

# HENK PANDER

MEMORY AND MODERN LIFE

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HALLIE FORD MUSEUM OF ART  
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Front cover, and Figure 97 (p. 102): Henk Pander, *The Burning of the New Carissa* (2000); oil on linen, 63 x 81 inches. Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, Oregon, Maribeth Collins Art Acquisition Fund, 2010.043.

Frontispiece, and Figure 80 (p. 85): Henk Pander, *For My Father (For Pappa)* (2004); oil on linen, 64 x 54 inches. Collection of the artist.

Page 6: Marne Lucas, Henk Pander in his studio, Portland, Oregon (2006). From the artist portrait series *Sitting City*.

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BY ROGER HULL

### INTRODUCTION

Henk Pander has lived in Oregon for forty-five years but to this day describes himself as a “reluctant immigrant” from his native Holland. Arriving in Portland in 1965, already an academically trained painter at the age of twenty-seven, he observed and documented the crosscurrents of the American cultural scene of the 1960s with the fascination and detachment of a European émigré. In the decades since, Pander has maintained his cultural double vision: he records and interprets American technology, materialism, topography, and disaster in paintings and drawings that radically revise aspects of traditional Dutch painting in order to make hard-hitting American art. At the same time, drawing upon childhood memories of Holland and periodic visits to his home country, he frequently paints specifically European scenes and subjects. His painted narratives range from memories of Nazi-occupied Holland, to a conflation of the American West with deep space, to the burning of the *New Carissa* off the Oregon coast. Combining personal and art-historical memory with the subject matter of modern life, Pander creates

works that are profound in their seriousness, dramatic intensity, and expressive power.

Henk Pander is a professional artist who devotes himself entirely to making and selling artwork. He has rarely taught or supported himself in other ways, and consequently he has found it necessary to address broadly varied markets for his work. The result is an oeuvre of tremendous range. It encompasses the political and cultural event posters that he created in his early years in Portland, the sets and costumes he designed for the Storefront Theater and other theater groups and dance companies, murals for public and corporate places, and portraits—all works that in various ways and contexts are created on commission for particular individuals or entities. He is also the rare example in this era and region of a traditional academic artist who creates oil paintings, watercolor paintings, and drawings that deal directly with the drama and ennui of modern life—with the cultural history of Oregon, the American West, and Northern Europe. His paintings and drawings range from the sheer lyricism of his landscapes and still-life compositions, to intense dramatic narrative in his memory of war series and his paintings of fire and

police personnel responding to crisis, to works that address sexuality and death, Eros and Thanatos, with almost unbearable frankness and candor.

Henk Pander is a major figure in Pacific Northwest art and has been for nearly half a century. From the moment he first set foot in Oregon, Pander has startled, shocked, outraged, and yet astonished and pleased his viewers. His work has been deemed too bold and controversial (“pornographic,” some have said), too traditional and academic, too calculatedly aimed at the marketplace, too independent, too art-historical, too varied and wide-ranging and thus lacking in focus, too un-modern, too “weird.” Pander himself has been known to list some of the “problems” associated with his work: “I know my work does not sell well—it’s too large, confrontational, does not follow trends, deals with politics, social critique, satire, irony, the negative aspects of life—everything which turns people off.”<sup>1</sup> Pander’s sometimes irascible personality, his immigrant’s defensiveness and even paranoia, can itself raise the temperature of the debates surrounding his work. Yet when one asks who are the major portraitists in the Pacific Northwest these days, Henk Pander is on the list. When one asks who are the artists who paint the major murals and other public art works around here these days, Pander is on the list. And when one asks who paints the most dramatic narrative scenes of modern life in Europe and the United States, Pander is sure to be named. On the other hand, by painting scenes of human beings engaged and ensnared in daily experiences of the mundane and tragic, Pander opens himself to the assertion that he is not a modernist, that he paints and draws in the ways of art history but not the ways of now. Henk Pander offers a case study that is rife with paradox. His work is contradictory, complex, vital, often abrasive, often gorgeous. He is a remarkable Northwest master whose art provides a synthesis of New World and Old World experience in sometimes beautiful and sometimes toxic ways.

## COMING OF AGE IN THE NETHERLANDS

Hendrik Pieter Pander was born November 21, 1937, in Haarlem, The Netherlands, the son of Jacob Pander and Hendrica Smedes Pander (see Figures 1, 2, and 4). Jacob and Hendrica were from Friesland, an agricultural province in the north of Holland unique for having its own language. They spoke in Friesian to one another; Henk grew up speaking both Friesian and Dutch. Henk’s father, an illustrator and painter who used the professional name of Jaap Pander, provided the model for Henk’s becoming an artist. He was the first of the Panders’ ten children and, as the oldest son, the object of his father’s affections and expectations. From the time he was eight or nine



FIGURE 1. Henk Pander with his mother, Hendrica Smedes Pander, Haarlem, The Netherlands, ca. 1938.



**FIGURE 2.** Henk Pander with his father Jacob (Jaap) Pander and younger sister Gesa, Haarlem, The Netherlands, ca. 1940

years old, he joined his father on drawing expeditions, often to the dunes near Haarlem, establishing a lifelong practice of painting watercolors *en plein air* (see Figure 3). His father also introduced him to the indoor world of studio painting, and he continues to set up and visualize his studios as zones of Dutch-ness, spaces that keep him linked to a way of painting that extends back to Frans Hals and Rembrandt van Rijn.

Jaap Pander had studied at the Minerva Academy in Groningen, where he was singled out as a promising graphic design student. He went to work for a Haarlem graphics company and became known for his advertising layouts for such companies as the Holland American Lines. Jaap Pander was also a highly religious man, a stern and serious Calvinist who, Henk believes, wanted his oldest son to become a minister. In addition to his work in advertising, Pander's father drew the illustrations for three Bibles, including one



**FIGURE 3. JAAP PANDER**

Henk Pander drawing in the dunes near Haarlem  
ca. 1960

Charcoal and Conté crayon or colored pencil on paper  
10 1/4 x 13 3/4 inches  
Collection of Henk Pander



**FIGURE 4. HENK PANDER**

*Portrait of the Artist's Father, Jaap Pander*  
1962

Oil on canvas  
30 x 26 inches  
Collection of the artist

published in Cleveland, Ohio. He considered his Bible illustrations to be his most significant work, reflecting his deep religious faith. Recalling his father,

Pander said: “He was extremely talented. Much more than I am. A tremendous influence. He was difficult, but he loved his children. Our whole life was about drawing, painting, Bible illustrations, stories. I grew up in my father’s world.”<sup>22</sup>

The Pander family’s world, the European world in general, was difficult and dangerous during Henk’s childhood as it unfolded in and around the family home at Number One Tetterode Straat (see Figure 5). Memories of the terror and extreme hardships that the Dutch endured during the Nazi occupation of the early 1940s remain vivid and frightening for Pander nearly seventy years later. In the 1980s and 1990s, he painted a series of personal history paintings of the remembered realities of wartime. But Henk Pander’s early world also was suffused with art and cultural history. The rich art tradition in Haarlem, linking back to Frans Hals, Judith Leyster, and Jacob van Ruisdael in the seventeenth century and continuing in the twentieth century with Haarlem artists such as Henry Boot, Kees Verwey, and Poppe Damave, as well as Jaap Pander, always at work in his studio located in the family home, made it natural if not inevitable that Henk and four of his siblings would study art and pursue art careers.<sup>3</sup>

Already skilled in the basics of drawing and watercolor, Henk focused on subjects other than art in his early education in Haarlem schools. He was particularly interested in the natural sciences and astronomy, subjects that he still references in his creative work. In 1955, he graduated from the lyceum, or high school (see Figure 6), and at his father’s urging enrolled at the Kunstnijverheid-School in Amsterdam. Pander describes this as a “high modernist design school that ridiculed my abilities”<sup>24</sup> in drawing, *plein air* painting, and other traditional practices. This experience began Pander’s lifelong antagonism with modernism, even though he acknowledges that elements of modernist practice are essential to his work.

A year or so later, in 1956, he began taking night classes at Amsterdam’s Rijksacademie van



FIGURE 6. Henk Pander, age eighteen, ca. 1955.

Beeldende Kunsten, the prestigious government-supported academy of fine arts. He was accepted for a probationary first year and soon qualified as a regular full-time student. In contrast to the design school, he found the academy a perfect fit for his skills and ambitions. The curriculum included art history, iconography, and anatomy as well as studio practice. For the first three years, it was “draw, draw, draw,” with some watercolor sessions gradually introduced.<sup>5</sup> Pander’s drawing ability immediately attracted the attention of his instructors and fellow students. There was no ridiculing of his traditional skills here.

Oil painting came in the fourth and fifth years. Pander and his fellow students learned of the legendary painter George Breitner (1857–1923), credited with introducing to The Netherlands a realism in art that paralleled the work of Gustave Courbet and Edouard Manet in France. Breitner’s paintings (see Figure 7) of the working class, city streets and buildings, and female nudes were recognized as authentic early Dutch modernism by Pander’s teachers Charles Roelofs and Jan Wiegers (Figure 8). Wiegers, a friend and acolyte of the German Expressionist painter Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, in turn had introduced German Expressionism to The Netherlands in the 1920s,



**FIGURE 7. GEORGE HENDRIK BREITNER**  
*Corner of Leidsche Square, Amsterdam*  
 ca. 1880–1890  
 Oil on canvas  
 Private collection; courtesy The Bridgeman Art Library  
 International

and the more progressive students at the academy, including Pander, embraced the emotional intensity and coloristic abstraction of Expressionist painting.<sup>6</sup>

At the academy in the postwar period, traditional Dutch painting was practiced alongside Wiegiers's modernism as well as work inspired by Karel Appel and other artists associated with COBRA, the avant-garde movement active from 1949 to 1952, its name coined from the initials of the members' home cities of Copenhagen, Brussels, and Amsterdam. COBRA, emphasizing the free and spontaneous use of color and form, drew upon Fauvist and Expressionist experiments in modernism. The combination of new art and more conservative modes made the 1950s Dutch art scene conflicted but vital, Pander recalls.<sup>7</sup> By the 1960s, "the dominant factors" emphasized by the academy "were a broad brush, a firm drawing hand, a feel for construction and pronounced expressiveness." The instructors encouraged the use of "lots of paint, but precisely where it belonged."<sup>8</sup>

Pander's student works include a series of vividly colored landscape paintings of such locales as the dunes near Haarlem and the terrain of the barrier islands in the Wadden Sea. *Oerd* (1959, Figure 9) depicts the wilderness area of that name on the island of Ameland, where the academy rented a hotel each year to house students and instructors while they drew



**FIGURE 8. JAN WIEGIERS**  
*Ameland*  
 ca. 1930  
 Oil on canvas  
 22 1/2 x 27 1/2 inches  
 Collection of Renée Smithuis

and painted the scenery. With its intense palette of orange, gold, pink, and green and abstract rendering of dunes, water, and vegetation, *Oerd* relates to the high-keyed modernism of mid-century Dutch painting, as seen in the work of artists such as Wiegiers (see Figure 8). Pander works the paint broadly and freely, yet the composition is undergirded by a strong sense of drawing, which for him is the basis of all art-making. The areas of color, with contours created by straight and curved outlines, give the painting a structure and sculptural three-dimensionality that contrasts with the flatness often emphasized in modernist painting.

Like all students at the academy, Pander was supported by a government scholarship that paid for tuition and studio supplies (except for brushes) and provided a living stipend of two hundred guilders per month.<sup>9</sup> A life of independence and promise was opening for young Henk Pander as he settled into studies at the academy and made friendships in Amsterdam. Life in nearby Haarlem seemed distant, his father's Calvinist strictures dismal. If the joys of student life in the big city, with all its delights and distractions, set one on the path to Hell, he recalls thinking, so be it. "I turned my back on religion once



**FIGURE 9. HENK PANDER**

*Oerd*

1959

Oil on linen

40 x 58 inches

Collection of the artist

I got to Amsterdam,” Pander states in a video made by his son Jacob in 2005.<sup>10</sup> “I rejected my father’s beliefs and became critical of his work as a Biblical illustrator.” This caused his father pain and led to many arguments; Henk laments that he “never had a chance to set this right” with his father, who died in 1962 at age fifty.

Pander concluded his studies at the academy in 1961. That year, after passing a rigorous qualifying exam, he was named one of two candidates for the Prix de Rome, a national competition established by the academy in 1871 for artists under thirty years of age, held every four years. The second step of the competition calls for the painting of a major work. The title of Pander’s competition piece was *A Visit to*

*the Studio*. The subject was assigned to him in a sealed envelope that he was allowed to open only after he had locked himself in a studio, where he spent a day completing the preliminary drawing that would be the basis of the composition of the painting. (The drawing was sealed in a glass-fronted box so that it, or the resulting painting, could not be altered in any significant way in the course of completing the project.) Pander rendered *A Visit to the Studio* with well-established academic conventions including a model with a still-life arrangement in the foreground, a self-portrait in the midground, and at the back an open door with a visitor entering the studio. The completed painting no longer exists, but one of the studies, showing the artist standing at his easel (Figure 10), demonstrates his proficiency with the broad brushwork and solid compositional construction advocated by the academy. With the finished painting, he won the Prix de Rome silver medal and a cash award; the gold medalist then spent a year in Rome.

After completing the course of study at the



**FIGURE 12. HENK PANDER**  
*Amsterdam Café*  
1964  
Oil on linen  
38 x 48 inches  
Collection of the artist

academy, Pander set about establishing himself as a professional artist in Amsterdam. His work included public commissions, portraits for private clients, and oil paintings, watercolors, and drawings that he showed in group exhibitions in galleries and museums. In 1963, the Dutch government commissioned him to paint a series of watercolors documenting the construction of a new dike system (the *Lauwerszeewerken*). He rigged up his motorbike with bags for his watercolor papers and boards and rode out to the coastal areas to paint on site in the construction zones, kneeling on the sand

as he painted or hitching rides on workboats heading to the off-shore project locations. Pander figures that he painted about fifty scenes of the dike project, with the State of The Netherlands purchasing a significant number of them (see Figure 11). In 1964, he was commissioned to create a series of drawings and watercolors documenting the Dutch railway system.

Meanwhile, everywhere he went he carried with him a small sketchbook to make quick drawings of the modern scene and modern life in Holland of the early 1960s. The sketches often became the basis of paintings, such as *Amsterdam Café* (1964; Figure 12), a work in the spirit of George Breitner. For Breitner, history painting was painting contemporary life, Pander notes, and he considers his own work to be in that tradition. His noncommissioned work of the era includes figure studies and still life, landscapes and



**FIGURE 13. HENK PANDER**  
*Marcia in Red Dress*  
1964  
Oil on linen  
36 x 30 inches  
Collection of Marel Kalyn

cityscapes, some of them in a Fauve or Expressionist high-color palette, others much darker in tone, and most all of it in a painterly style that de-emphasizes the fact that the compositions are generally firmly based on drawing. Pender was soon to leave behind this emphasis on the texture of paint and the modernist blur of abstraction in favor of an imagery of clarity and unremitting detail. Circumstances were about to change radically for Pender: he was to relocate to the New World and revise his approach to artmaking in fundamental ways.

But the early sixties in Holland were halcyon days for Henk Pander. His Prix de Rome medal and other awards, his public and private commissions, and the acceptance of his work for exhibitions in museums and galleries allowed him to live comfortably if simply as a full-time artist. His father's reputation in the art world was an asset, as was the support of his former

teachers at the academy. "I was young. I was single. I was successful."<sup>11</sup> He worked hard, sometimes spending many hours each day in his studio, but to his father's consternation he also found time for hanging out in bars and meeting women.

During these years, as a student and then as an independent artist, Pander met various internationals and, because he spoke several languages, helped some of them with translating English, Dutch, French, or German. He particularly liked meeting Americans because, of all countries foreign to him, he considered the United States the place he would most like to experience firsthand. The enormous contrast between the Old World and the New intrigued him, though he considered his foot firmly set on the path that would lead to an established place in the Dutch art world. One of the Americans he met was Marcia Lynch, from Portland, Oregon (see Figure 13), and they became close friends. She went on with her travels in Italy and France but fell ill in Paris. Alone there, she contacted Pander, who joined her to help. When she had recovered, they decided to hitchhike to Italy. This was in 1963.

In Rome, they met the Portland artists Michele Russo and Sally Haley. Marcia Lynch had studied with Mike Russo at the Museum Art School in Portland and knew that he was on sabbatical in Rome. Pander recalls that Russo was a great storyteller. He talked about American politics and American life. He had photographs of paintings by C. S. Price. Before meeting Marcia, Henk had not heard of Portland and knew nothing about Oregon. Talking with Mike and Sally, drinking lots of red wine, he began to get an inkling of what being an American artist might involve.<sup>12</sup>

During their travels Marcia became pregnant. In 1964, they were married in Amsterdam, and their son Jacob was born there. Marcia wanted to visit her father in Portland, and eventually Pander received a grant from the Dutch government to cover the travel costs. He applied, via Mike Russo, for a part-time teaching position at the Museum Art School



**FIGURE 14.** Henk Pander boarding ship at Rotterdam, The Netherlands, July 1965.

in Portland and was hired to fill in for Louis Bunce, who was on sabbatical for the 1965–1966 school year. In July 1965, he and his young family sailed from Rotterdam to New York (see Figure 14). From there, they traveled across the country by train. As they passed through the Columbia Gorge on an early morning, Pander woke up to his first glimpse of the Pacific Northwest. Like the artists Charles Heaney in 1913, Carl Hall in 1942, and Harry Widman in 1950, all of whom saw the Northwest for the first time from the windows of a train, Pander was struck by the dramatic beauty of the region. It is still the case that Pander likes to see the New World in the mode of a traveling observer, through the eyes of an outsider, as an immigrant, an itinerant visiting Dutchman.

### **A NEW WORLD: PORTLAND IN THE 1960s**

When Henk Pander, his wife Marcia Lynch, and their infant son Jacob (see Figure 15) arrived in Portland in 1965, the city's art scene was alive and well on its own terms but radically different from the long-established art world of Amsterdam. In Portland, the pioneer Oregon modernist C. S. Price, whose posthumous portrait Pander would later be commissioned to paint, had been dead for fifteen years but was recognized, as

he still is, as Oregon's first major modern painter. The 1960s saw the rise of some of the first independent Portland art galleries devoted to contemporary art by regional artists. Jack McLarty and his wife Barbara established the Image Gallery in their house on Northwest Overton Street in 1961, the same year that Arlene Schnitzer opened the Fountain Gallery of Art.<sup>13</sup> The Image and Fountain galleries, together with the annual Artists of Oregon exhibitions at the Portland Art Museum and smaller solo and group shows at Reed College, Portland State College (as it was then called), and other schools provided the primary venues for displaying and viewing art in Portland. So, while the scene was thriving as never before, to Pander, the immigrant outsider from the ancient, art-rich city of Amsterdam, the situation in Portland seemed provincial and limited, the art world self-absorbed and closed to newcomers. In Holland, Pander was buoyed by his artistic pedigree, with all the connections and opportunities it entailed, and by a long-established system of state and private support for the arts. In Portland, he was an unknown, and cultural support for the arts seemed nonexistent. Teaching courses in drawing, painting, and watercolor at the Museum Art School was a matter of survival. He recalls that he taught a heavy load of classes for low pay. "We were extremely poor."<sup>14</sup>

But the Museum Art School of the Portland Art Museum was a major institution on the city's art scene. There, the painter and printmaker William



**FIGURE 15.** Marcia and Henk Pander and their son Jacob, Portland, Oregon, ca. 1966.

Givler had been serving as dean since the 1930s, and the 1960s faculty included, in addition to Mike Russo and Louis Bunce, Jack McLarty, George Johanson, and Manuel Izquierdo. Givler, Bunce, McLarty, Johanson, and Izquierdo all had been students at the school. The New Yorker Harry Widman, with his MFA degree from the University of Oregon, was a relatively new member of the faculty. Eunice Parsons was teaching in an adjunct position. These and others were the teaching artists that Pander joined in the fall of 1965 and with whom he taught for two years, through the spring of 1967.

He considered the faculty to be “friendly but aloof”<sup>15</sup> and felt closer to some of the students than to his colleagues. Portland artists all seemed to know each other and formed “sort of a clique,” he believed. “Their art and what they talked about was totally different from what I was used to. And vice versa.”<sup>16</sup> This was a matter of perception based on the state of art affairs in Portland as well as a newcomer’s feelings of alienation, anxiety, superiority, and detachment from an art world that by Amsterdam standards was casual, loosely structured at best, carelessly egalitarian, and indifferent to the academic precepts that Pander held dear.

Furthermore, the Vietnam War was in full tide, anti-draft sentiment was reaching a fever pitch, and students were staging demonstrations, experimenting with drugs, sometimes basing their artwork on their drug hallucinations, questioning all that was traditional or conventional. It was a time of “turbulence and excitement” providing “grist for the mill for an artist” and an interlude during which “I was expanding my horizons before I became a Dutch artist.”<sup>17</sup> Pander found the rawness of the cultural scene to be exhilarating, but American politics and militarism were frightening to him. Previously apolitical, he found himself becoming radicalized from the moment he arrived in Portland.

The watercolor *Falling in Portland* (1965; Figure 16) reflects something of Pander’s state of mind during his first year in Oregon. Although he had insisted that he and his wife and son travel to

New York by ship and cross the country by train, taking the time to mark the fact that a long and truly transforming journey was under way, the painting suggests that Pander saw himself falling into Portland from an airplane. A fragmentary figure tumbles from above into a city square reminiscent of Giorgio de Chirico’s terminals and arcaded piazzas. The scene is nocturnal, with light glowing from the buildings and splashing the falling figure and two others that flank it with a stutter of illumination that suggests physical bruising and mental angst. With *Falling in Portland*, he was experimenting with new ways of painting in response to a “bigger, more violent, and alien” reality. It was “new work in response to a new environment” and expresses his “sense of disconnect, anxiety, upheaval.”<sup>18</sup>

Pander’s first Portland exhibition was a show in 1966 of drawings and watercolors at the Portland Art Museum, organized by Rachael Griffin, the influential curator who, along with the museum director Francis Newton, admired and supported Pander’s work. In 1967, they purchased the painting *Rodeo* from an exhibition of Pander’s work at Portland State College.<sup>19</sup> This exhibition also included the painting *Red Tree* (1966; Figure 17), an early example of Pander’s signature soaring bird skeleton, which in this case flees over a landscape littered with a sprawled horse with a skull for its head, a human nude in the fetal position, and a skinny, pacing, open-jawed white dog. This imagery was inspired by a three-week trip to Mexico that Pander took with several students in 1966, traveling in an old Buick purchased for the trip. The students drove (Pander taught himself to drive only in 1971), and Pander made drawings and took photographs of animal carcasses and bones that they saw along the roads and littering the deserts. Back in Portland, he began integrating the images into paintings such as *Red Tree*, a combined landscape and still life that he relates to the melancholic, *vanitas* tradition of Dutch still-life painting.

The red tree in the background, evocative of van Gogh but based on drawings Pander made of



FIGURE 17. HENK PANDER

*Red Tree*

1966

Oil on canvas

50 x 60 inches

Collection of the artist

oak trees on Sauvie Island in the Columbia River in Portland, entangles itself with the bones of the flying bird at the front, compressing the space. The work is hallucinatory, emblematic of unarticulated anxieties, and art historical in its intertext with van Gogh and stories of the Apocalypse. Pander in Portland in the sixties was an artist of anxiousness and panic. He was pressing into service Surrealist and Expressionist

traditions to convey his feelings of foreboding about the era (the Vietnam War and its fallout) as well as his own existence in the United States, which he perceived as a war-prone and dangerous country. Harry Widman, Pander's colleague at the Museum Art School, reviewed the Portland State show for the *Oregonian*: "The paintings of Henk Pander are blunt, forceful, and their impact is immediate. His themes are love, violence, age, and death."<sup>20</sup>

Pander remembers the late 1960s as an unsettled time that paralleled his own personal turbulence. He and the era were in edgy synchronicity. Exacerbating the situation was the fact that Pander's marriage was "full of troubles."<sup>21</sup> He and his wife were having

“terrible fights,” but now Marcia was pregnant with Arnold. Pander was adamant that their second child, like the first, be born in Holland, and in the summer of 1967 they returned to Amsterdam. This was a longed-for homecoming for Pander but one that clarified a fact that he would attempt to come to terms with throughout his life: from then on, living in The Netherlands would be as problematic for him as living in the States. “I had to readjust to Holland. I had seen turmoil, violence, a country at war, demonstrations. I had grown quite a bit. It was not easy to go back to what I was before. My green card was still valid, and I was not really done with the U.S. experience.”<sup>22</sup> He sold a collection of works to the City of Amsterdam and used the money to help pay for the return trip. A KLM Royal Dutch Airlines executive saw a show of his work and was impressed enough to provide free airline tickets.

The Panders, now a family of four, returned to the United States in the summer of 1968, one month before his green card expired. Shortly afterward, Henk and Marcia separated, she with custody of the boys. He loved his children, they were in Portland, and he couldn’t leave them. From a large family himself, he realized the importance of strong family ties. The stage was set for his becoming “a reluctant immigrant,”<sup>23</sup> a Dutch artist living in Portland.

Meanwhile, the physical strain associated with moving a family of four to and from Europe caused Pander to have back troubles; “I was in incredible pain for a period of time.” Money was short. He had to pay child support. He was “desperately scraping by.”<sup>24</sup> But he was making art, and in November 1968 he hired a model to pose for him. She was Linda Long, who went by the name of Yasha, a single mother of a five-year-old daughter. Henk and Yasha lived together and married in August 1969 (“primarily to get rid of the nagging authorities who constantly threatened to take away our children”<sup>25</sup>). He enjoyed being part of a family unit in a situation where his sons could visit on weekends (see Figure 18).



**FIGURE 18.** Henk Pander with his sons Arnold and Jacob, Sauvie Island, Portland, Oregon, ca. 1969.

On the professional level, the year 1969 began with a significant award and ended in disaster. In February, his large figure painting entitled *1875* (inspired by the human locomotion photographs of Eadweard Muybridge) was awarded a \$500 prize in the *Artists of Oregon* exhibition at the Portland Art Museum. His studio in this period was a big space in a building at Northwest First Avenue and Burnside Street that the owner, the furniture manufacturer Mike Montchalin, made available to Pander free of charge. It provided the setting for sustained, intense creativity. “I was making paintings that dealt with the stresses and turmoil of sexuality and alienation,”<sup>26</sup> and in the last month of the last year of the cataclysmic 1960s he presented this new work to a startled, uncomprehending, and ultimately hostile Portland public.

He did this in an exhibition of paintings and works on paper at Portland State University in December 1969. It was his second Portland State show in just two years, and it was scheduled at the last minute after another artist canceled a previously scheduled exhibition. Pander presented twenty-five pieces—oil paintings, watercolors, and drawings, the range of media that still characterizes his production. As in 1967, his works were displayed in the White Gallery, a corridor-like space in a high-traffic campus building, Memorial Center. A ratings committee would use such terms as “nudity,” “explicit



**FIGURE 19. HENK PANDER**  
*Disgust at My Show at PSU*  
 1998  
 Ink on paper  
 30 x 44 inches  
 Collection of the artist

shocking to me. All of a sudden, I had become highly controversial, and this really freaked me out. It was extremely alienating.”<sup>27</sup>

Student defense of the exhibition in the name of freedom of expression prevailed over feelings of

sexuality,” and “figural distortion” to describe and warn about this exhibition. Some viewers, especially members of the public, used the words “obscene,” “pornographic,” and “depraved” (see Figure 19). The office of Governor Tom McCall (whose official portrait Pander would paint twelve years later) received complaints about such works being displayed in a public institution. The president of Portland State held his VIP Christmas parties at the nearby Portland Art Museum instead of the Memorial Center to spare his guests the discomfort of viewing Pander’s work. Pander was blindsided by the response and shaken by its intensity. His sense of being imperiled (even as he was intrigued) by the American 1960s reached crisis stage as the result of the vituperative public response to his exhibition. “The wall of hostility was



**FIGURE 20. HENK PANDER**  
*Family*  
 1968  
 Oil on linen  
 48 x 60 inches  
 Destroyed



FIGURE 21. HENK PANDER

*Curves*

1969

Oil on linen

72 x 96 inches

Collection of the artist

discomfort and, in some quarters, outrage, and the exhibition remained on view for its scheduled time. Furthermore, the sensational coverage in the press assured that it was the most highly attended White Gallery exhibition ever (Pander wrote to a friend that only the van Gogh exhibition at the Portland Art Museum a few years earlier had drawn larger crowds, and he also might have noted that between van Gogh and Pander, Portlanders had been exposed to extreme

variations of the intensity of Dutch art).

The White Gallery show included such works as *Family* (1968; Figure 20), in which stand-ins, perhaps for Marcia, Jacob, and Arnold—a mother and sons with horror-struck faces reminiscent of Edward Munch's *The Scream*, are hemmed in by two ladder forms and threatened from above by a hurtling figure split in two. Harsh lighting from the right scours the figures, which seem exposed and adrift in an alien universe. In *Curves* (1969; Figure 21), two nude figures crouch on a sculptural ledge above a colorful patchwork quilt of landscape that extends to a distant horizon. The smoothly painted figures of a male and female seem to cringe from unseen forces, symbolized by a curved tube and anthropomorphic clouds that



**FIGURE 22. HENK PANDER**  
*Discarded Corpse*  
 1969  
 Ink on Japanese paper  
 17 x 22 inches  
 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

hover high above the landscape. The strong horizon line, floating tube and clouds, and the harsh light that creates extreme shadows all evoke de Chirico, but in this painting the elements of eroticism, imminent danger, and menace are more overt.

