

1997

# In Search of the Meandering Absolute: The Prints of Mitzi Humphrey

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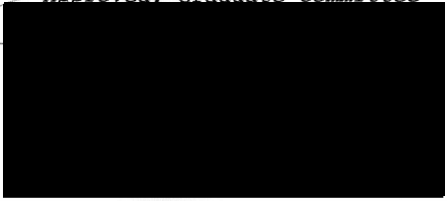
IN SEARCH OF THE MEANDERING ABSOLUTE:

THE PRINTS OF MITZI HUMPHREY

by

MITZI HUMPHREY

Approved: Graduate Committee



Approved:



May 14, 1997  
Date



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VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

IN SEARCH OF  
THE MEANDERING ABSOLUTE:  
THE PRINTS OF MITZI HUMPHREY

AN ARTIST'S THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING AND PRINTMAKING  
BY  
MITZI GREENE HUMPHREY  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA  
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . . ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS . . . . . iii

LIST OF SLIDES . . . . . iv

INTRODUCTION . . . . . 4

CHAPTER I: COSMOLOGICAL, MYTHOLOGICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL,  
AND HISTORICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF MY ART . . . . . 6

CHAPTER II: LANDSCAPE AND ANATOMY:  
THE IDENTITY OF SELF--MEMORY AND PSYCHE . . . . . 14

CHAPTER III: GEOMETRY, INVENTION, AND THE  
AURA OF ART . . . . . 21

CHAPTER IV: THE VISUAL/LINGUISTIC/SYMBOLIC NEXUS . . . 27

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION . . . . . 42

APPENDIX I . . . . . 47

APPENDIX II . . . . . 48

APPENDIX III . . . . . 58

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 59

CURRICULUM VITAE . . . . . 65

SLIDES . . . . . Inside Back Cover

. . .[T]here were moments when I found it psychologically exhausting to be the pretext, as it were, that acknowledges in advance its own futility but which at the same time insisted that nothing was more valid than to make the effort anyway. This fundamental contradiction, arising from the hopeless discrepancy between conception and realization, is at the root of all artistic creation, and it helps to explain the anguish which seems to be an unavoidable component of that experience.

--James Lord

A Giacometti Portrait

## LIST OF SLIDES

- Slide 1. To the Kiva. Wall collage installation 7'1" x 8'1"; etching, photoetching, aquatint, white ground etching, woodcut, monoprint.
- Slide 2. Where Do I Come From? Mixed media unique print 30" x 22"; Etching, white ground etching, aquatint, woodcut, letterpress.
- Slide 3. Primordial Breeze. Woodcut 12" x 18"; edition variable.
- Slide 4. Rose Crown. Mixed media unique print 30" x 22"; Etching with shaped plates; engraving; soft ground transfer etching, color xerographic transfer, collagraph, collage.
- Slide 5. Child's Play. Hard ground etching; aquatint. 22" x 30"; edition of 5.
- Slide 6. Tantra Card I. Lithograph. Xerographic transfer from computer-scanned and altered image. Each card is approximately 11" x 6".
- Slide 7. Tantra Card II. Photoetching, monoprint, letterpress. 11" x 6".
- Slide 8. Tantra Card III. Etching, collage on shaped wood. 11" x 6".
- Slide 9. Tantra Card Installation. Twenty-four double-sided mixed-media prints, installed under plexiglass with one side showing. Others simultaneously on display in Painting and Printmaking Department, Third Floor, Pollak Building, Virginia Commonwealth University. Slide is from a similar installation. Each card is approximately 11" x 6".
- Slide 10. Self-Quotation. Etching, collage on shaped wood. 47" x 51" x 2".
- Slide 11. Prières de papier. Five mixed media prints on various papers. Each print 12" x 4"; framed together, 20 7/8" x 30 3/4" x 1 1/4".
- Slide 12. Birth Day I. 30" x 22" unique print. Woodcut,

perforation, oil stick, oil pastel, shellac.

