

# Paul McMahon



photo: M.Pollack

**Born 1950, San Diego, CA**

**BA Fine Art; Pomona College, 1972**

**MS Art Education, Massachusetts College of Art,  
1975**

**Ordination; Interfaith Minister, Center for the Living  
Earth, Bearsville, NY, 1996**

**Lives in Woodstock, NY since 1990**

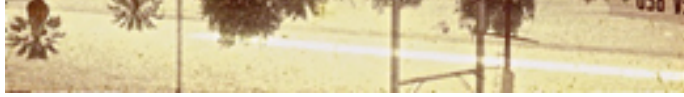
Paul McMahon's life mission is based on a burning desire to know the truth, a mission begun early and continuing throughout his life. His career, or perhaps 'non-career,' is remarkable not so much for the heights of his achievements as for their breadth.





Saw Pete Seeger at 9 and decided to be a professional musician. At 15 he took lead guitar lessons from Elvin Bishop, then playing with Paul Butterfield. Received darshan from Pir Valayat, prominent Sufi sheik in 1969. Met Thomas Banyacya and heard a long talk on Hopi prophecies the following year at Pomona College. Also in 1970, influenced by the teaching of Stanley Crouch, he gave up blues guitar and switched his attention to conceptual art.





Claremont gas stations 1970

Vermont 1971

Started making art in 1970, first teacher was Mowry Baden, second was James Turrell. Helene Winer was the gallery director. Heard Lawrence Weiner and Baldessari lecture on their work same year. First artworks come about because of a photography mistake. Hal Glicksman assigned the task of documenting Claremont architecture and he chose gas stations. The pictures were badly overexposed. He stacked them just to see more color. He liked what happened serendipitously and put a few pairs of transparencies together in single slide frames. He began playing with postcards in 1971. At first he paired them with one upside down looking for a seamless bleed from one to the other to make the transition from perceiving right side up to upside down to be disorienting.

Through John Baldessari he met CalArts students Matt Mullican and Jim Wellins in spring '72. Later that year at

the age of 22 he began producing a series of over 30 one night shows of conceptual, performance and visual art at Project Inc. in Cambridge, Mass. on his salary at a gas station. These shows, mentioned in AVALANCHE, brought artists like Welling, Mullican, Dan Graham, Laurie Anderson (first Boston performance), David Salle (first solo show), Jack Goldstein and Lawrence Weiner from New York.



Assisting Matt Mullican performance. Matt imagined entering the picture which was set on fire, 1973. Charles Simonds Project Inc, 1974





**Indian Summer** Matt Mullican, James Welling, Paul McMahon, Robert C. Morgan, Project Inc, 1974, which included a half dozen or so pieces in the PICTURES GENERATION 1974-1984, at the Metropolitan, 2009, among them David Salle (*Coffee Drinkers*) and James Welling (*Rothko/Cocteau smoking*)

He started coloring onto newspaper photos with pastel in 1973 as a way of exploring the mystery of visual intelligence within the informational context of news.



Nixon Resigns 1974

Helene Winer hired him as Assistant Director at publicly funded Artist Space 1975-77 and he was influential in the formative stages of the scene which exploded in NY in

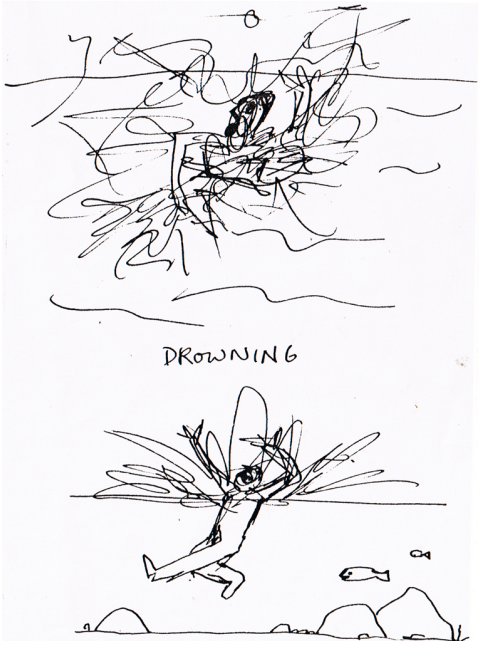
formative stages of the scene which exploded on NY in the 80's with Cindy Sherman, Michael Smith, Robert Longo, David Salle, Sherrie Levine and many others. Of that time David Salle says, "The key intelligence at Artists Space was always Paul McMahon and his intelligence was humor."



In New York, the noise level in the art world was a lot higher and McMahon felt the pastels were too small and quiet to be noticed so he set about finding 'louder' ways to make art, including writing on postcards, like DEATH WISH and LOSS. began one night in the fall of 1975.

when Matt Mullican and David Salle were hanging out at his apt. at 110 Thompson. Collection the Metropolitan Museum.

In 1976 he began focussing more on line drawings and made a few small books



ONE ARTISTS TRYING TO PROVE TO OTHERS THAT HE IS RIGHT  
a page from *FEAR OF WATER*

SIDE VIEW  
ARTIST AND LAYMAN

Originally stapled 8.5 x 11" photocopies, they were re-printed in 2014 at 5 x 7" with cardstock covers.

The audience at I'M WITH STUPID, shot by Ericka Beckman



Left foreground: Jo Shane, back to camera, foreground, Willoughby Sharp, above his head, Troy Brauntuch, above him Helene Winer with Susan Wyatt. Right of WS, Mike Zwack, Nancy Dwyer, and Matt Mullican, with mouth open.



On 7/7/77 he left the art gallery business to become an artist instead of art administrator. His performance of the floor show in a make-believe nightclub called I'M WITH STUPID at the Kitchen Center later that year led to an invitation to join DAILY LIFE, a punk art band.



by Daile Kaplan, 1978

Christine Hahn, Paul McMahon, Glenn Branca, Barbara Ess

Played in first two Glenn Branca all guitar pieces.





photo Tom Otterness

He and Nancy Chunn organized the PARTY CLUB at Franklin Furnace over Christmas-New Year's 1978-9. Featuring many performers in an impromptu social club format, a highlight was Cindy Sherman as the coat-check girl.





