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This just in, Bansky created a work that shredded itself after it sold at auction. The scraps were then resold in another auction fetching \$25.4 million. Not to be outdone, Billy’s got tons of scraps and even ashes, too. This from his *Art Work Elimination Event #1*, Ash Wednesday, 1975: “Five Paintings Will Be Consumed By Fire” and “Five Sculptures Will Be Abandoned at Random Locations”. He’s been lugging ashes around ever since and is finally willing to let each 1-ounce baggie go for a cool mil five. He’s also got stones from his grave; old swim trunks from the swim and shards from other eliminations.

Life With Willy II - Billy’s Willy continues to grow just a bit too big for his britches. At times, Willy even competes with Billy for attention. The wisecracking ventriloquial has not been confined to the travel case ever since the “Free Willy” ransom was dropped at a sleazy eatery in Northern Iowa. The genies out of the bottle. Billy & Willy were first paired in *Driving from Here to There* (See: Vol. 46) and have followed up with the fancy extended performance *My Life with Willy*. Willy is a Spiritualist. He has renounced all worldly goods. The years in confinement and isolation blessed him with superlative powers of meditation and second sight. He’s pledged himself to help others as they struggle with life’s persistent questions. The answers to love, life, health, finances and so much more - are not so much from him - but channel to and through him. He offers individual readings to everyone regardless of age, ancestry, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender/gender nonconformity, vices or diet. In his/her humanitarian role, s/he does not and cannot accept payments of any kind. Willy, does however, want Billy to cash in big-time as his assistant and confidant.

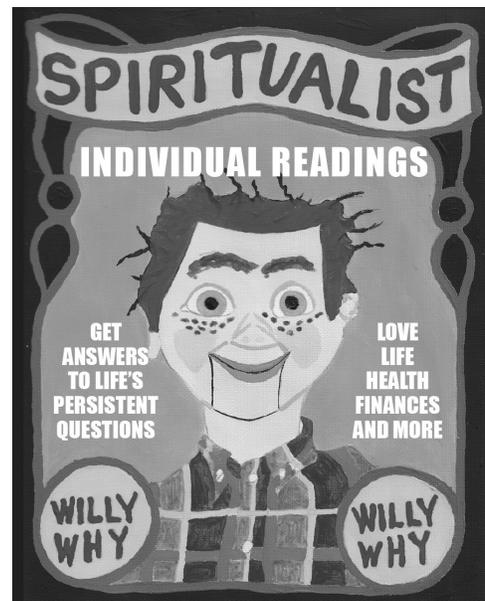
The sessions will - in all likelihood - be held on Zoom for the low, low price of \$29.95 - or rarely - and with added fees - in person (prices subject to change along with our whims). Additional fees will accrue for travel, lodging and his accompanist. We’ve ponied up for his 1/4-page ad in *Big River Magazine* and coordinated the full color posters. See: BigRiverMagazine.com

Before Billy, Willy knew only that dark musty case and a preacher’s knobby knee. He was brought out only to parrot biblical jokes and aphorisms. He knew not from whence he came. His new found freedom sparked a flash of curiosity. After some laborious Internet searches, he believes his lineage flows directly from the hallowed halls of burlesque via the team of William and Wanda Why. Theirs was, for the times, a very risqué coupling between the ventriloquial humorist, William, and the titillating and voluptuous dancer, Wanda. Arte’ Vitae’, the desire for performance is deeply ingrained. This ventriloquial - is - no dummy.

