

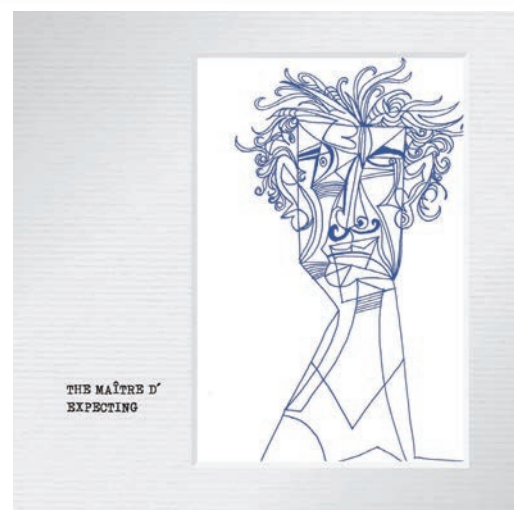
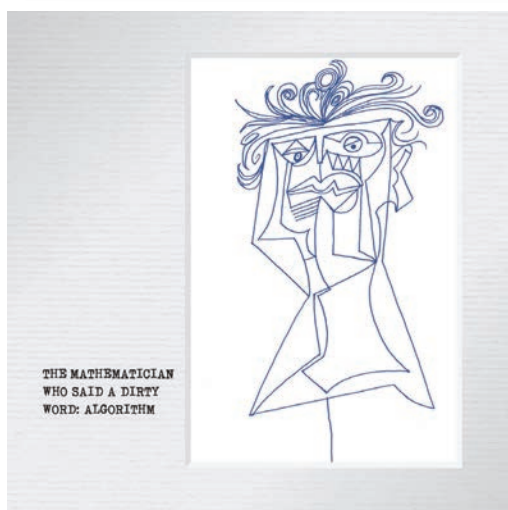
Harold Zisla

A Life Devoted to Art

by Barb Berggoetz

Artist and Indiana University educator Harold Zisla felt compelled to create paintings not to earn money, but to share his insights in the hopes that people would be inspired.

"He was not interested in selling," says his daughter, Beverly Welber, a retired art historian in Bloomington. "Mostly, he gave them away. He wanted people to have his work so they could enjoy it. If someone did buy something, he would also give them a couple of drawings." ▶



(this page and opposite page) Examples of the artist's work. Photos by William Healy and Tim Rummelhoff

Zisla had a long, wide-ranging career as a representational or “realist” artist. He transitioned to an abstract expressionist style in his 50s, which persevered until his death at 90 in 2016. Zisla, a Cleveland native, directed the South Bend (Indiana) Art Center and became the first art department chair at Indiana University–South Bend, where he taught fine arts until retiring in 1989.

Explaining his move to abstract painting, Zisla wrote in the *IU South Bend Review* in 1997, “My belief now is that art is ideas expressed visually and that enlightenment is the goal, along with sensate pleasure.”

Welber remembers her father as a sophisticated artist and voracious reader of psychology, philosophy, science, and art



The artist, Harold Zisla. Courtesy photo

history, but also as a funny, social person who golfed daily. He left behind thousands of paintings, drawings, and sketches in his South Bend home studio. About 70 of them are featured in the book *Provocative Lines*, published by Welber, her brother, Paul, and his wife, Debbie, in 2020 as a legacy to Zisla’s life. Available at Morgenstern Books. ✱



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