

1994

Another amazing year of my 1990's!

The highlights and changes were huge. I was 30, and ready for higher quality. I'll focus on the big stuff first.

WORK

I had been working part time, on and off helping brother Brian by remodeling houses for several years by then. It was increasingly taxing for Bri to need to pay me, the pay wasn't great, and I was tired of that kind of labor. I should find other work, and Brian would stress this point. I was in a job rut, too reliant on the freedom of very flexible hours.

Working on my art as occasional good income yet too sporadic to be lucrative enough.

I didn't know what to do, and avoided job hunting which was like pulling teeth each time I opened the newspaper to see what dearth existed there.

(Groan.)

I was having a good year of painting, dedicating to better quality work, was in a few exhibitions, and made a few sales. This made me think that I could eventually make it as an artist if I kept at it diligently!

I had a strong desire to get back to Europe during being 30, but couldn't see this happening on the part time construction work income. The previous year I had sold a large painting to a client of Brian's who had a nice craftsman house up in the affluent hills of Orinda. Since this was via Brian, I agreed to let him use my profits to help keep his business debt paid off. Fair, especially after the help he's given me.

I asked him to pay me back in part with a round trip ticket to Paris, when I had the chance to afford a substantial tour of at least over a month there. That time had potential sometime soon, since he could afford it by summer, and I found another part time job doing fairly mindless work in a print shop in downtown Oakland. With the goal to build and save up funds for my long awaited return to Europe!

The exact *when* was up to the income amount saved, so I saved as much as I could. Looking lean at the time, then opportunity knocked.

P, who I had been in a relationship with during the past few years, tipped me off that our artist friend Richard Fong was looking for artists to work on computer animations for a massive educational project at Mondo Media ; a local multimedia gaming company where Richard was an art director. I heard that we get training and practice time beforehand, so I was on it! Along with a community of illustrator friends Seb, Gavin, Jane, Kevin and more artists with not much computer experience but could draw and paint.

That June I started going in to spend good training time with new software to me. It was Adobe Photoshop [2.1?]

They produced test versions of scenes from the project to help us first master the procedure needed. The illustrations were already created; our task was to animate parts of them. *[the product was Microsoft's Explorapedia]*

Using Photoshop to select figures, copy & paste into each subsequent frame, repainting each frame into a series (and this was BEFORE layers in Photoshop, so every frame had to be saved and backed up) that animated smoothly after being loaded in Macromedia's Director — an early industry standard for 2D computer frame animations. The "repainting" of each frame was highly aided by Photoshop's Clone Stamp tool, being especially helpful with moving textures around. I spent days and weeks there, getting up to speed until I was ready for hire.

Mondo Media was in a nice industrial building on Townsend Street across the road from the Caltrain station, making an easy bike ride from the Mission. I joined the crew of other production artists to be assigned scenes to animate. This was paid not by hours but by each finished animation. So if you were good at the task and your work wasn't sent back by the art directors to redo, then the daily money was good. My assigned section was animals (also for several other artists) Reworking moving fur was tricky, like a coyote, while rhino type skin proved to be easier. I dedicated to the work, determined to make this kind of

career instead of the dead end jobs I had always done. [I quit the print shop gig; the toner ink and incessant machine noise gave me awful headaches]

We had a fun crew working around the clock, rotating our own cd's [The Soft Boys *anthology*, Pink Floyd '*The Division Bell*' and Steve Tibbetts '*The Fall of Us All*' were my 1994 cd's contributed to the mix.] Among the aforementioned artist friends were Academy years colleagues Pete Hermann and Dean McDonald, who got involved earlier on. They would always jokingly sound "*Ka-Ching!*" after an animation was completed! This was good. A brave new world of digital pioneers. Richard and everyone was great, Photoshop was magical, friendly environment and good cash to this starving artist who can't wait to get back to Europe!

