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AN INTERPRETATIVE  
ESSAY CONCERNING  
SIX WORKS OF ART

JAMES, WALTON BURTON JR.

Directed by: Burt Carpenter

(1978)

AN INTERPRETATIVE ESSAY CONCERNING SIX WORKS OF ART

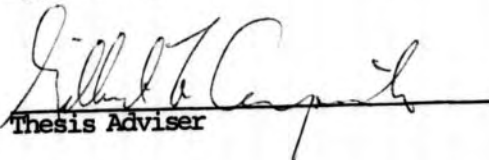
by

Walton Burton James, Jr.

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

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Approved by

  
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis Adviser Richard F. Carpenter

Committee Members Walter Barber  
Tom Hestie  
Joan Susong  
Richard F. Carpenter

April 28, 1978  
Date of Acceptance by Committee

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Appreciation is also due to the guidance, teaching, and inspiration of my thesis members.

## CATALOGUE

TITLE	DIMENSIONS
1. The Amazing Universe	16" x 20"
2. The Angel Game	40" x 60"
3. Dreams and Spirits of the Past	16" x 20"
4. Space Odessey I	12" x 14"
5. Space Odessey II	12" x 18"
6. Heroes of the Past	6" x 8"

The exhibited thesis paintings are intended to communicate a maximum amount of information to the viewer as quickly as possible and then hold his attention. I hope to achieve this immediacy in the design by first organizing simplified analogous shapes placed side by side that later may evolve into an underlying and disguised, large scale rhythmical pattern. However, to hold the viewer's attention involves the intrinsically difficult problem of establishing a balance between variety and unity. The variety may be represented in the manipulation of the full range of elements that exists, including simulated texture, hieractic values, chorded hues, as well as the geometric patterning. Color unity is established by Munsell and Ostwall's color systems, but the harmoniously exact proportioning of shapes is formulated by the studies of Maitland Graves, Gunnar Goude, and Inga Hjortzberg. In the design, then, geometric and algebraic computations are a means of establishing the placement of positive and negative shapes along with the aesthetically "felt" judgement. Written data is frequently left on the painting surface, in the actual problem-solving venture, creating a subtle, elaborate, and enriched surface on a small scale.

Overall, the entire abstract design, serving as a foil or grided pattern allows for the further development of a geometrically figurative motif, that fits into the painting like a piece of an abstract puzzle. As a result, the divergence from the unreal to the fanciful world is, of course, consistent even with the typically enigmatic theme. One example,

may be noted in the two symmetrically placed figures at a game table in the painting, entitled "The Angel Game." Reflective in appearance, surrealistic in mood, and unifying in design, the effect of a mirror is implied and one is faced with the question of: "What is real and what is not?"