Pander's drawings in the Portland State exhibition included a rendering of a corpse in a Dumpster; in the background, he quotes the police department's slogan "Wave to a Cop" in an obvious criticism of a law-enforcement establishment that he perceived to be more interested in public relations than protection of individuals (Figure 22). Another drawing is a study of a nude female fingering herself

on a bed with a gigantically phallic bedpost pulsing in the foreground. In the drawing *Babylon* (Figure 23), its title apparently a reference to the term the Black Panthers used to refer to the United States, Pander incorporates various elements that for him were iconic of America and the Pacific Northwest. Power poles and lines set up the perspective leading to Mount Hood on the horizon (in Holland, there are no power poles, as the electrical lines are all underground, and no mountains). A big automobile, emblematic of 1960s America, lunges forward in the composition. A pig's head with flies rests prominently in the foreground. Some of the drawings in the Portland State show retain the modeling and shadowing of his Dutch style, but *Babylon* is an experimental work that juxtaposes washes with precisely drawn elements, such as the power poles, and combines flat planar areas with rapid plunges into space. The works are elegant in their varying techniques, but most viewers were blind to



FIGURE 23. HENK PANDER  
*Babylon*  
1969  
Ink on paper  
17 x 21 inches  
Collection of the artist

the skillful drawing because of the subject matter and an expressive attitude that they found shocking.

### DRAWING LIKE THE DEVIL

In April 1970, Henk Pander wrote to his friend Willem den Ouden, the Dutch landscape painter and etcher (see Figure 24), beginning a correspondence that would last for twenty-five years:

We are now living in Bolinas, a small town 30 miles north of San Francisco in Marin County, close to the ocean, in a park-like

landscape which is somewhat like Southern France in appearance. For two months now, we have been living in a 1947 MACK school bus . . . built for 50 passengers. The final reason for our departure from Portland was that an exhibition of my drawings and paintings at Portland State University caused scandal of such magnitude that even the Governor of Oregon was brought into it.<sup>28</sup>

“I needed to get out,” Pander recalled in 2009.<sup>29</sup> In an era of communes, alternative lifestyles, and the example of Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters traveling the country in *Further* in 1964, heading out for a new life in a bus was in the spirit of the times. And for Pander, fresh non-Portland air was an immediate requirement. Henk, Yasha, and her daughter Demauri made the sojourn after friends in Long Beach, Washington, helped them rebuild the



**FIGURE 24. HENK PANDER**  
*Portrait of Willem den Ouden*  
 1962  
 Oil on canvas  
 40 x 30 inches  
 Henriette Polak Museum, Zutphen, The Netherlands



**FIGURE 25.** “The moment of departure from Long Beach”  
 (inscription on back of photograph).

Yasha Pander stands at the center of the group, holding Arnold Pander; the blond boy in front is Jacob Pander, standing next to Yasha’s daughter Demauri. The other adults are the Panders’ friends Scott and Kathy McGregor.



**FIGURE 26.** Henk and Yasha Pander’s house, 527 Northeast Russell Street, Portland, Oregon, ca. 1971.

Henk Pander is in the doorway, his sister Gesa, visiting from Holland, on the steps.



**FIGURE 27. HENK PANDER**  
 Announcement for his drawing exhibition at Mount Angel College, Mount Angel, Oregon, November–December 1970  
 Poster  
 17 x 11 inches (approx.)  
 Collection of the artist

engine of the bus (see Figure 25). The expedition was less aimless than it might have been because Pander thought there would be teaching prospects at the San Francisco Art Institute and at University of California, Berkeley. When these did not materialize, it was “a weight off my heart,” he wrote to den Ouden. But gradually life in a bus with no plan of action began to pall. “Yasha is very free, as are most people here in Bolinas,” at ease with their laid-back existence. “I am a Calvinistic brooder,” Pander confessed to Willem, “and sometimes get sick of myself. . . . Often times I feel like a lonely worrier predicting death. What a rotten job.”<sup>30</sup>

The confines of the bus did not permit full-scale painting, but “today [June 17, 1970] I stretched a . . . canvas to paint a Bolinas landscape. Painting outdoors is fun, and I haven’t done it for years. Hattem [in Holland] was the last place where I painted plein air.” In time, road trips to remote areas to paint on site would become common practice for Pander. But in Bolinas, apart from a few landscape paintings, “I work mostly on my cool, surrealist line drawings” based on imaginative fantasy, not topography. “I’m starting to get very good at it, but I have to watch out not to fall into mannerisms. The drawings are starting to become minimalist.”<sup>31</sup> The sharp, biting line of these drawings made them significantly different from the ones he had shown in the Portland State exhibition just months before.

In May 1970, some three months into their California adventure, Henk and Yasha were “talking about returning to the Northwest, where life is easier and we have many friends. Maybe we can borrow some money to buy a piece of land.”<sup>32</sup> Another lure northward was the presence of Jacob and Arnold in Portland. Pander eventually made the return trip to Portland by Greyhound, with Yasha driving the school bus, which broke down beyond repair on the way. In Portland, they rented a house at 527 NE Russell Street in the Albina district (see Figure 26).

The drawings that Pander made in Bolinas and at the Russell Street house in Portland led to two

important projects in the early 1970s. The first was an exhibition of drawings and watercolors at the progressive Mount Angel College in Mount Angel, Oregon, in November and December 1970 (see Figure 27). “Most of the work was recent, for Pander works a lot,” his friend Jack Eyerly wrote in the *Oregonian*. “A few went back to this summer when the artist made a tour South in a school bus converted to the comforts of home.” Exactly one year after the controversial exhibition at Portland State, the Mount Angel show promised to be equally stunning, Eyerly warned. “The work is even more brilliant, clear, even elegant . . . and if we can still be moved, shocking. . . . The drawings are black lines on very white paper. . . . Each little stipple mark is brightly seen. No corrections. Exact renderings of Mt. Hood and familiar buildings identify the vast plazas where bloated, floating figures act out their impatience for death.”<sup>33</sup> One of the works in the Mount Angel exhibition is an untitled drawing of misshapen nude figures involved in a balletic or acrobatic parody on a gridded foreground stage (Figure 28). Against a background of swirling clouds and high-rise buildings, the figures hoist aloft one of their mates, his penis and testicles dangling, a toothy jack-o’-lantern grin on his face.

In his review, Eyerly admired this and the other works in the show for their honesty, “frank affirmation of society’s ills,” and “beautiful craft.” He hailed Mount Angel College for “engaging Pander’s clear apocalyptic shout.” The show was considered a daring one for the college to host, as there were “fears that the exhibit might endanger the school’s precarious existence,” as Daniel Yost wrote later.<sup>34</sup> Writing to Willem, Pander said the show consisted of “15 line drawings and six watercolors, all new work. I thought it looked great, and it got a very good review [by Eyerly], but it stopped there.”<sup>35</sup>

Though Pander was frustrated and stymied by the dearth of informed response to his work, he was approached in November 1970, just as the Mount Angel show was about to open, with an exciting proposal of a different sort. This was to create a set



**FIGURE 28. HENK PANDER**

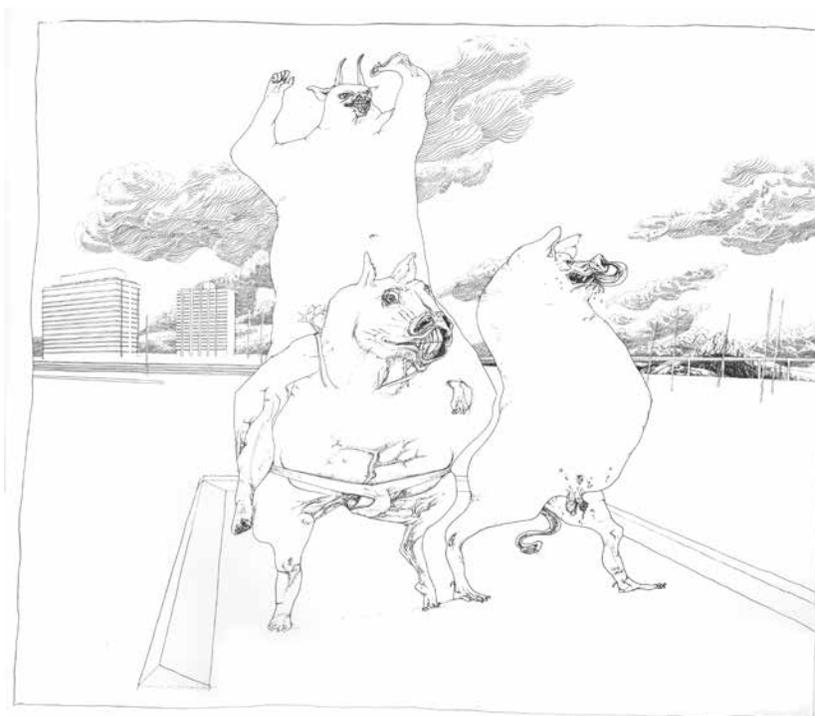
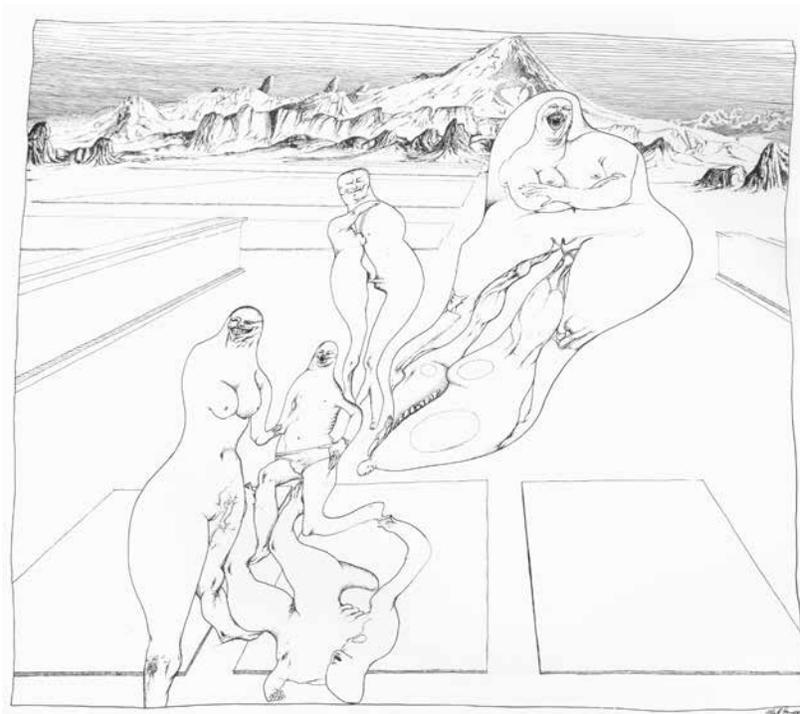
Untitled  
 1970  
 Ink on paper  
 23 x 35 inches  
 Collection of the artist

of drawings to be published as a book by Press-22 on the occasion of its first anniversary. The one-man operation of John Laursen, Press-22 was known for its elegant publication of Gary Snyder's translation of twenty-four poems by the Chinese poet Han Shan, in *Cold Mountain Poems*. "My drawing book is the largest project [Laursen] has undertaken thus far," Pander wrote to Willem. "He came to me in November and asked if I wanted to draw and design a book. He said he would leave me completely free. The only restriction was that the format and the drawings had to be executed in line. He would pay for the whole thing. I was quite overwhelmed, actually. A whole



**FIGURE 29. ANDRÉ MASSON**

Untitled Automatic Drawing  
 ca. 1924–1925  
 9.5 x 10.7 inches  
 On loan to the Hamburg Kunsthalle, Germany  
 Artists Rights Society (ARS) and Bridgeman Art Library  
 International



**FIGURE 30 (TOP), FIGURE 31 (BOTTOM). HENK PANDER**

Untitled drawings (published in *Views of Mount Hood*)

1971

Ink on paper

Each 17 1/2 x 23 inches

Collection of the artist

book without restrictions is quite something.”<sup>36</sup>

The result was *Views of Mount Hood* (1971), published in an edition of 250 and sold for twelve dollars a copy. The horizontally formatted, hardcover book was designed by Pander and Laursen. Jack Eyerly wrote a laudatory introduction but decided not to publish it so as to let the drawings speak for themselves. “Both Henk and I decided [it] was too much explanation, too much justification, too simple for the message carried by the completeness of the book itself,” Eyerly wrote to a friend.<sup>37</sup> Dedicated to Yasha, the book is in effect a gallery of some twenty-eight crow-quill pen drawings that Pander describes as a tongue-in-cheek homage to Hokusai’s *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*. Living on Russell Street in North Portland, extremely poor, with “a volcano outside my window, a very dramatic sense of place was the result,” he stated in 2009.<sup>38</sup> As he wrote to Willem in 1971, Mount Hood “rules the horizon with its icy triangle. It makes everyday American life seem so damned temporary. To me, the mountain represents a kind of mysticism from the past. I find her mysterious. But Portlanders take my drawings personally and find me a perverse sick figure.”<sup>39</sup>

In contrast to Hokusai’s views of Mount Fuji, Pander’s views of Hood, when Hood appears at all, are cast far into depth so that the mountain is a miniature on a distant horizon. One of the first drawings is an image of an elderly, nude version of the artist in the act of drawing, while a nude female who might be Yasha looks on, their dog hunched at one side. The next scenes are of women and children frolicking nude in the landscape, but the seeming innocence of these renderings shifts to stronger stuff. Plains and plazas soon are occupied by biomorphic, rubbery figures of humanoids, animals, and hybrid creatures that loll, prance, float, and writhe with penises erect, vaginas wide open, and faces (when these figures have faces) in bare-teethed grimaces or sardonic smirks (see Figures 30 and 31). The imagery evokes the extremes of George Grosz and *Neue Sachlichkeit* German Expressionism, the biomorphs of Salvador Dali, the

snarling sensuality of Francis Bacon, Picasso in his more surreal and sexualized work, the exaggerated penile erections of erotic Japanese prints—and rather incidentally the Mount Fuji views by Hokusai. When the mountain is rendered, it is remote, untouched, unruffled by human folly—pure, and indeed representing “a kind of mysticism from the past.”

Obstructing the views of the mountain are the sexualized figures and also a scatter of distant skyscrapers, occasional sheds or roadside barns, a modern building at the edge of a parking lot. “Some of the drawings actually do portray local scenes, like Macadam Avenue or the Lloyd Center parking lot,” Pander told a reporter.<sup>40</sup> But in *Views of Mount Hood*, the realm is one of fantasy, invention, hyperbole, and vicious wit, not documentary. Pander has said that the grotesque imagery of the drawings in the book reflects a state of mind caused by living in a violent neighborhood, in the depths of the Vietnam War, poverty-stricken. But the vast sweep of these drawings suggests a far broader view, both spatially and imaginatively—a view that encompasses a particular artist, with all his paranoia and skepticism, as well as a particular place, an era, and a sweep of art history arcing back to Pander’s Netherlandish forebears Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brueghel the Elder, and arcing forward to European twentieth-century Expressionist and Surrealist art that came into being in reaction to two world wars and the dehumanizing advances of science and technology.

For Pander, “drawing is always some place between waking and dreaming,”<sup>41</sup> and these drawings are reveries on the human predicament that hover between consciousness and dream, or nightmare. They are Surrealistic in their Freudian, dreamlike imagery and in their origination in a process of automatic drawing, of allowing the pen to flow freely over the surface of the paper without calculation or premeditation. The line flows, shapes emerge, forms come into focus. This is a type of drawing that originated with artists experimenting with Automatist Surrealism in the 1920s, and Pander had recently

been reminded of this sort of work at the exhibition *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage* at the Los Angeles County Museum. For Max Ernst, automatist techniques resulted in bird forms, for André Masson the emerging shapes were fish or abstract personages (see Figure 29). For Pander, the results are humanoid sexual beings. The contour lines flow and undulate, and with a suave grace soar and meander to form misshapen grotesques. It is this contrast of gracefulness with the grotesque that is startling and even shocking. Furthermore, the textures and details of some of the figures are rendered by stippling, applying many tiny dots that from a distance read as shadows, shaved pubic hair, or scabs. Pander describes his stippling as “scientific” drawing—using tiny dots to create the illusion of closely described textures and details. “I linked Surrealism with *Scientific American* accuracy. I presented subjective content with objective scientific drawing technique.”

Pander executed these “clean drawings” in order to “get away from ink wash drawings” (of the sort he had exhibited at Portland State), which tended to be “Dutch and moody” in nature. Unblurred line set down starkly on paper provided a way to find a new style, different from the picturesque nature of his Dutch drawing. It was also a way to “show off my versatility,” to display his skills before Portland viewers, who seemed to be indifferent, skeptical, and overtly hostile to his art. The drawings that he made in Bolinas and on Russell Street in 1970 are clear, sharply focused, and technically astonishing as the ink lines speed across the surfaces, pure, unwavering, uncamouflaged. As a draftsman, Pander is among the best. “I can draw like the devil himself,”<sup>42</sup> and some of his viewers may have thought that these gorgeously perverse drawings were indeed the devil’s doing.

Pander’s remarkable drawings of the early 1970s form an historic component of the artist’s oeuvre, for he gradually stopped creating this type of work. “I realized that I was repeating myself. They were facile, based on an arbitrary technique. I stopped doing them and began working more and more from

nature. I started drawing from life.”<sup>43</sup> His later ink drawings (see Figure 45, for instance) are exquisite, realistic studies of figures and forms modeled in light and shadow, with textures and surfaces rendered with almost magical accuracy. These later drawings are academic in the best sense of the word, their fine, sure lines informed by the flexibility he mastered in his free-form drawings of the early 1970s.

For Pander, drawing is—in one way or another—the basis of all art-making, and his paintings of the early seventies began to show the effects of the linearity of his drawing of that period. He points to the painting *Chase* (1971; Figure 32), for instance, as an example of his new approach, emphasizing graphic clarity, sharp, clear edges for forms and figures, and a rejection of the “lots of paint” advocated by the academy in favor of smooth, continuous skims of pigment creating broad, blank planes. *Chase* presents a zone similar to the drawn environments in *Views of Mount Hood*. A plain recedes to a distant horizon, where Mount Hood is seen below a rising bank of clouds. A modern building dominates the horizon on the right. Abstract but clearly rendered figures occupy this surreal world: the foreground pair embodies the chase referred to in the title. Pander wrote to Willem:

This year I was invited to participate in the Oregon Annual Exhibition at the Portland Art Museum. I made a special painting for them, a running black man, with his tongue hanging out of his mouth, tries to rape a fearful looking white man. All this takes place in a plaza-like space that transitions into desert. In the background is a 25-story apartment building and a street clock. There is a beautifully painted thunderous sky in the distance. The building resembles one in Portland and the mountain in the distance looks quite a bit like Mt. Hood.<sup>44</sup>



FIGURE 32. HENK PANDER

*Chase*

1971

Oil on linen

36 x 48 inches

Collection of the artist

Pander has said that the painting reflects the exaggerated paranoia that whites felt about blacks in Portland in the 1960s, a paranoia that he was keenly aware of because he lived in a black neighborhood that he considered dangerous.<sup>45</sup> It also reflects his ballsy nose-thumbing of the Portland art establishment of the period.

## NEW HORIZONS: LIGHT AND THEATER

Henk Pander told the writer Daniel Yost that his reason for returning to Portland from Amsterdam in 1968 was his interest, shared by few others in Holland, in light shows<sup>46</sup>—of the sort he had experienced at such venues as the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco, where he had attended a performance in 1966. The United States was the place to be for exploring light media, which in the late 1960s Pander seriously considered as a creative alternative to painting. His interest in science, technology, and new art forms led to his involvement with the Portland chapter of Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), for which Jack Eyerly was the exuberant

agent and catalyst. Pander met him through Eyerly's wife, Polly, who worked at the Portland Art Museum, and he became Pander's most articulate advocate in the rough years around 1970–1971.

Henk and Jack presented light demonstrations at E.A.T. meetings, at which members experimented with video and feedback loops and created “rooms made of fluorescent lights.”<sup>47</sup> Pander was in a phase of “intense questioning about the meaning of everything I was doing. I thought it was necessary to be more relevant to the twentieth century, so I tried another medium.”<sup>48</sup> Though it was not long before he re-embraced painting and drawing as the media most relevant to him and his talents, the theater became the experimental arena for combining his academic skills with lighting and technology.

In 1971, Pander became “quite involved with a loose, commune-like group who call themselves ‘Storefront Theater,’ ” and this group was to engage him creatively and socially for the next two decades. “There is a lot of talent in Portland, underground talent—writers, film-makers, poets, actors, dancers, set designers, rock bands,” Pander wrote, “and a lot of this creative energy has centered itself around Storefront.”<sup>49</sup> Envisioned in 1969 by freelance theater artists including some who had migrated to Portland from the theater scenes in New York and Seattle, the Storefront Actors Theater was to set up shop in a storefront (hence the company's name) on North Russell Street and Interstate Avenue, not far from where Henk and Yasha settled in 1970. According to Jack Eyerly, the Cambodian Incursion and Kent State killings of 1970 galvanized Storefront Theater to create and present productions that questioned the status quo in a period that “demanded new artistic forms.”<sup>50</sup> Although its productions were often collaborative, the chief director/designer for the company was Ric Young, the flamboyant “fabricator of Decameronic dreams and vaudevillian terrors,” in the words of Steffen Silvis.<sup>51</sup> Pander and Young were to become fast friends. “I have wanted to design sets for years, and here is my chance,” he wrote to Willem.<sup>52</sup>

Pander, who had taken a theater design course at the academy in Amsterdam, signed on to create the set for the 1970 production of Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*, produced outdoors at a farm near Portland before the storefront itself was set up as a theater. The play is an edgy antiwar comedy originally performed in Athens in the fifth century B. C. *Lysistrata* convinces the women of Greece to withhold sexual privileges from their husbands and lovers until they agree to negotiate the end of the Peloponnesian War. The serious theme is explored by means of comedic sexual farce, ranging from innuendo to obscenity. By creating a set that featured enormous phalluses, Pander made the most of the play's graphic potential and the “make love, not war” attitudes of the anti-Vietnam War movement. His next set (Figure 33), for Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*, involved shaped paintings in the same bawdy spirit, in this case featuring creatures from the realm of the *Views of Mount Hood* drawings, boners and all. But now the figures were huge and vibrantly colored, Baroque in their scale and in their aerial acrobatics, in the manner of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ceiling paintings in European palaces. These beings, however, had the Pander bite of twentieth-century satire and raw sexuality. Andy Rocchia of the *Oregon Journal* described them as “sensuous” on one occasion and “freaky” on another.

Pander submitted the *Salomé* set to the 1972 Artists of Oregon exhibition at the Portland Art Museum, and the juror Rose Slivka accepted it for the show. But the work was deemed too large for installation in the regular galleries, even though, as Pander argued, it was designed for the intimate space of Storefront Theater. It was installed instead on the stage in the museum's Swann Auditorium. “Hardly anyone saw it,” but those who did “thought it was the best thing in the exhibition and it got very good reviews,” Pander assured Willem.<sup>53</sup> One of those who did see it was the critic Andy Rocchia, who wrote: “Pander's backdrop is an exotic, violent, paranoid romp. Bodies arc and slide over one another in a composition which is a fornicator's dream of Saturday



**FIGURE 33. HENK PANDER**

Set for Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*, performed by the Storefront Actors Theater, Portland, Oregon, 1971.

night.” Whether for these reasons or nonetheless, he deemed it to be a “successful backdrop. By all means see it. You’ll either dislike it intensely or consider it the most unlabored, artful statement in this over-rated exhibition.”<sup>54</sup>

These productions were the first of some twenty-five that Pander worked on for the next twenty years, primarily for Storefront Theater (which came to an end in the early 1990s “when AIDS wiped out the leadership core of the group”<sup>55</sup>), but also for Portland Dance Theater (1978), the Portland State University theater department (1980), Oregon Ballet Theater (1990; a production of Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*), and Tygres Heart Shakespeare Company, for which he did his final theater set in

1992, though in the later 1990s he designed sets and puppets for Tears of Joy Puppet Theater at the Portland Center for the Performing Arts. In the early 1970s, the world of the theater offered a refuge, a kind of salvation for a worried and distraught young artist. “I was becoming a hermit,” Pander acknowledged. “I had lost contact with people, lost my sense of reality, but it’s different now that I have started involving myself with Storefront,” he wrote to Willem in 1971. “I even played a part in . . . “The Tavern,” by George M. Cohan. My accent is very effective!”<sup>56</sup>

Storefront Theater was at times a frustration. “I’m beginning to find it difficult to always have to steal, borrow, and organize all of our materials and never get any subsidies because everyone is too lazy or stoned to fill out the forms,” he griped in 1974.<sup>57</sup> But overall the theater work energized him and provided a creative arena at a time when he had only a small following for his painting and few opportunities



**FIGURE 34. HENK PANDER**  
Set for *Echo*, performed by Portland Dance Theater at the Civic Auditorium, Portland, Oregon, 1978.

for sales. The theater allowed him to work on a large scale, integrating painting and drawing with architectural constructions. “They became more and more architectural. They were constructions, installations. I liked the vitality of it.”<sup>58</sup> Working for the stage amplified and expanded his artistic vision—expanding it literally to a new scale, into a realm of three-dimensional complexity. Stage design work also paved the way for his later paintings that emphasize the theatrical, with stagelike settings, costumed figures, and the sense that the sitters are actors caught up in internal soliloquies or dramatic narratives.

Pander’s reputation as an innovative set designer brought him to the attention of the Portland Dance Theater in 1978. With a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the company was preparing a production for the 2000-square-foot stage of the Civic Auditorium. At the time, Portland Dance Theater had just five dancers. A set was needed that

would allow the small company to take control of the huge stage. Hired to design a solution, Pander made a set of Mylar panels each measuring forty feet high and sixty feet deep. High-watt projectors cast light onto rear-projection Visqueen screens, each measuring twenty-five by twenty-five feet, which in turn reflected light onto the sheets of Mylar. The stage was transformed into a shimmering, colorful zone of diaphanous planes (see Figure 34). In addition, Pander incorporated a single neon tube to create an accent of



**FIGURE 35.** Henk Pander and Delores Rooney, Portland, Oregon, ca. 1988.

vertical light. Slits in the Mylar, through which the dancers passed, and reflections of the dancers made it seem that the cast was larger than in fact it was. (The pliable materials also meant that the set could break down into a very compact form, small enough to fit into the company director's Volkswagen bus; the production traveled to San Francisco, where it was staged at the Palace of Fine Arts in 1979.<sup>59</sup>)

This design project related to Pander's theater experience but took his thinking in new directions: "With a play, there are a lot of particulars—entrances and exits—which have to resolve themselves. This design was freer, more purely visual. The set is immaterial. It looks very big, but there is really very little to it."<sup>60</sup> He told a reporter, "The whole principle of the set is a classical investigation of space, straight from the Renaissance, but using space-age materials (large rear-projection screens, mirrorized surfaces, aluminum, plastics) to explore the idea. It's called *Echo* because of the reflectivity. It should make the performers become more than real, not upstage them."<sup>61</sup> As were many of the Storefront productions, *Echo* was a collaboration, in this case between the dance company, Pander, and the composer Gordon Mumma.

The set for *Echo* was luminescent and beguiling, and one person particularly beguiled by it and its maker was Delores Rooney, the assistant general manager of Portland Dance Theater. She recalled that the set was "incredibly beautiful." She also recalled that Pander seemed to be hanging out in her office quite often—to watch the dancers, she assumed. By this time, Pander and Yasha were divorced and he had been involved in several short-term relationships. He seemed to sense in Delores Rooney the possibility of a more stable commitment. For her part, "I fell in love with his art before I fell in love with him. But I fell in love with him pretty soon thereafter." Delores Rooney, later Delores Pander, became the love of Henk Pander's life (see Figure 35). "Delores helped stabilize my life," he said in a conversation in 2009. Before Delores, his existence was "chaotic."<sup>62</sup>

## POSTERS: THE CITY AS A GALLERY

Related to his work in the theater in the 1970s were the posters that Henk Pander designed as advertisements for the Storefront Theater and other theater and dance productions, as well as for rock concerts, his own exhibitions, and as personal statements about the American political and corporate establishment. He also designed, lettered, and illustrated covers for poetry anthologies. Pander had learned freehand lettering and the principles of layout design from his father, the illustrator and advertising design artist. "I'm versatile," he states. Knowing how to do this type of design work helped "keep my head above water."<sup>63</sup>

One of his early posters was for the *Music Now* dance concert in January 1969 at Portland State College, soon to become Portland State University. The event involved performances by several different groups plus "gary's beautiful balloon and lite show," a reference to a "plastic balloon project" by Gary Ewing, a light-show artist from San Francisco. In the spirit of his experiments with E.A.T., Pander assisted him with the balloon project. To make a prototype in Pander's studio, "we organized a number of enormous pieces of white plastic, which we put together with a sewing machine. Then we inflated them with a simple blower, the type used for hot air heaters. This made a tremendous space with filtered light where people could enter through an airlock and view projections from the outside."<sup>64</sup> At the dance concert, Yasha performed nude inside the bubble.

To create the poster (Figure 36), Pander combined collage and brush drawing. "The image was Yasha sitting nude on a tile floor in the foreground playing a flute. Behind her were a number of nude Aborigines, taken from *National Geographic*, throwing stones and making gestures to a lion with its mouth wide open, into which two sheep and a barking dog threatened to leap. Behind all of this . . . stood a row of riot police, complete with clubs. Above the police, my wristwatch gave the time—8:30—when the dance would begin."<sup>65</sup> The collage of disjunctive

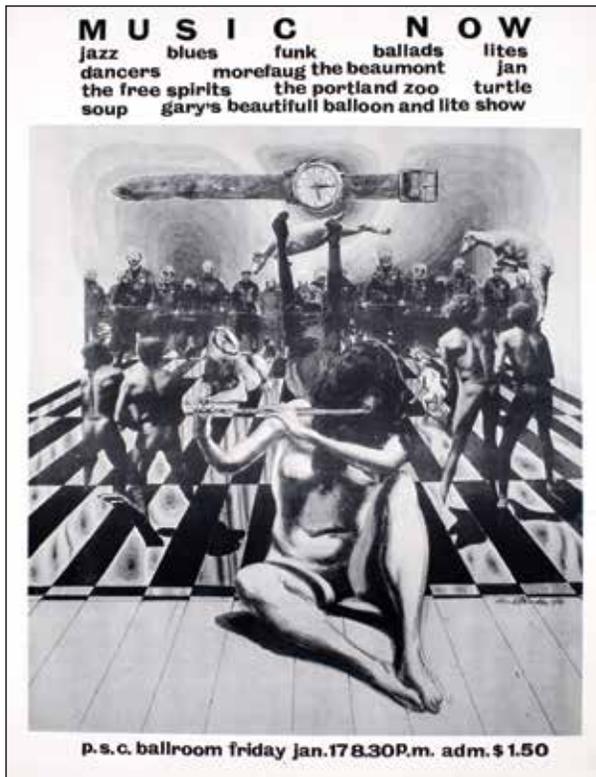


FIGURE 36. HENK PANDER

*Music Now*

1968

Poster (photo offset print)

22 x 17 inches

Collection of the artist

images—timepiece, animals, Aborigines—and the anti-establishment tone are in the spirit of the Dada works by Max Ernst and others that Pander had seen that summer at the Dada and Surrealism exhibition in Los Angeles.

