

# the Art Cellar

## Wiili B. Summer

1956 - 2004

*“My earliest memories are well tied together with solitary musings over toadstools, moths and many strange configurations of shadow and light. My manner of painting permits but slender amount of pretense of plan...if any. I have been drawing, creating, etc. (moody and eccentric in other’s eye, til they’ve become at times my own as well) since I was little.” - Wiili Summer*

William Holiday Armstrong, AKA Wiili Summer was born in Lansing, Michigan on August 18, 1956. His family moved to Vienna, West Virginia where he resided until leaving home at the age of 16.

Wiili spent half of his adult life working odd jobs while traveling the Eastern states. During a work shift at a video arcade, he threw a man through a plate glass window. Shards of glass fell, slicing through tendons and ligaments of his lower left arm...his painting arm. Wiili taught himself to write and paint with his right hand during the surgeries which followed, eventually able to return to using his left hand despite aches and stiffness.

Wiili was often homeless, which led to brief stays in various types of institutions and rehabilitation facilities. Though diagnosed Manic-Depressive with various paranoid and debilitating phobias, such as agoraphobia, Wiili was highly intelligent, testing at an IQ level of 163 at age 6.

The son of a veterinarian, Wiili inherited an interest in the world of nature and animals. His focus was mostly birds and butterflies, able to readily identify several species and their habitats, which are often beautiful recurring themes in his paintings. The women in Wiili’s life were also common subject matter. Former or present girlfriends and lovers would be his “angels” or his muse for several paintings.

Wiili would often go the winter months in the mountains brooding and noncommittal to his art, creating dark abstracts (he completed approximately fifty spiders one year). With Spring came emergence of new life for his favorite subjects. new romances also kindle a dormant spark resulting in bright, flowing works in great number. Though often compared to Chagall or Van Gogh, Wiili claimed no influences other than the muse/angels guiding his crooked arm, always encouraging and uplifting. Wiili worked primarily in acrylic on canvas, construction paper, and found objects. He also draws in ball point pen. He created “constructions” or assemblages. Depending on the season, mood, personal interests, or available art supplies, Wiili would fluctuate from bright to drab, clear to incomprehensible.

Wiili B. Summer passed away December 27th 2004 at the age of 47.

