



JOE SLUSKY, *ASHBY ODYSSEY*, 1969-75, PHOTO 2015

**RUSS MCCLURE ON JOE SLUSKY'S *Ashby Odyssey*:**

This is a piece made from found metal objects and material from 1969 to 1975. Joe literally did this on his own. He never had assistants like you see nowadays. Teaching at UCB, he was very limited financially. He would go down to the old Judson Steel property in Emeryville before it became Ikea and pick up all these throwaways. He shaped and manipulated and forged them and put this thing together over seven years. It's called *Ashby Odyssey* because the work was created on Ashby Ave. where the old bus station was.

What I see, in terms of the European influence, is Futurism from Italy and Suprematism from Russia leading into the Bauhaus School of Walter Gropius, and then coming into the '60s with Pop and Funk Art. In terms of the motifs, there are probably six or seven schools of art in this piece. And it's incredible how they all come together in this one piece. It doesn't feel like a collage of fragments because it has its own unity.

You don't realize it, but during those years Joe put the piece down and went to New York and Europe to get more inspiration. He went back and forth that way. I just find it amazing. He was anti-war, and all that—and the piece is emblematic of that, too. The early '60s

were, I think, the most inspirational time maybe for Joe and for a lot of artists in the Bay Area. It was just like Voukos' period in the mid '50s up to 1959. That four-year period was just incredible for Peter.

**ON HIS PARENTS:** They adopted my sister and me in their late 50s, if you can believe it. It was unheard of in those days. My father was Scottish. My mother was Irish. I was born in Korea in 1957 and came to this country in 1967. My father was a very noted engineer who worked for both Julia Morgan and William Randolph Hearst. He was born in 1905. My father always wanted to be an architect, but he was a civil engineer. He went to UC Berkeley and got his degree and then went back to the Castle, where he was the superintendent of construction.

Julia Morgan was the head architect of the Hearst Castle. She called the shots. She was the one—this petite little woman, 4' 10"—who told the construction people, all these Irish, Italian, Polish laborers what to do. It was an amazing dichotomy.

The Hearst Castle was never finished and my dad retired in 1945. Hearst gave away the "ranch house," which is what he called it, to the state of California. ♦



our other Prius up to idyllic Point Reyes Station. She parked across from Toby's Feed Barn and, coming back to the car twenty minutes later, discovered the front end was scrunched in. So I found myself in a second dance with my insurance agent. More to the point, I remembered having a friend in the dent removing business. It's what brought my wife and me to Russ's place one chilly morning in December.

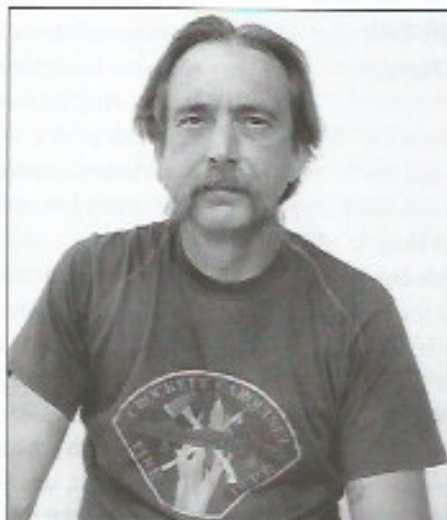
**PREMIER AUTOBODY** sits on San Pablo Ave. in a west Berkeley neighborhood that's home to an intriguing variety of cultural and individual life. The shop sits between a 99 Cents Only Store and the BrasArte World Dance Center, a non profit that seeks to preserve Brazilian culture. Directly across the street, you can visit the Sacred Rose tattoo parlor, the Indus Village restaurant, a Wells Fargo Bank and the Halal Food and Meat Market. Down the street a block, there's the Middle East Market, a tapas bar and a Mexican grocery store. Just up the street, you could check out an aikido dojo while around the corner you'd find the Bombay Spice House and the Sari Palace. Just a short block west you could check out Sacred Laughter, "an arts place dedicated to taking life less seriously." And nearby you could stop in at the Priya Beauty Salon, Mission Hill Baptist Church,



RUSS MCCLURE WITH SLUSKY'S ASHBY ODYSSEY BEING RESTORED

Milan Indian Grocery, the Thai Table or Kombucha to the People, where you could sign up for a class. If you wanted to think about it first, you could stroll past Philthy Clean Tattoo, Sukam Copy and Print, Isalia's Alterations and peek into the Multicultural Institute to see what they're about.

