

June 18 through August 6, 2023

# *Intrinsic* *Visualizations*

## a Robert Joy/Scarlett Memorial Exhibition

Robert Joy/Scarlett (1943-2023) was a Kansas treasure that we lost on March 23, 2023. He made unique artworks that captured feelings about himself, his life, and a world of topics. As artist in residence at the Shafer Gallery in Great Bend, he worked in the public eye and continually amazed with his prolific output. To provide an example of his thoughts, here is the artist statement and biography he used for his Sandzén Gallery exhibition in 2025:



Untitled drawing by Robert Joy/Scarlett

I was asked to write a Bio. I suppose it would suffice to give my dates, schools and my work. Okay... Here are some dates. I'm sixty-six years old so far this year. Next year, I'll be sixty-seven and on and on. Now as for my schooling, I went to Garden City High School, because I had to go. It was then, as it is now, the law. I wasn't a very good student and no one on this earth was happier to graduate and leave, than myself.

What was it that actually influenced my artistic ability the most? Well, I guess it was a little fluke in my brain and something I was completely unaware of until very late in life. I had a learning disability, but I didn't know it and maybe it was best that I didn't. In the 1950's and 60's, I was diagnosed by my teachers and peers as stupid and lazy. All I had to do was apply myself and I'd be as productive as everyone else. Believe me, there would have been no greater joy in my life than to be like everyone else.

Art and speech class seemed to be the only places I could excel. I actually did better in the speech class, because it had the least pressure on me to conform. Art class in high school was really geared to conformity, but there I could at least fake conformity and thus I survived to graduate.

To make a long Bio short, I really sucked in art, but it was so easy for me to fake it. I even ended up with a Master's degree in art. (I should mention at this point, that I was eventually drafted). I went to Vietnam, but I came home in one piece, got married, had kids, went to college on the GI Bill to get a teaching certificate and I got a job for USD 428 in Great Bend, KS as a junior high school art teacher. I served, nine years of that.

I hadn't gone to college to hone my handwriting skills, but it was certainly my own style and I didn't have to work at anything special to produce that style. I just moved my pen

on a paper and there it was without the slightest effort. Why couldn't I just do the same thing in drawing and painting as when I wrote?

So I just simply started drawing and all the magic began to happen. My wonderful screwed up brain, with all its crazy way of seeing things just locked on to that freedom and off I went. I suppose all those years of college had some effect, but no more than anything else.

One of my two wonderful, talented daughters, has since, diagnosed this old head as ADHD and maybe my own little diagnosis of some dyslexia has cleared up the mystery as to why I had such a horrible time in school. Still, all that being said, being stupid and lazy on one side of my head, helped the other side to become more developed. My brain just waited until I decided to stop trying so hard to conform to be with all those other motivated folks. It just waited until I finally did what came natural.

I really consider my art a "Grass roots style," but I was told by the powers-that-be, that I must conform to be something else. Sorry, Bob, but because you simply have too much education to be a grass roots artist, you can't be one of us! So... I decided to start my own school and I've declared to be in *The school of just being myself*.

Everyone that knew Bob/Scarlett will cherish his legacy and everything he encompassed. He is deeply missed by his wife, Marcella, who has continually championed and supported his art endeavors, and all of his family and friends.



Birger Sandzen  
- MEMORIAL GALLERY -

401 N. First Street, PO Box 348, Lindsborg, KS 67456

(785) 227-2220 sandzengallery@gmail.com www.sandzen.org

Gallery Hours: Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m.