The *Music Now* poster was edgy enough that no shop would print it. “Finally, we managed to get it done at Reed College, where they had a big offset press in poor condition.” Pander and his friends distributed two thousand posters and five thousand handbills in high schools around Portland, which “created some waves in Portland, but the dance was a success.”<sup>66</sup> The poster and event attracted the attention of the police, the press, and even the city council, which considered conducting an investigation that they estimated would take six months. Ostensibly, Pander was doing nothing more than helping a fellow artist make a stage set and designing a poster. But *Music Now* evolved

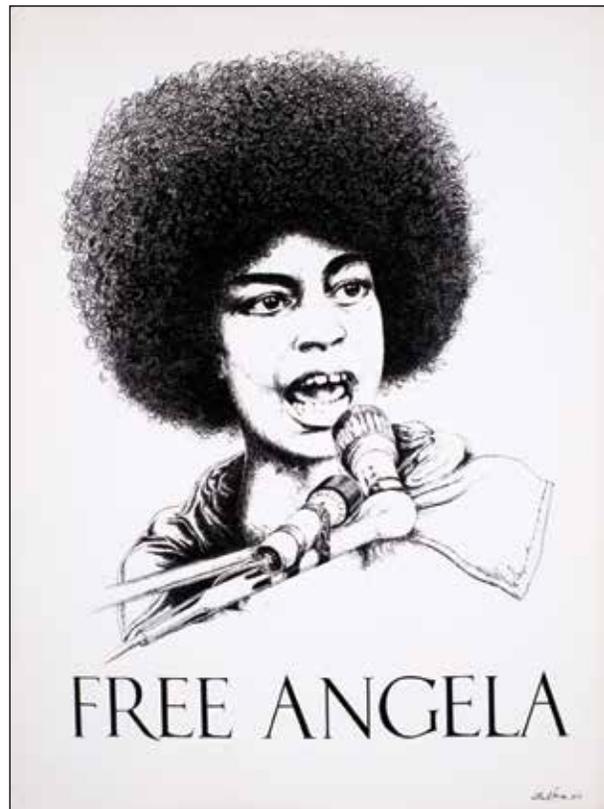


FIGURE 37. HENK PANDER

*Free Angela*

1971

Poster (limited-edition silkscreen)

25 x 19 inches

Collection of the artist

into a sort of happening that attracted widespread attention, stirred up controversy, and inserted Pander firmly into Portland’s counter-culture scene less than one year before his exhibition at Portland State would scandalize the city.

Pander’s poster for his exhibition at Mount Angel College in 1970 (Figure 27) also relates to Dada and especially Surrealism. Information about the show is lettered at the top and bottom of a drawing of a muscular dog, several other animals, and sexually alert human figures deployed on a wide plane that recedes to a distant sky billowing with clouds or smoke. The words HENK PANDER are set against the sky just above the flailing nudes and snarling dog, which form a kind of Renaissance dynamic pyramid of figures run amok. In this drawing, the brushy effects that he used



FIGURE 38. HENK PANDER

*Free Joanne Little*

1975

Poster (photo offset print)

22 1/2 x 17 1/2 inches

Collection of the artist

in the *Music Now* poster are replaced by the sharp, clear lines of his recent drawings. Pander realized that this type of line reproduced more clearly in posters.<sup>67</sup>

In 1971, Pander made his limited-edition silkscreen poster *Free Angela*, with an image of the radical activist Angela Davis speaking into a pair of microphones (Figure 37). When Pander made the poster, Davis was confined to the Women's Detention Center in New York, accused of participating in the murder of a Superior Court judge in California. Pander's poster, John Lennon and Yoko Ono's song *Angela*, and Mick Jagger's *Sweet Black Angel* all were aimed at rallying support for Davis, and in 1972 a jury returned a verdict of not guilty. Pander wrote to Willem: "Angela Davis is free, and there is a kind of optimism here lately."<sup>68</sup> A few months later, he wrote: "Angela Davis has my poster of her in her private collection."<sup>69</sup>



FIGURE 39. MARY RANDLETT

Henk Pander with a selection of his posters on the wall of his studio at his home on Southwest Cable Street, Portland, Oregon, summer 1972. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

In 1975, Pander made a poster urging that another politicized prisoner be freed. This time, the high profile detainee was Joan Little (pronounced "Joanne" and spelled that way by Pander), a petty crook accused of murdering her jailer. She admitted that she had killed the man while defending herself from sexual assault. Beneath the words FREE JOANNE LITTLE is Pander's black-bordered drawing of the naked lower half of the dead man's body (Figure 38). He is seen from behind, his testicles the center of focus, an icepick held in his hand. The poster advertised a benefit for Little at Portland's legendary Euphoria Tavern on Southeast Third Avenue. Although Pander made the poster in support of the benefit for Little, he said recently that he focused on her victim because he considered the case problematic, a moral tale less simple than Little's advocates proclaimed. "They were furious with me," he says.<sup>70</sup>

Pander made posters for modest and sometimes no pay because he supported left-wing political causes

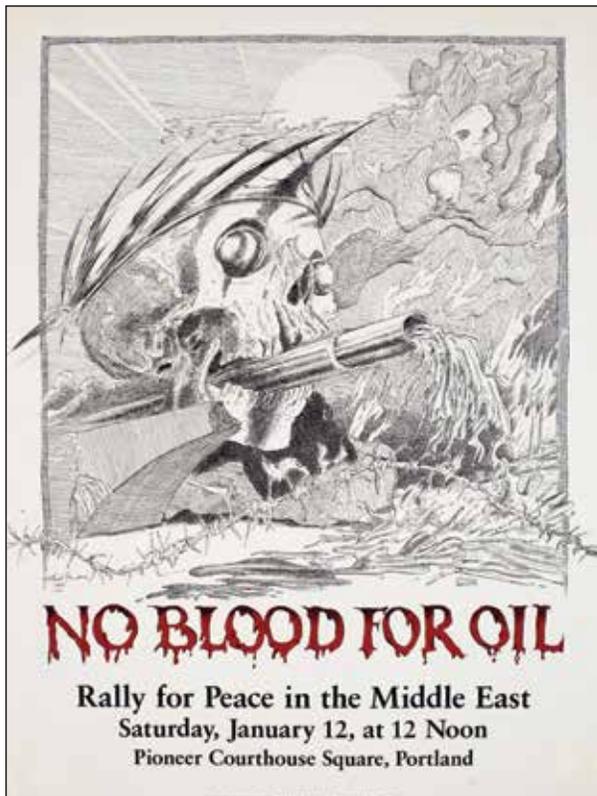


FIGURE 40. HENK PANDER

*No Blood for Oil*

1991

Poster (photo offset print)

25 x 18 1/4 inches

Collection of the artist

and Portland's experimental cultural scene. He also realized that his posters came before a wide if not always welcoming audience. The walls, storefront windows, high school bulletin boards, kiosks, and telephone poles of Portland served as a citywide gallery for his provocative images at a time when he had few opportunities to exhibit his work and not many collectors knew of it, let alone dared or deigned to purchase it. Yet his posters were avidly collected, he believes. "They would be up for a day and then be stolen. I think they wound up in the bathrooms of houses and apartments all over town."<sup>71</sup>

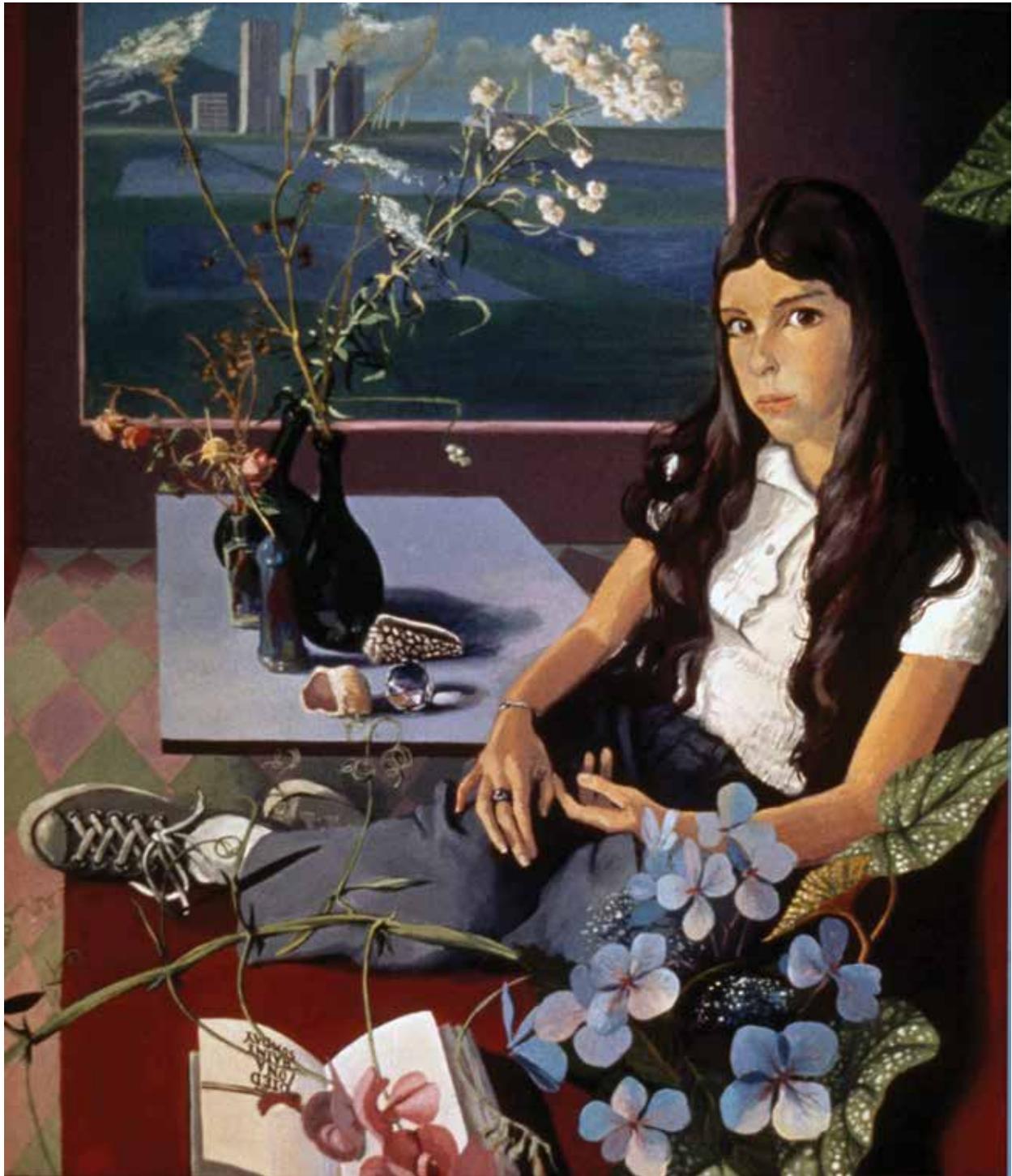
Pander created most of his posters during the social upheavals of the late 1960s and 1970s (see Figure 39), but in 1991 he felt compelled to make and

distribute a poster protesting the Gulf War (Figure 40). He wrote to Willem that "just before the war started, I made a 'No Blood for Oil' poster out of pure frustration. I had to do something. I made a bizarre pen drawing of a giant skull with a pipe sticking through its teeth and slimy fluid spouting from it. The skull is mounted on what appears to be giant rocks. I arranged a still life on a table in my studio—two stones, a skull on top of them, and a plastic vacuum cleaner tube sticking through the mouth of the skull. I drew a smoking desert in the background, red dripping text along the bottom of the poster."

Pander, his brother Jan visiting from Holland, and Delores distributed the posters. "If one is going to be subversively active, one should experience the reaction." They "walked up and down busy shopping streets, those boutique and yuppie streets which are a plague across the world, Jan carrying the folder of posters, and Delores and I taking them into stores." In the process, "we got a nice picture of the mentality of the average shopkeeper. In general, they are very polite and nice. Nobody said, 'No, get the hell out of here,' but rather 'We have a policy of not hanging any posters,' or 'I have to ask my boss,' or 'Nice drawing, but too controversial.' " But "we got rid of a great many copies in bookstores, record shops, Korean groceries."<sup>72</sup> For Pander, posters were a graphic means of commenting publicly, to diverse audiences, on what he perceived to be America's ills and options wrongly chosen. As he acknowledged, they were subversive—and corrective—in their intent.

### THE POTENTIAL OF PORTRAITURE

Although designing sets and posters absorbed Henk Pander throughout the 1970s, and he frequently told his friend Willem that he was not doing much painting, it was in the seventies that he established his reputation in Portland as a portrait painter. Portraiture had always been part of his range. He grew up in a portrait culture that extended back to the



**FIGURE 41. HENK PANDER**  
*Portrait of Nicky Buchwalter*  
1973  
Oil on linen  
36 x 30 inches  
Collection of the Buchwalter Family

work of one of the great portraitists of all time, Frans Hals of Haarlem, and continued in Pander's boyhood

in the work of such artists as his own father. Pander himself was skilled at portraits from an early age and was awarded the Therese van Duyl Schwarze Portrait Prize in Amsterdam in 1964. He scoffs at the idea that portraits are hackwork, pointing out that some of the great masterpieces in art history are portraits. He mentions Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* (1642;



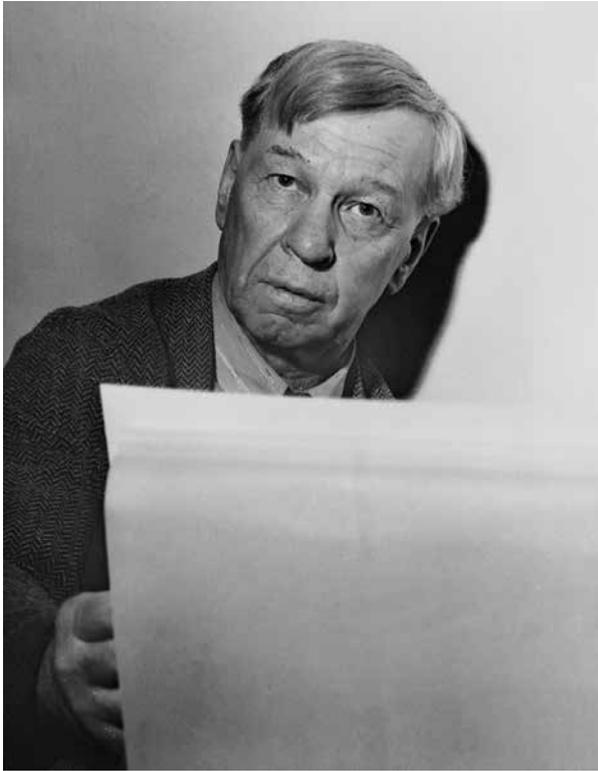
**FIGURE 42. MARY RANDLETT**

Henk Pander, with *Portrait of Nicky Buchwalter* in progress on the easel, in his studio at his home on Southwest Cable Street, Portland, Oregon, summer 1972. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Randlett Collection.

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) as well as the work of Hals and the Spanish master Diego Velazquez as cases in point.

In his early years in Portland, Pander introduced himself as a portraitist by drawing pastels at a fundraiser for the Metropolitan Learning Center. These quick studies, mostly of children, priced at three dollars,

entered family collections and led to commissions for painted portraits. Early clients included Marianne and Fred Buchwalter, who had settled in Portland after fleeing the Nazis. In 1973, when Pander finished a portrait of the Buchwalters' daughter (Figure 41; see Figure 42), "they gave a little party for me and invited all sorts of people, including . . . people who had written and spoken badly about me. That portrait began to change people's attitudes somewhat."<sup>73</sup> In the course of the 1970s he received more and more commissions to create portraits of children, families, and noted personages. The best-known early example



**FIGURE 43. MINOR WHITE**

*Portrait of C. S. Price*

ca. 1938–1942

From Al Monner's print of White's negative, 1978  
Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon.

is the posthumous portrait of C. S. Price that he painted for Timberline Lodge in 1976.

Clayton Sumner Price (1874–1950) was the pioneering modern painter in Oregon, known for his bold, heavily textured paintings that weld the spirit of *Blaue Reiter* German Expressionism to the modernist tradition of the Pacific Northwest. He painted two of his most famous works, *Huckleberry Pickers* and *Pack Train* (both created under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration in 1937) for Timberline Lodge. In the 1970s, Price's family donated one thousand dollars to the Friends of Timberline to commission a portrait. Rachael Griffin, the Portland Art Museum curator, approached Pander, who agreed to undertake the project.

Because Pander had not known Price, he interviewed Price's artist friends Charles Heaney and Amanda Snyder. From Heaney, he learned that Price

wore a shirt and tie when he painted, was a "clean man," and made his own paint emulsions. Snyder had inherited Price's palette and showed that to Pander. At the Portland Art Museum, Pander located Al Monner's print of Minor White's negative of a photograph of Price (one of the few images of Price known to exist; Figure 43). Using a mirror, Pander posed as Price, adapting the head from White's photograph.

The portrait (1976; Figure 44) shows Price in the act of painting, palette knife raised above his head, standing at a floating worktable with arrangements of tubes of paint and paintbrushes. Pander had learned that Price worked with his paint table directly in front of his canvas, and the composition of the portrait makes it the case that the front plane of the painting is the canvas that Price is working on, just as it is the surface on which Pander painted. Price's face is partly in a shadow cast by his raised hand. The light is coming toward him to suggest Price's mystical and visionary nature, according to Pander.<sup>74</sup> The huge rising moon contributes to the ethereal, otherworldly quality: Price seems to hover on the brink of the universe. As Delores Pander pointed out, the moon in the Price portrait is one example of Pander's interest, both scientific and imaginative, in astronomy and the world of outer space in all its vastness.<sup>75</sup>

Pander's most famous portrait is of Tom McCall (1982; Figure 47), painted at the end of the governor's life as his official portrait for the Capitol in Salem. This is the dramatic, full-length painting of the lanky governor standing on a beach at the Oregon coast, nattily dressed in a gray suit, standing so close to the water that one foot is in the surf. He faces us from the north, looking south; the west sun saturates his seaward side while his inland side is plunged in shadow. He greets us heartily, but he is at the beach to perform calculations: the red and white pole (a reference to the sixteen-foot pole actually used by the surveyors) marking the low tide line, with the string stretching from the top of the pole to the inner shore, is configuring the triangulation that will determine the depth of the beaches deemed to



**FIGURE 44. HENK PANDER**

*Portrait of C. S. Price*

1976

Oil on panel

44 x 50 inches

Collection of Friends of Timberline, Timberline Lodge, Mount Hood, Oregon



**FIGURE 45. HENK PANDER**  
*Governor Tom McCall*  
 1982  
 Ink on paper  
 38 x 50 inches  
 Private collection

be public property. Along with the so-called “bottle bill,” the beach bill that confirmed public ownership of and access to Oregon’s ocean beaches was part of the legacy of McCall’s governorship in the years 1967–1975. The strong west light dramatizes not only McCall’s figure but also, in the manner of American Luminist paintings of the nineteenth century, the rocks, shells, and snags based on studies that Pander made at the coast. The helicopter hovering in the distance references historic fact (McCall had made his 1967 beach visit via helicopter) as well as Pander’s interest in the contrast and tension between American wilderness and American technology.

When Secretary of State Norma Paulus approached Pander about painting the portrait, he was not entirely familiar with McCall’s record and role as governor. As he had done for Price, he conducted research on his new subject, beginning by reading the autobiography *Tom McCall: Maverick* (1977). As he learned about the former governor, he came to believe that a full-length figure in a beach setting would be historically relevant and visually appropriate for the dynamic and dramatic McCall. He and Paulus visited McCall at his Portland home; would such an approach, necessarily rendered on a



**FIGURE 46.** Governor Tom McCall and Henk Pander in the artist’s studio, Southwest Tenth Avenue and Washington Street, Portland, Oregon, 1982.

large scale, be appropriate? McCall liked the idea and agreed to pose for photographs that Pander would use for reference. Since McCall was ill with cancer, he could not pose for long periods in the studio. Pander returned to McCall’s house on a later occasion to do a large study drawing of the governor, to get to know him better, to “break the ice,” as he recounts in a State of Oregon video about creating the portrait. This and several other portrait drawings were not direct studies for the final painting but character studies, close investigations of McCall’s body language, facial features, his overbite. One of Pander’s study drawings (Figure 45) includes a setting sun and a crescent moon, which might have served as a reference to the transcendent, as in the portrait of Price, but he decided not to include the sun or moon in the lightly clouded sky of the final work.

When the painting was all but completed, he invited McCall to come to his studio, at that time a storefront located at the corner of Southwest Tenth Avenue and Washington Street, to sit while final touch-ups were made (see Figure 46). Delores joined them to talk with McCall and in an effort to keep up his spirits during the session. “I asked him questions for an hour or so to keep him talking and animated,” she recalled. McCall, who died a few months later, told Pander: “I’m going to live forever in your painting.”<sup>76</sup>



**FIGURE 47. HENK PANDER**  
*Portrait of Tom McCall*  
1982  
Oil on linen  
81 x 72 inches  
Oregon State Capitol Collection, Salem

The McCall portrait is characteristic of Pander's oil paintings of the seventies and early eighties in that it is thinly painted (in contrast to the rich impastos of built-up paint, in the Dutch tradition of Rembrandt and Hals, in works that he made both earlier and later in his career). For the McCall portrait and other works of that period, he applied fine Belgian paint in thin layers, sanding the layers between coats, and gradually applying thin glazes. This technique was partly inspired by frugality, to conserve paint, partly to achieve, as in the Price portrait, an ethereal, glowing effect. Pander was conscious of McCall's standing on the edge of things in both a physical and metaphysical sense: on the edge of the beach at the edge of the continent, and on the thin edge between life and death. (Although the portrait depicts the historic episode of McCall's 1967 visit to the coast to measure the beach, the figure is based on drawings of him much later as an ill man; Audrey McCall is said to have disliked the portrait because the image of her husband as a sick person distressed her.)

As are many of Pander's works, the McCall portrait is unconventional, and at the time of its unveiling it was controversial, as it probably still is in some circles. Technically, it is a stunning work—clear, articulate, glowing and light-filled, dramatic, theatrical. It narrates a significant moment in the history of Oregon public policy. Expressively, it does the job of setting forth a self-described maverick, the governor of a state that at the time was seen, and saw itself, as innovative and unorthodox. It is a daring version of an official portrait and a New World history painting rolled into one. Given these factors, it seems unfathomable to consider it anything less than an Oregon masterpiece.

Portraiture has remained a signature genre for Pander. His clients range from private citizens, commissioning portraits as expressive family documents, to boards of directors hiring Pander to commemorate a business colleague, to another State of Oregon governor (his portrait of John Kitzhaber was unveiled at the Capitol in May 2009). He sometimes



**FIGURE 48. GEORGE HENDRIK BREITNER**

*The Red Kimono*

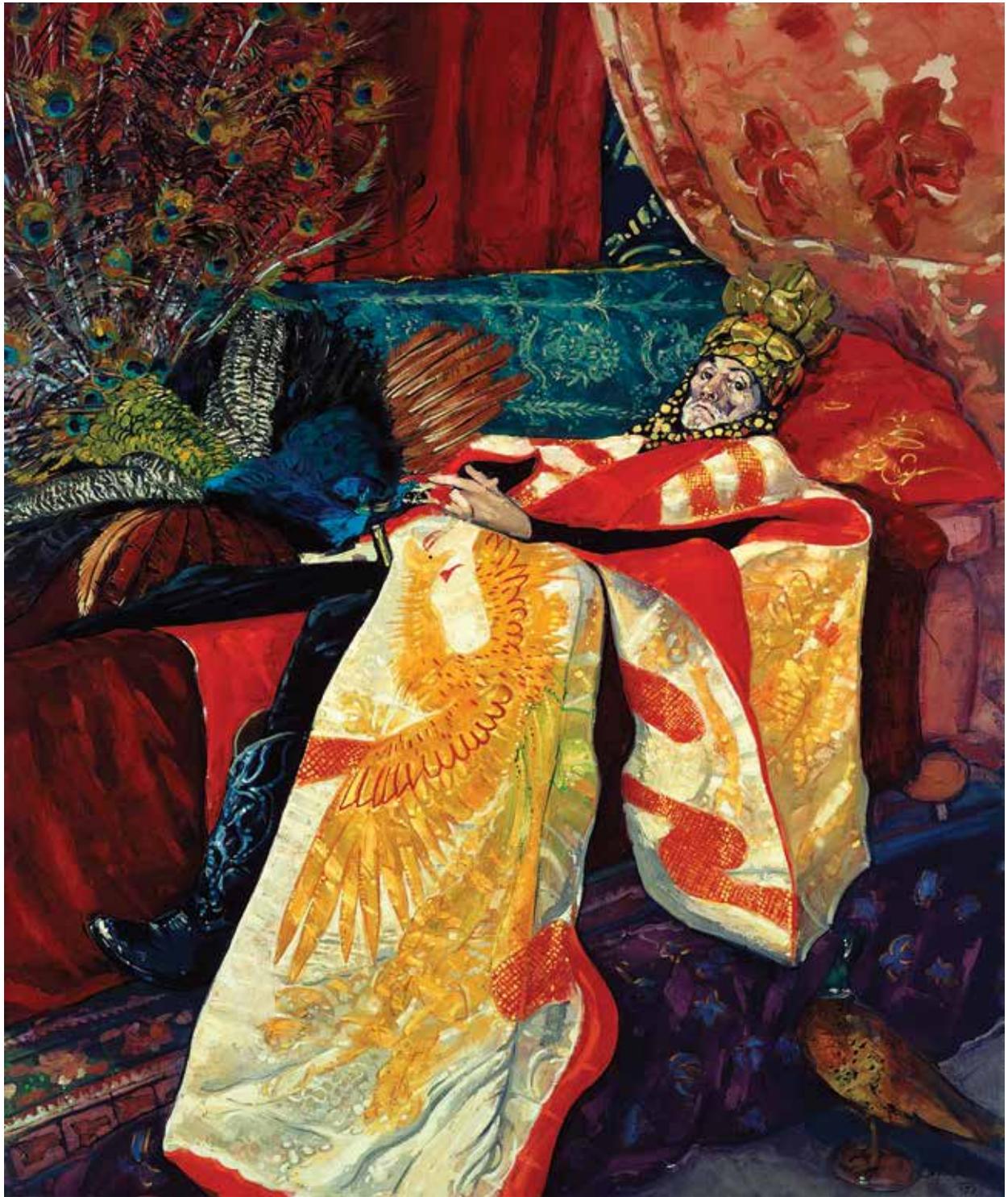
ca. 1894

Oil on panel

33 1/2 x 20 1/2 inches

Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, The Netherlands / The  
Bridgeman Art Library International

paints portraits as an homage to individuals he personally admires; such is the case of his painting of Gordon Gilkey, the printmaker and print collector who founded the Vivian and Gordon Gilkey Center for Graphic Arts at the Portland Art Museum. Pander held Gilkey in high regard for his role in retrieving Nazi-stolen artworks following World War II. For Pander, Gilkey represented “the best of America’s role in the world.” He died a year after Pander painted his portrait, just as McCall died soon after his portrait was completed. Pander considers some portraits to be marked by a sense of gravitas, to be memorials. “They involve history, and saying good-bye.”<sup>77</sup>



**FIGURE 49. HENK PANDER**  
*Prayer Before the Night* (Portrait of Ric Young)  
1992  
Oil on linen  
81 x 67 inches  
Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Washington

This was painfully true for his end-of-life portrait of his friend Ric Young and the group portrait he painted of Young's friends gathered at his deathbed. In *Prayer Before the Night* (1991; Figure 49), Pander portrays Ric Young as he lies dying of AIDS. He had suggested to Young that he paint the portrait as a means of diversion from his illness. The typical device of accenting a portrait with still-life objects is here reversed to present a sumptuous array of fabrics and feathers that engulf Young's withered face and folded hands. As Storefront Theater's flamboyant director and imaginative guru, Young was famous for his love of costume, regalia, and the theatrics of dress. In Pander's portrait, he reclines as if on a sultan's couch, swathed in an opulent Japanese kimono emblazoned with a golden crane and surrounded by crimson draperies of different patterns that hang over and behind the bed's blue headboard. The feathers of the crane are echoed in a blaze of peacock feathers at the upper left. In its decorative sumptuousness, the painting is in the spirit of the work of George Breitner in his *Japonisme* phase (see Figure 48), as Pander points out.<sup>78</sup> Young wears a tiara-like crown, and his leg extends from beneath the kimono to show that he is wearing a stylish cowboy boot—one of Pander's boots, in fact. In setting extravagant materialism in contrast to the faltering human life, the work celebrates the aesthetic and the theatrical, qualities that Young had made the focus of his life, and sets them forth as pleasures to savor even as death descends. In fact, Young died before the portrait was completed, necessitating the emphasis on still life over life itself.

*Waiting* (1992; Figure 50) depicts the moment of Young's death in the hospital. In a composition that echoes some of the great mourning pictures of art history, Young's body lies wrapped in white sheets on a gurney set at a diagonal in the composition. Tubes link the body to a jumble of medical apparatus at the left. The bed is surrounded by figures: the doctor checking Young's pulse; Young's partner, staring out the window; Delores standing at the foot of the bed,

and two other friends. Pander is also present, as the unseen artist. He had been entrusted with making the decision, in consultation with the medical staff, about when to end life support; the painting presents the seven minutes it took Young to die after that decision was made. The dying man's body glows in the light, the sunset burns on the faraway horizon outside the window, and the friends stand, crouch, and weep. Pander made sketches at the moment and later persuaded Kaiser Permanente to allow him to reenter the intensive care unit to draw it in detail. He also convinced those present at Young's death, including the doctor, to pose for the re-creation of the scene in his studio. The result is a group portrait that transcends portraiture to become a personal history painting, a painting about a death in modern times from a disease of modern times. It represents an extreme case of Pander's understanding of portraiture as imagery of farewell.

