stasis like cocoons. For instance, *Spirit Bodies* (1990) depicts seven pod-like forms with yellow outlines in blue space. *Floating Man* and *Moon Skull* (1993) also depicts a black figure, evocative of Jung's concept of "the shadow" (repressed or unknown aspects of the self), outlined in blue near a stark biomorphic white form.

According to the recollections of Rod's friend June Lambla, the recumbent figures we see in his paintings may be metaphors for "a need for meditation or regeneration." Lambla and Jane Kessler co-curated a show of Rod's work at the Asheville Art Museum in 1989, *Rod MacKillop: Paintings 1971-1989*. In an essay for that exhibit Kessler posited that these reclining figures signify spiritual "recuperation." They also reference a variety of iconic historical works, including the *Dead Torreador* (1864) by Edouard Manet (a print of which we found in Rod's personal effects), Henri Rousseau's *The Sleeping Gypsy* (1897), and Mantegna's *Dead Christ* (1480). Supine figures are found in *Dog with Dead Man* (which may, according to Anderson, allude to Rod's father's death) and *Sleeping Man* (1976), depicting a man with two profiles, two sets of arms, his grey skin tinged with a blue aura. Rod's private visual diary developed as he probed his psyche, and produced a wealth of suggestive symbols.

Other themes are represented in this exhibit in Rod's box and, later, house series (circa 1975-1981), wherein he concentrated on geometric, cubic planes of line and muted color, as seen in *Box #9* (1977) and *House #2* (1980). While most works from this series do not contain figures, they reference constructions, buildings, dwellings – metaphors for human congregation, safety, family, home. In a later piece, *House of Memory and Desire* (1994), the shapes and planes blend with figures, one floating and another running. The figures occupy the same pictorial field, yet are disconnected from one another, distant and apart.

Popular culture references surface in a few of Rod's works as vehicles for social commentary. Two boldly coloristic paintings of characters from the *Blondie* comics (begun in 1930) stand out as metaphors for fraught gender relationships. Blondie's husband, Dagwood Bumstead, was the quintessential bumbling family man. In one canvas, Dagwood looks about, bemused, lost between two looming shadows. In another he and his wife talk, but their "speech balloons" convey no clear meaning, no legible text, suggesting they as a couple cannot communicate nor understand one another. Another high-keyed canvas depicts a talk show host on a TV-screen shape; the almost vicious ferocity of his toothy smile suggests phoniness and pretention.

Rod's paintings simmer with meanings nuanced by emotional tensions. There is abundant anonymity in faceless figures complemented by brushwork and markings that create a sense of mystery, apprehension, and even disintegration. Overall, Rod's work is permeated with a sense of disquieting psychology that suggests he is both detached as an observer yet intimately tied to his subject matter. *Empty Chair* resonates for me in this regard; we see the silhouette of a man staring at an empty chair. It becomes a touching metaphor on many levels – of self-reflection, loss, aging, death, or other associations each viewer brings to the piece.

Anderson observed that his greatest appreciation for Rod was "his ability to instinctively transform his daily life's experiences, creating autobiographical paintings that measured his moment of feeling, while at the same time creating a mirror for the viewers to see themselves embodied in the figures within his images." It is fitting that Rod's life's work is now being shared publicly, per his wishes, to generate endowments for art students. This effort continues his legacy, as artist and as educator, for generations to come. 

Dr. Lili Corbus is an Emeritus Associate Professor of Art History, UNC Charlotte, who retired from teaching in 2006 but continues to research and publish in her areas of specialty including modern and contemporary art, women in art, and photohistory.

Thanks to Bob Trotman, Jerald Melberg, Eric Anderson, June Lambla, and Hodges Taylor Gallery representatives Christie Taylor, Dot Hodges, and Lauren Harkey for additional information, emails, and conversations.

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"Rod MacKillop," Weaver Foundation website

"Rod MacKillop," Asheville Art Museum website

"Roderick Macy MacKillop," Obituary, The Charlotte Observer, 1 May 2016.

"UNC Charlotte in Charlotte, NC, to Feature Rod MacKillop Retrospective," Carolina Arts, Sept. Issue 2001

"Roderick MacKillop Memorial Endowments to Fund Student Scholarships, Alumni Exhibition," Meg Whalen, 14 June 2017

MOMALearning, "Willem de Kooning: Abstraction, Representation, and Reinvention"

Unidentified announcement page on Rod MacKillop, nominated for UNC Charlotte teaching award, 1997 (found in his personal effects).