ICONOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE ARMADILLO AND COSMIC IMAGERY WITHIN ART ASSOCIATED WITH THE ARMADILLO WORLD HEADQUARTERS, 1970-1980

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This thesis draws upon recent, art historical scholarship in iconography and semiotics to identify and analyze key images in an iconographic program associated with murals, paintings, and posters related to the Austin, Texas music venue, the Armadillo World Headquarters, 1970-1980.

Resources include South Austin Museum of Popular Culture, the Center for American History at the University of Texas, Austin, personal communications, and publications concerning the artists, music and history of Austin and the Armadillo World Headquarters.

There are five chapters as follows: Introduction, History of the Armadillo World Headquarters, Analysis of the Armadillo Mural and Freddie King Painting, Analysis of Posters for the Grand Opening and the Michael Murphey Cosmic Cowboy Concert, and Conclusion.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis identifies key images in a mural, a painting and posters associated with the Austin, Texas music hall called the Armadillo World Headquarters (hereafter alternately referred to as AWHQ), active from 1970-1980. I apply iconography to analyze these images in order to reveal the existence of a complex program of meanings associated with the building, the events, and the audience.

In this chapter, I provide necessary background information. First, I identify the Armadillo World Headquarters by describing the key figures who conceived of the music hall and what purposes the founders envisioned for its use. Next, there is an introduction of the primary artists and a description of the works of art associated with the Armadillo World Headquarters. I then introduce specific images that are significant to the study and discuss the purpose of analyzing these works of art. A statement of the problem for the thesis is next, followed by an outline of the methodology and a review of literature. Finally, I provide a brief summary of succeeding chapters.

Barry Shank, author of *Dissonant Identities: The Rock'n'Roll Scene in Austin, Texas*, 1994, provides much of the history of the AWHQ. In 1970 in Austin, Texas, a small group of entrepreneurs, under the company name Armadillo Productions, leased and renovated a vacant building which had been used formerly as a National Guard Armory. They renamed the building the Armadillo World Headquarters. It was to function primarily as the largest music hall in Austin, at that time. The building also contained small offices for staff and the Armadillo Productions Company.[1]

[1] Barry Shank, *Dissonant Identities: The Rock'n'Roll Scene in Austin, Texas* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994) 53.

Eddie Wilson conceived of the music hall with the intent of providing a music venue to promote a band he managed called Shiva's Headband and to provide a place that would help realize his vision of defining Austin as a viable music scene.[2] The vision included having local and national music artists come to the AWHQ to perform, as well as developing a nationally recognized recording company. Wilson, along with entertainment attorney Mike Tolleson, Bobby Hederman, Spencer Perskin of Shiva's Headband and artist Jim Franklin, who was the initial designer of the promotional art for the concerts and other events performed at the AWHQ, transformed the old, vacant building on Barton Springs Road into a music hall. (Fig.1)

Within the first mural Franklin painted on an interior wall of the AWHQ and within the first concert poster designed for the AWHQ, Franklin introduced the nine-banded armadillo, sky, and planetary images that are the focus of this thesis.

The Armadillo World Headquarters existed from August 7, 1970 to December 31, 1980. According to Brad Buchholz, author of the article "It all happened at the Armadillo," the AWHQ "was widely recognized as Austin's social, musical and artistic hub."[3] Sam Yeates, who also created poster art for the AWHQ, provides a further understanding of this social, musical and artistic hub. He notes that "the Armadillo served as a creative focal point and clearing house for so much of the popular culture of the time." He further elaborates that the Armadillo World Headquarters provided "a cross pollination of music, poster art, mural painting, alternative lifestyles and cultures of that time."[4] Artists painted murals on the interior and exterior walls of the AWHQ, as well as free hanging paintings that were located in different areas within the building. There was a prolific production of ephemeral poster art created for promotion of events

[2] Shank, 77.

[3] Brad Buchholz. "Day of the 'Dillo." *Austin American Statesman*, 10 December 2000, sec. K, p. 1.

[4] Sam Yeates, personal communication, email, 08 May 2004.

associated with the AWHQ.

As more and more music artists were booked for performances, more artists were needed to create the promotional art. A group of artists who were named the Armadillo Art Squad in 1975 came together to meet the increasing demands.[5] Micael Priest, Kerry Awn, Danny Garrett, Ken Featherston, Sam Yeates, Henry Gonzalez, Bill Narum, Gary McIlheney and Guy Juke joined Jim Franklin in creating AWHQ art. Many other artists contributed, as well, but were not then and are not now typically recognized as members of the Armadillo Art Squad.

The artists, many of the patrons with whom I communicated while doing research and the authors of literary works who include comments about the imagery associated with the AWHQ refer to the concert posters, paintings and murals as art. The staff of the Austin Museum of Popular Culture refers to the concert posters, handbills, and paintings created by the artists for the Austin music venues, including the AWHQ, as Austin pop culture art, as do I.

In 1970 just prior to the opening of the Armadillo World Headquarters, Franklin began transforming the interior of the building with murals.[6] He painted the murals directly on the interior walls throughout the building, as well as on exterior walls. In Chapter 3, I analyze what has been called the armadillo mural that Franklin started painting on an interior wall to the right of the stage just days before the grand opening. (Fig. 2) In Chapter 3, I also analyze Franklin's painting of Freddie King which he completed and installed to the left of the stage in the AWHQ in 1971. (Fig. 3) The murals and painting are significant due to their physical connection to and orientation in the music hall. Based on recollections by former patrons of the AWHQ, the images of the armadillo and sky within the mural and the armadillo within the painting served as constant visual reminders of an association linking the armadillo mammal to the music hall. How

[5] Leea Mechling, personal communication, email, 12 September 2006.

[6] Buchholz, “Day of the Dillo,” 10.

attending patrons of concerts and events in the AWHQ building perceived the imagery enlivening the walls is elaborated on in Chapter 3 where I identify and analyze the significance of specific images in the mural and a painting.

I have chosen two concert posters for an iconographic analysis based on their containing the key images pertaining to an identified iconographic program. I analyze these posters in Chapter 4. The first poster is Franklin's promotional poster for the first concert performed at the AWHQ in August 1970. (Fig. 4) The images in this poster are integral in representing the AWHQ in several aspects. In 1973 Micael Priest created a poster titled *Michael Murphey's Cosmic Cowboy Symphony and Bar B Q*. (Fig. 5) The cosmic cowboy is an important component in the history of the AWHQ, which I introduce in Chapter 2 and discuss, in more depth, in the iconographic analysis in Chapter 4.

Nels Jacobson, author of "The Maverick Tradition: Postering in Austin, Texas," 1991, writes about Austin poster art created from the 1960s through 1990. He comments that, "In illustrating this movement, the Armadillo artists created a powerful and singularly appropriate iconography that helped to unite performers, flower children and rednecks in an on-going common celebration."[7] The nine-banded armadillo, the sky and planetary images represent meaningful connections between the building, the music, and members of the audience which is why they are important in an iconographic study.

The armadillo, although not depicted in every poster of the AWHQ, is prevalent in the murals, paintings and many of the promotional posters. The armadillo image created and sustains a visual association of the mammal with the name Armadillo World Headquarters. As will be seen in Chapter 3 in the analysis of a mural and a painting within the building and in Chapter 4 in

[7] Nels Jacobson. "The Maverick Tradition: Postering in Austin, Texas. *OFFtheWALL* 1, no. 2 (1991): 6.

the analysis of poster art, the armadillo image acquires more associations and meanings through audience reception and social function.

Also of interest are the sky and planetary images that may be referred to as cosmic within the context in which the artists use them. The cosmic aspect is an important element, as is the armadillo image, in the discussion of the images as they relate to the AWHQ audience's reception of the images. The cosmic aspect helped create the connection the members of the audience felt, and still feel, with each other and the armadillo as a unifying symbol. The cosmic connection takes on an even more specific meaning when it relates to the "cosmic cowboy" term that applies to a genre of music and a visual representation of music artists in concert posters.

Hans Biedermann, author of the *Dictionary of Symbolism*, 1989, includes within his discussion on the symbolic meaning of earth that "heaven and earth were synonymous with the totality of the cosmos."[8] Miranda Bruce-Mitford, author of the *Illustrated Book of Signs and Symbols*, notes that the sky is symbolic of transcendence and creativity.[9] It is possible, to some extent, to apply meanings from dictionaries and encyclopedias of iconography to the planetary images, as I explain in the analysis of the posters in Chapter 4.

Space exploration and planetary images became a major focus of the United States' NASA Space Program beginning in the early 1960s. One of the main goals was landing men on the lunar surface. The Apollo Program accomplished this feat on July 20, 1969. Subsequent Apollo, Skylab and the Apollo-Soyez Test Project programs kept space exploration in the forefront of public consciousness through the mid-1970s. This space exploration, especially lunar landings, inspired Jim Franklin's art. I elaborate on how he was inspired during the analysis

[8] Hans Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism*. (New York: Facts on File, 1992), 111.

[9] Miranda, Bruce-Mitford, *The Illustrated Book of Signs and Symbols* (New York: DK Publishing, 1996) 36.

of one of his posters in Chapter 4.

The project is warranted and timely on a number of points. The first is that no scholarly study has been made concerning the meanings associated with imagery created for the Armadillo World Headquarters. Danny Garrett, one of the Armadillo Art Squad artists, notes that there is no scholarly text concerning the meanings of images in this art.[10]

Due to what appears to be the uniqueness of an armadillo image as a major element in an iconographic program at that time and due to the fact that after the AWHQ closed, other music venues have integrated images of the armadillo in their art, I think artists of the AWHQ art established a new symbol that is traceable to the Austin music venue of the 1970s.

The analysis of the armadillo, sky and planetary objects in the art of the AWHQ is a perfect opportunity for applying the methodology of using audience reception in the search for meanings of images. This is especially true for the armadillo image as I found no texts listing traditional, art historical symbolism associated with the mammal.

It seems appropriate to analyze a more current art form known as popular culture art with more recent art historical scholarship in iconography.

Another important reason to perform an iconographic study of the specific images is due to the fact that the Armadillo World Headquarters no longer exists. The murals disappeared when the Armadillo World Headquarters building was torn down in February 1981. There are very few photographs of the murals existing. As the murals were an important component in visually defining the Armadillo World Headquarters and the audience who gathered there, the meanings of the images should be investigated to aid in an understanding of that place and the people who identified with the iconographic program centered on the armadillo mammal.

[10] Danny Garrett, personal communication, email, 18 November 2004.

Statement of Problem

This thesis draws upon recent art historical scholarship in iconography to identify and analyze key images in an iconographic program associated with murals, paintings, and posters related to the Austin, Texas music venue, the Armadillo World Headquarters, 1970-1980.