MOVING

This new work boosted the likelihood of my travel goals occurring sooner rather than later! I hoped to be there for my birthday, but was coming up too soon as the summer flew by working. The new plan was to fly to Paris by October, return by the new year. Got the ticket for back just in time for Christmas. Yeah — that's nearly 3 months! I loved planning for this. But I had my apartment room to deal with. Sublet or leave?

I chose to give notice and leave. It was a good flat for most

of my 20's, but it seems like a good opportunity to move on. I had a new career direction, paving a higher possibility that I could rent my own place next year, plus I have family to stay with during the transition. I kind of outgrew the place and the roommates. Jim was always great — an artist brother who got me in several years back. By then he became an accomplished fine art furniture maker, rotating outstanding sculptural chairs and tables, that would sell. Creative master works of wildly structured and colourfully dyed wood!

He was also experiencing major life changes, now with a fiance who practically lived there like a 4th roommate. I couldn't imagine them staying. The recent roommate addition Casey was just a bit too passively aggressive for me, and we clashed ; not horribly, but enough to make moving easier.

When I broke the news that I'm officially moving out by October 1st, Jim announces that he and Misako found a place in Oakland. And Casey decided to rent his own studio instead of deal with finding roommates under a renewed lease.

Thus ends the Bryant pad years.

It was a memorable, funky old San Francisco Victorian. Rent was cheap, under \$800 a month total for the whole flat. If I knew then how much rents blew up in just a years time, I might have held on instead of travelling. Regardless, I'm much happier with choosing the latter — by far.

Experiencing Europe the way I did is much more priceless. I spent more than enough time in that flat, with nonstop

impressionable memories of the place and people and artworks from those years.

Onwards! Getting deeper into my 30's, taking charge.

Those are the big changes that I wanted to begin with.

Career / Moving / Europe.

Before lauding my autumn trip, let's backtrack to some of the other highlights and details of '94...

GUITAR PLAYING

I was a drummer for decades. At the start of the year, I was moved to play acoustic guitar, along with artist friend Jason and Jim. I plunked around occasionally, with some limited practice arpeggiating on a nylon string years before, and rarely on a crap guitar that an old flame gave me ; too lousy to want to play much. Jim had a much better acoustic that he pulled out and let me play just about any time, which felt great! [i think it was a Yamaha] While Jason brought his new acoustic for jam sessions. Jim had a Beatles song book that we'd eagerly tear through, learning all sorts of chords. It was a blast!

Finding more songbooks helped build a repertoire of familiar favourites. I got used copies of the classic Grateful Dead songbook and a unique old one of early Pink Floyd songs, both found at Manzanita Books on 20th near Guerrero. Owned by an interesting character named Wayne

to have conversations with every time I stopped in to peruse the racks, finding treasures amongst the clutter. It was one of the now long lost funky used bookstores that used to dot the city. In fact, Wayne printed a small publication titled "*Bookstores of the Mission District*" back then.

Getting better at playing chords really began with Craig showing me basics ; probably around his ski trip visit that winter. [he was much stronger on handling the slopes of Heavenly than I by then}, and later in the year. Otherwise the songbooks helped boost practice, and the jam sessions with Jim and Jason. Jim sometimes playing cello since there was only one decent guitar around. Jim has a good singing voice too, and we all enjoyed belting it out. The Beatles songbook had us going! But realised that much of the chords used in this particular volume were probably transcribed from piano to guitar. [later I discovered more accurate transcriptions]

Anyway, I consider 1994 to be the year I became a guitarist, becoming increasingly accomplished until disease robbed that ability by 2015.

Back to '94...

PROUST SAID THAT

Contributions to the new zine called *Proust Said That*. The brainchild of P Segal, gifted writer and true enthusiast for all things Proust, who needed help with imagery and print

prep, relying on some of the artists and print production pro's in her life to help make this realised. I had the esteemed position as the main illustrator for the first few issues that were started that year. Seeing / reading this zine is a joy, and satisfying to see in the zine racks for sale among other literary publications at City Lights Books in North Beach!

