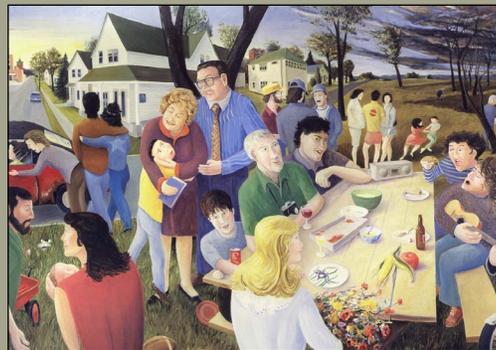
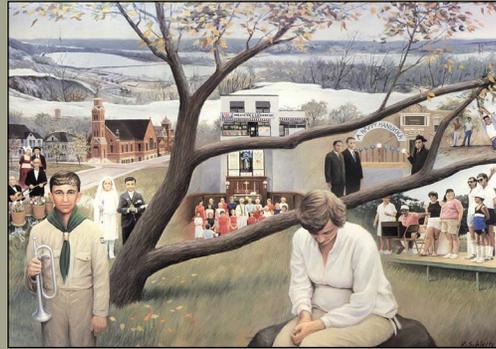


WEST SIDE PAINTINGS



SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

Dedication

It is only with an appreciative understanding of the Past that it is possible to realize the Present and to see the direction of the Future.

It is within this context that the Paintings which this book describes are dedicated, to hold in honor all those who have counted Saint Paul's West Side as the place in which they have lived and worked and played – the basis from which they have dreamed dreams and envisioned visions for tomorrow.

But, more specifically, these Paintings are dedicated to the Pastors and People of the Saint Matthew's and Holy Trinity Parishes, who in their Centennial Celebrations of their beginnings have, in honoring their pasts, renewed the immortal dreams and visions which had inspired their genesis, seeing again their presence in this community as the Yeast that gives flavor and meaning and purpose to all those things of which the Paintings so magnificently speak.

In humbled gratitude, therefore, are these Paintings Dedicated, in the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The Reverend Arthur K. Gaard, Pastor
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Introduction

These paintings reflect images of 100 years of life on the West Side of Saint Paul.

The faces, the landmarks, the symbols, the images portrayed here are a glimpse of our heritage.

The paintings, in a sense, are frozen glimpses of the collective consciousness of our West Side life. I hope these glimpses allow each of us the freedom to dream our own dreams. I hope these serve as starters which trigger thousands of imagings and rememberings.

This work, the creation of Mr. Richard Schletty and Mr. Craig David, was made possible because of the generous gift of Mr. Gordon Barron in memory of his wife, Doris Barron. Other individual contributors and the COMPAS Community Art Fund through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the city of Saint Paul, the R.F. Bigelow Foundation, the Ford Motor Company, the General Mills Foundation, the Minnesota State Arts Board and the United Arts Fund made it possible to present to this community these six panels.

The occasion for this project is nothing less than the centennial celebrations of two West Side churches – Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and Saint Matthew's Catholic Church. How fitting that these two Church communities join together to celebrate their common community as they celebrate 100 years of Church life.

The Rev. Stephen Adrian, Pastor
The Church of St. Matthew

On viewing the paintings

These pictures are not intended to be an allencompassing, historical account of life on Saint Paul's West Side. They are a collection of carefully chosen "snapshots moments in time, that represent some of the experiences of West Siders. The pictorial descriptions that follow will, hopefully, be an aid to you in understanding. They are not to be regarded as absolute, definitive interpretations.

You are encouraged to complete the cycle begun by these paintings, through a projection of your own experiences into the works. While viewing the pictures, interpret situations and develop characterizations as you will, allowing memories and emotions of your own to be aroused. Only then will the artistic cycle be completed, with you, the viewer, becoming an integral part.