Methodology

Erwin Panofsky developed the methodology of iconography in which he proposed several levels of meaning or stages of analysis originally applied to Renaissance art. The first level or pre-iconographic stage includes the primary identification of visual images known to depict factual objects with natural meanings. Viewers who are familiar with the depicted objects readily understand what the images represent. The second level or iconographic stage is an analysis or interpretation of the images of the natural objects as they relate to existing motifs and literary references. Christine Hasenmueller, author of "Panofsky, Iconography and Semiotics," defines the third level or iconology by comparing it to iconography. Iconology compares the "articulate, conscious and decodable" meanings obtained through literary references, with meanings that are "essential, unconscious, and accessible only to subjective understanding."[11] The first two levels are applied to the study of an interior mural of the AWHQ (Fig. 2), the *Freddie King* painting (Fig. 3) located within the Armadillo World Headquarters and two posters, the *Grand Opening* poster, 1970, (Fig. 4) by Jim Franklin and *Michael Murphey's Cosmic Cowboy Symphony and Bar B Q* concert poster, 1973, (Fig. 5) by Micael Priest. The third level of iconology will not be used in this study.

[11] Christine Hasenmueller, "Panofsky, Iconography and Semiotics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 36, no. 3 (March 1978): 290-291.

The South Austin Museum of Popular Culture, The Center for American History at the University of Texas in Austin and artist Sam Yeates furnished the majority of the copies of the images for this study. Yeates provided digital images of photographs of the murals and of his painting of the AWHQ. Copies of the poster images came from the museum and the Center for American History. I was able to photograph the Freddie King painting that is now hanging in Threadgill's restaurant in south Austin.

The primary approach of study of these images draws from discussions and criticisms of Erwin Panofsky's theory of iconography proposed by scholars from various disciplines at the conference *Iconography at the Crossroads*, conducted at Princeton University in 1990. Brendan Cassidy, in his introduction to the anthology of *Iconography at the Crossroads*, 1993, proposes that the meanings of works of art should not be based solely on textual research which has been the traditional method of art historical investigations using iconography as a methodology. Instead, it is noted that meanings of imagery may also be found in audience reception and the social function of the imagery.[12] According to Cassidy, "Scholars may have to avail themselves of texts to gain entry to unfamiliar subjects or to reconstruct the contexts in which works of art once made sense. But they must also know when to let go of their texts and approach images on their own terms and on terms that would have been familiar to their creators."[13]

In order to apply Cassidy's proposal to my study, I elicited personal communications with former patrons and staff of the AWHQ and with the artists, who created the popular culture art for the AWHQ, to use as my primary, contextual text for making sense of the key images. I am treating the correspondence gained through personal letters and emails and information

[12] Brendan Cassidy, ed. *Iconography at the Crossroads: Papers from the Colloquium sponsored by the Index of Christian Art, Princeton University, 23-24 March 1990*) (Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, 1993), 10.

[13] Ibid., 10.

gained from direct conversations as the point of origin at which an iconographic program can be discerned. These communications are not intended as a survey, but rather to gain individual responses. It is important to solicit, faithfully record, and document the personal communications as authoritative sources of information, especially in meanings of the images.

In 2004 I began making inquiries about the Armadillo World Headquarters. Former patron Joe Richmond was the first person to describe his experiences at the AWHQ through direct conversations. In 2004 I also contacted the South Austin Museum of Popular Culture which houses the surviving art and other memorabilia from the AWHQ. Leea Mechling, Executive Director of the museum, has answered questions about the AWHQ and the art through both personal conversations and emails. She also helped to connect me with several of the artists with whom I also have had contact through direct conversations and email correspondence. These were the preliminary contacts that have been ongoing.

While researching, I found a "message board" on the Internet via the Web site for the AWHQ. This message board is a forum in which former patrons and staff of the AWHQ can communicate their observations, feelings, and memories about the Armadillo World Headquarters. It is possible to email participants directly through the site. By my posting questions about the AWHQ and its art to the message board, former patrons began contacting me directly through my email address. This contact led to correspondence with them and to my contacting others on the message board, whose messages contained information that seemed pertinent to the thesis. Originally I attempted gathering responses from participants through a list of questions I developed about the AWHQ and images associated with it. This proved not to be as successful as just letting them relay their own recollections of what was important to them and what their perceptions were about the AWHQ and the art. These responses provide a variety of

meanings for the images. Communications gained through conversations and emails are a form of text that is appropriate for my inquiry and serve to advance iconography's traditional ideas about acceptable texts to consult.

The email correspondence from those who experienced events at the AWHQ and message boards on Internet Web sites serve as a new kind of text to reference for meanings of the images. “New kinds of contemporary texts, other than the theological or philosophical, are being deployed to provide the frames of reference within which various classes of people might have made sense of what they gazed upon.”[14] It is of interest whether audience reception with different frames of reference will reveal corresponding meanings or result in a range of meanings associated with specific images.

There are a variety of text sources for understanding the key images, with each having possible, applicable contexts for use in interpretation. The literary sources include popular culture texts and histories of Austin and Texas during the 1970s. There is also another approach in which the key images are compared with other popular culture imagery, such as found in music album cover art or even fine art. I realize it would take the study to another level if I interpreted statements from any number of methodological perspectives. However, with the exception of referencing dictionaries and encyclopedias of iconography as secondary sources in order to gain a preliminary insight into the range of established meanings for the key images, my approach is to use the personal communications as the primary sources for information and ideas.

While researching the art historically-accepted, literary texts on iconography, I found there are few applicable meanings available for the images I am analyzing, especially for the

[14] Cassidy, 11.

armadillo. Hans Biedermann, author of the *Dictionary of Symbolism*, 1989, Miranda Bruce-Mitford, author of *Illustrated Book of Signs and Symbols*, 1996, and Rowena and Rupert Shepherd's *1000 Symbols*, 2002, are three of the sources I researched that did provide meanings that are useful in analysis of the cosmic, planetary images, but none listed the armadillo mammal. I also investigated James Hall's dictionaries, *Illustrated Dictionary of Symbols in Eastern* and *Western Art,* 1994 and *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, 1974. Not finding applicable meanings through text for the armadillo confirms that the use of meanings gained from audience reception is of particular advantage in conducting an iconographic analysis.

Of particular interest to my inquiry is the image impact on viewers and how viewers' receptions, uses, and interpretations of art and the images created a community specific to the Armadillo World Headquarters. Cassidy writes that, "A concern with the audience is more apparent now than before and that audience is recognized for the heterogeneous mix ... that it was. Also, the meanings of works of art are no longer assumed to be the product of scholarly cerebration; their meaningfulness is now just as likely to be sought in their social function."[15] This idea of a heterogeneous mix is relevant to the study of AWHQ art as there was a cross-section of people from different backgrounds who attended the AWHQ. Two notable groups commonly referred to as hippies and cowboys represented the urban and rural sectors. These two groups have special significance in the study of certain aspects of the images. I address this in Chapter 4 in the analysis of the poster depicting the "cosmic cowboy."

The idea of finding meanings of images through audience reception and social function is useful to the iconographic study of the art of the AWHQ. According to Cassidy, "Audience, artist, and the medium itself ... would seem to conspire against the once widespread notion that

[15] Cassidy, 10.

the thoughts and opinions of intellectuals consistently provide the most appropriate access to visual iconography. It became clear that the meaning of works of art should be sought in a much wider range of human experience."[16] For this reason, audience reception, gained through personal communications, provides another form of textual basis with which to analyze the AWHQ art imagery.

Quoting Cassidy, "By immersing oneself in a culture one was supposed to emerge with a richer understanding of the society from which an image derived and thus be better prepared to recognize its implicit meaning."[17] As I never attended the Armadillo World Headquarters, gaining knowledge from those who did is of benefit for my study.

Review of Literature

A primary literary source for the music venue of the Armadillo World Headquarters is Barry Shank's *Dissonant Identities: Rock'n'Roll Scene in Austin, Texas*, 1994. Shank is a scholar of U.S. popular culture and popular music. He is also a musician who played in different bands, including in Austin, so his perspective also comes from an insider as a participant in making music. As the title of his book implies, identity within the music scene is one of his primary focuses. He specifically discusses the development of the cosmic cowboy community. Shank makes the statement that, "For a brief moment – the much-acclaimed era of the cosmic cowboy and the Armadillo World Headquarters – Austin music appeared to define the cultural meaning of being Texan.[18] His observations on Austin music of that period and how Austin's economic history, communities, and culture influenced the development of the music and the identities of

[16] Ibid., 8.

[17] Cassidy, 5-6.

[18] Shank, 16

those involved is most useful in my study.

Jan Reid's *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock,* 2004, provides a chronological accounting of the music during the decade of 1970 – 1980 in Austin, which aids with a cultural and historical background. There is scant information provided on the Armadillo Art Squad artists, although Reid does discuss Jim Franklin's role in both the music scene and his art contributions. This literary source provides a more journalistic view than Shank's more analytical approach. I was able to acquire a better “feeling” for the Armadillo World Headquarters through Reid's portrayal.

An article by Nels Jacobson titled “The Maverick Tradition: Postering in Austin, Texas,” published in *OFFtheWALL,* 1991, includes many of the artists who contributed to the Austin music scene, starting in the late 1960s. This is a good overview of the poster art and artists associated with the popular culture in Austin during the period this thesis addresses. Jacobson does not include an iconographic study of the art as it relates to the culture of that time. The value of this article is in the information conveyed about the primary artists who contributed to the AWHQ poster art.

A series of articles written by journalist Brad Buchholz for the *Austin American Statesman*, December 2000, provides a history of the AWHQ. Buchholz conducted interviews with Eddie Wilson, patrons, musicians, and artists to obtain their impressions of the AWHQ. This is similar to my approach for gaining information of an art historical nature from oral histories. I am able to incorporate information he acquired in his interviews into the analysis of the AWHQ art imagery.

Brendan Cassidy, editor of *Iconography at the Crossroads,* 1993, which is an anthology of papers submitted to a conference conducted at Princeton University in1990, proposes that an

iconographic study of the meanings of images should be expanded from using purely literary text to include social function and audience reception. Due to the scarcity of applicable meanings in iconographic texts for the study of images associated with the Armadillo World Headquarters, using audience reception is of benefit in my iconographic analysis of Armadillo World Headquarters art.

This introductory chapter has provided a brief overview of the Armadillo World Headquarters with a proposal and methodology for analyzing the meanings of specific images within works of art associated with the Armadillo World Headquarters, a music hall in Austin, Texas, 1970-1980.

In Chapter 2, I provide a brief history of Austin during the 1970s and a history of the Armadillo World Headquarters. Most of the AWHQ history is basic information about the founding of the Armadillo World Headquarters with some variations attributed to responses in interviews of those who were involved with the AWHQ in different capacities. The historical information includes brief comments on the music and discussion about the different groups who attended the concerts.

In Chapter 3, I identify the images of interest to the thesis in the art that was actually attached to the AWHQ building in the form of murals and hung in the building in the form of a painting. Using audience perceptions of the armadillo and cosmic images and social functions derived from audience reception, I apply these meanings and functions to the iconographic analysis of the first mural Franklin painted for the grand opening of the Armadillo World Headquarters and to Franklin's Freddie King painting. I discuss important points about using audience reception and social functions in an iconographic study.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the ephemeral art objects in the form of promotional posters. Following the same process as in Chapter 3, I provide an iconographic analysis of two posters. I discuss meanings identified through texts of iconography and personal communications and how these contribute to the cosmic aspect of the images, as well as identity and community association with the AWHQ art imagery.