A Band; Peter Moser, Joe Gone, Paul McMahan,  
Wharton Tiers

David McMahan photo:James Welling

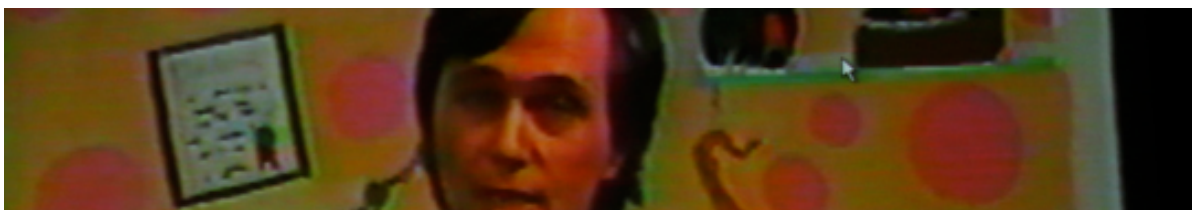


He formed A BAND with Wharton Tiers and put out a 45 of LOWLY WORM on Nancy Records, sleeve design by Matt Mullican. It was played first on Alison's 'best of 1979' indie releases show on WPIX, then New York's only 'new wave' show on commercial radio.



AT ONE OF PAUL MCMAHON AND NANCY CHUNN'S BATTLE OF THE BANDS PARTIES AT 135 GRAND ST. 1979. FROM LEFT: DAN GRAHAM, DAVID SALLE, MIKE SMITH, ERIC FISCHL AND BARABAR KRUGER (OBSCURED) PHOTO: PAULA COURT

At Battle of the Bands parties people chose up teams and everyone except Dan Graham had to perform in a band. BTW- Photo by Paul McMahan not Paula Court

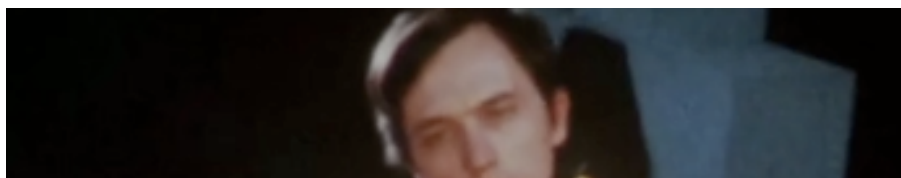




on the LIVE! Show with Jaime Davidovich  
about 1982

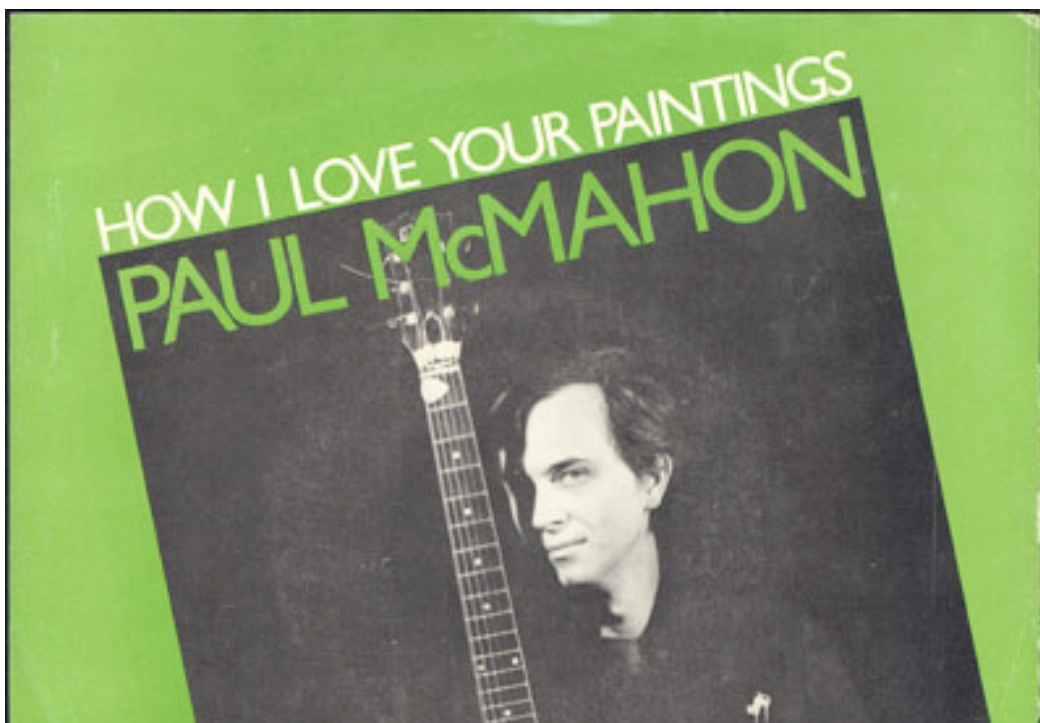
In 1980 he created the ROCK'N'ROLL THERAPIST; a completely improvisational act where he asks audience members to tell him their problems and cures them on the spot with songs. Many problems have been mysteriously cured, even car and money issues. He started appearing on the radio in the 80's and later became a regular guest on KTV, a kids' show with a live audience on CNBC in 1989-90 making up songs for kids in the studio audience. He currently performs on WDST-FM in Woodstock on Doug Grunther's "Roundtable."

He starred in of OUT OF HAND by Ericka Beckman,  
1980





Barbara Jakobson produced his second 45 HOW I LOVE YOUR PAINTINGS with a photo by Robert Mapplethorpe on the sleeve on the sleeve





He traveled to Europe in 1981 as artist/songwriter in residence at Corps de Garde, an innovative situation in Groningen, Holland in 1981 run by Leendert 'Van' Lagestein.