<https://archive.org/details/proustsaidthat01pseg>

To warm up for this adventure of zine making, P took on the role as editor of *Rough Draft* ; the monthly newsletter of the San Francisco Cacophony Society. I had fun supplying imagery for them, and helping further by taking the images to photocopy, riding to Kinko's by bicycle after midnight, returning with visuals to cut & paste into cohesive, surreal drafts. Fun teamwork!

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ab926f8a9e0287fbf928015/t/5cda044a82d811000157f7a8/1557791828826/Rough+Draft%2C+1994.pdf>

I wasn't as active with Cacophony Society events as much as usual that year, collaborating on one event that spring. With Bill Binzen, for a tunnel jam in a bunker tunnel up in the Marin headlands. Jim participated playing cello and drove us and my drums. We had a good turnout of sound makers! The sound decay in the tunnel made for expansive

acoustics, and my drumset was awfully loud — drowning out nearly everyone else. This was remedied by isolating quieter instruments in chambers within the bunker system. Dhaivyd showed up bringing percussion instruments and a tape recorder. This was the most cacophonous Cacophony event I know of — truly unusually literally so! I now have the recording on cd thanks to Dhaivyd. Freaky sounding stuff!

THE HAIGHT ASHBURY FREE BAND

Not much band activity that year, with one standout day when we did a truck gig! Crashing the Haight Street Fair, then to the Mission and back, playing the entire ride. I loved it! My good longtime friend Matt Welbes was visiting from out east, who volunteered to drive the truck. The musicians were a mix of older and newer Free Band members. We met in front of Maya's apartment building where the Haight meets the Inner Sunset neighbourhood. It was one of those windy, foggy summer days, so between wind and truck motion it was challenging at first to play. We got our bearings, and Matt drove us around town at a nice and slow crawl. That was one of the most fun days of the year!

Nick posted a video of the gig on YouTube here : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yr2Q4BbWjI4>

While Matt was in town, Brian drove us and Jim for our annual trip to Yosemite! Which is always fantastic.

CONCERTS

Saving for Europe lightened affording live music considerably, yet there were a few irresistible shows that were fortunately attended.

The year starts with **Todd Rundgren** at The Fairmont ballroom. This was the *No World Order* tour, calling himself **TR-i**, featuring the most unique, "interactive" stage that seemed like a sci-fi set more than a concert stage. Placed in the center of the ballroom so the audience surrounds what fans eventually dubbed as "the Todd Pod". Highly innovative, TR style, designed for interactivity, and the show was a total blast!! TR in high energy form. I went with Brian, and Joe & Jane joined us. January 15, and it felt like a new years party!

Wow - the triumphant return of **Pink Floyd!** In April, with a new album release the same month. This is going to be huge. Tickets went on sale a month previously, so Joe and I planned to meet in line at Tower Records ticket outlet the Sunday morning they went on sale. We knew that the new practice for regulating BASS ticket lines is by a lottery system. This made overnight ticket lines waiting pointless now. Our idea was for the lowest number of the two of us would buy. It turns out to be me, landing about 10th in line — chances for decent tickets looking likely. Joe hands me enough cash for 4 tickets of the 6 ticket limit I was going to get. When 10am struck, the line moved sluggishly. Not

good. It sold out just as I was just the second in line. Ouch! I knew better though, expecting another show to be added. Sure enough, going on sale after only around a 15 minute wait! This was to my great advantage, scoring floor seats 30 rows back! Too bad for the numbers of people behind me who left the line after the first show sold out. I suspect that they eventually got in later, since a third show was later added. Popular stuff, for good reason. PF is an epic quality experience!

The Division Bell is released that April not long before the show by a couple weeks, when I bought it first thing when the door opened at Rough Trade records in the Haight. (y'see I did my research.)

