

“If Possible, Take Risks to Pursue Your Passions ”

Stan Cardinet

23 May 1938 - 14 August 2024

## PREFACE

*Stan was known for his unconventional approach to life and art. His refusal to adhere to social norms made him a bit of an eccentric, but that was exactly where he thrived. Often engaged in deep, thought-provoking conversations, he questioned the purpose of existence and what it meant to be truly alive. He believed that everyone had a purpose and that finding it required courage and introspection. Stan inspired those around him to dig deep within themselves, to question their own paths and passions. His exploration of culture, art, music, and nature was at the core of his unique artistry.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Stan's early years were spent in the wonder and color of his grandmother's garden overlooking the San Francisco Bay. He undertook drawing and watercolors as a child. In elementary school, he learned that he preferred pictures to words.

In the early 60's, Stan took up residence in Europe. While there, he had come face to face with the canvases of several painters whose work was the impetus to pick up the brush, and later, to shape much of his work. As visible in many of his paintings, the German Romantics earned the role to inspire atmosphere; while Van Gogh and the Post-Impressionists influenced color. His interest in Gardenscapes owed debt to Monet and Klimt.

The 70's took on a euphoric experience as he and a few fellow colleagues agreed to start a school offering an intellectually honest education to low-income students. Living on \$90 a month, they made a commitment to one another to stick it out for one year. In 1972, amid local and national political turmoil, they established a tradition of learning in nature on extended camping trips, both because they believed deeply in the transformative power of the natural world and because inexpensive space was difficult to find.

Also, during the 70's, Stan established a summer residence in the Sierra Foothills, with family, creating studio space for painting. Working for Nevada City's *Western Slopes Connection*, a bio-regionalist newspaper, he used oils to paint an artistic reflection of living in Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia*.

Throughout the 80's, Stan labored to hone technique, which he referred to as a paradoxical struggle to combine spontaneity and control, using new influences, Western and Asian, combined with European.

His work was not limited to the idyllic Gardenscapes alone. There was a “shadow side” that explored anger and death in its existential, social and historical forms. Volcanoes and Fin-de-Siecle Viennese influences reoccur through much of his work. He was interested in rendering the weather, the wind, the sky, in physical and emotional terms. And there is “”Light understood literally as it is seen optically in the hues of yellow to white, and as it holds metaphoric meanings.

Stan was never taught how to paint. He regarded his paint tools, his continual frustrations, and the satisfaction of pigments, as his teachers. He reflected how his technique, although true and inconsistent, was somewhat free from constraints since he was never dependent on painting for income. He stated his work had evolved without concern for trends or the market.

From the 90’s into the 21st century, his career as founder of Maybeck High School (going on its 52nd year) came first; then, his painting, his passion, took on wings.

To quote his former student, he compared Stan to Maybeck as, “The culture, the vibe, the encouragement to be yourself, whatever that self is, and to innovate and be creative; that’s the ethos of the school and that’s how Stan lived. ”

Besides his talents as a teacher and a painter, Stan was an adventurer, a prolific writer, an old school photographer, an avid reader, and an imaginative sketch artist.

Stan had hoped that the final phase of his life would be working as a professional painter; however, he had yet to cross that bridge before he passed on August 14, 2024. In his own words, “I remain as a ‘hermit’ painter with a substantial body of work.”

## IN DEDICATION

*Every Maybeck student is presented upon graduation with a small tree in a one-gallon pot, usually a coast live oak or buckeye. More than 1,000 trees have been planted in the East Bay by Maybeck graduates, with more to come. There were 27 trees handed out last spring, among a student body that holds steady at around 110.*

*For every sale, Maybeck High School, will receive a portion of the proceeds to be donated for the “Plant a Tree” tradition, established by Stan Cardinet.*