

LIGHT

Woodstock 1969 Bus



The History and Symbolic Interpretation of “Light” the Woodstock Bus

Owned and Commissioned by Robert Grimm · Designed and Painted by Bob Hieronimus, Ph.D.



Clockwise from top: Bob Grimm with "Pegasus" (circa 1971), another Hieronimus-painted VW on the left, and the bus "Light" on the right; two photos from Woodstock NY 1969 by Rob Goald; Detail of "The Apocalypse" 2,700 sq. ft. mural by Bob Hieronimus at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland (1968).

The History and Symbolic Interpretation of “Light” the Woodstock Bus

The VW Bus, with its distinctive rear-mounted, air-cooled engine like the Beetle, became a classic design icon, rich in romantic associations, symbolizing fun, freedom and adventure. “Light” the Woodstock Bus was a Volkswagen 1963 Model Year Kombi. Designed as a no-frills combination of goods transporter and people carrier (hence its nickname *Kombi*, from the German word *Kombination*), the Kombi was first introduced in 1951. Unlike the Microbus it had a spartan interior, with its key feature being the middle row of seats was quickly and easily removable, as was done with the “Light” bus where the musicians’ gear was stored.

AS DAVID AND CEE ECCLES said in their Abbeville Press book, *Traveling with the VW Bus and Camper*, “Not only was the ‘Light’ Bus by Bob Hieronimus one of the first VW buses to be painted in the ‘psychedelic sixties’ style, its Woodstock heritage adds to its importance and influence on the future. It is not just another ‘hippie bus,’ but a work of art in its own right, which captures the mood and aspirations of a generation searching for its own identity and place in the universal scheme of things. The bus may have passed into legend, but its legacy as inspiration for new generations of VW bus owners lives on.” (*VW Camper and Commercial Magazine*, www.volkswagencamper.co.uk.)

IN THE MIDDLE OF 1968, Bob Hieronimus postponed a commission from the chaplain at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Dr. Chester Wickwire, to paint a mural on one wall of their student union building. This mural eventually evolved to cover four walls, a ceiling and a stairwell, over 2,700 square feet in all, and to be called “The Apocalypse.” The history of the “Light” bus is intertwined with this mural. Hieronimus remembers:

BEFORE I BEGAN WORK on “The Apocalypse,” I took several months off and embarked on a very interesting summer visiting backstage with Elektra and other recording artists like Jimi Hendrix, the Doors, Janis Joplin, and others who were requesting information on esoterica,

earth changes, astrology, Atlantis, reincarnation, meditation, and UFOs. It didn't take long for me to get my fill of backstage life with rock and roll legends, and in early August, I returned home to begin work on "The Apocalypse."

IN BETWEEN I filled a series of commissions for what are popularly called "psychedelic" painted cars, growing in popularity at that time. Rather than the somewhat meaningless label "psychedelic," however, I have always preferred to call my art "symbolic," the difference being that all my designs are carefully mapped out and considered as part of a comprehensive teaching guide with a message. I consider my painted cars to be moving billboards, and have driven them myself on and off since 1965.

IT WAS AT THIS TIME that I painted the "Light" bus that went to Woodstock without me. It's interesting with hindsight to observe how harmonically the symbols I painted on this bus matched with the theme that emerged from this powerful event. The "Light" bus was owned by my friend, Bob Grimm, who commissioned the painting on it so he would have something eye-catching and meaningful in which to drive himself, with his fellow musicians and their gear, to their performances. He named it after his band, "Light," and it was with friends and fellow bandmates that he drove it up to Woodstock the following year.