The Ric Young paintings are images of Thanatos, the post-Freudian term for death and oblivion. This term is set in contrast with Eros, the term Freud uses to suggest life, sexuality, and sensual abundance. Thanatos is central to Pander's art, but so is Eros, and his portraiture, as well as his work in other categories, can embrace Eros just as unflinchingly as Thanatos. A case in point is *The Marriage of Brad and Brandy* (1993; Figure 51), painted as if to celebrate life and bracket death.

In the early nineties, Pander painted a number of full-length portraits, including one of his sons Jacob and Arnold and another of Delores's father, costumed in a robe and headpiece to become king-like and fictitious in an unabashedly theatrical portrait. Now Pander was interested in doing a full-length, life-sized portrait in the celebratory spirit of Eros. He mentioned to friends that he was looking for models, and a short time later a couple of his acquaintance let him know that they would be interested in posing. Pander set about creating a boudoir in his studio. He laid out a futon and covered it and the wall behind

with fabrics of various patterns and colors. The result was a nestling stage. When Brad and Brandy arrived at the studio, he told them to ignore him, make themselves comfortable, and follow their instincts as if no one were around, with a luxurious lovers' bed at their disposal. He took slides of their activities—their flirtations and lovemaking. Later, he reviewed the slides for the best composition and chose a vertically formatted arrangement that was sexually explicit and visually arresting. He asked the couple back to pose for a composition related to the photograph. Pander rarely paints figures based on photographs as such; rather, they serve as preliminary possibilities that are later realized by painting directly from the model.

*The Marriage of Brad and Brandy* stands as a complement, contrast, and alternative to the portrayal of Ric Young in *Prayer Before the Night*, painted the previous year. Both paintings are heavy with draperies of different patterns and patinas. In *Prayer*, cloth is used to shroud and engulf, to replace life with still life. In *Brad and Brandy*, fabric is foil to vibrant flesh. Brad, wearing an open dressing gown, stands with legs spread, penis erect, his body torqued in a swivel to one side. Brandy, wearing what Pander purports to be her wedding dress, reclines beside Brad, reaching up to clasp the tip of his erection with her left hand to stroke it with her right. She wears high heels and black stockings, with her black gown shuffled up to reveal her thighs and pudenda. A fantastic veil of lace and satin cascades behind her tilted head. Given Pander's procedure with his models, their pose is of their own making—with all the implications of macho masculinity, subservient femininity, and unabashed exhibitionism. The work of such an early twentieth-century artist as Egon Schiele can be seen as an intertext but with the fundamental difference that Schiele's angst and morbidity are replaced by Brad and Brandy's playful joie de vivre. Their scene is stagy, campy, and tongue-in-cheek. The item Brad holds is an antique vibrator that will supplement the powers of his own remarkable organ.

## HENK PANDER, MURALIST

Henk Pander, an artist who supports himself solely by making art, is ever vigilant in seeking for-profit opportunities in his role as artist. This is necessary given his sporadic affiliation with commercial galleries and the reluctance of some gallerists to present his more difficult work. Painting portraits on commission and creating watercolors for the market are aspects of Pander's money-making enterprise, and so are the murals he has painted for the private and public sectors. His career developed in Oregon just as the state's Percent for Art legislation was enacted (in 1975, and expanded in 1977) stipulating that one percent of the cost of new construction or remodeling of State buildings be devoted to art for the new or renovated structure. The City of Portland also established art acquisition programs and agencies. In the private realm, clubs and corporations were sometimes in the market for mural paintings as their headquarters were being renovated or newly built as Portland became a city of modern architecture. Pander, assisted by Delores, an editorial assistant to authors, was able to write successful proposals for projects of this sort, and some of his most monumental paintings are the result.

Pander's first large-scale mural commission came in 1984, when the board of directors of the Memorial Union at Oregon State University selected him to paint two huge paintings, each measuring twenty-one by sixteen feet, for the stairway in the rotunda of the Memorial Union (see Figure 52). This was an Oregon Percent for Art project in conjunction with the remodeling of the Union, originally constructed in 1928 in honor of those who had died in World War I, including Oregon State students.

The Memorial Union murals present completely contrasting subjects: a World War I battlefield in France and the Oregon State University research ship, the *Wecoma*, in the Pacific Ocean. Pander explained to the committee his reasoning for juxtaposing these



FIGURE 52. Stairway in the rotunda of the Memorial Union, Oregon State University, Corvallis, with murals by Henk Pander.

seemingly unrelated subjects: “One is of land, one of ocean; one faces east, one faces west; one shows the past, one shows the future. I have set up a situation that shows times, culture, a sense of going forward, and at the same time reminds people what this building really was built for.”<sup>79</sup> It is also a pairing that allowed Pander to explore in one ensemble the antipodes of his creativity: Europe as the site of history, heroic sacrifice, and legendary natural and cultural beauty, the United States as the locus of technological advances and the compulsion to push explorations to distant frontiers. The proposal encompassed his interest in history and its ruins, on the one hand, and the unfolding future with its technology and new discoveries, on the other. It also entailed travel and adventure: he went to Europe in the spring of 1984 to study and photograph the battlefields, and that summer he joined the crew aboard the *Wecoma* to learn about the university’s ocean research. For both paintings, Pander made numerous watercolor and drawing studies, including renderings of what the

works would look like when installed at the Memorial Union.

The completed World War I mural is entitled *Montfaucon* (Figure 53), the name of a village that was destroyed in the war and the site of the monument to the American soldiers who died in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in 1918. Pander does not depict the modern monument, instead focusing on the ruins of the Romanesque church at Montfaucon as seen from below, rising against a dramatic sky with pink clouds. Poppies swarm the immediate foreground, and to the right the composition plunges to a stunning landscape of the Lorraine Valley. Pander explained that the scene depicts “intense sunrise skies over ruined buildings overrun with brilliant flowers. The idea . . . came from the image of soldiers gazing up from their trenches, watching dawn creep over their battlefield.”<sup>80</sup>

*Montfaucon* depicts architectural ruins and landscape; no human figures are present although the memory of human beings long gone pervades



**FIGURE 53. HENK PANDER**  
*Montfaucon* (mural for Memorial Union)  
1985  
Oil on linen laid to the wall  
240 x 192 inches  
Oregon State University, Corvallis

the scene. In contrast, the companion work, *Wecoma* (Figure 54), bustles with human activity on the deck of the ship as contemporary Oregon State students participate in research at sea. The contrast of nature and technology is a favorite subject for Pander, and *Wecoma* explores this contrast in dramatic terms. The foreground deck, presented at an angle so that it forms a triangular stage, is filled with gear and apparatus in various stages of use by students wearing orange life vests. A boom extends overhead, and from it dangles a white rope that curves back to the deck where it lies in loops. As in the deck paintings by Winslow Homer, the details of buoys, rigging, and the seafarers' garb are closely observed and accurately rendered.

Beyond the ship, the horizon is seen at raking right angles to the deck. Between ship and horizon is the foaming sea, another triangular wedge in this composition of diagonals and counter-diagonals. An enormous crescent moon arcs through the sky, its curve an echo of the arched top of the painting. For Pander, the frontier of the open sea and the frontier of outer space are linked in their unfathomable vastness and promise of scientific knowledge.

Pander completed the project for Oregon State in 1985 after spending a year and a half in its planning and execution. In 1986, he was commissioned to paint another mural—a six-by-twenty-foot view of Portland for the Multnomah Athletic Club (Figure 55). Completed and installed in 1987, it offers a view of Portland that shows the club as an institution integral to the city. Branches and a tree trunk push tight to the front plane of the composition, serving as caesurae against which the scene plummets into space—across the gabled roofs of nearby houses, on to the skyscrapers and steeples downtown, and then still further into the atmospheric space of a distant sky dappled with clouds and containing another enormous arc of moon, plainly visible even though it is daytime. The central arc of the moon and the framing foreground trees, echoing the verticals of the buildings, provides a stable compositional structure. “The cityscape I did for the MAC Club is finished

now,” he wrote to Willem. “It looks pretty good and is fairly complicated. If I do say so myself, it does have a good composition.”<sup>81</sup>

The murals at Oregon State and the Athletic Club are paintings on linen that Pander created in the studio; the Oregon State murals are laminated to the walls, while the Athletic Club's city view is mounted on stretcher bars. Pander's biggest mural of all (said to be the largest indoor mural anywhere in the state) is painted directly on the wall, in acrylics rather than oil. This is the ill-fated *Palmyra* (see Figure 56), measuring an astonishing thirty by seventy-five feet, that he created for Portland's Emergency Communications Center (the 911 call center) in 1988. This was the facility located in a concrete bunker thirty-five feet below ground in Kelly Butte south of downtown Portland. Built as a bomb shelter during the Cold War, it was converted in the 1970s to the 911 center and in the 1980s renovated with city funds to try to make the cavernous, windowless interior more habitable for the emergency call operators, twenty-five at a time, who staffed the center around the clock. “They work under great tension in a vault without windows,” Pander wrote to Willem. “The painting will be illusionistic and spectral. It will be a landscape with suggestions of the landscape outside, a view of Portland, Mount Hood maybe, masked by architectural elements, colonnades and arches.”<sup>82</sup> In his proposal to the Portland City Council, Pander wrote: “An illusionary classical architecture of colonnades and arches would extend into a landscape [with a] huge, luminist sky . . .”<sup>83</sup>

The result is a vast scene that dissolves the arched wall at the end of the barrel-vaulted space. At floor level, a geometric pattern, which reads as a plaza from some angles and as steps from others, leads into a dreamed world. An overhead latticework with flowering vines provides a proscenium to a fantastical landscape that is seen through and beyond the ruins of ancient or medieval arcades, similar to those in *Montfaucon* painted three years earlier. Perhaps in this case these are remnants of *Palmyra*, for which



**FIGURE 55. HENK PANDER**  
*View of Portland*  
1987  
Oil on linen  
72 x 240 inches  
Multnomah Athletic Club, Portland, Oregon

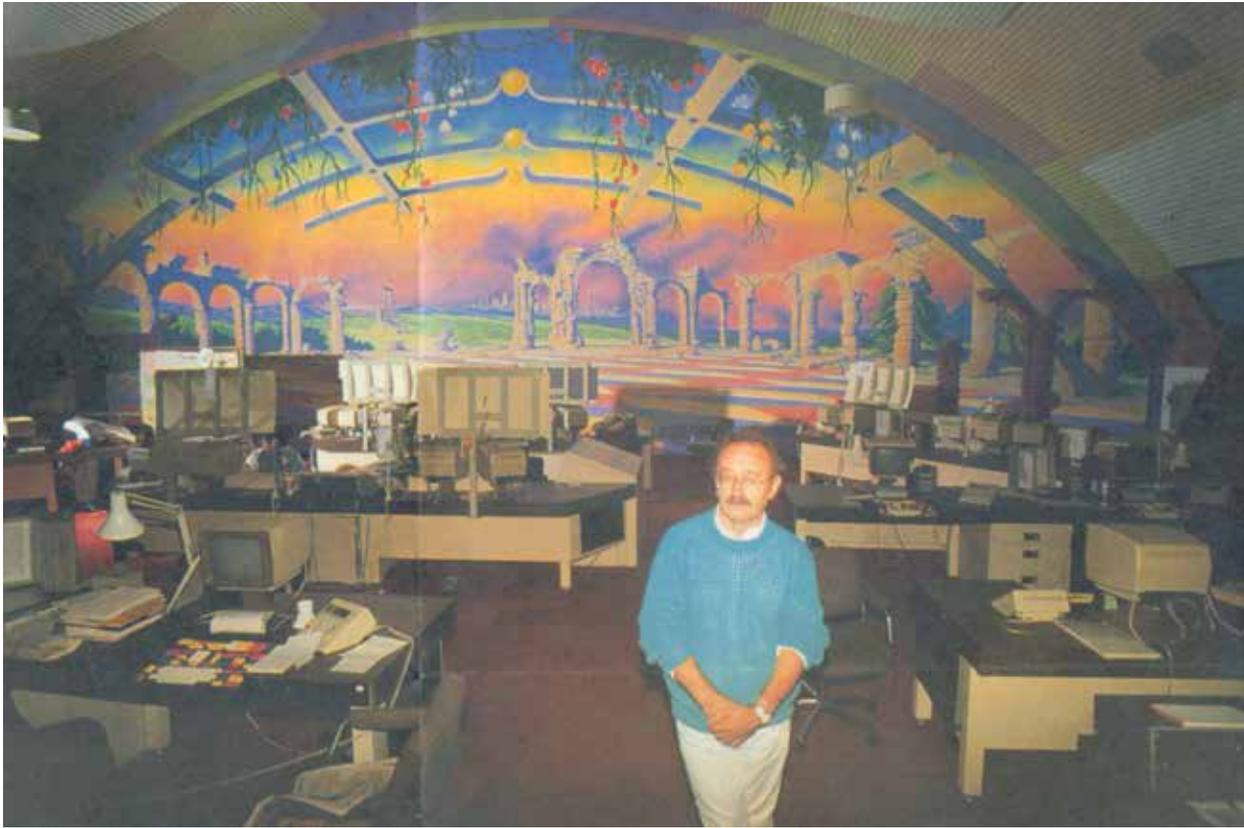
the painting is named, the ancient Aramaic city of central Syria, located in an oasis in the Syrian desert. Beyond and through the ruins, a spacious green terrain leads to a distant view of a modern city—Portland or some imaginative variation. The distant city and nearby ruins are illuminated by a sky that shifts from purple, orange, and gold at the horizon to deep blue in the forefront of the painting, above the flowered trellis. Light flooded the painting from the front, as well, for Pander’s experience with stage sets and light art led him to install a twenty-four-hour computerized lighting system that created the illusion of the sun moving across the sky in the course of a day. The painting purports to extend the space of the underground bunker by some forty miles of space, light, color, landscape, and architecture near and far, past and future.

Pander and his assistant, Benjamin Hayden, painted this vast scene in four weeks in close proximity to the emergency operators. Pander arranged for “a giant scaffold with a plastic screen . . . to shield the employees and computers,” he wrote. “No distance, no fresh air. 10 x 20 meters! I’m afraid to think about it, all that climbing.”<sup>84</sup> The operators also spent a rough four weeks, at times wearing hard hats as they worked the phones and coped with the smell of paint

fumes. The always-closed doors of the call center were propped open to increase ventilation.

And then, too, there was the problem of aesthetic doubt: “Pander envisioned a dramatic landscape that would soothe raw nerves and create an illusion of open space,” wrote one commentator. “But to his surprise, some of the employees were disturbed by what they interpreted as an apocalyptic vision. The last thing he wanted to do was create a painting that, yet again, would alienate his viewers. But Pander knows something about time—its healing properties and its capacity for transforming hostility into indifference and eventually fondness.”<sup>85</sup>

A quarter century later, I asked Henk if he would take me to see the mural at the call center. In an e-mail reply, he said: “I have no idea how to get to the 911 mural, that building has been abandoned and no one has taken responsibility for my painting. I will do some calling, this could be interesting.”<sup>86</sup> As it turns out, the mural is entombed with the old furniture and fixtures of the abandoned call center. The entrance of the bunker has been sealed off and mounded with rubble. Theoretically, the site is impenetrable, but trespassers have burrowed in on occasion, and photographs of what they saw occasionally appear on the Internet. At some point, a vandal defaced the mural with a huge splash of black paint. Pander, who considers *Palmyra* to be his most elaborate and sophisticated mural, deems its fate at the hands of city officials and vandals to be incomprehensible. For him, the situation is a glaring example of the limits of American respect for and appreciation of the arts.



**FIGURE 56.** Henk Pander in the Emergency Communications Center, Portland, Oregon, with his mural *Palmyra* in the background. The facility and mural are now inaccessible. *Oregonian* photograph, published October 23, 1988.

In 1989, a fourth major mural commission came Pander's way, this one for three paintings for an immense, dis-used lobby in the Portland Center for the Performing Arts on Southwest Park Avenue. Funded by Portland's Percent for Art program, these murals were inspired by Pander's 1975 set design for the Storefront Theater production of *Vaudeville II*. The production had been staged in the original Storefront Theater on Russell Street, but by the time Pander painted the murals Storefront productions were presented at the Center for the Performing Arts. The east wall depicts the play's opening scene, entitled "Portland Town." The south wall presents a dressing room, and a third wall (with a curved surface) is painted with abstract designs. The painting based on "Portland Town" is rendered in anamorphic perspective with the result that it is "spatially very,

very complex, very illusionistic . . . somewhat of a metaphor for the illusion and magic of theater," Pander said.<sup>87</sup>

Among Pander's more recent mural commissions is the Oregon Percent for Art project for the new district office of the Department of Forestry in Tillamook. *Kilchis River* (2002; Figure 57) is a framed painting measuring six by eighteen feet, installed permanently in a large meeting room. It depicts the Kilchis as it flows through an alder-dominated corridor in the Tillamook State Forest. The foreground and midground are a jumble of old logs that over the years have washed downstream from the Tillamook Burn, a complex of fires that occurred at intervals between 1933 and 1951.<sup>88</sup> They form a shattered bridge across the river. Pander made a number of forays in the Tillamook area with foresters, and the painting is a composite of various views and details that he spotted along the way. The dramatic eye of the composition is a rootwad just left of center in the immediate foreground (Figure 58). The exposed roots of the downed tree are ensnared by a



FIGURE 58. HENK PANDER  
*Kilchis River* (detail of Figure 57)

### THE CITY AS THE STAGE FOR MODERN LIFE

steel choker line, a remnant of the steam logging era. The forests are littered with relics of bygone logging operations, and Pander's interest in the interplay between nature and technological remnants brought them to his attention. The rootwad, with its gaping red orifice, eye-like oval, and proboscis branches, is intertwined with the choker cable. The peaceful Kilchis is home to a fork-tongued monster, it almost seems; Pander's Surrealist underpinnings rise to the surface in this transformational image that hovers between descriptive fact and imaginative possibility.

Painting city scenes is a venerable Dutch tradition that extends back to the seventeenth century, when van Ruisdael painted his views of Haarlem, Vermeer painted Delft, and Rembrandt etched the skyline of Amsterdam. In Italy, Canaletto and Guardi painted views of Venice in the eighteenth century, and in the nineteenth the Englishman William Turner sought to outdo his Italian predecessors by rendering Venice as a mirage of light and color. Henk Pander too is noted for his cityscapes, views of Portland, Haarlem, and Amsterdam that function sometimes as straightforward visual documents, often as Surreal visions of familiar places.



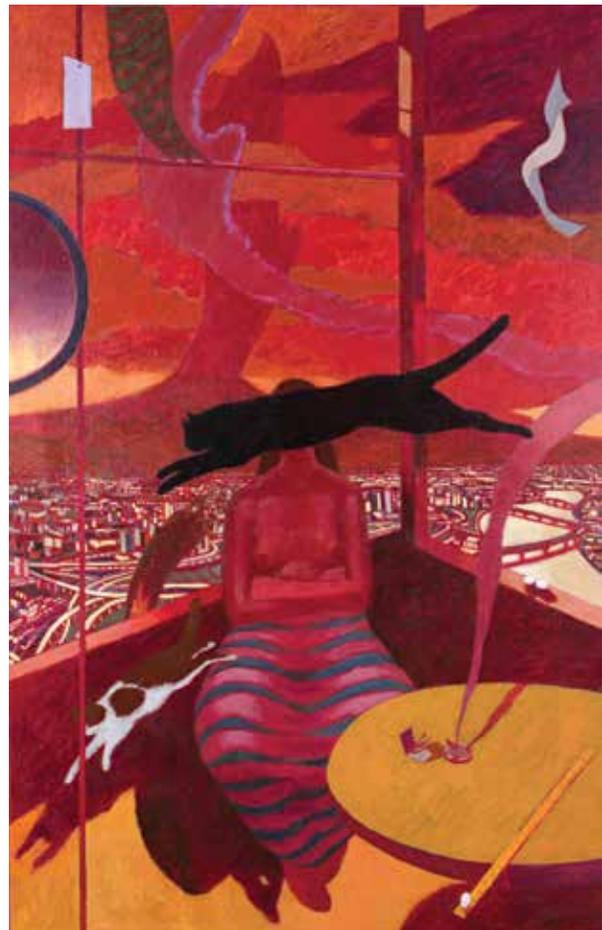
**FIGURE 59. HENK PANDER**  
*Southwest Ankeny Street, Portland, Oregon*  
 1965  
 Conté crayon on paper  
 19 x 22 inches  
 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Pander joined this city-painting tradition naturally and instinctively from his earliest days as an artist. At the academy in Amsterdam, George Breitner's work provided an early modern example of an artist responding to the sites and sights of the city. Pander painted views of Amsterdam and its public squares and waterways. Arriving in Portland in 1965, he began to come to terms with his new environment by drawing, in ink or Conté crayon, dozens of quickly executed impressions of such landmarks as the Steel Bridge or a cluster of buildings on Southwest Ankeny Street (Figure 59).

Artists such as Harry Wentz, Charles Heaney, Jack McLarty, George Johanson, and Eunice Parsons had for years depicted the intersections, avenues, bridges, and buildings of Portland in some of their works. Though literal documentation was rarely the point, such works provide an imaginative record of the city and its changing tenor, and virtually from the moment he arrived in town Pander began adding to this record. In 1984, he proposed the idea of the Visual Chronicle of Portland, a collection of artworks depicting the city from different perspectives and points of view. He cited as a model Amsterdam's Topographic Atlas of images of the city from medieval

to modern times. The Visual Chronicle of Portland was established in cooperation with the Metropolitan Arts Commission (it is now under the aegis of the Commission's successor, the Regional Arts and Culture Council). A city-owned collection, in 2010 it contained 256 paintings, drawings, prints, and photographs by 146 artists.

Pander proposed the Visual Chronicle for the value he believed it would have for the City of Portland and also as a good-faith effort to engage with, if not embrace, the city and its art community. He was aware of his lingering reputation as a "bad boy" artist, a designation that he feels was imposed on him, and as an "outsider," a designation for which



**FIGURE 61. GEORGE JOHANSON**  
*Black Cat—Mountain*  
 1982  
 Oil on canvas  
 68 x 44 inches

Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, Oregon. Maribeth Collins Art Acquisition Fund



**FIGURE 60. HENK PANDER**  
*Eruption of Saint Helens from Cable Street*  
 1981  
 Oil on linen  
 54 x 64 inches  
 City of Portland, Oregon, courtesy of the Regional Arts and  
 Culture Council

he is quite willing to take partial credit. Proposing the Visual Chronicle and then serving on its committee is one of a number of volunteer initiatives that Pander has taken in order to moderate his “reluctant immigrant” status.

Pander advocated for the Chronicle even as he was absorbing the city of Portland as a subject or setting for his own paintings and drawings. It was in the 1980s that Pander produced many of his most memorable Portland view paintings. The decade began with the eruption of Mount Saint Helens,

an event of astonishing drama for Portlanders and especially for Pander, the immigrant from the land of no mountains and certainly no erupting ones. “This was about as un-Dutch as it comes.”<sup>89</sup> He immediately seized on this subject of nature’s vast power, drawn to its direct confrontation with the structures of modern human life. He describes the eruption as a “planetary process” that recurs throughout the Solar System and is thus a cosmic event as well as an earthbound and regional one. In 1980 and 1981 he executed a number of watercolors and a major oil painting that show the volcanic blow gushing upward and outward across the sky as seen from the backyard of the house where he lived on Cable Street in Goose Hollow.

In *Eruption of St. Helens from Cable Street* (1981; Figure 60), Pander moves from foreground still-life to midground cityscape to background cataclysm

(and by implication on out into the universe) in swift, matter-of-fact terms. At the front of the painting, on a glassy tabletop—shiny and pristine but sure to collect a thick layer of ash before long—are two objects for seeing and learning: a pair of binoculars and a small television set that is broadcasting the eruption as it occurs. The antenna of the TV is angled directly into the base of the rising column of smoke and ash. This object in the foreground touches a phenomenon in the background, while the buildings in the middle distance are reflected, somehow, in the glass-top table at the front of the painting. Spatial intervals are established and de-established, infusing Pander's realism with an element of mystery and perceptual reorientation. These qualities, in more abstract terms, are also present in the work of George Johanson, the other Portland painter who explored the eruption of Mount Saint Helens. In *Black Cat—Mountain* (1982; Figure 61) and other works by Johanson, the point of view is similar to Pander's: a tabletop with objects, a terrace, and a view of the city lead us in stages from the minutiae of daily life to a natural cataclysm on the near horizon.

In Pander's *View of Portland with Orbanco Building* (Figure 62), a watercolor painted in 1981, another mountain, this time Pander's "icy triangle" of Mount Hood, spreads majestically from one side of the painting to the other behind and beyond a row of International Style buildings that helped establish Portland as a model modernist city. The newest building in town was the Orbanco Building, completed in 1980 by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. At the time, it "seemed not like a building at all, but like a great mirror stood up against the sky."<sup>90</sup> Pander's point of view is from the Vista Bridge in the West Hills of Portland, looking downtown with the aid of a camera with a telescopic lens. Pander renders the Orbanco Building as a dark form set directly against the whiteness of the mountain. A portion of the multi-planar facade catches the light and mirrors buildings in the immediate foreground as well as structures behind us in the world behind the painting. Not reflected, it

seems, is the suspended floor, cantilevered from the lower left corner of the composition, on which two nude figures conduct a sort of dance with the new buildings and old mountain as their backdrop. This floating stage with dancers high up in the metropolis arrives from the world of *Pittura Metafisica* and Surrealism to intercept and destabilize the descriptive and factual nature of the painting. Interception, intersection, a splice: the reality shifts from the view from the bridge to a dream. Pander explains that the figures are present to establish scale—the enormity of the buildings in contrast to the diminutive size of human beings—and to infuse the scene with unpredictable human energy and liveliness.<sup>91</sup>

Another realistic yet hallucinatory watercolor of Portland's architecture and mountains is *View of Portland with Airplanes* (1983; Figure 63), in which the KOIN Tower under construction rises front and center amid other structures, including Michael Graves's garlanded Portland Building off to the left. Moonscape mountains are on the horizon. Just overhead, nearly grazing the tops of the buildings, three jets fly in formation, moving diagonally upward from left to right. The low-flying planes and the sci-fi mountains shift the scene to the realm of imagination and dream, yet the buildings are described with meticulous accuracy, and the painting is the jacket illustration for the book *Frozen Music: A History of Portland Architecture*, by Gideon Bosker and Lena Lencek, published in 1985.

In 1982, the year he painted Tom McCall in his gray suit standing on the sunlit beach of the Oregon coast, Pander told an interviewer: with "the landscapes and cityscapes I've been doing, I always felt they were like settings in which something might happen. Now I'm more interested in putting people in the settings. I think it's also what I'm best at. I think the people can take on a real emotional power. I think I have the craft now. But I won't necessarily follow a realistic approach. I'll take any kind of liberty."<sup>92</sup> This was already the case with the shelf of dancing figures in the painting of the Orbanco Building. Pander



**FIGURE 62 (TOP). HENK PANDER**

*View of Portland with Orbanco Building*

1981

Watercolor

29 1/4 x 47 1/2 inches

Virginia Haseltine Collection of Pacific Northwest Art  
Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon, Eugene

**FIGURE 63 (BOTTOM). HENK PANDER**

*View of Portland with Airplanes*

1983

Watercolor

31 x 53 inches

Collection of the artist



**FIGURE 64. HENK PANDER**  
*Man Reading*  
 1984  
 Oil on linen  
 81 x 105 inches  
 Collection of Suzie Stevenson

continued to integrate the human figure into his views of Portland in such paintings as *Man Reading* (1984; Figure 64).

In this large oil painting, a small figure finds himself on a large stage that is specifically if disorientingly Portland. The Burnside Bridge opens to allow a ship to pass, and city buildings are visible in the distance. A sharply banked jetliner streaks between the raised segments of the bridge, bisecting the path of the ship gliding slowly not far below. Jet trails streak the sky above the bridge. The sun is low,

casting intense light that creates deep shadows on the pylons. It is a moment of technological and natural drama, but technology is in the ascendance. This is a painting about concrete, steel, engines, and the noise



**FIGURE 65.** Study photograph for composition of *The Office*, with Henk Pander's friends posing, ca. 1986.



of ships, planes, and drawbridges and to that extent is a particularly dramatic “city view” painting. But the presence of the figure of the man absorbed in reading a newspaper, engrossed, unaware of his surroundings, even the churning currents of the river so dangerously close at hand, shifts the painting’s expressive purpose. It becomes a commentary on human isolation, indifference, and obliviousness to a threatening world. *Man Reading*, inspired by a 1931 painting by Franz Radziwill that Pander saw in London in 1979 at a *Neue Sachlichkeit* exhibition, is in Pander’s mind a statement about the overwhelming American defense systems advocated in the Reagan era as necessary to repel nuclear attack.<sup>93</sup> Portland as the immediate and sometimes aggressive backdrop, acting almost as a protagonist in the drama, occurs frequently in

FIGURE 66. HENK PANDER

*The Office*

1986

Oil on linen

81 x 96 inches

Collection of the artist

the artist’s work of the 1980s. Portland as a setting stimulates Pander even as it embodies American realities that disturb and mystify him.

*Man Reading* was presented in Pander’s one-person show at the Fountain Gallery of Art in March 1984. It is one of several works of the period, both paintings and drawings, that he rendered in anamorphic perspective, causing spatial relationships and degrees of distortion to vary radically depending on where one stands when viewing the picture. A



**FIGURE 67. HENK PANDER**  
*View of Haarlem*  
1979  
Oil on linen  
54 x 64 inches  
Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon, Gift of Art Advocates,  
Inc.

Renaissance device, anamorphic perspective can create an extreme distortion of form or, as in *Man Reading*, a sense of surreal disorientation. Light, perspective, and the criss-crossing movement of ship, plane, and bridge create a mood of disturbance and unease for the viewer, and the reading man's unawareness of both the viewer and his own situation heightens the troubling, intriguing effect.

