

business - poetry - filmmaking - sound art - bookmaking - poetry - sound

My father was an accountant, business consultant, tax advisor and business broker. I grew up with the expectation that I would go to college for business. Somehow my drawing bloodied baseball players, playing Lost in Space in the playhouse converted to a space ship in the backyard and the countless hours spent in my room listening to records and doing god knows what else didn't deter my father's expectations. I went along with the program but somehow managed to never learn how to balance a checkbook or even to begin to think about how to profit financially from anything. My earliest business venture as a child was organizing a carnival in my backyard where I gave local kids rides on my dad's lawn mower and created a spook house by blindfolding kids and handing them peeled grapes telling them they were eyeballs torn from their sockets. All of the money earned from the carnival to the Environmental Defense Fund. I think it was about \$75, enough presumably to pay for the mails of solicitations for me to donate more money for the rest of life since the outreach program at the EDF probably thought there was a chance I was going to be a life-long benefactor. The most I can say I got out of accounting classes in high school, when I actually went to class, is the unique quality of being totally naive and uneducated in all aspects of art since in a college prep curriculum geared towards business there wasn't any room for art classes. On a whim and on the first day of classes of my freshman year at college I went into the admissions office and asked if I could switch my major from Business Administration to Modern Poetry of which they reluctantly said "well, yes you could". I did. What a fateful whim! After a year of Poetry and getting to meet Gary Snyder and Robert Bly at readings at the college I developed an irrational fear of an impractical professional path and switched my studies to Journalism. Writing the who, what and where of everyday events laid the groundwork for the boredom I would need to embrace the burgeoning punk music social scene that I would soon be a part of. But first I took a filmmaking class where I alienated myself (alienation - another prerequisite for punk life) from everyone I knew by making a film contrasting tomb stones and suburban housing developments and using the newly released album from Lou Reed, Metal Machine Music, as the sound track. Confused by my own interests I left school while reading On The Road and traveling from the east coast to the west coast where I saw my first punk band, The Lewd in Portland Oregon. I followed them to Seattle and Vancouver before hitchhiking down to San Francisco and melding into the poetry and punk scenes that had converged at The Mahubay Garden in North Beach down the road from City Lights. Drugs and punk and poetry in San Francisco in 1977 gave me the focus to go back to school for what I thought was the marriage of the impractical -poetry and the practical -journalism. I was accepted at NYU and landed in the East Village at the ripe year of 1978. The year and the scene was ripe for the music scene happening in New York at the time which made doing anything at school seem pale. But it was my interest in listening to film which led me to discover sound and noise which became my music. By the time I bought a reel to reel tape recorder and began experimenting with sound it seems everyone I was hanging out with had already graduated from art schools. My attempts to make music with other musicians always ended up failing for one reason or another. Many times it was because musician had a problem with me not having any musical training even though I told them that up front. It was continually frustrating causing me to paint all the keys on my first Korg synthesizer so that I could show people that I didn't work with a keyboard the way they did. However making noise and music with non-musicians and other artists was easy. I listened and played what I thought was new and it was new to many people. Very knew. But as I explored the history of experimental music and sound it seemed everything had been done already. It seemed pointless to just repeat what had been done. John Cage visited me in a dream and I told him my dilemma and told him that everything I had ever thought of had already been done by him and he told me that he had never laminated! So I continued laminating with joy and enthusiasm and working with the sound of lamination which I do to this day. And it was sound and lamination that led me to bookmaking. And the funny thing about books is that they have their origins in oral tradition which is sound. So the roots of my work in business and art continued to be SOUND.