Van's prescient publication was a bumpersticker advertising Paul's performance 15 years before McMahon minted his first *Welcome to Woodstock* sticker.



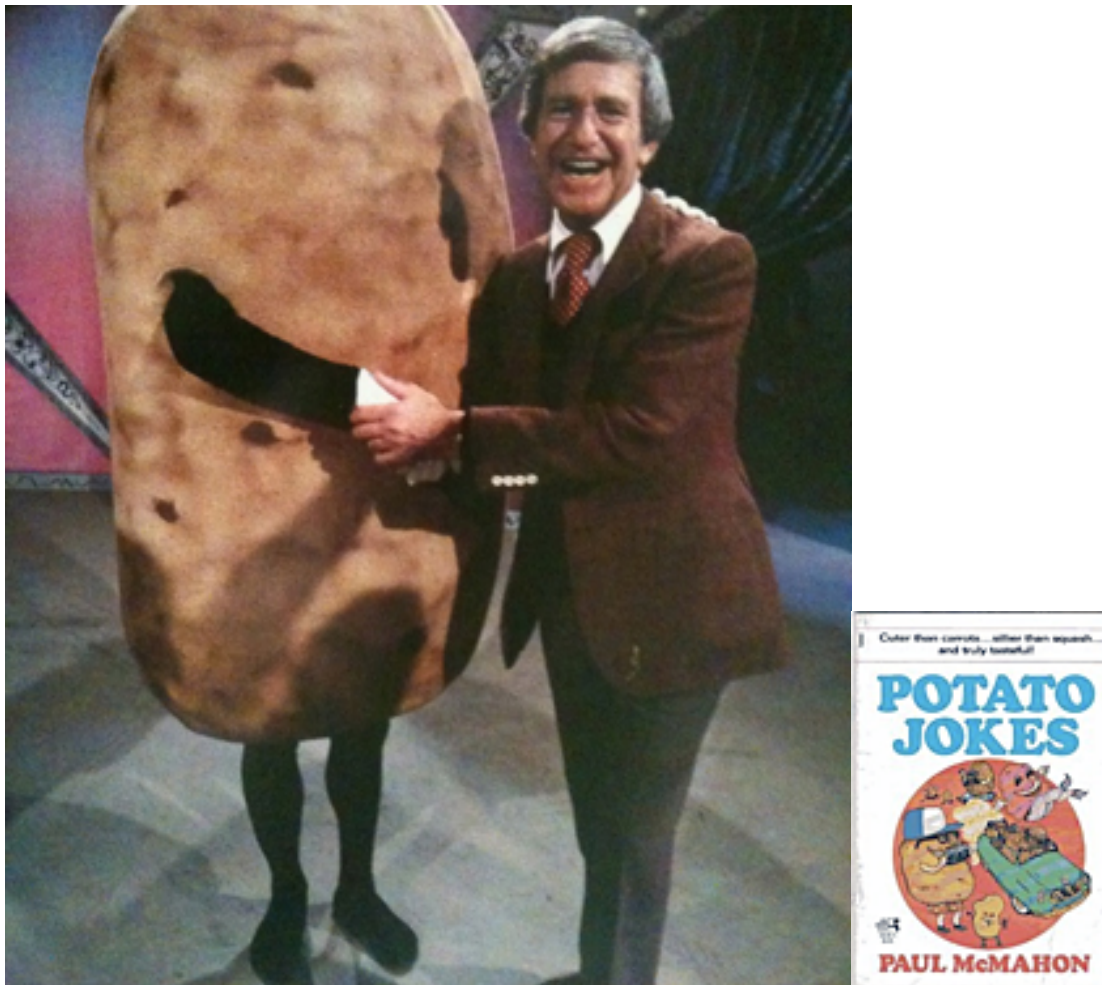


Song Paintings, Simon Weasel RIT 1983 photo: Robert C. Morgan

In 1982-3 he toured the US and Canada with **ROCK'N'ROLL PSYCHIATRIST** and **SONG PAINTINGS**, a solo musical art performance critical of the new and apparently greedier art world of the 80's. This collaboration with Nancy Chunn was both amusing and pointedly satirical of the booming 80s artworld. Biting hands which were feeding him, he was not able to get **SONG PAINTINGS** exhibited in a gallery or museum in NY after its premier performance at Artists Space in 1982. The tour put 11,000 miles on a rental car in 5 weeks and broke even. In a fit of depression he realized he'd always be small potatoes and spontaneously started writing jokes about potatoes.







With Soupy Sales on COMEDY TONIGHT with Bill Boggs, Metromedia TV 1985

At this time he worked part-time in the mailroom at the Muppets. They commissioned him to make a giant potato costume for their Halloween party at the Waldorf-Astoria because he was driving everyone nuts with his jokes. This evolved into a book; POTATO JOKES, published by Pocketbooks in 1984 and various other joke and comedy writing gigs, including the MUPPET MAGAZINE, MTV and Workman Press, where he authored the PAGE-A-DAY JOKES, PUNS AND RIDDLES CALENDAR for 1984 and 1985. He wore the costume on COMEDY

TONIGHT on national TV, trading one-liners with the legendary Soupy Sales. The show also featured Whoopie Goldberg, in her first TV appearance. This led to a gig at the original Caroline's Comedy Club. He also appeared on the news with Morry Alter on WCBS-TV and on the ARCH CAMPBELL (DC) and JOE FRANKLIN SHOWs.



MILD STYLE, a comic short video about an incompetent white break-dancer, was distributed by Coe Films and screened often on WNET-TV in NY, 1985-6. Shot by Ericka Beckman, edited by Tony Oursler.





He played the disturbing clown in William Wegman and Michael Smith's "World of Photography."

