

## SMART ART

# Two exhibits show circles of Hopkins' career

By Debbie Forman  
Contributing Writer

The circle is a dominant element in Budd Hopkins' later work, and also a symbol of the evolution of his career. His retrospective at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum is therefore designed to show how his art came full circle.

From Hopkins' 1950s abstract expressionist paintings, he moved on to his hard-edged, geometric "Guardians" and finally to "Dancing Guardians," in which he combined that image with the looser approach of his earlier work.

"He came around in the end to where he was in the beginning, but with a lot more panache," says Hopkins' daughter, Grace Hopkins, who is curating "Budd Hopkins: Full Circle."

The exhibition at PAAM, which runs from Friday through Sept. 3, is his first solo show there. "And it's not going to end there," says Grace, who is planning to take the show to other museums.

Since she was a little girl, Grace has been a witness to her father's career. "I went with him everywhere, to art openings and parties. He was Mr. Fun Guy. He was charming, the life of the party, a

## If you go

**What:** "Budd Hopkins: Full Circle"  
**Where:** Provincetown Art Association and Museum, 460 Commercial St.

**When:** 11 a.m. daily; to 8 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays, to 10 p.m. Fridays, to 6 p.m. Saturdays and to 5 p.m. Sundays, July 21-Sept. 3; opening reception 8 p.m. July 21  
**Admission to the museum:** \$10, free for members and children under 12 (reception is free)

**Information:** 508-487-1750; www.paam.org



**What:** "Budd Hopkins: Full Circle"  
**Where:** Berta Walker Gallery, 208 Bradford St., Provincetown

**When:** 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays, July 28-Aug. 19

**Information:** 508-487-6411; online: www.bertawalkergallery.com

very commanding presence. He loved to dance and tell jokes and do magic tricks. He gave huge parties."

For many years, her father, who died in 2011, had homes on the Cape, in Truro and Wellfleet. He was a member of Long Pont Gallery, probably the most prestigious gallery in Provincetown, from 1977 to 1998, when it closed.



For "Dancing Guardian," from 1992, artist Budd Hopkins imbeds a sentinel image into the looser painting of abstract expressionism. [COURTESY OF GRACE HOPKINS]

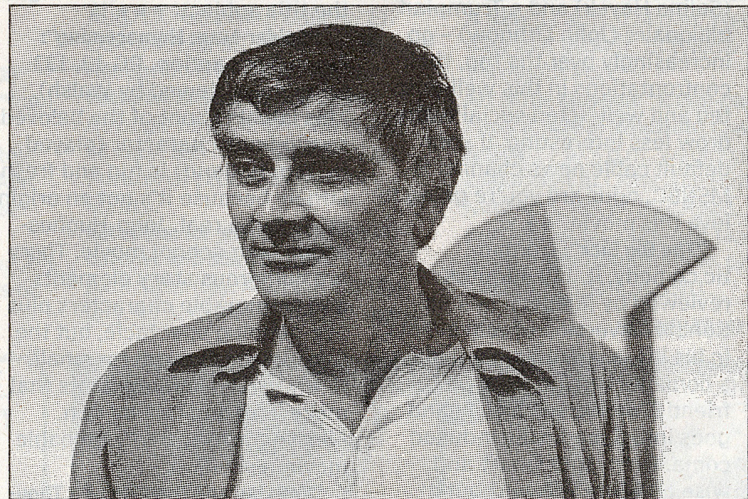
Grace remembers the openings when Robert Motherwell and his colleagues drew dozens of people eager to see the art and also be part of an illustrious gathering.

"I loved the space, the people and the art. I was the only kid there. It was a really big thing, the highlight of the summer for me."

Born in 1973 to Hopkins and his second wife, art historian April Kingsley, Grace missed her father's early career. He was born in 1931 in Wheeling, West Virginia, and came to New York in the early 1950s after earning a degree in art history at Oberlin College in Ohio. Abstract expressionism was on its way to becoming the dominant art movement, and he caught the fever.

He was particularly influenced by Franz Kline and Mark Rothko. His early works show the energy, excitement and expressive intensity of that movement.

In the early 1960s, Hopkins began introducing hard-edge forms into his work, which



Artist Budd Hopkins in front of his piece, the "Guardian." [COURTESY OF GRACE HOPKINS]

showed the influence of Piet Mondrian. Soon, geometric forms with flat planes of bold colors and dynamic angles supplanted his abstract expressionism. This work includes collages, paintings and architectural sculptures.

In 1966, with "Sun Black I," Hopkins introduced the circle and it became a principal

form in his work.

As Grace recalls in the exhibition catalog, when she was 14, her father was teaching her how to apply paint to a canvas. "(He) started to paint a basic guardian shape but much more loosely. These then transformed into what

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he called dancing guardians." This image, she writes, brought together the rigid qualities of the guardians with the abstract expressionism from his early work. "I think the word dancing is very appropriate here since it is as if they are ballerinas dancing off the stage." She adds: "I came to see how these small late works really brought his artwork full circle."

About a dozen works, "many of them large," Grace says, are included in the PAAM exhibit. Hopkins' 1974 "Arrezzo's Palace," boldly painted with a divided orb at its center and dynamic diagonals, measures 97 by 166 inches.

The "Guardian" works, in brilliant colors, have a half circle as the head and linear strips below. It is an image one can associate with a sentinel, an abstract figure

standing guard.

Hopkins' "Dancing Guardian" imbeds that image into the looser painting of abstract expressionism, which he wrote in 2010, was about "the freedom and richness" of that style returning in "full force."

By installing Hopkins' art in a progression revolving around the gallery, Grace says, she hopes viewers will see how his art evolved to return to elements of his early work.

In conjunction with the PAAM retrospective, will be a Hopkins show at the Berta Walker Gallery, from July 28 through Aug. 19.

Hopkins' work is in collections of major museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.