Some of Pander's Portland view paintings show the buildings of the city as seen from inside another building. A particularly dramatic example of this is

*The Office* (1986, Figure 66), an amped-up variation of Edward Hopper's tableaus of after-hours emotional tension in offices downtown. The scene is an office on the twelfth floor of the KOIN Building, to which Delores, who then worked for the city, arranged access for Pander to make watercolors and drawings of the setting. In his studio later, he had three friends pose for the violent scene he stages (see Figure 65). Barry Johnson, the *Oregonian* critic, visiting Pander in his studio on Northwest Upshur Street, spotted *The Office* soon after it was painted and observed that "with a beautiful cityscape of Portland in the background, some strange conflict has arisen between a bearded businessman, a stylish woman and a gritty gangster type."<sup>94</sup> Pander was inspired to create the scene after reading accounts of the murder in 1985 of a Portland psychiatrist, gunned down in his office by a

former patient.<sup>95</sup> (Pander borrowed a submachine gun to use as a prop, but the drama in the finished painting unfolds without a weapon.)

Pander's painting transforms the office as a site of order and efficiency to one of passion and violence in a room that affords no containment; the spotless window walls provide scant protection from a plunge through the glass to the street twelve stories down. Graves's Portland Building and other recognizable structures stand ready as stages for disaster. The accuracy and specificity of the setting renders the bizarre human behavior believable. And although the acting is exaggerated to the point of caricature, the meaning of this behavior is understandable: in the corporate world (and the medical variant of it) of gleaming desks, humming machines, windows so large and clean that office and metropolis are on a dizzying continuum—in this world of modulated tones and decorum, passions lurk, ignite, and explode. In the painting, they do so in the thrall of the huge moon that seems to be descending fast over the city.

Pander painted *The Office* in the same period that he was at work on the Multnomah Athletic Club's panoramic mural of Portland buildings. Cities and their spaces, seen from afar as well as from within, always alluring to Pander and a central concern of Dutch civic art throughout the centuries, were of particular interest to him in the 1980s.

Pander is also the painter of city views of Amsterdam and Haarlem. Some of these, like his Portland views, are rendered from an outdoor vantage point while others are glimpses of the city from an architectural interior. *View of Haarlem* (1979; Figure 67) assumes a viewpoint on the bank of the Kloppersingel, the canal surrounding the old part of the city as part of its ancient defenses. The canal and buildings are placed low in the composition, while nine-tenths of the painting is devoted to the sky through which is plunging a ball of fire trailing a cloud of black smoke. "I remember at the end of the war a plane was shot down over Haarlem, I can still clearly see it in my mind's eye."<sup>96</sup> We gaze across

the Kloppersingel through time as well as space. The city view morphs into history painting as it turns to an event that occurred long ago. *View of Haarlem* is one of a number of Pander's city-oriented paintings that deal with modern, frightful life in Europe forty years earlier.

## REMEMBERING WARTIME

In Paris in 1984, Pander saw an exhibition of works by Anselm Kiefer, the German artist born in 1945 as the Nazi era that Pander so vividly recalls was ending. Seeing Kiefer's stark mixed-media paintings, which brood on German history and the Holocaust, was a moving experience for Pander that caused him to meditate on his life as he remembered it from the ages of three to eight years old in wartime Europe. As he recalled more and more incidents and scenes from the war years, he filled several drawing books with images. The sketches led to a series of formal drawings and a set of large oil paintings dating from 1987 through 1995, along with several painted later and a number more that "I would like to paint before it's too late," as he wrote in 2006.<sup>97</sup> Dealing with the German occupation of Holland during 1940–1945, these war-memory paintings are among Pander's most moving and profound accomplishments.

Many of these paintings present Pander's childhood city of Haarlem—its houses, church towers, and marketplaces—as the backdrop for human drama, with the city often seen from a domestic interior. In *The Raid* (1988, Figure 68), for example, the view is from the window of an attic room as the Haarlem skyline is strafed by the criss-crossing beams of German searchlights scanning for Allied bombers. The transept of the Catholic church near the Panders' house is seen out the window, its stained glass reflecting the lurid pink light on the horizon. All this is dramatic backdrop to the scene in the foreground of a little boy, naked and malnourished, crouching on his cot, staring fearfully out. The skinny boy is the surrogate of Henk

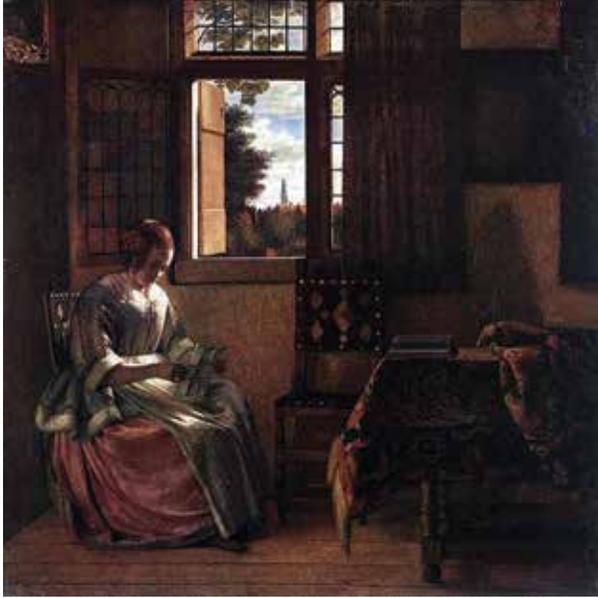


FIGURE 68. HENK PANDER  
*The Raid*  
 1988  
 Oil on linen  
 72 x 96 inches  
 Collection of the artist

Pander himself, who as a child was sick with diphtheria and isolated in an attic room of his family's house for many weeks. In combining the memories of illness and isolation with the air raids, the painting dramatizes the terror the times held for children, who nonetheless were expected to be plucky and stalwart. The plaque on the wall to the left reads: "Don't complain, but carry your burden and pray for strength."

Another view from inside a house, from the point of view of a child and showing the city of Haarlem under siege, is *Raid Over Haarlem (The Father)*, painted in 1995 (Figure 70 and page 12). Two bombers flying low over Haarlem's steeples and pan-tiled roofs seem about to crash into a room in which a terrified man

falls to the floor and shoves the child away from the window and into the room, toward the viewer. With his tousled blond hair, bulging eyes, and outstretched arms, the child seeks asylum deeper inside the house. The room trembles from the reverberations of the airplanes: the lace curtains billow to the side, chair and table are akimbo, the door of the hutch has swung open and the goblets on the shelves surely will smash to the floor. The painting transforms traditional Dutch and Flemish paintings of the domestic interior as a site for order, balance, serenity, and contemplation, enhanced by views of the well-run city seen through windows in the background. In seventeenth-century genre scenes by Jan Vermeer and Pieter de Hooch, window frames, chair backs, table legs, and cupboard doors form an ordered grid of verticals and horizontals that frame and anchor a human figure in a serene world (see Figure 69). In *The Father*, furniture and fixtures are in disarray, the ordered grid replaced by diagonals of



**FIGURE 69. PIETER DE HOOCH**  
*Woman Reading a Letter*  
 1664  
 Oil on canvas  
 21.7 x 21.7 inches  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, Hungary

disorder and confusion. In narrative as well as formal terms, the painting expresses the cultural chaos of the war years in Holland by contrasting it with the images of stability that earlier Dutch art had provided.

Pander's memories of the war become particularly intense and personal in several paintings set in the rooms of his childhood home as he remembered it forty-five years later. For *Hunger Winter* (1987; Figure 71), Renardo Barden provides a vivid description: "Think of the canvas as a 45-year-old window which looks into the family home where Pander grew up. Makeshift lanterns flare, giving off a bad light in a dim room. A sick baby ([Pander's] brother) is propped up on a table, squirming under the examination of a doctor. Heavy smoke, a byproduct of the green wood being burned to provide inadequate heat, darkens the haggard faces of Henk's parents. Stepping into the room . . . is the artist as a child of about 5 . . ."—the child Henk as Pander remembers him.<sup>98</sup>

On the table along with the candles and sick baby is a rat-like sugar beet, beets along with tulip bulbs being the staple of the starvation diet endured



**FIGURE 70. HENK PANDER**  
*Raid Over Haarlem (The Father)*  
 1995  
 Oil on linen  
 64 x 54 inches  
 Collection of the artist

by Haarlemers during the winter of 1944–1945. Mrs. Pander cooked the beets for hours to form a pudding. The smell would linger in the house for days, wafting through the rooms like the smoke of candles and green wood fires, and sugar beets nauseate Pander even now. In *Grace Before Meat* (1988; Figure 72), the menu shifts from tubers to cat (Jaap Pander thought it was a rabbit he had purchased on the black market). Before this ghastly repast, Japp recites grace as Henk, with his sister Gesa across from him, his brother Arnold beside him, and baby Jan in the arms of Mrs. Pander at the end of the table, clasp their hands in prayer. There are three open mouths in this painting: the praying father's, the dead cat's, and the crying baby's. The child Henk is close-lipped, staring into some realm beyond the pious family scene. The shade on the overhead light is decorated with patterns of windmills and tulips, incongruous reminders of happier Dutch times and the attempts of families like the Panders to carry on in a normal way in extreme,



FIGURE 71 (TOP). HENK PANDER

*Hunger Winter*

1987

Oil on linen

56 x 72 inches

Collection of the artist

FIGURE 72 (BOTTOM). HENK PANDER

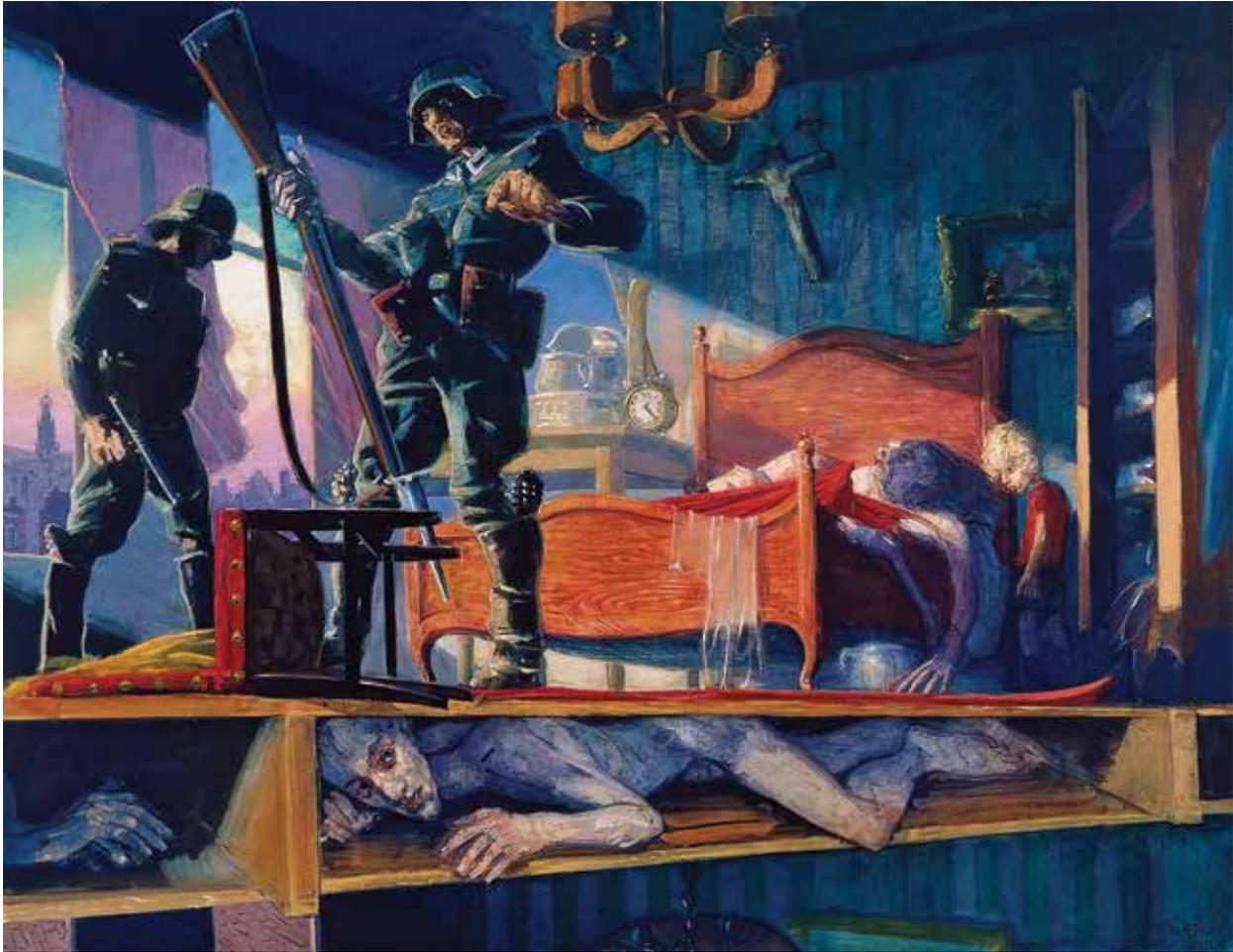
*Grace Before Meat*

1988

Oil on linen

72 x 96 inches

Collection of the artist



**FIGURE 73. HENK PANDER**  
*The Floor*  
 1992  
 Oil on linen  
 81 x 105 inches  
 Collection of the artist

abnormal circumstances. Again, Pander invokes, and comments by means of, Dutch artistic tradition—in this case referring to van Gogh’s painting *The Potato Eaters* (1885; Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam), in which the members of a family are similarly grouped around a table illuminated by an overhead lantern.<sup>99</sup>

The most harrowing of the war paintings is *The Floor* (1992; Figure 73), a scene in which German soldiers invade a household in search of Jews in hiding. Pander remembers a search of this type in a neighbor’s house in Haarlem. *The Floor* depicts an architectural cross-section, revealing the space below the floorboards occupied by the cramped nude figure

of a youth and, in an adjoining compartment, the hands of a second hiding figure. Immediately above, foreshortened upward as seen from our low point of view, are two German soldiers, one about to pierce the bayonet of his rifle through the floor hoping to stab the fugitives that only we know for sure are encased below. As in *The Father*, the room is as disordered and chaotic as the situation: a chair is tipped over, clothes are in disarray; the same little boy with blond hair and a red shirt surveys the room and the soldiers. A woman lying on the disordered bed feigns illness, dramatizing her fictitious ailments in hopes that the soldiers will leave her and her household in peace. Out the windows, the skyline of Haarlem remains intact, but the staid old city has become a stage for madness.

The composition of *The Floor* echoes that of an altarpiece, with a predella-like segment at the



**FIGURE 74. HENK PANDER**  
*Liberation of Haarlem*  
1992  
Oil on linen  
72 x 81 inches  
Collection of the artist

bottom (the nude, prone figure is a living version of Holbein's dead Christ, an association reinforced by the crucifix on the wall above the bed), above this a scene with monumental figures accented by drapery (the billowing curtains), distant city view, and shafts of light traditionally spiritual in nature but here denoting the hard light of day. This altarpiece has been shifted to an oblique angle; from our kneeling position, the composition glides away from the picture plane to reveal the dark void beneath the floor joists, the pit of

darkness underlying the hellish scene.

And then there is the liberation of Haarlem (see Figure 74). Pander shows us that, too, letting us outdoors for the first time in a long while. Allied aircraft thunder low over the city, cracking limbs from trees and rippling the linens hanging on the clothesline. The planes fly low in order to drop food packets for the starving Haarlemers. The Panders are outdoors looking up into the evening sky. Mrs. Pander's bulging figure is seen in shadowy profile; she is pregnant with the next child. Henk and his siblings are barely visible in the shadows at the right foreground. The church is intact, silhouetted against the sky. A siege has come to an end, but for Henk Pander and probably most of his generation in



**FIGURE 75. HENK PANDER**  
*The Crossing*  
1983  
Oil on linen  
70 x 81 inches  
Collection of the artist

Holland, the aftermath has never ended.

This point is made, it seems, in *The Crossing* (1983; Figure 75), an earlier painting commenting on a later time. Here, “four Amsterdammers are trapped between the reverie of a disturbing past and a vacant future,” in the words of Carol Gamblin.<sup>100</sup> On a day cold enough for the women to wear fur coats and the man to wear a suit and hat, four figures cross a barren landscape between two sets of railroad tracks. They pass in profile at such close range that their figures

are cropped just below their knees. With their eyes cast downward, they are isolated from each other and from us. The left set of tracks ends abruptly, as if a section has been torn up, and to the left of this break is a cliff of unstable stones and slabs that Pander states is a bombed building. The forms suggest a giant skull, a merging of the architectural and anthropomorphic that Dali sometimes effected. The “skull” is at once authoritarian and crumbling before our eyes, a modern-day sphinx that endangers rather than protects. The human beings avert their gazes, but their repression and introversion are apparent in their body language and facial expressions, as the feeling of menace and forces not quite seen are conveyed by the stony cranium. These people are contemporary

Europeans, in age and middle-class prosperity much like Pander's Dutch siblings. Not long before he painted *The Crossing*, Pander told a Portland newspaper: "You can walk through Amsterdam and get the sense that although everything is festive and wonderful and beautiful, it could suddenly *turn*, and there would be nowhere to go; that kind of quality is in the air. And of course these sorts of things have already happened several times in this [the twentieth] century."<sup>101</sup>

In his paintings of the occupation of Haarlem during World War II, Pander is the heir of the tradition of history painting as it was redefined by such nineteenth-century artists as Francisco Goya, Theodore Gericault, Eugene Delacroix, and William Turner. These artists in their different ways shifted the subject matter of history painting from the ancient world and Biblical subjects approved by the academy to topics of recent and current history: the execution of Spanish nationals by a firing squad made of up Napoleon's invading troops (Goya); the desperation and death of the survivors of the sinking of the French frigate *Medusa* (Gericault); the death and dying of Greek citizens after the Turkish invasion of the island of Chios (Delacroix); the throwing of slaves overboard to guarantee a ship owner's recovery of costs for cargo lost at sea (Turner).

In the tradition of such artists as these, Pander is the creator of art that is dramatic, emotionally gripping, and unabashedly narrative, with the narrations sometimes involving catastrophe and unspeakable human suffering. He places himself and his work in what he refers to as "the humanistic tradition" of making art that deals with the fundamental concerns and fate of humankind: life and death, good and evil, love and sexuality, war and peace, catastrophe and ennui, technology and its consequences, nature and its indifference. In his commitment to figuration and narration, he is not a modernist painter. Yet he is a painter of modern life—as it is unfolding now and as he remembers and envisions it from his European childhood past. For Pander, "painting your time, the

life you live" is the fundamental and central role for an artist.<sup>102</sup>

## THE ALLURE AND PATHOS OF STILL-LIFE PAINTING

In the mid-1970s, involved with the theater community and creating posters and portraits, Pander turned once again to still-life painting, a genre he had explored as a student in the academy and as a professional artist in Amsterdam. He had painted little if any still-life works in the United States, but in 1975 his friends and early patrons Jane and Ron Cease, who had purchased a figure painting from Pander's infamous show at Portland State in 1969, approached him about painting an arrangement of flowers from their garden. Since the tradition of still-life painting, including flower painting, is a major one in Holland, Pander did not disdain the idea, just as he was quite willing to embrace posters, set design, portraiture, and mural painting—categories of work that some artists might avoid for fear of seeming too eclectic or diffuse. His father had frequently produced flower paintings for the tulip bulb growers in Haarlem. The oil-on-linen still life that Pander painted for the Ceases was the first of numerous flower paintings, many in watercolor and some in oil, that he has created for Portland exhibitions and collectors over the years. Entitled *Flowers with Landscape* (1975; Figure 76), it displays long-stemmed irises, poppies, roses, and other flowers before a landscape that relates to those in *Views of Mount Hood* and such paintings of the early seventies as *Chase*. A broad plane recedes to a low, distant horizon accented by a mountain range. Close up in the foreground are the flowers, reaching to the top of the nearly four-foot canvas, radiant against an atmospheric and lightly clouded sky.

The Ceases' painting helped create a demand for flower paintings by Portland collectors and gallerists. Along with portraits and landscapes, Pander considers them his bread-and-butter works that are a pretty



**FIGURE 76. HENK PANDER**  
*Flowers with Landscape*  
1975  
Oil on linen  
46 x 50 inches  
Collection of Ron and Jane Cease

sure bet when it comes to sales. Many of them use the still life-plus-landscape combination of the Ceases' painting. In the mid-1970s, he created numerous watercolors with titles such as *Black Iris and Moon*, *Pink Rhododendrons with Black Sky*, and *White Rhododendrons with Eclipse* (all 1975). In these, a flower or cluster of flowers is silhouetted against the sky or universe, sometimes supported by stems that thrust up from the bottom edge of the composition, sometimes hovering in midair without support. The concept of still life is expanded to suggest animation and movement, with

the flowers, like astral bodies, in motion according to the rhythms of the universe. These studies reflect Pander's interest in astronomy and the continuity between what he calls inner space and outer space, the connections between the tangible right here and the imagined out there.

At the same time, many of Pander's flower still-life paintings are tabletop studies, related to traditional Dutch flower paintings yet painted with twentieth-century flair. A number of watercolors created in the early 1990s, for instance, are studies of two or three glass vases with profuse bouquets of different types of flowers, set against fabrics of various patterns such as stripes, florals, and Miró-like squiggles, and contrasting textures such as brocades and high-sheen silks (see Figure 77). These have a lightness and



**FIGURE 77. HENK PANDER**  
*Floral Still Life II*  
 1990  
 Watercolor  
 40 x 60 inches  
 Private collection

delicacy of touch in the spirit of paintings by Matisse or Dufy—a French élan. These are paintings intended to please and delight, and many of them have made their way into private collections.

Pander's still-life oeuvre ranges far beyond flower painting to include varying combinations of objects—books, vessels, skulls, bones, shells, feathers, fabrics, old letters, furniture from his family home in Haarlem, and more. In the manner of such Haarlem forebears as Kees Verwey (1900–1995), the setups for his still-life paintings are often enormous. Pander's studio is equipped with a pulley system for raising and lowering a horizontal lattice construction from which he hangs still-life objects—skeletons of animals that Pander has found in the desert, for example. In place in October 2009 was an arrangement of furniture, including a pendulum clock and a mirror-faced coffee

table (which had belonged to his mother), fabrics, a ledger book open to a page with a drawing by Henk, an old-time telephone receiver, and an adding machine.

Stored in a room adjacent to the studio are props that Pander uses for these paintings. Kept elsewhere is a batch of hundreds of letters exchanged by his parents when they were courting; he used them as the subject for a painting, commissioned by an estate lawyer, that is a tabletop still-life with a pile of the



**FIGURE 78.** Still-life arrangement for Henk Pander's *Song of the Wild V* in the loft studio he occupied from 1985 to 2004 on Northwest Upshur Street, Portland, Oregon, ca. 2001.

tattered letters, most in their envelopes. Pander said he had not yet read all the letters but is interested in the sense of history and time passing that they convey simply as entities. Still-life painting inevitably indexes the past, for objects have histories and evoke memories. For Pander, the memories extend through space as well as time; geographical distance reinforces and lends pathos to temporal distance. The letters, painted into a still life in Portland in the twenty-first century, were written in the 1930s by separated lovers who wrote to each other in Friesian. As entities, let alone as messages, they are the tangible links to a long-ago world. Like skulls and old furniture, they remind us of the passage of time, the brevity of life, the world as a place of inexorable change and decay.

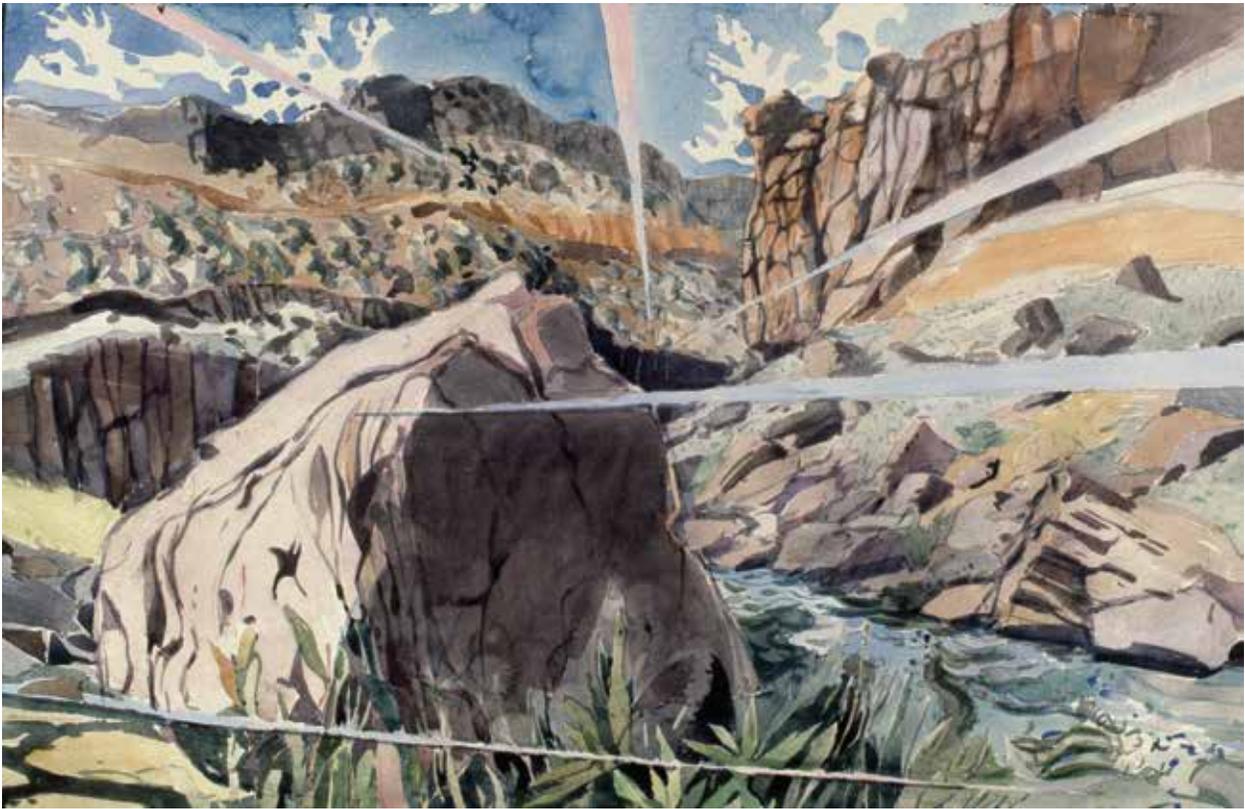
These are the themes of *vanitas*, or emptiness, that Pander inherits from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Netherlandish painting. In its swift passage, earthly life is meaningless, according to *vanitas* tradition. For Pander, who expands the scale of still-life painting to epic scale, meaninglessness is not so much the point as reminding viewers of meanings that optimistic American culture may discount: memories can be mournful and even painful, the world has lurched dangerously in the past century, worn-out times can be forgotten but they affect us still. Still-life painting comes naturally to Pander because it is a vital genre in traditional Dutch painting and because he holds a world view that enables him to realize the expressive potential of the genre in postmodern times. Pander's somber, *vanitas* still-life paintings reflect his existential, postwar perspective and convey a sense of loss that, as he acknowledges, he has never been able to shake off. "I never bought into American optimism."<sup>103</sup>

The range of Pander's still-life subjects is suggested by two twenty-first century works that relate to different but related strands in his still-life oeuvre: *Song of the Wild V* (2001; Figure 79) and *For My Father (For Pappa)* (2004; Figure 80). *Song of the Wild* harkens back to *Crossing the River* (1996; Portland Art Museum) and even further to *Red Tree* (1966; Figure 17). All

involve hanging or suspended animal skeletons—the one in *Red Tree* based on drawings made on a trip to Mexico, those in the later paintings rendered from still-life setups in his studio of bones he collects on his painting trips into central and eastern Oregon. Visiting the Steens Mountain area in 2004, for example, Pander came upon the remains of a horse. "I gathered a skull, a rib cage with pelvis, two front and two hind legs, and one shoulder bone, and loaded all of [this] into the van on top of a small blue tarp."<sup>104</sup> Jacob Pander's 2005 video about this father opens with a scene of Pander loading a different skeleton into his van.

Back in the studio, he uses ropes to rig up these sometimes enormous remnants so that they hang suspended above the still-life table (see Figure 78). In *Song of the Wild V*, the table is replaced by landscape—a foreground rocky ledge with an ocean bay and a mountain range beyond. The skeletons of a horse, deer, bird, and human being (a bony rider of one of the animals) are hung like puppets against the grand panorama of nature. They are made to prance and fly, to live again. A blasted tree-trunk joins them at the left. Trunk, bones, and ropes press close to the surface of the painting, harshly and radiantly lighted, the effect both macabre and festive in the manner of medieval Dance of Death imagery. To reinforce the memento mori symbolism, the painting includes an object from a more traditional still life, a clock, with its symbolism of passing time and approaching death, attached to one of the skeletons. This is a painting that hammers pretty hard. "As far as the *vanitas* skeletal paintings [are concerned]," Pander states, "the driving force was remembering twentieth-century Haarlem painters in addition to bringing these animals alive once more, giving some meaning to the meaningless (if paintings have meaning, that is). They also make a social comment insofar as what is happening in the animal kingdom these days."<sup>105</sup>

In contrast to the majestic coastal view that provides the setting for *Song of the Wild*, the painting *For My Father* (also titled *For Pappa*) is set, as traditional still-life paintings are, in an interior, the



**FIGURE B1. HENK PANDER**  
*Hondo River, New Mexico*  
 1978  
 Watercolor  
 26 x 39 inches  
 Collection of the artist

portion of an interior that involves a close-up view of a tabletop and the objects upon it. In this case, the table was Jaap Pander's work space. A chair with a red cushion sits empty in the lower right corner, ready for the return of the person whose books, prints, drawing board, and T square lie waiting. A Bible is open to a color illustration of the sort Jaap Pander is known for, and one of his drawings lies diagonally on the drawing board. More books, a vase of dried flowers, a crow (alive? a work of taxidermy?) are among the other objects strewn on this table where the creative life has been interrupted, as it was for Jaap Pander when he died at age fifty. *For Pappa* is a memorial to Pander's father as an absorbed, creative being who died before his time.