Craig David and Richard Schletty
December, 1986



THE FRIENDLY CIRCLE

CRAIG DAVID



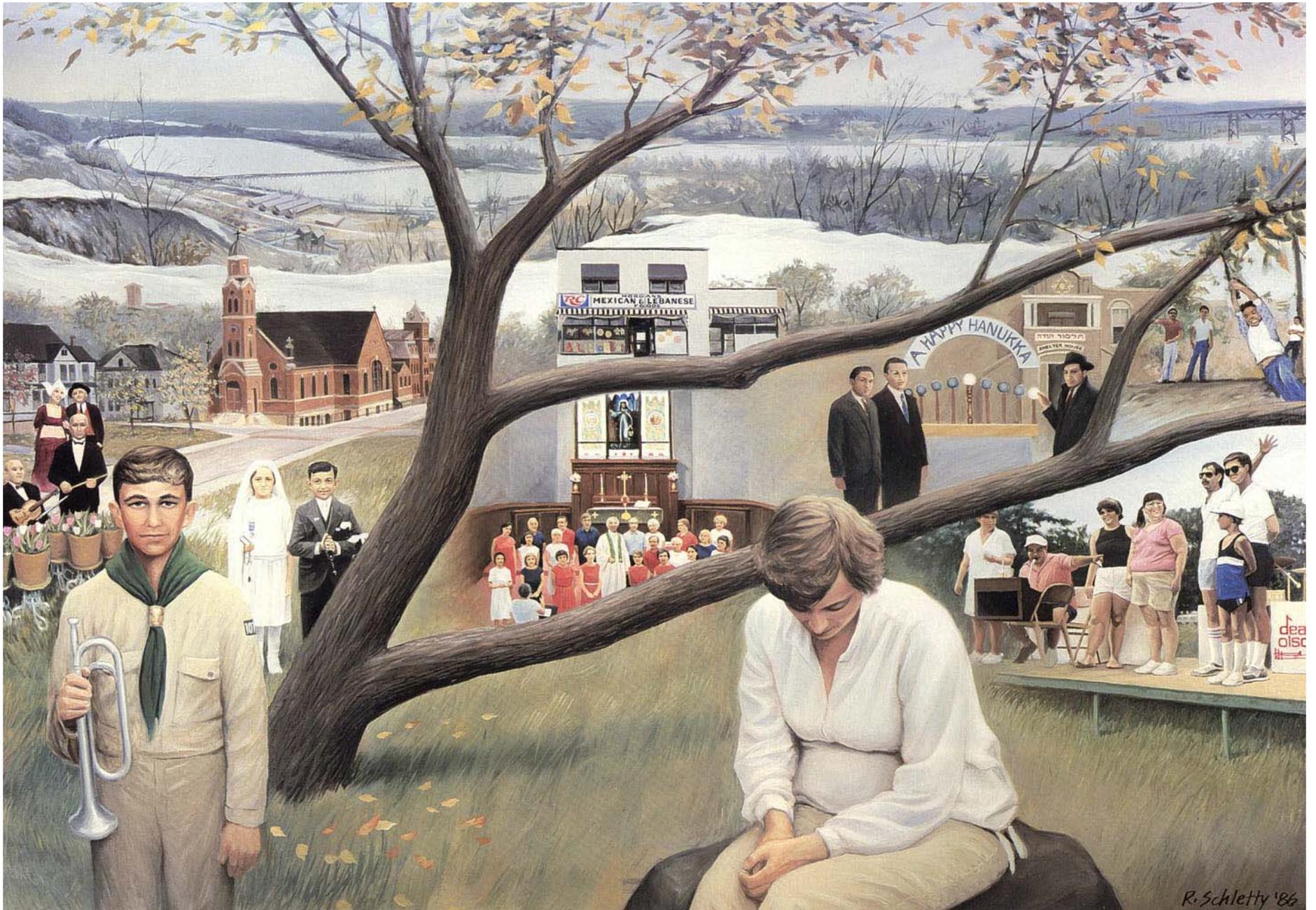
CELEBRATION OF LIFE

CRAIG DAVID



FAMILIES

RICHARD SCHLETTY



TRADITIONS

RICHARD SCHLETTY



VISIONS

RICHARD SCHLETTY

THE FRIENDLY CIRCLE

by Craig David, 1986
Oil on linen, 7' x 8'

Identities and characterizations of West Siders within their social sphere are represented in this painting. Happiness, friendship and the family are portrayed.

Interaction amongst friends is the dominant theme as a card game proceeds and the players share in congenial repartee. Children are entranced by a television program. Others enjoy winter sledding on Baker hill as seen through the window.

Objects of the day represent important domestic activities.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

by Craig David, 1986
Oil on linen, 7' x 10'

The themes of family and friends are key elements in this central panel.

