

- An iconic artist of the beat/hippy era who, along with others of the Kansas Vortex – McClure, Pewther, Branaman, Hopper, Haselwood, played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Batman Gallery in 1960. Held several exhibitions at the Batman until it closed in 1965. Crucifixion 1960, Touch Don't Touch 1963. Established the Rat Bastards Protective Association 1957.
- Versatile artist renowned for his diversity – drawings, collages, sculptures, assemblage, paintings, prints, photographs and experimental films – the father of MTV music videos.
- “Avant Garde” prime mover in developing a new consciousness in the beat/hippy era and San Francisco Renaissance  
 “...facing the work of Bruce Conner (you) realize that what we are confronting is a uniquely new way of seeing things, a strange recasting of experience in terms of sensibility we have not before encountered. It is a rare phenomenon ... a new sensibility what we get is simply a completely new way of seeing the world, which once communicated to us never leaves our way the same again. (Philip Leidon, Art Forum Magazine).
- Conner was the feature artist at the inaugural Batman Exhibition, famous for his “Child” Assemblage in wax, silk, wood and nylon and featuring his  
 “CRUCIFIXION” painting #49. This painting, along with “Cannabis Collage” were recognized as his seminal works and these were key paintings in 1968 exhibition at San Francisco Museum of Art. Significantly Bruce Conner, in correspondence with the Gallery about his work being loaned to MOMA by the Batman Gallery/M. Agron, indicated he, Bruce Conner as the artist, had the right to come in and alter his work at any time. This was absolutely alarming to MOMA who wrote to M. Agron that it could not show the work under these conditions. M. Agron subsequently wrote back calming the waters and paintings were loaned and shown. Conner however, to prove his point, removed the frame on the right hand side of “CRUCIFIXION” as in his view it “opened up the painting”. Conner was considered to be a deeply spiritual person and “CRUCIFIXION” is still a powerful today as when it was first painted. “FLOATING HEAD” #256 reinforces the ethereal consciousness to be found in Conner’s work.

“Crucifixion” was first recognized when it won 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in a Religious Art Festival at Grace Cathedral in 1958 (?)

- Conner’s work received widespread support across the U.S. and he had many very successful exhibitions in New York and Minnesota.
- Conner’s opinion on the environment.

“The answer is not in the politics it is in the biology”.

“I often say that I am anti political, I am not non-political and I certainly act politically. It is just that I believe that acting politically is only a band aid, it doesn’t count, it doesn’t do any good. The answer does not lie in politics the answer lies in biology. The problems are not problems of the market as we are obsessed with in the United States, the problems are of natural resources. The rhetoric that this nation is living by is an utterly and complete foolish joke – a way of duping a consumerized, propagandized public in the further one dimensionality while the ecosystem is destroyed. I don’t know what these people think is going to happen to their grandchildren.”

- Conner continued to work using religious imagery and inkblot drawings that have been shown in numerous exhibitions, including the 1997 Whitney Biennial. Throughout Conner’s entire body of work, the recurrence of religious imagery and symbols underscored the essential visionary nature of his work.
- Anecdote – In the 1960’s in San Francisco, pot (Cannabis) was illegal and the S.F. cops were tough. When the “Kansas Group” met at Bruce Conner’s apartment one evening, Conner went out with a white can of paint and converted a “stop” sign on the road to “love”. This was reported on radio by a very popular broadcaster and in the San Francisco Chronicle with great notoriety. No one knew who it was or got busted! Eye witness, M. Agron

- Mike Agron found Bruce Conner to be imaginative and inventive – someone he liked a lot and who was quiet, self assured, organized and easy to work with. He was very insightful about what was happening to people and had a keen instinct for publicity. Mike had been introduced to the “Kansas Group” by a medical colleague, Dr. Sterling Bunnell. Their common interest in creativity, consciousness and art inevitably led to experimentation (sensory perceptions) which was a psychiatric research project at San Francisco Medical School. For Mike Agron the combination of art and psychiatry being part of this group was intoxicating.
- The Batman Gallery purchased works for its permanent collection starting in 1960 with “CRUCIFIXION”. The collection contains several paintings and works on paper which reflect Conner’s ingenious creativity and exploration of consciousness.
- The Batman Archive contains
  - Photographs of exhibitions of Conner’s work
  - Lists of clients who purchased Conner’s works and who loaned works for exhibitions
  - Correspondence between the Conners and the Agrons from Mexico and other Locations 1960-2000.
  - Badges “I am/I am not Bruce Conner”