

Robert Burridge Bio

1943, I was born... in a small farm community near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. I spent my childhood with both parents and four brothers. I was the middle child. My farm chores consisted of the usual daily stuff for kids: Feed the 500 chickens, ride the two pigs, pet the cows, pick the corn, dig the potatoes, plant the garden and put on magic shows.

As a kid, I also taught myself "entertainment skills" - juggling, magic, ventriloquism, circus acrobatics and trapeze show-off stuff. I performed one-man circus shows inside our huge wood barn. It had dirt floors, loose slats, large beam rafters and plenty of pigeons in the eaves. From these rafters I suspended my circus bike and performed goofy stunts while it was on fire. (I'm not making this up!)

My first artwork was making circus posters announcing my shows. By the sixth grade, I entered my first art competition with a "Hire the Handicapped" poster. I won a certificate and the cash prize of... one dollar.

I graduated from the Philadelphia College of Art with a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Design and a minor in Fine Art Painting. As a designer, I got the opportunity to create and invent new products for Litton Industries (the first production electronic cash register and bar code scanner for retail and food stores), Becton-Dickinson (medical, surgical and biomechanical devices) and as the Principal Designer for Westinghouse Electronic Corporation, I produced product designs for 15 Divisions, receiving the Grand Industrial Design Award of the Year in 1976 for a Power Circuit Breaker, an Uninterruptible Power System, an Advanced Nuclear Control room consoles and Industrial Control switches.

And finally, as an independent design consultant living in Santa Barbara, California, I invented new wheelchairs for the severely disabled, designed the first digital sound editing consoles for a Hollywood sound studio to edit the blockbuster movie, "Stars Wars" and created the electronic circuit breaker featured in the movie "Jurassic Park."

My other product designs include a kitchen line for Corning Glass, a hands-free automatic soap dispenser and hand dryer for public rest rooms, surgically implanted body parts, custom wheelchairs for Cerebral Palsied children, brain surgical drills as well as a few whimsical products like tubular fabric lights, desk accessories and Teva Sandals, to name a few.

At this time I held the honored position as Consultant to the President's Committee for the Handicapped, Adjunct Professor of Design at Cooper Union Art College, New York, the Visiting Critic Advisor for photography at Harvard University and finally, CEO and Design Principal of my own advertising and design agency, which was rated as Fortune's Top, Fastest Growing Companies in 1984. I was elected into the Human Factors Society and the International Council of Color Consultants.

I hold 23 design, mechanical and chemical patents. During all this time, however, at night and on weekends, I turned into another person... a painter. Eventually my ever longing passion to invent new paintings consumed me.

In 1985, I turned my passion into my second career. I retired from industrial design and became a full time, contemporary fine art painter, moved to California's Central Coast and prepared to paint for the rest of my life. Today, besides painting, I am an invited juror for international art shows, college and national painting workshop instructor, and have taught fine art mentor programs in France, Italy, Cuba, the Bahamas, Guatemala and Costa Rica. I hold Signature Member positions with the Philadelphia Water Color Society, San Diego Watercolor Society and the International Society of Experimental Artists.

My original paintings can be seen galleries, on Starbucks Coffee mugs, Pearl Vodka bottles, eight tapestries and on fine art edition prints in upscale retail stores and cruise ships. I have shown my work in Museums—both group and solo shows—and at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, Circus Arts Folklife Festival, where I had a solo show.

My work has received lifetime honors, including The Franklin Mint Award and recently the Philadelphia Water Color Society's prestigious Crest Medal Award for achievement in the arts previously awarded to Pablo Picasso, John Singer Sargent and Georgia O'Keeffe.

It is said "your heart doesn't know how old you are." For me, it's true. Painting everyday in my small studio overlooking the Pacific Ocean, I feel like a kid again playing with color, design, paint and canvas, which reminds me of the saying, "It's never too late to be what you should have always been." Follow your bliss!

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