



# What's It All Mean: William T. Wiley in Retrospect

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The retrospective exhibition of the work of William T. Wiley that this publication accompanies is the first to be organized since 1979, when *Wiley Territory* opened at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Thirty years later, *What's It All Mean: William T. Wiley in Retrospect*, considers the artist's entire career (including films) through 2008. The art of William Wiley (b. 1937) has stood the test of time in the face of changing styles, successive movements, critical theories, and passing fashion. Wiley's self-deprecating humor and sense of the absurd make his art accessible even to those who do not comprehend his more ambiguous ideas, allusions, narratives, private symbols, and layers of meaning. His liberal use of puns makes more palatable his deadly serious commentary on war, pollution, global warming, racial tension, and other threats to contemporary civilization. Wiley is best known as a leading California artist, whose influence and importance in the San Francisco Bay area are well established. This exhibition and catalogue affirm his significance as an artist of national stature whose accomplishment resonates well beyond the region in which he has chosen to live and the time period when he first achieved recognition.

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