Chapter 5 includes a summary of the application of Cassidy's proposals for new approaches in iconographic analysis. I then propose a further study of Austin concert poster art created for the AWHQ, as well as for the other music venues that were present in Austin during the 1970s.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF THE ARMADILLO WORLD HEADQUARTERS

This chapter provides a history of Austin during the 1970s and the Armadillo World Headquarters (AWHQ) to aid in understanding the development of the music scene and art imagery found in the murals, paintings and posters. First, I provide an overview of Austin in the 1970s with an emphasis on what factors contributed to the rise of the AWHQ. Then there is a description of the building that became primarily a music hall called the Armadillo World Headquarters in 1970. I explain how the name of Armadillo World Headquarters came to be. Next, I provide an overview of the music and music artists who performed at the AWHQ. Following this, I discuss the variety of audience groups with special attention to the hippie community. Finally, I list reasons for the demise of the Armadillo World Headquarters.

Up to the 1970s, Austin was commonly viewed as having a small-town, laid-back atmosphere. Austin's identity was mainly one of being a political and university community due to its status as the state capital of Texas and home to the University of Texas.[1] Several literary sources mark the year 1967 when IBM opened a large, new plant in Austin as a turning point when residents began to perceive the rapid growth as a threat to the leisurely paced, small-town feeling. Following IBM's lead, Texas Instruments arrived in 1969, followed by Motorola and Advanced Micro Devices, all of which increased the presence of technological industries in Austin during the 1970s. Due to the influx of new jobs, the population of Austin increased from approximately 250,000 in 1970 to 430,000 in 1985.[2]

[1] David C. Humphrey, *Austin* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association in Cooperation with the Center for Studies in Texas History at the University of Texas at Austin, 1997), 55.

[2] Ibid., 57.

The 1970s proved to be a period of many changes in Austin. These changes impacted politics, economics, growth, and communities in many ways. Anthony M. Orum, author of *Power, Money & the People*, 1987, summarizes the challenges of the 1970s in Austin through his comment that it was a "continuing battle between the forces on behalf of expansion and those on behalf of the people."[3] There were also challenges for students at the University of Texas which included dissension over the Viet Nam war in the early 1970s, as well as growing concerns over environmental issues which affected the university campus and neighborhoods in Austin. Even with the concerns of rapid growth during that decade, one area where expansion was considered positive was in the music scene. David C. Humphrey, author of *Austin*, 1997, notes that Austin became a nationally recognized music center in the 1970s, especially with its identification as the home of progressive country music. Willie Nelson and Jerry Jeff Walker were instrumental in promoting this sound by their entertaining at the Armadillo World Headquarters and Austin's other clubs.[4] Expansion in Austin's growth, ultimately, also proved to be a factor in the demise of the AWHQ, which will be discussed in more detail later.

A big part of the allure of Austin was and continues to be its lakes, parks, natural pools such as Barton Springs, hills, hike and bike trails, nature preserves, UT football, Hippie Hollow, and music. Austin also has been associated with open-minded, accepting, well-educated inhabitants who possess a strong sense of community.[5] These qualities attracted students to enroll in the University and people from other places to seek employment in Austin, especially with the opportunities that were made available through the new industries and supporting companies. As revealed in the personal communications, the qualities of open-mindedness,

[3] Anthony M. Orum, *Power, Money & the People* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1987), 271.

[4] Humphrey, 59.

[5] Ibid., 59.

acceptance, and community also described attributes of the Armadillo World Headquarters. Both old and new residents of Austin who cared about protecting Austin against damage from commercial, industrial, and residential expansion organized into various environmental and neighborhood groups. These groups along with historic preservationists increased greatly in numbers and political influence in the mid-1970s.[6]

University of Texas students became more politically active starting in 1970, in part due to their concerns about protecting Austin from the adverse effects of unlimited expansion. Jeff Friedman, a University of Texas law student who marched with the Viet Nam protest rally from downtown Austin to the UT campus in 1970, rallied student voters and ran for a seat on the Austin City Council. His intent was to increase liberal, political representation for the poor people of Austin and defeat the forces of the Establishment which supported rapid growth.[7] Friedman's opponent Wick Fowler ran on the platform that "hippies were not fit to hold office."[8] Despite Fowler's efforts, Friedman became the first student and youngest person to win a seat on the Austin City Council. This seems a clear indicator of the growing hippie and university student influence in Austin during the 1970s. Friedman became mayor of Austin in 1975.

Even with the efforts to control growth in Austin, it proved impossible to stop the expansion. This resulted in a convergence of a wide variety of new residents from other cities, towns, and rural areas. These new people, combined with the 40,000 students from the University of Texas campus, contributed to a large number of people seeking a way to belong in their new environment. Some were living away from home for the first time. Those from rural backgrounds had to adjust to urban living. Students, in general, can feel an alienation or

[6] Humphrey, 58.

[7] Orum, 273.

[8] Ibid., 275

dislocation combined with anxiety when attending a university, especially one as large as the University of Texas. One way to find a group to join is through music venues. Shank makes the following observation about the Austin music scene in the mid-1970s. "The middle-class, Anglo population of Austin ... alienated from their origins ... had developed a tradition of grouping in clubs, listening and dancing to the only artistic form that made any sense out of their feelings of dislocation, anxiety and possibility, and musically constructing a new connection with their origins."[9]

Many of the patrons who attended concerts at the AWHQ were students at the University of Texas, but other patrons were those who had moved to Austin to work. Richmond began attending concerts at the Armadillo World Headquarters approximately two weeks after arriving in Austin from Amarillo in 1972.[10] Richmond is an example of a displaced person who found an identity within a social group through music. Simon Frith, author of "Towards an aesthetic of popular music," writes that a primary reason people listen to and enjoy popular music is "to create for ourselves a particular sort of self-definition, a particular place in society."[11]

The Armadillo World Headquarters that was located at 525 ½ Barton Springs Road in South Austin had its grand opening on August 7, 1970. (Fig. 1) As noted in Chapter 1, Eddie Wilson, Mike Tolleson, Bobby Hederman, and Jim Franklin, along with others who helped with financial backing, such as music artist Spencer Perskin and a group of Austin writers and artists who called themselves Mad Dog, Inc., transformed an old, vacant building, used at one time as a National Guard Armory, into a music hall named the Armadillo World Headquarters. Brad

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[9] Shank, 87.

[10] Joseph Richmond, personal communication, 12 October 2004.

[11] Simon Frith, "Towards an aesthetic of popular music," in *Music and society: the politics of composition, performance and reception* eds. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 140.

Buchholz describes the Armadillo World Headquarters as being founded by "an eclectic band of hippies and artists," which started as "a ragtag counter-culture haven and grew into something celebrated by the mainstream."[12]

David Menconi, in his thesis "Music, Media and the Metropolis: the case of Austin's Armadillo World Headquarters," 1985, provides details on the actual building. The brick building was cavernous at approximately 30,000 square feet and the area designated as the music hall could accommodate 1500 people for concerts. It had a high, arched ceiling, exposed metal beams, and a concrete floor with a few scraps of carpet both in front of and on the stage. The interior walls were composed of cinder blocks. All of this made for poor acoustics. There were risers and folding chairs available for seating, but people usually sat on the floor. Originally the building had no air conditioning or heating until space heaters were added in 1971.[13]

Further renovations occurred in the summer of 1971 when the founders organized a crew to add an indoor bar, turn the original stage into a raised cabaret with tables and chairs, and build a new main stage at the other end of the hall opposite to the original stage location. They removed small offices on the first floor to allow for more space and built new offices upstairs. In 1972 they added an outdoor beer garden with a small stage for concerts and a kitchen.[14] The garden became a favorite gathering place for patrons to eat, drink beer, and listen to live music.

In 1976 they built an eight-track recording studio called the Onion Audio behind the main stage.[15] That same year, the staff opened a T-shirt shop inside the building. By 1978 they offered

[12] Buchholz, "Day of the 'Dillo," 1.

[13] David Menconi, "Music, Media and the Metropolis: the case of Austin's Armadillo World Headquarters" (Thesis, University of Texas, 1985), 74.

[14] Ibid., 75

[15] Ibid., 130

promotional posters from concerts for purchase at the shop. Finally, in 1979, cigarette lighters and belt buckles, decorated with part of the AWHQ logo, were added to the souvenir options.[16]

Jim Franklin is responsible for the armadillo mammal becoming a part of the name Armadillo World Headquarters. Buchholz writes that Franklin, who has a great affinity for armadillos, liked how the skating rink adjacent to the armory looked like an armadillo with its armored contours and domed roof.[17] Franklin saw a visual resemblance between the armored appearance and shape of the adjoining building and the armored appearance and shape of the armadillo. This similarity led to his contributing "armadillo" to the first part of the name of the Armadillo World Headquarters and began the armadillo's association with the building that functioned primarily as a music hall. Murals painted on the interior and exterior walls of the building, some of which included armadillos walking along the walls or doing improbable acts such as taking a bite out of the moon, visually reinforced the association.

According to Franklin, Eddie Wilson added "World Headquarters" to Armadillo to complete the name. Wilson was a former Marine who saw a military connection with the former use of the building as a National Guard Armory.[18] Since the term "headquarters" commonly applies to a place where military orders are issued, Wilson's use of the military term is an ironic choice because he became a hippie following his return from the Viet Nam war. There are also meanings associated with the words "head" and "quarters." "Head" is a slang term used in reference to those who use illegal drugs. "Quarters" can be associated with the quartering of the world and with the quartering of an armadillo egg.[19] Franklin created a visual representation of

[16] Leea Mechling, personal communication, email, 06 December 2006

[17] Buchholz, "Day of the 'Dillo,"10.

[18] Jim Franklin, personal communication, email, 09 May 2006.

[19] Franklin, personal communication, email, 09 May 2006

"quartering" in the *Grand Opening* poster, as I describe in the analysis of the poster in Chapter 4.

During the ten years the Armadillo existed, music artists Spencer Perskin and the local Shiva's Headband, Jerry Garcia with the Grateful Dead, Willie Nelson, Michael Martin Murphey, Doug Sahm, Freddie King and Waylon Jennings, and Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen, along with many others both local and national, performed there. Musicians sat in with other bands for jam sessions, mixing the styles of playing and singing. The AWHQ concerts included a great variety of music genres, including country, blues, jazz, rock, progressive country also called cosmic cowboy or redneck rock, chamber music, and international music, such as performed by Ravi Shankar. The Austin Ballet Theatre performed there many times. All of these different music sounds and entertainment attracted a variety of patrons.

During the mid-1970s, the cosmic cowboy sound became a prominent component of the music scene of the Armadillo World Headquarters. It is the sound most often written about in association with the AWHQ. This sound is generally described as a crossover of rock and country music and, as previously noted, was also called redneck rock and progressive country. Many literary sources credit Willie Nelson with becoming the designated head of that sound when he began performing at the Armadillo in 1972. There were actually many contributors to this new sound including Michael Murphey who wrote the song "Cosmic Cowboy" in 1973. That song title became the designated name for the new sound and a new identity that came from a kinship formed between hippies and cowboys in Austin who found they had a mutual appreciation of the new sound. Archie Green, author of "Austin's Cosmic Cowboys: Words in Collision," discusses the combining of rock and country music in depth. He notes that hippies typically liked rock music and cowboys typically like the country sound. When the music sounds

melded together, both groups found they liked this new sound.[20] A changing appearance in the clothing and hair of members of the two groups was the visual indication of the alliance. I describe these transformations in more detail in Chapter 4, during the analysis of specific images in the Michael Murphey Cosmic Cowboy poster.

