

Artist Resources – Wayne Thiebaud (pronounced *Teebow*; American, b. 1920)



Thiebaud, 2010

Photograph: Max Whittaker/Sactown Magazine

[Sactown Magazine](#) profiles Thiebaud in 2010 in conjunction with his induction into the [California Museum's California Hall of Fame](#).

Smithsonian Magazine reviews Thiebaud's career trajectory in a [2011 profile](#).

Thiebaud [talks about his artistic influences and interests](#) with the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 2011 at UC Davis, where Thiebaud is Professor Emeritus of Art and has become one of the most generous donors [of his own work and his own personal collection](#). "I'm a very basic American painter. I paint what I want to paint...often I feel I'm doing something I shouldn't be doing. All of it is a way in which for me the kind of painter I admire works...what [painters] have to have, is to love making these little painted worlds."

[Listen to Thiebaud](#) discuss his life as an artist and his affection for "painted worlds" in a 2000 lecture at the Natural Gallery of Art in DC, a subject to which he returned in 2015 for a [talk at Stanford University](#).

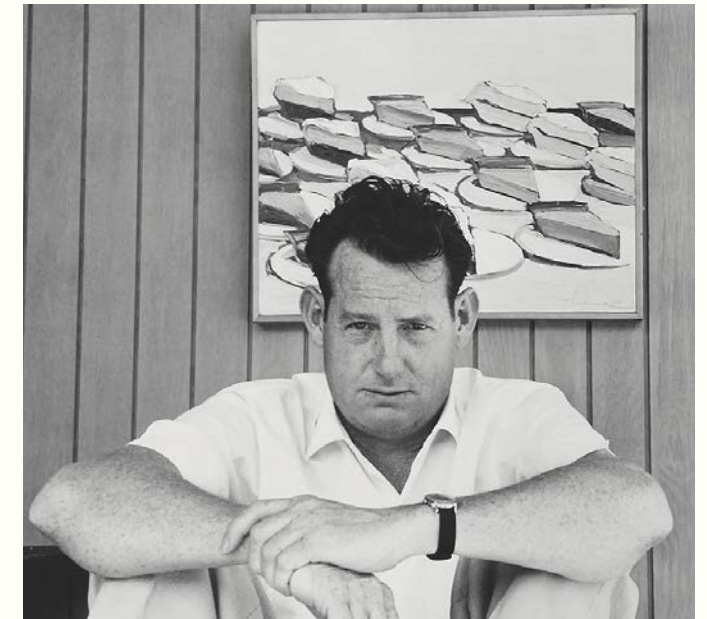
Sactown Magazine [talks with Thiebaud in 2018](#) about his dual careers as artist and educator, how UC Davis changed his life in 1959, and the magic yet universality of art. "You take something ordinary, a piece of paper, a canvas, and put things that come from the earth [on them], and things are brought into being so that we have a kind of duplicate, parallel history of the world through individual creations—I call them little painted worlds. We have a Van Gogh world...We have Picasso worlds, Michelangelo worlds, Rembrandt worlds that fortify and amplify and engage us in a whole other marvelous dimension we hadn't counted on."

The Laguna Art museum celebrated [70 Years of Painting](#) with Thiebaud in 2017, featuring lesser known figural series.

Thiebaud discusses his early years and self-taught skill as a cartoonist in [artist talk](#) in conjunction with the Morgan Library & Museum's 2018 exhibition [Wayne Thiebaud: Draftsman](#).

SFMOMA hosted Thiebaud for [two exhibitions in 2018](#), featuring his own work alongside his selection paintings by other artists.

The Crocker Art Museum is scheduled to open [an exhibition in celebration of Thiebaud's 100th birthday](#) in fall 2020..



Thiebaud, 1961

Photograph: Betty Jean Thiebaud/Wayne Thiebaud Foundation



Wayne Thiebaud (American, b. 1920)

River Ponds, 1998

Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2020:29.1

Bay Area artist Wayne Thiebaud has eschewed categorization throughout his prolific seventy-year career, motivated by a desire “to steal,” in his words, “every kind of idea – western, eastern, and everything I could think of—atmospheric perspective... linear perspective, planal and sequential recessions.” Thiebaud began as a freelance cartoonist and illustrator in New York before becoming a painter at age twenty-nine. His early attraction to quotidian subjects, such as the offerings displayed in bakery cases and ice cream shops, earned him critical acclaim and commercial success. The landscapes surrounding his Sacramento studio – where the ninety-nine-year-old artist still works every day – and the cityscapes of San Francisco also serve as constant inspiration. **River Ponds** is a characteristic example of the artist’s bright visions of California. Flattened perspective and chromatic exaggeration demonstrate Thiebaud’s characteristic style, grounded in patient observations mediated through imagination and memory, which he describes as “playing with reality.”

On view August 5 – November 8, 2020

Wayne Thiebaud (American, b. 1920)

River Boats, 2001

Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2019:123.1

Bay Area artist Wayne Thiebaud has eschewed categorization throughout his prolific six-decade career, motivated by a desire “to steal,” in his words, “every kind of idea – western, eastern, and everything I could think of – atmospheric perspective...linear perspective, planal and sequential recessions.” The artist further defines his vision as “many ways of seeing in the same picture – clear forms, hazy, squinting, glancing, staring and even a sort of inner seeing.” Though his earliest canvases of desserts and confection shops in the 1960s drew critical comparisons to the Pop Art movement, Thiebaud identifies his oeuvre in the lineage of the expressive and formal innovations of early twentieth-century European avant-garde. **River Boats** is a characteristic example of Thiebaud’s bright visions of quintessential West Coast landscapes. Its flattened perspective and chromatic exaggeration signal how his rendition of this pastoral setting is grounded in observations mediated through the artist’s imagination and memory. Despite their titular spotlight, the two river boats nearly become lost within the colorful panorama.



On view January 15 – April 19, 2020



Wayne Thiebaud (American, b. 1920)

Dessert Cart, 2003

Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2019:102.1

Thiebaud began his artistic career as an Army illustrator and cartoonist, working briefly as an animator for Disney, a freelance commercial artist, and movie poster designer for Universal Pictures before completing an MFA and becoming an art professor at Sacramento City College and UC Davis. In his early professional work as a painter in the 1960s, Thiebaud concentrated on depicting American food, especially sweet treats like pies, cakes, lollipops, and ice cream. **Dessert Cart** harkens back to these panoplies of sugary fantasy, which were inspired by the endless color, assortment, and arrangements of bakery counter displays. Against the somber grey of the cart, the vivid display of carefully placed desserts tempts the senses. Thiebaud's thick, almost buttery application of paint captures the material essence of his subjects – frosting, cream, pudding – transforming the still life into a sumptuous offering of comfort and indulgence.

On view February 8 – May 13, 2020