The Spazju Kreattiv Art Collection - Malta

Several works from Billy’s 2017 solo exhibition and performance on the Island Nation of Malta were acquired for the national collection (See: Vol. 43). His works about water are now housed at MUŻA – the Maltese National Art Museum. Much to our delight, Toni Sant reproduced some samples in a deluxe hard cover edition, *The Spazju Kreattiv Art Collection* - €38.00 online: See: kreattivita.org

CAA Again (See: Vol. 46) - Billy zoomed academia with a paper and video, *The Astounding Metamorphosis: Muck Minnow the Gill Boy*, for the College Art Association Annual Conference. It was the first ever-online forum for this world’s largest gathering of art professionals. He joined chair, Toni-Lee Sangastiano, - Marie A. Roberts, Jill O’Connor and Arrie Fae Bronson-Davidson for *The Freak Show in Contemporary Culture and Aesthetics* panel. His paper and 20-minute video were available on the web during February. Unfortunately, the live panel was a premium offering open only to attendees. *Metamorphosis* is the tale of a young boy’s fascination with backend attractions, his journey in art and an eventual run as a sideshow oddity. The artist in him risked life and limb in a Mississippi swim to reclaim the river for life affirming pursuits. A rare case of punctuated equilibrium caused his abrupt evolutionary - or devolutionary - transformation to Gill Boy. The swimmer became more complete with gills and webbing ideally suited to a world of water. It seems especially appropriate with rising oceans and changing times to consider the path from Homo Sapiens to Homo Phibian - or more properly - Homo Phibian Erectus.



The two 4' X 6' Sideshow Banners conceived in the Mississippi River and executed for performances as *Muck Minnow the Gill Boy* were featured in *Metamorphosis* and on the *Culture and Aesthetics* panel. They were painted in the Chicago School style with scenic backgrounds and distinctive borders. Billy continues this backend banner theme, although shrunken into a series of 9" X 12" water media studies, exploring his collected works. *Baba Daba X* represents the 40-Day *Death Valley Desert Fast*. It premiered in the *62nd Midwestern Invitational* at The Rourke Museum, Moorhead, MN. *Willy Willy Why* followed in the Winona Arts Center members' exhibition and as a full color ad in *Big River Magazine*. It announced Willy's journey as a Spiritualist with Billy. We wonder how many more?

The River Arts Alliance 2021 member exhibit *Making History* at the Winona History Center also has an online catalog with Billy's *Baba Daba X*, *Political Prisoner* and YouTube link to the *Metamorphosis* video - See: riverartsalliance.org *Muck Minnow's* Knickerbocker Theatre video is on YouTube.

☐ off white (Italian-American)

Green Privilege We wish we could quit lumping people together by race, creed, gender, national origin and other common denominators useful to bean counters, graphs and charts. It reminds us, "If everyone is an artist, there are no artists." Terms lose their descriptive meaning if they become universal. Systemic racism is real, but if everyone is racist? What does that mean? White privilege is real, but it's not distributed equally. Green privilege (figure it out) probably trumps all. Billy has long been annoyed by all the forms with boxes that keep us in boxes. He identifies as off-white and has stamped his forms with the rubber stamp seen here (circa: Early 1970).

Let them eat cake and all that, but while they're scarfing it down, remember, we are the Bastille. Much like pitchfork-armed peasants - immigrants, refugees and all manner of third-worlders are coming for their share of warmth, comfort, food and drink. Be kind, love your new neighbors and share the wealth. A way rich guy once said, "I'd rather give away half my fortune than lose it all". Good advice.

Pioneering Eco-Sexuals, Annie Sprinkle and Beth Stephens, thrilled Billy with a studio visit. After meeting the groundbreaking pair, we realized he's probably been an Eco-sexual for many years and didn't even know it. His early performances for nontraditional audiences were often considered bizarre or relegated to obscurity until his cow tour took off. Some say the isolated farmhouse years on a minimum maintenance road surrounded by more critters than people drove those works. Not so. He's been happy as an otter performing for - the earth, moon, plants, rocks and all creatures big and small ever since childhood.

