

Remember the line in Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid when Paul Newman and Robert Redford say, "Who Are Those Guys?" Well, it was me they were asking about, at least when it comes to A.D. Cook.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kbTbg00AJU>

In 2016, my company was ramping up for a new block-buster museum exhibition and I was its self-appointed curator. When a curator wants to knock one out of the park for a grand slam, what does he do? He goes for quality. In my search for quality, I came across the art of one, A.D. Cook in the summer of 2016. Though I hadn't seen his work in person that was immaterial as far as I was concerned. I had seen enough on-line to know that it was first-rate, top-of-the-line artwork by a truly masterful artist. So I scoured the internet for contact information and set about trying to connect with the artist to tell him about my project and ask if he would participate as an exhibiting artist. After calling and leaving messages and messaging and emailing a few times with no response, I finally got lucky. I reached him by phone at 5:01 p.m. on August 10, 2016, and was quite excited to finally be able to talk to this talented guy. But the conversation was short. He explained he was on his way to Sturgis, and really couldn't talk much. Turned out that he was on his way to the 76th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally where he would be joined by about 1.1 million other biker fans and fanatics. Though I gave him my best pitch, quite honestly, he seemed uninterested, lethargic at best, more interested in getting to Sturgis than hearing about the opportunity I tried to describe in my attempt to instill a desire in him to want to have his work tour the nation in my traveling museum exhibit. I've met artists like that before on occasion. Some uninterested because they have bigger fish to fry; others because their world did not revolve around the artworld that I knew. In A.D.'s case, I guess it was some of both. He obviously had a successful career outside of the world of art museums, with commissions a plenty which profited him handsomely. So why should he care? My job was to provide him the answer to that question, and convince that my answer (a whole 'nother story) was right. So I persisted. I followed up by email and reiterated the concept and my plan for Luster. I finally heard back from him eight days later with this short email reply: "It was a pleasure chatting with you earlier. I appreciate you reaching out and your invitation to participate in your upcoming motorcycle realism show. Attached are five of my motorcycle paintings images . . ." with captions, links to promotional information, and a little polite chit chat. Suffice it to say that I had more work to be done. So I became a gang of one, like those chasing Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, to cajole this successful and talented biker artist into joining other awesomely talented artists who had already agreed to participate in Luster. With time, we got on one another's wave length, and A.D. not only became motivated enough but also succeeded in convincing a couple major collectors to lend works back from their private art collections for the exhibition and its tour (though one collector refused; one I guess who couldn't tear herself away from her prized A.D. Cook painting). In the end, but actually really the beginning, I met A.D. and Beti at the world premiere of Luster which kicked off Bike Week in Daytona, at the Museum of Arts and Sciences there, which gave us cause for a double celebration, since the premiere just happened to coincide with A.D.'s birthday to the day. Imagine that! Especially popular, you might even say iconic for Luster, has been A.D.'s painting,

Indian Summer, which was featured at The Daytona Museum of Arts and Sciences to welcome (or perhaps lure) visitors into the entrance of the exhibition. It has since been mainstay among other museums on tour throughout the nation to promote the exhibit. So now you know the answer to Paul Newman and Robert Redford's question, at least inasmuch as A.D. Cook and Luster are concerned. It was me.

Recounted by David J. Wagner, Ph.D.

Curator/Tour Director

LUSTER Realism and Hyperrealism in Contemporary Automobile and Motorcycle Painting