All of the music artists' performances and other events, such as the Austin Ballet Theater, required the creation of poster and handbill art to promote the events. Henry Gonzalez, one of the Armadillo Art Squad artists and one of the founders of the South Austin Museum of Popular Culture, noted that all the artists who contributed to the creation of promotional posters produced almost 600 different music and event posters and handbills for the Armadillo World Headquarters.[21]

Artists' promotions of the diverse concerts through posters helped to bring concert-goers to this music hall. Members of the audiences proved to be as diverse as the music genres and constituted a major component in the history of the Armadillo. As already mentioned in the section on the history of Austin, major growth in the 1970s resulted in a diverse group of people moving to the city. Those who enjoyed music found the Armadillo World Headquarters music hall to be a good venue for meeting people. As Shank summarizes it, "An astounding alliance developed among progressive country musicians, long-haired pot-smoking young people, radio disc jockeys, nightclub owners, football players, and even local and state politicians."[22] Green would add to this list of patrons the rural members referred to through various names such as

[20] Archie Green, "Austin's Cosmic Cowboys: Words in Collision," in *"And Other Neighborly Names": Social Process and Cultural Image in Texas Folklore* eds. Richard Bauman and Roger D. Abrahams (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 164.

[21] Henry Gonzalez, "The Armadillo Years: A Visual History" (Brochure for Armadillo Christmas Bazaar, 1991), 5.

[22] Shank, 16.

rednecks and cowboys, all of whom contributed to the diversity of the audiences.[23] The groups found a common ground through identification with the music of the AWHQ. Menconi makes the following comment on the Armadillo World Headquarters. “As an architectural magnet that drew cultural segments that would not ordinarily come together, the Armadillo was able to transcend cultural differences.”[24] Several of the former patrons of the Armadillo, including Juliana Fernandez-Helton, Joseph Richmond, Bill Dunlap and Aimée Johnson, all of whom I communicated with either through direct conversations or email correspondence, commented that it was the feeling of community, the camaraderie of meeting old friends, and making new friends at the Armadillo that is one of the best memories for them.[25]

Leea Mechling commented that writers from Japan, Germany and France, who specialized in writing about America, came to the AWHQ after hearing about how unique it was. “They found a bunch of hippies just living out the whole 'peace and love' creative thing ... People would walk in off the street after hitch hiking across the nation believing that AWHQ was a meditation center and living space...all ready to 'sign up.' The aura of the place drew people like a magnet.”[26]

A term commonly used for many of the audience members, as well as for the owners, staff, artists, and many of the musicians who performed at the AWHQ, is hippie. It is not entirely accurate to use the term hippie in reference to all those involved with the AWHQ. However, it is the term most often used in literary sources. A complete description of hippies is complicated

[23] Green, 164.

[24] Menconi, 94.

[25] Juliana Fernandez-Helton, email, 02 February 2006; Joe Richmond, conversation, 25 March 2006; Bill Dunlap, email, 27 March 2006; Aimée Johnson, email, 17 May 2006.

[26] Mechling, email, 28 September 2005.

and beyond the scope of this thesis, but I will list the most common characteristics associated with the hippie culture, noting a difference particular to hippies in Austin.

The hippie culture began emerging in the mid-1960s in the United States. According to Lewis Yablonsky, author of *The Hippie Trip*, 1968, most hippies come from middle and upper class society in the United States.[27] James L. Spates, author of "Counterculture and Dominant Culture Values: A Cross-National Analysis of the Underground Press and Dominant Culture Magazines," 1976, writes that the original members of the hippie culture tended to be drop-outs from the educational process, but as the groups spread, hippie communities developed in major towns and cities with members also coming from colleges and universities.[28] The University of Texas and Austin were prime locations for a hippie community to develop.

Seth Bovey, author of "Texas Armadillo: From Psychedelic Totem to Regional Icon," makes the following observations about hippies. In general, hippies are often identified as being against corporate competitiveness, conformity, ambition, and consumerism. This was known as being against "The Establishment." They were anti-war and the more motivated members walked in peace marches, such as the protest march against the Viet Nam war that occurred in Austin in 1970. One of their main slogans was "Make love, not war." Hippies believed in not letting negative aspects of life bother them too much.[29] They are commonly associated with taking drugs such as hallucinogens, smoking marijuana, living communally, and letting their hair grow long.

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[27] Lewis Yablonsky, *The Hippie Trip* (New York: Pegasus, 1968), 26.

[28] James L. Spates, "Counterculture and Dominant Culture Values: A Cross-National Analysis of the Underground Press and Dominant Culture Magazines," *American Sociological Review* 41 (October 1976): 870.

[29] Seth Bovey, "The Texas Armadillo: From Psychedelic Totem to Regional Icon," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 37 (2003): 9

There is a notable difference between the hippies of Texas and the rest of the United States. Steven L. Davis, author of *Texas Literary Outlaws: Six Writers in the Sixties and Beyond*, notes that Austin's hippie community is similar to others found in major college towns. One difference, though, is "an odd mix of the freak culture and Texas' ingrained ranching heritage."[30] This comment coincides with the hippie and cowboy alliance that occurred during the mid-1970s. There is further discussion of hippies in Chapter 4 where I analyze the cosmic-related imagery in both the grand opening and cosmic cowboy AWHQ posters.

Now that I have introduced the AWHQ and given an overview of Austin, the music and audience members, I will explain the demise of the AWHQ. Joe Nick Patoski provides an overview of the end of the Armadillo World Headquarters in "The Armadillo's Last Waltz," 1980, as does Barry Shank.

The Armadillo struggled financially for most of its years of operation. In 1976 there were changes in the management. Eddie Wilson, Bobby Hederman, Mike Tolleson and Jim Franklin no longer wanted to participate in the managing of Armadillo World Headquarters and went into various other ventures, resulting in a loss of the original creative force. Hank Alrich took over operations and through cutting staff and making changes in booking policies, he was able to eventually turn the financial situation around. This enabled the AWHQ to stay in business for an additional four years.[31]

Other factors, though, were now contributing to the demise of the Armadillo. Many new music clubs opened in Austin which provided different genres of music and competition for audiences. By 1977 the progressive country sound that had unified the Austin music scene and

[30] Steven L. Davis, *Texas Literary Outlaws: Six Writers in the Sixties & Beyond* (Ft. Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2004), 229.

[31] Joe Nick Patoski, "The Armadillo's Last Waltz," *Texas Monthly* (August 1980): 165.

was closely associated with the Armadillo was losing its popularity. Disco, followed by punk rock, attracted the young audiences by the late 1970s.[32]

By that time, Austin had begun revitalization of the downtown area making the property on which the building was located increasingly valuable. Unfortunately, expansion during Austin's real estate boom also proved to be one of the factors in the demise of the AWHQ. As will happen with economic growth and development, real estate values increase, property taxes increase, and rent has to increase to compensate. The rent charged for use of the AWHQ building was too low to accommodate the increased real estate costs. In 1980, the property where the AWHQ building was located was rezoned to allow for high rise construction. This is when the Hage family who owned the property sold out.[33] M.K. Hage announced the impending sale of the site in February of 1980. This gave the AWHQ until the end of the year before closing its doors for the last time. The Armadillo World Headquarters had its final concert on December 31, 1980.[34]

This brief history of Austin in the 1970s combined with the overview of the Armadillo World Headquarters aids in understanding the development of the imagery found in the murals, paintings, and posters. In Chapters 3 and 4, in order to further the understanding of certain images, particularly in symbolic meanings, I introduce information from oral histories that I began acquiring in 2004 from former patrons, former staff and several of the artists through personal communications. The personal communications provide information for an iconographic analysis of the art discussed in the next two chapters. As noted in Chapter 1, the oral histories I have acquired are from direct conversations and email correspondence.

[32] Shank, 16.

[33] Ibid., 9.

[34] Patoski, 165.

I am applying what I have learned from the personal communications to propose meanings to the armadillo image and the cosmic aspects of the sky and planets that are specific to the audience reception and artists' perceptions. Writer John Wheat notes in his short history of the AWHQ, written in the *Handbook of Texas Online,* 2001, "The name Armadillo World Headquarters evoked both a cosmic consciousness and the image of a peaceable native critter, the armadillo..."[35] I found that it is not just the name of the music hall, but images in the murals, paintings, and posters that also function to evoke memories and connections of the patrons to the armadillo and the AWHQ. The next chapter discusses the art directly related to the Armadillo World Headquarters building.

[35] John Wheat, *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "Armadillo World Headquarters," http://www.tsha.texas.edu/handbook/online/articles/AA/xda1.html (Accessed September 5, 2006).

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE ARMADILLO MURAL AND FREDDIE KING PAINTING

In this chapter, I introduce the use of literary sources, audience reception, oral histories, and social functions and apply these to the iconographic analysis of specific imagery within a mural painted on the interior wall of the Armadillo World Headquarters (AWHQ) building, as well as to imagery within a painting that was installed inside the building near the stage.

The armadillo, sky, and planetary images are primary components of an iconographic program within the art created for the Armadillo World Headquarters. The armadillo and sky are primary elements in Franklin's armadillo mural that he painted on an interior wall of the AWHQ, while the armadillo without any sky imagery present has a prominent position in his painting of Freddie King.

Franklin is commonly credited with creating a symbol of the armadillo in Austin, although he was not the first artist there to portray the mammal. The image of the armadillo first appeared in Austin in 1966 within artist Glenn Whitehead's cartoon drawings of the mammal that he created for *The Texas Ranger*, the student humor magazine for the University of Texas. Whitehead continued to include his armadillo cartoon character in *The Texas Ranger* through 1967. During this period of time, he was known as the Armadillo Man on the University of Texas campus.[1]

Although Franklin probably was aware of Whitehead's armadillo images, he developed his own distinctive renderings of the mammal. While Whitehead limited his armadillo image to cartoon characters, Franklin drew his armadillo images in a more realistic manner by depicting details of the mammal's appearance. Franklin has a variety of armadillo objects to use as models. Stephen Harrigan, in an article he wrote called “The Dawning of the Age of Armadillo,” 1972,

[1] Glenn Whitehead, personal communication, correspondence, 04 November 2004.

notes that Franklin's collection of armadillo objects includes armadillo body parts from the highways, wooden and glass armadillos, and stuffed armadillos.[2] These objects, especially the stuffed armadillos and body parts from the highway, provide him with realistic models for his detailed portrayals of the mammal.

Rush Evans, author of "Armadillo World Headquarters," 1996, notes that Whitehead had discontinued using the armadillo image by the time Franklin began his often surreal and what Evans calls Franklin's "visual pun" usage of the mammal in 1968.[3] According to Whitehead, Franklin became the next Armadillo Man.[4]

Jim Franklin was the first artist and member of the Armadillo Art Squad associated with the AWHQ. Franklin is a native Texan, born in Galveston in 1943. His formal art studies include training at the San Francisco Art Institute during the early 1960s. In the mid-1960s he returned to Texas where he helped open the Vulcan Gas Company, a music hall in Austin where Shiva's Headband performed. In the late 1960s Franklin began drawing promotional posters for that music venue and continued to do so until it closed in 1970.