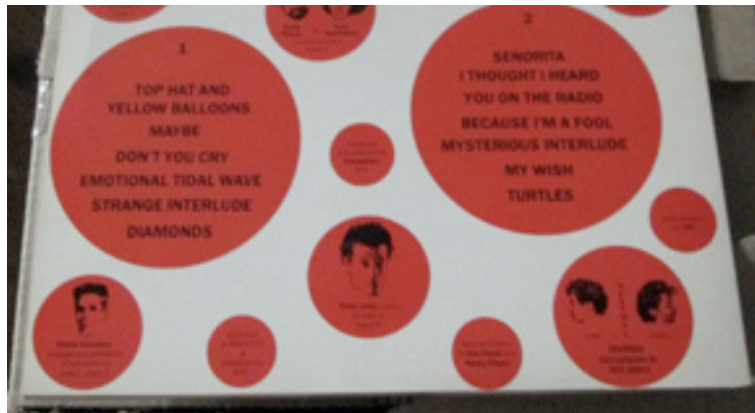
Also in 1985 he organized a show called FUNNY ART at the Concorde Gallery in Soho with Komar & Melamid, Ed Ruscha, Robert Cumming and others.





*Have a Nice Day* 1977, this altered photo of his used on the FUNNY ART flyer was cropped, reprinted as postcard by Fotofolio and has been distributed worldwide ever since. It was published as a print by Strother Elwood Editions and he used it on the cover of his LP. In 1998 appeared in a major photography show, *Under/Exposed* in the Stockholm subway system. The image was also used as a comedy book cover, in an advertising journal and in a promotion for eyeglasses.





His first album PAUL McMAHON, appeared in 1986 on Neutral, the label which launched Sonic Youth. It won an Annual Design Award from PRINT and charted on WFMU, where he subsequently appeared monthly for a year on Bill Berger's show as the Rock'n'Roll Therapist and thereafter on the Glen Jones Show and the Music Faucet with Nick Hill.

With Nancy Chunn he co-produced the second PARTY CLUB at Franklin Furnace in the fall of 1986; a performance art festival in a faux nightclub setting. This extravaganza featured many including Linda Montano, David Leslie, Syd Straw, Joey Arias, Diplomat Samurai Band, John Miller, Ronald Feldman, Microscopic Septet, Pat Oleszco.

One of his volunteer workers, Michael Dorf, went on to found the Knitting Factory, which McMahon booked in its inception during the first few months of 1987. A solo visual art show that year at White Columns got a rave

review from Carlo McCormick in ARTFORUM.



Song of the Statues

photo: Dorit Cypis

The same year he produced a semi-operatic performance art piece about identity called SONG OF THE STATUES at Home, NY. Jon Pareles, writing in the NEW YORK TIMES called it, "...better than an hour of MTV." It included collaborative work by Cindy Sherman, Michel Auder and Dorit Cypis. He recorded an album of the songs from this show at Radio City Music Hall Recording Studio and released it on cassette on his label, Akashic Records and Tapes. It was paid for by the ICA in Boston, which produced the show in 1988.

**M A N I A D**

# MIYLAR

Has a dream which shows him how to market Mock Mouse, the cat toy he invented earlier to play with his cat, Billie Blue, 1988. This is his main means of support from 1988 to 2001. A second product, Ms.'Tick' Mouse was invented in the 90's. Production and sale of these continues, McMahon's first successful micro-business.





His performance of one of these songs, "Bang Your Crazy Head," was praised by reviewers of MIKE'S TALENT SHOW, 1989 on Cinemax, hosted by Mike Smith, starring Lyle Lovett and Stephen Wright. Produced by the Kaminsky Brothers.



Regular act as the Rock'n'Roll Therapist on KTV, fledgling CNBC's kids show weekly; making up songs on the spot about the kids' problems, dreams, etc 1989-90

He received initiation in Kriya Yoga from Sri Atmananda-Giri, and the darshan of Sri Hariharananda-Giri, disciple of Sri Yukteswar 1989-90







Released third album, ADULT CHILD on cassette.  
Produced by Richard Jean with a fine cast of musicians.  
Extraordinarily eclectic collection of songs about  
recovery issues and psychological healing, 1989 cover  
art by Peggy Preheim



Released 4th cassette album MR. PAUL MCMAHON,  
akashic, mostly self-produced solo. 22 songs, mostly  
acoustic, photos: Paula Court

Artwork shifts to reflect more shamanic orientation.



Heart Wand 1990, approx. 12x16x10"

He received a fellowship in New Genres from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1990. He interviewed Wayne Newton for INTERVIEW Magazine and began the spiritual quest in earnest with a near-death rock climbing experience in Sedona, Arizona. That same day, 1/1/90, he was initiated into the tradition of the sweat lodge. He sought Native American teachings from Grandmother

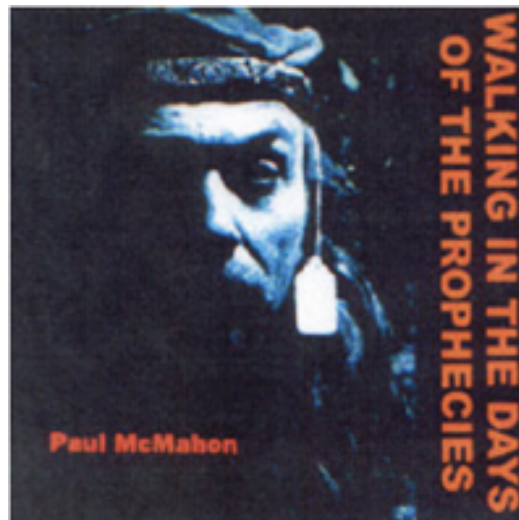
Twyla Nitsch of the Wolf Clan Teaching Lodge on the Seneca reservation in NY. There he also met Grandfather Thundercloud, who was his mentor until his passing in 1995 and encouraged him to move to Woodstock, which he did later that year, after traveling and doing ceremony in Wyoming with another shaman named Two Feathers. He moved from Brooklyn to become an intern, later artist in residence and finally seminarian at the Wittenberg Center in Bearsville, where he was ordained in 1996 as an Interfaith minister by Beautiful Painted Arrow and the Rev. Betsy Stang.