Lineage is symbolized by the grandson, grandfather and father figures sitting together at the table. The young maiden, with a bouquet, in the foreground, depicts the 'ideal' of life through her gesture, youth, beauty and dress. A young nuclear family is shown in the lower left. Behind are two couples. One couple argues, the other embraces, as they walk. Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Barron are represented in the right center. Mrs. Barron embraces a young Humboldt student with one hand while holding a book in the other. (Mrs. Barron was librarian at Humboldt for over 25 years). Friends gather and children dance in the background.

A typical West Side neighborhood is illustrated, depicting the new St. Matthew Catholic Church, the school, traditional wood frame houses, the steeple of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, streets, cars and a park.

Life is symbolized in a linear fashion through the sky and background. Dawn, on the far left, represents birth. Sunset, clouds and the leafless trees, on the right, represent death.

Objects of the day depict various activities of the people.

ALLEGORY OF THE WORKERS

by Craig David, 1986
Oil on linen, 7' x 8'

This picture portrays facets of West Side life through the development of worker identity and characterization.

The central figure, a blue collar worker, walks boldly toward the viewer, carrying a key and chain: work being a 'key' to life, the chain representing drudgery. To the right, a young working mother and single parent is represented by her gesture, the color violet, a diaper pin and the book she carries. Behind, a man and woman typify the professional worker through dress and gesture. In the lower right corner, a young Hispanic worker is depicted, the work place reflected in his glasses. A retired worker fills the lower left corner, proud and exuberant about a lifetime of work. Hispanic migrant workers are shown harvesting. A figure climbs the ladder of success, up and out of the picture and, symbolically, to a new neighborhood. A crawling man signifies the struggle of the depression.

Old factories, other places of business, a neighborhood, the bluffs and the river fill the background.

FAMILIES

by Richard Schletty, 1986
Oil on linen, 7' x 8'

The family is the starting point of my presentation of West Side life.

These are, with only a few exceptions, portraits of real West Siders. Some are my own family members. Some are Craig David's family members. One of the groups was unknown to me before I chanced upon them while driving around the West Side with my camera this past summer.

The alley behind the house I've lived in for the past 30 years serves as a "backdrop" for this painting. It, like so many other "inner city" residential alleys, does much more than provide access to garages for motorized vehicles. The alley is the hub of communication, the common meeting ground for the families living on the block. For the kids, it is a relatively safe playground (safer than the main streets, anyway). If you're lucky enough to have an alley, and if the alley is inclined more than a few degrees, the kids can have a blast sledding down it in winter and rolling down it in summer on bikes, trikes (now they're called big wheels), skateboards and chugs. Garbage cans also roll nicely down an inclined alley.

Of course, the north facade of Humboldt High doesn't really belong here at the south end of my alley.

TRADITIONS

by Richard Schletty, 1986
Oil on linen, 7' x 10'

The center panel of my trilogy uses a unique tree (you'll find it at Wilder Residence . . . on the old rock quarry grounds) to symbolize a unique community. The West Side, throughout the years, has been a welcoming host to diverse ethnic groups and religious traditions. All the branches are part of a single structure, but the branches do carve out separate and distinct spaces. And it is into these spaces that I have painted a small (and incomplete) sampling of West Side traditions.

Religious traditions: A Jewish celebration in front of Shelter House on the old West Side "Flats." Saint Matthew's German Catholic Church, with the old church building (destroyed by fire in 1968) and its past tradition of dramatic performances (shown here are a few members of the cast and orchestra of the 1936 production of the operetta, "Hulda of Holland." Henry Schmidt is the orchestra conductor). Saint Michael's Irish Catholic Church (its church tower is seen here off in the distance just to the left of Saint Matthew's). First Communion (the boy is John Mike from Holy Family Maronite Church, the girl is Mrs. Wolf from Saint Matthew's). Holy Trinity English Lutheran Church's "Joyful Noise" choir, representing a longstanding and vibrant tradition of sacred choral music.

National traditions: A member of Boy Scout Troop 107 (Don Morin, from a 1936 photograph). A Fourth of July celebration at Cherokee Park, where the best family singing group is being judged (from a 1986 photograph. Tom & Jonathan won).

Ethnic traditions: Morgans Mexican and Lebanese Grocery Store on south Robert Street.