His first drawing of an armadillo appeared in a handbill he designed for a Love-In at Woolridge Park in Austin in September 1968. The image is an armadillo smoking marijuana. Franklin wanted an image that represented the audience. He thought a marijuana-smoking armadillo would be a visual to which the Texas underground hippie culture could relate. It was an instant success with hippies who found identification with the armadillo through the reference to marijuana.[5]

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Franklin included armadillo images in cover art

[2] Stephen Harrigan, "The Dawning of the Age of the Armadillo," *Rolling Stone* (March 1972): 20.

[3] Rush Evans, "Concert Poster Art: Austin, Texas Style," *DISCOVERIES* 94 (March 1996): 30.

[4] Whitehead, 04 November 2004.

[5] Evans, "Concert Poster Art: Austin, Texas Style," 30.

for *The Rag*, an Austin underground paper.[6] Beginning in the 1970s, he used the armadillo image in T-shirt designs, record covers for music artists, such as for Freddie King who performed at the AWHQ many times, concert posters, and Lone Star beer advertising. Franklin created a symbol with the armadillo. "Thus, a brilliant advertising, cross-promotional symbol had been found that would long be displayed as an image to be associated with Austin and its independent musical spirit for years to come."[7]

Franklin does not limit his use of the armadillo image to promotional work. He also painted and continues to paint surrealistic landscape and cityscape paintings many of which include armadillos doing improbable acts. A contemporary example is his oil painting titled *The Meek Shall Inherit the Highway*, 1997, where armadillos are burrowing out from under a highway. This painting became the cover art for Gary P. Nunn's "What I Like About Texas," 1997, CD.

It was in 1970 when he introduced the armadillo mammal to the art he made specifically for the Armadillo World Headquarters. He painted murals, many of which included armadillo imagery, on the interior and exterior walls, as well as free-hanging paintings of music artists that were installed throughout the AWHQ building. He also included the mammal in many of his concert posters. Danny Garrett, one of the artists who began creating AWHQ posters in 1971, says that he and most of the other artists associated with the AWHQ consider Franklin the godfather of their group and credit Franklin with elevating the armadillo mammal "to a star in the semiotic firmament."[8]

In August, 1970, Franklin, using acrylic paint, began painting what became known as the armadillo mural, the first of several murals painted on the interior, cinder block walls of the

[6] "Armadillo Man," *The New Yorker* (11 December 1971): 41.

[7] Evans, "Concert Poster Art: Austin, Texas Style," 30.

[8] Garrett, email, 18 November 2004.

Armadillo World Headquarters building. (Fig. 2) Franklin "quickly took the image of the Texas rodent in the name of the place and made it his own and made sure the people of Austin knew what it stood for, incorporating it into the show posters and wall designs that made the familiar little mammal synonymous with this new place to hear music."[9] I surmise that the term "wall designs" refers to the murals Franklin painted both on the interior and exterior walls of the AWHQ. Bovey writes, "As resident artist of the Armadillo World Headquarters, Franklin converted the place into the 'Sistine Chapel of armadillo art' by covering the inside and outside walls with murals."[10]

The armadillo mural was situated on the wall perpendicular and to the right of the main stage when viewed facing the stage. It contained a pastel sky with cumulus clouds that provided a backdrop to a herd of gray armadillos. The armadillos faced in different directions. Some faced directly towards viewers, some showed their backs to viewers while others were seen in profile. Some armadillos stood on their hind legs while others were on all four feet. They were painted closely together, even appearing stacked on top of each other, with the herd receding back to the horizon line. Franklin painted few details on the armadillo bodies. He did not define the distinguishing scaly appearance and nine bands of the outer body carapace or include distinct facial features. This was unusual for him as he drew his first armadillo image in detail and his subsequent paintings and drawings after this mural are also detailed depictions.

The only other images included in the mural were cumulus clouds that Franklin scattered sparsely throughout the middle section of the mural and more closely together in the upper area of the mural. The wide expanse of sky, covering approximately two-thirds of the mural, helped create an overall panoramic appearance. With no other imagery than clouds and blue sky, the

[9] Rush Evans, "Home with the Armadillo: Austin's Legendary Armadillo World Headquarters," *DISCOVERIES* 94 (March 1996): 25.

[10] Bovey, 10.

images of the armadillos, especially given their size and quantity, were visually prominent.

Regarding the size of the mural and its imagery, a photograph of the interior of the AWHQ shows that Franklin's armadillo mural covered a portion of the lower half of the wall. Information on the specific dimensions of the mural is unavailable as no record was made of the size and the mural no longer exists due to the building's demolition in January 1981. We can approximate the size by comparing the height of the folding chairs, located in front of the mural, with the height of the armadillo and sky imagery painted on the walls. The armadillos must have been approximately three to four feet tall, depending on whether they were on all four feet or standing up on their hind legs. Franklin painted the images of the armadillos close to the floor, but according to Richmond, they were so large that they could be seen when viewed from the area leading up to the stage.[11] The overall mural must have been at least twelve feet high and possibly thirty to forty feet long. Due to size of the armadillo imagery and the size of the overall mural, these herds of armadillos must have provided a constant visual reference to the mammal for the patrons and staff while in the building.

In order to perform an iconographic analysis of the armadillo and sky imagery in the mural, I investigated traditional literary sources, such as dictionaries and encyclopedias of iconography but found no symbolism attached to the armadillo or any applicable meanings for the sky image as used in the mural. This finding is in accord with Cassidy's comment, that “the once dominant principle of 'find a text and you've found the answer' is no longer thought sufficient.”[12] Many of the meanings, listed within these texts, are derived from allegorical and mythological sources which do not apply to the context for which the artists created the images and in which they were used.

There are references to the armadillo in Mayan literature and in analysis of Mayan art, but

[11] Richmond, 25 March 2006.

[12] Cassidy, 10.

after investigating literary sources of Mayan iconography, I was unable to find any symbolism associated with the armadillo. For this reason, I now turn to an iconographic analysis of the armadillo image by applying meanings that former patrons perceived and shared with me through personal communications.

There are a variety of meanings of the armadillo image found in the personal communications that are applicable to the mural. Former patron Gilbert Conwoop said he perceives the armadillo as a symbol for the "old armory" building that functioned as the Armadillo World Headquarters music hall. He comments that Franklin drew the armadillo "as an animal that had survived through the centuries without much change and used that as a reference for this concert hall."[13] As previously noted in Chapter 2, Franklin liked how the building adjacent to the Armadillo World Headquarters resembled an armadillo shape with its architectural design of armored contours and domed roof. In this analogy, there is a physical association of the armadillo mammal and the building.

There is an additional correlation between the armadillo image and the building as perceived by Conwoop. He uses the term "old armory" in reference to the Armadillo World Headquarters building's previous use, as well as referring to the armadillo as a survivor through the centuries. Bil Gilbert, author of a history of the armadillo, writes in "That 'little armored thing' doesn't get by on looks alone," 1995, that the nine-banded armadillo evolved from an order of mammals, Xenathra, which originated some 50 million years ago in South America.[14] The nine-banded armadillo arrived in South Texas around 1850 and gradually migrated north.[15] Conwoop's use of the term "old" ties his meaning of the armadillo image and the building together.

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[13] Gilbert Conwoop, personal communication, email, 17 May 2006.

[14] Bil Gilbert, "That 'little armored thing' doesn't get by on looks alone," *Smithsonian* 26, Issue 7 (October 1995): 142.

[15] Ibid., 144.

Richmond says his first reaction to the armadillo image, depicted in the mural, was to feel an immediate personal association with the mammal. He thought the mammals were odd and funny-looking and he thought of himself in the same way. Richmond noted the pointed faces, humped backs and general prehistoric look of the armadillo image in the mural. Although Richmond does not possess these physical characteristics, he felt he had an odd, funny-looking appearance due to having long hair and a long beard, which was the typical look of a hippie.[16]

Richmond also thought the image of the herd of armadillos represented the people who came to hear the concerts.[17] The herd of armadillos painted in the mural resembled the groups of concert attendees inside the music hall area. While researching images, I found a photograph of the interior of the AWHQ that showed groups of people in the audience space. The people are grouped together like the armadillos in the mural. They are facing in different directions and are variously standing or sitting on the floor similar to the positioning of the armadillos with some facing the main stage while others are not.

For Richmond, the social function in terms of response to the imagery, was to feel an identification with the armadillo and, further, to feel like one of the group. He had moved to Austin just a few weeks before attending his first concert at the AWHQ. This immediate personal association with the armadillo helped him feel a connection with a social group in his new environment.[18] Harrigan writes that the armadillo imagery served as a bond for the Central Texas counter culture.[19] Former patron Bill Dunlap refers to himself as an "old armadillo" and says he still stays in touch with the friends he made there because of the good times they had together "at

[16] Richmond, direct conversation, 25 March 2006.

[17] Richmond, direct conversation, 25 March 2006.

[18] Richmond, direct conversation, 25 March 2006.

[19] Harrigan, 20.

that time in Austin history which will not happen again the same way."[20] And, as former patron Fernandez-Helton comments about her experience at the AWHQ, "You never met a stranger in an Armadillo concert crowd; everyone had a good time – grooving to the music ..."[21] It was the Austin hippies identifying with the armadillo mammal which originated from Franklin's personal connection with and promotion of the mammal through his art that secured the association that still exists between former patrons of the AWHQ and armadillos. The armadillo "became a symbol of the place, its patrons and its guiding philosophy."[22]

Eddie Wilson summarized the similarities between hippies and armadillos which contributed to the hippies identifying with the mammal. "Armadillos and hippies are somewhat alike, because they're maligned and picked on. Armadillos like to sleep all day and roam at night. They share their homes with others. People think they're smelly and ugly and they keep their noses in the grass. They're paranoid. But they've got one characteristic nobody can knock. They survive."[23]

David Sumners, a former patron and blues musician who frequented the Armadillo World Headquarters beginning in the early 1970s, comments on what the armadillo meant to him in the art produced for the AWHQ. "The armadillo, once an ordinary and common roadside sight (and often road kill) along Texas highways, became a symbol of all things uniquely Texan, both musically and psychically as portrayed in the artwork."[24]

Sumners also sees a Texan symbolism in the type of sky painted in the mural. He refers to the "puffy cotton ball cumulus clouds common to the summer Texas skies" as being a part of

[20] Dunlap, email, 27 March 2006.

[21] Fernandez-Helton, email, 02 February 2006.

[22] Buchholz, "Days of the 'Dillo," 10.

[23] Evans, "Home with the Armadillo," 26.

[24] David Sumners, personal communication, email, 16 May 2006.

the visual Texan symbol when used with the armadillo image.[25] This was the only comment about the sky within the personal communications. However, there is one extrapolation I propose concerning the Texan symbolism as Sumners associates it musically.

