

For Immediate Release

*Wired Gallery Presents*

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF NEW PALTZ

*An Exhibition in Three Parts*

**Part Three: 1968 – 1971**

Curated by Jack Murphy

September 29 – October 21, 2018

**Opening Reception: Saturday, September 29, 2018**

**5:00 – 7:00 pm**

*Click on any picture to download high resolution images.*

From Left to Right: *Man On Street* by Win Bottum-Morgan; *Small Mug* by Robert Sedestrom; *Main Street* by David Holt; *Dinner* by Laura Wilensky



From Left to Right: *Untitled* by Alex Martin; *Groupe Therapy* by Allen Littlefield



High Falls, NY, September 10, 2018—On Saturday, September 29, 2018, Wired Gallery opens the third and final installment of **The Golden Age of New Paltz**, an exhibition in three parts celebrating the New Paltz artists of the 1960's, with a reception from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The show runs until Sunday, October 21, 2018.

**The Golden Age of New Paltz** is curated by Jack Murphy.

Part 3 exhibition surveys artists who either came to New Paltz, or lived and worked in the area from roughly 1968 to 1971. (Many of the artists in the combined shows were active throughout the 1960's and beyond. The use of the three time periods for each show is more a way to break down the number of artist involved, into manageable groups.)

Among the work on display will be examples by State University College at New Paltz professors Alex Martin, Dan McCormack, Henry Raleigh (also Department Chair), Robert Sedestrom, Tom Wasmuth, and Benjamin Wigfall.

Work by students from that era will include Fern Apfel, Larry Audette, Robin Berger, John Bestard, Win Bottum-Morgan, Chris Cipot Parrow, Harvey Cohon, Eileen Cowin, Bob Crimi, Jimmy Frankfort, Didi Lee Gallo, David Holt, Sue Horowitz, Tom Kastner, Charles Leopardo, Stephen Lifschitz, Manuel Lipton, Allen Littlefield, Jack Murphy, Connie Noelle, Richard (Richie) Rizzi, Rosalie Rossi, Daniel Schmidt, Francine Stein Bellinger Toirac, Jo-Ellen Trilling, Michael Velkovich, Jerry Vis, Laura Wilensky, and Rosalind Zarr.

*Note: This is an incomplete list as of 9/10/18*

### **CURATORIAL STATEMENT BY JACK MURPHY**

This exhibition, Part 3 of the Golden Age of New Paltz (1968 – 1971), brings the decade of the Sixties to a rip roaring close. As I attempted to show by the work that was exhibited in Parts 1 and 2 of this show, the level of professionalism, the technical skills and expertise, and the interest in exploring more and varied avenues of expression were being embraced by many artists and art students by the mid-1960's. For these students, and established artists, the work being produced started to display more pointed messages. Personal expressions of strongly held beliefs were pushing images of bowls of fruits and bucolic landscapes aside. Art, and particularly a new era of protest art, entered the fray. By 1967, events in the United States and the World began to have a greater impact on the general public. Television brought the War in Viet Nam, the Draft, Civil Rights, Equal Rights for Women, and growing student unrest on campus into the public debate. People protested on both sides of the issues. To many, freedom, and the right to express your views, became essential, for others, it represented a lawless anarchy, an attack on the status quo. This was how the Sixties ended, and change was everywhere.

New Paltz, and the local art scene, was not immune.

As the war dragged on, posters and banners produced by art students were evident at protest marches and campus strikes. Political cartoons were appearing in the student newspaper, *The Oracle*, and in the local "underground papers," the *Gargoyle* and *Hudson Valley Encounter*. And increasingly, the art displayed in the area became more controversial, more politically inspired, and aimed more at hated isms: capitalism; imperialism; racism; sexism; and more. The artists were finding their voice, and their work became a weapon for their cause. They were becoming stronger, more focused, more opinionated, and were looking for more respect and value for their work.

