



by Prof. James Thorp, Virginia Tech, USA

94

hobby

Art - XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Fine Art

by Prof. James Thorp

PAC World magazine is introducing the art of Prof. James Thorp.

IT IS AMAZING HOW little we know about the



Prof. James Thorp, painting on the pool table in his family room

hobbies of our colleagues and how we find out about them. When I visited Stan Horowitz for his Guru interview, I noticed on the wall in his apartment a large painting that looked like a Jackson Pollock. Knowing how expensive they are, I asked Stan about it. He smiled and told me that it was actually a painting by Prof. James Thorp – another guru in our industry. At the next IEEE Power Systems Relaying Committee meeting I asked Jim if he would be interested to share with us his interest in art and how he started painting in this style.

Prof. James Thorp: I was always interested in art. I won a scholarship to an art institute in grade school and took some art courses as an undergraduate at Cornell, New York.

We had a box of little paintings like the vocabulary cards in a language class with the entire Italian renaissance from Cimabue to Michelangelo.

Half of the tests were a sequence of photos of paintings that lasted about a minute. For each of them you had to say who painted it, when, and where it was. The other half was an essay question.

I took figure classes at Cornell and tried my hand at charcoal and oil. All that remains of that period is the self-portrait. You will have to accept my claim that I looked more like the painting then than now. I did a few graphics while on leave in

New York at AEP (American Electric Power). My cousin was an artist and lived in a loft near the World Trade Center. Some of her friends were into graphics. Other than an occasional hand drawn Christmas card, I sort of let the oil paints dry up and spent most of my time working for a number of years. If I had a hobby it was golf.

When I became Department Head at Cornell my Assistant Department Head was named Pollock. We cooked up the idea that I would make a fake Jackson Pollock, he would sign it, and we would hang it in the undergraduate student office and pretend we were so rich we had an original Pollock.

I really enjoyed doing the painting and we had a lot of fun with the incredulous students. Before I knew it, I was creating similar painting to match someone's rug or bedroom



furniture, etc. Friends would see one in my home and ask for one.

2 This is the painting the Dean auctioned off



The buyer gave it to an institute on campus that was moving into a new building. It is now hanging on the third floor of that new building.

I paint one color a day and let it dry, so the next color doesn't run. It means the trick is to keep the composition in your mind for days.

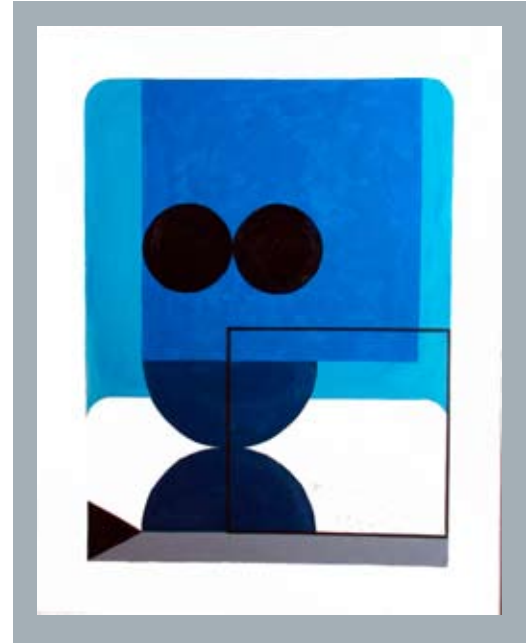
Stan Horowitz has one, as does Arun Phadke (*we traded paintings - he is a real painter*). Jaime DeLaRee has two and is responsible for the idea of painting on glass. I have since learned Jackson Pollock painted on glass.

My Dean, two Assistant Deans, and a department head acquired the paintings after the movie about the Franklin award showed one of each of our paintings. The producer got a kick out of our both being painters but in drastically different styles. The Dean auctioned off one of my paintings to raise money for a \$100 million building. I told him I could not paint fast enough to help.

Prof Thorp paints on the pool table in his family room in Blacksburg, one color at a time. He has to keep the composition alive in his mind until its completion.

Prof J. Thorp: "The blue graphic was painted when I was on leave at AEP in 1976-77.

It was influenced by my cousin's friends as was the collage on page 94".



3 Oakland Raiders

Named by a football fan friend.



4 Personal property

to an Assistant dean at Virginia Tech.



5 Personal property

Colors commissioned by my business manager





4 Supercomputer simulations for a 750 x 750 grid in color

Fractal Art is a genre concerned with fractals—shapes or sets characterized by self affinity (small portions of the image resemble the overall shape) and an infinite amount of detail, at all scales. Fractals are typically created on a digital computer, using an iterative numerical process. Lately, images that are not technically fractals, but that share the same basic generating technique and environment, have been welcomed into the FA world.

The Fractal Art Manifesto (by Kerry Mitchell)
<http://www.fractalus.com/info/manifesto.htm>



Jim Thorp was born in Kansas City and spent 50 years as student and professor at Cornell University and is about to retire from his "retirement job" as Department Head at Virginia Tech. He has children and grand children in New York but, at least for now, enjoys living on a golf course in Blacksburg. Arun Phadke has to accept responsibility for Jim's being at Virginia Tech. While he has been there they have written a second book and shared the Franklin medal in Electrical Engineering in 2008.

This is a computer generated fractal I published in Phys Rev Letters that started my research in chaos and fractals. It's actually a "truncated fractal" - so named by Benoit Mandelbrot himself. I think that is another reason I paint things that look like fractals. Computer analysis has found fractal patterns in Jackson Pollock's works.

6 Color combinations on glass - expressing the author's talent and his fans' creativity

The glass allows the colors to change with light fluctuation

Belongs to Jaime De LaRee who had the idea to paint on glass

