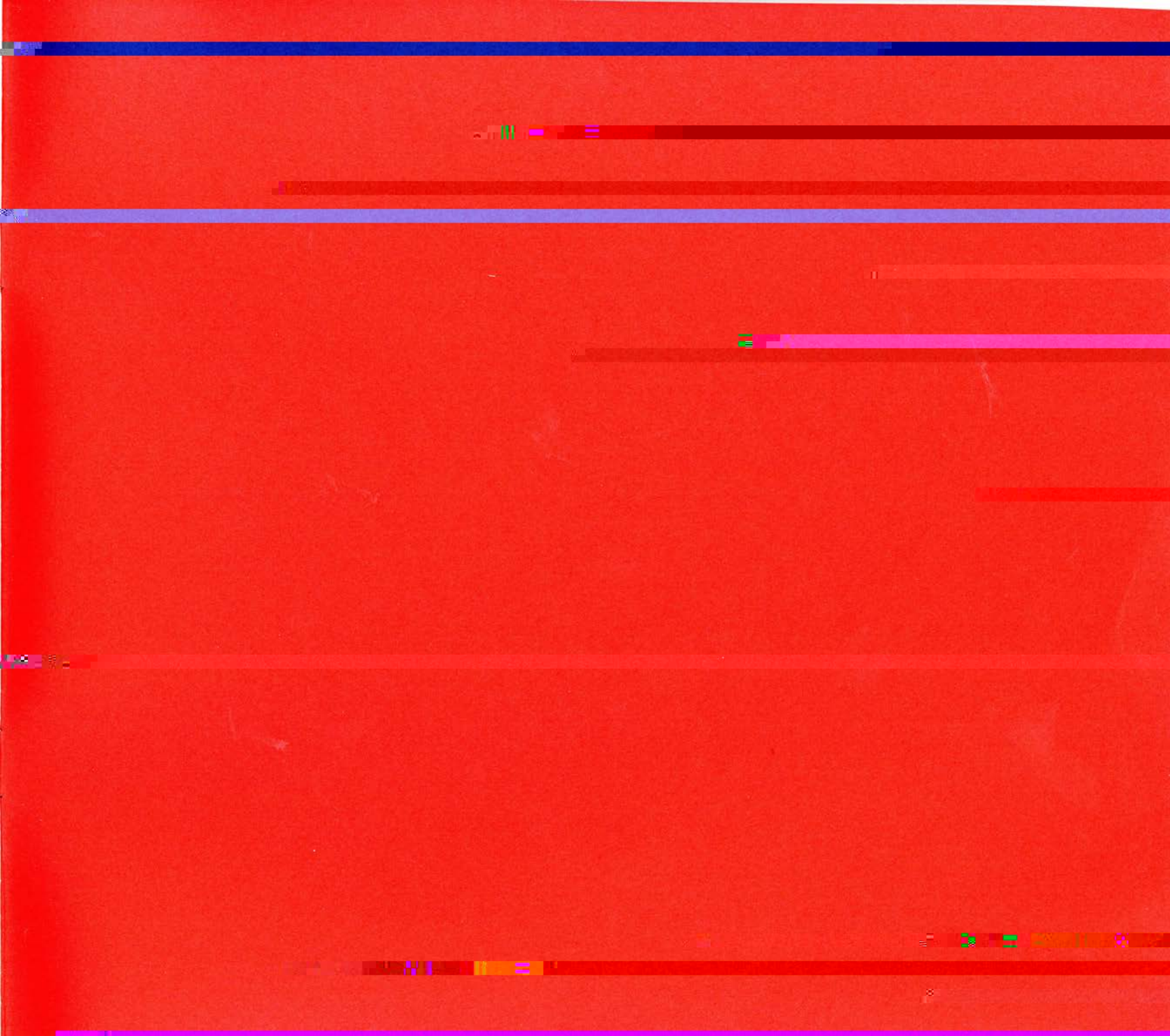


PEE WEE ROOLES  
AND  
GEORGE WASHINGTON



THE ART OF

DEWEY RUSSELL  
AND  
GEORGE WETTLING

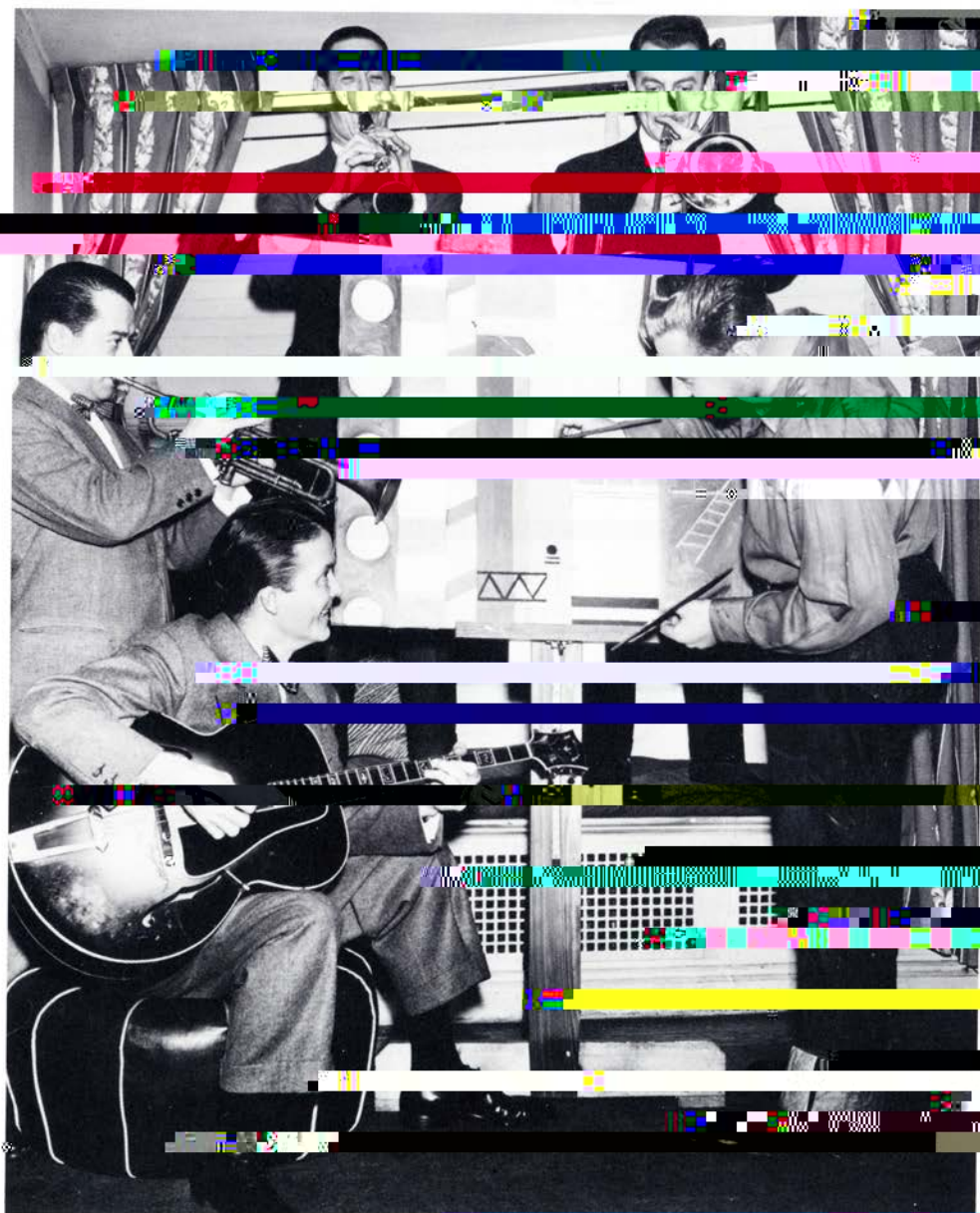
Sordani Art Gallery, Wilkes College  
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

April 27 through June 4, 1994

Essays by Hank O'Neal and Dan Morgens

Exhibition Organized by the Sordani Art Gallery





Left to right: Max Kiminsky, trumpet; Eddie Condon, guitar; Pee Wee Russell, clarinet; Frank Orchard, trombone; George Wettling, paintbrush and palette.

## Lenders to the Exhibition

Jon Aaronsohn

Morris Gordon

Phyllis Condon

Kenny Davern

Earl Gengo Davis

Richard Hadlock

Marianne Marland

Harikoni

The Institute of Jazz Studies  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers

## INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

painter was an American abstractionist, Stuart Davis, with whom he traded drawings for paintings. Weiling's images are bold, geometric abstractions of animal subjects like Eddie Condon's night club. Like Davis's paintings, they reflect a deep love for jazz. Such extraordinary jazz musicians, we are indebted to those who helped organize this exhibition and the concert held in conjunction with it: Pee Wee Russell once said that he didn't know what he would do without his clarinet. He couldn't live without music and his music was a strong and vital force in his paintings. One of the lenders to the exhibition was Andrew Spaulding III, Chairman of the Sordani Art Gallery Advisory Commission; Hank Neal, clarinetist and producer; Dan Morgan, Stern, Rutgers University; and Kenny Davern, clarinetist. Most of all, I would like to thank the lenders who, through their generosity, have made this exhibition possible.