On campus, the number of art students was growing. Art Education was still a popular career choice, and guidance counselors all over the state were suggesting high school seniors who were interested in art to apply to either the State University College at New Paltz or at Buffalo. Yet, as the enrollment of art students grew, there seemed to be more interest in "fine" art, than art education, and a trend to shy away from earning teacher's certification, and, instead, concentrate on studio classes in pursuit of becoming an artist, was increasing. A small, but growing, number of colleges and universities began offering degrees in the Fine Arts. Within the art building, two student groups, the Student Art Guild and Kappa Pi, an honorary art fraternity, were changing from what had been mostly two separate social groups, to one politically active organization, operating under the umbrella of the Student Art Guild. The recruiting of student members and mobilizing them for change, was a prime goal. By 1969, art students at New Paltz were asking for representation on what had been strictly faculty committees, such as Budget, Curriculum and Planning, and Tenure and Promotion. The students wanted a say in their education, and with the arrival of a new department chair, Dr. Henry Raleigh, those requests were granted. At that point, the Student Art Guild initiated the process of pushing the College to draw up a proposal and petition Albany to approve the Bachelor of Arts degree, with concentrations in print making, painting, sculpture, gold and silversmithing, ceramics, and

photography. It took a few years for all the studio options to be approved, but by the first few years of the 1970's, New Paltz was awarding BFA degrees, the first in the SUNY system, as a direct result of the quality of instruction offered by the faculty, along with their interest and dedication to their students. The desire of the students for a fine art education, along with the high quality of work produced, played an equal part convincing Albany of the justification in offering the BFA program. It is easy to say that the decade the 1960's laid the foundation for today's art department at SUNY New Paltz, and today's students are benefitting from the changes the faculty and students of that decade brought about.

The 1960's saw the growth of arts in media and general culture (pop art, op art, psychedelia, happenings, music, writing, poetry, movies, etc.) through the visionary work of people like, the Beatles, Bob Dylan, Andy Warhol, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Stanley Kubrick, and Peter Max and many others. More and more art museums and galleries opened. Art became big business. The number of collectors grew, and the demand for art increased. The Art World was on a roll. And the artists represented in these three Golden Age of New Paltz shows were there. They were a part of it, and contributed to it. They truly created New Paltz' Golden Age. Everything before them was just the prologue, it set the stage. And everything that the SUNY New Paltz Fine Arts program became, owes a debt of gratitude to these artists who were active during the 1960's, and are celebrated in this exhibition.

**- Jack Murphy**

(Information about the history of the State University of New York at New Paltz was found on the History of the Campus page, in the About New Paltz section of the website:  
<http://www.newpaltz.edu/about/history.html>)

Golden Age of New Paltz Official Website: <https://www.goldenagenewpaltz.com/>

#### **ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF THIS SHOW**

Wired gallerist Sevan Melikyan says "The first time I heard of "the Golden Age of New Paltz" was in an article penned by Rich Corozine in the Almanac Weekly in 2012 about Bob Draffen, an artist from that period who had recently passed away. The only golden ages I knew were the Dutch Golden Age and the Spanish Golden Age. I had no idea that New Paltz also had a "golden age." How intriguing and exciting! This deserved to be told in a show. It turns out that Marjorie Myers Simon -- who came to New Paltz in the early 1960's as an art education student and who was a friend to many of these artists -- had a plan to organize a show at the Dorsky Museum, SUNY New Paltz, to celebrate the fifty years since many of them were graduated. Unfortunately, Margie developed an aggressive cancer which limited her work on this project. Jack Murphy, who was an art student in the late 60's, offered to assist, and when she died in November, 2016, he decided to try to realize her vision. Without Jack, who took on the monumental task of curating the show, it may be that no one would have learned that New Paltz had once a Golden Age."

This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of Marjorie Myers Simon, and to the many faculty and students who made the Arts Department at the State University College at New Paltz the vibrant, exciting educational and social experience remembered by all involved.

#### **WIRED GALLERY**

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