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A Use of the Visual Metaphor: The Relationship between the Figure to the Environment

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A USE OF THE VISUAL METAPHOR
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FIGURE TO THE ENVIRONMENT

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Betty Anne Skalicky
August, 1971

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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In this study the human figure was used as a departure. I imposed my own style of drawing on the human form in order to achieve not only the illusion of a three-dimensional quality, but to create a personal identification with the image on the part of the artist and the viewer.

The humanistic images I created were an attempt to portray an idealized figure. They are one with the quality of nature itself and the environment. Hence, the whole of the figure as one structure, together with the necessary negative area, encompasses the entire composition. Participation on the part of the viewer is an identification with not only the composition and surface, but the emotional impact of the image. It was also hoped that an identification would prevail from this union of the environment with the idealistic figure. It would seem more natural to relate to something which is anonymous, as opposed to a specific human individual, and to that which is a representation of stability in the cycle of nature. A stable three-dimensional quality would seem to support this view. For me, a culmination of reality is achieved through the process of drawing. A seeking of reality is not necessarily intentional, rather it is something that happens as the result of the process of drawing. The interaction between my thoughts and the physical objects of the media brings about a completed work. That is to say, everything is synthesized and organized when the right tools or elements shape the unconscious reservoir of influences.

Because of this association between thoughts and the media of drawing, art leads me to an awareness of that which is actual and potential in nature.

There are certain elements in my style of drawing basic to the development of a three-dimensional quality in the figure. Contour drawing was basic to my style and I found that line variation and narrowing of a line gave the visual impression of either a flat surface and/or, a three-dimensional space when used in the figure. The illusion of a shallow depth was incorporated in the contour line through variation. Texture of the surface was achieved by balancing shading and smearing, with fluidity and facility to the media. I further imposed a controlled positioning of light and dark to try to achieve an ambiguity in weight and space, which refers to the anonymous quality depicted in the figure. Together these elements shaped the product of a figure drawing.

The work depicted, on the whole has, an anonymous quality. The figures depicted are idealized because I associated them with the environmental influences, such as mountains. They are also stating an awareness of the universe or the outside environment which influences human beings.

Possibly in the future I would like to say something about the universe within, in an inward personal manner. I consider these drawings the beginning of a personal expression and a process of reaffirming my reality in graphic terms. It is in this respect that I consider them significant, and sincere.



Figure 1

Number 6



Figure 2

Once Upon a Time no. 2

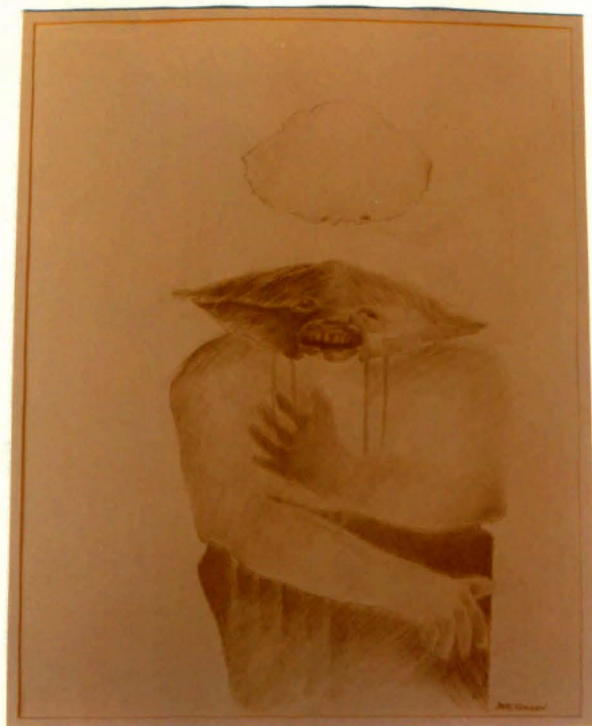


Figure 3.

The Crab



Figure 4
Outer View



Figure 5

Number 2



Figure 6
White Form



Figure 7
The Bat

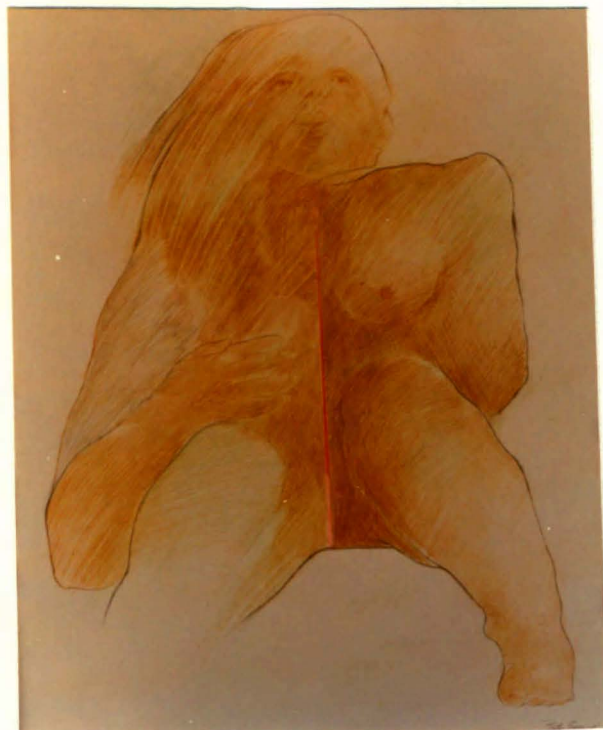


Figure 8

Eternal



Figure 9
Fingers and Toes



Figure 10

Shadow



Figure 11

Number 4 Collograph



Figure 12
Summum Bonum