

This book was compiled on a day to day basis as a pictorial chronology of my building the Five Car Stud tableau. The project was started in the fall of 1969 and all work on both the tableau and the Sawdy edition, produced by Gemini G.E.L., was completed by the end of January 1972. Also during this time Lyn and I made eleven exciting, exhausting, time consuming yet wonderful trips to Europe to install and shepherd my shows there. The name Five Car Stud was coined by Los Angeles columnist Art Seidenbaum during his 1970 visit to our vacation home in Idaho. "Sawdy" is the name that was affixed to the door of the pickup truck by its former owner.

As the book developed it was decided to include some introductory writing to indicate how and why the piece was made and perhaps what artistic and/or social implications it might represent. Both Ken Tyler (Gemini G.E.L.) and Maurice Tuchman (Los Angeles County Museum of Art) thought that black and white professionals (psychiatrists, lawyers, educators, etc.) might have interesting insights and comments to make. A number of these people were asked to write something. The plan did not work, the probable reason being that most of them had to work from photographs as they had not seen or physically experienced the tableau when it was briefly assembled at Gemini.

Generally, I think of Five Car Stud as symbolic of minority strivings in the world today. Surface subject matter concerns a black man caught drinking in his pickup truck at night with a white woman. His vehicle has been surrounded and cut off by the parked cars of his six white captors. No attempt was made to indicate an actual geographic location or any historical situation. However, I did use small American flags and the "State of Brotherhood" license plates to create a frame of reference. Total dimensions (approximately seventy-five feet square) were determined by the amount of space required to set up five full-size American automobiles and, of course, the figures.

The man has been stripped by the whites who are in the process of castrating him. The victim's head is a composite of two: The inner one in wax, sadly resigned and quiet, while the outer plastic features scream with the rage and fury of violation. The woman, still in the truck, is vomiting. The attackers are realistic except for their heads, which are made from rubber masks. The bizarre idea of an Emmett Kelly (fun image) pulling the rope, that stretches the leg, that pins the man, who twists and turns, etc. somehow appeals to me. My scene is invented -- the germane complexities within today's society are not.

I first saw the wax head in 1960 and was later able to acquire it through the help of Brooke and Dennis Hopper. In fact, the photograph of me

inspecting it was taken by Dennis in 1967 at the Bekins storage vault in Beverly Hills. The head had been part of a '40's war-time medical display and in adapting it to Five Car Stud I first repaired the nose, had brown contact lenses cemented to the eyes, and then painted the whole thing black. Sculptor Jim Toatley made an oversized clay head and by modeling from the likeness of the original wax features he transformed them into the tormented, screaming visage of the final plastic head. A three piece mold was made in Alf Peterson's Venice foundry, the wax head positioned inside, and the whole thing filled with Mass Cast Plastic. I was fortunate at this point for the head came out as we expected, and I have subsequently learned that to cast different materials together in plastic is almost impossible due to the expansion and contraction factors involved. The head was next farmed out to Tony Day for polishing. John Romeyn signed on as my assistant, and we started collecting automobiles. Bob Bucknam gave me the blue Plymouth and Monte Factor contributed the now bisected Cadillac which extends from the wall (the animal horns were added). Other cars were bought from salvage yards and automobile auctions, each being towed or driven to the house where they were gutted and lightened in every way possible. The steering mechanisms were left intact so they could be readily moved. During this project Johnny was a great help to me in his dual role of working collaborator and photographer.

The pickup truck was a big problem as I wanted a certain vintage and look. Eventually I spotted the Sawdy truck on a used car lot in North Hollywood and since it had just been sold, I had to pay an outrageous \$75 to get it away from its new owner. I left the vehicle pretty much as I found it. There are still some letters to Clarence Fred Sawdy, miscellaneous personal effects and pictures of white women from nudist magazines over the visor. Raul Guerrero stripped the truck while Lyn and I cast Chris Hansen as the white woman. The Sawdy pickup was completed by mid-1970 and patiently sat in the yard with its woman occupant while we vacationed in Idaho that summer.