Interesting cover art, as a Floyd album should have. Being the mid 90's, only cd's and cassettes were available. I was possibly the first to buy this in San Francisco. Taking off from there to Golden Gate Park, to sit in the hillside of daisies at the field near 7th & Lincoln where I pleasantly paged through the cd liner notes and artwork on this nice spring morning. Rode home, to thoroughly absorb this excellent new album.

This turned out to be the album of the rest of the year. Always playing at home, and later it was heard all over Europe when I was there by October.

The show was bigger in production than the previous tour of '87-88, for anyone who knows about the *Pulse* tour. I won't expound, but will mention who I enjoyed this with ;

Brian, Joe, Jane, Joe's brother George and his wife (whose name escapes me)

Needless to say, we were completely thrilled!

The **Straw Coyotes**, Dhaivyd's excellent folk oriented ensemble, were in fine performance mode that year. I caught several of their gigs, at the Owl and Monkey on 9th and Irving; Cafe Picaro in the Mission, and across the bay. They had a lovely sound, a cassette release, together for a couple of years. Sometimes I would join Dhaivyd for a glorious Marin bike ride, then off to his gig, loading my bike in his VW bus [named *The Bubble Bus.*] Good times !

Annual outdoor show by **The Moody Blues** at Concord Pavilion with Brian—this time with an orchestra!

Robyn Hitchcock at The Great American Music Hall. An excellent annual Robyn H show at my favourite small San Francisco venue! I never miss RH. A top fav songwriter, whose songs dominated my San Francisco 90's. This show was in September.

Also in September turned out to be my final **Grateful Dead** concert, acid trip — 9/18/94. At Shoreline amphitheatre, not my preferred venue, but am really pleased that I went. Jason drove us there in his orange '71 VW bus {the same one I later traded a painting for!} he has some hits of acid, so we dosed before the show. I don't recall a particularly strong trip, but a decent amount of lysergic frisson ; perfect,

not overwhelming.

The show was decent overall by late era GD standards, it was enjoyed, with some excellent newer Jerry ballad performances that were moving standouts. *Days Between*, and *So Many Roads*. Wow. And under the autumn moonlight, we were blown away by these renditions. Topped with a *Brokedown Palace* encore A fitting farewell from Jerry, who I never caught live ever again.

After the show, we took advantage of tripping into the night by taking a hike in the wild, forested hills in San Mateo near where Jason lived. Perfect place for the mindset we were in! The forest was spooky in a good way. And the moonlight was brilliant at the hilltop, with a sweeping view of the bay.

We came across something unusual, which was a large cardboard "E", about 4' long, lying face up in the brush. We fabricated a story how James Joyce had been abducted by space aliens and left this large E behind as a clue to let us in particular to know!

It was one of those long, crazy nights. Grateful Dead concert, tripping artists hiking in wilderness under a full moon. Just before the eve of leaving the old Mission flat, then to Europe!

Planning for 3 months in Europe

. . . gave me energy! I loved this ; I am going for sure, after several years since the last time for the summer of 1986.

And the summer of 1985; both of these first visits were

lengthy, made possible by expatriate brother Grant who lived in North Germany at the time [from 1972-1990 as a classical musician] I was fortunate to have the luxury of time, and in my early 20's on a threadbare budget.

This time I would be mostly staying in paid accommodations, depending on where I go, with some exceptions being worked out.

P helped by calling to book a hotel room in Paris for my first few days, since she can speak French. Great start! Plus she contacted her friends Konstanze and Horst in Berlin for me to possibly stay with for a few days.

The itinerary expanding, I bought a Eurail Flexipass to allow — well, as its named — flexibility! I could go wherever whenever, within reason and time frame for the amount of train hours allotted. I am loving this plan, now expanding to Scandinavia and Italy and Greece!

Relatives in Sweden were contacted with mailed letters. The only ones who had previously met them were uncle Walt & aunt Melba (i think?) Lena is a daughter of one of dad's second cousins (?) who was kindly inviting to stay for a few days with her family in Boras. Great! And friends Åsa and Bjorn in Gränna!