Collage of Bob Hieronimus artwork featuring "We The People" (2008); a complete set of unused ticket to the original Woodstock,



Woodstock Music and Art Fair		Woodstock Music and Art Fair		Woodstock Music and Art Fair		THREE DAY TICKET
FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	
August 15, 1969	August 16, 1969	August 17, 1969	Aug. 15, 1969	Aug. 16, 1969	Aug. 17, 1969	Aug. 15, 16, 17 1969
10 A. M.	10 A. M.	10 A. M.				
\$8.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$24.00	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$24.00
Good For One Admission Only	Good For One Admission Only	Good For One Admission Only		Good For One Admission Only	Good For One Admission Only	Good For One Admission Only
01173 NO REFUNDS	01173 NO REFUNDS	01173 NO REFUNDS		01173 NO REFUNDS	01173 NO REFUNDS	01173



res (clockwise from top left): Plato Hieronimus in a baby artcar (1972); Bob Hieronimus and the VW bug "Pegasus" (1971); the artcar of U.S.P.S. 2 oz. \$0.59 stamps showing four sides of "Light" the Woodstock Bus (available from www.21CenturyRadio.com); Bob Hieronimus's held on August 15, 16, 17, 1969. Center: The VW bus "New Atlantis" (1972); Sue Hawley with the painted VW bug "Old Smoke" (1968).

“We came for the music! We didn’t realize that it was probably the last time we freaky bunch would experience freedom on such a scale.”

- Bob Grimm



Front view of the Sun Star model of
“Light” the Woodstock Bus.

I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO to Woodstock. I still have my original ticket, in fact. But when I heard from my music industry friends in New York that they were projecting crowds in the range of 50,000 people, I decided that sounded too crowded for me. When I learned that the final count turned out to be more like ten times that number, I did not regret my decision. By this time, I was also heavily involved painting “The Apocalypse” mural while simultaneously founding the AUM Esoteric Study Center, and too busy to make the trip anyway. But I was very happy later on to learn that the bright colors and occult symbols I painted on the “Light” bus caught the attention of several photographers in attendance including the Associated Press and *Rolling Stone* Magazine. In the decades since then, several popular photos of this bus have been reprinted in retrospective articles, CD compilations, and other promotional pieces about Woodstock, until it has become better known as the “Woodstock Bus.”

BOB GRIMM remembered arriving in the “Light” bus with Light’s drummer, Rick Peters, singer, Trudy Morgal,

and his girlfriend at the time, Lynn. They got there the day before the first performances only to discover that cars were already being turned away. When a policeman told them they had to get out and walk, Grimm thought fast and said, “We’re taking this bus to the art exhibit.” Fortunately the ruse worked, and they were allowed to drive through. As the rain and mud increased over the next three days, the bus would prove an invaluable shelter to them, and many other passersby.

SEVERAL FAMOUS musicians were said to have huddled inside for a few minutes. Grimm and friends parked the bus up the tree-lined dirt road, near the portable toilets on the hill to the left of the stage (“stage right”). The first day offered them a great view of the stage from the front window of the VW. Later they took to sitting on its roof, which is where Trudy and Ricky were sitting when the Associated Press photographer captured their famous image.

NOTING THAT they did not swim naked or partake in some of the other iconic experiences, Grimm remembers: “We came for the music! The historical significance of the event at the time seemed to be the birth of a new spirit. We were soon caught up in the energy; a surprisingly peaceful anarchy! We didn’t realize that it was probably the last time we freaky bunch would experience freedom on such a scale.” Trudy Morgal remembers how the “Light” bus resonated with the energy of Woodstock. “Light is healing energy, so how could it be any different? We’re here on planet Earth to help each other and find inner peace. Just like Woodstock.”

ANOTHER OF my friends remembered seeing my bus even though we didn’t know each other at the time. Phyllis Benjamin says, “I remember going to an ice cream truck early on that first evening, up on a rise, before or maybe just past the Port-A-Sans (not the main bank of them though) and there your bus was, in all its psychedelic glory. I think I saw your bus several times that weekend. I did go over to where the Hog Farm was dishing out brown rice since none of us had much to eat for a day and a half, and I saw ‘Furthur,’ Ken Kesey’s school bus. *Penultimate*, I thought, after seeing your artwork.”

