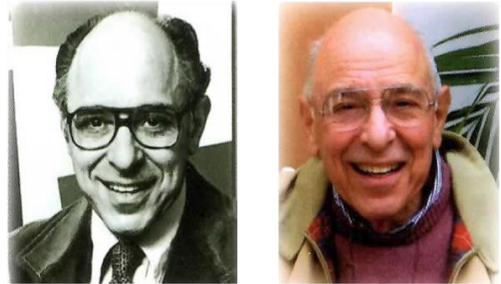


Milton Teichman at Eighty

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Milton Teichman is grateful, and not just because he's arrived at the age of eighty in sound body and mind. "I've experienced a double passion in my life," he explains. "I spent forty-seven years teaching literature and writing on the college level, and during that period I also actively pursued my interest in painting and sculpture."

Today, he lives in Brewster, where he operates the Teichman Gallery with his wife Sharon Leder, and the couple spends the winters in Mexico. He lived in the Hudson Valley of New York for many years before becoming a resident of Cape Cod in 1999. On arriving here, he began to experiment with paintings that reflected the influence of the Cape landscape, where he abstracted and simplified the ever-changing appearances of the ocean and bay, marshes, and sand dunes. "The colors I employed were poetic rather than naturalistic," he says. Now he paints such quasi-representational landscapes as well as nonobjective paintings and collages which show his continued interest in the interplay of form and space on a two-dimensional surface.



When he was young, he was drawn to the paintings of Picasso, Matisse, and Braque. "I loved their visual simplifications, their deliberate and creative distortions of factual reality. In my early years, I was intrigued also by the work of Kandinsky and Mondrian. Their work struck me as a form of visual music, stirring the feelings through the eye as music stirs the feelings through the ear. In Mondrian, I also saw the beauty of two-dimensionality and the exciting dialogue between form and space." In the 1960s, partly under the influence of the Abstract Expressionists, he turned to non-objective painting and collage, treating the canvas not as a window through which one views a scene but as the glass itself, on which the pure elements of design—form, space, color, texture, and line—are brought into harmony.

In his three-dimensional work, he now focuses on small sculptures in wood, sheet brass, fired clay, and bronze. The bronze pieces reflect the influence of the primitive art of Mexico, where he and his wife have been spending the winters since 2001. "I work at two different locations making sculpture—in fired clay at the Rufino Tamayo Workshops in the city of Oaxaca, and in bronze in the workshop of sculptor Mario Rangel Gomez in San Miguel de Allende. And when I'm not working in the sculpture studios, I am making paintings in the apartments we rent in these locations. Sometimes people ask me, 'Don't you want to take a vacation when you're in sunny Mexico?' My usual answer is, 'Making sculpture and painting IS my vacation.'"

When asked, Which do you prefer—painting or sculpture? he replies: "I try to be a wise parent who loves his offspring equally." And when asked, Aren't painting and sculpture very different artistic activities? he says: "Indeed they are, but in both media I am concerned with the dialogue of form and space, the pursuit of artful simplicity, and the search for harmony or unity."

He enjoys having his own gallery, and feels that it motivates him to produce a new body of work every year. And the gallery also allows him to fill his need for a fully creative life; from June through September, the Teichmans host cultural events—musical, literary, theatrical—organized by Sharon and held in the gallery. They also invite artists, writers, and musicians to speak about the nature of creativity as they experience it.

On his milestone this year, he says, “Now that I'm about to be 80, I find myself tallying up the number of years I've been making art on a consistent basis—and that number comes close to 50. What a deep source of satisfaction, considering the fact that not only have I received pleasure making art but I've also given pleasure to many who have seen my work over the years and who have honored me by purchasing my paintings or sculptures. In reaching 80, I've been given a gift of time. The marketplace says that time is money. I know that time is really life, and that I've been given a good span of it. For that, I'm deeply grateful. How wonderful to feel driven daily to make something with my hands, to know that though I'm 80 I can still grow as an artist, and that I can feel through my work an elation no less strong than when I was a young man. You can see why I've become a fanatic in the religion of gratitude.”