- Slide 13. Birth Day II. 30" x 22" unique print. Woodcut from two blocks, perforation.
- Slide 14. Sentinels. Installation of four or six life-size silhouette woodcut prints on varying paper and fabric surfaces. May be installed on wall and on floor. May also include wooden matrices. Total wall area of three sentinels: 98 1/4" x 154".
- Slide 15. Draped Overlay. (Sentinel I) Woodcut on polyester gauze overlaid on color woodcut on Rives BFK. Paper underlay: 85 1/4" x 50". Fabric overlay - 98 1/4" x 50" x 5" - 6" (depth of fabric on floor).
- Slide 16. Photosensitive. (Sentinel II) Woodcut on linen. 82" x 50". Unique print.
- Slide 17. Mutant Message. (Sentinel III) Woodcut on seven pieces of Mexican bark paper, each 14" x 18"; overlaid on linen. Unique print. Linen underlay: 82" x 54".
- Slide 18. Simultaneous Pause. Woodcut on burlap, hung from wood. Unique print. Wood 4" x 2" x 70". Burlap: 102" x 40".
- Slide 19. Meridian/Diurnal: A Waist-High Stack of Prints. (in progress). A Stack of 9 1/2" x 9 1/2" mixed media prints in iron holder. Total height c.40". Includes silk screen, lithography, etching, paste grain papers, monoprint, monotype, letter press, collage, and chine collé.
- Slide 20. Conception. Accordion book in wooden frame: 31 1/2" x 24 1/4" x 6" closed; 31 1/2" x 97 3/4" x 1 1/2" open. Each frame 31 1/2" x 24 1/4" x 1 1/2". Frames contain mixed media unique prints relating to a poem by Elise Asher from The Meandering Absolute. Woodcut, etching, photoetching, artist's hand-poured paper, collograph, copper engraving, collage, monoprint, monotype, chine collé, and letterpress.

ABSTRACT

IN SEARCH OF THE MEANDERING ABSOLUTE:  
THE PRINTS OF MITZI HUMPHREY

By Mitzi Greene Humphrey, M. F. A.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 1997.

Major Director: David Freed, Thesis Director,  
Professor of Painting and Printmaking, School of the Arts.

Art is more than just a bridge to (or a reflection of) the natural world; it is a natural force in itself. The author is a strong advocate of "artist's prints," prints which are conceived and printed by the artist. She believes that there is a natural sequence of actions and thoughts which cannot be approximated by the substitution of an artist/printer collaboration unless the artist is truly involved with the printer or assistant in every step of the decision-making and mark-making processes.

The prints of this series are not about realistic pictorial space; they are about interior space--that of the mind and the heart. The artist is interested in creating variations on a matrix, making one-of-a-kind prints or altered prints, even impure prints. Sometimes this work is investigative, instructive, meditative, or celebratory. This work is not printmaking in accord with the common notion of prints as exact replications of a



picture from another medium for the sake of general availability. Nor is it printmaking in accord with the atelier concept of an artist-created print matrix editioned with the aid of professional print craftsmen.

On the contrary, the artist approaches printmaking as a form of experimentation and ritual, seeing the cosmic in the microcosmic. She says, "I strive to create unique prints which cannot reasonably be duplicated in other media by other people--or even at another time by me. I try to give meaning and definition to inchoate perceptions using art as visual metaphor."

## INTRODUCTION

I have adapted into the title of my thesis a phrase from a book of poetry by Elise Asher, The Meandering Absolute. I intend the phrase to signify an artist's search for ultimate truths, standards, and ideals. The truths are elusive, and the artist's path is not straight, but meandering. The phrase also connotes fluidity and an ever-changing, cosmological evolution-- both in the actual physical world and in the way it is perceived by the artist.

Why and how one makes art is largely determined by who one is and what one believes. A meaningful description of one's art necessarily involves delving into one's background and, even further, into the psyche to see how the artist's self is revealed in art.

Influences on my art have been wide-ranging, occurring at many stages of life. Some influences appear to be stronger than others, and these are singled out for discussion. My approach in both writing and art-making is inclusive and specific rather than exclusive and general. By this simultaneous focus and range, one may glimpse the universal in the specific and the ordered in the apparently chaotic.

This is not to say that poetic ambiguity is

eliminated; it is simply not explained away by too abstract or too objective an analysis. Finding the touchstones of ideas, art, literature, people, places, creeds, philosophies, and cultures which have influenced me, I investigate their relationship to the art which I have chosen to make.

## CHAPTER I

### SEARCH FOR THE UNIVERSAL: COSMOLOGICAL, MYTHOLOGICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF MY ART

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,' that is all

Ye know on earth and all ye need to know.

