



Shop Showcase

with Ed Attanasio

Ed Attanasio is an automotive journalist based in San Francisco, California. He can be reached at era39@aol.com.

Northern California Body Shop Paints Huge Coffee Cup for Major Artist

Body shops are adept at painting cars, but they often get asked to paint a wide range of other things such as golf carts, kid's toys, old appliances, statues and in this case, an enormous coffee cup

for our unusual request."

Kirk Kapfenstein, the general manager at Regal Collision, has painted a lot of things in his career as a painter, but never a 1,000-lb. coffee mug, that's for sure. "Howard called us out of the blue and we were definitely interested in talking to him about it," Kapfenstein said. "We love out of the ordinary, challenging jobs, so we looked at it and said 'Heck yes.' The gallery was pretty much up against their deadline so if we didn't agree on the spot, they probably would have been in real trouble."

Howard Fried, 70, is a highly-regarded conceptual artist who became known in

the 1970s for his pioneering work in video art, performance art and installation art. He founded the video and performance department (currently the New Genres Department) at the San Francisco Art Institute and is associated with the first generation of conceptual artists in the San Francisco Bay Area, including other trendsetters such as

Terry Fox, Lynn Hershman, David Ireland, Paul Kos and Tom Marioni. His early works dealing with issues like decision-making, conflict situations, control, predictability, learning, and cognitive processes gave him international fame.

With a tight deadline of two weeks and a show that was well-publicized and anticipating a large turnout for opening night, Fried was concerned but not ready to panic—yet. "I admit, I was a little nervous, but the people at Regal Collision assured me not to worry," Fried said. "At one point, we considered the idea of refabricating the piece using 3-D printing, but the cost was prohibitive. So we were basically in the hands of

Jim, Shellie and Kirk at Regal. We knew that we would be juggling 100 things right up until the show and getting this cup painted and delivered to the gallery was at the top of the list."

In addition to priming and painting the sculpture, it also had a few cracks to repair from past shows, due to the fact that the cup (called *Derelect #5*) was the reincarnation of five previous art pieces. "We worked out the changes and Regal had to repair all of the cracks that had developed over the years. Before this show, it was on display at the University of Berkeley back in 1983. Regal also had to repaint it with a waterborne paint, because the paint we used in '83 was oil-based and now it's illegal."

Jim Boyle, the owner at Regal Collision, isn't going to disclose how much he charged for the job, but he

will at least admit he made a nice profit. "Working on this project has given us a better understanding of how an artist develops his work and how much they care about their creations. Howard was intense and was here in the shop almost every day,



On its big opening night at the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco, *Derelect #5* wows the critics and art lovers alike

that was displayed at an art gallery in San Francisco, CA by a major nationally-renowned artist.

It all began when **Howard Fried**, an artist based in Vallejo, CA, was looking for a body shop that was willing to take on a rather large project for an upcoming art show at the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco last August. When one shop opted out, *Regal Collision* in Vallejo, CA, stepped up and completed the project on time and with an artistic flair.

After visiting one shop that his curators had found for him, Fried decided to start looking around for another shop via Yelp. "The first shop we went to didn't seem to be very excited when we described the project to them," he said. "I wasn't getting a real positive vibe from these folks, so we bailed. So I started searching for a shop near to my studio in Vallejo. I used Yelp and found Regal Collision. Their reviews were great, and I got the sense that they might be the right shop



In excess of eight feet tall, painting **Howard Fried's** enormous coffee cup (*Derelect #5*) was easier to paint than move, according to the crew at *Regal Collision* in Vallejo, CA



Artist **Howard Fried** (far left in the blue shirt) was a hands-on customer and oversaw the delivery of his sculpture from start to finish

sometimes before I showed up in the morning. Working with him was a lot different from painting a customer's vehicle because he had a vision and passionately wanted it achieved."

In the end, the shop made money and they also received the most unique 5-star review on Yelp that they'll ever get from the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco. "Regal Collision went above and beyond for us. We had an artist who needed a sculpture repaired with the same methods that are used in auto body repair. The sculpture is very large and extremely heavy. When we asked Regal Collision if they were interested in a very different than normal challenge, they jumped at the chance, despite being a consistently busy shop. They spent weeks working with our artist and treated the sculpture with unbelievable care. The end result is absolutely perfect. We feel so lucky to have found them. They are one in a million!"