INTERPRETING THE SYMBOLS ON

The Colors

EACH COLOR IS RELATED to an important meaning. The main characteristics are: **BLACK** is unmanifest and potential; **WHITE** is purity and honor; **GOLD** is Spirit; **SILVER** is intuition; **VIOLET** is spirituality and wisdom; **BLUE** is religious inspiration; **GREEN** is harmony and sympathy; **YELLOW** is intellect and magnanimity; **ORANGE** is energy and pride; **RED** is life and power; **BROWN** is acquisitiveness and materialism.



The Eagle side of the Sun Star model of "Light" the Woodstock Bus.

"LIGHT" THE WOODSTOCK BUS

The Front of the Bus

THE SYMBOLIC STORY on the front of the bus is basically this: As we enter the age of Aquarius, humanity will once again become conscious of the builders and hierarchies of the universe by aligning themselves with the divine plan through cosmic vibration.

A GALAXY OF STARS, the Milky Way, is a birthplace of life in the universe. Below it is a pair of wings (spirit) surmounting a circled cross, related to the four builders of the universe: air, earth, fire and water. Below this is the serpent biting its tail (Orobouros=eternity) within which are eight circles containing seven celestial bodies: Sun (higher or spiritual self); Saturn (karma); Jupiter (expansion of consciousness); Venus (harmony); Mars (activity); Mercury (mind); and Moon (personality). The central circle is the heart (the cohesive force of the universe, Love).

A HAND HOLDING an Egyptian sistrum (cosmic vibration) emanates from the left side of Orobouros. On the right, Piscis Australis swallows cosmic vibrations pouring from an unseen urn on the roof of the vehicle. The urn belongs to Aquarius, the "water carrier," the sign that precedes Pisces. The dissemination of spiritual teachings (waters from Aquarius) given to the multitudes (fish) assures regeneration or a rebirth of soul consciousness. Below the Orobouros is a UFO, representing extraterrestrials, inner-terrestrials, inner-dimensionals and spiritual hierarchies of the universe. On the red bumper in gold letters are the words "Christ in You," "Voice of Silence," and "Ra Om," a mantra used by ancient traditions to achieve these states of cosmic consciousness.

The Sphinx side of the original "Light" Woodstock Bus with its owner, musician Bob Grimm, who drove it to Woodstock 1969, peering from the window. Soon after Woodstock, Grimm joined the Four Seasons, and later established a successful solo career. www.BobGrimm.net.



The Eagle Side

THE USA (THE EAGLE) was established as a center of light (wisdom), which regenerates the planet through its past connections to the ancient Egyptian mystery schools freeing humanity to serve the divine plan.

THE EAGLE IS A HIGHER SYMBOL of Scorpio (rebirth and regeneration) whose opened wings shed "Light." The pyramid symbolizes the mystery schools of ancient Egypt and elsewhere. The rising sun is the emergence and rebirth of the spirit, and the five pointed star is the victory of the intuitive mind over the four elements, which is indicative of the process of transformation or regeneration. Above the eagle are a series of scripts: the hieroglyph reads "Destiny," the Hebrew reads "Wisdom," and the alleged Atlantean script reads "Out of the darkness cometh the light."

The Sphinx Side

THE MYSTERY SCHOOLS of the ancients (Egyptian, Indian, Judaic) taught the science of spirituality and how humanity can transform its physical consciousness into spiritual awareness, allowing humans to learn who they are, why they are here, and their purpose on planet earth.

THE SPHINX IS SPIRITUAL conscious control (human head) over animal instincts (animal body). This is an Egyptian Sphinx with a circled trident on its rear flank suggesting its origin in the Atlantean mystery tradition, and a reference to a more ancient mystery school established by a blue stele with a symbol of the legendary Mu or Lemuria between the Sphinx's paws. The Judaic mystery schools are symbolized by a series of six pointed stars behind the Sphinx. The green serpent beneath the Sphinx is that of the Wisdom of the 10 divine incarnations of Vishnu spoken of in ancient India's mystery tradition.