Thomas Banyacya with Oren Lyons at the General Assembly of the UN

He taught performance art in the spring of 1991 at the

San Francisco Art Institute, and visited the Hopi reservation in Arizona, where he met Grandfather Titus Lemson. Long interested in the Hopi, he was exposed to Hopi prophecies when he saw Thomas Banyacya speak about them in 1970. On December 10 of 1992 he saw Banyacya again, when he addressed the United Nations, warning of the Day of Purification. In minutes New York City was hit by an unforecast 'spirit storm.' The song he wrote about it was included on WALKING IN THE DAYS OF THE PROPHECIES. Recorded at Applehead Studio with excellent local musicians, including Randy Ciarlante of The Band, Professor Louie, Steve Rust, Larry Packer, Mike Birnbaum and Jimmy Eppard. The album was finished in 1994, and self-released on cassette.



In 1993 he had three simultaneous art shows in Soho, at Muranushi-Lederman, Horodner-Romley and Zand, and was favorably reviewed in the NEW YORK TIMES by Roberta Smith. He sold a lot of work at low prices, mostly to other artists.



Pink Cloud acrylic on wood panel 1991 16 x 21"  
collection Edward Albee

**VCCA**



Later in 1993 he met Bhagavan Das and shortly after heard the voice of the Goddess speaking in his head.

# DHARMAWA RE

He also started the Dharmaware Café, Woodstock's only acoustic music venue for a few years, later called the Kathmandu.

**I I T T**

# HET PAROOL

In 1994 he performed solo on the Eco-Stage at the Woodstock 25 concert in Saugerties. Surprisingly, pictures of him he did not know were being taken showed up on the front page of HET PAROOL, Amsterdam's daily newspaper. A Japanese camera crew looking for a representational Woodstock hippie also filmed him in his apartment and aired a piece on a Japanese news show.

# MYLAR MAN MTV

With Magnolia Santibanez-Nava from 1994-5 he co-produced a weekly cable access show called DOGS ON

PATROL which ran for about two years on Woodstock Public Access. This show featured local musicians and productions of plays written by McMahon and Santibanez.

# dogs

He also started backing up Lakota singer/songwriter GAYLE TWO EAGLES.



St. John the Divine 1996

In 1996 he began producing a popular series of satirical "Welcome to Woodstock" bumper stickers that make fun



of the town with punchlines like, "Old Beer, Stale Hippies and Psychedelic Rednecks," "Mid-life Crisis Center of the Northeast," and "Most Famous Small Town on Earth." The next year he started doing black & white stickers for the general market like; "My God Can Beat Up Your God," "CAR," "Inner Child In Trunk," and "How Do You Like Armageddon So Far?."



All of the stickers on this van are by Paul except the EVOLVED one.

Also in 97 Paul got a prank call from JAY LENO, who was pretending to answer a classified ad he and his friend had placed in the Woodstock Times; "Position available: m/f 50 or over: Must be willing to run naked in public covered with a fine dusting of powder. No pay. No questions. No wimps." Leno later displayed it on the Tonight Show.

Around this time he started performing songs with two young girl backup singers, Julia Nichols and Diane Penz, and did some shows in NYC.

In 1999 he traveled to South Dakota and was adopted in a hunka ceremony at a Lakota sundance, by Gayle Two Eagles. He also backed singer/songwriter Shamsi Ruhe in a few gigs, and continues to do so on occasion. He and three other Woodstock musicians formed NAKED, a band of four songwriters doing each others' work, which lasted a year or so, breaking up in 2000.

In July of 2000 he turned 50 and released QUEEN PAUL QUINQUADRIO, an improvisational collaboration with DJ 113; recorded, mixed and pressed in 24 hours. This was his deepest adventure into free-style hip-hop and hard to find.

At a concert backing up Gayle Two Eagles in September, he and 20-year-old model Amanda Williams started seeing each other.

.....

In December he released his first CD, ARMY OF LOVE, a very eclectic compilation of old and new tracks including three recently completed by producer Shahzad Ismaily.





Summer 2001

In January 2001 Amanda, pregnant with twin girls, started writing songs and they formed a band called, coincidentally, ARMY OF LOVE with Emily Lopez. Their first CD, DEMO, was completed that month. Williams recorded her first 14 songs just 5 weeks after McMahan showed her some chords on the guitar. They were married on Easter 2001 by Bhagavan Das and Ginger and Hominy were born in June.

In August McMahan recorded a folk-y six song CD with Pete Caigan called WOODSTOCK WINDMILLS.

September 10; McMahan joined the Post Office and began training at Rural Carrier Academy, became a part-time letter carrier to provide a more stable income for the twins

LWIIIS.

September 11; Later McMahon noticed this day was also the 108th anniversary of Vivekenanda's address on Interfaith tolerance at the Parliament of World Religions, Chicago, 9/11/1893. This may have been the first high profile exposition of Eastern thought in the New World. Vivekenanda was a student of Ramakrishna

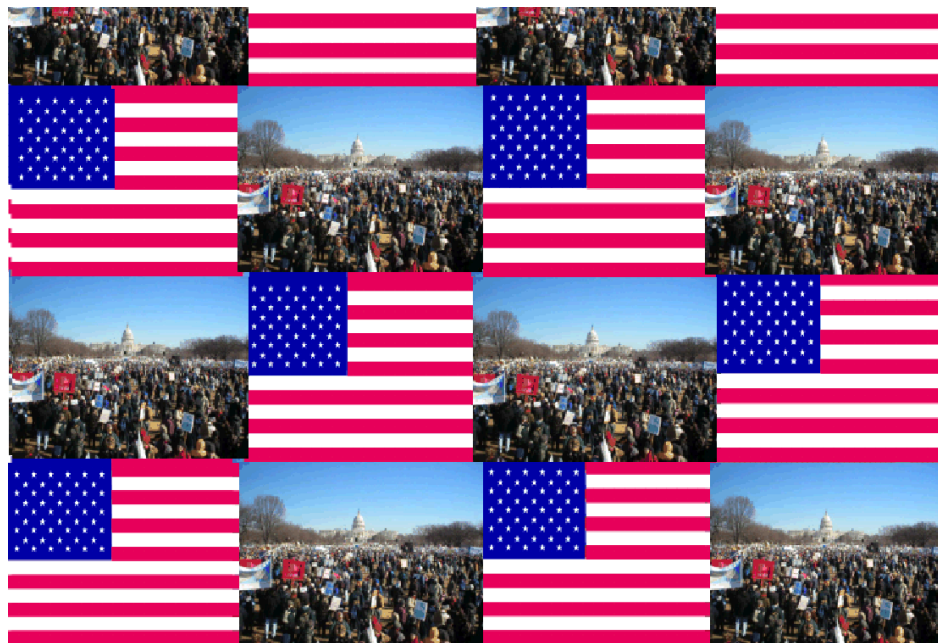
September 15th; Pete Caigan recorded Army of Love's second CD, SERGEANT CATFISH AND GENERAL WILLIAMS, which now included Hollis Smith and a song written by her and Amanda on September ninth called "Here Comes The War."

