

About: **BROKEN WORLD**

During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and concurrent political dysfunction, I attempted to resolve my feelings by painting the *Broken World* series.

Hart Crane (1899 – 1932, USA) wrote modernist poetry attempting to find a more optimistic view of contemporary urban culture than he discovered in the poetry of **T. S. Eliot**, an important influence upon his writing.

Crane suffered from bouts of alternating depression and elation. He drank excessively. One of his last published poems, *The Broken Tower*, emerged from his only heterosexual affair, a relationship with Margaret Cowley (an American landscape painter who married the poet-playwright Orrick Johns and writer Malcolm Cowley and was the lover of playwright Eugene O'Neill). Crane felt himself a failure (leading to his suicide), in part because he recommenced homosexual activity in spite of his relationship with Cowley.

The Broken Tower contains ten quatrains, number five of which forms the primary inspiration for the *Broken World* series of paintings.

And so it was I entered the broken world
To trace the visionary company of love, its voice
An instant in the wind (I know not whither hurled)
But not for long to hold each desperate choice.

Crane's response to his broken world was love; mine too.

(The playwright **Tennessee Williams** chose the above lines as an epigraph to *A Streetcar Named Desire*.)

As this series developed, the paintings often featured a central core with forces creating centrifugal movement, an aspect also suggested within the poem's fifth quatrain. Later, I began using a dark circle that might intimate to the viewer several possible interpretations. More recently, I returned to my interest in fire as a force for destructive regeneration, i.e., a process of ordering, disordering, reordering; however, unlike my *Fire Work*, I now depict fire as an apparition rather than employing it as a painting medium.