In the early 1990s, Henk retrieved some of his father's artwork from the attic of the Pander family

home in Haarlem and arranged for an exhibition of his father's Old Testament scenes to be displayed at the Jewish Museum in Portland, this being the first show of his father's work following his death in 1962.<sup>106</sup>

### THE ASTRONOMICAL SUBLIME

"Sometime in 1972, when I was in the middle of drawing a wanton scene, a photograph of the Martian moon Phobos appeared in *Newsweek*. To celebrate the event and in admiration of Phobos' potato-like appearance, I carefully sketched its portrait above my uninhibited characters. After completion I realized that they had become Martians and I was no longer responsible for their behavior."<sup>107</sup> Eros and astronomy blend in a number of Pander's drawings and paintings of the 1970s (the *Earth and Mars* series of a copulating couple; the *Sex Over Holland* watercolors), but astronomy itself, along with its technological infrastructure in the American Southwest, became its own focus of interest for him.



**FIGURE 82. HENK PANDER**  
*Very Large Array*  
1978  
Watercolor  
30 x 53 inches  
Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem,  
Oregon, from the collection of Lillie Lauha.  
Maribeth Collins Art Acquisition Fund

In 1977, Pander was one of the first to receive the Oregon Arts Commission's Individual Artists Fellowship, designed to help artists undertake projects to enrich and enhance their careers. Pander's project was to drive from Portland, through eastern Oregon, and on through Nevada, Utah, and Colorado to New Mexico and then Arizona. This sojourn was one of Pander's first one-person American road trips in search of inspiration, adventure, and solace. In this case, the trip was funded, and he had a particular goal in mind: to visit and make drawings and watercolors of two space-age facilities: the Very Large Array radio telescope near Magdalena, New Mexico, and the Kitt Peak National Observatory in the Quinlan Mountains near Tucson.

"In the spring of 1978 I set out by car for the Southwest, carrying with me a number of large drawing boards, sketchbooks, and cameras. I intended to paint very large watercolors (my paper was 31 by 52 inches) in order to express the scale of the landscape," he wrote in an article for *Sky and Telescope* magazine.<sup>108</sup> Arriving first in New Mexico, he painted watercolors of Georgia O'Keeffe country near Abiquiu (see Figure 81) before heading south to Magdalena and the nearby Very Large Array, at that time an installation of seventeen antennae, each eighty-two feet high, constructed on a vast ancient lake bed surrounded by low mountain ranges. "There was a hard wind blowing, dust, flat clear light, white machines humming with automatic equipment, and one slightly suspicious security guard."<sup>109</sup>

Pander was arriving unannounced, a Dutchman in a dusty Toyota borrowed for the trip. Pander is nothing if not articulate and persuasive, and before long the guard was showing him around the site, explaining the layout. In the course of his visit, he produced four watercolors, a number of drawings,



**FIGURE 83. HENK PANDER**  
*Solar Thermal Vacuum Test of Galileo Spacecraft at  
 Jet Propulsion Laboratory*  
 1990  
 Oil on linen  
 54 x 64 inches  
 National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

and took many photographs. At an elevation of eight thousand feet, “the solar radiation was fierce—[the whiteness of] my paper would be blinding at times. The wind was so strong that I had to keep a tight grip on my palette, brush, drawing board, and hat all at once, while crouched on my knees in the gravel and bent over an oversize drawing board, for hours at time. Summer thunderstorms would blow over me, lightning striking fearfully close.”<sup>110</sup>

Pander is describing a natural and scientific site in terms of the sublime—a setting so ferocious that it

might be on a distant, desolate planet. The telescopes changed position every fifteen minutes, the dynamics of light and wind constantly shifted; in this isolated high territory, the earth’s place in the planetary system was clearly evident. In *Very Large Array* (1978; Figure 82), one of the telescopes dominates the scene, tilting upward to fill half the composition and half the sky of swirling clouds intermixed with splinters and splashes of blue. Pander told Beth Fagan of the *Oregonian* that these structures “were like ‘strange technological flowers’ moving counter to the rotation of the planet while moving from source to source.”<sup>111</sup> His watercolors of flowers held up to the universe, created a few years earlier, do seem to find their mechanical cousins in these images of giant creations turning their faces to ever-shifting stimuli.

Pander has said that his experiences at the Very

Large Array and at the equally eerie site of the Kitt Peak observatory in Arizona, which he visited on the same trip, stimulated his interest in “a larger view” of one’s life in nature and the universe. Back in Portland, he wrote in his essay for *Sky and Telescope*, “I am trying to assimilate this experience and turn it into paintings which convey, above all, my added sense of amazement at the cosmic structure of which we are a part.”<sup>112</sup> In fact, his interest in astronomy and the universe had begun in childhood. As he told Barry Johnson of the *Oregonian*, “It started as a kid, going out on the Dutch landscape, painting skies with my dad. I always looked at the skies, moon, starlight, northern lights. I’ve always been interested in natural history.”<sup>113</sup> Delores Pander noted that “ever since Henk and his dad looked at photos of craters of the moon and made them either concave or convex, depending on the angle [from which] you looked at them, Henk has had an interest in astronomy, and of course the sky itself has played an important role in all his work.”<sup>114</sup> Pander’s interest in science, he asserts, is scientific and cultural but not poetic or “new age.” He describes himself as “a pragmatic materialist”<sup>115</sup> who explores outer space from the perspective of science rather than science fiction, empiricism rather than spiritual inquiry.

The 1978 journey to the land of fantastical terrain and telescopes set the stage for later expeditions to the frontiers of space research. In 1987, Pander made on-site watercolors at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, documenting the construction of the *Galileo* spacecraft, named in honor of the first modern astronomer. Oils painted in the studio include Pander’s depiction of a solar vacuum test (Figure 83), in which the white-suited technicians are at work on two different levels inside the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The stagelike arena, strong contrast of light and dark, and vivid color range reflect Pander’s experience in theater set design and his awareness of the drama of scientific endeavor.

On October 18, 1989, Pander was in Cape Canaveral in Florida to witness the launch of the

space shuttle *Atlantis* carrying the *Galileo* into outer space to study Jupiter and its moons. But at Cape Canaveral, Pander was not allowed close-up access to the launch. “I was kept away from the science by all the nationalism, materialism, ‘pride,’ and ‘us.’”<sup>116</sup> As he wrote to Willem: “This country is very beautiful, but I am developing an aversion to some aspects of it, especially technology, about which I know quite a bit. My work trip to Cape Canaveral as a member of the *Galileo* art team really brought it home—all the technocrats, engineers, tanks, razor wire, machine guns, security films, and giant American flags were difficult to swallow.”<sup>117</sup>

Nevertheless, Pander’s expeditions to the thresholds of scientific exploration resulted in sets of drawings and watercolors that are important documents in their own right and also served as studies or preliminary idea pieces for larger-scale oil paintings executed in his studio. The scientific sites provide the subjects for “beautiful still lifes, figure composition and architecture,” and Pander explores them as cultural indicators as well, “reflective of the current state of the U.S.” and representing “human enterprise” and aspiration in the face of seemingly unbeatable odds.<sup>118</sup> The interplay of American scientific technology, developed in pursuit of pure knowledge but also military superiority, makes for an “incredibly complex and interesting context,” Pander says.<sup>119</sup>

Surrealism, the space age, the marvels of scientific technology, and the detritus of that technology—all are addressed in *Goldstone* (1989; Figure 84), Pander’s oil painting on linen measuring nearly nine feet wide. *Goldstone*, in the Mojave Desert east of Los Angeles, is the site of one of three radio telescopes located around the world that scan the universe for data for the Deep Space Network. The other two telescopes are in Spain and Australia. As the earth rotates, one of the telescopes is always gathering data from interplanetary space probes.

The painting shows the Goldstone telescope from a low angle, rising against a sky of fantastic cloud



**FIGURE 84. HENK PANDER**  
*Goldstone (Deep Space Network, Jet Propulsion Laboratories)*  
 1989  
 Oil on linen  
 81 x 105 inches  
 Collection of the artist

formations and a horizon of hot pink and orange. The bowl of the telescope is rendered in anamorphic perspective, which is to say that viewed from far to one side its three-dimensionality is exaggerated so as to emphasize the mass and physicality of the form. The contrast of light and shadow within the bowl nudges it into the semblance of an egg-like oval open at one end. Anamorphic perspective sets up the conundrum of reading the form as both bowl (a shallow open dish) and egg (and ovoid with a shadowed surface). This complex bit of visual doubling gives the telescope a “higher coefficient of reality,” to use the term Bernard Berenson came up with to describe the exaggeration

of form in Giotto’s paintings. Pander’s interest in anamorphic perspective began in 1975, when he saw an exhibition of anamorphic drawings at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. “I found it fascinating, for the theater and for painting.” His interest is partly polemical, for he sees anamorphic perspective as an exaggerated negation of the modernist emphasis on the flatness of the picture plane in painting. “I’ve always been interested in space. I’m not interested in modernist flatness. Painting is illusionary. I make it a point to explore space—theater design helped reinforce this interest.”<sup>120</sup>

The foreground of *Goldstone* presents a jumble of abandoned wires, canisters, and not quite identifiable leftovers—apparently relics of the construction of the telescope, a gleaming monument to science and technology. The foreground miscellany, arranged on a mound of dirt, is rendered with the extreme clarity of Magic Realism. At the center of this still life of debris,

a painting lies on the ground—the watercolor that Pander painted on-site as the study for the oil painting. The foreground still-life thus contains items that refer to the construction of the telescope in the past and to the artist’s work in the present and future. The painting within the painting documents Pander’s process, used in creating many of his works, of kneeling on the ground to paint a watercolor based on direct observation in the open air and then using the watercolor as a study for an oil painting on linen.

### HENK PANDER, WATERCOLORIST

Painting outdoors with his father, Henk Pander was from an early age proficient in watercolor, a medium popular among Dutch artists because of its capacity to render the evanescent quality of sunlight glinting off water, dunes, and the picturesque architecture of farms and villages. Watercolors also sell readily, and as a working, nonteaching artist, making art that produces income is essential. Pander is well aware of this, yet this relatively fragile medium also plays a profound and fundamental role in his entire creative process.

Pander’s father was skilled in the medium. Pander’s friend Willem den Ouden is a master watercolorist. Henk at one point was the youngest member of the Dutch watercolor group founded by Kees Verwey of Haarlem, whose bravura watercolors of flowers are akin to Pander’s. English art is also famous for its watercolorists, including William Turner and Thomas Girtin, while in the United States Winslow Homer in the nineteenth century and John Marin in the twentieth are famous practitioners of the medium.

Watercolor is de-emphasized in art-historical discourse, however, and Portland artists are not known for it. But because of his background, Pander embraces watercolor as a venerable medium that serves him well in the marketplace and also allows him the freedom to paint much further afield than the limits



FIGURE 85. Henk Pander’s painting table on site in the Columbia River Gorge.



FIGURE 86. Henk Pander painting a watercolor at the Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River.



FIGURE 87. Henk Pander’s painting table with watercolor board and paper on site on Steens Mountain, Oregon.

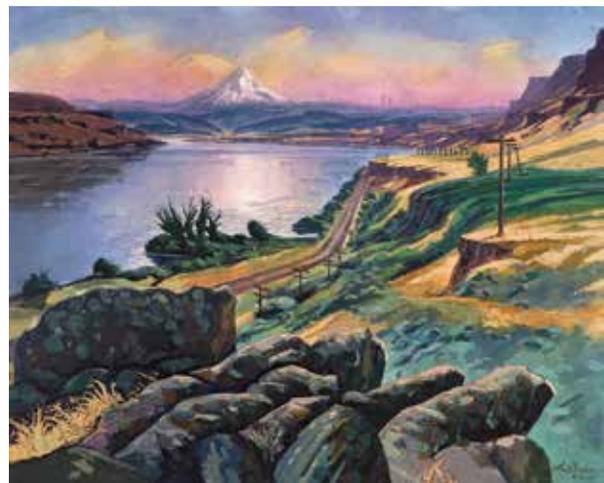
and complexities of oil will allow. It is watercolor (and drawing) that goes along on the road trips to remote locales with their fresh views and exotic artifacts. Oil painting stays home. Watercolor is the “right there”



**FIGURE 88. HENK PANDER**  
*Columbia River at Avery Boat Ramp*  
 1996  
 Watercolor  
 40 x 60 inches  
 Kaiser Permanente, Portland, Oregon

medium for documenting the abandoned airplanes, buried Buicks, and humming telescopes. It's Pander's *plein air* medium, the one he takes with him out into the world (see Figures 85–87).

When painting watercolors, the whiteness of the paper is a given, the white translating as light in the completed work. A deftly executed watercolor is luminous and aglow. Lightness of touch, sureness of gesture, are essentials in this practice. The medium itself—of the moment, of right now—discourages reworking and revision. The accomplished watercolorist works quickly, confidently, knows when to stop. Pander is a master of all this. His watercolors are gorgeous and grandly spacious in scale, typically measuring forty by sixty inches. According to the Dutch curator Ger Luijten, they differ significantly from the watercolors Pander painted in Holland.



**FIGURE 89. HENK PANDER**  
*Columbia River at Avery Boat Ramp (early version)*  
 1996  
 Oil on linen  
 81 x 105 inches  
 Collection of the artist

“What he has done in America . . . is abandon the dominating, moody, not to say saturated palette of his Dutch watercolours.” Thanks to the “completely different light in America,” they have brightened and lightened as Pander “found it easier and easier to get



**FIGURE 90. HENK PANDER**  
*Cars in Shaniko*  
2001  
Watercolor  
40 x 60 inches  
Collection of Daniel Smith

down on paper the clear blue sky, the orange glow of late afternoon and the blonde backlighting that does not exist in Holland.”<sup>121</sup>

Pander’s watercolors span the entire range of his oeuvre in all media. Studies for theater sets, figures, portraits, still life, landscapes, cityscapes, high-tech astronomy installations—all are subjects that Pander explores in watercolor. Many are studies for oil paintings or murals and thus are preliminary and spontaneous variants of his larger, more studied works. An oil painting or mural by Pander is often at the center of a constellation of supporting watercolors and drawings that make up the final work’s lineage and pedigree. The preparatory pictures stand on their own, often with great authority, as works that can go to market and sell, but they originate in the process of

envisioning a different, larger, and more major work.

Pander understands watercolor, drawing, and oil painting as reflecting three categories of his creative process—three stages that are of equal aesthetic validity but that represent different types of looking and thinking. For him, painting in watercolor is a mode of “witnessing.” He arrives at a site, sets up his painting tables, gets out his board with the pre-stretched paper attached, and paints the scene then and there. Drawings, on the other hand (not the quick sketchbook drawings but the finished, large-format ink drawings that are generally made in the studio, often during the winter months) are “more like mindscapes.” They take the visual facts gathered in the witnessing process of watercolor painting and transform those facts by means of exaggeration, reduction, or amplification. Created in black and white, drawings are by definition generically abstract. As for the oil paintings, they “tend to bring the two together” in a combination of the record of witnessing and the effects of the more cerebral drawings.<sup>122</sup>

While it is often the case that watercolors come first in the sequence, drawings second, and the oil painting third, that is not always so. The mindscape drawings are sometimes the final variation of a set of works.

At times, the witnessing watercolor and the more mediated oil painting are, apart from scale, closely similar to one another but with differing expressive nuances. The watercolor *Columbia River at Avery Boat Ramp* (1996; Figure 88) and the nearly nine-foot-wide oil painting of the same title (Figure 89), for instance, present virtually identical views. But although the oil version is directly based on the watercolor, the mood becomes more surreal as the foreground rocks bulge into tumescence, the colors darken to create shadowland, and the sky surrounding the mountain turns pink and purple. The watercolor captures the fresh first impression while the oil, worked on slowly in the studio, reflects the artist's imaginative contemplation upon what he had seen in nature.

Pander argues with himself about his motives for painting watercolors. Is he doing so as part of a time-honored tradition in which he excels and that brings him joy, or is he painting for the market? He is doing both, and therein lies a tension that he frequently mentions in his letters to Willem, lamenting that galleries often want to deal only with his watercolors because those are what will sell. The more ambitious history paintings and allegories painted in oil tend to make patrons pause. Affiliated with the Fountain Gallery of Art in the early 1980s, "I became known as a flower painter [of watercolors]—not my idea of a good time."<sup>123</sup> Economics and motives aside, Pander's watercolors are visually ravishing and a significant category in his artistic process and production. "They are spontaneous, elegant, often quite accessible," Pander points out. Furthermore, "I extended the scale to a very large format and did away with preliminary drawing—all to increase the challenge, to make it harder for myself."<sup>124</sup> In addition to its other benefits, watercolor provides Pander with an arena for testing and surpassing limitations.

## EMBRACING THE ABANDONED

Pander's 1978 road trip to the observatories in New Mexico and Arizona was the prototype for painting trips that he still takes once or twice a year, spending ten days or two weeks in the Columbia Gorge, the John Day area, Frenchglen in eastern Oregon, or the Alvord Desert, as well as destinations further south to Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and the greater Southwest. In 1990 he and a friend drove up to Alaska, and on another occasion Henk and his son Jacob took a trip to Arizona. But generally he travels alone on these junkets, using the time to think, write a journal, and make drawings and watercolors. His drive-about are roving retreats that provide him the time to explore and meditate upon the American West, which even after forty-five years in the States strikes Pander as mysterious, unbelievably isolated, implicitly threatening, emotionally unsettling, creatively stimulating. "The more I spend time in these deserts," he wrote in his journal during a drive through eastern Oregon in 2006, "the more I seem to find—the deeper I get into . . . metaphors."<sup>125</sup>

His vehicles for these forays have changed over time, but since the mid-1990s Pander drives a van full of art supplies and equipment and pulls a trailer to live in. These outings yield mother lodes of watercolors, ranging from the pure landscapes to scenes in which the sublime of technology competes with the sublime of nature—a contrast Pander carries to the extreme in his renderings of sites such as the Very Large Array or Goldstone. This intersection of nature by new technology, the theme of the "machine in the garden," to use Leo Marx's phrase,<sup>126</sup> is frequently seen in American art: George Inness's *Lackawanna Valley* (1855; National Gallery, Washington), depicting a train sweeping through the countryside, is a classic example; Charles Sheeler's gleaming rendering of the Ford Motor Company's plants, ironically titled *American Landscape* (1930; Museum of Modern Art, New York), is another. In this tradition, which Pander



**FIGURE 91. HENK PANDER**  
*Northern Lights*  
1998  
Oil on linen  
67 x 81 inches  
Collection of the artist

joins with his paintings of observatories and launch sites, the machine is new, clean, and pristine.

But Pander the European, the self-described classical artist, the student of art history, is equally interested in the ruin, including the derelict machine, the technological or civilizational remnant. In *Cars in Shaniko* (2001; Figure 90), for example, Pander chooses not to explore the picturesque old Oregon town that Charles Heaney had made an icon in mid-century Oregon painting. Pander relegates the buildings of Shaniko to the background in order to present us with

three abandoned vehicles—a red pickup truck and a couple of 1940s sedans. These are rusted, dented, and forlorn artifacts—outdated machines in the metaphoric garden that is now unkempt and dystopian. The abandoned autos relate to the countless clusters of old machinery, old refrigerators, old stoves and washing machines that nestle in the ravines, gullies, back lots, and front yards of houses throughout the interior of the American West. Pander brings these marginal relics to the foreground. They fascinate him on the level of American Studies; as remnants of the material culture of a recent era definitely in the past, they are archaeological indicators.

Perhaps the artist's most affecting studies of derelict machinery embedded in the landscape are his depictions of the carcasses and parts of airplanes, such as those in the aircraft graveyard in Kingman, Arizona.



**FIGURE 92. HENK PANDER**  
*Automatic Pilot*  
 1999  
 Oil on linen  
 80 x 142 inches  
 Collection of the artist

Like the ruins of Roman aqueducts and bridges in paintings by Claude Lorraine and Nicolas Poussin, the abandoned planes are fascinating on many levels: as forms, as technological and civilizational remnants, as colossal memento mori, as scarifying reminders of time passing, of the new becoming old, of the pathos of human endeavor and human limits. In 1996, Pander and his son Jacob visited Kingman, where Henk made drawings and watercolors of the derelict planes, Jacob took photographs, and they both roamed the desert to collect bits and pieces of metal and glass from the planes that Pander incorporated in still-life paintings.

One of the big oil paintings resulting from this visit is *Northern Lights* (1998; Figure 91), in which the carcasses of two Trans World Airlines jets overlap one another to form a horizontal band at the center of the composition. The tail wing of one of them cantilevers from the edge of a hillock as if

still airborne, silhouetted against the aurora borealis that washes the sky. Pander's skills in lettering are evident, with the letters TWA and the words TRANS WORLD precisely duplicating the company's official font. Pander is his father's son in that he could have had a career in advertising illustration, but in this case that legacy and skill set are used ironically, for *these* airplanes are junkers, no longer the pride of American and international airways.

While at Kingman, Jacob climbed inside some of the planes (quite against regulations) to take photographs. Pander made a photo collage of some of these as a study for *Automatic Pilot* (1999; Figure 92), in which the view is from inside the cockpit of a derelict plane. Wires dangle from the ceiling, wall coverings are torn away, and the floor tilts to the right, for the craft has listed to one side in its desert grave. But the cockpit is flooded with light of the sort that flows into planes at high altitude, and through the windshield we see that, like the TWA jetliner rendered in the distance, we are airborne; the painting "makes the plane fly once more," says Pander, as if in a modern adaptation of the *Flying Dutchman*, the ghost ship of folklore that can never go home, doomed to



**FIGURE 93. HENK PANDER**

*The Bombardier*

2003

Oil on linen

59 x 81 inches

Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon.

Museum Purchase: Funds provided by Mr. Albert Kennedy, the Laura Russo Gallery, Greg Goodman Charitable Fund of the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, and the Mark and Christi Goodman Charitable Fund of the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation

sail the oceans forever.<sup>127</sup> Like the animal skeletons set to dancing, the airplane carcass returns to the skies.

In addition to Kingman, Pander has twice visited the Davis Monthan Air Force Base near Tucson, where he made watercolors of B-52s, designed to carry nuclear weapons on Cold War deterrent missions but in the 1990s dismantled to comply with arms treaties ending the Cold War. Even though they were built after World War II, Pander associates the B-52s with the warplanes that flew over Holland in the 1940s. He finds strong parallels between wartime technology in Europe and the remnants of more modern technology in the airplane graveyards of the American West. Memory and modern life are on a continuum for Pander. The now, the recent, and the more distant past form the matrix for his most creative work, and the airplane junkyards and abandoned airports, such as the one near Wendover, Utah, the location of the hangar that housed the *Enola Gay* before its mission to the Pacific, are sites that haunt and energize the immigrant artist with his long memory and essentially tragic vision.

Views from inside the cabins of planes aloft recur in Pander's work, as in *The Bombardier* (2003; Figure 93) and *The Pilot* (2008; Figure 105). In *The Bombardier*, the bomb master sits alone in the cockpit as the plane careens toward a city already in flames. He turns to face the viewer, nonchalant in his pose but wide-eyed and solemn in this spectacular and dreadful moment. The painting is about Europe and World War II, but it brings to mind particularly American imagery, from the cartoonist Milton Caniff's drawings for the long-running *Terry and the Pirates* to Roy Lichtenstein's Pop Art takeoffs on comic-strip fighter pilots. Pander's intentions are more serious, morose, and existential, but dramatic exaggeration, at times to the point of caricature, is one of his strategies. Paintings such as *Automatic Pilot*, *The Bombardier*, and later *The Pilot*, attract and entertain in the manner of American comics and action movies.

## THE NEW CARISSA

Although Henk Pander instinctively heads inland for his painting junkets, he grew up in a maritime country of pressing seas, a constantly recalibrated dike system, an economy buoyed by the shipping industries, and an art history of sea and ship paintings. As a Hollander, he is particularly attuned to the shifting line between sea and land and to the transformation of ships from vulnerable specks on the open seas to looming masses as they enter ports and harbors. He has made paintings of picturesque boats anchored in Amsterdam harbor and of oversized Navy ships gliding between the upraised ramps of the Burnside Bridge that spans Portland's Willamette River. But his most dramatic ship paintings, among the most powerful of his works on any subject, are the set of seven that he painted in 1999 and 2000 of the wreck of the *New Carissa* on the Oregon coast.

This was a subject that in every way suited Pander's talents, background, documentary instincts, and sense of drama and pathos. As a child immediately after World War II, he stood on the beach and made drawings of a freighter stranded in the North Sea. In 1990, on a trip to Homer, Alaska, he came upon a moored World War II ship inhabited by "crazy people" and surrounded by garbage and junked cars. He made drawings and watercolors for an oil painting (1990, revised 2004; Figure 94) that shows the boat as a shadowy ghost ship resting in shallow water a few yards off shore. In the foreground, a derelict automobile noses toward the water, as a semi-clad youth leans against its fender. This painting is about "the end of the road, with nowhere to go," says Pander. "The traveler is stopped."<sup>128</sup> The boat as metaphor for the voyage of life in Romantic painting has become the image of the dead end of hope and life.

At the other end of the decade of the nineties, on February 4, 1999, the freighter *New Carissa*, carrying a load of wood chips and its tanks full of fuel, ran aground in a storm at Coos Bay, Oregon. As Pander told a reporter for a coastal newspaper, "It's an ancient



**FIGURE 94. HENK PANDER**  
*Homer, Alaska*  
1990, revised 2004  
Oil on linen  
81 x 105 inches  
Collection of the artist

subject, the beaching of ships. There's an element of metaphor to it, as well. Being adrift, landing in some place, somewhere, being stranded. There's sort of layers to it. Being an alien, in a sense, is being beached in a foreign country." He likened the wreck of the *New Carissa* to the wrecks of the airliners and bombers he had seen and painted in the desert: these, too, were "huge vehicles of transportation, beached in the desert."<sup>129</sup>

On February 10, Pander began a journal that would recount his experiences in documenting the fate of the *New Carissa*. "Tomorrow I will try to go

to the burning ship, the *New Carissa*, stranded near Coos Bay."<sup>130</sup> He made an initial foray to the site, four hours from Portland, but could get no closer to the wreck than Radar Road in a hillside neighborhood, where many other spectators were gathered. It was from there, on his first day on the scene, that he watched the ship burst into flame. The fire was ignited in an effort to burn off the fuel before it leaked into the ocean. "Suddenly, shockingly, the sky lit up with a huge fireball. It had gotten so dark that the Nikon took a full second for each shot. The light and fire faded and a huge, low black cloud stretched north along the distant beach."

Back in Portland, he contacted the Oregon Arts Commission in Salem to inquire about getting a pass into restricted areas closer to the site. It was arranged that he would present himself at the National Guard Armory in Coos Bay, where he would receive the



**FIGURE 95. HENK PANDER**  
*Beach*  
1999  
Oil on linen  
80 x 142 inches  
Oregon Historical Society, Portland

necessary clearance. For the next week or so, he was treated essentially as a member of the press corps, attending press conferences and riding with the reporters to close proximity to the burned and listing hulk of the *New Carissa*.

“And there it was, a few hundred yards to my right, lying on the beach, all enveloped in a hazy light, misty gray. The haze made it difficult to read its shape. Its bow, with its bulbous snout, was facing me. There was a huge rusty scrape diagonal across the bow. The red paint under the water line had pinks, rusty violets, blues, the light delicately bouncing off its face. Its superstructure looked complex and implacable; bundles of cables strung diagonally across the silvery sky. Enormous waves crashed against the seaward side of its rusty flank, and where the stern had been, an immense sheet of steel was bent and ripped. I started drawing immediately while the light was good.” Returning to his motel that evening, “I realized how much I like doing this kind of stuff—

painting outdoors, being on highly visual adventures.”

On site, making drawings in pencil and Conté crayon in his sketchbooks and taking photographs, he was beginning to envision a painting or paintings but had not formulated a definite plan. His presence at the press conferences and on the beach, where he knelt in the sand to draw, attracted the attention of the media, and he found himself telling reporters that yes, he would be making a series of paintings. “So now I am committed to make a painting, I guess.” He also observed: “It is interesting how often I end up in scenes involving the military or police—disturbing.” But overall, it was an exhilarating adventure for Pander, a particularly Oregon one, and also oddly Dutch; for once, Pander’s two worlds seemed to coalesce. There were Dutch speakers besides Pander on the scene, crewmen of the Dutch salvage company. “The sea, the sand, the machines, the dunes, the Dutch—and me drawing. There was something very natural about it.”

By September 2000, Pander had created a set of seven oil paintings, ranging from two works of epic proportions at eighty by one hundred and forty-two inches to one of thirty-eight by fifty-five inches, the smallest. These were based on the sketches and photographs he had made at the site, and, as often



**FIGURE 96. HENK PANDER**

*The Wreck of the New Carissa*

1999

Oil on linen

80 x 142 inches

Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon.

Museum purchase: Funds provided by the European and American Art Council, The Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation, Marianne Buchwalter, and the Wells Fargo Fund for Northwest Art



**FIGURE 97. HENK PANDER**

*The Burning of the New Carissa*

2000

Oil on linen

63 x 81 inches

Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, Oregon.

Maribeth Collins Art Acquisition Fund, 2010.043

is the case with Pander, the major works were surrounded by a galaxy of preparatory and preliminary studies. Today, all of the *New Carissa* sketchbooks are in the collection of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The *New Carissa* project took Pander a year and a half to complete. In September 2000, all seven paintings were exhibited at the Davidson Galleries in Seattle, with which Pander has been affiliated since 1994. On September 24, the *Oregonian* published the seven in color, along with a commentary by Barry Johnson and excerpts from Pander's journal.

The two largest *New Carissa* paintings are in major Portland collections. *Beach* (1999; Figure 95) is owned by the Oregon Historical Society. From a vantage point on the beach, the view is of the ship's hulk angling into the sea, mists softening and darkening the mass as it recedes in space. It reads somewhat like an amphibious tank, a vehicle that might grind ashore with us in its path. Like the ruined airplanes in the desert, this hull is somehow animate, about to be alive. Nearest to us are the ripped and rusty jaws, the section where, as Pander wrote in his

journal, “the stern had been” and “an immense sheet of steel was bent and ripped.” This portion is in full, reddish light, lurid and cinematic.