With these words Keats ended his immortal poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn."<sup>1</sup> Beauty is not the same as the sublime, according to some present-day critics, but to Keats they were the same. The difference between sense and sensibility, between the rational and the romantic, and between prudence and passion--as in Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility--still captures our imagination, even though the words do not mean the same today and even though the standards by which they are judged have disintegrated.

I strive for beauty in my work, but it is the kind of beauty of which Keats spoke in "Ode on a Grecian Urn": the kind which ultimately transcends the ordinary functions of beauty--such as pleasure, edification, function, taste, decoration, or class distinction. I seek the beauty that comes from the personal free

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<sup>1</sup>Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" in George Benjamin Woods and Jerome Hamilton Buckley, eds., Poetry of the Victorian Era (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1955).

expression of the aesthetic code of the truth of the individual artist. I use the word "code" advisedly and consciously here to mean a pattern of reifications which may be delved from one's own psyche, from one's own intuitive action and knowledge, and from an amalgam of qualitative judgments which are assimilated from the cultures of both our own and past times. This amalgam is composed conceptually of archetypes, metaphors, allusions, myths, and direct references to a broad spectrum of thought and imagery, from the cosmologically universal to the psychically personal.

In this range from the grand to the mundane, my art is suggestive of the scope of the Renaissance pursuit of knowledge or of the arbitrariness of metaphysical poets such as John Donne or T. S. Eliot.<sup>2</sup> There is a definite bookish, scholarly guise invoked, with references to Shakespeare and Leonardo<sup>3</sup>. Despite this appearance of science and grand philosophy, of learned linguistics and

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<sup>2</sup>Eliot, T. S. The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry. The Clark Lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge 1926, and the Turnbull Lectures at Johns Hopkins University, 1933. Edited and Introduction by Ronald Schuchard. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994); and Herbert J. C. Grierson, Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>3</sup>See A. Richard Turner, Inventing Leonardo (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) for an exposition on the appropriation of the art and ideas of Leonardo da Vinci by many artists, including Marcel Duchamp in his L.H.O.O.Q.

calculated numerology, the art is arrived at intuitively, sometimes solemnly and sometimes whimsically; the work is in many respects self-parody and it is on occasion pseudo-scientific. Elise Asher in her poem "Conception," on which my large accordion book of the same title [slide 20] is based, speaks of the "capricious child in man" and of a creator who does things for his "own astonishment."<sup>4</sup> It might be said that I sometimes think of art as a fun-house or as a museum of the mind, in which surrealistic things happen by juxtaposing artifacts from the realms of fact and fantasy.

Octavio Paz has asserted that "what a work of art says is not its manifest content but what it says without saying anything: that which lies behind colors, forms, words."<sup>5</sup> He further emphasizes, "It scarcely bears repeating that art is not concept: art is a thing of the senses."<sup>6</sup>

Clarissa Pinkola Estés confirms the significance of imaginative and archetypal juxtapositioning by addressing

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<sup>4</sup>Elise Asher, "Conception," in The Meandering Absolute (New York: Morris Weisenthal, 1959). See Appendix, p.40, for the complete poem and a description of my involvement with and use of this poem. See Appendix, p. 41, for a brief biography of Elise Asher. See Appendix, page 42, for a transcription of my correspondence with Elise Asher.

<sup>5</sup>Octavio Paz, Convergences: Essays on Art and Literature (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), pp. 120-121. Trans. from the Spanish by Helen Lane.

<sup>6</sup>Octavio Paz, p. 55.

the role of cantadoras<sup>7</sup> and Native American mythologies. She cites the "lingering evidence of archetype in the images and symbols found in stories, literature, poetry, painting, and religion."<sup>8</sup>

It would appear that [an archetype's] glow, its voice, and its fragrance are meant to cause us to be raised up from contemplating [the mundane] to occasionally traveling in the company of the stars.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, Estés relates the power of the archetype to physical and psychical strength:

At La Loba's place [the place of the Wild Woman, i.e. the psyche], the physical body is, as poet Tony Moffeit writes, "a luminous animal," and the body's immune system seems to be strengthened or weakened by conscious thought.<sup>10</sup>

Marlo Morgan in Mutant Message Down Under,<sup>11</sup> and Diane Ackerman in A Natural History of The Senses,<sup>12</sup> examine the loss of sensory strength in modern society. In Morgan's

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<sup>7</sup>Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), pp. 25-31. Contadora: storyteller. Estés is herself a Jungian analyst and contadora; she has collected multicultural myths, fairy tales, folk tales, and stories which help women reconnect with the instinctual visionary attributes of the Wild Woman archetype.