As with the canvases of creative impulses, on the road, on a gig, wherever, his ment

Judith H. O'Toole, *Director*





## INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exhibition is the second in a series established in 1984 with the presentation of the music and paintings of jazz pianist Erroll Garner. The paintings of Art Haggart, the paintings of Pee Wee Russell and George Wettling are visual evidence of the creative impulses which made them such extraordinary jazz musicians.

Pee Wee Russell once said that he didn't know what he would do without his clarinet. He couldn't live without music. The same could be said for the presence in his painting. The same could be said for the exhibition said he liked Pee Wee's paintings because they reminded him of his playing. They reflect an interest in syncopation, strong rhythms, and vibrant color — all terms that are applicable to both mediums.

George Wettling always carried a sketchbook with him. He drew the road, on a gig, wherever he was. His mentor as a

painter was the American Abstract Expressionist Jackson Pollock. His paintings were bold, geometric abstractions based on familiar subjects like Eddie "The Duke" Anderson's night club. Like Davis' paintings, they reflect a deep love for the jazz.

We are indebted to those who helped organize this exhibition and the concert held in conjunction with it:

Gallery Advisory Commission, Hank O'Neal, author, and producer, New York City; Dan Morgenstern, Director, Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University; and Benny Davern, clarinetist.

Most of all, I would like to thank the people who through their generous efforts have made this exhibition possible.