A collection of his bumper stickers was included in Logoless People, a group show at the Hotel Winston in Amsterdam.

In 2002 he mastered most of his recordings onto CD and currently has 9 CDs. These are available at paulmcmahon.tv, cdbaby.com and digital downloads at iTunes, Rhapsody, etc.

Released ARMY OF LOVE SAVES THE WORLD AGAIN 2003 , by the Army of Love with Alanna Orr on drums





PRAGUE WRITERS' FESTIVAL PRESENTS

# ED SANDERS & THE PLASTIC PEOPLE OF THE UNIVERSE

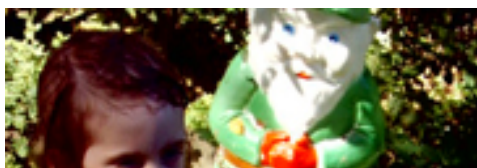
Concert 3.12.07 20:00 Divadlo Minor  
[www.pwf.cz](http://www.pwf.cz)

Tickets:  
Divadlo Minor, Vodňánská 6, Praha 1  
Tel.: 222 231 361

MORAL VALUES?



WITNESS TO THE MONKEY by Army of Love was recorded and mixed in 2004 by Wharton Tiers, with Mackenzie Parker on drums.





2005

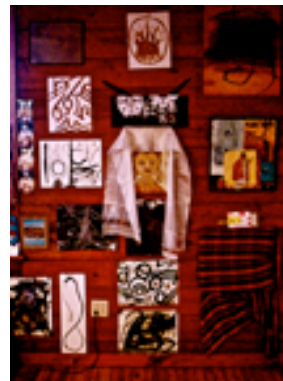
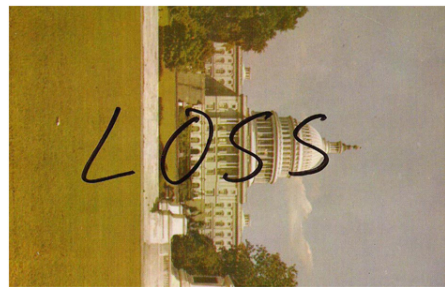
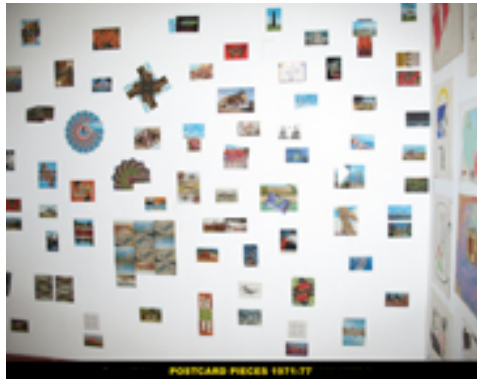
Orchard re-enacts 1973 MICHAEL ASHER Film screening from Project Inc. series. McMahon is the only person who was present at both events.







876 show in Ktown



collection Metropolitan Museum  
from the 90s

works

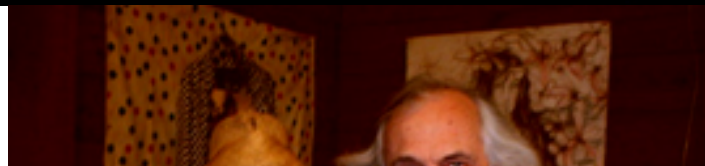




# ANDY WARHOL

## AND HOLY WAR

2007 Solo show at Woodstock Mothership, I GIVE THANKS FOR THIS BEAUTIFUL LIFE 70-07, works from 1970-2007





Linda Mary Montano is Paul McMahon, 2007. Linda Montano lipsynchs to three hours of Paul McMahon recorded music, during his show at the Mothership; the first of several performances of Linda being Paul 2007-2010

