

PAUL LAFFOLEY (b. 1940, Cambridge, Massachusetts)

***The Renovatio Mundi*, 1977**

Oil, acrylic, vinyl lettering on canvas
73 ½ x 73 ½ in.

Exhibitions:

Paul Laffoley. Art Gallery, Fitchburg State College Gallery, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1979
Brockton Art Museum Triennial. Brockton Art Museum, Brockton, Massachusetts, 1983-84
Paul Laffoley. Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts, 1985
Mind Physics. Kent Gallery, New York, 2007

Literature:

Wasilik, Jeanne Marie. *Paul Laffoley: The Phenomenology of Revelation*. New York: Kent Fine Art, 1989.
Paul Laffoley Architectonic Thought-Forms: 1967–1999. Austin, Texas: Austin Museum of Art, 1999.
Johnson, Ken. "A Beautiful Mind." *The Boston Globe*, 11 February, 2007.

Subject:

The Renewal of the World

Symbol Evocation:

The Inverse of the Garden of Eden (World Utopia)

Comments:

If a single influence could be identified for the Gothic poet Dante Aligheri, it would be the Cistercian mystic Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202 AD). His doctrines were especially popular among the "Spiritual" Franciscans, a conventicle of which Dante was a lay member. He appears in *Il Paradiso*, Canto 12: "And here beside me shines the Calabrian abbot Joachim whose soul was given the power of prophecy." His reward in the afterlife is in *The Heaven of the Sun*: the second circle of lights (i.e. the outer Augustian ring of stars. Joachim is big star number 12, his favorite number). The message of Joachim is the *Sabbatum Fidelium* (the final rest of the faithful in the renewed world). It is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit as world Utopia, where heaven and Earth are at last united. Considering the Bible as two dispensations as any Christian believer would, Joachim separated the entire Bible into three historical parts: the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Book of Revelation. Each part, although understood separately, are actually organically related to each other, like Grecian ornamental frets-- growing one out of the other. Also each part represents a particular spiritual condition of the world-- from the beginning to the end of time: the Age of the Law, the Age of the Gospel, and finally the Age of the Spirit. He named exact dates of various cosmic events and named those responsible. The concepts of the historical "Rapture" and "Tribulation" are just two of his religious inventions. All present day evangelical Christians owe him an enormous debt. The descriptions he wrote of the New Jerusalem descending and hovering over the Dead Sea in Palestine are the literal beginning of modern science fiction. Father Pierre Teilhard deChardin (1881-1955) had less problems with the Papacy in terms of heresy than Joachim. Nevertheless, Dante composed the entire *Divine Comedy* on the basis of Joachim's Byzantine Mathematics.