

## OLI SIHVONEN BIOGRAPHY

This is the last Biography written by Oli in 1990

My education in art began at the Norwich Free Academy (Connecticut), and continued at the Art Students' League in 1938. After service in the U.S. Army during World War II, my studies were resumed in 1946 at Black Mountain College, primarily with Joseph Albers.

In 1954 – 1956 I taught drawing and design at Hunter College in New York; leaving that position to accept a Wurlitzer Foundation in Taos, New Mexico for a year. After the initial year I remained in Taos with my family, exhibited regionally and taught at the University of New Mexico and at the University of Denver.

My paintings were first shown in New York in 1962 at Betty Parsons Gallery and in 1963 in the Whiney Annual and in a one man show at the Stable Gallery. The Museum of modern Art acquired my painting "Dialogue" from the "Retrospective Eye" exhibition in 1965. The following year I was awarded the purchase prize at the Corcoran Gallery "Biennial 1966" and the Whitney and the Chase Manhattan bank acquired paintings. In 1967, on Henry Geldzahler's recommendation, I received a grant of \$ 5,000. from the National Endowment for the Arts.

In the late 1960's and into the 1970's I sought prospects for Art in Public Places through architects' offices. The Midland Federal Bank in Denver commissioned a painting in 1967. Returning to New York to live, my work was in the important exhibition "Plus X Minus, Today's Half Century" in 1968. A committee selecting artists for what became named "The Empire State Collection" commissioned a large work for an elevator lobby in the South Mall complex in Albany. Another large commission from Walter Netsch, a partner at Skidmore, Owings, Merrill (Chicago) in 1970 – 1971. This painting is in the Library Building at Northwestern University.

In October 1975 I suffered a serious heart attack, followed with complications, which caused a real hiatus in my career. I was advised to avoid strenuous and stressful activity. Despite these limitations in 1977 I accepted a visiting artist position at Louisiana State University. I taught and exhibited there and continued my sojourn, away from New York City, followed by five months in New Mexico. Work from this time was shown at Roswell Museum and then at the Hoshour Gallery in Albuquerque.

I was a guest at "Yaddo" in the summer of 1980 and 1985. During these years I found alternative medical therapy that gradually improved my health and I have been working full time since then.

The Craig Cornelius Gallery in New York and the Hoshour Gallery in Albuquerque collaborated on a mini retrospective for me in 1983. More recently I have shown with the American Abstract Artists. First, in 1986 at the Bronx Museum and in 1987 at the City Cultural Center. "Selections from the A.A.A." are currently touring Eastern Europe until 1992, under the United States Information Office auspices.

In October of 1987 I was awarded a one year grant by the Pollack – Krasner Foundation. I have had a marvelously productive year. Paintings with a new focus and "look" have emerged.

Oli Sihvonen