2008



2009

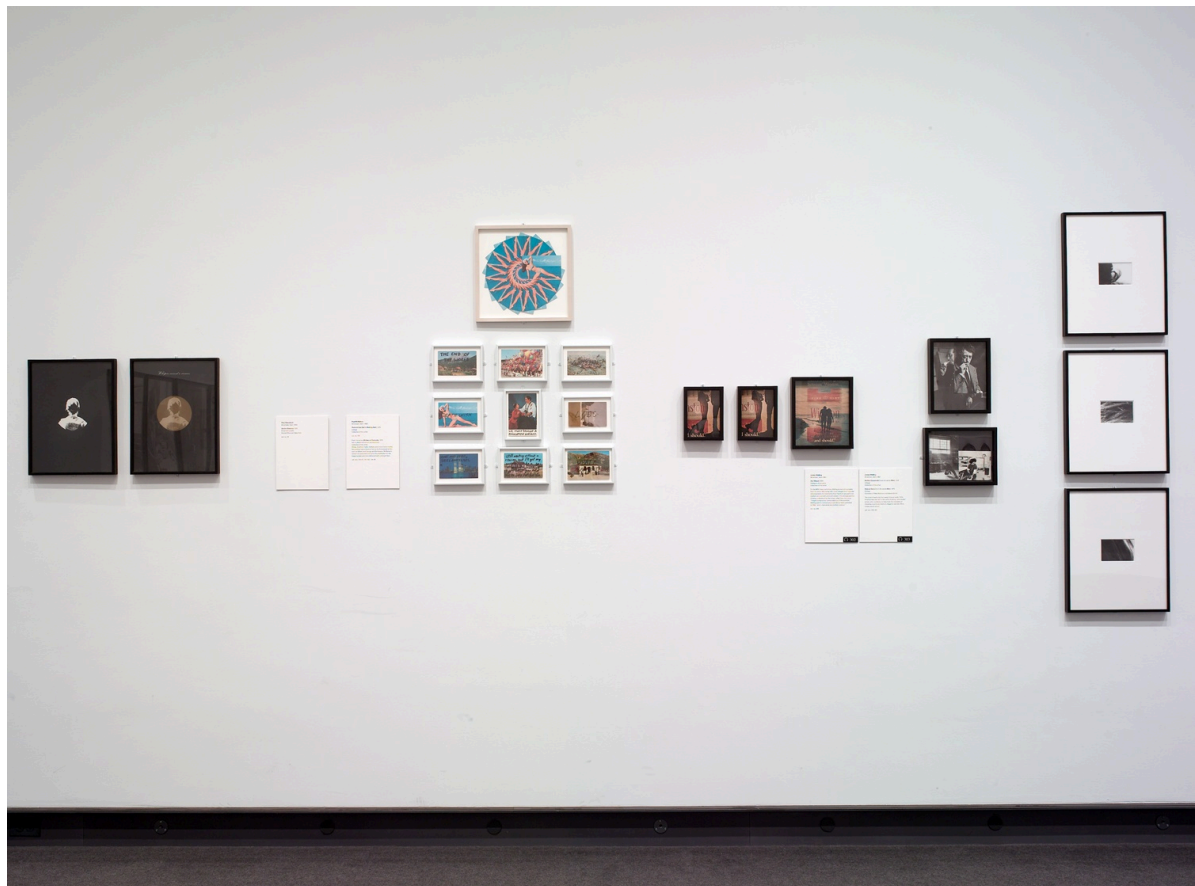


2009: McMahon was included in THE PICTURES GENERATION 1974-1984 at the Metropolitan Museum, curated by Douglas Eklund. Well represented, with over 30 works, mostly over 30 years old, in an exhibition of over 30 artists.





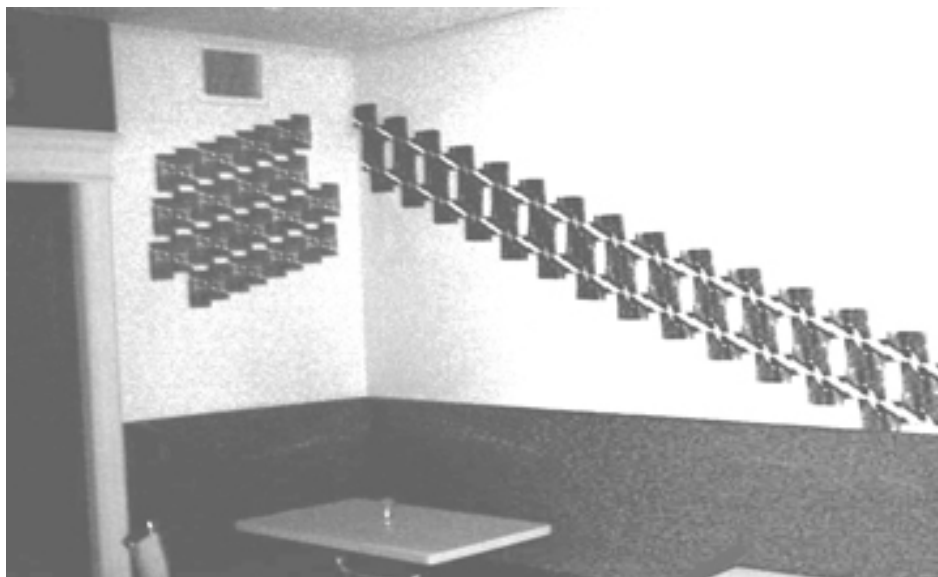
His pastels are seen here with postcard pieces on wall at left in next room

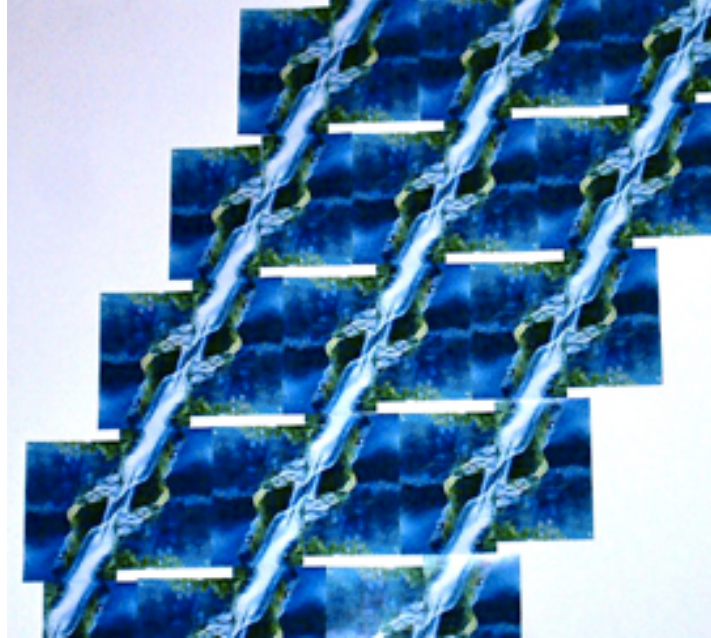


Metropolitan photos: Eileen Travell



McMahon accepted the award for the Metropolitan's PICTURES GENERATION show for Best Museum Group Show of the Year (2009) at Rob Pruitt's First Annual Art Awards ceremony at the Guggenheim. Patrick McMullan photo.





