



“New Universe” by Bill Buchman

Interview with artist

Bill Buchman

**2009 Winter Forum on Aging:
*Creating a Lifetime of Possibilities***

You moved to Sarasota in 2001. Where did you move from and what brought you to Sarasota? What do you appreciate most about this community?

From 1981 to 2001 I lived in Europe, primarily in Copenhagen, as well as Paris and Amsterdam. It was an exhilarating period for me of expanding horizons and much artistic development. After twenty years abroad I felt it was time for a change. My mother, Natalie, a most incredible person, was alive at that time and living on Long Boat Key and I wished to spend more time with her. This, along with the fact that my Danish wife and child wanted to experience America and that I had an invitation to teach at the Longboat Key Center for the Arts convinced me to take the leap. I love living here. I enjoy the natural beauty of Florida, the relaxed friendly atmosphere of Sarasota, and the lively and hospitable cultural environment.

You are an internationally accomplished painter, poet and musician. Tell us about your artistic path.

An artist's path is a never ending process of development and learning. I decided when I was 16 that I wished to be an artist and have been discovering what that means ever since. I started out studying to be a painter at Cornell University but ultimately switched to music and received my bachelor's and master's degree from the New England Conservatory of Music. I became a full time jazz pianist. This took me across continents and into contact with an extraordinary variety of people, both artists and non-, in the worlds of art, jazz, and beyond. By 1980, even as I continued to develop as a musician, I had come to the realization that visual art was my true calling, and returned with vigor to making visual art. In 1981 began a period of artistic development in Europe that lasted 20 years. There I connected with the European artistic roots and traditions which have always been close to my heart and developed my style of figurative and abstract art. At a certain point I began to write a lot of poetry, too. Through this activity, I reached the further realization that, for me, the concept of poetry, particularly the Zen poetic ideal of getting down to essentials, embodied what I was trying to accomplish with my art.

Another activity I have always enjoyed is teaching and since moving to Sarasota my teaching activities have greatly expanded. Besides teaching at Ringling's Longboat Key Center for the Arts I am now giving painting and drawing workshops and demonstrations nationally which are sponsored by **Savoir Faire**, importer of fine European art materials. I will be teaching a workshop in figure drawing Jan 20th-22nd at Art Center Sarasota. I have exhibited my work frequently in different parts of the world and will be exhibiting at **Gallerihuset** in Copenhagen, Denmark in January of '09. Also I will be giving classes at the Longboat Key Center for the Arts this coming February and March.

You agreed to allow your artwork "New Universe" to be used as the icon for the 2009 Winter Forum on Aging. Can you explain how the Winter Forum relates to your work and what excites you about the Winter Forum on Aging?

My art students range generally between 45 to 85 years old. In class we strive to achieve a childlike freshness every time we pick up our brushes and that is what I strive to do in my studio as well. I certainly think that making art is a great way to keep oneself mentally young and alive. I think it was writer Evelyn Waugh who once said something to the effect that the artist's true purpose in making art was not to try to achieve immortality but to be able to visit eternity. Time stops where art begins. I think it's exciting to have the chance to challenge concepts of aging through this forum and through art.

You just released an instructional DVD on creativity entitled "Creative Breakout –The Art of Freedom" Tell me about this piece and what inspired you to produce this piece?

My art and teaching focus on two distinct areas: the nude and abstraction. A year ago I did my first instructional DVD, "**Art Is an Attitude -The Art of Drawing the Figure**" which demonstrates and explains my techniques of drawing the human figure. This has met with considerable success and is being sold nationally in art stores. I discovered that DVD's are a fantastic way to be able to share what one has learned with others so it seemed only natural that I should follow it up with a new DVD demonstrating and explaining the creative process and the techniques behind my abstract paintings. This DVD, "**Creative Breakout –The Art of Freedom**" has just come out in November. I would like to mention that both my DVD's are available through my website: www.billbuchman.com and that on my website you can see film clips as well as examples of my work and much more.

What is something you're working on right now that you're excited about?

I am incredibly excited to be working on my first art instruction book, "**Expressive Figure Drawing**" to be published by **Watson –Guptill**, an imprint of **Random House**. This will be on the subject of how to draw the human figure and will be out in the fall of 2010. And of course I am always excited to be working on my latest painting!