Then Mokka in Athens, Greece, Hans Wilhelm in Bremen, Eric in Hamburg, Hans Hermann in Detmold, and the Jobmann's in Herford [where Grant lived in the 80's] The rest I just wing it with finding hotels along the way.

This trip is shaping up to be huge!

Skipped the Burning Man event that year; it grew too large

for my tastes, but I had artwork in the Burning Man exhibition at SOMAR, along with other artist friends. It was a crazy scene, serving as a warm up to the desert event itself.

Busy times. Including a short labor day weekend / birthday trip to help Brian who was there for a couple weeks to help Craig & Karen work on their house, enjoying the amazing Minnesota State Fair,.. And they gave me a brand new shiny black Takamine acoustic dreadnought guitar! Upgrade! This boosted the quality of my playing by a quantum leap. I was thrilled and grateful!

Good times, upon good times, upon busy times, upon good times.

August and September were indeed busy times for this kid. Working at Mondo Media, making travel preparations, and moving. I was fine with it all, reveling the details.

I remember a striking sunny afternoon running errands on bustling Market Street on my bicycle. I enjoyed exchanging US dollars for French francs at the American Express centre - they depict artists, writers, musicians! On my ride on Market, I passed a stalled bus with some fresh commotion surrounding it. A bicyclist was just run over by the bus, and I could see the dead body beneath the bus!

Horrors.

That could be me if not careful. Yikes.

I often thought about that incident when on hundreds of future bicycle jaunts on Market. It's a crazy downtown

artery. Not many days later, I had a little bike accident of my own! Rare, and stupid of me. I was crossing Harrison @ 5th, an unusual route for me, while not paying attention to the freeway entrance over to the right. So when I rode straight south on the green, traffic turned right, towards the on ramp. D'oh! I fall sideways as the rear fender braised me. My knee hit the asphalt, but fortunately knocked out of further harms way — and it seemed to happen in slow motion, with not so much abrupt force to hospitalize me. Fortunately there was a cop right there! Who made sure I was okay. He also informed me that this was my fault for riding straight into turning on ramp traffic, and how this happened occasionally at this difficult intersection before. I could now see this.

The policeman stayed with me for 15 minutes, to thoroughly make sure there were no after effects. I looked over to see one of roommate Casey's bike messenger friends stop to see me with the policeman. She came over to find out. [years later now I've sadly forgot her name. attractive, with long red hair]

I ended up with bruised knee pain for a few weeks afterwards, that gave me a dose of worry that this might prevent good walking in Europe. [whew, I became fine, and I did an enormous amount of walking there!]

Tragedy narrowly averted, (as Bob Weir says) and the worst bicycle accident I ever had in San Francisco, putting me at excellent odds considering the thousands of bike rides I have taken throughout that town.

Moving felt eventful after being for six very formative years. Brian had a rented open u-haul trailer for one of his remodeling jobs, coming in handy for moving my stuff. I along with Jim had purged a lot of furniture by leaving it out on the sidewalk — in portions. The city is notorious for local scavenger residents grabbing almost anything left out, in minutes! Especially in the Mission District. We shared good laughs about how rapidly our junky old furniture went out there on Bryant Street!

About to drive off with stuff all loaded, sitting on the stack in the trailer was that old crap guitar that I didn't need. Two Mexican guys pass by, noticing the guitar sitting on top that was obviously getting little respect, asking if I would sell it and for how much? I think I said that it isn't even worth a dollar. They give me a 5 and we both left happy! Brian and I had a laugh, getting in his Jeep, and left 2720 Bryant and on to the Concord house, and on to new phases — beginning with a highly anticipated travel adventure in Europe in just a day away!

EUROPE AT LAST

I think the following 3 months of traveling Europe deserves a separate essay from this one. Will consider that to become Part Two of 1994.

For now I offer this summary.

