At midnight, Lou Rudolph lugs his canvas onto the stage of the Fab Mab North Beach's notorious punk music hall. She is a six-foot square panel painted enough to be a section from a billboard or stage set. As Lou finishes the set-up and permits one of a pair of polished satellite-style speakers on a stage from that time's featured act nails a pair of leather straps into the wall behind his hair. A few minutes later, when the band is at full power, the singer slips his feet under the stage and starts walking over. As he shouts out the lyrics of the two songs from the group's last album, an avalanche of audience crashes and collides against one another. Lou surveys the scene with legs astride, as if on the prow of some turbulent ship. Then, with one easy move he bends over, picks up his cymbals and cymbal stands, and steps onto the stage.

"Documentation is an important aspect of my art," he says a few days later, "but it's not the primary function of it. Sometimes, I'm much more interested in capturing the energy. The paintings in particular, lend themselves to this. My work is just a way to explore and make art. One element at a time."

Lou's style is bold and powerful. The markings of his crayon or brush are seen to dig into the surface of the paper, pulling the viewer into the world of the art. Lou does not compromise a scene; whether it be in a bar, a friend's house, or a performance, the artist is always present. His work has been exhibited on both coasts, most frequently in San Francisco's Ambar House, where he works as a bartender three nights a week. His next show will be at New York's Hibbs Gallery this September.

"As far as the work is concerned, I'm definitely after fame as a focus of ambition. I mean, I'm working hard to achieve that. But it's also a way for me to be effective as an artist. I don't make the decision to be an artist until after I was able to make my own system and discover what is really important in the world. Now I see how art is directly connected to the very essence of life. Its power is subtle, not to be underestimated. Artists have to make people see this, it's much more important for me to do than design nuclear reactors. There's just no going back, as they say."