https://www.davidjwagnerllc.com/Luster_Exhibition.html



LUSTER World Premiere
Museum of Arts and Sciences
Daytona, Florida



A.D. Cook and Indian Summer
Museum of Arts and Sciences
Daytona, Florida



A.D. Cook and Beti Kristof
Museum of Arts and Sciences
Daytona, Florida

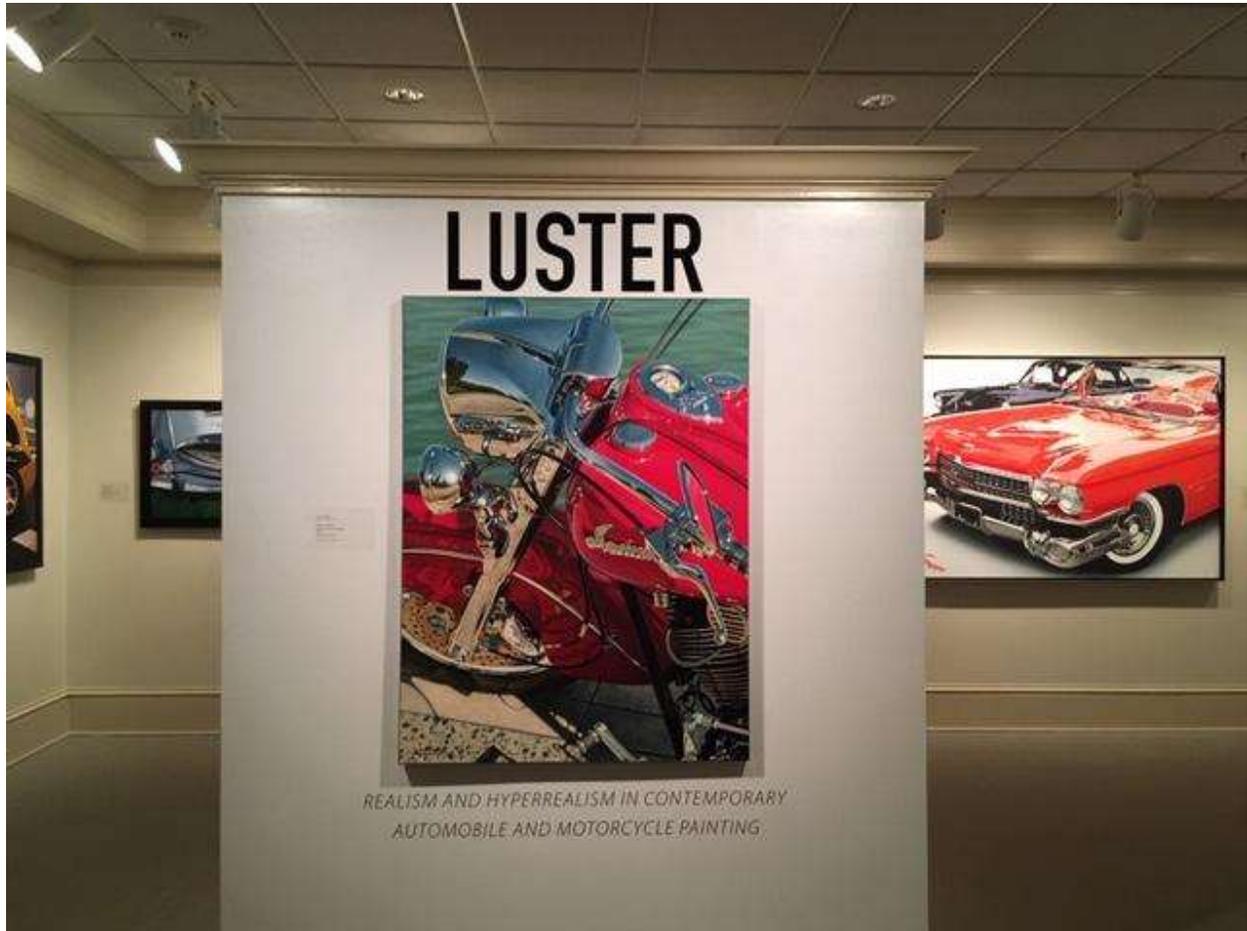
NOVEMBER 7, 2019—FEBRUARY 2, 2020

LUSTER

Realism and Hyperrealism in
Contemporary Automotive
and Motorcycle Painting



LUSTER on Tour
Haggin Museum
Stockton, California



LUSTER on Tour
Morris Museum of Art
Augusta, Georgia



LUSTER on Tour
Michele and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts
Springfield, Massachusetts