Judith O'Toole, Director



that year he collapsed. His friends in the jazz world rallied to his aid (a touching photograph of Louis Armstrong and Jack at his bedside appeared in *Life* magazine), and staged benefit concerts at his bedside. He pulled through, and by October 1951 resumed work at the helm of his own group — a rare instance in his career. Soon he was playing as well as ever, and just as soon had given up leading bands. The then-new genre

him, and he became a member of George Weins Newport All Stars, with whom he visited Europe for the first time in 1961. In the following year he formed a quartet with trombonist Art Farmer, saxophonist Sonny Rollins, and pianist Bud Powell. Though short-lived, this group attracted considerable attention, not least because its repertoire included compositions by Thelonious Monk (with whom Pee Wee had appeared at a Newport Festival in 1955).

Wee had not changed his style, but the material and setting were different. He brought his own and recognition from a new generation of listeners. He won the Down Beat International Critics Poll through 1968, and in 1969 was voted into *Down Beat* magazine's Hall of Fame.

Pee Wee's final years were busy and productive ones. In 1964, he toured Australia, New Zealand and Japan. He was offered a position to select the jazz music for the new radio station, and his devoted wife, Mary, felt that he should no longer commit himself to exhausting travel schedules. Like most jazz musicians,

learned that he should find something which would not be too time-consuming. One day he came across a paint set in a department store, bought it, and some pre-stretched

husband said, "Here," she said, "Do something with that. Though I have never seen you paint before."

To her surprise, he proceeded to do just that. Though he had never seen a painting of any kind, though his knowledge of painting was limited to the years of work he had done in the navy, he looked to his new task with zeal. While he was

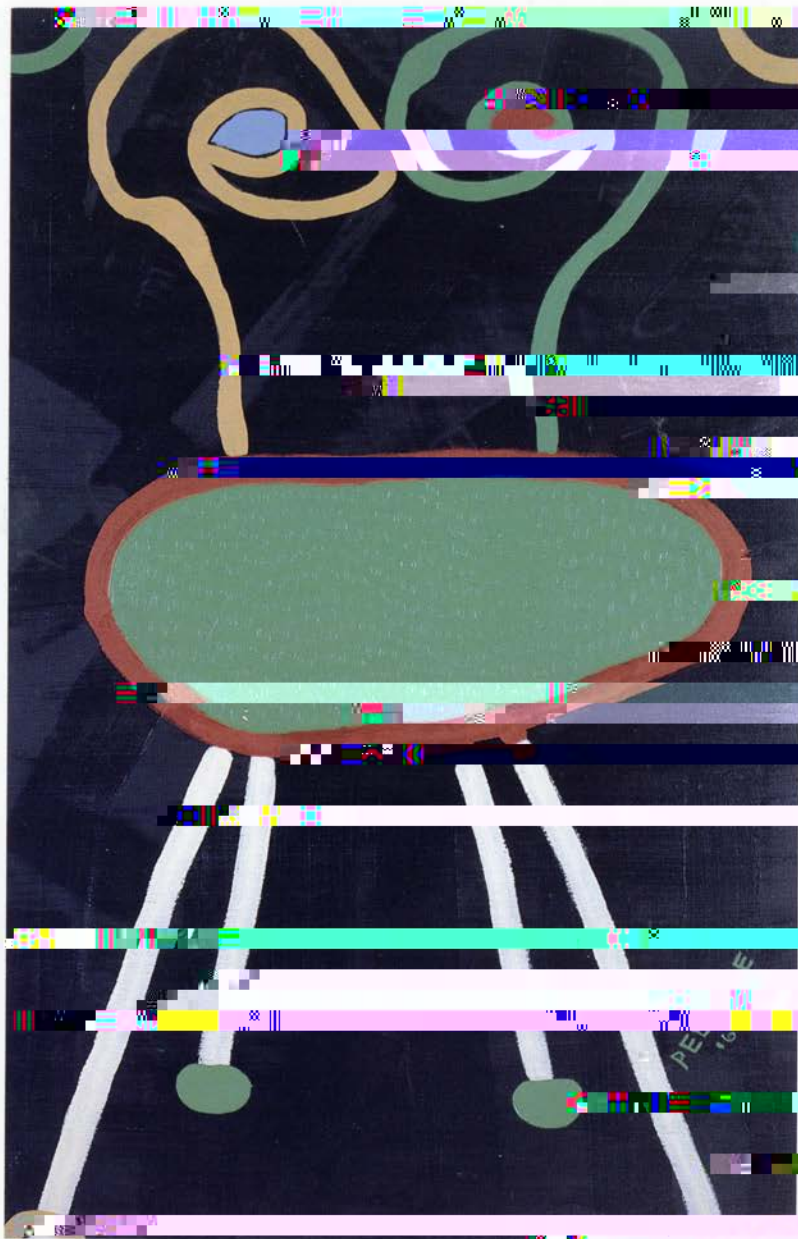
unconvinced that he could do it, he began to paint. His art — his touch was sure, his sense of form and color, and his work in the medium displayed the same unclassified originality that marked his playing. In a burst of creativity, he

immensely when they were praised by his friends. He had been able to do it for many years. There were still some things that he had not done. After that, Pee Wee felt very tired and