ON THE PASSENGER DOOR and above the green serpent's head is the symbol for Isis, the door to the Egyptian mysteries. Above this is written in Hebrew, taken from *Sepher Yezirah* (the book of Formation), the words "Limitless Light."

*The Sphinx Side
of the Sun Star
model "Light" the
Woodstock
Bus showing all
the doors opened.*



The Rear of Bus

THE REAR OF THE BUS is a story about the importance of balancing energies of the feminine and masculine. At the bottom left is fire, related to the masculine, outgoing, electric energy, the power of the gods, the color of gold and the sun. The right side shows waves of water linked to the feminine magnetic force, which gives birth, protects, and is linked to the power of the goddess and the color of silver and the moon. From the mixture of these gold and silver vibrations rises a sun with golden rays emanating from it. Within the rays are the silver symbols linked to the major religions: the triangle (Egyptian), the sun (Hinduism); the cross (Buddhism); the six-pointed star (Judaism); the interconnected angles (Orphic); the five-pointed star (Zoroastrian); the four-petaled rosette (Christian); and the seven-pointed star, which is the ritualistic aspect of all religions and Masonry. Above the rays of the sun are the words "S/He Is Coming." Note the "S" in "She" is silver, but the rest of the phrase is in gold, again, a balance of the masculine and feminine. Above this phrase is "Shalom," Hebrew for peace, which is the result of the balancing of these male/female energies. The artist's name is above the window.

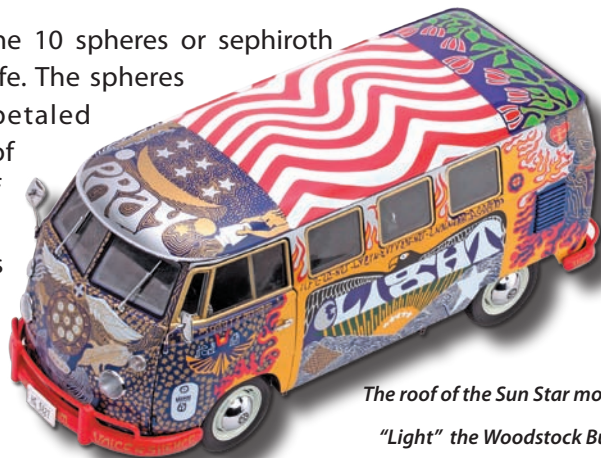
BOTH CORNERS of the rear of the bus contain several symbols used by the Mystery School, the Knight's Templar of Aquarius. The left side shows the teachings of this order, while the right side is the actual mystery school symbolized by the pyramid. On the red bumper is "We Live" and "To Serve," with the hieroglyph for Isis between them.



The Roof

THE ROOF OF THE BUS depicts a series of symbols that make up the heaven worlds, which also illustrate the importance of balance of both masculine and feminine energies. At the very front of the bus is the word “Pray” (external talk with the Deity) painted in silver and surrounded by the solar vibrations of gold. Above “Pray” is a crescent moon of internal meditation (listening to the Deity) painted in gold, above which are 6 five-pointed silver stars emanating gold vibrations. Beneath the horns of the crescent moon are a silver and gold circle or sphere. Six is beauty, harmony, and balance. The comet on the left symbolizes change, while the golden Aquarius on the right is pouring its energies from a silver urn, the teachings of Aquarius (Brother-Sisterhood). The center of the roof is the red (masculine) and white (feminine) stripes from the American flag that mimic the waves of Aquarius, and from which both the comet and Aquarius emerge. The rear of the bus contains 10 red flowers as the root of the red and white stripes. Flowers are symbols for growth containing the cycles of life and death – a time to sow and a time to reap.

