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# Of vapor beneath the evening star

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Of vapor beneath the evening star

by

Sarah Barnard-Blitz

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Peter Pinnell

Lincoln, Nebraska

March, 2009

Of vapor beneath the evening star

Sarah Barnard-Blitz, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2009

Advisor: Peter Pinnell

The things we see are but shadows of reality. We are in a cave, but if we turn around we can see the fire that casts the shadows we call reality. We can take the difficult journey to see the beauty and magic that is our true world. Stories such as this, Plato's allegory of the cave in *The Republic*, have taught for centuries that there is more to our world than we initially know. Allegory and metaphor can help us begin to understand the shadows for what they are. It is in our hearts and our imaginations that we find our reality.

In my mind I walk on a path deep in the woods. The forest is so dense and large that one could easily become lost. It is a place of mystery where the unknown awaits discovery. Myth and history seem to hang in the wind. Finding my way through the trees I stumble upon an object. Finding this artifact, I begin to tell myself a story of its life. Is this all that remains of a long forgotten palace? Perhaps here was an ancient place of worship and this was once a ritual object. Was some human-made object abandoned and then reclaimed by nature? If I walk closer, will it come alive? No matter the explanation, the object holds a certain power. My finds are gates to the unknown, paths found to mysterious destinations, protection against negative forces, and reflections of my heart. It is a place where I feel the unseen forces around me and anything is possible – a place of changes in perception. Here,

time holds very little meaning. I imagine the history of my finds, but the past, present, and future of the place and the thing all exist simultaneously within the object as in a dream.

Like the forests of folk and fairy tales, spiritual and religious teachings, legends and myths across cultures, what I find in the woods and translate into objects are metaphors for real experience. My work springs from this vision of the woods as an attempt to bring the intangible into visual space. My touch transforms the clay, the dirt, the earth, into the object of my imagination. Manipulated natural imagery is the language I use sculpturally to convey meaning and reconnect with both the actual woods and the metaphorical woods of inner self. Within each piece is a fantasy realm rooted in the magical realities all around us. It is a visual tale, a myth viewers must discover for themselves from the object before them. It holds an expanded view of reality, conveying a sense of wonder and possibility.

Sarah Barnard - Blitz  
Image List

1 - 12 - Not Labeled





























Sarah Blitz

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