**ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY**

Dutch Kepler (b. July 16, 1943) grew up watching his Great Uncle Cliff paint. Art always seemed a part of his life, although his family suggested he should not emulate his Uncle Cliff. He nevertheless received his BA in art in 1965 at North Texas State University and went on to Florida State University to get his MFA in 1970. While at Florida State University he studied under the well-known artist, Karl Zerbe. He became a graphic designer in order to earn a living, a strategy that allowed him to be a painter as well. Acrylic is his medium of choice. Dutch taught for 33 years at what is now called the University of Louisiana, Lafayette (ULL) where he was a Professor of Advertising Design. He favors abstraction and tends to create non-objective stylized art. In *Blue Rainbow with Green Woman*, Dutch utilizes a female nude in his composition. His fascination for the form originated with his interest for Native American culture and woman's place within it. In Native American culture Dutch observed that women were the primary owners. Dutch's interest resulted in his *Mother Earth Series* of which this work is part. Dutch's most recent art has turned to fish as a subject matter due to his love for fishing and the pond behind his studio. Dutch retired from ULL in 2000 but he continues to paint and show.

**About the Art**

Kepler's painting was part of his *Mother Earth Series*. He liked including the gentle curves of humans to show nature, while using stylized flat colors. He used a scumbling technique for the clouds and the trees. The background is monochromatic, with a dark forest green for the silhouette of the female figure. He created an asymmetrical composition with the surrounding border the same color as the female figure to create balance in the piece. The placement of the rainbow reflects the pose of the female figure. The scumbled clouds are a harmonious repetition of the trees. The female figure represents Mother Earth. All other parts of the painting are congruent with this figure.

**Related Terminology**

**Scumbling:** A technique in which the paint brush is lightly brushed over the surface to let some of the color beneath show through. To show a soft effect using an opaque color.

**Zerbe to Kepler**

Dutch Kepler studied under Karl Zerbe in 1970. Eventually Zerbe became known for his interesting treatment of the repetition of subject matter from nature, specifically birds. Today, his one-time student is also focusing on the repetition of subject matter from nature, fish. Kepler recently reminisced about Zerbe. "He was a fantastic guy with good quirks. He would do this thing with his fingers, putting them together, twirling them around, and say, 'you need more of this in your piece.' He was always helpful. If he had a crack in the door you could come in but if the door was closed he was painting and you couldn't. Zerbe used encaustic in his paintings."

**Artist's Statement**

"I had about 7 shows in 5 years here in Louisiana....Currently I'm just painting for me. I'm actually working on [a] piece right now. I'm covering my walls 30 inches from the floor with gessoed canvas to create one giant painting. I don't know what I will do yet but I'm just seeing where it will take me." Phone Interview, 2/1/10

**References**

- Dutch Kepler, telephone interview with the author, February 1, 2010.
### MOTHER EARTH IN ART

#### ACTIVITY LESSON PLAN: 9-12

**Session Activity:**
In Dutch Kepler’s painting, *Blue Rainbow with Green Woman*, he represents "Mother Nature." This painting is part of his series titled the *Mother Earth Series*. He shows the silhouette of a stereotypical woman form of the 70s. Mirroring and repetition are present in his piece, female nude to rainbow, and trees to clouds. He uses stylized flat colors, scumbled trees, and the gentle curves of the human female to reflect natural form. In this activity students will be asked to think of what Mother Nature means to them, the way their vision of “Mother Earth” would be changed today.

**Discussion questions:**
- Should only a certain audience view this panting? If so, explain?
- When viewing the silhouette of the female form, in what way does it reflect nature? How does the artist imply a comparison of the female form to the rainbow? Explain.
- In this painting explain the way the artist is portraying Mother Earth. Why do you think he is portraying Mother Earth this way? What makes his female form stereotypical?
- If you were creating an image of Mother Earth today, what would she look like? What would inspire your creation? How could you avoid creating a stereotypical form?

**Activity procedures:**
After the discussion cited above, each student will be given a piece of paper and will be asked to paint a monochromatic nature scene. Once the painting is dry each student will add a silhouette of his/her version of Mother Earth.

---

### RECYCLE MOTHER EARTH

#### Activity and Contemporary Art History Lesson Plan: 9-12

**Extension:**
Have the students create a Mother Earth image from recycled materials. In Dutch Kepler’s *Mother Earth Series*, he uses abstracted painted forms to show his version. Keeping the earth clean through recycling is a major thrust in varieties of art movements in today’s society. Look at Australian John Dahlsen’s art to see the way he creates pieces from things he finds, like the pieces titled *Blue Plastic* or *Blue Rope*. Dahlsen said, “These artworks are a selection of my assemblage wall works, which began as my creative medium shifted from abstract painting to working as an environmental artist.”

http://www.johndahlsen.com/index.html

#### Discussion Questions:
- Identify other artists who use recycled materials.
- Why is it important to recycle?
- Are you for or against the movement to create recyclable art? What benefits come from this movement? What problems come from this movement?
- What statement do you think artists are making when they create recyclable art?
- Explain why you think people make recyclable art? Is it to make a statement or to enhance environmental quality by reusing what we as an overpopulated society throw away?

---

**SunShine State Standards: 9-12**

**Arts: Visual Arts**
Strand: Creation and Communication
Standard 1,#2: Understands that works of art can communicate an idea and elicit a variety of responses through the use of selected media, techniques, and processes. (VA.B.1.4.2)

**SunShine State Standards: 9-12**

**Life Science**
Standard 17: Interdependence
18: Describe how human population size and resource use relate to environmental quality. (SC.912.L.17.18)

**Blue Plastic**
John Dahlsen
Panel, 1.2m x 1m
Plastic objects, assembled behind Perspex

John Dahlsen’s art is made from plastics collected from Australian beaches.

**Blue Rope**
John Dahlsen
Triptych, each panel 165 cm x 44 cm
Plastic objects, assembled behind Perspex