In *The Wreck of the New Carissa* (1999; Figure 96), in the collection of the Portland Art Museum, the view is of the side of the ship buffeted by heavy waves at high tide. If the hulk in the other painting threatens to come ashore, this one seems sea-bound—the ghostly *Flying Dutchman* once again. The ocean churns as if to give the ship momentum, the sky opens up as if to reveal endless destinations. As in Turner’s paintings of fishing boats battling the crosscurrents of the Thames as it flows into the Atlantic or trying to dock at Calais Harbor, this version of the *New Carissa* seems determined to survive, but of course it is past surviving. The hulk in the foreground is part of the bow section of the ship. The piece in the water is the stern, partly sunken, and what is left above the water are parts of the deck cranes and cables. The *New Carissa* is neither one of Turner’s fishing boats fighting the odds nor the *Flying Dutchman* sailing on forever.

Another of the paintings shows the burning of the *New Carissa* (Figure 97), the scene that Pander had witnessed from the suburban hillside. It’s a scene similar in composition and cataclysmic impact to his views of the erupting Mount Saint Helens as seen from his house on Cable Street in Portland (see Figure 60). From a hillside neighborhood with houses just below, the view is of stands of trees and the bay red and yellow with reflections of an inferno rising against the dark blue sky of dusk. This painting, like those of Mount Saint Helens erupting, gets at a basic theme in Pander’s art: the sudden intersection of an event of catastrophic proportions with ordinary life, routine and uneventful until just now. The mountain erupts, the ship bursts into flame, a murderer invades a high-rise office, the Nazis park their tanks in the town square. With the *New Carissa* paintings, Pander’s twentieth century concluded with a major accomplishment that reverberated with the powerful

themes of his earlier work and anticipated major accomplishments yet to come.

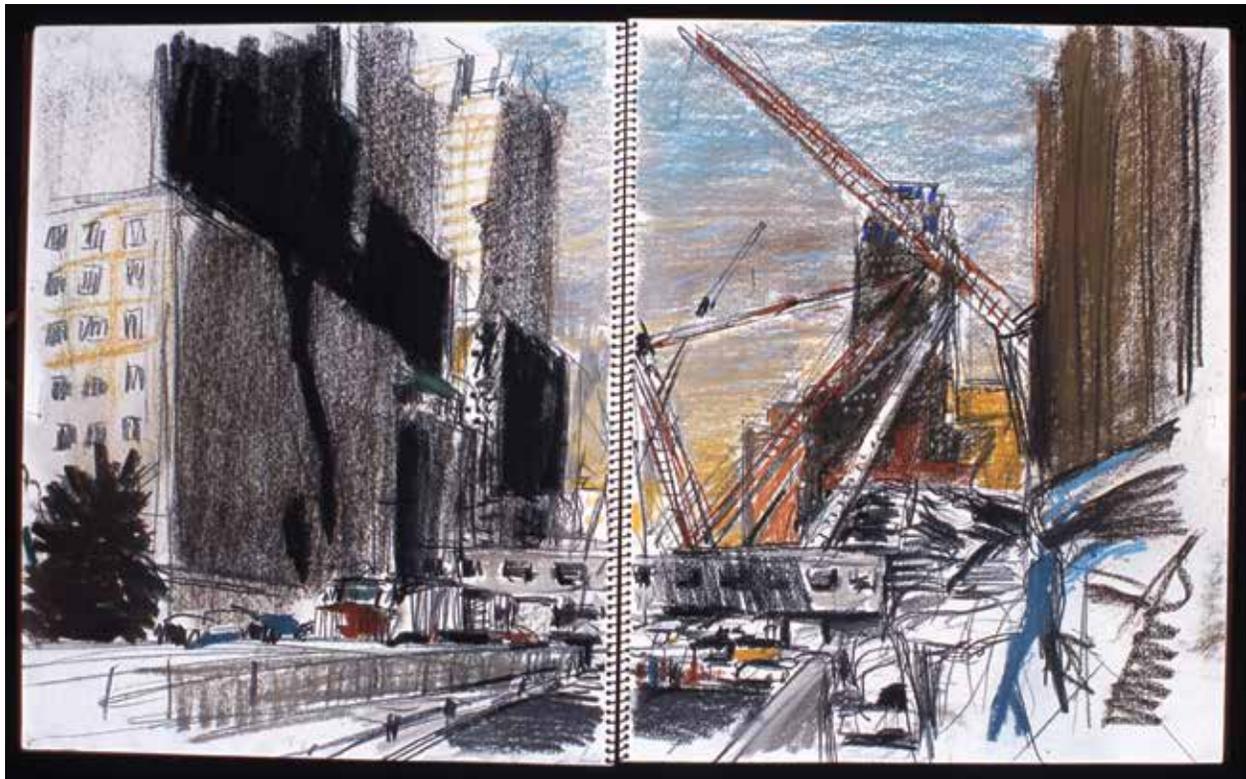
## THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The new century brought significant changes in Henk Pander’s personal life. He and Delores Rooney married in 2004, having been partners for twenty-six years. They had considered their union to be a common law marriage, but Pander was being advised to become a naturalized American citizen. Friends in the political world warned that living in the United States in the post-9/11 era on the strength of a green card was risky business, especially since he had made controversial political posters during his early years in the States. Being married to an American would allow him to retain Dutch citizenship even as a naturalized American citizen. And so it was that Henk and Delores married on November 4, 2004, and he attained American citizenship on November 17 (see Figure 98). He says that, emotionally, “I will never be an American. My family is in Holland. I think in Dutch. I didn’t want to give up my Dutch citizenship.” At the same time, he says that he is very glad to be able to vote in the United States.<sup>131</sup>

The new century also saw Henk Pander’s art brought to full maturity as he explored the range of themes that had absorbed him for decades: the



**FIGURE 98.** Henk and Delores Pander at the Federal Building, Portland, Oregon, on the occasion of Henk’s attaining U.S. citizenship, November 17, 2004.



**FIGURE 99. HENK PANDER**  
*World Trade Center Ruins*  
 2001  
 Sketchbook drawing  
 30 x 36 inches (two pages)  
 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

collision of technology with nature; the capacity of human beings to terrorize and destroy but also to nurture and comfort and try to save lives; the pleasures and terrors of remembered realities; portraiture; memento mori—the passage of time and the death of loved ones. One year after the completion of the *New Carissa* project, an event of far graver significance confronted Pander with a subject that chillingly revises our understanding of his 1980s paintings of warplanes over Haarlem and Portland. But instead of depicting the planes crashing into the towers of the World Trade Center on the beautiful morning of September 11, 2001, Pander painted the aftermath—the ruins and rubble of Ground Zero.

On November 7, 2001, not quite two months after the attacks on the World Trade Center, Pander was aboard a Frontier Airlines flight to LaGuardia.

“I don’t know what I’m doing flying to New York to draw cityscapes around the World Trade Center site—drawing out in the streets,” he wrote in his journal. “Yet, I feel drawn to the subject. It seems to belong to other themes I have painted over the years—my childhood memories of World War II, the fields around Verdun, the airplane paintings, the *New Carissa* project. There is a concept I learned long ago in Amsterdam: the only thing one can really do is paint a picture of your time. I think I might have taken this to mean making documentary paintings of historical events as they more or less affect my life, or to which I am a witness. I find the painting of ruins, of transient moment, *vanitas* still lifes, compelling. We’ll see what happens.”<sup>132</sup>

Pander made the trip at his own expense, staying with the son of an old friend from Holland. Although he planned to try to make gallery contacts during his stay in New York, his first priority was to document as thoroughly as possible the site of the destroyed towers. He had no special pass to the site or contacts who could help arrange access, so he spent much of his time on the surrounding streets, glimpsing the

destruction through barricades as throngs of tourists and other visitors surged around him. On his first day he “began making photographs, shifting between the telephoto and the wide-angle, and walked around the whole perimeter trying to get close. As the afternoon progressed and the evening light started to illuminate the distant ruins, I revisited sights I had seen earlier and re-photographed the scenes. Police asked me if I was press. I told them I was an artist from Oregon and they let me in the site, briefly.”

The next day, he paid a visit to Pearl Paint, the gigantic art-supply store at 308 Canal Street, to purchase sketchbooks, colored chalk, and other drawing supplies. He bought a backpack to carry all these materials and returned to the site, where “I got out my sketchbook and started drawing, ignoring the crowds, children, people taking my picture, filming me, and slowly made it to several sites I remembered from yesterday, ones I had already photographed. I made four drawings in the crowds of various sites, carefully drawing composition, proportions, spaces, while ignoring a lot of detail.” In the course of this and many later visits, he filled two thirty-by-eighteen-inch sketchbooks, with a number of the drawings spanning two pages to become panoramas thirty-six inches wide (see Figures 99 and 100). When he looked over his drawings at the end of the two weeks, “it was clear that there had been a definite progression from a certain timidity to a full, sure-handedness as I became more familiar with the subject and got used to working under extreme conditions.”

Pander was also able to view the site from nearby buildings. He visited a friend at the Tribeca Pointe apartment building, where he made drawings in a sunroom that opened onto the roof of the forty-third floor. From the roof, he had a view of the World Trade Center site “deep below me,” but it was so windy that he had to do much of his work in the sunroom, making many trips to the roof to re-see the site. On another occasion, a stranger approached him on the street. “His speech was slurred and hard to understand. He said, ‘You want to see the best view of ground zero, the

best anywhere?’ I looked at him, puzzled. ‘I have seen you draw, and you can see nothing. Put that away,’ he said, pointing to my sketchbook, ‘follow me.’ He stopped at the entrance of a large building nearby, an apartment or hotel.” They entered the building, strode past workmen in the lobby, and took the elevator to the tenth floor, climbed stairs to the twentieth, and rode another elevator to the twenty-third. “I walked out onto a broad, graveled roof layered with plywood panels, electrical cables and various equipment.

“As I looked north over the parapet I stood directly above ground zero and could see all the damaged buildings and the remnants of the towers. Part of the towers had fallen on top of other partly collapsed buildings. The huge cranes were nearby now, the smoke and the City of New York rising up behind it all.” His guide, who turned out to be deaf, wished him well and departed, “leaving me alone on the 23rd floor roof where I had no business being. I worked fast on the drawing—a wild sketch. I quickly put in my last roll of film and with the telephoto shot a large panorama of the scene. The pit was in the shade, all gray, and the skyline was lit by the late sunlight.”

It was this view that formed the basis for *Shadows* (2002–2003; Figure 101), the largest and most powerful of several oil paintings that Pander, working from the drawings and photographs, created in his studio in Portland. The composition is based on a composite of the photographs that he shot from the twenty-third floor roof where he had so unexpectedly been taken. The view, out and down into the pit, is framed by two buildings in the left and right foreground, creating, as Pander points out, a stage-like frame for the scene. The building on the left, its blank windows reflecting the light in mysterious, pictographic patterns, is partly in shadow and in turn may be the form that is casting shadow on the framing building to the right. Like many others around Ground Zero, this structure is draped in fabric or sheeting, creating the effect of its being muted and muffled, protected and in mourning.

Between the two framing buildings is Ground Zero itself, with two huge red cranes reaching up



**FIGURE 100. HENK PANDER**  
*World Trade Center Ruins II*  
 2001  
 Sketchbook drawing  
 30 x 36 inches (two pages)  
 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

from the shadows into the sunlight of a November late afternoon. In the shadowy pit, tattered remnants of Minoru Yamasaki’s Venetian-inspired arcade evoke the ruins of ancient monuments, while elsewhere on the site are piles of rubble and still-smouldering hot spots. Pander wrote that “the ruins are still burning and today I saw huge clouds of smoke and steam. I had the feeling of looking down into the gates of hell.” Above and beyond the destruction in *Shadows*, Pander renders the Manhattan skyline rising undamaged into the sunlight, standing upright against a sky in which the clouds evoke a lunar landscape with “craters that suggest bomb craters in Afghanistan to give the work a mythic quality, I hope.”<sup>133</sup> The painting is metaphorically a telescope from a site of utter destruction to a robust city in the sun to the unknown worlds beyond earth—and back to this scarred planet.

*Shadows* is a huge, gleaming, pictorial document. New York City absorbed an unfathomable attack, it survives, the sun shines, shadows are cast, light shifts

from one surface to another and another, the world moves along. While he was in New York, Pander twice visited an exhibition of Brueghel’s drawings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Pander might have recalled Brueghel’s painting of the fall of Icarus, in which the ill-fated flyer falls from the sky as the plowman plows, the ship bobs in the bay, the sun (responsible for Icarus’s fate) shines its neutral light, and life moves on because there is no reason not to, and no choice.

*Shadows*, based in part on photographs, provides, despite its vast scale yet because of its point of view on the island of Manhattan in a time of radical transition, an intertext with Alfred Stieglitz’s photographs of the 1930s. From his rooms in the Shelton Hotel, Stieglitz photographed the demolition and construction of New York buildings as the city he remembered was being razed to make way for new realities. Stieglitz’s photographs and Pander’s painting make the point that what exists is always and inexorably exchanged for what will be. The direct photographic and immediately contemporary parallel to Pander’s documentation, however, is the work of the photographer Joel Meyerowitz, who unlike Pander gained unlimited access to Ground Zero. He created the body of photographs that comprise the book *Aftermath: World Trade Center Archive*, published by Phaidon Press in



**FIGURE 101. HENK PANDER**

*Shadows*

2002–2003

Oil on linen

81 x 142 inches

Collection of Mark Parker



FIGURE 102. HENK PANDER  
*CPR*  
2004  
Watercolor  
26 x 40 inches  
Portland Fire and Rescue, Portland, Oregon

2006.<sup>134</sup> Some of Meyerowitz's views are strikingly similar to Pander's *Shadows*, stark but beautiful images of steaming rubble and skeletal ruins as foreground to the buildings that survived to glimmer in the sunlight.

Henk Pander's paintings that document the wreck of the *New Carissa* and the destruction of the World Trade Center are images of thing and place. While the sketches, drawings, and watercolors related to these projects often depict Coast Guard and other personnel on the beach at Coos Bay or throngs of onlookers and the policemen at Ground Zero, the oil paintings largely present the stranded ship as a kind of massive outdoor still life, and the 9/11 site as a portion of a damaged cityscape. Most of these works focus on visual evidence in the aftermath of catastrophe but

not on human presence. In complete contrast are two documentary projects that Pander undertook in 2004 and 2005—the first a record of the work of Portland Fire and Rescue, the second a record of the work of Oregon public safety personnel in various agencies. Both projects brought the artist into direct engagement with human drama at its most intense.

From February 2004 through March 2005, Pander worked intermittently on documenting the work of Portland Fire and Rescue, a commission for the public art project "Intersections" sponsored by the Regional Arts and Culture Council. Pander spent many hours, sometimes staying all night, in several different Portland fire stations, meeting and interacting with a shifting series of fire personnel—all first responders to a variety of situations that in addition to fires include 911 calls for medical assistance in private homes, nursing facilities, city parks, and city streets. Pander rode along on these calls, armed with his sketchbook and cameras, adrenalin surging. His mission was to document in as complete detail as possible the on-duty lives of these public employees, so he also spent time with the crews in their living



FIGURE 103. HENK PANDER

*Rescue*

2005

Oil on linen

59 x 81 inches

Collection of the artist

quarters as they recreated, exercised, joked around, participated in training exercises, took the fire engine to the grocery store to buy provisions to cook their meals in the station kitchens, or, on a couple of occasions, drove the engine past Pander's house on Southeast Harrison Street to check the progress of the new studio he was building in the back yard of his and Delores's house. After a lifetime of renting studio space, he and Delores had decided it was time to build to own.

As he did with the *New Carissa* and World Trade Center projects, Pander kept a journal on his experiences with Portland Fire and Rescue. The entries

describe Pander's fascination with—and awareness of invading—the lives of individuals at moments of crisis as he accompanied the first responders into crowded apartments or lonely nursing homes. Pander is a terse and vivid writer, producing entries that often reveal more than they literally state. On February 6, he wrote:

The interior of the house was dark and unkempt with piles of furniture, garbage, rubble, and clothes. A haggard man sat on a couch and, in a back room, sprawled on the floor, was a nude man with a towel covering his crotch. He was motionless. I thought he was dead. I started drawing while medics and firemen massaged, an IV bag hanging from the light fixture. There was frantic activity; they were looking for a pulse. In quick succession I made four drawings of the man on the floor. He looked in good shape, in

his mid-forties. There was a young boy, the man's son, frantically playing a video game standing in the middle of a pile of broken furniture. I shot film of the man being carried out and put into the ambulance. In the excitement I ran out of film and rewound. I opened up the camera only to discover that the film had not rewound completely. I think I ruined it. Stupid, since it was exactly what I was looking for for a painting.

On another occasion, he wrote: "It's a continuous dilemma. How to be discreet, respect people's privacy, and document at the same time."

The sense of engagement yet detachment, of being a participant yet a neutral observer, runs through Pander's narrative. The pathos he recognizes in particular situations is offset by his quest for the dramatic composition, the evocative setting, the revealing detail. He tells of his efforts to translate factual images, whether drawn or photographed, into affecting works of art. In the case of some of his drawings, he notes that "because of their narrative, busy, illustrative compositions, they lack the emotional, dramatic power I experienced. Therefore, I started making images which are more focused and concentrated, with deep, rich, dark colors, a little light centered on the essential human drama. That works a lot better but makes the images quite grim."

Examples of this approach are seen in the watercolor entitled *CPR* (2004; Figure 102) and the oil-painting variant of the same subject entitled *Rescue* (2005; Figure 103), in which furniture, woodwork, and carpet provide the dark brown frame and stage for a nude male figure, lying on the floor, attended by medics. The victim's out-thrust arm, the green oxygen tank in the watercolor, and the scattered papers create a fan across the foregrounds, the light colors of the papers echoing the light colors of the backgrounds. The light and dark colors jostling throughout the compositions, varied poses of the figures, and the staccato placement of individual shapes create an effect

of agitation tempered by the professional calmness of the attendants. Rembrandt's work comes to mind, as does Eric Fischel's. And the theme of ordinary life intercepted by the extraordinary, including in this case sudden death, arises again. Recalling his experience with Portland Fire and Rescue, Pander said that it "seemed like entering the heart of American society";<sup>135</sup> not long after, in 2008, he undertook a similar project with the crews at Fire Station 108 in Santa Clarita, California, under the auspices of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

In the summer of 2005, as his work with Portland Fire and Rescue came to an end, Pander was preparing to embark on an Oregon Arts Commission Percent for Art project for the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. The department, whose mission is to train and set standards for personnel working in the areas of police, fire, corrections, parole, and probation, as well as telecommunications, was constructing a new Public Safety Academy in Salem. Pander's commission was to create artwork for the facility. The circumstances were similar to those with the fire department: for two months he would spend time observing and documenting the work of the public safety agencies throughout the state. He would continue to visit fire departments, but he would also interview police officers and visit jails.

The situation was an ironic and daunting one for Pander, and he entered into it with misgivings: "I have a fear of cops because of my memories of World War II in Haarlem. Dutch cops were in cahoots with the Nazis."<sup>136</sup> Seeing a man in police uniform still generates feelings of "terror." He took Delores along when he went to meet the police and discuss the project. He felt that he needed a witness. He recalls that the officers received his fearfulness with sympathy and some amusement. They offered to show him firsthand what their work entails by taking him on ride-alongs in police cars and allowing him to attend SWAT training sessions. Pander's spirit of adventure, already at full throttle because of his

experiences with the *New Carissa*, Ground Zero, and the fire department, overcame his paranoia, and on July 25, 2005, he began two months of “field research in small towns throughout the State of Oregon.”

His fieldwork took him to various fire and police stations in the Portland metropolitan area, to Tillamook and Oceanside on the coast, Dallas in the Willamette Valley, Redmond in central Oregon, and La Grande in eastern Oregon. He traveled in his van and trailer, camping in RV parks during his visits to the various stations and facilities. He went on calls with Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue, witnessed a car break-in training session in Dallas, and accompanied the police on calls in Hillsboro, Tillamook, Redmond, and their outlying areas. He visited a jail in La Grande. As with his other extensive outings, Pander kept a journal that describes his experiences and impressions, and his feelings of ambivalence about the everyday practices of the culture of law and order. “There is something starkly depressing about the subject,” he observed at one point. “A lot I have seen in day-to-day police work seems to have much to do with social conditions—poverty, poor education, poor parenting, self-medication, and small traffic offenses. It also strikes me that the rampant gun possession, defended and promoted by American law, adds to a culture of violence, which seems self-defeating.”<sup>137</sup>

Though he found some of the police officers to be cynical and quick to assume guilt rather than innocence, he acknowledged that his negative impressions and fear of the police were lessening. “My feelings are shifting from seeing the police as uniforms, entities representing abstract law, robots in machines, to seeing some of them as actually quite caring and kind people struggling with often very dangerous work and dealing with sometimes violent and mostly sociopathic individuals.” He made note of the undeniable allure he felt for the high-adrenalin world of fires, traffic accidents, and medical emergencies: “After two years of this stuff, I am also becoming used to it, the thrill, the adventure. Things will seem boring after this.”

He took many photographs and made a number of drawings in his sketchbook, all the while trying to formulate the form that his art project would take. What theme or subject, he wondered, could possibly reflect the many aspects of public safety work—in a way that would do justice to the subject but not compromise Pander’s own feelings of lingering skepticism? He considered a multi-paneled work, with scenes of various subjects. Another possibility was “to paint a group portrait of all the officers and sheriffs I have worked with—a kind of *Nightwatch*.” He executed a watercolor of a phalanx of police officers with guns drawn, accompanied by the little girl carrying a chicken from Rembrandt’s famous painting. But an accident scene was vivid in his mind.

There were ambulances, people crying, police writing reports, and then a chaplain appeared, a nice, white-haired man. There were distant mountains in the desert, rubble along the roadway . . . and a western low light. Here was a rescue operation involving various agencies in the American landscape as I had envisioned it some time ago. Both victims were injured, but not too badly. A man in red coveralls swept the street. Lying in the gravel in the talus, I made one of my most spontaneous drawings.

This sketch became the basis of watercolor studies and a large oil painting that hang in the Public Safety Academy. Entitled *The Road* (2006; Figure 104), the oil painting measures nearly twelve feet wide. It hangs permanently in the vast cafeteria where all personnel in training see it many times during their residency. Against a majestic eastern Oregon landscape of basalt cliffs, talus slopes littered with boulders, and a sky filled with pink, purple, and white clouds seen through a gap in the cliffs, fireman and police officers have converged at the scene of a spectacular traffic accident. The cab of an enormous truck looms over the scene, angled precariously on two

sets of wheels. Chains attached to its undercarriage are pulled taut from outside the picture to the right, as an unseen winch pulls the truck into position. Its mass dwarfs all else in the scene, the grill and power horns transforming it into a mechanical monster. A police cruiser, a fire truck with ladders, and an ambulance block the highway. The double yellow center lines warn that this stretch of road is a no-passing zone. The other vehicle in the crash, a small automobile crumpled beyond recognition, is partially obscured by the five rescue workers leaning over the victim lying on the roadway in the left foreground. These are firemen, wearing red suspenders over their blue shirts; two are standing and leaning over the prone figure, three are kneeling with their backs and the soles of their boots facing the viewer. The white-haired chaplain approaches from the left, a macho police officer astride his motorcycle is on the center lines, and the attendant in red coveralls is sweeping up glass and bits of red plastic. A female officer tends to something in the trunk of the cruiser, her figure and car made miniature by the looming truck cab.

The work is a sublime illustration, but it is also a deftly designed abstract composition. The diagonally leaning cab with its mighty exhaust pipe pointing to the horizon and the supplementary diagonals created by the rescue vehicles, the yellow center lines, the handle and brush of the push broom, and the firemen's red suspenders interplay with various verticals and horizontals to create a mesh of criss-crossing lines that are echoed in the rock formations of the landscape. The current catastrophe is echoed in the forms of upheavals in nature that occurred long ago. Light floods the scene, bringing the reds, blues, yellows, and gleaming whites into full vibrancy. The painting becomes almost heraldic with its primary colors and diagrammatic composition.

*The Road*, together with a number of watercolors that resulted from the project, was reproduced in the *Sunday Oregonian* on June 24, 2007, along with excerpts from Pander's journal. Of *The Road*, he wrote: "This painting is a metaphor. A metaphor

for how we live. There was a real situation like this, where some log truck overturned. To me, a log truck represents corporate America. So I had this little Toyota conflicting with the log truck, creating this extreme condition. The Commission requested that the painting be set in Oregon. So I went out in my trailer to find some road to place this painting. I put all of these different fragments of different police experiences into this one painting."

While the "corporate America" metaphor seems simplistic (Pander acknowledges that it "was just a flip remark"<sup>138</sup>), the painting is remarkably powerful, especially in light of the public relations aspect of Pander's assignment. It renders in vivid terms the goal of the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training: to create humane and efficient teams of fire personnel and police officers who work in cooperation for the public good. The image of the firemen kneeling on the road is touching in its rendering of their gentleness and attentiveness. The heroic police officer astride his motorcycle reflects the strength and physique of fine officers and Pander's feelings of paranoia when faced with such blatant authority figures. The natural setting speaks of the artist's countless trips through Oregon's outback. It brings eastern Oregon to Salem and makes the point that, in the Academy, personnel from all over the state are being trained to assure the safety of citizens back home.

*The Road* is one of many examples in Pander's oeuvre that presents the world in active voice: the firemen tend to the victim, the chaplain prepares to minister, the policeman revs his motorcycle, the man in the red overalls sweeps the roadway. In other works, medics work feverishly to revive victims of drug overdose, a father sweeps his young son to the floor to protect him from the low-flying plane that may crash into their home, the governor extends his hand in greeting out on the Oregon coast. In each case, so far as the painting is concerned, the time is now. But Pander also envisions the aftermath. The slopes of



**FIGURE 104. HENK PANDER**

*The Road*

2006

Oil on linen

80 x 142 inches

Oregon Department of Safety Standards and Training Public Safety Academy, Salem

Montfaucon lie silent with their memories, Ground Zero smoulders. In a significant exhibition at the Laura Russo Gallery in Portland in the late summer of 2008, these two strands of Pander's representation, paintings of the active now and paintings of silent places scarred by what took place in the past, were both on view. One strand reinforced the other and reflected a truth about a great many of Pander's works—that they relate to each other as scenes in an ongoing narrative.

The active side of things was represented in the Russo Gallery exhibition by *The Pilot* (2008; Figure 105), a variation of *The Bombardier* (Figure 93) but in this case placing the viewer in a perilous sky-high position outside the cockpit of an airplane. A helmeted, goggled pilot is seen through the plane's metal framework, and far below the honeycomb of a bombarded city lies in flames. Is the pilot the perpetrator of this destruction? Is he flying reconnaissance after the fact? The painting does not reveal itself in this regard, but the image revisits Pander's haunting references to World War II, the ruination of Europe, and the fate of individuals in the service, for better or worse, of powers greater than they.

In contrast to the split-second imagery of *The Pilot*, with the airplane pin-wheeling in the sky, other paintings in Pander's 2008 exhibition present claustrophobic, earthbound rooms that have remained unchanged for sixty-five years except for the paint peeling from untended walls and ceilings and debris piling up on the floors. These paintings depict spaces in which only a very slow-motion camera could detect the slight individual movements associated with erosion and decay. Dead stillness obtains down here; the roar of an unmuffled airplane engine engulfs the pilot as he hurtles over the city. The decaying rooms that Pander depicts are the shower stalls, hallways, and other chambers of abandoned concentration camps. As is the case for *Shadows*, his rendering of the remains of the World Trade Center, Pander's

paintings of the architectural interiors of the camps convey profound meaning by showing nothing but the places where horrible events once transpired.

In *History and Topography* (2007; Figure 106), which Pander painted in response to his visit to the Ravensbrück concentration camp for women in northern Germany, the crumbling ceiling and littered floor compress the twelve-foot-wide composition, squeezing us into depth to the right, past a slippery ceramic tile wall stained with rust. The awful wall ends to allow a splinter of light to mark the floor in the far corner of the room. The topography of this room is such that we may not reach that light. The fallen tiles make the floor a tricky terrain, the unstable ceiling is not to be trusted. We are trapped here, as those before us were. For these formal and descriptive reasons, *History and Topography* and other paintings in the exhibition, such as *Ort* and *German Corridor*, are troubling and grim. "The concentration camp pictures are cold as ice," observed Daniel Duford in his review of the exhibition. "The interiors are rendered with an exacting and distant eye. The pictures chill to the bone."<sup>139</sup>

Even as Henk Pander dealt with the tragedies of others in the past and present in his paintings, he faced personal tragedy at home as the first decade of the twenty-first century neared its end. Delores Pander, his partner for thirty-two years and his wife for nearly six of those years, died on June 24, 2010,

**FIGURE 105 (TOP). HENK PANDER**

*The Pilot*

2008

Oil on linen

54 x 64 inches

Collection of the artist

**FIGURE 106 (BOTTOM). HENK PANDER**

*History and Topography*

2007

Oil on linen

80 x 142 inches

Collection of the artist

after a long illness with cancer. Her death devastates him. “Most of my work deals with sorrow and loss already, yet she made my life tolerable. Now I don’t know anymore.”<sup>140</sup> As Delores said in a conversation in December 2009, “Henk always sees through the eyes of an immigrant. He thinks as a European. To this day, he feels homesick. I help temper that. I think I help a little bit psychologically.” Pander agreed: “I get paranoid, take a negative attitude, whatever. . . . Delores has been just great in helping me with all sorts of things.” An editorial assistant in recent decades, Delores also helped Pander in practical ways, keeping his résumé up to date and editing his journals and grant proposals. “Henk is an excellent writer, but I do make it better,” she said. “We work well together.”<sup>141</sup>

Over the years, Pander made numerous drawings and paintings of Delores and in the last months of her life painted several large portraits of her, including one with her granddaughter Maryalice, whom Delores and Henk had raised from early childhood. Perhaps the most eloquent of his late portraits of Delores is one completed in 2009 (Figure 107). It shows her sitting alertly and even regally in a chair, holding a book by Ursula Le Guin. Other books are stacked on the table to the right. Books are included because of Delores’s many years of work assisting the writers Le Guin and Jean Auel. Near the stack of books is a ceramic vase made by Maryalice when she took children’s classes at the Pacific Northwest College of Art. To the left is a vignette of the front of the Panders’ house, which Delores owned before she knew Henk.

