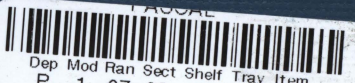


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[In an unqualified knot]

THESIS STATEMENT

By

Sally Henderson

B.F.A., University of Colorado, 1970

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

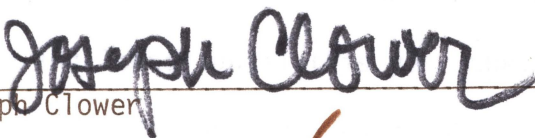
Master of Fine Arts

Department of Fine Arts, Creative Art

1974

This Thesis for the Master of Fine Arts Degree by
Sally Henderson
has been approved for the
Department of
Fine Arts
by


James Johnson


Joseph Clower


Frank Sampson

Date _____

As I attempt to set down in rather formal terms a discussion of and about my art I am undeniably forced into a categorizing effort. At this point in my painting such a defining of both my intellectual feelings toward my art and my emotional feelings is most difficult, as they are indistinguishable and lie tangled in an unqualified knot.

In my older work from 1968 through 1972 I remained a staunch proponent of geometric abstractionism and a formalist at heart. My work was tight and hard-edge, constructed with logic, allowing little if no leeway for any intuitive or spontaneous pre or after thoughts. I felt more than comfortable in this situation for quite some time, my paintings were finished as soon as I completed the original study needing only to be reworked on the larger, final scale.

By the end of 1972 I finally began to feel less and less comfortable in my formalist situation. My pre-painting studies became looser and looser until this year they no longer really existed in their previous capacity. And as I began to change the work itself as it was being painted, allowing intuitive changes in construction or color, another link in my chain of tightly-knit formalist thinking was destroyed. I began to consider the more spontaneous aspects of my

creativity and actually began a fight against the organised logic which I had so carefully constructed, but which had begun to leave me vacant and dry of ideas, perhaps out of boredom or overuse.

The unqualified knot of which I spoke began about this time, with the rise of a looser format and a disintegration of basic formalist ideas. The question of whether or not I could continue to work with formal geometric patterns and combine these with a new sense of spontaneity and even emotionalism began to throw me out of balance. The conception of the intellect as being the mainstay and salvation of my previous work left me empty as I began analytically searching for formal reasons, logical reasons void of intuitive change, for my loosening up. But the change was purely intuitive, perhaps a rejuvenation for something that was going stale. And the only word I can find that seemed sensibly definable for my new work, in terms of my own feelings about it, was geometric expressionism, as each of my pieces, though still formal in patterning, becomes more visibly emotional.

The objective viewing of color and space which I previously held, has now become more subjective and the dichotomy between logic and emotion has lessened. The basic decisions made regarding my new work are still fairly tight and formal, relating to a certain geometric and symmetrical structure or things and the space these objects or images does or does not encompass.

However, the subsequent decisions of color and surface have become predominately emotional or intuitive. And I am no longer representing space in only one aspect, which had previously been that of the object in perspective sitting in space with weight and volume. I am now searching for new spaces, where the background becomes the foreground, the foreground the background, the object itself can exist as an object with weight or as an outline of itself in a one-dimensional environment, or as merely edges in perspective with the object not existing at all.

The paint has also changed in my new work. It is no longer flatly opaque, but can now be opaque and translucent, even allowing for the strokes of the brush. My vibrant "hard-edge" colors have disappeared and left a more minimal pastel palette. I believe this to be because of my desire to put more emphasis on the object, which at times could not be predominant because of its competition with the forceful color I had been using. Also, it was important to me to clear my head as I began to once again truly experiment with my work, and throwing out a lot of excess color and starting with a more minimal palette helped me keep my thoughts clearer.

The colored pencil on my six-sectioned painting allowed me to surpass the texture I was getting from my brush, and I could actually energise myself more easily with its scribbles. Since I had been putting the original grids on

the paintings in pencil, it seemed like a natural step to continue and integrate that medium with the paint.

I have begun to look forward to a new objective in my work which I had forgotten about and not remembered in my more formal pieces. This is the completion and final outcome of the painting which has begun to come to me, unpredicted, as a final surprise. The shapes or objects or images, passing through different planes in space, changing at will, merely because I want them to, not because they should to achieve a certain structure in space or optical effect, coloring them as I feel at the time, has kindled the more direct experience of painting. This seems to feed on itself and makes me objectively search for a way of combining my symmetrical, formal world with the more subjectively perceptual one I had forgotten.

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

Sally L. Henderson

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

Eight Acrylic Paintings
Number and Medium

Varying
Size

Untitled
Title

slides of which are in the permanent possession of
the University of Colorado and recorded with the

Department of Fine Arts

Approved by 
Chairman of Committee


Committee Member


Committee Member

Chairman,
Fine Arts Department

