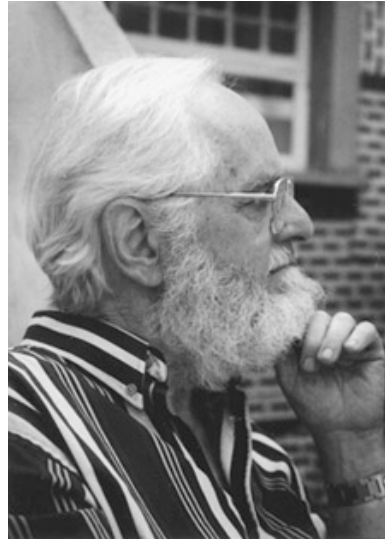


## **Robert Perine: Chouinard Artist and Art Activist** *by Dave Tourje, 2008*

I met Bob Perine in 1998, shortly after purchasing the home of Nelbert Chouinard in South Pasadena. Bob had sent me the book he wrote about Chouinard entitled “Chouinard – An Art Vision Betrayed” which I read cover to cover, so I was very anxious to meet with him. In our meeting at the House, I began to understand the immense passion Bob had for this art school, which I later found out was echoed in many of his Chouinard associates.



Bob had spent years writing this book, from 1978 to 1985, in the hopes that it could spark some kind of re-emergence of the spirit of Chouinard, something Bob felt had relevance in the contemporary art world. He seemed pleased that our coming together might just help create that.

Bob was a fabulous and diverse artist and thinker. His drafting skills, his approach to the human figure and watercolor medium were spectacular and renowned. He was an exceptional graphic designer who practically designed the modern view of Orange County with his friend and fellow alum Ned Jacoby, as well as innumerable other companies including designing the modern logo for Fender Musical Instruments.

Bob was a poet and musician as well, and a very open minded writer, having written excellent books as well as many articles on art and artists in San Diego publications for decades. Bob was a fairly traditional and quiet fellow in some ways, but I would tell people in order to fully understand him they should read his writings to get the full scope of his aesthetic multiplicity and penetrating observational skills.

But with all these accomplishments and skills, there was an underlying sense that “Chouinard” was his true passion – not as a strictly nostalgic pursuit, but as a pursuit in terms of Chouinard’s relevance – TODAY. He believed this relevance had its roots in drawing, and as we joined with other Chouinard artists, this was the core idea which pervaded our thinking as we grew from just a few people to what we are today. It was a strong base in drawing, Bob believed, that formed the success of the original Chouinard, and should form the core of the new Chouinard if we were to become successful – no matter what the art form was that the artist was pursuing.

Bob’s idea of this was not a reactionary ideal in order to return artmaking to some traditional place of the past. He drew the connection between drawing skill and numerous forms – from animation, to his own California Watercolor School, to the

conceptualism of Doug Wheeler, Robert Irwin and everything in between. It was Bob's belief that it was the ability to SEE, to DRAW, that helped distinguish these great Chouinard artists from others. And though, as a group of radically diverse artists forming the new Chouinard we disagreed on much, it was upon this idea we FULLY agreed.

"Chouinard" owes Bob Perine a deep debt of gratitude for his passion and persistence. Without him, we could not possibly be where we are today. Bob helped set the groove we are now in to this day, and if Chouinard is to ever realize the potential we have all envisioned from the beginning, it would be in large measure, due to the efforts of Bob Perine.