

J. C. Whittaker was born September 21, 1942 in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, England. In 1987 he moved from St. Just-In-Penwith, Cornwall, England to the U.S.A. and now resides in Cambria, California.

### **ART EDUCATION**

The London School of Printing and Graphic Arts, England-1961  
St. Martins School of Art, London England-1962  
Harrow College of Art, London England-1963  
North East London Poly, London, England-1967  
Nornsey College of Art, London, England-1968-1972

### **INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS**

Space Open Studios, London, England-1969  
Kinetic Art-New Works-Brentwood Municipal Gallery, London -1969  
Serendipity-Sloane Square Gallery, London-1970  
International Vending Exhibition-Earls Court, London-1976  
Realities Nouvelles-Salon Parc Floral De Paris, France-1971  
International Book Fair-Dusseldorf, Germany-1971  
Kenetic Gallery-Toronto, Canada-1972  
Trigon, Austrian Biennial-New Gallery, Gaz Austria-1977  
Summer Exhibition-Orion Municipal Gallery, Newlyn, Cornwall, England-1998  
Summer Echibition-St. Ives Municipal Gallery, Corneall, England-1986  
Europe Prize for Painting-Municipal Art Museum, Ostende, Belgium 1986  
9th International Biennial Print & Drawing Exhibition-Taipei Fine Art Museum-1999

### **UNITED STATES EXHIBITIONS AND SHOWS**

San Luis Obispo Art Center-San Luis Obispo, California 1998  
The Vault Gallery, Cambria, California 1991 to present  
Harmony Fine Art Gallery, HArmony, California 1990  
Knickerbocker Artist, Juried Show, New York 1992  
Peter and Susan Barrett Art Gallery-Retrospective-Santa Monica, California-2001

### **PUBLISHED ARTICLES**

Architectural Design, Pompidou Center, "Packaged Emotions Products"-1977  
Europe Prize for Painting, Ostende, Belgium, "Friends and Influences"-1986  
Other Times Literary Magazine, "Packaged Emotions Products"-1986  
Studio International-1981  
Art Actuel Annuel [Included with Hockney, Raushenberg, Christo, Miro & Moore]-1977  
9th International Biennial Print and Drawing Exhibition ROC Catalogue-Taipei Fine Art Museum-1999  
The Cambrian  
The New Times  
The Tribune

## Artist's Statement

It was as an art student, in London, that I became influenced by two quite different ways of thinking. The first was embodied by Joseph Beuys, a German artist working at the edge of meaning and myth. The second was from my discovery of the Argentinian writer, Jorge Luis Borges. Although his style of writing is deceptively simple -- using outwardly conventional plot structures -- at each turn, he subverts and rearranges the world in a way that forces you to look at it in a completely fresh way.

I suppose what fascinated me was how they could both take the most ordinary idea and fashion from it something that was, at once, imaginative, ironic, witty, and above all gave a unique insight into the human condition.

In my work, I try to make sense of my everyday experiences. The ideas, concepts and themes draw upon an eclectic mix that covers everything from politics, opinions, and friendships to my immediate environment. In that sense, my paintings, sculptures and assemblages are part diary and part soapbox. Because each work, and often each series, results from an exploration of a set of inter-linked ideas, there is a strong narrative thrust that underpins what I do. It is not conventional story telling as you might understand it, but there is a logical path that you can follow -- though it is not one that I could, or would want to, express in words. As the spectator goes from one work to the next, this narrative helps to guide them through the visual surface and journey onward to discover a complex, and contradictory, world that may sometimes confuse but, I hope, never ceases to amaze.

J C Whittaker, Cambria, November 2000

*The following is a tribute to John Whittaker's four Cambrian paintings written by Christopher Moore*

## **AN ALIEN'S GARDEN OF COLOR**

When you consider that John Whittaker's fondest memory is that of watching his art college burn; when you hear him wax nostalgic on the summer days on the beach in Cornwall that remind him of death in a deep-freeze; when you listen to his stories of the pain and passion of a life in the arts, you are not the least bit surprised to find out that he was conceived during a German air-raid on London. And it is obvious that an errant shock wave scrambled the poor boy's DNA, turning him into something typically unEnglish; for he was born with a thirst for color in a land that has none: and he grew up to become an artist, shaken, but not stirred.

So it begins: a lifelong crawl through a desert in search of water (for isn't color to a painter as water is to a man dying of thirst), and in a land where sunshine is a rumor, blue sky a myth, and the Emerald Isles an embarrassment, what could he find but frustration: black and white: a gray irony? (But unlike most Englishmen, he took no solace in drinking dry wit with a stiff upper lip.) He came to America?

In California there was light, there was life, there was color! Like a firefly in a power plant he drank deep and lit large. And for our benefit he became drunk with color, hallucinated, and purged himself on canvas in a celebration of life, a great splashing tribute to all that is vibrant and vivid and wonderful in nature's moments – especially the unnatural. He has fired a cannonload of confetti over a watershed of whimsy, sharing at last the shock wave in his soul, the excitement he carries for color and light. And blessedly he shares with it his humor, lest we all miss the message, and perhaps, burst into flame.

**Christopher Moore**  
*Author of Practical Demon Keeping*  
*Coyote Blue*  
*Blood Sucking Fiends*  
*(A love story)*