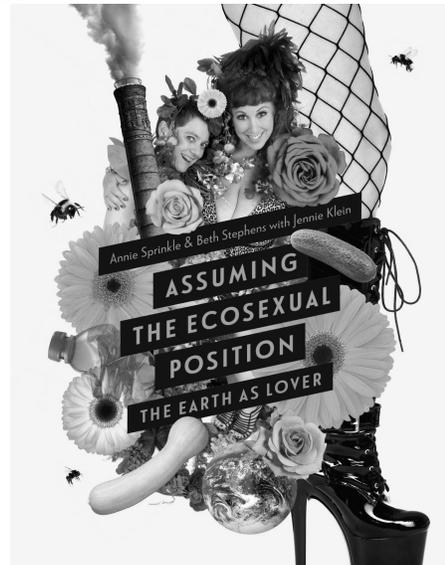
A love affair with the Mississippi River inspired his 2,367.4-mile swim as performance and environmental statement. His early writings declared the river to be his lover - sometimes gentle and kind and sometimes angry. The Zen of stroke after stroke, mile after mile, on and on, hour after hour began in 1987 and found the gulf as reward in 1997. And guess what, he still loves swimming the river. Maybe he's among the Eco-sexual pioneers, as well?

Annie and Beth tag-teamed Billy with an interview for their Pollination Productions and the projects: *Playing with Fire* and *Lover Earth, an environmental art film* (working titles). They shook hands, exchanged books and dove into the interviews. Billy says it was a great pleasure and an honor to work with them. They've been putting some sex and some fun into the environmental movement. When he's tapped, he never knows how the materials will be used, but - as usual - signed his rights away into perpetuity. He trusts Annie and Beth. In the end it's only fair, when people work with him they often sign into perpetuity (plus three weeks). Although, he couldn't get any cows to sign anything. They did leave a pie or two. Billy's *Futurism's Bastard Son* is still available See: billyx.net and *Assuming the Eco-sexual Position - The Earth As Lover* is at University of Minnesota Press - See: upress.umn.edu/book-division. Both books are at all our "better" libraries, museums and retailers - if not - better ask - why not?

Wagging Just a Stub Billy's travel tales are pathetically worn down to a nub. He misses live audiences for live art, but now he Zoom(s) more than he be hard copy. Air travel was once delightful. It was considered crucial for the good ol' American Pie. Travel was supported and competitive to keep people and goods moving here and there and everywhere.

The 1978 deregulation frenzy gave birth to our unfriendly skies. Competition is a farce with only three giants - American, Delta and United with primary ownerships tied to Black Rock, State Street, Vanguard and Prime Cap - at most airports. Four Wall Street investment big shots - call the shots, control the rules and set prices in tandem for air travel. Add to that September 11 fallout, climate upheavals and what-not-have-you. Weary travelers are soaked in surprise fees, frequent delays, shrinking seats and whatever indignity the "shared monopolies" can invent.

No recourse for some of it - but put a cork on corporate greed. Obviously it's not just the airlines. It's cradle to grave. "Three global conglomerates control 85% of US baby formula; just two corporations make 82% of our coffins." - *The High Tower Lowdown* (Oct. 2021) - Don't get us started on Amazon and all the rest. Corporate power increases every hour with no head to put on a plate and no body to incarcerate. The Institute for Local Self Reliance (See: ilsr.org) has a guide with local and state anti-monopoly models that have worked. Maybe it's not too late.



Fine Art Haul Away FAHA - If you are reading this, you are probably a genuine art lover and perhaps even a long-time, way cool and important art collector. We are well aware that collectors sometimes simply run out of room for acquisitions. If you are wondering, where-in-the-heck-ever can you place Billy's latest masterpiece (and we know you simply must have it) never fear, ring up the Art Works USA Fine Art Haul Away (FAHA).

For just modest handling and travel fees, the FAHA Haul Away van with professional art handlers can pull right up to the door and remove an abundance of pesky pieces in fine art drive-a-ways. You have our word and iron clad guarantee all works will be respectfully recycled or humanely destroyed. Alternatively, for an additional creative genius fee, the works can transit through the Billy Boomerang Program and be returned after the artist applies a nice coat of paint.

Losses Column (See: Vol. #46) The international giant, PicRights, extorted a cash settlement from us over an AP image Billy posted on his Franklin Furnace daily climate blog. Ironically, he was actually in the photo holding up half of the huge "PROTECT WHAT YOU LOVE" banner carried ahead of the large inflatable earth in the 2014 NYC Peoples Climate March. He credited the photographer, the Associated Press (AP) and followed all fair use standards as outlined in the College Art Association guidelines. There were plenty of other photos with Billy and the banner, so the image was easily replaced. His attorney agreed PicRights probably had no case, but cautioned court costs are high and proceedings could drag on and on. He got, we got, No time for that. He suggested we pay the settlement and report PicRights to the MN Attorney General. We are grateful for assistance from Springboard for the Arts and MN Lawyers for the Arts in closing this matter.

