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A Personal Aesthetics Statement

By

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B.F.A., University of Colorado, 1973

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

Master of Fine Arts

Department of Fine Arts, Creative Art

1976

This Thesis for the Master of Fine Arts Degree by

Carol S. Weil

has been approved for the

Department of

Fine Arts

by



Luis Eades (Chairman of the Committee)



James Johnson

Date _____

The job of the critic is to analyze, the task of an artist in writing about his own work is to set down his own perceptions about his art work. I have used the word aesthetics in the title of this statement with caution. It can be a problematical word for an artist to use. I am not using it in the context of its usual definition, that is, to denote a philosophy or science of the beautiful, but in its broader sense, to mean perception, feeling, awareness or sensitivity. It is in this context that we understand the word "anaesthetic," the removal of feeling or perception as when drugs are used to ease or avoid pain. What follows will be my thoughts and perceptions about my art and the process of making it from an appropriately personal vantage point: a personal aesthetics statement.

My art is about what I know. It is also, to paraphrase Jasper Johns, what I cannot not do. It is a personal art and its content comes from what is personally significant to me. My art making process is irrational. A creative search is like a maze. Each step in the process of making a piece of art, each transformation, opens up an unlimited number of possible choices for me. Although I often begin a drawing with a precise visualization I find I must allow my imagination and unconscious to take over because it is this part of me that can most easily grasp the total structure of what is before me and lead me to a choice my rational mind might overlook. In this sense, my art does not contain images that summarize acquired learning or diagram logical consequences.

I have an expansive approach to working. I try to avoid the traps that a consistent and purely logical approach to technique can foster in my art. I like to make things that I've never seen before, to do what I'm not sure I know how to do. My work is often like daydreaming and is in this sense expansive. In daydreams there is often no beginning or ending, things seem unfinished, growing, cyclical. I also like the element of surprise, that feeling that the drawing made itself. When drawings happen this way I feel a sense of detachment and peace. It is in this kind of peaceful state of solitude and intense involvement that I can be so close to something within myself and perceive it most objectively. This way of working often produces for me a re-discovery of the obvious in myself and the world around me.

I want my art to be a celebration of life. I want it to be about a transcendence of opposites. I make art that is a visual re-imagining or reflection of those times in my own life experience that are the most transcendent. My art is as direct in its attempt to visually communicate this as I can make it because it cannot be translated into literary terms.

The seventy-five drawings in the show are small in scale and are intended to be modest. Modesty in the sense of equalization of extremes. It takes time and attention to take in all the detail in something small and to allow it to expand. The worlds and experiences that I make in my drawings are manageable and easily dominated. I want my art to be a magnifying glass, to recapture youth in returning to the enlarging gaze of a child; to return to the garden.

The drawings are all squares because squares are stable and can visually best project the feeling of peacefulness that generates them. I use line and color inside the peaceful squares to break them up to

make them move and float away and to promote contradiction, to imply change or transformation and to add a lightness and humor to mediate between the opposites.

If color, line, light, mass, form, volume are experienced personally these can result in a very personal art, no matter how abstract. Color, in particular, is of cardinal importance to me. I am greatly affected by the color in the landscape and environment around me, as well as by the forms and surfaces. Color is sensual, of the senses said Matisse, it often produces very physical sensations in my body that I cannot ignore. It is a major factor in what my drawings are about and their reason for being. I work in pastel chalk because it is one of the purest color mediums I could find. Pastel absorbs light with its matte surface and gives color back with great luminosity and intensity. Ad Reinhardt once said color is irrational, I sometimes wonder if it is not light that is the irrational element. Color and light are enigmas, challenges, adventures for me. Line seems purely rational to me most of the time, it is perhaps one of the things in my drawings that I feel most secure about. I sometimes try to make line irrational (as in the drawing illustrated from the "Edges" group) and color rational, it increases the tension.

In dealing with space in my drawings I want to attain suspension. Suspension between the opposites of illusory depth and flatness, a floating, timeless sensation and a feeling of solidity. This is best illustrated in the slide of the drawing from the "Field" series of drawings.

The drawings in the show are divided into four groups, "Edges," "Fields," "Walls" and "Gardens." Within each group a transformation is implied that is cyclical and is reminiscent of my personal approach to the process of my work. They are visual records of incident. Small

groups of incidents in my thought processes about my relationship to my experiences in the world and the physical landscape that surrounds me.

I often see a great deal of absurdity in art, and in life, and understand the position of existential perception of opposites, of paradox that generates this notion. Ultimately I want my art to transcend the dichotomy. The way to this sense of wholeness for me, now, is to state the opposing factors in an integrated and mutually dependent fashion in the record or end product of my process. I am wanting to shun the trap of categories such as romantic and classic, for in reality I am both. I strive for classic ideals with romantic methods. I do not deny order, I just believe in more than one system of ordering. I do not deny rules, I just believe that they must be made up each time. Art is a human endeavor and therefore imperfect. This is why I believe in an art that is particular and personal, because it is human. Art is also, for me, about that which is greater than us all, and therefore about something perhaps more perfect than humanness.

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Fine Arts

Carol S. Weil

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

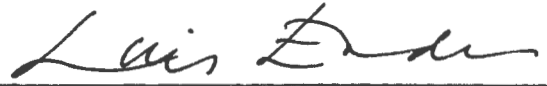
one pastel drawing

11"x14" untitled

and ten slides

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

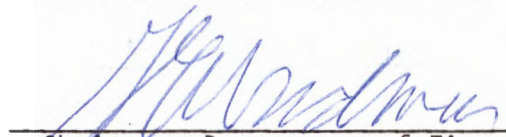
Approved by



Chairman of the Committee



Co-Chairman of the Committee



Chairman, Department of Fine Arts

Number of Slides and Medium

<u>#1</u>	<u>Pastel drawing</u>	<u>11" x 14"</u>	<u>Untitled</u>
<u>#2</u>	<u>Pastel drawing</u>	<u>11" x 14"</u>	<u>Untitled</u>
<u>#3</u>	<u>Pastel drawing</u>	<u>11" x 14"</u>	<u>Untitled</u>
<u>#4</u>	<u>Pastel drawing</u>	<u>11" x 14"</u>	<u>Untitled</u>
<u>#5</u>	<u>Pastel drawing</u>	<u>11" x 14"</u>	<u>Untitled</u>
<u>#6</u>	<u>Pastel drawing</u>	<u>11" x 14"</u>	<u>Untitled</u>
<u>#7</u>	<u>Pastel drawing</u>	<u>11" x 14"</u>	<u>Untitled</u>
<u>#8</u>	<u>Pastel drawing</u>	<u>11" x 14"</u>	<u>Untitled</u>
<u>#9</u>	<u>Pastel drawing</u>	<u>11" x 14"</u>	<u>Untitled</u>
<u>#10</u>	<u>Pastel drawing</u>	<u>11" x 14"</u>	<u>Untitled</u>

