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ABSTRACTIONS OF SHAPES AND SPACE

By

Rita Ford Jones

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of the University of Louisville  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Allen R. Hite Art Institute  
University of Louisville  
Louisville, Kentucky

December 1986

ABSTRACTIONS OF SHAPES AND SPACE

By

Rita Ford Jones

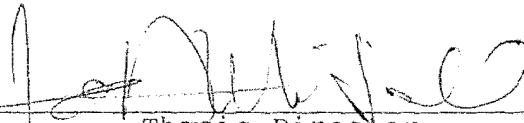
B.A., Indiana University Southeast, 1984

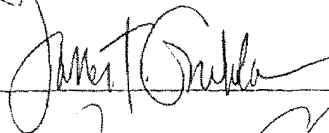
M.A., University of Louisville, 1986

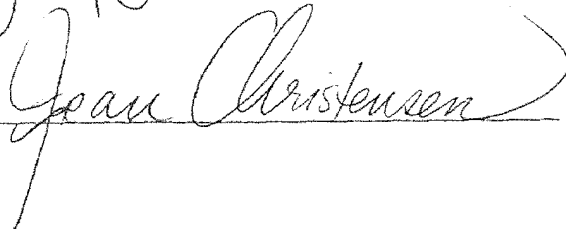
A Thesis Approved on

Dec. 1, 1986

by the following Reading Committee:

  
Thesis Director





## Abstract

Abstractions of shape and space is the theme of this thesis. These prints and drawings were created between September, 1984 and October, 1986. Emphasis was placed on developing a body of work which is expressive, spontaneous, and rhythmical.

Intaglio was chosen as a major area of concentration. I experimented with soft-ground etching, hard-ground etching, machine engraving, scraping, burnishing, open bite, sugar lift, aquatint, and with several techniques for color printing. The project also involved a study of various media with the purpose of finding a technique as artistically satisfying as intaglio but less physically demanding to execute. Colored pencils and pen and ink were eventually chosen as the favored medium.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are certain people who have contributed to the achievement of many of my dreams and goals. I wish to thank these people and gratefully acknowledge their influence and assistance which has made this thesis possible. Among these are Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Ford, Mrs. Barbara Jernigan, Susan Matthias, Jonas Howard, Brian Jones, John Martin, Don Anderson, Dr. Stephanie Maloney, Dr. Dario Covi, John Whitesell, James Grubola, Dr. Jean Christensen, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Connell, Mr. Charles Rinkle, Mrs. Brenda Jones, my family, and my husband Jerry Jones.

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## LIST OF SLIDES

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## ABSTRACTIONS OF SHAPES AND SPACE

Abstractions of shape and space is the theme of this thesis. These prints and drawings were created between September, 1984 and October, 1986. Emphasis was placed on developing a body of work which is expressive, spontaneous, and rhythmical. Movement is shown within the compositions by the direction of line, shape, color, texture, and, by the contrasts between dark and light areas. Curved marks and round shapes give direction and result in a rhythmical, almost musical, movement in the works. This allows the viewer to sense the excitement and energy of the creative process.

A colored print by Donnis Campbell captured my interest and inspired me to learn the technique of intaglio. Eventually I chose intaglio as a major area of concentration because of the potential it has for deep dark blacks and rich velvety color. No other medium, including oil paint, has the depth in the dark areas which can be achieved in an etching. The technical aspect of etching the copper or zinc plates has been as much a source of satisfaction to me as the finished print.

I experimented with soft-ground etching using new and antique laces and various textured fabrics, hard-grounds, machine engraving, scraping, burnishing, open bite, sugar lift, and aquatint. Color is visually stimulating and important to me. Thus, I concentrated on and experimented with several techniques for color printing. Among these were the methods called "three color separation", and printing with different viscosities of inks on plates etched to different depths.

In January 1985, I undertook a study of various media in order to discover a technique to serve as a link between intaglio and drawing. This search was instigated by my need to find a medium as artistically satisfying as intaglio but one less physically demanding to execute. This involved four semesters of searching for the best solution. At first, colored pastels seemed to be the answer but they were messy and large pieces were hard to handle. In the summer of 1985, I started drawing over paintings done in acrylic or watercolor. I used Prismacolor, watercolor pencils, chalk and oil pastels, which was fun and highly satisfying. Then, I made a collage of different kinds of lace from the materials I use for image making with soft-grounds in intaglio work. These were then arranged to form a composition which I glued to gessoed paper. I brushed on acrylic paint and used Prismacolor pencils to draw on the surface. This created a wide variety of surface textures. I liked the results and plan to repeat this procedure in the

future. Eventually, colored pencils and pen and ink were found to have the linear and color characteristics of intaglio, and ultimately fulfilled my needs.

