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INNER GEOMETRY .

An Abstract

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Arts

Susan Jane Wadle

University of Northern Iowa

April 1986

ABSTRACT

The most ancient mathematical handbook known to our time is a papyrus included in the Rhind collection of the British Museum. This interesting hieratic document, described by Birch in 1868, and translated by Eisenlohr in 1877, was written by an Egyptian, Ahmes by name, in the rein of Ra-ā-us, some time between 1700 and 2000 B.C. It is entitled: "Directions for obtaining the knowledge of all dark things."

-Florian Cajori,
A History of Elementary Mathematics
with Hints on Methods of Teaching

The body of my work indirectly offers parallels to the most ancient usage of the word "geometry" known, that of the "earth-measurement" practices of the Egyptians and Babylonians. Such practices were in response to the needs of everyday living. Although the later introduction of deductive geometry by the Greeks evolved into more complex and intellectual formulas, I felt a richer vein could be tapped by exploring geometry's earliest province: "earth-measurement."

The earth has infinitely warmer, more emotional connotations to me than do the colder geometric formulations that rise in the intellectual air above the ground. Consequently, geometry's earliest definition of "earth-measurement" more clearly aligned with my nature than

the more sterile definitions of contemporary geometry. For me, an "inner land measurement" became not only an artistic direction but evolved into an emotional necessity as well. Realizing that air is as critical a component to existence as the warmth symbolically held within the earth itself, I sought a reconciliation using the following process:

Step #1. To accommodate the intellectual level I sketched a series of tight, linear configurations, each one representing a specific time, place, event or sometimes crossing over and invading another.

Step #2. To create a bridge meeting the more emotive level, I used a soft graphite pencil to develop a safety net of light and dark contrasts within each of these separate and overlapping configurations.

Step #3. A meeting between the emotive and intellectual levels was achieved by the use of a tool that took on a totally unexpected tone. Although it formerly seemed relatively innocuous, it now evolved into an agent of transformation sheltering within it a strong spirituality which powerfully ignited startling, catalytic changes within the work: the simple, commonplace eraser (see Slides #12, #13, and #14).

This simple tool not only transformed the strictly intellectual setting into one that was highly emotive (with strong Abstract Expressionistic surface treatment), it also, if one allowed it to do so, offered many unexpected gifts.

Relatively uncensored erasings, sometimes with a touch of a linear or painterly quality, lent immediate associative meanings. Those that seemed more reluctant to offer their secrets, given a little time and open-faced honesty, later revealed surprising meanings. It became evident that any measure of censoring was to be avoided as it only served as an obstructive force, placing too much critical distance between me and any revealed symbolic messages the work came to offer. My initial motivation was to traverse the inner landscape of my own inner geometry merely to explore the territory. Before I realized it I had developed more than a nodding acquaintance with the earliest of mathematical texts, "Directions for obtaining the knowledge of all dark things." My work suddenly became a rather dark mystical journey as I found myself carrying on what appeared to be a conversation with my deepest self (see Slide #5).

Art is not just picture-making. It has the ability to transform. It is like the freedom of dreams wherein symbols and transformation occur with an intense constancy. Both speak to me in a very compassionate and tender fashion. No arbiter stands to condemn or frighten. Gentle invitations, and yes, sometimes ambiguous ones at that, invite one to embrace all parts of oneself. Fragmentation takes place only when one chooses not to look too closely. Yet if one does examine all aspects of the self the promise of reward is great. Self-acceptance, forgiveness, and the

overall insight that harmony exists reunite chaos. Dreams and art, in these associate or emotive drawings, act masterfully as both parables and kindly benefactors. They invite the exploration of an inner geometry.

An exhibition of this studio thesis was held April 28 through May 10, 1986, in the Department of Art Gallery at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

INNER GEOMETRY,

A Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Susan Jane Wadle

University of Northern Iowa

April 1986

This Study by: Susan Jane Wadle

Entitled: INNER GEOMETRY

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the
Degree of Master of Arts

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9 June 86

Date

Chairman, Thesis Committee

Jo Siddens

July 9, 1986

Date

Member, Thesis Committee

Shirley E. Haupt

July 9, 1986

Date

Member, Thesis Committee

John C. Downey

July 17, 1986

Date

Dean of the Graduate College

LIST OF SLIDES

1. She Found Being in a Secondary Position Untenable, 1985, graphite and eraser, 22" x 28".
2. Burning Symbols, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
3. A Meeting of the Self, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
4. Fields of Tenderness, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
5. Convoluting Inheritance, 1985, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
6. Why Must the Taste of Paradox Be Bittersweet?, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
7. We All Spoke of Such Inane Things While Waiting Our Turn, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
8. Anger Recognized, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
9. de Kooning's Child by Symbolic Inheritance, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
10. Enigmatic Environments, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
11. Why Must I Deny Who I Am to Maintain This Charade?, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
12. Phantom Father and Hieroglyphic Mother, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".

13. If I Press My Ear to the Sounds of the Fetal Heartbeats I'll Understand Her Composition, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
14. Leo's Hope, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
15. Bless Us Father for We Have All Sinned, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
16. Kept Secrets and Healing Forces, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".
17. Ser Hut Mir Fardrossin: So Much and So Little, 1986, graphite and eraser, 24" x 19".