



Michael Everett, **Decorated Envelope**, 1995  
Grateful Dead Archive

fans, these words represented a clarion call to participate in the cultural phenomenon defined by the Dead and the Deadheads. The art they produced is a window into American culture, an extraordinary body of work that challenges how we understand the protean fusion of high art and folk art that has been one of America's greatest gifts to the world.

This exhibition features more than 158 primary works, along with 110 digital images, from band members Jerry Garcia, Mickey Hart, and Bill Kreutzmann, and dozens of Deadhead artists. Just as the band's music transcended genres, these art works span the gamut from digital media to oil painting, from folk crafts to gallery art. A detailed guide to the exhibit, with a complete list of works and associated readings, can be found online (see the next column). Thanks for visiting!

Nicholas G. Meriwether  
Exhibit Curator  
Grateful Dead Archivist



Rita Carmen Fiedler, **Uncle Sam Animations**, 1975  
Courtesy of Rita Carmen Fiedler.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about the exhibition, a complete checklist of the art exhibited, and a list selected bibliography, see the "Songs of Our Own" online exhibit guide:

<http://guides.library.ucsc.edu/dead-archive-songs-exhibit>

For more information about the Dead Archive, see the Archive website:

<http://library.ucsc.edu/grateful-dead-archive>

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THE GRATEFUL DEAD ARCHIVE  
Special Collections, McHenry Library  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064



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# Songs of Our Own:

## The Art of the Grateful Dead Phenomenon



WELCOME to the second annual exhibition of the Grateful Dead Archive. “Songs of Our Own: The Art of the Grateful Dead Phenomenon” documents the extraordinary art that celebrates the Grateful Dead and their fans, from Jerry Garcia’s student days at the California School of Fine Arts to the poster renaissance of the Haight-Ashbury in the 1960s to the increasingly sophisticated art created by Deadheads in the 1970s and after, and finally by band members in the 1990s.

In 2003, lyricist Robert Hunter wrote that “I’ve come to realize that the art movement that accompanied the rise of the Dead is as much a part of what we became in the public eye as the songs and our playing of them.” This exhibit shows how that remarkable art informs the Grateful Dead phenomenon and helps define its significance. It is a vital part of the rich artistic legacy of the Haight-Ashbury, and it traces the evolution of that legacy in the dynamic visual culture of the Deadhead experience in the 1970s and after. For thirty years, Grateful Dead concerts were occasions to continue the



Jerry Garcia  
**Untitled.** Monoprint,  
4.8 x 7.5 in., ca. 1959

*Courtesy George  
Michalski Collection*

*This unpublished image has never been publicly exhibited until now.*



Wes Wilson. **Bill Graham No. 51.** Lithograph, 13.6 x 22.25 in., 1967 © Wolfgang’s Vault. All rights reserved.

extraordinary renaissance of art that flourished in the Haight-Ashbury in the sixties.

One defining aspect of the Grateful Dead was their democratic, bohemian artistic sensibility, a central legacy from their countercultural gestation in the Haight. The community-based ethos of that formative place and time infused the band’s attitude toward art and music, rippling out into concert parking lots in the decades that followed, where fans continued the Haight’s tradition of folk art. In time, some of these efforts even approached fine art, as a number of Deadheads went on to produce

band-sanctioned works and establish professional artistic careers.

The Dead modeled that philosophy in more forms than just their music. Just as concerts were co-creations, collaborations between musicians and audience, so too were the artistic trappings that colored and illustrated the experience. From Jerry Garcia’s and Robert Hunter’s paintings and whimsical cartoons to the mature work of Garcia and of drummers Bill Kreutzmann and Mickey Hart, band members showed that the connections between art forms in the world of the Grateful Dead could be supple, extended, and powerful. It made the Deadhead experience a multifaceted, multimedia artistic phenomenon.

“Sometimes the songs that we hear are just songs of our own,” Robert Hunter mused in one of the Dead’s best-loved songs, “The Eyes of the World.” His lyrics take on many colors, many shades of meaning, but for



Harrison Rucker, **Jerry Garcia Carolina.** Acrylic on board, 30 x 40 in., 1970. Gift of Mark Rucker and Harrison Rucker.