New postcard works 2009, solo show at Alchemy Cafe,  
Woodstock



OCTOBER 2009 Marrying Chondra and Claudio  
Sanchez (Coheed and Cambria)



Singing at Echo Country Clubhouse 2010, LA

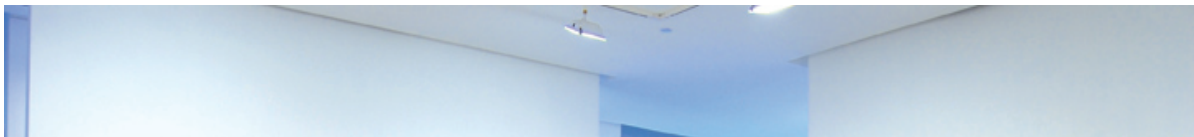
Performed music at several venues in LA and lectured at  
CalArts, UCLA and Otis Art Institute, spring 2010

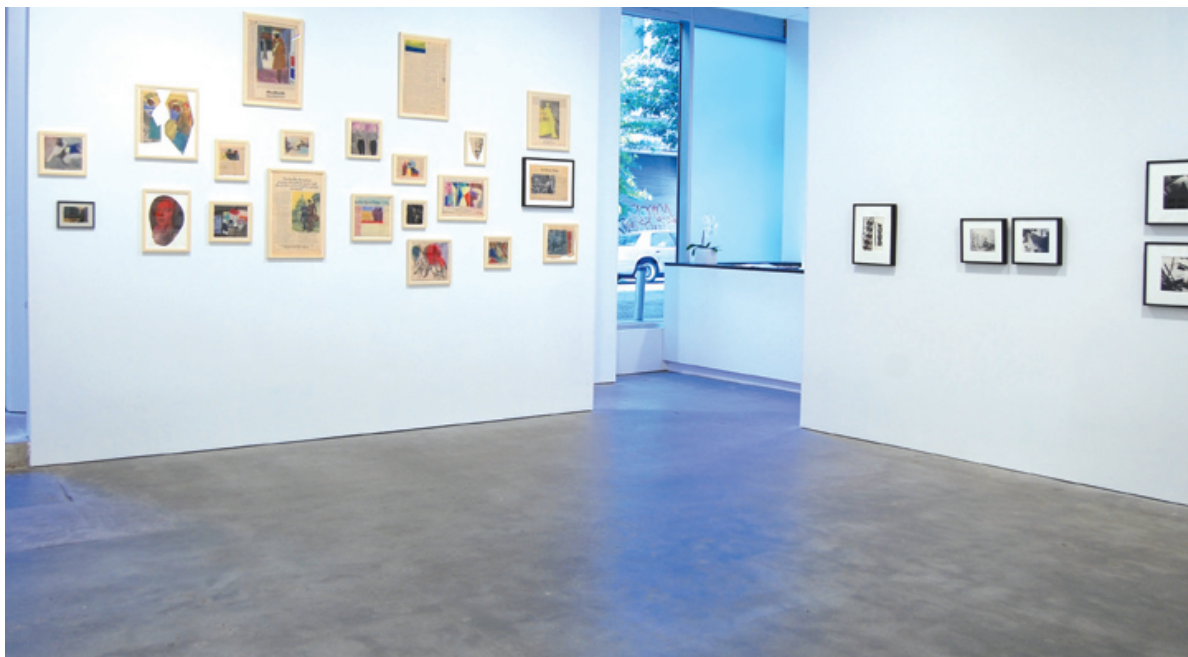






Cuddling up at the Mothership





STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN Group Show with Matt Mullican and James Welling of work from 1970-75 at Susan Inglett, June 2010





Babette Mangolte, Whitney Biennial

By chance both Whitney Biennial and Dan Graham  
Whitney shows have something of McMahon in them.  
(Center rows 2,3 and 4) from the bottom.

Project Inc. archives acquired by Bard Center for  
Curatorial Studies 2010

2011



McMahon's artist daughters, Ginger and Hominy, aged

10 and artist uncle Will Barnet, aged 100 at his talk during retrospective at the NY Art Academy.

Pre-Occupied at Roos Arts

2012



Homemade Obama Lawn Sign





Released new CD

2013



Performed with Liam O'Maunlie

2014

12 | January 16, 2014  
Looking Forward

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# All in the family

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Woodstock's tight-knit vibe imbues it with charm

Paul Smart

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**M**OST PEOPLE STILL COME TO Woodstock the first time with some idea of its 1960s hippie al-




IM... lure in mind. Or they come with its legacy in mind: a center for the arts, populated by working artists of all sorts.

But they generally return for shopping, despite the slightly higher prices they pay for non-chain-store stuff. They keep coming back for Woodstock's mix of public events and private businesses. They appreciate the ease with which they find those places that make one feel like locals.

Every once in a while the business community gets worried, as it did a few years back, that there's a decline in the local business scene. For a while the merchants get very busy and involved, the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce & Arts gets into gear, the town board sets up special commissions and work groups, and before you can say "renaissance" all the spaces along Mill Hill Road and Tinker Street — the burg's main thoroughfare — are filled again. New ideas, like monthly Friday-night shopping and entertainment sprees, get kicked off. Or the next huge community event like Halloween, second Saturday art openings, the annual Film, Writers', Comedy or Luthiers' festivals, or the Christmas Tree Sale and other events...



PHOTOS BY DION OGUST

member of a beautification committee that's been quietly spiffing up Woodstock's hamlet center. It's almost becoming a pure pleasure to walk around at any time of year. Cool nooks and crannies are almost everywhere you look.

The quirky and handmade have become as

Foods Market, The Bear Café, Joshua's Café with its Middle Eastern cuisine and coffee shop, Sunfrost Farms at which discerning locals gather at the juice bar, Woodstock Meats, Catskill Mountain Pizza, the Wok n' Roll Café and most of the town's other eateries.