<sup>8</sup>Estés, p. 30.

<sup>9</sup>Estés, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup>Estés, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup>Morgan, Marlo. Mutant Message Down Under (New York: Harper Collins, 1991). This book, admittedly, may be a literary hoax.

<sup>12</sup>Diane Ackerman, A Natural History of the Senses (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

account of an enchanted "walkabout" with a tribe of Australian aborigines, it is clear that, by comparison, "civilized man" is the mutant group, no longer able to make full use of sensory perception for survival.

On the other hand, the modern world is no longer a fit place for the aborigines, whose senses are so keen that they appear to use extra-sensory perception and to communicate telepathically. Because they are exceptionally attuned to sensory perception of the natural world, a world which is increasingly being altered and destroyed, the aboriginal tribe is united in willing itself to self-extinction by refusing to propagate.<sup>13</sup>

At La Loba's place, the spirits manifest as personages and La Voz Mitológica, The Mythological Voice of the deep space, speaks as poet and oracle. Things of psychic value, once dead, can be revived. Also, the basic material of all stories existent in the world ever, began with someone's attempt to relate what occurred to them here.<sup>14</sup>

In my art I am trying to redeem for myself some of the instinctive action and sensory perception which has been lost in modern society.

Claude Lévi-Strauss has said that he considers writing to be the decisive contrast between primitive and civilized cultures. He says that instead of "primitive" we

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<sup>13</sup>Estés.

<sup>14</sup>Estés, p. 31.



should say "pre-writing."<sup>15</sup> His conclusion is similar to that of Mutant Message: people who do not write use more of their sensory perceptions and have developed certain mental capacities that we have lost.<sup>16</sup> It is the responsibility of the artist to become a receiver of the "message for mutants," that is, to appreciate and cherish the natural world as revealed in the psyche and to make it manifest in art.

Estés states

There are various names for this locus betwixt the worlds. Jung called it variously the collective unconscious, the objective psyche, and the psychoid unconscious--referring to a more ineffable layer of the former. He thought of the latter as a place where the biological and psychological worlds share headwaters, where biology and psychology might mingle with and influence one another. Throughout human memory this place--call it Nod, call it the home of the Mist Beings, the crack between the worlds--is the place where visitations, miracles, imaginations, inspirations, and healings of all natures occur.<sup>17</sup>

Octavio Paz has observed that art and poetry are a configuration of signs and that the pattern they trace is that of dispersion. He sees time as the repository of meaning:

"[The artist] names the flow, gives voice to succession." He says that ideas become incarnate in images "without a fixed form and perpetually changing." From the magic

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<sup>15</sup>Lévi-Strauss, Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture, 1978, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup>Lévi-Strauss, La Pensée Sauvage, The Savage Mind, 1962.

<sup>17</sup>Estés, p. 31.

invocation of spirits by primitive peoples to the narrative description in contemporary novels, Paz sees art confronted with the loss of the image of the world. "And so it takes on the appearance of a configuration of scattered signs: the image of a world without an image." "Time," he adds, "is grounded in the criticism of itself, its constant division and separation; its form of manifestation is not the repetition of an eternal truth or of an archetype: its substance is change. . . . A new time is a new mythology: the great creations of modernity, from Cervantes to Joyce and from Velázquez to Marcel Duchamp, are different versions of the myth of criticism."<sup>18</sup>

It is the elusiveness of truth and beauty, and especially of any objective qualitative standards for such abstract concepts in a time when pluralism and relativism reign, that makes the quest of the artist heroic and romantic even today.<sup>19</sup> It is not a quest unique to modern man, but it may seem more fraught with existential angst and ever more futile as we approach the 21st century.

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<sup>18</sup>Octavio Paz, Convergences: Essays on Art and Literature. Helen Lane, Trans. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Javonovich, 1987), pp. 120-121.

<sup>19</sup>Suzi Gablik has said (and on this point we disagree), "Today there is this excessive sense of art--along with everything else in our culture--being an individual pursuit, an autonomous activity that is not connected in any profound sense with the world, but is used more as a kind of solace, or retreat, from it. Like psychotherapy, it's done mostly behind closed doors, without any great concern for the state of the world outside." Conversations, p. 47.