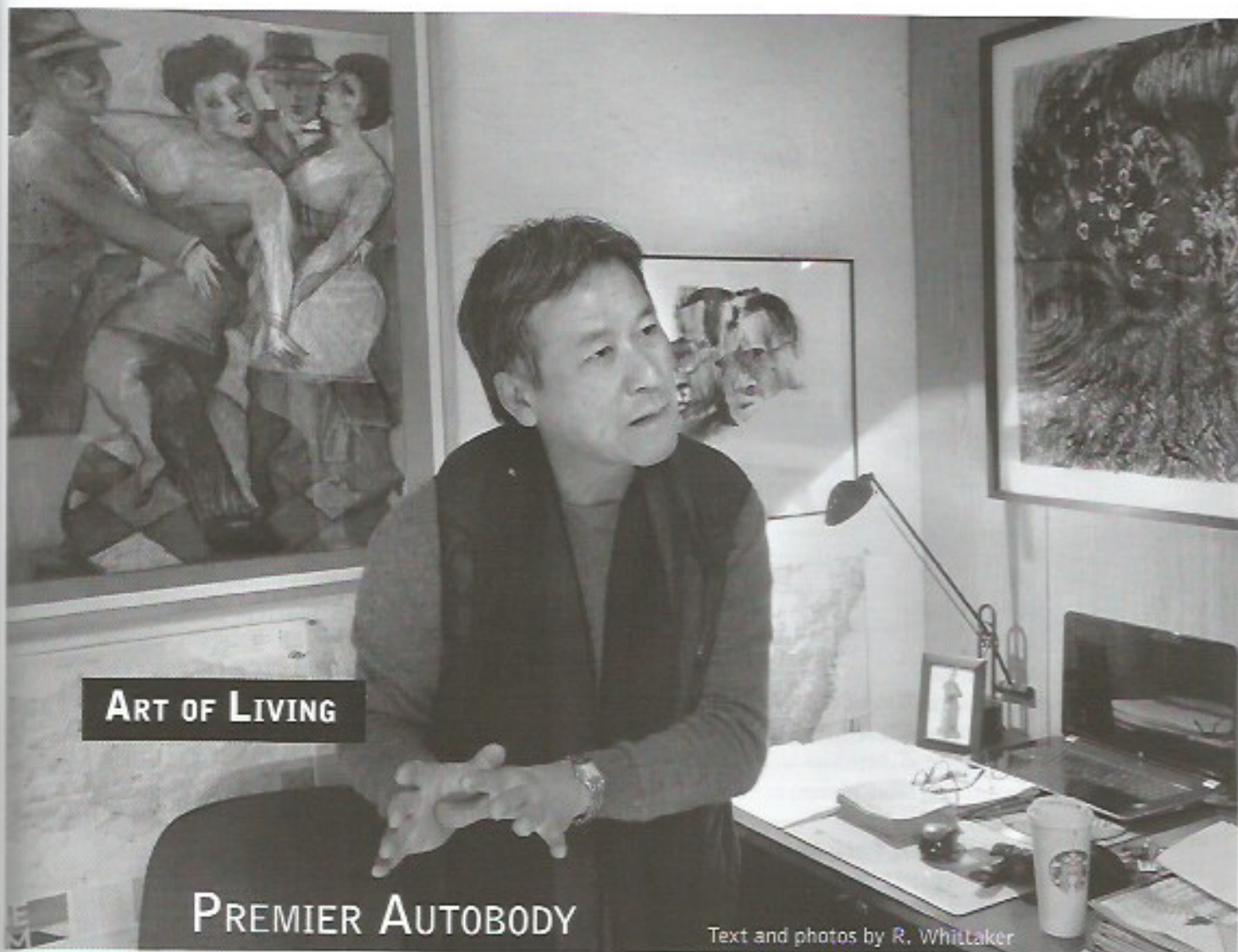
San Pablo Ave. is a four lane ribbon of stoplights passing through an international and economic mix from near and far and from the homeless to the well healed. Beginning in Oakland, it runs north through west Berkeley, the municipalities of Albany, El



DR. GLADSTONE/CLAYTON BAILEY

*The Bailey Museum featured Clayton's work as well as that of his alter ego, Dr. George Gladstone, who, notably, discovered something overlooked in paleontology—the Kaolithic Period. Among the finds Dr. Gladstone unearthed in his explorations is an intact, fossilized skeleton of Big Foot. That, and a wide range of other astonishing things, were on display in the Bailey Museum, now closed.*





ART OF LIVING

## PREMIER AUTOBODY

Text and photos by R. Whittaker

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"It sat there sharing space with several banged-up cars under the wooden trusses of the old garage's roof. I stood there looking at it, at a loss for words for a moment, before exclaiming, 'Russ, why do you have Joe Slusky's work in here?'"

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ARTIST, POLYMATH and friend, John Toki told me about Russ. It was years ago and I imagine it went like this: "Richard, do you know Russ McClure? No? You should meet Russ. He's—and here John would have laughed because—*where were the words?* It was always a tip off.

Spending time with Russ is like pulling into the fast lane. You have to step on the accelerator to keep up. And if the sudden lane-switch ends with a collision, no worries. McClure runs Premier Autobody in Berkeley, California. He's a master at taking out dents, matching paint colors and getting you in shape in a hurry—all without overlooking the details. Time is precious, after all, and life too rich to