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To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed slides are from David White and are examples of his "Elmo" style in which a fanciful paper montage figure (an apotropaion) is the vehicle for an expressive odyssey.

While influenced by the Italian "Metaphysicals" - particularly DeChirico and Morandi, the paintings in acrylic reveal their own qualities independent of any movement and embody concerns different from orthodox surrealism.

The artist holds a degree in philosophy from Illinois College, Jacksonville, Illinois and has a number of styles that he has developed over two decades. While not having studied art formally, he nonetheless has worked a number of years with a competent instructor.

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Who is Elmo?.....and what is Elmoism?

Elmo is an "apotropaion", a talisman created out of scrap paper - to be exact, manila envelope, for his head, old newsprint for his torso and brown paper (as in shopping bag paper) for his bottom or pedestal.

Elmo is distinguished by two large flat sky blue disks for eyes. Eyes indeed for an apotropaion deflects with his strikingly brilliant eyes all disasters, evil intents and malicious eyebeams directed at the innocent. This is, of course, an ancient perception of how mischief comes about. There are malevolent people who desire the ruin of the good!

This primitive preoccupation with warding off evil forces is the earliest religious awakening. Man resides in a mysterious and, at times, a hostile world where spirits, demons and unfriendly men roam.

As an artistic invention, Elmo is a "vehicle" for creative expression. This expression is no longer concerned with the kind of magic an apotropaion would have embodied in remote times. Elmo today is "irony" and "ironic man" as he moves about in the contemporary world discovers an affinity for "apotropaic man".

Ironic man is educated in the arts and sciences and questions his world according to its ever-shifting paradigms: is the universe only matter? Or is mind the true basis of reality?

Apotropaic man knew a world of change and dangers and felt the need to protect himself at all times. The spirit world was all pervading and invited caution, fear, awe and reverence.

Ironic man rediscovers apotropaic man deep within his twilight soul. It is here in this realm of the ambiguous, in this strange crepuscular world of dream, where the meeting of the two occurs.

In a playful fashion, Elmo was constructed and his adventures include his anatomy. Made of debris that is commonly discarded, Elmo exalts what is ignored or marginalized. His newsprint proclaims nothing but an echo of the culture which ignores him. Elmo is both manifest and unmanifest in the contemporary world.

This twilight soul of contemporary ironic man searches for expression and is not easily content with the glib and the superficial. The world remains a mysterious place and now that science has turned its gaze upon the mind, the twilight soul of ironic man confronts its apotropaic other and the two converse in a manner both penetrating and playful. This is Elmo and everything else becomes a kind of adventure in Elmoism.