Although the means in my art may seem antithetical and meandering, there is an underlying search for order, synthesis, meaning, and absolute truths.

CHAPTER II  
LANDSCAPE AND ANATOMY

Landscape and anatomy are key components of my art, affecting both the formal elements and the content; they are natural roots for that part of my psyche that seeks to deal with both reality and myth. Even more strategic is the desire to find the reality revealed in myth. This approach is akin to the idea of the spiritual as a search for ultimate truth, a belief expressed by many artists, writers, and visionaries throughout history.

The landscape influence on my work is deep-rooted and psychological, demonstrated by an emotional affinity for nature and nature archetypes and an almost Druidic love of trees and plants. "The study of mythology," Robert Graves has shown, "is based squarely on tree-lore and seasonal observation of life in the fields."<sup>20</sup> Graves uncovered "an ancient Celtic calendar-alphabet, found in several purposely garbled Irish and Welsh variants, which briefly summarizes the prime poetic myth." Graves says that it is unfortunate that

. . . despite the strong mythical element in Christianity, 'mythical' has come to mean 'fanciful,

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<sup>20</sup>Robert Graves, The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1948), p. 11.

absurd, unhistorical; 'for fancy played a negligible part in the development of the Greek, Latin and Palestinian myths, or of the Celtic myths until the Norman-French trouvères worked them up into irresponsible romances of chivalry.<sup>21</sup>

As Lucy Lippard points out, all cultures are layered with nature myth and symbol, as is all human art.<sup>22</sup> She says that what she has "learned from mythology, archeology, and other disciplines is the overlay's invisible bottom layer."<sup>23</sup>

My long-held interest in environmental activism and an identification with North American landscapes have guided me in my art, along with a keen awareness of nature metaphor and the spiritual transcendency of nature in both art and literature. From the mountains and caves of Tennessee and Kentucky, to the mid-West, to the Deep South, to all the West, to the Catskill Mountains, and from New Mexico to the Hoh Rain Forest and British Columbia, nature and my memories of nature have resonated in my consciousness. The landscape of nature unites with language, art, and religion in such forms as petroglyphs, totems, and kivas. I have explored the nature/spirit sensibility that can be found in such widely varying cultural phenomena as Greek myths, Zen, British and

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<sup>21</sup>Robert Graves, The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1948), p. 13.

<sup>22</sup>Lucy Lippard, Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), pp. 1-13.

<sup>23</sup>Lippard, Overlay, p. 1.

American poetry (especially Wordsworth, Yeats, Emerson, Whitman, and Dickinson), European fairy tales, and the totems of the First Nations of British Columbia. In my work the nature/spirit affinity is expressed implicitly in To the Kiva [Slide 1], Where Do I Come From? [slide 2] and Primordial Breeze [slide 3].

The method in my work is apparently similar to that of Lippard, who says that the method she uses in writing is that of collage--

. . . the juxtaposition of two unlike realities combined to form an unexpected new reality. I have tried to weave together the ideas and images of very different cultures by making one a metaphor for the other, and vice versa.<sup>24</sup>

She adds that primal peoples "made sense of the universe through visual metaphors that linked their experiences." She points out that the snake was "associated with water in part because its movements reproduced the form of a stream and its coils that of a spiral spring." The truth of Lippard's thesis was confirmed for me in 1996 at the Serpentine Falls in British Columbia; the Falls, named by First Nations people, were believed to have been formed by the motion of a huge serpent slithering up the mountainside.

Suzi Gablik, with whom I studied at Virginia Commonwealth University, has long addressed the issues of environmental and activist art and the responsibilities of

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<sup>24</sup>Lippard, Overlay, p. 1.

artists as caretakers of the earth and the keepers of enchantment.<sup>25</sup> In Conversations Before the End of Time<sup>26</sup> Gablik addresses, in interviews with artists, writers, philosophers and critics, her "feeling that we're maladaptive--we're a dysfunctional species--and we're probably not going to survive."<sup>27</sup> She finds it liberating to put this truth out on the table. "It takes us more deeply into life rather than having to retreat from it. . . . [It is best to] feel the pain and live it and not have to smother it. . . ." She concludes that "acceptance is not the same as resignation."<sup>28</sup>