Herschel Kranitz was my next model and from his cast I made the Emmett Kelly headed man which pulls the rope. The construction procedure on all figures was basically the same. An angle iron skeleton was welded to an appropriate sized 1/8 inch steel base. "L" tabs were fastened at intervals to hold 3/4 inch white pine cross sections and then the plaster cast was nailed in place with additional plaster bandages used to seal cracks and complete the form. A mixture of orange and white shellac was painted on for color and the surface was then fibreglass resined for strength. Clothing was always a problem as the seams had to be split and the garment reassembled and sewn on the body. Hair was usually made from old fur pieces or wigs. At this point the completed and dressed figure always received additional coatings of fibreglass which finished it and related it to the final tableau.

For faces I experimented with bandanas tied over the features, silk stockings pulled down over the head and finally decided on the rubber masks.

This decision was confirmed by the little old man in the Hollywood Magic Shop who kept watching me each time I bought masks. I finally asked him what in the hell he was staring at and he quite apologetically explained that the police want descriptions of all people purchasing masks, as they are frequently used in committing crimes in the L.A. area.

My son Noah and his friend Kierk were cast half and half to form the "sissy boy" who peers from the Corvair. At about the same time I worked out plans with Ken Tyler at Gemini to make the Sawdy multiple. A driver's side door from a wrecked Datsun was bought from a wrecking yard and I made the prototype, "Sawdy A", over the following few months. Jeff Sanders had the uneasy job of seducing Japanese parts through the West Coast dock strike and fabricating actual production on the multiple edition. I sometimes wonder at the reaction in Japan to an order for fifty-five left front Datsun doors!

The next casting was of my 6 foot 4 inch friend, Bob Bucknam, whose large dimensions make up the black man and relates to the oversized plastic head.

I should digress and explain that in actuality there is no black man. If you study the photographs you will see that what appears to be the victim is in reality three separate white figures (each with part of the black body attached) shoved up against a central "pan body" welded from steel in a human torso form. Next, the left leg is attached, the plastic head positioned, and the body/container filled with black water. This water is then agitated by a submersible pump which in turn moves floating plastic letters. These in turn should occasionally drift into position to spell out the word N-I-G-G-E-R.

Carl Frederik Reutersward arrived at the house one night when I was in Cologne and Lyn was out for the evening. He was on European time and completely exhausted so he decided to sleep in one of the cars until someone came. In the semi-darkness he opened the door of the pickup and the sight of the white woman inside aged him drastically before he realized that she was part of a piece. He subsequently was cast as the Bela Lugosi figure that wrestles the Negro's left arm, his body also concealing the electrical controls for the pump.

Ken Rodenbush was my next model and had the uncomfortable task of trying to maintain a stress pulling position while being cast. His final mold became the man holding the Negro's right arm; however, I plan to change his animal face mask to one of an idiot boy before the tableau is shown.

The construction of the black's two legs was simple, but time consuming to make and the next hard cast was that of Chris Taylor, who ultimately became the castrator. I used Chris because of the curve in his back which somehow helps to

impart action to a static scene.

The shank of the penis was made from a piece of 3/4 inch steel shaft which I welded to the frame so it would be strong enough to withstand attacks by vandals or souvenir hunters. The penis head was made from a peen which was hacksawed from an appropriate size hammer and welded to the shaft. A porno magazine provided sufficient detail to grind and shape the head and to also weld in the dorsal vein. The scrotum was made from a cast iron trailer hitch incised with a cutting torch and welded in place. The right hand of the castrator holds the knife, the blade of which disappears into the wound. Immediately behind the castrator is the figure I cast from Dwight Whitney which stands on the black man's ankle, calmly holding his shotgun and absurdly wearing a Christian cross around his neck.

Dr. Keith Berwick and his wife were at the house one Sunday morning and after breakfast I cast his hands as replacements on the Kenny Rodenbush figure. We were drinking champagne and as the molding took shape he became very excited about doing a Channel 28 documentary in my studio under actual working conditions. Having done far too many interviews and TV programs, I was not enthusiastic, but as Keith persisted over the following weeks I finally called the program director and said that I would do the show only if Dr. Berwick, while he was interviewing me, could be tricked into being my model. It was arranged and we actually surprised Keith on camera by stripping him down to his shorts, rubbing oil over his body and making a plaster cast. He stood around in his skivvies, his good-natured cooperation versus his supposedly straight-laced history professor image aiding the creation of an interesting film (very funny fan mail from the viewing audience). He was the last figure cast and became the man obstructing the pickup door.