THE NUMBER 10 is a reflection of the 10 spheres or sephiroth found on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. The spheres are vessels, and the three-petaled flowers in bloom indicate that all of these vessels are activated. The roof tells the story that when humankind balances its energies and activates all its energy centers and utilizes both prayer and meditation resulting in service to others, it enters the heaven worlds.



*The roof of the Sun Star model of
“Light” the Woodstock Bus.*

WHEN YOU combine all five sides of the bus for a very simplified symbolic interpretation you can read that there are advanced beings in the universe in various dimensions that are assisting planet Earth's evolution toward cosmic consciousness. The Eagle side reveals that America was destined to lay the foundations that we are all Earth People. The Sphinx side reveals the various influences that have supported America in attaining the goal of **ONE PEOPLE, ONE PLANET.**

Indeed while most people enjoyed the bus as a piece of "psychedelic" art, those with eyes to see and ears to hear realized that it carried the message of who we are and the purpose of life on planet Earth: serving others as we evolve towards cosmic consciousness.



About the Artist

Robert Richard Hieronimus, Ph.D.

ROBERT R. HIERONIMUS, PH.D. has been an acknowledged pioneer in the “New Paradigm” movement for over 40 years. After traveling with numerous rock and roll bands in the 1960s to share information about esoterica and design posters and album covers, Hieronimus began a long career as a muralist and painter. His highly acclaimed occult and symbolic Artcars and murals include the 2,700 square

foot prophetic “Apocalypse” at the Johns Hopkins University, which led to Hieronimus being called “one of this country’s best muralists” (*Forecast Magazine*) and a biographical documentary on PBS entitled “Artist of Savitria” (WMPT). Art historian and critic Alan Barnet noted, “Hieronimus has a talent for winning the cooperation of the establishment while he lives and works in the counter-culture.”

IN 2006, HIERONIMUS painted his first Artcar in 20 years, transforming his Mercedes 300 SD into the Biodiesel-fueled “Founding Fathers Artcar” – the only Biodiesel Artcar in the state of Maryland and a popular feature in regional parades. **IN 2008, THIS CAR WAS TRANSFORMED** and repainted to be called the “We the People.”

THE SUBJECT OF HIS DOCTORAL dissertation is an historic and symbolic analysis of the reverse of the Great Seal of the United States (Saybrook Graduate School, 1981), which was published in popular form in two editions: *America’s Secret Destiny* (1989) and *Founding Fathers, Secret Societies* (2006) – recently translated into German, French, Russian, and Spanish. His most recent book is *United Symbolism of America: Deciphering Hidden Meanings in America’s Most Familiar Art, Architecture and Logos*, a page-turning account of how the Statue of Liberty, the Liberty Bell, the flag, the eagle, the Great Seal, and Washington DC became American icons. This work was turned into a 2-hour special on the Discovery Channel called “Secret America,” a special on the History Channel called “Secrets of the Founding Fathers,” and was featured in a segment on Canada’s Vision TV called “Occult Architecture: Washington DC.”

SINCE 1988 HIERONIMUS has hosted 21st Century Radio®, the longest-running radio program of its kind in history, currently airing on WCBM 680 in Baltimore, Sunday nights 8-10 PM Eastern. In 2002, he published *Inside the Yellow Submarine: The Making of the Beatles Animated Classic*, which has been called “an indispensable companion to the movie” (*Animation World Magazine*) and was recently translated into Japanese.

FOR MORE INFORMATION please visit www.21stCenturyRadio.com.

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1963 Model Year Kombi Tech Specs

Model Designation: 231 (Left hand drive with cargo doors on the right)

Engine: 1192 cc (34HP); air-cooled "flat four"

Compression ratio: 7.0:1

Top speed: 60 mph

0-50: 40 seconds

Fuel consumption (unladen): 28 mpg

Wheel size: 15"

Kerb weight: 1065 kg

Model is 1/12 scale of original.

Sun Star

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