Concern for environmental issues and their mythological resonances in the sub-conscious can be seen in a print such as Rose Crown [Slide 4], (which was included in the exhibition entitled "National Works on Paper: Artists Listen to the Earth" at The University of Richmond in 1996). A broader, cosmological philosophy is revealed in Where Do I Come From? [Slide 2]. Lippard's insight is

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<sup>25</sup>Suzi Gablik, "Humphrey Class notes, 1987"; The Re-enchantment of Art (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991); Conversations Before the End of Time: Dialogues on Art, Life and Spiritual Renewal (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995); "Deconstructing Aesthetics: Toward a Responsible Art" (New Art Examiner, January 1989); and Has Modernism Failed? (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1984).

<sup>26</sup>Suzi Gablik, Conversations Before the End of Time (London: Thames and Hudson), 1995.

<sup>27</sup>Gablik, Conversations, p. 54.

<sup>28</sup>Gablik, Conversations, p. 55.

similar to my philosophy as shown in the star and planet formations of this print when she says of primitive imagery, "the discovery of whirlpools deep in the sea and nebulae turning in the heavens offered the synthesizing symbol of a cosmic mill."<sup>29</sup>

Simon Schama has given an extensive treatment of the landscape factor in his Landscape and Memory.<sup>30</sup> He talks about what we see in our mind's eye when we think of the "forest primeval, the river of life, [or] the sacred mountain." He talks about the mythologies throughout history and art which incorporate natural elements and natural forces. He talks of fire, wind, water, and air, and he says that

. . .if by suggesting that over the centuries cultural habits have formed which have done something with nature other than merely work it to death, that help for our ills can come from within, rather than outside, our shared mental world, this book may not entirely have wasted good wood pulp.<sup>31</sup>

Schama's cross-cultural perspective--combined with his specific focus on the psychological and Romantic, literary and visual, current and historical features of landscape imagery--serves to echo my own eclectic use of landscape elements. One artist cited by Schama to illustrate his landscape thesis, and one who has also worked extensively with

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<sup>29</sup>Lippard, Overlay, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup>Simon Schama, Landscape and Memory (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.



both woodcuts and unique books, is Anselm Kiefer. (The Kiefer retrospective in Philadelphia was the first exhibition where I saw white-gloved attendants turning the pages of a book--in this case his sand book--for an audience).<sup>32</sup>

Anatomy imagery, too, is used for both scientific and artistic reference; anatomical allusions in my work relate to art history, medicine, a sense of physical and emotional vulnerability or strength, and to the physical body and psychical self. Most of my art is self-portraiture; the same might be said of all self-expression. However, I take the concept further by using my own body, face, and human scale as a reference point in the work, e.g. Draped Overlay [slide 15], a double woodcut print, one on paper and one on fabric, part of an installation of a number of prints [slide 14] from the same matrix using my own life-size silhouette, and Self Quotation [slide 10] employing several photoetchings of my face collaged on wood. In addition, my hands appear in Child's Play [slide 5], and my Tantra Cards<sup>33</sup> [slides 6, 7, and 8,] (examples of more than one

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<sup>32</sup>Anselm Kiefer.

<sup>33</sup>Tantra--[according to The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Random House) 1987], any of several books of esoteric doctrine regarding rituals, disciplines, meditation, etc., composed in the form of dialogues between Shiva and his Shakti, Agama. Also called Tantrism--the philosophy or doctrine of these books, regarding the changing, visible world as the creative dance or play of the Divine Mother and regarding enlightenment as the realization of the essential oneness of one's self and of the visible world with Shiva, Shakti.

hundred such cards created in a period of two years) are designed to human scale, as "hand-held prints." The reference to my own scale is also evident in the time-based, site-customized installation Meridian/Diurnal: A Waist-High Stack of Prints [slide 19, in progress], which I designed with the plan of changing the top print daily.

The prints also contain repeated references to the anatomical studies and notebooks of Leonardo. These may be seen for example, in my use of the eyes of Study for the Angel's Head, a silverpoint pencil drawing by Leonardo, in both negative and positive photoetchings. These eyes were appropriated for some of the individual prints of Meridian/Diurnal [Slide 19]. I have also used his drawing of a fetus in Where Do I Come From [slide 2 ], and his (and others') drawings of Vitruvian Man (a parallel to the personal silhouette woodcuts [slides 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18]. Furthermore, all of these images are incorporated into the Tantra Cards and will probably re-occur in future prints, primarily as signifiers of Renaissance knowledge and art.