The lushly colored fabrics (clothing, carpet, curtain), the rich still-life array, the spatial shift from interior tableau to exterior house facade, and above all the psychologically engaged and preoccupied sitter—too engaged to be understood as merely sitting—evoke the grand tradition of Dutch portraiture. In Pander’s portraits, the subjects more often than not are participants, active rather than passive, engaged in activity or thought, in the midst of life. In this way, they are, for instance, like the businessmen Rembrandt portrayed in *Cloth Syndics* (1661; Rijksmuseum,

Amsterdam), engaged in a meeting, interrupted by an outsider, registering civility but annoyance, in the moment, alive, now. As a character study, the portrait of Delores also brings to mind nineteenth-century American portraiture by such an artist as Thomas Eakins (one thinks of *Miss Van Buren*, ca. 1886–1890, in the Phillips Collection, Washington, D. C.), but Pander expresses far greater warmth and compassion. Martha Ullman West in her tribute to Delores Pander states that “her favorite color was the deep, dark red that saturates the painting, and the lighter red shoes she’s wearing are emblematic of her love of pretty clothes.”<sup>142</sup> Though the portrait of Delores is in the Thanatos tradition, it invokes the vital forces of Eros, as well.

#### CONCLUSION: HENK PANDER AND CONTEMPORARY ART

In migrating to American shores from Holland, Pander inadvertently followed the model of his artistic Dutch forebears Willem de Kooning and Piet Mondrian. Though these artists reside firmly in the firmament of modernism, which Pander questions and often claims to reject, there are parallels to consider. Like Pander, de Kooning arrived in New York when he was in his twenties (in 1926) and scrambled to make a living by doing commercial artwork. Later, with WPA funding, he painted murals, only after some years finding it possible to work full-time as an independent artist. de Kooning is canonized as an American Abstract Expressionist, but he was a maverick in the movement because of his insistence that pure paintwork for its own sake was not necessarily the last word in painting. When he introduced his Women series in his show at the Stable Gallery in 1950, the pure-painting acolytes of Clement Greenberg were aghast. As de Kooning famously remarked in a BBC interview in 1963, “at one time, it was very daring to make a figure red or blue—I think now that it is just as daring to make it flesh-colored.”<sup>143</sup> By insisting that figuration remain



**FIGURE 107. HENK PANDER**  
*Portrait of Delores*  
2009  
Oil on linen  
54 x 64 inches  
Collection of the artist

a viable option in mid-century American modernism, de Kooning provided a liberating example for young George Johanson of Portland, Oregon, who attended

the Stable Gallery exhibition and saw his own instincts to paint the human figure confirmed.

As for parallels with Pander, certainly figuration is central to his enterprise, even though, beginning in the mid-1970s, he based his version of it on observation and nature rather than automatist strategies and

gestural painting. Of de Kooning, the art historian Jed Perl notes: “While de Kooning held true to an old Netherlandish idea that art ought to be democratic, anti-idealistic, and progressive, he found an American anarchism buried inside the Dutch empiricism and developed ideas—and paintings—that in their unsettling combination of violence and elegance have come to be regarded by many people as a veritable definition of what is American in American art.”<sup>144</sup>

Pander, too, developed an anarchic streak, whether or not it is based on Dutch empiricism, once he set foot on American shores. And his work often refers to violence—the historic violence of World War II as well as contemporary violence, both accidental (as it occurs in car collisions, for example)

and intentional. He renders these violent subjects with stylistic elegance that evokes the work of earlier Dutch masters. Like Rembrandt's elegant style and like de Kooning's painterly elegance, Pander's paintwork can itself be "violent" in its garish color, extremes of chiaroscuro, and heavy modeling. The idea of violence in combination with elegance that Perl finds in de Kooning's painting has a parallel, in somewhat different terms, in Pander's art.

Furthermore, the idea that "art ought to be democratic, anti-idealistic, and progressive" also sheds light on Pander's work. Eschewing abstraction, he paints boldly realistic paintings "accessible to all," not only in style but in subject matter: the military-industrial gothic, the gleam and ruination of late-model automobiles shortly after a high-impact collision—such subjects are riveting to democratic American audiences, trained to be fascinated by them by American movies. There is a cinematic aspect to the art of Henk Pander, and this too is particularly American.

As for Mondrian, who fled the blitz in London in 1940, when Henk Pander was about three years old and had no means of escape from the German hostilities in Holland, his arrival in New York came late in life, just four years before his death there in 1944. By the 1940s, Mondrian's artistic Dutchness had been pretty thoroughly universalized into the ardently nonrepresentational elements of his Neoplasticism: verticals and horizontals intersecting at right angles to form rectangles that are left white or filled in with the primary colors of red, yellow, and blue. The goal of this art was to leave behind the particulars of a dreadful, murderous century; the ordered paradigms in Mondrian's paintings have their antecedents in the genre paintings of Vermeer and de Hooch, in which window frames, doorways, and walls form an orderly structure for human habitation and meditation—the Dutch serenity that Pander upends in his war-memory paintings of Haarlem interiors. In New York, Mondrian took his spare style of universal

order and energized it with the thrum of the American metropolis, embracing the fresh energy he found in the New World in such late paintings as *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942–1943; Museum of Modern Art, New York). Pander, too, saturates his work with the pulse beat of American reality.

In purporting to reject modernism, Pander sometimes overstates his case, for, as he readily admits in his calmer moments, his work is inflected with modernist strategies, including those he distantly shares with de Kooning and Mondrian. The more obvious relationships are with Automatist surrealism as manifested in his drawings of the early 1970s and the extremes of German Expressionism in its early *Neue Sachlichkeit* forms as well as its much later variations in the work of such an artist as Anselm Kiefer—or, in a different vein, the "New Leipzig" paintings of Neo Rauch and David Schnell.<sup>145</sup> Pander's frequent lament that in the United States and Holland modernism has trumped the world of art and discarded artists like himself is narrowly focused. Modernism is itself a historic chapter, replaced by shifting versions of postmodernism in which absolutes (such as Greenberg's assertion that "pure painting" without reference to subject matter is the only truly viable painting) are rejected in favor of pluralism and variety. The very "impurity" of Pander's art makes it relevant and significant in an age of cultural diversity and rejection of hierarchies.

Contemporary art provides additional parallels, if not a context, for the work of Henk Pander. Anselm Kiefer and Eric Fischl come to mind, as do Rackstraw Downes and Antonio Lopez Garcia. Like Pander, Downes and Lopez Garcia were born in the 1930s outside the United States, Downes in England, Garcia in Spain. Both are deemed realists and are praised and chastised for this, depending on the context. Both paint city views and landscapes, Garcia also engaging at times with nudes and explicit sexuality: *Atocha (Esparto)* (1964; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) depicts a couple copulating on the pavement of a city square.

Like Pander, Downes emigrated to the United States in the early 1960s and creates oil paintings that “are notable for their meticulous detail accumulated during months of plein-air sessions, depictions of industry and the environment, and elongated compositions with complex perspective.”<sup>146</sup> Peter Schjeldahl notes that Downes “likes jam-ups of culture and nature, where practical human uses overlap with indifferent geology and shaggy flora.”<sup>147</sup> Clearly, these artists are in the same broad realm as Pander—all three are Europeans who grew up during World War II, evolved international lives, and create art that merges academic tradition with subjects of modern life.

In the Pacific Northwest, meanwhile, is Pander as totally idiosyncratic as he purports to be? Well, yes and no. One does think of Robert Colescott, whose teaching at Portland State overlapped Pander’s arrival in Portland by a year, his tenure there helping the school become the one venue in town that elected to take on Pander’s stiff stuff in the exhibitions of 1967 and 1969, and where Pander taught in 1985. Colescott went on to paint figures, sex and race (black guys, blonde gals), and politics. At least one Portland veteran artist links Colescott and Pander as the two pariahs of the local art scene. But they could also be seen as the two who took the issues head on. Then there is Jack McLarty, the resident socialist of Portland art, who never flinched from critiquing the stupidly powerful or the hellishness of conformity. Harry Widman, one of the first in Portland to write seriously of Pander’s art, in the 1990s turned his abstract image inventions into terrorizing monsters or terrorized victims, falling from an apocalyptic sky. These artists are not taking refuge in the supposed thin blank air of modernism. Neither is Michael Brophy, just for instance. Henk Pander is not entirely alone in the Pacific Northwest in his belief that art should address the issues and concerns of modern times, modern life.

Earlier modernism, of course, never did quell an interest in modern life, and the figuration to illustrate it, and in fact explored variations of realism for much

of its history. Even as the New York School of the late 1940s and early 1950s embraced the extremes of Abstract Expressionism, de Kooning began to figure forth his women and Larry Rivers the image of a Buick or the last Civil War veteran. Pop Art, with which Pander has occasional affinities, emerged in the late 1950s to declare that figuration was far from dead, and Photo Realist painting, with which Pander also has affinities, followed shortly thereafter. And while it is true that Conceptual Art purported to do away with form and all things academic, it often engaged implicitly with place, politics, and paradox—themes beloved by Pander.

The fact is that art provides various ways to skin a cat, make a point, engage or evade, entertain or chastise, attack the system or go along with it. Pander, for his part, has arrived at a mode of artmaking that operates on many levels and in various contexts, from museum and gallery to boardroom to living room and on into the boudoir. It can hold its own in fire stations, in police academies, astronomy research centers, the beaux-arts stairwell of the Memorial Union at Oregon State University, even the marble halls of the State Capitol.

And yet, outside of the Pacific Northwest, the only major museum that owns Pander’s work is the famous Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the city of Pander’s coming of age as an artist. By landing in New York only to board that train to Portland in 1965, Pander set his foot on a pathway in American art that until recently would be called provincial. Now we take pleasure in noting that the marginal can be repositioned to the center, so that if Portland is our cultural center the world moves out from there. But no matter what the perception, Pander’s paintings and drawings are in the Portland Art Museum, not the Metropolitan; at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, not the Whitney Museum of American Art; at the museums of the University of Oregon and Willamette University, not Harvard and Yale. Pander’s work is in Pacific Northwest museum collections and in Dutch

ones—the Rijksmuseum and also the Henriette Polak Museum in Zutphen. Thanks to Pander, Portland and Holland are culturally linked in an arc that does not touch down in New York.

It is the Dutch curator Ger Luijten, as head of the Rijksprentskabinet, who is systematically building the Rijksmuseum's collection of works on paper by Henk Pander. He has overseen the acquisition of a large collection of works on paper including watercolors, drawings, etchings, posters, and sketchbooks—works that span the period 1959–2007. Luijten remains in touch with Pander in order to review and select more pieces over time. Pander describes Luijten as the quintessential Dutch curator. One of the reasons he is interested in Henk Pander is that “I'm the only artist out of that group at the Rijksacademie van Beeldende Kunsten [the group studying there in the postwar years] who made the leap to the new world. At the same time, I never let go of my Dutch antecedents. This makes me unique” to a curator like Luijten. For Luijten, Pander is not precisely an American artist or a Dutch one but instead a hybrid, a unique type.

Pander himself has made various comments to this effect over the years. Although he travels to Holland for extended periods every year or eighteen months and says “I measure myself against the Dutch art world,” living and working in the United States for so long has changed his art and made it “un-Dutch.” In Amsterdam, his work is viewed as highly accomplished but “too American.” On the other hand, a Dutch woman passing a gallery in Seattle where Henk had a show a few years ago, declared: “That's a Dutch artist.” Thus, says Pander, “there is no context for me here, and there is no context for me in Holland.”<sup>148</sup>

Though Pander is more aware of his isolation from than his embeddedness in the web of modern and contemporary art, in fact his work intersects with much art production of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as well as with the art of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. His work is richly

intertextual, to use a theoretical term currently favored by art historians. In simplified terms, it means that every image has built into it references to other images; every work of art, whether Pacific Northwest art or other art, whether modern art or academic, enters an implicit dialogue with all other works. Artistic intention is not the issue here, nor is artistic influence. Henk Pander may or may not know about Antonio Lopez Garcia (in fact, he owns a book about this artist, but he was unaware of the work of Rackstraw Downes). Intertextual critical strategy sets aside intention and influence as secondary matters. What is important is that no matter who is or isn't aware of it, intertextual relationships occur the moment an artwork is created.

Thus, Henk Pander's work, any major artist's work for that matter, is world art. Pander's is especially so because of his international perspective, his memory that reaches so far back into the twentieth century, his art-historical awareness extending back to the seventeenth and earlier centuries, his concentration on the links and gulfs, the parallels and discrepancies, between the cultures of the Old World and the New. Within Pander's tremendous range, the true measure of his talent is seen in his monumental oil paintings that deal with human experience in the past and in the present in Europe and America. It is some of these works—the war-memory paintings are the most vivid example—that are the closest to Pander's heart and soul and at the same time the hardest to situate in collections, whether American or Dutch, institutional or private. For Pander, this is a matter of genuine grief, for he considers his work of this sort to be his most important accomplishment in the humanist tradition that he works urgently to maintain and strengthen.

Clearly, there are various ways to describe the life and work of Henk Pander, the Dutchman who settled in Portland as a “reluctant immigrant,” never quite coming to terms with it, never quite fitting in, always feeling shut out, always lamenting if not complaining. “What am I doing here?” he asks. “But what would I

do going back to Holland? [Discussing which country to live in] would be a pointless argument. I have to slug it out here, until the lights go out.”<sup>149</sup> In being a man with two countries, Pander has in some ways become a man without a country. On the one hand, “I feel the need for the old culture, museums, people with whom I feel close. I know many people here

. . . but there are very few people with whom I can exchange thoughts.”<sup>150</sup> On the other, the American continent and culture, so richly chaotic, gorgeous, and brutal, intoxicates and energizes him even as it angers and alarms him. He is a reluctant immigrant but an addicted one.



## NOTES

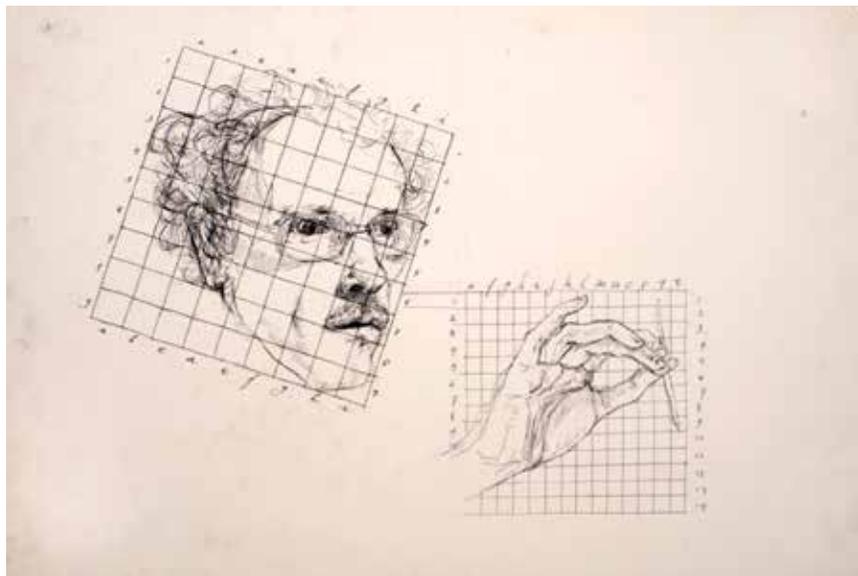
1. Henk Pander, Journal, May 2005–June 2006. Typescript, artist's papers.
2. Henk Pander in conversation with the author, 9 Oct. 2009. Hereafter all such conversations are referred to as "Conversation" with the specific date.
3. Henk Pander's siblings, in chronological order of birth, are: Gisela, called Gesa (studied at the Textile Academy, Amsterdam; textile artist); Arnold (studied at the Rijksacademie, Amsterdam; drawings, public art, conceptual art, tapestries); Catherina, called Toos (a retired nurse who is a painter in Friesland); Jan (studied at the Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam; watercolors, oils, antique ship reconstruction); Adele (studied at the Social Academy, Amsterdam; spent most of her career in Bolivia doing developmental work); Hilde (studied cultural anthropology; operates hotel for artists and theater workshops in Maurik, The Netherlands); Gaila (studied philosophy, a specialist in Nietzsche; also a sculptor living in The Hague); Peter (studied political science; co-owns Amsterdam antique store with his brother Alexander); Alexander (co-owns antique store with his brother Peter).
4. Conversation 4 Aug. 2010.
5. Conversation 4 Aug. 2010.
6. Henk Pander, e-mail to the author, 14 July 2010. In addition to Jan Wiegers, he lists as his teachers at the Academy Charles Roelofz, G. V. A. Roling, Otto B. De Kat, Piet Esser, J. M. Luttge, and Jhr. de Savorin Lohman. With regard to his own modernist work of the period, Pander mentions, in addition to Wiegers's influence, cross-references with fellow students such as Jerry Keizer, Peter Vos, and Roger Challoux.
7. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
8. Ger Luijten, *Henk Pander: American Landscapes*. Zutphen, The Netherlands: Museum Henriette Polak, 2007: 5.
9. Conversation 28 July 2010.
10. Jacob Pander, director. *Painted Life: An Immigrant Artist's Journey*. Video. Portland, Ore.: Radius Pictures, 2005.
11. Conversation 28 July 2010.
12. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
13. Somewhat earlier, two other contemporary art galleries had operated in Portland: Eda and Louis Bunce's Kharouba Gallery (1949–1955) and Ron and Norma Heyser Peterson's New Gallery of Contemporary Art (1958–1962).
14. Henk Pander, e-mail to the author, 14 July 2010.
15. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
16. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
17. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
18. Conversation 28 July 2010.
19. *Rodeo* represented Pander's brief tenure on the faculty of the Museum Art School in the exhibition *PNCA at 100*, held at the Portland Art Museum in 2009. In addition to the drawing show in 1966, the Portland Art Museum presented an exhibition of Pander's drawings in 1982. Curated by associate curator Rachel Rosenfield Lafo, the 1982 exhibition stands as the most recent one-person show of Pander's work at the museum.
20. Harry Widman, "Henk Pander Paintings Called 'Blunt, Forceful'." *Sunday Oregonian* [Portland] 9 Apr. 1967: 101.
21. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
22. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
23. Conversation 5 June 2009.
24. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
25. Pander, letter to Willem den Ouden, 24 Apr. 1970. Typescript, artist's papers.
26. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009. Pander has worked in studios at nine different locations in Portland: NW Irving Street and Twenty-fifth Avenue (1965); NW First Avenue and Burnside Street (1968–1969); SE Ninth Avenue (1969–1970); NE Russell Street (1970–1971); SW Cable Street (1971–1977 and 1983–1985); SW Washington Street (1977–1983); Portland State University as associate professor of art (1985); Northwest Upshur Street (1985–2004); and SE Harrison Street (2004 to date).

27. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
28. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 24 Apr. 1970.
29. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
30. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 1 June 1970.
31. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 17 June 1970.
32. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 19 May 1970.
33. Jack Eyerly, "Surreal Vision, Virtuoso Work Due in Pander's Mount Angel Show." *Sunday Oregonian* [Portland] 22 Nov. 1970: 27 (Arts section).
34. Daniel Yost, "Henk Pander: Why He Paints." *Sunday Oregonian Northwest Magazine* [Portland] 5 Dec. 1971: 10. Mount Angel College closed in 1973.
35. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 4 Jan. 1971.
36. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 4 Jan. 1971.
37. Jack Eyerly to Nancy Lindburg, 5 Jan. 1976. Roger Hull papers.
38. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
39. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 5 Aug. 1971.
40. Yost, "Henk Pander," 10.
41. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 4 Jan. 1971.
42. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
43. Conversation 4 Aug. 2010.
44. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 16 Jan. 1971.
45. Conversation 28 July 2010.
46. Yost, "Henk Pander," 11.
47. Conversation with Delores and Henk Pander 28 Dec. 2009.
48. Yost, "Henk Pander," 11.
49. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 5 Aug. 1971.
50. Jack Eyerly, "Unicorn Work Set for Gallery." *Sunday Oregonian* [Portland] 16 Apr. 1972: 14 (Arts section).
51. Steffin Silvis, quoted in Richard Wattenberg, "25 Years and Counting" ("Drammys 25th Anniversary"). Online at: [www.drammy.info/documents/25yearsandcounting.pdf](http://www.drammy.info/documents/25yearsandcounting.pdf) and [www.drammy.info/documents/2004program.pdf](http://www.drammy.info/documents/2004program.pdf)
52. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 5 Aug. 1971.
53. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 5 Aug. 1971.
54. Andy Rocchia, "Young, Old Professionals Skip 'Artists of Oregon'." *Oregon Journal* [Portland] 17 Mar. 1972: 2 (Section 2).
55. Anne Richardson, "Portland Theater History." Online at [www.talltalestruetales.com/2009/03/portland-theater-history](http://www.talltalestruetales.com/2009/03/portland-theater-history)
56. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 5 Aug. 1971.
57. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 23 Feb. 1974.
58. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
59. Conversation 28 Dec. 2009.
60. Pander, quoted in Robert Lindstrom, "Dance Concert 'Echo' to Spotlight Set Design, Mumma Music." *Oregonian* [Portland] 6 Oct. 1978: E1.
61. Pander, quoted in Mindy Aloff, "Pander's Reflections, Mumma's Music, PDT's *Echo*." *Willamette Week* [Portland] week of Oct. 10–16, 1978: 9.
62. Conversation 28 Dec. 2009.
63. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
64. Pander to Willem den Ouden, Jan. 1970.
65. Pander to Willem den Ouden, Jan. 1970.
66. Pander to Willem den Ouden, Jan. 1970.
67. Conversation 28 July 2010.
68. Pander to Willem den Ouden, June 1972.
69. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 15 July 1972.

70. Conversation 28 July 2010.
71. Conversation 28 July 2010.
72. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 6 Feb. 1991.
73. Pander, quoted in Renardo Barden, "A Gift of Vision." *Oregon Focus* [Portland] Dec. 1987: 27.
74. Conversation 28 July 2010.
75. Conversation 28 Dec. 2009.
76. Conversation 28 Dec. 2009.
77. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
78. Conversation 11 Sept. 2010.
79. Henk Pander, quoted in Barbara Curtin, "McCall Portraitist Hired to Paint Mural for MU." *Gazette-Times* [Corvallis, Ore.] 6 Apr. 1984: B1.
80. Curtin.
81. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 5 Jan. 1987.
82. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 5 Jan. 1987.
83. Pander, quoted in Dee Lane, "Quest for Less Stress Spurs Nod to 911 Operators' Mural." *Oregonian* [Portland] 20 Mar. 1987: D2.
84. Pander to Willem den Ouden, 5 Jan. 1987.
85. Renardo Barden, "Art in the Heart of Darkness." *Sunday Oregonian Northwest Magazine* [Portland] 23 Oct. 1988: 12–13.
86. Pander, e-mail to the author, 17 July 2010.
87. Pander, quoted in Phil Manzano, "Mural to Set Stage for Theater Magic." *Oregonian* [Portland] 29 June 1989: D8.
88. I thank Doug Decker of the Department of Forestry for arranging to show me this mural and providing information about the types of trees depicted and the original use of the cable.
89. Conversation 28 July 2010.
90. Gideon Bosker and Lena Lenceck, *Frozen Music: A History of Portland Architecture*. Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1985: 237.
91. Conversation 28 July 2010 and e-mail to the author, 7 Sept. 2010.
92. Penny Allen, "Henk Pander, An Artist of Two Worlds." *Clinton St. Quarterly* [Portland] Aug. 1982: 23.
93. Conversation 28 July 2010.
94. Barry Johnson, "Theater also Pander's Gallery." *Oregonian* [Portland] 12 Nov. 1986: E4.
95. Michael McCulloch was murdered by his former patient, John C. Eaton, on 26 June 1985.
96. Pander, e-mail to the author, 27 July 2010.
97. Henk Pander, "Painting Trip, Desert, Fall 2006." Journal typescript, artist's papers.
98. Renardo Barden, "A Gift of Vision." *Oregon Focus* [Portland] Dec. 1987: 25–26.
99. Vicky Halper, "Henk Pander War Series," in *A Dutch Contribution: Deknatel, Nix, Pander* [exhibition catalogue]. Seattle: Nordic Heritage Museum, 1994: 29.
100. Carol Gamblin, "Henk Pander." *Art and Architecture* [Los Angeles] May 1985: 76.
101. Allen, "Henk Pander," 23.
102. Conversation 28 July 2010.
103. Conversation 4 Aug. 2010.
104. Henk Pander, "Painting Trip, Desert, Fall 2006." Journal typescript, artist's papers.
105. Henk Pander, e-mail to the author, 7 Sept. 2010.
106. The exhibition *Imagining the Bible: The Vision of Jaap Pander* was on view at the Jewish Museum, Portland, Oregon, 4 Sept. 2003–4 Jan. 2004.
107. Henk Pander, "An Artist's Astronomical Odyssey." *Sky and Telescope* [Cambridge, Mass.] Jan. 1979: 7.

108. Pander, "An Artist's Astronomical Odyssey": 7.
109. Pander, "An Artist's Astronomical Odyssey": 9.
110. Pander, "An Artist's Astronomical Odyssey": 9.
111. Beth Fagan, "Space Exploration on Canvas." *Sunday Oregonian Northwest Magazine* [Portland]. Undated clipping [1978], artist's papers.
112. Pander, "An Artist's Astronomical Odyssey": 10.
113. Henk Pander, quoted in Barry Johnson, "Portland Artist Calls NASA Project 'Unreal.'" *Oregonian* [Portland], 27 Oct. 1988: E1.
114. Delores Pander, e-mail to the author, 20 Feb. 2010.
115. Conversation 11 Sept. 2010.
116. Conversation 11 Sept. 2010.
117. Letter to Willem den Ouden, 6 Feb. 1991.
118. Henk Pander, quoted in Johnson, "Portland Artist Calls NASA Project 'Unreal.'" E1, E3.
119. Conversation 11 Sept. 2010.
120. Conversation 28 July 2010.
121. Luijten 11.
122. Conversation 25 Aug. 2010.
123. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
124. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
125. Henk Pander, "Painting Trip, Desert, Fall 2006." Journal typescript, artist's papers.
126. See: Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.
127. Conversation 28 July 2010.
128. Conversation 28 July 2010.
129. Henk Pander, in Andy Porter, "Artist Finds Beauty in Grounded Ship." *The World* (Coos Bay, Oregon). Undated [Feb. 1999] clipping, artist's papers.
130. Henk Pander, "The Wreck of the *New Carissa*: The Journal of Henk Pander, February 1999." Typescript, artist's papers. Unless otherwise noted, subsequent statements by Pander regarding his documentation of the *New Carissa* are quoted from this journal. Portions were published in "The Wreck of the *New Carissa*: Excerpts from the Journal of Henk Pander," *Sunday Oregonian* [Portland] 24 Sept. 2000: G14.
131. Conversation 2 Nov. 2009.
132. Henk Pander, "Journal—New York City Work Trip, November 7–21, 2001." Typescript, artist's papers. Unless otherwise noted, subsequent statements by Pander regarding his documentation of the World Trade Center site are quoted from this journal. Portions were published in "Henk Pander's New York Diary, November 2001," *Sunday Oregonian* [Portland] 8 Sept. 2002: F1, F4.
133. Henk Pander, e-mail to the author, 7 Sept. 2010.
134. I thank Dan Schmidt for drawing my attention to Joel Meyerowitz's photographs of the wreckage of the World Trade Center.
135. Henk Pander, e-mail to the author, 10 Aug. 2010.
136. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
137. Henk Pander, "Henk Pander Journal: Holland, DPSST and Boeing, May 2005–June 2006." Typescript, artist's papers. Unless otherwise noted, subsequent statements by Pander regarding his project with the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training are quoted from this journal. Portions were published in "Arresting Images," *Sunday Oregonian* [Portland] 24 June 2007: O1, O6–O7.
138. Henk Pander, e-mail to the author, 7 Sept. 2010.
139. Daniel Duford, "Henk Pander at Laura Russo Gallery." *Artweek* [San Jose, Calif.] Nov. 2008: 22.
140. Pander, e-mail to the author, 9 July 2010.
141. Conversation 28 Dec. 2009.
142. Martha Ullman West, "Delores M. Pander, A Personal

- Tribute" [essay in memorial service brochure] 2010. Online: [www.artscatter.com/general/delores-rooney-pander-1938-2010](http://www.artscatter.com/general/delores-rooney-pander-1938-2010)
143. Jed Perl, *New Art City: Manhattan at Mid-Century*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005: 91.
144. Willem de Kooning, *Artyclopedia* on-line: [http://www.artyclopedia.com/artists/de\\_kooning\\_willem.html](http://www.artyclopedia.com/artists/de_kooning_willem.html)
145. The exhibition *New Leipzig Paintings from the Rubell Family Collection* was on view at the Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Washington, 17 Feb.-3 June 2007.
146. "Rackstraw Downes." *Wikipedia* online.
147. Peter Schjeldahl, "Rackstraw Downes's Realism." *The New Yorker* 18 Oct. 2004: 208. I thank Dan Schmidt for drawing my attention to the work of Rackstraw Downes.
148. Conversation 9 Oct. 2009.
149. Henk Pander, quoted in D. K. Row, "Eerie Exactitude: Henk Pander Continues to Explore the Bizarre and the Beautiful." *Oregonian* [Portland] 15 Dec. 2003: C1.
150. Henk Pander, Journal.



# SOURCES AND RESOURCES

## LETTERS TO WILLEM DEN OUDEN

Henk Pander wrote intermittently to his friend Willem den Ouden, a well-established painter and printmaker in The Netherlands, from January 1970 through February 1991. The letters, written in Dutch and later translated by Pander, are vivid commentaries about his experiences living and creating art in the United States. The typescripts of these letters, all in the artist's possession, are invaluable for the information and insights they provide on Pander's life and art and are quoted extensively in this monograph.

## HENK PANDER'S JOURNALS

Henk Pander has written numerous journals that record his observations and tell of his experiences while away from home on painting expeditions in the United States and Europe. Pander also keeps journals that describe his involvement in special projects such as his documentation of the work of the Portland Fire Department in 2004 and of the State of Oregon public service agencies in 2005. Typescripts of these journals, all in the artist's possession, are valuable sources of information and insight about Pander and his world view and are quoted extensively in this monograph.

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