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[To the point of beauty]

MASTER OF FINE ARTS THESIS

By

Amy L. Metier

B.F.A., Colorado State University, 1975

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

1979

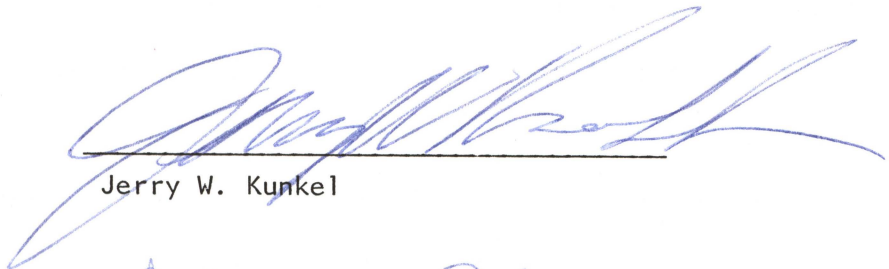
This Thesis for the Master of Fine Arts Degree by

Amy L. Metier

has been approved for the

Department of Fine Arts

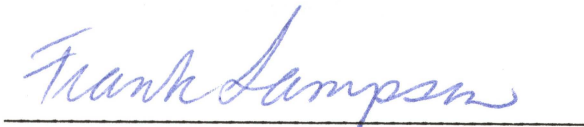
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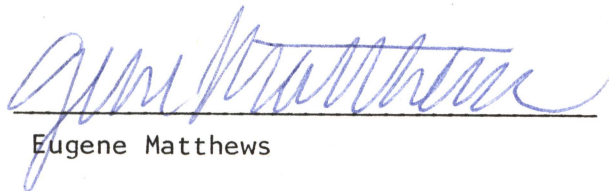
Jerry W. Kunkel



Celeste Rehm



Frank Sampson



Eugene Matthews

Date 12/5/79

"Byoot'e, n. The quality attributed to whatever pleases the senses or mind, as by line, color, form, tone, behavior, etc."<sup>1</sup>

I have always been compelled to that which is "beautiful" to the point of beauty becoming a primary motivation for creation. Obviously the notion of beauty is highly subjective--the topic of aesthetics being an elusive, at times controversial one. Although my opinions about beauty may be debatable, I do appreciate a few aesthetic formulas which have been accepted on "popular" levels in many cultures--the shape of a vase, flower or shell, various color combinations or geometric configurations. These appear frequently in my work, not only because of a personal attraction but also for their immediate accessibility to the viewer.

While there is aesthetic value in numerous natural and unnatural phenomena, I have developed a particular interest in the combination of or interaction between the two. Contrast and stylization are two devices by which I explore and express this interest. The quality of a natural or organic element can be greatly emphasized and enhanced by contrasting it with an inorganic form. In the "Sha-zam" series there are repeated examples; the sinuous curves of a fish contained within the geometric rigidity of a rectangle; the linear intricacy of a flower or the graceful shape of a vase framed against the edge of the paper or an architectural structure. The result which I intend to achieve in emphasizing these contrasts is that of a dynamic tension to give my work strength and keep it from being merely "pretty".

It is seemingly characteristic of man to desire change or impose his will upon nature. Art is one method which enables him to do so.

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's New World Dictionary, 1977, Avenal Books, NY, p. 65.

Stylization, or man's convention of nature, is one expression of this need. The Japanese, the Persians, the Greeks and Egyptians are among the many peoples known for stylization of nature. I enjoy borrowing from these cultures and freely mixing their stylizations with my own. In "Eclipse" I interpolated a Japanese abstraction of water with an architectural structure; Italian hunting dogs (after Paolo Uccello) chase Persian rabbits in the "March Hare" series; the painting entitled "Mareotis" depicts Egyptian birds and flowers as well as Japanese fish.