Way Big Losses: Billy road-tripped with a sad *Oxy* sobbing, "Annie's Outa Here! She's organizing the really big demo in the sky..." His framed 'toon tribute for longtime friend and Vietnam Veterans Against the War organizer, **Annie Bailey**, was dropped on the stage of her Milwaukee Love In. She worked tirelessly to end the war and on veterans' issues like PTSD, the Vets Center and Agent Orange. His tribute also appeared in *The Veteran* along with his regular *Oxy* feature. All available online: See: VVAW.org

Billy and long time coconspirator, Steve Smith, knocked out *X-Ray Glasses* for yet another passing. **Jerry Modjeski** was one of us - a producer and a friend. His ideas and audio skills guided *Little City in Space* to national syndication. Check out: Scorched Ear.com - Billy's harmonica shows up on the Weird Winonans' *Lonesome Cowpoke: Cattle Mutilation Song*. *X-Ray Glasses* was inspired by John Coltrane's elegant transformation of *My Favorite Things*. Billy lyrically attempts to channel Captain Beefheart's voice with the likes of, "X-Ray glasses dipped in Molasses..." while Captain Smitty blows free - the way Jerry liked it. CD Baby posted a longer big band raucous version from *New X: Trios & Duets* on You Tube. If you've got 5' 37" to spare - and you dare, take a listen.

11th Annual Art 4 Shelter Billy donated *Woman in Blue & Orange* (silkscreen print) and *Be Bop Billy* (pencil drawing) both 5" x 7" to Simpson Housing *Art 4 Shelter*. It's an annual fundraiser: "To house, support, and advocate for people experiencing homelessness" - simpsonhousing.org - See also:

Homeless Hilton: NY, NY - Billy's 1990 Franklin Furnace sponsored, unauthorized performance at the NYC Hilton Hotel focused on homelessness and privilege. It was parallel to - but not connected to - the CAA conference panel: *What Are Artists Doing With Their Lives?* Chaired by Audrey Flack - with Billy, Betsy Damon and Allan Kaprow (See: Vol. 8 #1-4).

FranklinFurnace.org - Billy & Willy love the Furnace and its mission to make the world safe for the avant-garde.

The EcoArt Space Blog shined its member spotlight on Billy with an interview excerpt, kind words, swim project images and an opportunity to own his or other Eco-art works in their fundraiser gallery. EcoArt cofounder, Patricia Watts, paid Billy a studio visit at Art Works USA. She collected enough material for a new video, but alas, nonprofits struggle for funds to get their work produced. See: ecoartspace.org

Luddite & All Right Although we are confused about all the requirements, we can confirm that Billy is now studying to become a Luddite. He's grown tired of innovating with tech only to have tech jump ahead - ever mindful of profit - over compatibility. Buy, buy, buy the latest gizmos or say bye-bye with a spit in the eye and recycle - or more likely - landfill the past.

His latest low-tech protest *The Artist as Sculpture* is from *Portrait of the Artist as Political Prisoner*. It is a 5" X 50" plasticized pseudo filmstrip that eliminates the need for electronic technology, players or projectors. The 19 serialized stills are from unauthorized performances in Winona, Rochester, Chicago and the Mississippi River (Pool 6) plus an authorized performance for *Art in Odd Places* in New York City. Famed photographers Margarita Baumann and Kathy Christenson shot the images.

An earlier low-tech, limited edition insurrection documents *Performance for an Unknown Space with Lemons* (1979) - still available from Billyx.net. The 65 signed and numbered, 2015 hand-sewn booklets record his 1980 collaboration with The Lyrical Conceptualist Society, Montréal, and Quebec, Canada.



