

“Pushing Up the Sky”



An Exhibit of Paintings in Homage to Myths of the Storytellers.



Winged Messenger, 36" x 36", mixed media on canvas

life is all about?" It is about our experience in being alive. These myths are our clues, our guidelines for finding deeper, inner meaning.

We are so focused to achieve outer values (tangible treasures) that we forget about the inner value, the overwhelming happiness of being alive. Myths teach us that when you turn inward, looking in your heart, you see things more clearly because you got the message. You understand the signs, the symbols, the guideposts. You understand your heart.

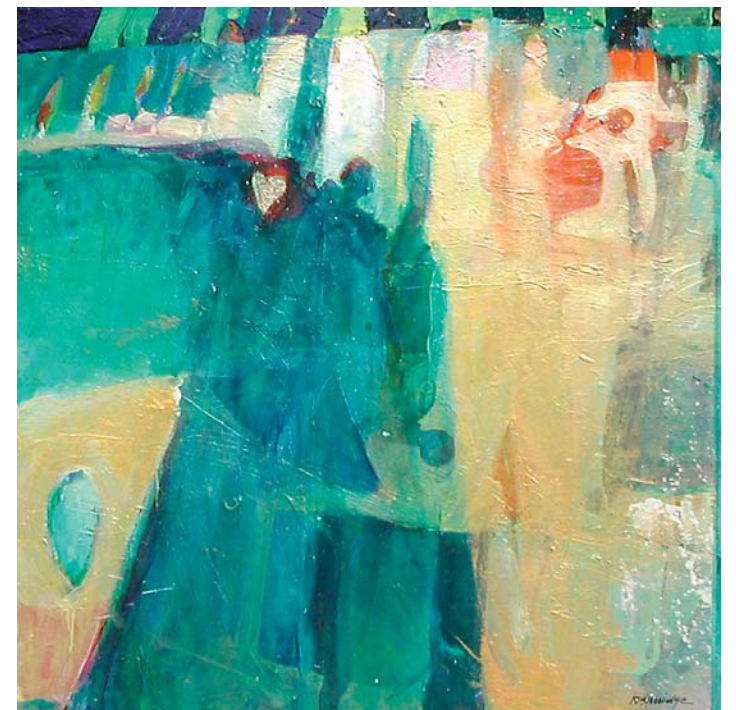
I've been getting ready for this show my whole life. Native American lore, ancient and religious myths have always influenced me.

Why myths? Because I believe we are all interested in the subject. Just look at literature and mythology sections in book stores. This selection gets larger as the news of the day and the problems of the hour escalate. And not just because of today's world events. Plato, Confucius, the Buddha, Goethe and others spoke of eternal values that have to do with the centering of our lives and our inner life.

These multiple bits of stories from ancient times all have to do with deep inner life problems... such as supporting human life, building whole civilizations and developing a high religion. These stories act as guides to help us deal with and get on with our own lives. We get to know where we stand and what's possibly ahead. So we tell stories to come to terms with the world. They help to give us hope. It's the perfection in the imperfect world.

The stories pass on from generation to generation.

The myths are our stories. It is not about "What



Procession of Voices, 36" x 36", mixed media on canvas

When I look up at the stars early in the morning I know my ancestors also got up early to see the same stars thousands of years before us. But why do we look at stars? We're looking for something far, something bigger... Bigger and past the petty daily technological interruptions. Our hearts long for the hope of bigger meaning.

I read myths from all cultures of the world but I found the Native American tales and narratives to be very rich, very well developed, the themes are timeless themes. I grew up in Pennsylvania, and as a boy scout, being fascinated with the daily "Indian life" dioramas in the our natural history museum. I would stand in front of these wax displays of early Pennsylvania life and wondered what their "camping life" was like. Their rituals, grinding corn, weaving baskets, making art. When I became a dad, my son and I joined cub scouts and Indian lore councils. Reading Native American myths, I discovered they were the same stories I was taught by the nuns in Catholic school -- creation, life, death and resurrection. Now, today in Arroyo Grande, California, I live on top of a hill, overlooking the ocean and I cannot help myself feeling a sense of Indian lore and their spirits around me. My mother, even though she is a proud French-Canadian, confessed she is one-fifth MicMac Indian.

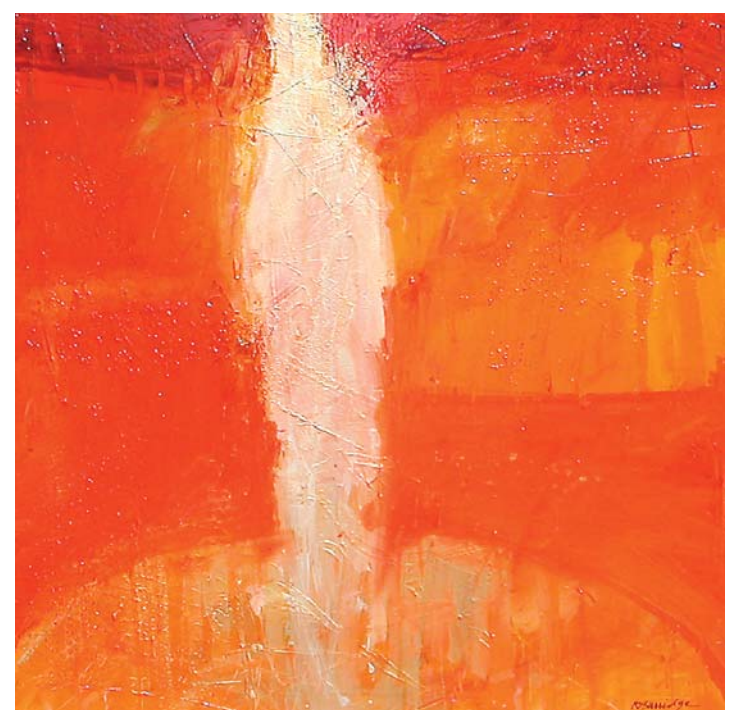
I recall, as a small child, visiting my grandmother and being taken by the musky aroma of her sewing basket woven from sweet grass by the Indians who annually "camped" on her farm fields, harvested the sweet grass, made baskets and sold them to tourists. I've been hooked ever since.

Thus, the theme of this show, "Pushing Up the Sky," a Native American story about... when the sky drops down, if all nations working together, used long poles we could push up the sky and not bump our heads.

This show visually explores my ideas of language, ancient beliefs and hope.



Creation of First Man, First Woman, 30" x 40", mixed media on paper



What We See, 36" x 36", mixed media on canvas

Robert Burridge

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