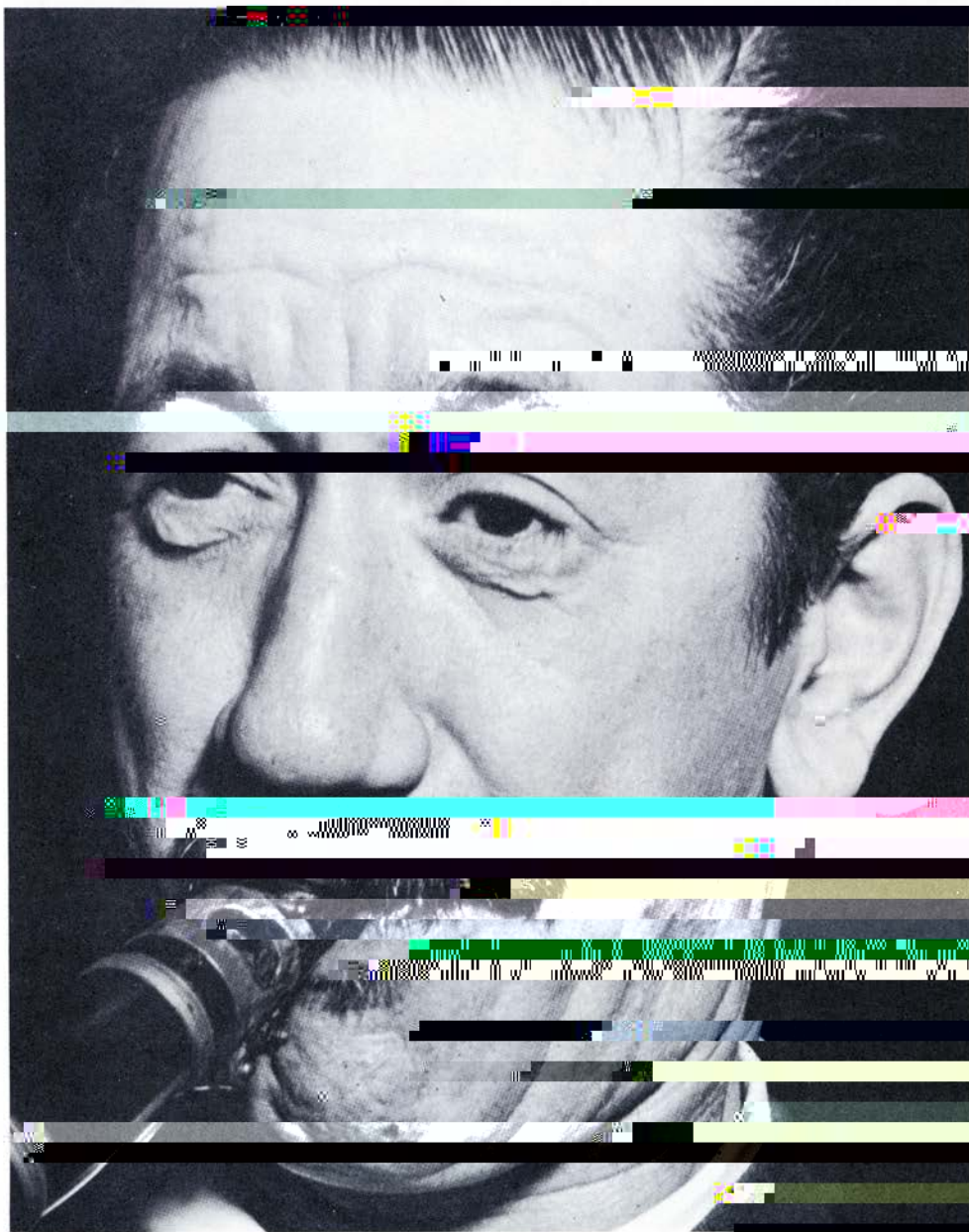
painting ceased, and the drinking, which he and Mary had been able to do for many years, had been the extent of it for many years. There were still some things that he had not done.

1969. After that, Pee Wee felt very tired and with friends in the Washington, D.C. area. On his own volition, he entered a private hospital in Washington, D.C. for a few weeks of his cold remedy.

