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SOME PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS ON MY DRAWING

by

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B.S., University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1963

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate  
School of the University of Colorado in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

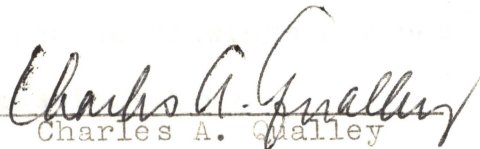
Master of Fine Arts

Department of Fine Arts

1969

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This Thesis for the Master of  
Fine Arts degree by  
Suzanne Reed Foster  
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The reasons for my involvement in drawing for the past two years are several. In particular, I rediscovered drawing at a time when a new approach to solving problems of form in painting was a major concern for me. I had not built up a past vocabulary of form and technique in using drawing as a creative means, thus I did not have to unlearn old habits in order to solve problems, but could approach these problems with a fresh material. Even the pencil which is a major element of my recent drawings has become a new tool with endless possibilities.

The result of the use of pencil to evolve forms encountered in paint became a clarification of these forms. The fluid, sensuous quality of paint, which I found hard to control, has been replaced by the more controllable nature of the pencil.

My present drawings are not related to the concept of linear contour drawing. The linear element is replaced by cross-hatch which is applied as areas of shape. Any contour edge is a result of one area of hatch meeting another area of hatched strokes.

The drawings are complete statements in themselves and are never used as plans for paintings or for larger drawings. While they are never used as plans for more completed painting, paradoxically, they have become the

greatest influence in solving the problems I have been having in painting. Their relationship is that of drawing before painting, but not as drawing as a plan for painting.

The drawings are somewhat conceptual in nature. All the considerations that I have dealt with in painting ( form, color, transparency, value ) have been transferred to paper and pencil. While the pencil influences the final form of the work; the formal considerations that I find myself making in the process of drawing are the same as those I make with paint.

Through drawing I have reinforced my awareness of the need for directness in my work. Of course, the expansion of the range of media used in drawing changes the directness of the drawing process. Limiting myself to pencil I have eliminated any over-involvement with technical problems which might result with the introduction of other media.

The importance of value contrasts in my work became apparent when I began using pencil. Limiting myself to the tonal range of a black pencil helped develop my sensitivity to value. The value contrasts used in my drawings are not tied to the definition of 3-dimensional forms, but are placed freely in areas and allowed to play one against the other. On



occasion, 3-dimensional form is suggested by the use of value, but this quality is a result of the layered application of pencil and is not pursued. The spacial feeling in the drawings is relatively flat and this has helped to control the organic quality of the work.

Transparency plays an important role in the drawings. In this case the layering of pencil strokes creates the transparent effect. The use of transparency introduces another means for the creation of space as well as a quality of ambiguity of space and form. Transparency also increases the effect of softness in the drawing.

Spacial concerns are important in my work. The use of value and transparency as a means of creating space has already been mentioned. The application of pencil strokes as directional lines into space is another way in which space is suggested. The placement of the strokes of pencil one on top of the other allows the actual layering of pencil to become involved in the suggestion of space. In this way the physical layers of pencil become readable as layers or levels of space. The movement of the white of the drawing paper in and among the penciled lines adds an element of spacial concern to the work. Space in this instance

becomes lateral as well as 3-dimensional. Lateral space allows for the awareness of the relationship between drawn elements on the surface of the paper. The paper also offers opaque contrast to the transparent penciled shapes. In addition, the white surface of the paper is activated dimensionally and gives off an appearance of light coming from behind the drawn forms.

Texture is a concern in the drawings. The application of pencil in strokes to create shapes automatically calls attention to the strokes as visual texture. In rendering the pencil strokes the fineness of a pencil point plays a role in controlling the quality of the textures. In particular, I use a finely pointed pencil when I wish to define an edge. The development of the directional, textured line in the drawings grew out of the use of a paper stencil. I found that in drawing off the edge of a stencil it was more natural to work in a diagonal direction; the hand moving quickly and surely in this way. The importance of my response to texture is a new discovery. While texture is an important component, it is a texture that is limited in scope. The texture used is visual and is a natural outgrowth of the manipulation of the materials used. I do not like to draw on textured paper nor do I respond to most works of art which



incorporate actual textures ( sand, heavy application of paint, etc.). Texture is useful in my work if it is refined and used with restraint.

The control of all the elements in my drawing is a necessary part of the work. The use of transparency, textures and ambiguities and with these the creation or suggestion of vague forms leads to a confusion in the visual response to the work. The ambiguous nature of my work tends to make it hard to grasp, thus it becomes necessary to add elements that bring the work back to an understandable level. The tightening up of darks and the creation of rich areas of blacks is one means of keeping the work from drifting away. The introduction of an edge within the nebulous forms of the drawings and the use of straight lines or edges which act as stabilizers for the organic, contoured edges of the forms help to control the drawings. An occasional, modulated line presented in the drawing also helps keep the drawing from slipping away as well as the introduction of stenciled forms. The stenciled forms, usually star shapes, act as recognizable images which can be grasped in reading the total drawing.

It would probably be possible to say that there is a concern for levels of readability in my drawings.

In addition, the success of the drawings depends on the tension that exists between forms that are more easily recognized and those that have an ambiguous nature.

The above passage hints at an overall philosophy that inhabits my work. The idea that painting, drawing etc. should contain an element of mystery, something that remains to be discovered. The balance that needs to exist between a work of art is one between complete presentation of form and the retainment of the not completely understandable or knowable. Each artist solves this artistic problem in his own way.

*Charles S. Gullberg*



In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree M.F.A. in Creative Arts

Supanne Foster  
Name

has submitted this written thesis  
as a supplement to the creative thesis

One Drawing  
Number and Medium

9x12  
Size

Untitled  
Title

which is in the permanent possession of the  
University of Colorado and recorded with the  
Department of Fine Arts

Approved by Luis Eades  
Luis Eades

Roland Reiss  
Roland Reiss

Charles A. Qualley  
Charles A. Qualley

Number of slides and medium

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