The next step was to photograph the entire piece for the nighttime scene in the Sawdy edition. We ordered five yards of dirt delivered and spread on Gemini's asphalt parking lot. Meanwhile, John Romeyn and I trailered each car and the figures down the hill. Assembly took two days during which time I also fibreglass resined the cars. Bob Bucknam took the photographs and we struck the piece the following day, trucking the cars back up the hill. Lyn and I then left for my show in London.

Maurice Tuchman had decided to include Five Car Stud in the Los Angeles Artists show at the Hayward Gallery in October 1971. While in England I worked out details for installing my tableau. It turned out that the architecture of the Hayward Gallery is inadequate to permit large sculptures through the inside doors and up the elevator, so a plan was devised to stop traffic on the Waterloo Bridge early one Sunday morning and swing each box across to the roof of the museum by a large construction crane. By spring 1971 it became evident that additional planning was necessary, so the director, Norbert Lynton, flew

to Los Angeles to finalize the show.

When Lyn and I arrived back in L.A. we discovered that the polyurethane resin had never hardened and each car in the tableau was now covered over with a sticky fuzz of tree leaves and dirt. The only thing capable of softening and removing the mess without damaging the automobile lacquer was a foul-smelling, poisonous mixture called Xylene. A whole crew helped clean the cars, notably John Reed, Don Steinmetz, Chris Taylor and Rick Cohan. The yard looked like outer space with guys in face masks and heavy rubber gauntlets rubbing and picking away at the cars. It took three weeks of hard work and in the end the Mustang had to be repainted at Earl Scheib's.

In June, on its way to Europe, Five Car Stud was again trailered down the hill, this time to Cart & Crate where Freeman Butts made individual garage/boxes for each car. The figures were also crated, the whole tableau fitting inside fifteen cases. England paid for this work and also contracted for three ocean containers preparatory to shipment. Meanwhile, the family and I went to Idaho for the summer and from there I again went to London to dismantle and pack my show at the I.C.A.

From London I next travelled to Amsterdam to install The Beanery at the Stedelijk Museum and there received word that Five Car Stud had been deleted from the Los Angeles show, ostensibly because it was too expensive and difficult to ship. I later found that probably the subject matter of a black castration was more sensitive and difficult than England cared to cope with. (I was subsequently amused when Newton Harrison's symbolic catfish execution and feast so disrupted and disturbed the English equanimity.) The fifteen boxes were warehoused for the summer and came back to the hill when we returned from Idaho -- this time on big trucks and with a crane. Once more Her Majesty's government footed the bill.

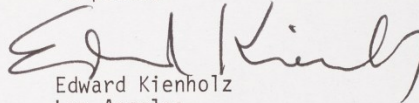
Maurice Tuchman then wanted to show the piece at the Los Angeles County Museum this spring, and as the galleries are scheduled for complete refurbishing, to paint the walls black and cover the stupid custom carpets with dirt would be of no consequence before the reconstruction work is started. His notorious Board of Trustees, however, overwhelmingly voted the proposal down in some vague demonstration of censorship or aversion to controversy (or probably just aversion).

Meanwhile, Harald Szeeman has asked to show Five Car Stud in the forthcoming Documenta V exhibit in Kassel and as I write this the tableau is on its way (barring catastrophic acts of nature or more dock strikes) for a premier showing in Germany this June. Lyn and I will fly to Kassel for the installation. For both of us this will be a special moment since it represents the culmination of two years of intensive work.

I should probably add that in my mind my work has always taken on a kind of life and identity of its own and as I push one way it seems to push back another. In this continuing internal dialogue I understand things better and do hopefully grow.

The conversation with Five Car Stud is still very painful and slow, but one thing has been established for sure: if six to one is unfair odds in my tableau, then 170 million to 20 million is sure as hell unfair odds in my country.

In peace,



Edward Kienholz
Los Angeles
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