Dan Morgenstern  
March 1980



10. Pee Wee Russell, *The Twins from Mars*, 1966



Photograph of Pee Wee Russell



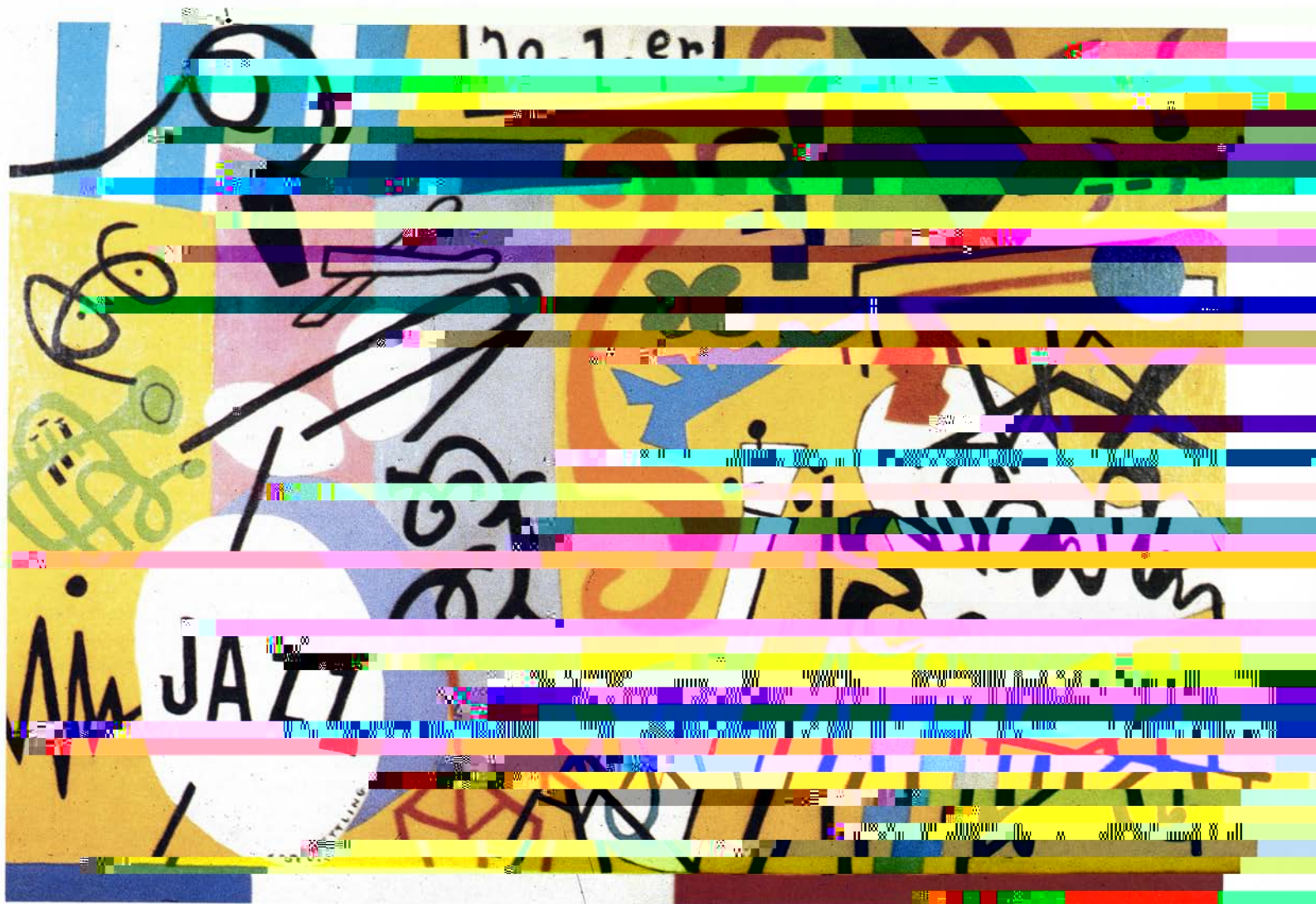




29. George Weiming, 7 2006



8. Page No. P. H. P. H. 1966





22. Ge.  Rae Wejtina. Ja 



# GEORGE WETTLING

April 16, 1954, *Celebrity Service's Celebrity Bulletin* picks its celebrity of the month along with Willie Holders, Allen, Ella Fitzgerald, Ivonne DeCarlo and Poniand Hoffa. George Wetling, the multi-talented painter, writer, photographer and highly skilled jazz musician. He died at Weir Hospital thirteen years and one month later, remembered by a few, but not many, was a bad little sort of an in-between time in terms of the historians and scholarly types: it's a pity that quickly he's been forgotten. Don't mean by you jazz fans or even jazz fans who emerged in the 1970's who have had little or no opportunity to hear his music, let alone know about him but by the current batch of writers, critics and educators who should know what better in Wetling's oblivion is, however, much more complicated than simple happy scholar's ill-informed listeners who really believe *Spain on Gvra* plays jazz.

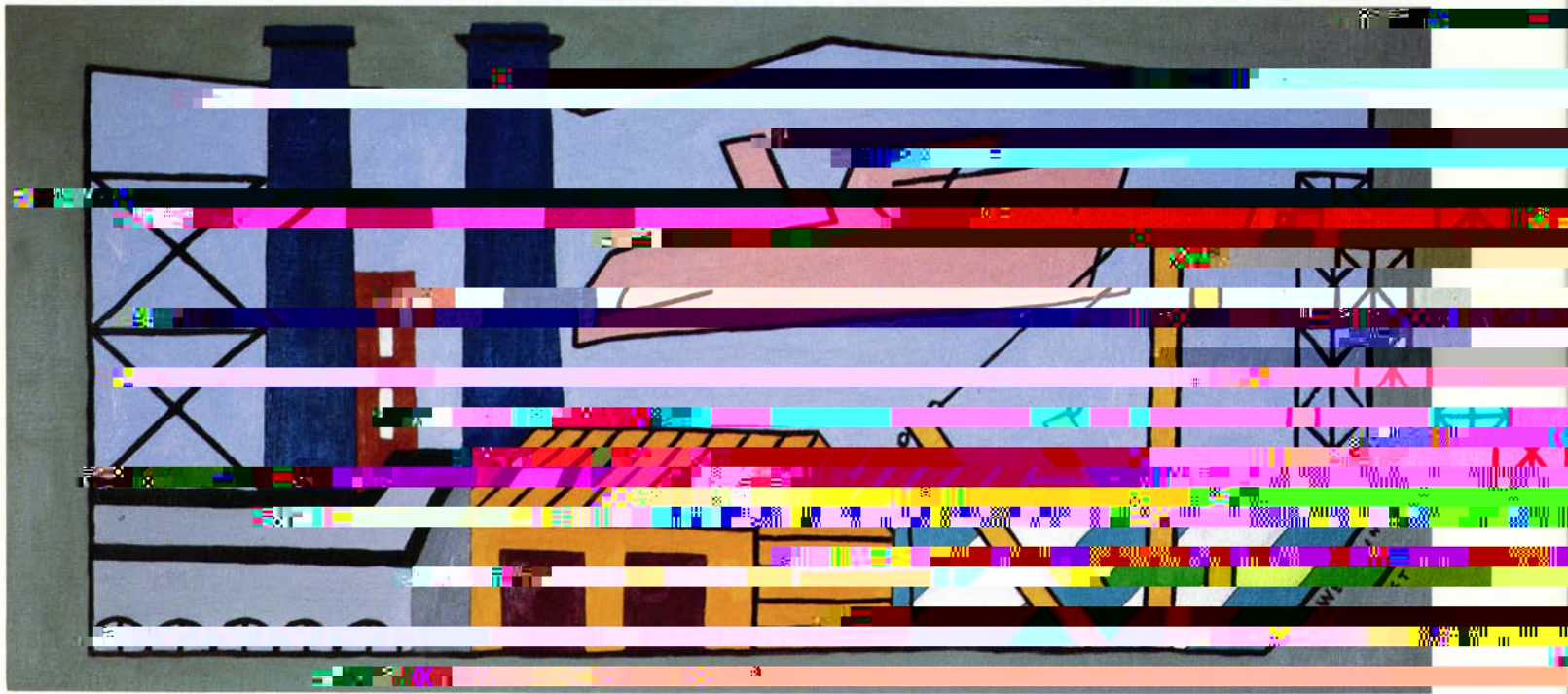
George Wetling the same year as Dave Tough and two years before Gene Krupa, the others in the triumvirate of exceptional white drummers from the midwest. He was in Chicago by 1921, the right place at the right time able to be influenced by the influx of great musicians from New Orleans and some equally great young musicians growing up in Chicago. By the time he was twenty he had already formed life-long friends and recorded with Muggsy Spanier, Frank Teschmacher, Joe Sullivan, Freddie Condon and a host of others. He was not only an exceptional drummer with small jazz ensembles but was also sufficiently versatile to handle big band chores with Paul Whiteman, Chico Marx and Burns. In the 1930's and the ABC staff in the 40's and 50's, jobs like these paid the rent but the musical friendships he made in the 1920's allowed to his finest performances and the best working conditions. But the good jobs were never sufficient to provide a steady income, even during the 1940's and 1950's when the