The combination of the armadillo and typical Texan, summer sky imagery, perceived as Texan symbols, may also serve to represent the Armadillo World Headquarters building as a Texan symbol in music during the 1970s and retrospectively. According to Mechling, the association of the armadillo image with music did not occur until it was used in the Armadillo World Headquarters art.[26] Shank notes that the original partners who created the Armadillo World Headquarters also created through publicity an "unshakable association in the minds of music fans in Austin and across the country between one performance site, one rather narrow slice of Austin music, and a specific image of Texan identity."[27] The Armadillo World Headquarters is the performance site to which Shank refers in the quote. The images in the murals that Sumners sees as symbolic of Texas may also, by being a physical part of the building, create a visual connection of the Armadillo World Headquarters with the music played there. This visual presence of a Texas landscape inside the AWHQ served as a reminder to the patrons that they were in a Texas music hall.

A more dramatic depiction of the armadillo in another work of art by Franklin is a 1971 painting of blues guitarist Freddie King. (Fig. 3) The purpose of this painting was to honor King in his first live recording of a performance at the Armadillo World Headquarters. King returned many times to perform at the AWHQ until his untimely death in 1976 at the age of forty-two.

Franklin painted King's portrait from a photograph, using acrylic paint on plywood. The painting measures eight feet tall and eight feet wide and is composed of two sheets of plywood

[25] Ibid.

[26] Mechling, email, 28 April 2006.

[27] Shank, 9.

put together. He began the painting the day of King's concert and was able to complete it just before King went on stage. Franklin said he works fast once he gets started.[28] The painting was hung in the AWHQ high up on the wall which ran perpendicular and to the left of the stage. This placed it on the wall opposite to the armadillo mural that I analyzed.

Freddie King's figure is portrayed from the waist up, positioned to the right of center and facing towards the left, with a three-quarter turn to viewers of the painting. His image covers over half the width of the board on which he is painted while the top of his head is very close to the top of the board. King is dressed simply in a white shirt. He is holding a red guitar in a position of playing it. His eyes are closed and his face has what may be described as a pained or soulful expression.

A gray, nine-banded armadillo is bursting head first and straight out of a bloody hole in King's chest. There is blood trailing off the armadillo's body. Unlike the mural, in which the armadillo imagery lacks detail in the surface texture of the bodies and facial features, there is much detail in the depiction of the armadillo bursting out of King's chest. Franklin carefully painted details of the face and scaly outer shell or carapace, making the nine bands of the nine-banded armadillo obvious on the main body.

Located in the lower right corner of the painting is a small image of the head of Leon Russell, another music artist. Russell's hair is long and he has a mustache. He appears to be singing into a microphone. He also is positioned similarly to King at a three-quarter turn to viewers and facing towards the left. His image is so much smaller than King's that it creates an odd spatial relationship between the two figures. The background of the painting is in various shades of blue that are predominantly in dark tonal values.

Several of the patrons comment on the dramatic image of an armadillo bursting out of the

[28] Franklin, email, 13 June 2006.

area of Freddie King's heart. A few patrons did not remember exactly who the music artist is in the painting. Fernandez-Helton remembered the artist as BB King rather than Freddie King. According to her personal communication, it is the image of the armadillo in this painting that serves as her primary catalyst for evoking memories of the AWHQ.[29] In her case, the armadillo imagery made a more lasting impression on her than Freddie King, the portrayed music artist. This remembering of the armadillo image, rather than that of the correct music artist, reinforces the perception of the armadillo image as a visual association and reminder of the Armadillo World Headquarters.

Sumners is one of the patrons who did remember that the music artist in the painting is Freddie King. Sumners is a former blues musician, himself. He notes that he loves "Texas blues music first and foremost and loved Freddie King music." He professes "an emotional, musical and psychic connection with that artwork."[30] As previously discussed in the iconographic analysis of the Franklin mural of the herd of armadillos, Sumners perceives the armadillo image as a symbol of Texas. Therefore, based on Sumners' Texan association of the armadillo image and his personal connection to the Freddie King painting, the armadillo image also serves the function of creating a link between the music artist, a Texan identity, and Texas blues music. The image of the armadillo bursting out of King's chest creates a connection between King and the armadillo. By the armadillo coming out of the area of King's heart, as if it is his heart, the armadillo also represents the heart and soul of the blues music artist. By extension, the armadillo represents Texas blues music as associated with Freddie King at the AWHQ.

Analyzing audience receptions and social functions found within the personal communications reveals a variety of meanings applicable to images of the armadillo and sky in Franklin's armadillo mural and the painting of Freddie King. The process of analyzing personal

[29] Fernandez-Helton, email, 02 February 2006.

[30] Sumners, email, 16 May 2006.

communications to aid in an iconographic analysis of specific images brings up several important points of discussion about the nature and use of audience reception and social function in iconographic analysis. The first point concerns themes that emerge from meanings of the images that former patrons and staff expressed in the personal communications. In conjunction with the identification of themes, there is a second point of discussion about viewer's use and response to the images. The last important point concerns the variety of meanings of these images found within the personal communications. This variety addresses Cassidy's comments concerning how different frames of reference by a varied audience produce different meanings.

There are common themes in the recollections of the former patrons, staff and artists. These themes include nostalgia, a community feeling among the former patrons, staff and artists of the Armadillo World Headquarters, an identification with the armadillo mammal, prevailing references to the term “cosmic,” and an association of the images as Texan symbols.

When I mentioned the Armadillo World Headquarters and the armadillo in the murals, painting, and posters associated with the AWHQ in my conversations and correspondence with artists and former patrons and staff, they were nostalgic and even wistful in their responses. A common memory of the Armadillo World Headquarters was that it was a place of positive and even magical experiences for those who attended the concerts or met friends in the outdoor beer garden. Conwoop said it “was such a magical time and one that I don't think will ever be equaled.”[31] Aimée Johnson, a former patron and staff member of the AWHQ, said that “the 'Dillo itself was a music mecca, a community, a great place to be.”[32] There is a common thread among the personal communications that there was a strong sense of community specific to the Armadillo World Headquarters. All of the themes determined from the personal communications help establish contemporary meanings which are applied to the analysis of the images.

[31] Conwoop, email, 17 May 2006

[32] Johnson, email, 17 May 2006.

There are predominant themes in the communications, but an important point to note is that there are differences in the viewers' use and response to the images. Not all viewers responded in the same way to my questions concerning their interpretations of the images. As revealed in the analysis of the armadillo mural, Richmond felt a personal connection with the armadillo image. He thought the armadillo represented him and the herd of armadillos represents the hippie audience. Conwoop, on the other hand, did not find any meaning to the armadillo animal on a personal level. As previously noted, he saw it as a symbol of the AWHQ building.

According to Cassidy, researching how images affect viewer's behavior and how viewers use and respond to images is as important as scholarly, textual sources. This is what he terms the social function.[33] In other words, in the case of the Armadillo World Headquarters art, the same image evokes different responses, which creates a wider range of meanings without reference to dictionaries of iconography. Given that the armadillo does not appear in traditional texts on iconography, this makes the responses to the image by former patrons, staff, and the artists important in discovering pertinent meanings that apply to the time, place, and situation for which the images are produced. Without traditional, art historical meanings of the armadillo, viewers lack that common source of knowledge of the armadillo image to use as a reference.

This aligns with the comment by Cassidy that what individuals saw in a work of art will not necessarily correspond with each other or with traditional meanings.[34] The interpretations of the images through audience reception are based on different frames of reference. As there were different social groups within the audience, such as the already noted cowboys and hippies, I am conjecturing that the different frames of reference of the different groups and individuals help explain the different responses I received.

An example of the differences in reception concerns meanings assigned to the cosmic

[33] Cassidy, 10.

[34] Cassidy, 11.

aspect of the images. As discussed in Chapter 1, cosmic elements refer to the sky and planetary objects. Many of the personal communications include the word “cosmic” throughout the comments about the Armadillo World Headquarters building and the Armadillo World Headquarters art.[35] However, there is a comment by Conwoop, who said he has never thought much about any “cosmic” images being associated with the Armadillo World Headquarters. Neither he nor his friends “saw any real 'meanings' in any planetary images.”[36]

Different and sometimes conflicting responses serve to validate Cassidy's proposal concerning variety in meanings within iconographic analysis using audience reception. According to Cassidy, more current approaches of audience reception and use of contemporary texts allows for a more realistic acceptance of the “ineluctable ambiguity” of the meanings of works of art. As noted previously, the variety of responses allows for more possible meanings of the images that are relevant to the period and place in which the images are made and received.[37]

First, the armadillo image represents a reference to the building that is called the Armadillo World Headquarters. Second, the armadillo image becomes a form of personal identification for an audience member and, when portrayed in a herd in the wall mural, the armadillos resemble the audience. This, in turn, shows a social function in audience reception of the armadillo image as the audience member feels he belongs to a group at the AWHQ.

The armadillo also became a Texan symbol that could, by its presence in a mural painted directly on the interior wall of the building, create a visual association that connects the AWHQ and the music performed there to a Texan identity. By its presence in the Freddie King painting, the armadillo also became a Texan symbol for a music artist, a Texan identity and Texas blues music. As Franklin and other artists continued to incorporate the armadillo in their art, the

[35] Franklin, 09 May 2006; Richmond, 25 March 2006; Sumners, 16 May 2006; Johnson, 17 May 2006.

[36] Conwoop, email, 17 May 2006.

[37] Cassidy, 11.

mammal became an iconic image. “The armadillo icon then spread like a virus throughout mainstream Texas society during the late 1970s, becoming a graphic way to express that which is Texan.”[38]

Oral histories gathered from patrons and staff of the Armadillo World Headquarters anticipated formal recognition of the armadillo as a Texan symbol. The armadillo became one of the symbols of Texas in the small mammal category in 1995 during the regular session of the Texas 74th legislation. This gave the mammal an official status as a Texas symbol.

The sky, that is a part of the mural, is also thought to be a Texan symbol that connects the Armadillo World Headquarters building to a Texan identity. Although the blue sky and cumulus clouds did not evoke any cosmic references within the personal communications, there are cosmic associations applicable to the planetary images within the promotional posters that I analyze in the following Chapter 4.

[38] Bovey, 8.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF POSTERS FOR THE GRAND OPENING AND THE MICHAEL MURPHEY COSMIC COWBOY CONCERT

In this chapter, I determine additional meanings of the armadillo and cosmic images through an iconographic analysis of two Armadillo World Headquarters (AWHQ) concert posters. I describe, and then by using iconographic texts and information from personal communications, analyze the images in these posters in chronological order. The first poster is Franklin's design titled the *Grand Opening,* 1970, and the second poster is Micael Priest's design titled the *Michael Murphey Cosmic Cowboy Symphony and Bar B Q,* 1973.

Armadillo Art Squad artist Sam Yeates makes the following observation about the poster art he and the other artists produced for the AWHQ, as well as for other Austin music venues in the 1970s. “Looking back at Austin at the time, it was the focus of so much creative energy. The poster art that was produced documented the changing times and provoked a lot of people to collect and own art. One can look back and recapture the pleasure associated to these posters and the events they advertised.”[1] The poster images that I am analyzing for this thesis served to advertise events at the AWHQ. They now function as personal reminders and souvenirs of the AWHQ for former patrons, staff, and the artists and aid in historical understanding of the AWHQ music scene.