Having played the piano since the first grade, I have been greatly influenced by music in my visual work. The circular motifs which I use frequently come from my deep love of the rhythmical qualities of music as well as from my affinity for biological and natural organic shapes. The idea of passageways or paths which allow the viewer to penetrate the work with his mental eye and walk through arches and explore windows to the unknown is of great importance. My purpose is to impart to the viewer a sensation of actually being there with the artist. These ideas were conceived and used as a result of my belief that people have many choices to make which can lead either to unhappiness in life or to great fulfillment and contentedness. I strongly believe in man's "God given" right to choose between good or evil, and that belief is expressed in my art work as passages or doors through which one can enter or not enter as one chooses.

It has taken me more than thirty years to understand that my art can be created spontaneously without regard to how someone else could or would have done it. I have learned that I must have an uninhibited response and an inner reaction to the subject being drawn in order to successfully articulate and reveal what I want to express. I also feel this approach elicits a better response from the

viewer. I personally enjoy my works that are quickly executed with a spontaneous burst of energy and where the rapid flowing movements are both natural and unselfconscious. The struggle has been not just doing something in what I think is the "accepted" way.

During the summer of 1986, needing a fresh outlook and a new creative objective, I travelled and lived in Italy. In the prints and drawings from this period the realism has been kept intact but the abstract shapes I prefer are evident. The added linear perspective gives a new impetus and dimension to my work resulting in a greater sense of volume, depth, and feeling than previous works. The ancient town of Perugia, Italy, was a perfect classroom for experimentation with linear perspective drawing. Its roof-top angles climbed into the sky, stretched across mountainsides and down into the valleys around the town.

I began my "tangled line" style of drawing while in Italy and then developed it more completely after returning to the United States. During my seventh week in Italy, I looked over the entire accumulation of drawings and sketches and realized that the loosely scribbled sketches were expressive, spontaneous, rhythmical, and quite exciting. This revelation was the beginning of my conscious experimentation with the idea of a scribbled, almost continuous tangled line. Since then the struggle has been to keep the "fresh approach" intact and at the same time to maintain complete control over the work. Photographs I

took, or sketches I made while in Italy are selected for their abstract shapes and deep spacial qualities. The combination of these ideas with linear perspective, and drawing in the "tangled line" style brought about the current body of work for this thesis. I feel these works are a culmination of all my previous study and the realization of several years search for a personal creative outlet.

## VITA

Rita Ford Jones, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Ford was born November 15, 1937, in Buena Park, California. She received a high school Art Award at graduation from Brawley Union High School, Brawley, California, in June 1956. An Associate in Arts Degree was earned June 7, 1958, from Imperial Valley Junior College, in El Centro, California. She married fellow classmate, Floyd Jerry Jones. They have four sons, Robert Floyd, James Randall, Kerry Nathan, and Benjamin Marrion. Moving to Indiana in August 1970, she attended Indiana University Southeast, New Albany, Indiana, from 1981 to 1984. She was on the Chancellors list or Deans list for five semesters. She was nominated to Alpha Chi National College Honor Scholarship Society, and was named an outstanding senior by Alpha Chi during 1984. She graduated with Distinction in May, 1984. Her Masters Degree was earned in December 1986 from the University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky. She received the Allen R. Hite Scholarship each semester.

Her art works hang in private homes, and in corporate, university and museum collections. A list of shows and awards follows:

- 1981 Indiana University Southeast Student Show
- 1982 Intra-Valley Annual Undergraduate Juried Art Competition, Indiana University Southeast
- 1983 Indiana University Southeast Student Show Purchase Award
- 1983 Floyd County Museum July Juried Show
- 1984 Intra-Valley Annual Purchase Award, and a Merit Award
- 1984 Water Tower Annual, Purchased by Brown and Williams
- 1984 Metroversity Art competition, Awarded top prize
- 1984 Indiana University Student Show, Merit Award and Honorable mention
- 1984 White water Annual Show, Richmond, Indiana
- 1984 Floyd County Museum July Juried Show, Museum Purchase Award
- 1984 Kentucky State Fair, Honorable mention
- 1985 University of Louisville Student Show, "Self and Other"
- 1985 Womens Club, Louisville, Kentucky
- 1985 State Treasurer's Office, Frankfort, Kentucky
- 1985 Wabash Exposition, Swope Gallery, Terre Haute
- 1985 Floyd County Museum July Juried Show
- 1985 Nineteenth Annual Juried Show, Owensboro Area Museum Art Gallery, Owensboro, Kentucky
- 1985 Cadillac Show, Louisville, Kentucky
- 1986 Womens Club of Louisville, Merit Award
- 1986 Floyd County Museum July Juried Show
- 1986 Italian Drawing Show, University of Louisville
- 1986 Masters Thesis Exhibition, University of Louisville