music that and fewer jobs for a drummer like Wetling, with his old who were less and less. There were no red unions festivals, with the Duke of Dixieland or piano trio date. His last stint on East Hamburgers to hurriedly the stairs. In the Spring of 1960 he no longer climb the stairs. He gave up and died in July. A few weeks later became aware of his

Me: I saw Meard and telephoned me sometime in mid-June 1963; told me Wetling had died, that he be cheered if they were quickly removed. I agreed that it was my duty to help her. I loved the music, had a strong back. I'll be an auto mechanic in Memphis. I agreed with her on all points and we did the job on a sunny Saturday afternoon. When I returned to my apartment I was not surprised to see everything in a state of disrepair. The housekeeper was on leave, wearing a suit but she had not washed the sheets. I had some at his house but I was unprepared to see anything lying about the apartment. I learned, was not surprising. We placed the drums in a small room and then went to see the widow Wetling. She was not having a good day. In fact, it appeared she had but one thing registered very quickly: she said







30. George Westinghouse, *The Westinghouse Building*, 1904.



exhibition at the Sordani Art Gallery and it is likely a third is also present. Age and stylistic similarities point

to the City No. 2 or the City No. 3 being omitted No. One in the cluster.

Wetling's paintings fall into four distinct stylistic periods; examples or each are presented in this

technique and lack of direction, as mentioned in **Maggie Condon** at **My First** **Age**. These

paintings are charming but very primitive. He entered his second phase well before the 1947 show, exhibiting

a much stronger dependence on Stuart Davis; shown in **Stuart Davis**

phase, perhaps his best, began in the late 1940s and lasted into the early 1950's where the complete

dominance of Davis is apparent, as is a secure technique. **Jazz Is In**, a painting that tells about a

recording session and was the focal point of an article are

examples of his work at this time and is perhaps his finest painting. **Roadgraders** and **High As**

exhibited at the **Belphair** Museum of Art in 1952.

are also in the late 1950's shows the influence of Davis but here Wetling's is presented in more personal vision,

as may be seen in **Self Portrait**, and **McSorley's**.

It is likely Wetling did not continue to paint in the 1960's, even though his sketch books continue to 1967. It may well be the sketch books took the place of larger

works for, beginning in the mid 1950's, many of his tiny drawings

**Torino 33** and **Gay Williams 07**. It also appeared to have stopped to

gave up painting. There is nothing in his scrapbooks to suggest you did his album

unclear why he stopped, as he was

supposedly no longer interested but this seems unlikely. The death of

Stuart Davis in 1964 was probably demonstrated he had stopped well before

the lack of commerciality would have stopped Wetling. I don't seem to be the kind of person who was only

reasons that he stopped because of personal disorders and serious health problems. Wetling's

medium of work

into

mitigated against his painting but as gloomy as the circumstances might have been, it might

real and

seems to have suffered a severe case of lack of confidence and this condition was exacerbated by some very poor guidance.