The posters, by being placed in strategic locations such as in record stores, ticket outlets, and on telephone poles, in the vicinity of the Armadillo World Headquarters and the University of Texas and at the AWHQ building, functioned to promote upcoming concerts and events at the AWHQ. Referring to Frith's comment noted in Chapter 2, concerning persons who are looking

[1] Yeates, email, 08 May 2006.

for an identity and social group through music, these promotional posters enabled students and others in the area where the posters were situated to find a potential music connection in Austin at the Armadillo World Headquarters.

Artists typically had to create posters quickly to meet deadlines. Bookings for the music artists sometimes were last minute and the poster artists had to complete their designs in a hurry to get them to the printer on time. There were almost always budget constraints. This meant the posters were usually one ink color or black and white prints with a finished size of 11 by17 inches.[2]

The first poster designed for the AWHQ was an exception to this one ink color format, perhaps because the main music band performing for the opening was Shiva's Headband, the music group Eddie Wilson managed. There was no last minute booking, in this case. Also, the owners of the AWHQ may have allocated a larger advertising budget since it was the opening night of the AWHQ.

Franklin created a colorful poster for the grand opening of the music hall. (Fig. 4) A predominant color in the *Grand Opening* poster is the blue of a clear, unclouded sky. The blue gradates from a medium shade to darker at the top of the poster. The sky image serves as the main background for the poster imagery. Franklin designed a visual representation of the words which composed the name of the Armadillo World Headquarters by combining images of four armadillos with an image of the world.

The central design of the poster is the depiction of the world covered above and supported below by four armadillos. This represents the “Armadillo World” part of the AWHQ name. The world is divided into four segments with spaces visible between the four quarters. Renderings of Canada, the United States, Central America and South America are tinted green

[2] Yeates, email, 08 May 2006.

and depicted on the upper and lower sections that are the visible right half of the world. The world has a slight tint of blue. Shading, created through cross-hatching, gives the world the illusion of three-dimensionality.

The curved bodies of two, nine-banded armadillos cover the top of the world. The back parts of their bodies appear joined together starting at the sixth band on their outer shells. They each face from the center of the poster diagonally towards the lower left and right corners of the poster. The right side and front of the face of the armadillo facing to the right is visible while the left side and front of the face of the armadillo facing left is visible. The exposed back foot of each armadillo appears joined to the other, just like the backs of their bodies are joined. The toes of the exposed front foot of each armadillo end at the bottom edge of the top two segments of the world. Their tails protrude from the backs of their bodies in such a way that the tails appear to come out from behind the ear of the armadillo to which they are joined. The overall impression of the image is the armadillos are physically connected and blanket the top of the world.

There are two nine-banded armadillos portrayed under the world, appearing to hold it suspended in the sky on their backs and tails. Their tails are joined at the tips, forming a connection between their bodies. The armadillos' bodies are angled away from the viewer with their heads in profile. There are two sections of green grassy land visible at the lower right and left portions of the poster, divided by an irregularly shaped crevasse. The two armadillos, located under the world, each have one front foot touching the edges of the crevasse. The armadillo on the left is touching the edge of the land with the toes of its left foot while the armadillo on the right is touching the edge of land with the toes of its right foot. The visible back foot of each armadillo is suspended in the air. Their bodies have darker shading on their backs as if in the shadow of the world. These armadillos appear to be supporting the world in space while maintaining a toehold on land.

Like the armadillo in the Freddie King painting, all four of the armadillo bodies are detailed in the depiction of scales, with the nine bands being evident. The textured treatment of the bodies gives the armadillos a gray color. There is no apparent expression on any of their faces, which is typical of an armadillo.

The other imagery in the poster is basically concert information. The words “Grand” and “Opening,” depicted in white letters with black outlines, are located at the top edge of the poster. “Grand” is on the far left and “Opening” is on the far right. Located directly over the two armadillos on the top of the world is the word “Armadillo” in yellow and all capital letters outlined in white and then black. A banner design that runs across the poster at the same height as the word “Armadillo” is in red with dark pink, capitalized letters. The words on the left side of the banner are “Shiva's Headband,” the name of the music group headlining the grand opening. The names on the right side of the banner are two other music groups, “Hub City Movers” and “Whistler.”

There are two yellow, egg-shaped designs with black outlining, located beneath the left and right sides of the banner. These shapes contain the dates and days of the grand opening. The dates of Aug. 7 & 8, with the words Friday and Sat., all capitalized, are written inside the egg shape on the left, underneath the banner noting Shiva's Headband. On the right, underneath the right side of the banner, is the notation of “Dance Concert 9:PM til.” The letters are white with black outlines. “World Headquarters,” drawn in all capital letters and printed in yellow outlined in black, is located below the image of the world and four armadillos. Beneath this is the address and location for the AWHQ. Running along the bottom of the poster are details about the cost of tickets and the locations for purchasing them. The address and ticket details are all written in small, black, and capital letters.

By Franklin's depicting two armadillos covering the top of the world and two armadillos

appearing to support the world on their backs, with the sky both above and below this imagery, he created a visual representation of the Armadillo World Headquarters name and connected the cosmic aspect of the world and sky to the mammal.

Franklin made the comment in reference to his creating the design of the world image surrounded by four armadillos that he used the armadillo "as a cosmic key."[3] He related an analogy that he sees between the four segments of the world and the armadillo reproduction process. In the *Grand Opening* poster, Franklin divides the image of the world or earth into four segments by drawing lines that represent the imaginary, intersecting lines of the meridian and the equator, which circle the earth north to south and east to west, respectively. An armadillo reproduces through the fertilization of one egg that divides into four embryos, producing a litter that contains four identical babies of the same sex.[4] He finds it cosmic that armadillos produce four identical offspring in a litter and that "this biological fact was present when the quartering of the world came."[5]

Franklin found inspiration not only by the quartering aspect of the world and armadillo eggs, but also by the NASA space program with its explorations into space and man's landing on the moon. He was fascinated with the idea of looking at earth and the universe from the moon's surface. This influenced much of his surreal imagery and composition in posters, such as his portrayal of an armadillo, curled up and floating in space as a planetary object or creating the surface of a planet or moon by drawing the scales of an armadillo carapace.[6]

As mentioned in Chapter 3, I was unable to find any listings for armadillo imagery in iconographic texts. I did find meanings for the sky and world where inferences might be made to

[3] Franklin, email, 09 May 2006.

[4] Gilbert, "'That little armored thing' doesn't get by on looks alone," 147.

[5] Franklin, email, 09 May 2006.

[6] Franklin, direct conversation, 25 March 2006.

the sky and world images within the *Grand Opening* poster.

Regarding the sky image, as previously mentioned in Chapter 1, Bruce-Mitford references the sky as symbolic of transcendence.[7] Biedermann notes an association with earth and the cosmos.[8] It is in the concepts of transcendence and the cosmos that I see an application of meanings from iconographic text. I propose that the transcendence and cosmic aspect is applicable to the sky and planetary images in the *Grand Opening* poster through an association of transcendence acquired from listening to music at the Armadillo World Headquarters, enhanced by drugs, in some cases. The drug aspect is tied in to the cosmic consciousness idea that I propose is related to the sky and planetary images within the AWHQ artwork. "Hippie society attempts to be tuned-in to and resonant with a deeper reality, or a cosmic consciousness of Man that is the pure framework for all societies."[9] Stanislav Grof analyzes cosmic consciousness in his book *The Cosmic Game*, 1998. This consciousness is related to mind expansion in which perceptions of self and the world we live in transcends our usual limitations of the body and ego and we are able to connect on a deeper level with the external world, including other people, and other dimensions of reality.[10] This transcendence is a factor in mystical and spiritual experience related to certain world religions and spiritual practice that include meditation.[11] Some members of the hippie community used drugs, such as LSD, to attain a state of cosmic consciousness.

According to Grof, music may also trigger what he calls "unitive experience," his term for mystical awareness or cosmic consciousness experience. Listening to music may initiate

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[7] Bruce-Mitford, 36.

[8] Biedermann, 111.

[9] Yablonsky, 24.

[10] Stanislav Grof, *The Cosmic Game: Explorations of the Frontiers of Human Consciousness* (New York: Albany State University of New York Press, 1998), 15

[11] Ibid., 26.

unitive experiences or the process of attaining a mystical awareness in the forms of unity with other people, nature, the cosmos and even God. “Composers deeply engaged in creative work, performing musicians, as well as people in musical audiences, can occasionally lose their boundaries and literally merge with the music.”[12] Therefore, listening to music at the AWHQ may have contributed to the cosmic awareness that former patrons and artists discussed in their personal communications. The sky in the *Grand Opening* poster may represent patrons' transcendence and mystical or cosmic awareness attained through listening to the music at the AWHQ. The image of the planet earth suspended in the sky, as depicted in the poster, reinforces the cosmic association through planetary images.

While researching “world” in dictionaries and encyclopedias of iconography, I found that texts of iconography use the word “earth” as a synonymous term for “world.” Many texts of iconography refer to earth or the world as a nurturing mother symbol. I propose the imagery of the world in the *Grand Opening* poster may represent the AWHQ as a nurturing place with characteristics of a nurturing mother. As noted in Chapter 1, Eddie Wilson envisioned the AWHQ as a place where the owners, staff and patrons would promote and support different genres of music in Austin and the variety of music artists and support the creativity of the artists of the posters, paintings and murals, thus nurturing or fostering the creative endeavors. Music artists who performed in far larger music venues than the AWHQ enjoyed playing there because of the attentive audiences and intimate feel of the place.[13]

The providing of food also evidences a nurturing aspect. Once a kitchen was installed in the AWHQ in 1972, food was available for staff, patrons and musicians. When funds were short, the staff accepted food as payment for services. Staff also provided the music artists and bands

[12] Grof, 80.

[13] Evans, “Home With the Armadillo,” 24.

with food and would send food with them when they went back on the road.[14]

The AWHQ was also a nurturing place by being a safe place for patrons to hear the music. Bill Dunlap, a former patron and stage crew member, said the AWHQ was "a place to go ... and know you would be safe."[15] Evans writes that the anti-establishment community found a haven at the AWHQ where they could feel at home.[16] Aimée Johnson, who had moved from New England to Austin in 1972, remarked that she "felt very at home" at the AWHQ.[17] The presence of the world image in the poster may represent the nurturing aspect of the AWHQ and, thereby, relate to the traditional symbolism of the world as a nurturing place.

The meanings of cosmic, planetary images take on additional aspects in Micael Priest's promotional poster designed for the *Michael Murphey Cosmic Cowboy Symphony and Bar B Q*, 1973. (Fig. 5) As noted in Chapter 2, the cosmic cowboy sound came from the crossover of rock and country music genres. This music prevailed at the AWHQ during the mid-1970s. From this crossover, there developed a new visual appearance for both hippies and cowboys. Glenn M. Hudak, one of the editors of *Sound Identities: Popular Music and the Cultural Politics of Education*, 1999, comments on the role of popular music as it functions to help form identity of individuals as well as a community, manifested through adoption of certain modes of dress and collective ways of behaving socially as appropriate to a certain music genre.[18] In the case of the AWHQ, the hippies switched from wearing sandals to cowboy boots and wore cowboy hats instead of headbands. Their jeans became boot cut instead of bell bottom. Some hippies even changed from tie-dye T-shirts to cowboy snap shirts. The main manifestation of the cowboys'

[14] Evans, "Home With the Armadillo," 27.