The background of this painting is a compacted view of Cherokee Park's bluffs, Lake Pickerel and the Mississippi River, stretching from the vicinity of the old brick yards (upper left) to the old high bridge (upper right).

The major figure in the foreground represent more than the tradition of motherhood. The process of becoming parent or guardian to a young child involves conscious and unconscious decisions to impart to that child the values, beliefs, attitudes and skills that you have inherited and embraced. Careful analysis or the opinions of friends may likewise lead you to the conclusion that a particular tradition is no longer right or appropriate or useful: like a branch on a tree it is allowed to wither and die.

VISIONS

by Richard Schletty, 1986
Oil on linen, 7' x 8'

This panel paints a panorama as seen from the black (now green) steps that rise from South Wabasha street and the floodplain of the Mississippi River to the top of the bluffs along Prospect Boulevard. To the left of the steps is a slice of the old "Flats" – a mix of family residences, boarding houses, small retail businesses, manufacturing plants, pool halls, movie theaters, public baths and a zoo. The time period is the early 1920's.

As your eyes scan to the right side of the steps, a transition to 1986 occurs. Now called Riverview Industrial Park, new, low-profile commercial, warehouse and manufacturing facilities are gradually replacing the older buildings. Gray Milling "bit the dust" this past summer (just one week before I shot my reference photo for this section of the painting). But the Drake Marble building is still holding its ground. The Flats used to be inundated frequently with high river waters. Now flood control walls and embankments protect the area.

The concept of "vision" can go far beyond what one sees with the eyes. Represented here are the visions of some of the people who have lived or worked in our community.

We applaud the good works of community leaders like Constance Currie, matriarch of Neighborhood House during its early years, and Ernest Stiefel, who in 1918 helped establish the Riverview Commercial Club, an organization that took an active role in many phases of life on the West Side – schools, playgrounds, streets, general improvements and overall economic growth.

Invention is an ally of vision, helping to turn thoughts and imaginings into practical reality. Herb Dalglish, who is just one of the many inventive minds our community has spawned, is shown here holding a thermoputer, a device for detecting bug infestation in grain bins, just one of many devices he invented in response to the need for "a better way."

Theresa Peyton is the woman holding the flag. She did not live on the West Side but taught civics, science and art at Humboldt High School. A quotation from Humboldt's June, 1918 Annual reveals why I have selected her as a visionary:

*Miss Peyton is a suffragist,
A politician she.
When women have the right to vote
We'll be the same, say we.*

Religious leaders in our community have encouraged selflessness and compassion for the needy. Furthermore, in the examples of this priest (Msgr. Alois Plut) and this young candidate for the sisterhood (Sr. M. Teresa Hermann), we recognize the commitment to spiritual and secular education that has been made by many faith groups within our community throughout the years.

Today, the West Side community must deal with issues such as family integrity, education, vandalism and theft, drug abuse, business development, environmental pollution and energy conservation, to name a few. The need for people of vision continues.

About the Artists

Craig David is a native of St. Paul and a descendant of two long-standing West Side families.

A graduate of St. Matthew's, Sibley High School and the University of Minnesota, he received a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting and drawing from the University of Oregon in 1984.

A newly returned resident to St. Paul's West Side, he is currently working there as a painter and sculptor.

Richard Schletty is a lifelong resident of St. Paul's West Side. He attended St. Matthew's Grade School, St. Agnes High School and St. John's University (Collegeville, MN), where he earned a B.A. degree in fine art in 1974.

He is a versatile graphic designer and illustrator. He has designed and executed several murals in the city. In 1985 he joined with two other local artists to produce the "hunger" mural for EFS (The Food Bank) on Captain Ken's building on the West Side.

One Hundred Years Passing

*From the city
cross the muddy waters
to a flat land burning
smoking, smoldering past
of houses irish, german, jew . . .
and native son.*

*Those foundations of living
those palatial rooftops
are gone now
the names and papered poses
lie about in withered books
on the backs of dusty shelves.*

*Yet our immigrant faces remain
in the oily flesh and yellowed eye
and fist heard pounding down
in steady rhythm time.*

*And laughter rings
fading softly
into white sandy bluffs
now crossing the tops
of windswept summer trees
and voices call
in the murmuring tongues
of mother, father
floating about
on the steamy sunstruck air.*

*And our children
come emerging from the sunrise
dressed in white
with silver dew upon their hair.*

Stewart Thomas