Hidden away in the back of Wetling's large scrapbook of clippings I found

matchbooks and in cheap magazines, sharing the

George Wetling; he sent in a dime to be turned

employee of this school, offering all sorts of manufactured suggestions on how Wetling might

improve. Apparently Wetling would submit a picture

repaint the picture showing him how it might appear

properly executed. Perhaps it would have been best

every one

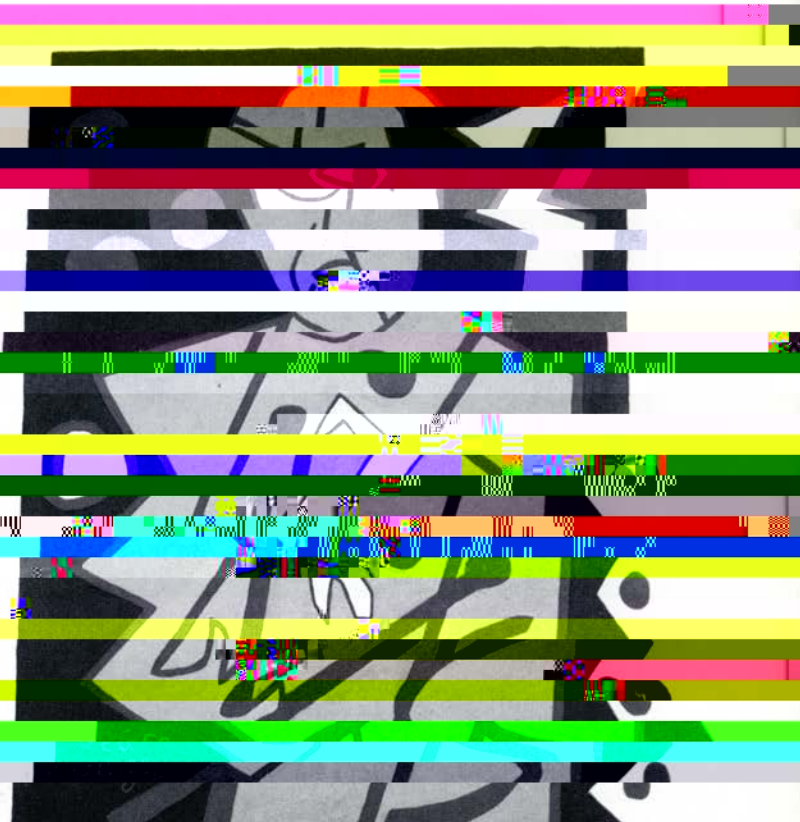
but such no prominently exhibited at county fairs and

reduced to working for the

paint. There is even a

Art School store plus a \$10 bonus for a professional photographer to take a picture to travel along with the jazz drummers, a student and close friend of one of the finest painters this country ever produced. And \$10 for a photograph? George Wettling had by Wegae, Ghon Mill, Lisette Model and goodness knows how many other photographers of note. Wettling started painting the walls of the apartment from which Eddie Condon was being evicted and ended fumbling about with the Famous Artists School. Both pursuits equally ridiculous, but in between, he produced some good work.

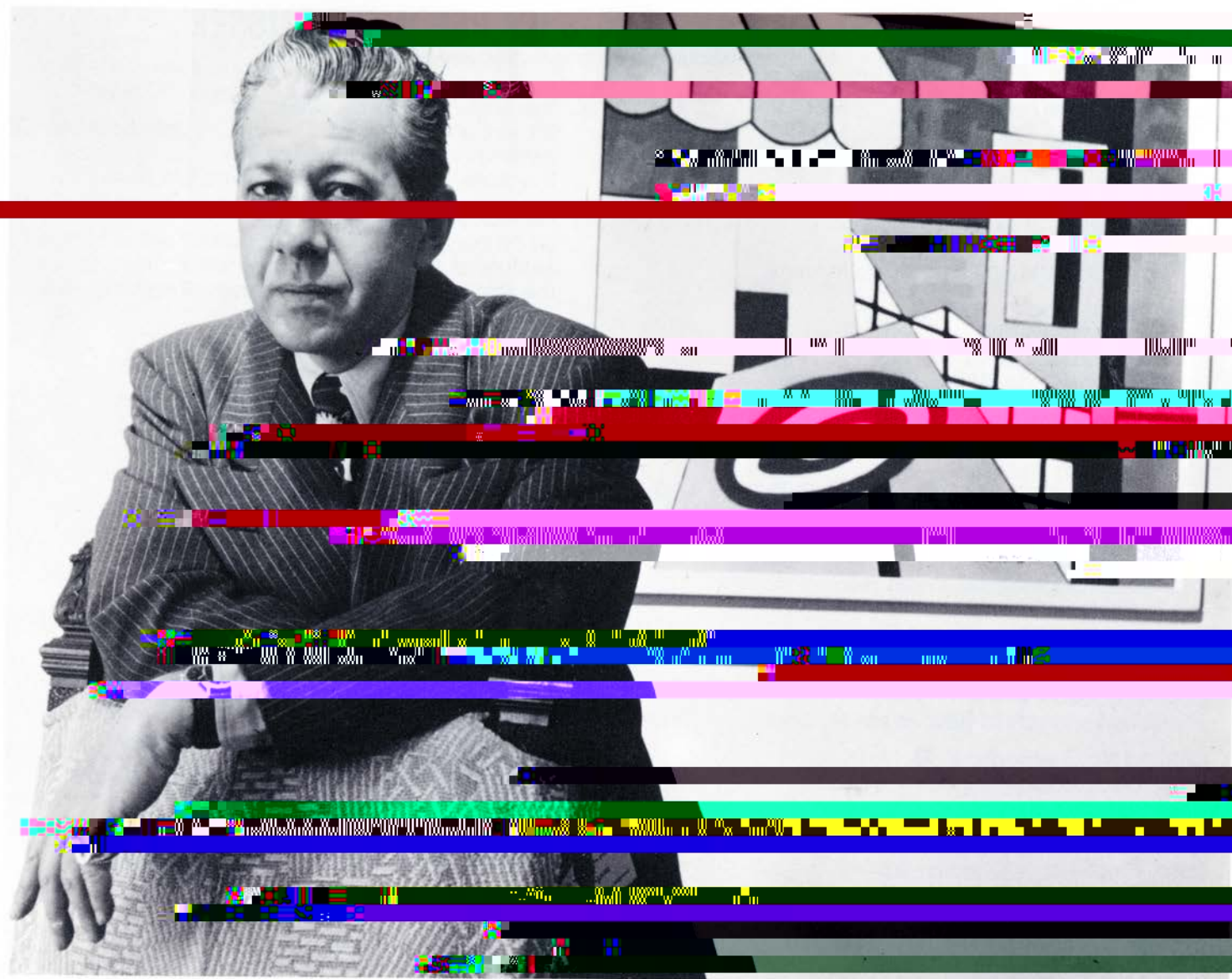
George Wettling was not a great painter but he was a more than adequate disciple of Stuart Davis. He certainly painted better than Davis. He was also a fine photographer, in the same manner as Ben Shahn and Reginald Marsh. His writing was inventive and witty. Every artistic endeavor he approached, music, painting, photography, writing, showed a genuine creative flair. There was, however, a flaw somewhere in Wettling's personality; his personal life was a shambles and he was unable to cope with the way in which our chaotic society of its more creative, though faintly uncommercial, citizens. Had his personal affairs been better organized he could have perhaps overcome the difficulties caused by a chaotic commercial life but each of his friends, Eddie Condon, Marian Ivy, Berland and myself all the more for it. His life would long ago have been spent on 57th Street or gracious somewhere. Most of Wettling's paintings are dispersed desecrated or abandoned in forgotten attics. A pity. He was a good painter and he deserved a better treatment.