[15] Conwoop, email, 17 May 2006.

[16] Evans, "Home With the Armadillo," 26.

[17] Johnson, email, 17 May 2006.

[18] Glenn Hudak and others, eds., *Sound Identities: Popular Music and the Cultural Politics of Education* (New York: Peter Land Publishing, Inc., 1999), 447.

appearance change was to let their hair grow long. Priest's cosmic cowboy poster illustrates the cosmic cowboy in visual appearance of the person and in symbolic representation of the cosmic aspect.

Micael Priest, originally from Alabama, came to Austin in 1969 and began creating poster art for the AWHQ by 1971. He and Franklin were two of the leading forces behind the art for the Armadillo World Headquarters.[19] Priest took over as the AWHQ art director when Franklin resigned from actively working at the AWHQ in 1976. Priest's other work includes designs for music CDs, cassette, album and single covers, and poster art for other music venues. He is recognized for his renderings of the cosmic cowboy appearance. Green says of Priest's imagery that he gave "a visual dimension to cosmic cowboy music."[20]

Priest had the Michael Murphey Cosmic Cowboy poster printed in dark blue ink on yellow paper stock. He used a combination of hatching and cross-hatching to create a three dimensional effect of the images. The main figure is a cowboy astride a horse. Horse and rider are in outer space with the cowboy lassoing the tail of a comet. The cowboy has a full, long mustache and long hair with strands flying out from under a cowboy hat. The hat appears to cover his eyes as he is looking diagonally down towards the comet tail. He is wearing a long-sleeved, button-up shirt with the lower part of the sleeves rolled up to his elbows. Over the shirt is a dark vest, which rides up, exposing the lower part of his shirt over his waist. He appears to be wearing chaps over his pants with a belt and large belt buckle at his waist. He is wearing gloves. The cowboy's upper body is twisted such that his right arm is extended in front of him, having just thrown the lasso to the comet tail, and his left arm is bent down at the elbow behind his body and holds several loops of the rope.

Like the cowboy, the horse is also in a twisted position with its neck and front left leg

[19] Mechling, email, 19 October 2004.

[20] Green, 178.

stretched diagonally towards the bottom left corner of the poster while its head is turned toward the bottom right corner. The horse's expression appears fierce with flared nostrils, intense eyes, and clinched teeth. The mane is long and flows out to the left, similar to the cowboy's hair. Long hair flowing from the fetlocks, the area just above and behind the horse's two front hooves, gives the further illusion of horse and rider flying through space. Parts of a bridle are evident on the horse's face and neck and a small corner of a saddle blanket is behind and to the right of where the cowboy sits on the horse. Two stirrup covers called tapaderos cover the feet of the rider.

The other images in the poster are cosmic-related. There are a total of eight round shapes which represent planetary images. Part of one is visible in the upper right-hand corner. Beneath this are five more such images with one clearly representing the planet Saturn, characterized by the rings around the image. Next to Saturn is a planet or moon with Michael Murphey's name printed within it. Beneath this image is a planet with “Cosmic Cowboy Symphony and Bar.B.Q.” printed inside it. Just to the left and partially behind this planet is another, smaller one which has printing of “with Diamond Rio,” another music group. There are two planetary images in the lower left corner, one of which has the printing, “Saturday Nite Special Guest Stan Alexander, The Original Cosmic Cowboy.” All of the lettering is in capital letters. The last planetary image is the comet which originates behind Saturn and circles up from the right to the left of the poster edges, then down behind the horse and rider and ends at the right bottom corner with the rope looped around it.

The only other imagery is the notation of the dates of the concert in the upper left corner of the poster with “Armadillo World Headquarters” written directly beneath.

Referring again to dictionaries and encyclopedias of iconography for an iconographic analysis of the planetary images, there is a similar association of transcendence and cosmic consciousness with the planetary images in the Cosmic Cowboy poster as there is in the *Grand*

Opening poster. In this case, listening to the cosmic cowboy music that is basically a blend of a rock and country sound joined the two disparate groups of hippies and cowboys in a common appreciation of the music and ultimately broke down the barriers between the two cultures. This is the cosmic consciousness aspect or mystical awareness of finding unity with others, as well as feeling transcendence through the music. These two concepts are visually represented by planetary images.

The image of the comet does not, for the most part, have any traditional, iconographic meanings applicable to its presence in the poster with the exception of one, from which I infer an association. Comets can be interpreted as signs of hope by symbolizing optimism and new beginnings.[21] As I noted in Chapter 1, the founders of the AWHQ had the hope and optimism of creating a music venue that would define Austin as a viable music scene. Music artists who had hopes of professional music careers performed at the AWHQ. The AWHQ artists had the optimism of producing works of art that enhanced the AWHQ building and promoted the music artists. On a personal level, they had the hope of developing their own artistic careers.[22] Therefore, I see the comet in the Michael Murphey Cosmic Cowboy poster representing hope, optimism and new beginnings in several aspects related to the Armadillo World Headquarters.

I perceive Priest's use of planetary images as representing the hippies' interest in astrological belief and cosmic consciousness. As Green notes in his discussion on Austin music audiences of that period, “Some saw cosmic life as a series of Star Trek dramas, while others related cosmic creeds to the revival of astrological belief by counter-culture converts.”[23] The counter-culture, in this case, describes the hippies. Priest's combining of the planetary images with the cowboy and horse images represents the mixture and interaction of hippies with

[21] Rowena Shepherd and Rupert Shepherd, *1000 Symbols* (New York: Thames & Hudson, Inc., 2002), 17.

[22] Yeates, email, 08 May 2006.

[23] Green, 174.

cowboys. The result was cosmic cowboys, whose union in the appreciation of a music genre, was a part of the music scene in Austin for a brief period of time. Sumners' comment about “seeking oneness with the cosmos through music” also applies to the images in the Cosmic Cowboy poster.[24] The hippies and cowboys who formerly were distrustful of each other found accord in their appreciation of the same music.

Although I have analyzed only two of the vast number of posters that artists created for the AWHQ, the *Grand Opening* poster and the Michael Murphey Cosmic Cowboy poster serve well to illustrate the armadillo and cosmic planetary images that are revealed for the iconographic program. The cosmic aspect of the images prevailed in the analysis of both posters.

In the *Grand Opening* poster, Franklin visually connected armadillos with the cosmic by drawing them surrounding the world while suspended in the sky with just a toe hole on land.

Priest uses planetary images in his poster *Michael Murphey Cosmic Cowboy Symphony and Bar B Q* to illustrate the cosmic aspect of the hippie and cowboy finding a common bond through a progressive country sound or cosmic cowboy music. Using the planetary image of a comet, he illustrates the hope and optimism of those associated with the AWHQ, whether it was the owners, staff, poster artists, or music artists and perhaps, by extension, the patrons who attended the music events.

Former patron Paul Brown is able to perceive an association of the armadillo with the cosmic cowboy. In his personal communication, he describes himself as “a cosmic cowboy with an Armadillo heart.”[25]

The following, final chapter contains a summary of the studies within this thesis as they relate to points of Cassidy’s proposals concerning iconographic analysis. Also provided is a proposal for further study related to the art of the AWHQ and other music venues in the 1970s.

[24] Sumners, email, 16 May 2006.

[25] Paul Brown, personal communication, email, 15 July 2006.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have identified specific images for an iconographic program within the art created for the Armadillo World Headquarters (AWHQ). The nine-banded armadillo image, prevalent in murals, paintings, and many of the concert posters for the AWHQ, served to create and continues to sustain a visual association of the mammal with the name Armadillo World Headquarters. The armadillo image has a Texan symbolism associating it with the AWHQ building, the Austin, Texas music venue, Texan music artists who performed there, as well as Texas music, such as the cosmic cowboy sound. The armadillo also represents those hippies who felt and still feel identification with the mammal.

The cosmic aspect that is visually represented by sky and planetary images is as important an element as the armadillo image in the iconographic program. The cosmic images relate to audience members' reception of the images and the music and how they felt and still feel a connection with the armadillo and with each other.

Due to the specificity of the images to the AWHQ and the fact that the Armadillo World Headquarters no longer exists, oral histories gained through personal communications play an important role in determining symbolic meanings of the armadillo, sky and planetary images within the context of the AWHQ. This confirms Cassidy's proposal that audience reception and social function are critical in determining meanings of imagery pertinent to the period and place in which they are created, especially when literary sources of iconography do not even address meanings for certain images, as is the case with the armadillo. Although I was able to infer meanings of planetary images from selected symbolic meanings listed in dictionaries and encyclopedias of iconography, it is the meanings gained from personal communications from the

artists and former staff and patrons that are so germane to the period of time and place for which the artists created the images, just as Cassidy theorizes. Of interest is the fact that the variety of responses did provide a range of pertinent meanings of the images specific to the AWHQ, Austin, and Texas. New texts in the form of email correspondence and message boards from Internet Web sites also confirm Cassidy's proposal that new kinds of contemporary texts provide further frames of reference for making sense of images, in addition to traditional literary sources.

A proposal for an additional study of the AWHQ poster art, as well as concert posters for other music venues in Austin during the 1970s, is also based on Cassidy's observations about using iconography in the analysis of images. This proposed study concerns exploring the elements of style. Cassidy comments that, "The elements of style (composition, line, and color) are themselves meaningful in ways that have been insufficiently explored."[1]

I propose a comparison study of specific stylistic elements in the portrayals of the music artists in concert posters to elements used to depict venerated persons, such as saints, in the medieval period. Many of the music artists, such as Willie Nelson and Jerry Garcia, attained an iconic status among their followers.

The style of representation within the iconography includes the frontal pose of the head or bust of the person, the depiction of movement and the amount of modeling, such as found in Byzantine art.[2] This study would reveal if there are elements of style in iconography from the medieval period that serve to visually represent a venerated person in contemporary popular culture. This further study, therefore, would also draw upon recent art historical scholarship in iconography with, again, an application to a more current art form known as popular culture art.

[1] Cassidy, 10.

[2] Cassidy, 13.

Figure 1. *Armadillo World Headquarters*, Acrylic Painting by Sam Yeates, 1976
Image used with permission of and provided by Sam Yeates. (© Sam Yeates 2006)

Figure 2. Section of Armadillo Mural
Photograph courtesy of Steve Hopson. (© Steve Hopson 2006) stevehopson.com

Figure 3. *Freddie King*, 1971.
Image used with permission of artist Jim Franklin, (© 2006) All Rights Reserved.
Photograph by author.

Figure 4. *Armadillo World Headquarters Grand Opening*, 1970
Image used with permission of artist Jim Franklin. (© 2006) All Rights Reserved.
Image courtesy of the South Austin Museum of Popular Culture, Austin, Texas

Figure 5. *Michael Murphey's Cosmic Cowboy Symphony and Bar B Q*, 1973
Image used with permission of Micael Priest. (© 2006) All Rights Reserved.
Image courtesy of the South Austin Museum of Popular Culture, Austin, Texas

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