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Dudley Huppler: Drawings

The exhibition *Dudley Huppler: Drawings* opens at the Elvehjem on July 13 and remains on view through September 22, 2002. The exhibition is organized by the Elvehjem as part of an ongoing series recognizing Wisconsin artists. *Dudley Huppler: Drawings* includes approximately fifty works on paper dating between 1943 and 1986 and borrowed from a few collectors and the artist's estate. The artwork is complemented by such archival materials as the artist's books, sketchbooks, correspondence and postcard-collages. A selection of works dedicated to Huppler by Andy Warhol will also be included.

Dudley Huppler was born in 1917 in Muscoda, Wisconsin. He earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and began work on a Ph.D. that he never completed. A self-trained artist, he developed an interest in drawing and art history that fueled his career and paralleled his literary curiosity. Huppler taught both art and English throughout his life at universities and private colleges in Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. He published two books of prose and collaborated on several illustrated book projects. Huppler's drawings were published in *Art Digest*, *Art News*, *Flair*, *House Beautiful*, *View*, and *Vogue*. During the 1950s and 1960s his pen and ink drawings received favorable attention in exhibition reviews covering one-person shows in Chicago, New York and beyond. He died in 1988 and is virtually unknown today.

During the 1940s, Huppler was part of an advanced circle of artists, composers and writers in Madison, Wisconsin that included Sylvia Fein, Marshall Glasier, Lee Hoiby, and John Wilde. The group was linked to friends in Chicago and Milwaukee including Gertrude Abercrombie, Karl Priebe, Charles Sebree, Felix Ruvulo and Julia Thecla. When Harry Partch was in Madison he naturally found kindred spirits in this group and performed concerts at the Glasier home. Huppler went to New York in 1950 where he established friendships with photographers Otto Fenn, George Platt Lynes and Carl van Vechten. He also met writers Charles Henri Ford, Katharine Ann Porter, Glenway Wescott, and Marianne Moore, who referred to Huppler as her literary protégé and praised his drawings. In New York Huppler showed at Edwin Hewitt's gallery, a relationship initiated by John Wilde. Through Hewitt and his stays in New York, Huppler met other artists, curators, and writers

including Paul Cadmus, Lincoln Kirstein, Frank O'Hara, Bernard Perlin and Monroe Wheeler.

In 1954, through Otto Fenn, Huppler began a friendship with Andy Warhol, then a successful commercial artist. Huppler and Warhol corresponded for many years and exchanged drawings. In spring 1955, Huppler was awarded a Yaddo Residence grant. At Yaddo he met artist (and later anthropologist) Tobias Schneebaum and the writers Ed Field and Ralph Pomeroy. Huppler introduced Pomeroy to Warhol who collaborated with the poet on the book, *A la Recherche du Shoe Perdu* (1955). In 1958 Huppler did commissioned portraits of Warhol and his partner, the designer Ted Carey. While living in New York City in the mid-1950s, Huppler designed windows for Bonwit Teller and sold his drawings to advertisers and manufacturers such as the Parker Pen Company. Huppler was also awarded two Huntington Hartford Foundation residence grants during the early 1960s.

Like the artists he admired, Huppler was attracted to the sensuality of drawing. He possessed a talent for revealing the humor in nature or delighting in the mystery of objects and their natural transformations. His work is marked by an unusual, meticulous technique which he used to form birds, stone, grass, flowers and other natural elements from tiny gradations of tonal dots. A selection of works from the exhibition is attached. There are few solid lines in his works after 1945; everything is composed through varying densities of tiny dots. His earliest work, dating from late 1943 is a kind of hard-edged biomorphic surrealism; in the late 40s to early 50s he made still-life studies and drawings of animals combined with unusual glassware; after trips to Italy in the 1950s he turned towards the fantastic in nature; he drew animals and the human body obsessively from the 1960s onward. His output was wide-ranging and prolific; his stylistic determination astonishing.

The guest curator for this exhibition is Robert Cozzolino, who also is principal author of the catalogue. The 104-page catalogue, available through the Museum Shop (608 263-2240) includes 24 color plates and 55 black-and-white illustrations; it reproduces additional work not in the exhibition in order to introduce the scope of Huppler's life and career to a wide audience. The catalogue contains reminiscences by Huppler's artist-friends, Sylvia Fein and John Wilde.

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additional funds from the Madison Community Foundation and the Overture Foundation for their generous financial support of this project.

The Elvehjem Museum of Art is open Tuesdays-Fridays 9-5 pm; Saturdays and Sundays 11-5 pm; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission to galleries and educational events is free. The museum is located at 800 University Avenue on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is accessible to wheelchairs from the Murray Street (north) entrance. Parking is available at the city of Madison's Lake Street and Frances Street ramps, university lot 46 on Lake Street between Johnson and University Avenue, university lot 47 on Johnson Street between Park and Lake streets. Evening and weekend parking is also available under Grainger Hall with entrance on Brooks Street between University Avenue and Johnson streets. The Elvehjem Museum of Art will provide sign language interpreters for associated programs by three-week advance request to Anne Lambert, Curator of Education, weekdays, 608 263-4421 (voice).

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