The places :

Paris > Hamburg > Bremen > Borås / Svenljunga > Gränna > Visingsö > Stockholm > Vasby > Uppsala > Borås > Oslo > Berlin > Dresden > Prague > Florence > Brindisi > Athens > Venice > Innsbruck > Herford > Detmold / Externsteine > Ghent > Paris.

The museums / The art :

The Louvre > Musee d'orsay > le Catacombs > Pompiduo Centre > Pere Lachaise cemetery > Hamburg Kunsthalle > Bremen Kunsthalle > Bremen modern art gallery > Bremen itself! > Borås Konst Galerie > Borås Museet > Stockholm's Nasjonal Galerie > Stockholm itself! > Vasa Museet > Nasjonal Historiska Museet > runestones in the Upplands landscapes > Edvard Munch Museet > Oslo's national Galerie > Viking Skibet Museet > Berlin national gallery > Schloss Charlottenburg > Pergamon museum > Alte / Nueues Pinakotek > Dresden gemaldegalerie > Trinitatus cemetery > Prague national gallery > Prague gemaldegalerie > Prague itself! > The Uffizi > Bargello > Firenze itself! > Athens Archeology Museum > The Parthenon > Accademia Venice > Guggenheim Venice > Venice itself! > Externsteine > Ghent altarpiece > Ghent itself! > Paris museums again + Conservatoire le arts des métier > Paris itself!

It was an art historians dream trip. I absorbed TONS of great art! I say "itself!" about the city listed, it's from how much I consider to be with art to experience everywhere. Most European cities are this experience, famously. [I might as well just say "Europe itself!"]

Europe has innumerable magnificent qualities that makes me hunger to explore. From the extraordinarily palpable history of western civilisation seen nearly everywhere, the best artworks and architecture ever — much of it integrated in public display, the light qualities that differ from place to

place. The people! Refined sense of the art of leisure, dining and drinking. This can go on.

I went mostly determined to draw as much as possible, absorb as much art history as humanly possible — with a concentrated focus to hunt for runestones in the eastern Swedish landscape while there — enjoy good company, and savor the adventure of it all. I succeeded!

All except for one important glitch ... I got sick about halfway through, in Dresden. The cough hit me every evening and night, putting a damper to a row of weeks, though I didn't let this stop me from seizing the days! I lost only around 3 days total ; one day convalescing in Prague, and two in Athens. I think running around nonstop for so long, and skimping on quality food to preserve my cash amount, had caught up with me in chillier weather by mid November. Dining bigger and more sleep helped.

But wow — the grandiosity of Paris! Arrondisements! Friends in Germany and Sweden! Meeting generous relatives in Sweden! Going on a unique runestones hunt in golden Aspen leaves! Cities of massive history! Art, architecture and archaeology galore! Walking, walking, walking! *Drawing, drawing, drawing!!* Slavic touchdown! The Mediterranean! The Alps! Christmas /Weinachten season! Renaissance /Baroque/Roman/Ancient/Romantic/Modern everything! [y'see, I can't even summarise without jumbling words] This was one huge marvellous encyclopedia experience of stunning fulfillment!

Like I mentioned, a separate writeup is called for to capture enough of the details.

I shall leave you with this link to a selection of sketchbook pages from that grand tour :

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/126364600@N06/albums/72157718332265398>

Yep ,... 1994 !

Returning to Concord for Christmas, my parents already had most of my sketchbooks, mailed to them from overseas as soon as they were filled, to lighten my travel load. Mom in particular expressed a love for these, travelling vicariously, who never made it to Europe.

Craig was visiting, and the last week of the year we spent time with my new Takamine acoustic, sharing the stories of my trip,.. And to get freshened back to digital work, dove into the fascinating new CD-ROM game that Bri got — it was all the rage, with beautifully designed environments, called Myst. The only computer game I ever played ; Brian and I were sucked in that winter.

And on to a new year of big advantageous changes... But not wonderful as 1994.

~~~ Dean Gustafson, February 2021