

EDWARD WALTON WILCOX: *An Artist Distraught*

Unlocking the Unseen World

Review by **Grady Harp**

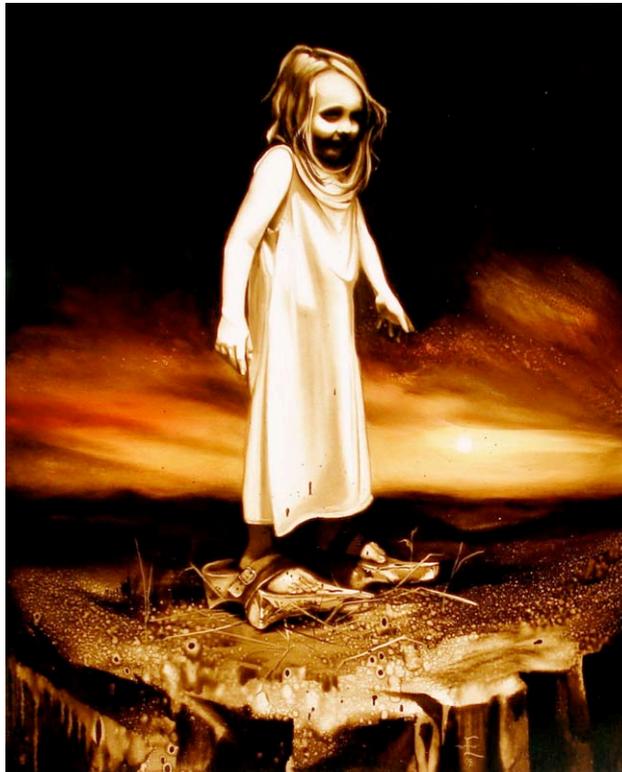


EDWARD WALTON WILCOX

ARTISTS vary in the manner in which they view the present human condition: some revel, some protest, some mock, and some retreat.

Edward Walton Wilcox has struggled with the pixelated mechanical and often harsh conditions that have caused the current impersonal world to alter our psyches and has found a degree of solace in retreating to the more soul nourishing sensitive era portrayed by the artists and writers of the Romantic period. 'When

SLEEPWALKER



the anxieties of this world become too severe and my abilities to navigate the advances and subsequent demands of this technological age fail me,

I create for my self an instrument of retreat, a reflection pool for the mind. It is there I withdraw to the twilight fields and amber vistas of my dreams.' And the results of Wilcox's caring, informed mind become the strangely and hauntingly bizarre visions his canvases convey – invitations to opening dreams and 'unlocking the unseen world.'
Wilcox



THE FOWLER'S SNARE

recognizes that often it is confronting our own fears in the disquietude of living in a time when the human aspects of living are being torn by the faceless devices created by King Science that assists us in searching for the comfort of nostalgia, of dreams of a kinder and more accessible time when the meaning of life was painted by artists in touch with their souls. In **SLEEPWALKER** he has created a childlike creature venturing into yesterday, into a land not unlike the Gothic creations that allowed man to walk among dreams, visions of both beauty and terror, as though appreciation for each brings the meaning of life both now and the eternal beyond into focus.

These paintings are dark: Wilcox paints with tempura and bitumen, a tar substance: 'It is a physical metaphor that in a most basic naturally

occurring material, one can find all the medium necessary for complex expression.' The resulting canvases or panels allow the images to hover in that frame of timelessness, reflecting the old, startling the present. In both **THE FOWLER'S SNARE** and **I KEEP THE DEVIL IN A SMALL HOUSE OUTSIDE OF TOWN** the artist creates stories that, while inordinately beautiful in their execution, offer a bifid sense of beauty and terror, responses meant to address our nascent emotions and hopefully awaken us to restructuring the world as we now see it.

In **DER BURNIN MILL (NOCTURN)** Wilcox recalls the imperfections of life in that time past when man was more in tune with the transitory implications of nature, more

I KEEP THE DEVIL IN A SMALL HOUSE OUTSIDE OF TOWN





DER BURNIN MILL (NOCTURN)

focused on the realm of the eternal unknown that served as a hope for change in the promised great beyond of eternity: man's creations for surviving can be lost in flames as easily as they were constructed – and that fact that all is transitory provided a safer psychological space.

Perhaps the important message of Edward Walton Wilcox's otherworldly art as guiding messages for surviving today's world is best summarized in his grand scale painting **A FOOL'S CROWN**: the nude body of a man, whose face is a mask

and who wears as a crown the jester's symbol of the fool, lies in sleep or death across the detritus of today, the richness of the beauty of a kinder time of the yesteryear of Romanticism in the misty background. Or in Wilcox's own eloquent words, 'To loose one's self in a painting is to arrest time itself. I think of them as lamentations of a lost paradigm that may have ever only existed in my mind.' This, then, is an artist who invites, no, demands us to think, and in thinking become cognizant of our bruised souls in need of repair.



A FOOLS' CROWN