

Harvey Offenhartz – Bio

My career in art began in the advertising world in 1957 when I returned to Brooklyn from Fort Worth, Texas, where I served in the US Air Force as an Intelligence Officer. Brooklyn was where I was born, raised, educated, married and raised with my wife, our son, and daughter.

I did not know what a career in art was, but I found a job as an apprentice in a large commercial art studio in New York City that serviced advertising agencies and some small companies. I cleaned rubber cement from paste-ups, one step up from being a delivery boy. Ultimately I was skilled enough to work full time in other art studios doing paste-ups, professionally called “mechanicals”.

Three nights a week I attended the School of Visual Arts where I studied layout design and created a portfolio. In 1961 I was hired as an Assistant Art Director at Helena Rubinstein, at the time, one of the larger women’s beauty products companies. I didn’t know anything about this industry, nor did I imagine how important this job would be for my career. Advertising, marketing, sales, production, the inner workings of any company that I observed, aided my thinking in solving design problems. Four years later I became the Art Director. In 1968 a book I wrote; Point- of -Sale Design was published by Reinhold. It is the same year I established my art studio, Harvey Offenhartz Inc. Without clients or commitments, I was fortunate to develop clients in leading companies in Pharmaceuticals, Health, and Beauty and Consumer Products. In 1992 my business was bought by Ketchum Communications, the largest privately-owned advertising company in the US.

My Shadow Life

It was in Brooklyn College that the seeds were sown for what is my love of art. Dormant for years, it began to slowly unfold while working in New York visiting art galleries and museums. Stimulated by these encounters I started to work at home in the evenings or weekends when I could. Uncertain of the work I was doing, I continued nonetheless. One day, visiting galleries as I often did on 10th Street in NYC, I had a conversation with an artist who invited me to bring my work in to be reviewed. I was accepted into the Aegis Gallery. I had my first solo show in 1962 and continued to have solo shows in 1964, 54 and 66. Some of my shows were reviewed positively in the Village Voice and Art News. There was a pause in this productivity, but not in my interest in art.

Out of the Shadow, Cornwall

It is here in Cornwall, which I found accidentally in 1981 and loved immediately, that my art again began to unfold. I started working with the encouragement of Hilda Daniels, the librarian of the Cornwall Library, then small, but intimate. I had a show of my oil pastels in 1984. And again in 1986 and 1989. I was able to work full time in Cornwall in 1997. The many shows since then are listed on my web site; harveyo.net