24. George Wettling, Self Portrait

Hank O'Neal  
3 February 1986





Photograph of [unclear]



# CHECKLIST OF PAINTINGS BY KY PFF WFF RISSH I

(All dimensions in inches, height)

- Beauty and...** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 18 x 24  
Courtesy of Hank U'Neale
- The In...**  
Oil on canvas, 18 x 24  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Down...** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 18 x 24  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Dance Around the Fire,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 18 x 24  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Life Room,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 35 x 24  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Anything Goes No. 2,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Untitled No. 3**  
Oil on canvas, 24 x 36  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Ditto,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 24 x 36  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- The Turtle,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 24 x 36  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- The Twins from Mars,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 24 x 36  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Parisian Sewer,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 24 x 36  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Self-Portrait,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 30 x 40  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Friends,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 24 x 36  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Subconscious,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 22 x 28  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Low Proviso,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 45 x 36  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Untitled No. 10,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 24 x 36  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Untitled No. 11,** 1966  
Oil on canvas, 18 x 24  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
- Explos...**  
Oil on canvas, 18 x 24  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers

19. **Untitled No. 11, 1966**  
Oil on canvas, 36 x 24  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
20. **The Prisoners**  
Oil on canvas, 36 x 24  
Institute of Jazz Studies,  
The State University of New Jersey, Rutgers
21. **Faces in the Crowd, 1967**  
Oil on canvas, 40 1/2 x 30 1/2  
Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy Day

## CHECKLIST OF PAINTINGS BY GEORGE WETTLER

(All dimension in inches; height precedes width.)

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| 22. <b>Jazz Is In</b><br>Oil on canvas, 22 x 30 1/4<br>Courtesy of Hank O'Neal   | 28. <b>Baby Dadd</b><br>Ink on Paper, 10 x 17 3/8<br>Courtesy of Hank O'Neal                           | 34. <b>Untitled</b><br>Pencil sketch, 9 x 11<br>Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Portland       |
| 23. <b>Roadrunners</b><br>Oil on canvas, 22 x 30<br>Courtesy of Hank O'Neal      | 29. <b>Red Wagon</b><br>Ink on Paper, 5 x 4<br>Courtesy of Hank O'Neal                                 | 35. <b>Untitled</b><br>Oil on non canvas wampaper, 10 x 24<br>Courtesy of Hank O'Neal   |
| 24. <b>Self Portrait</b><br>Oil on canvas, 20 x 16<br>Courtesy of Hank O'Neal    | 30. <b>The Queen Mary</b><br>Oil on canvas<br>Courtesy of Phyllis Condon                               | 36-40. <b>Sketchbook</b><br>Courtesy of Hank O'Neal                                     |
| 25. <b>Untitled No. 1</b><br>Oil on canvas, 16 x 12<br>Courtesy of Hank O'Neal   | 31. <b>Maggiè No Neck</b><br>Oil on canvas<br>Courtesy of Maggiè Condon                                | 41. <b>Gin Mill, c. 1950-53</b><br>Oil on canvas, 12 x 10<br>Courtesy of Richard Hadley |
| 26. <b>Left Hand</b><br>Oil on canvas, 13 7/8 x 9 7/8<br>Courtesy of Hank O'Neal | 32. <b>McSorley's Old Ale House, 1958</b><br>Oil on canvas board, 16 x 20<br>Courtesy of Jon Aaronsohn | 42. <b>Stuart Davis</b><br>Oil on canvas, 9 x 11<br>Courtesy of Earl G. ...             |
| 27. <b>Untitled</b><br>Oil on canvas, 7 x 5<br>Courtesy of Hank O'Neal           | 33. <b>Untitled</b><br>Oil on canvas<br>Courtesy of Hank O'Neal  |   |

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