

# *The Imagined Primitive Kingdom of Llhuros*

Public Opinion | Chambersburg, Pennsylvania  
Thursday, November 16, 1972

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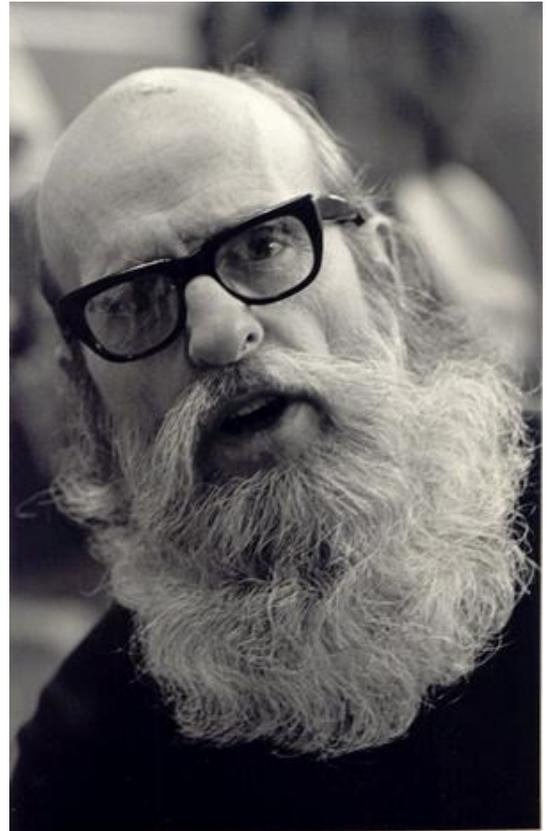
He was lounging serenely in the rathskeller of the Statler Inn on the Cornell campus, where he has been on the art faculty for 32 years.

Daly resembles a skinny, mannerly Old Testament type and when he talks his rich white beard waves bagrantly like the trailing ends of Spanish moss teased by the wind.

Glints of amusement, even mischief, stipple eyes behind the lenses of prominent black-rimmed glasses as he recalls what people say about his latest work, "The Civilization of Llhuros," a warehouse of synthetized artifacts that, at least to Daly, make up a parable that finds 20th Century civilization with an immeasurable deficit of morals and integrity, discovering it to be hypocritical, double-crossing, oppressive and cruel.

And there's sex.

"Some say it is unnecessarily sexual," Daly said. "There is a lot of phallic imagery, but what do you see when you go to a Fellini movie? How are you going to mirror today without sexuality? It would be hard to overstress the sexual aspect."



In Daly's Imagined Primitive Kingdom of Llhuros, over whose archaeology and anthropology he labored for five years in his studio and in an abandoned Quonset hut on the old Ithaca Airport, life was little different than it is in the world today.

It was just as disheartening as the world Daly observes these days from his studio windows.

Allegory is a stuffy word. Parable probably is too pat. What Daly has done is to have dreamed up a world, a culture, that never was, that reminds him of contemporary life.

He fantasized it from its archaic stages to its middle period to its decline and its disappearance.

*Daly is in love with "found objects," and fuses them into a whole and makes unknown worlds with them. They look real.*

He reconstructed its archeology, as though these pieces had been dug up and interpreted to paint a picture of a whole people.

These pieces look like the real McCoy. You might think you're looking at the authentic crop of a dig, but what you're apt to be seeing is an old fashioned stove lid lifter, or a 19th Century flatiron holder. Daly is in love with "found objects," and fuses them into a whole and makes unknown worlds with them. They look real.

People believe them. That kills Daly.

Even though everything is found, or manufactured by him he has found visitors to his exhibit taking it literally. "People are so gullible," he said. "It's incredible."

Is Daly spoofing? A put-on? "Absolutely not," he said. He wants people to look at his synthetic world and say, as a man in Akron, Ohio, said, "Why, that is me!" "He recognized himself," Daly said with satisfaction.

"What this does is draw parallels with our own condition. It is an archeological charade and from what we see and what we deduce from what we see tells us a great deal about ourselves."

*He manages to upset some gallery walkers with such figures as fornicating gods. One professor pronounced, "It is a fraud!"*

There's something for everybody -- women's libbers, people who don't like the ethics of some doctors or lawyers, people who feel smothered by religious strictures, people appalled by the maltreatment of the young, and of course, people bemused by sex. Daly even has swung a roundhouse right in his massive exhibit at what he considers one of today's major malaises the inability of anyone to be shocked at anything, from velvet-lined corruption to genocide. One of the archeological finds, for instance, is direct evidence that the Llhurosians practiced a ritual that involved the force death by starvation of children followed by mass sodomy.

Gratuitous? Not at all, says this whip-like little philosopher with concepts that lash him as a modern artist.

Murder plus necrophilia would seem to be a shock commodity, but Daly says, discouraged, no. The gallery gazers who are hit with the point don't, he said, seem shocked at all. This he puts down to the shock-proof encrustation built around us by the death and corruption of modern life.

Even though Daly has told a horror story of a dead civilization, it is hard for him to abandon a puckish role. He even identifies himself in the exhibit catalog as "Director of Llhuroscian Studies, Cornell University."

Because he loves the intrinsic beauty of such devices as can openers – and he uses these and other found objects by the bale – his synthesized artifacts have an almost comic identity, once it is known.

There is a "trallib" on display, for instance, an example of the kind of vessel the Llhuroscians used to hold oil.

If you look closely, it will appear also to be a detergent bottle similar to the ones on your kitchen shelf. It is.

A portrait of a man found in the mythological ruins actually is a small plastic figure of Honus Wagner, the old-time baseball player, but, Daly says, it fits.

He manages to upset some gallery walkers with such figures as fornicating gods. One professor pronounced, "It is a fraud!"

Another, Daly said, grinning, had received a lot of publicity for research he had been doing and when Daly's accomplishment started cropping up in the likes of Newsweek, the professor barked at him, "Daly, you're on nothing but an ego trip!" This pleased him greatly.

*Tom Cawley is a columnist for the Binghamton, N.Y., Evening Press, a member of the Gannett News Service of Ithaca, N.Y.*

# The Imagined Primitive Kingdom of Llhuros

By TOM CAWLEY  
Gannett News Service

Cawley is a columnist for the Binghamton, N.Y., Evening Press, a member of the Gannett Group.

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