New Website Showcases Norman Mailer’s Picasso-Inspired Drawings

Rozalia Jovanovic, Wednesday, July 16, 2014

 Courtesy Poba.org
When he wasn’t writing, carousing, or running for mayor, Norman Mailer was prone to dabble in drawing in the style of Pablo Picasso. You can see Mailer’s Picasso-inspired ditties at POBA: Where the Arts Live, an online portal that offers virtual galleries of artists’ undiscovered works.

Founded by the family of James Kirk Bernard, a young artist whose untimely death inspired them to preserve and showcase his work for the public, the site offers the same opportunity to families, estates, publishers, and anyone else who owns the rights to the creative legacy of an artist “who died without recognition of the full measure of their talents.”

Currently POBA (the phonetic pronunciation of the Tibetan word “phowa,” which connotes the transfer of consciousness to new life when a person dies) houses the online portfolios, along with brief bios, of roughly 20 artists. Tom Evans of rock band Badfinger was fond of painting in a Post-Impressionist style. Carol Carlisle, the managing editor of the magazine Popular Photography, was a gifted photographer herself whose black-and-white images of artists and everyday life evoke the work of Robert Frank and often appeared in the magazine or on the cover. David Shainberg, a psychoanalyst renowned for bringing Eastern spiritual leaders together with psychoanalysts, left that practice in the early 1980s to pursue painting full time. His accomplished Abstract Expressionist works are also on the site. You can also see a video of Clark Tippet, a principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre, performing in Baryshnikov’s The Nutcracker.

While POBA is still in its infancy, it has collaborated thus far with numerous art galleries including the Berta Walker Gallery in Provincetown, where in the mid-1990s, Mailers works were shown. (Walker is also on the POBA advisory board). Other early partners include the Schoolhouse Gallery, the Craig Krull Gallery, and the Packard Gallery.

“Too many artists of tremendous ability leave behind large collections of stunning works, but often their loved ones and representatives have no idea how to preserve and share them with the public,” said Sallie Bernard, president of the James Kirk Bernard Foundation, in a statement. “POBA offers a simple solution for helping such works find the audience and attention they deserve.”

The idea that Mailer, no stranger to self-promotion, may have died without recognition of the full measure of his talents is a little outrageous. But true, we were not fully aware of his Picasso-styled output. Thanks POBA!