My color, though at times "intuitive," also serves to accentuate tension and contrast. This is accomplished by using vibrant complementary color and by filling in natural shapes (a deer, a rabbit, or a tree) with subjective color such as violet or blue-green. In addition, I apply color to suggest atmosphere or light by layering transparent or thinned paint and allowing flecks of paper or canvas to show through. The light is diffused, however, as it has no logical direct source within the format of the painting. The work, therefore, tends to have an aura of fantasy about it.

Patterns are another method which I employ to facilitate tension and movement. Their decorative vitality energizes the surface of the painting, flattening the space, dividing and again unifying color. Pattern moves the eye, connecting images which are separated spatially or ideologically. The Japanese, the Persians and the Egyptians, as well as several artists at the University of Colorado influenced my initial involvement with pattern. Examples can be seen in my use of a grid in the "Blue-Print" series, the yellow stripes in "Mareotis," the antlers and tree branches in the "March Hare" series.

I create in the manner to which I feel most naturally drawn: painting. I deliberately choose to paint in a conventional format-- canvas or paper of a rectangular or square shape, using oil, watercolor, acrylic. At some point in time my interests and methods of expression may change, but at present, painting best relates my visual aesthetic concerns. Besides having a natural proclivity for these materials, I am enamored with the historical tradition of painting and drawing. A painting is immediately self-evident (if overcelebrated) as an "objet d'art," having the power to symbolize the inner workings or level of perception of an individual, as well as, collective, mind. It also has the magic ability to connote three-dimensional space and imagery on a two-dimensional surface. No matter how skillfully rendered to give an impression of realism, a painting is still undeniably an illusion, using symbols and imagery as information which are automatically transgressed or "read" by the viewer. Painting has become a mysterious sort of game using visual language that civilization has taught us to play.

My work indicates an involvement with this game or mystery. I play with the illusion of space, simultaneously flattening it into decorative pattern while alluding to three-dimensional depth. There are numerous references to architectural structures in my work. I often simplify these into triangles and boxes, a line suggesting a door or a wall. They are distortions of space and expressions of the dichotomous nature of architecture. My idea being that a building is a shelter for man as well as a prison; an extension of space and simultaneously an obstruction of it.

I have elected to paint the imagery in my painting for its inherently beautiful shape or linear quality and for what the image

symbolizes. I suggest forms--a deer, a bowl, a map or a tree--as a point of reference for the viewer to focus upon. These gestural "clues" may be symbolic of my specific personal experience, a dream or a story, perhaps a tribute to a literary or cultural source. But they are arranged in a mysterious manner, the images contradicting each other spatially or in color, scale and literal meaning. I invite whomever is looking at the painting to interact with it--to use imagination, to interpret as he or she pleases, or merely to enjoy it for the formal aesthetic qualities. In this way I hope to create work that is not only beautiful but mysterious.



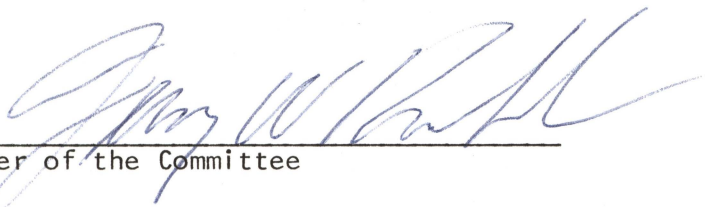
In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree Master of Fine Arts

Amy L. Metier

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

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

Approved by

  
Member of the Committee

  
Member of the Committee

  
Member of the Committee

  
Member of the Committee

  
Chairman, Department of Fine Arts

Number of Slides and Medium

Oil	4 x 6 1/2	"Mareotis"
Oil	4 x 4	"Arch"
Watercolor	11 x 13	"March Hare"
Watercolor	7 x 8	"Sha-zam"
Watercolor	24 x 20	"Blueprint I"
Watercolor	24 x 20	"Blueprint II"
Watercolor	11 x 13	"March Hare"
Watercolor	11 x 13	"March Hare"
Watercolor	7 x 8	"Sha-zam"