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CHAPTER III  
GEOMETRY, INVENTION, AND AURA

"Geometric diagrams can be contemplated as still moments revealing a continuous, timeless, universal action generally hidden from our sensory perception. . . . Thus a seemingly common mathematical activity can become a discipline for intellectual and spiritual insight."<sup>34</sup> In my art, geometry is used both archetypally and metaphorically. Geometric forms in the sense of archetypes from the subconscious, as discussed by Lawlor<sup>35</sup>, Jung<sup>36</sup>, and Bettelheim<sup>37</sup>, are arrived at intuitively, without conscious intention (and sometimes, subsequently, with conscious intention). This kind of instinctive geometry in my work can be found in such forms as the vesica pisces of To the Kiva, the circles of Conception, and the dentata of Birth Day I and Birth Day II [slides 1, 20, 12 and 13].

Another kind of geometry, a conscious level of simulacra of diagrammatic power and mathematical

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<sup>34</sup>Robert Lawlor, Sacred Geometry: Philosophy and Practice (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), p. 6.

<sup>35</sup>Lawlor. Sacred Geometry.

<sup>36</sup>Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Random House, 1975).

<sup>37</sup>Bettelheim.

complexity, is invoked in the transparent cube of Where Do I Come From? [slide 2] and in the spirals of the lithographic tantra [slide 6] based on one of my husband's economic diagrams scanned by computer and xerographically transferred to the lithography plate. I have observed that language and visual interpretation in mathematics and economics, as in so many disciplines, are based on natural forces (e.g., rising, falling, inflating, deflating, spiraling, cycling, expanding, and contracting) and that these forces, just as in art, can be communicated diagrammatically through geometry.<sup>38</sup>

Yet another kind of conscious mathematical allusion in the Tantra Cards [Slides 7, 8, and 9] is to numerology, such as astrologers, alchemists, and secret societies might have practiced in the Middle Ages or ancient Egypt. There are further references to the magic of repetition and to spiritual forms such as crosses, monoliths, cairns, twins, dualities, yin and yang, swirls, stars, crystals, mandalas, and pyramids.

The geometry of letter forms of languages real and imagined give an impression of codes, cryptograms, and arcane knowledge--suggestive even of fetishism, witchcraft, shamanism, voodoo, cabalism, or rabbinic tradition. I

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<sup>38</sup>Thomas M. Humphrey, "The Early History of the Box Diagram," Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond Economic Quarterly. Vol. 82, No. 1, Winter 1996; and Thomas M. Humphrey, Money, Banking, and Inflation: Essays in the History of Monetary Thought (London: Edward Elgar, 1993).

approach such forms not superstitiously but, rather, investigatively, to unleash their connotative power in art.

The geometry of nature is an intrinsic aspect of my work formally, but also philosophically and scientifically. I am fascinated by the geometry and order underlying the forms of nature--from the common example of snowflakes to the stunningly beautiful, angel-like floating form of jellyfish.<sup>39</sup> Snowflakes, jellyfish, river flows, fern fronds<sup>40</sup> and cloud formations are among the myriad nature forms discussed in treatises concerning order in the apparent chaos of nature.<sup>41</sup>

As for invention, its aura is created in my work, but, again, it is found not only in the aura. The experimentation involved in the printmaking processes is

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<sup>39</sup>These gorgeous sea-creatures were dramatically presented in an exhibition called "Planet of the Jellies," which I saw at the Monterey, California, aquarium in 1992.

<sup>40</sup>"The Sword Ferns of Hoh" was the title of my one-person show in 1991 at Artspace focusing on the Hoh Rain Forest of the Olympic Peninsula. See Roy Proctor, Richmond Times-Dispatch review.

<sup>41</sup>James Gleick, Chaos: Making a New Science (New York: Penguin Books, 1987). In the words of Douglas Hofstadter, "It turns out that an eerie type of chaos can lurk just behind a facade of order--and yet, deep inside the chaos lurks an even eerier type of order." This discussion also relates to the Benoit Mandelbrot Set as revealed in nature and to the comments of Rhonda Shearer, an artist and writer who lectured at VCU in Spring of 1997. Her topic was "Decoding Duchamp: An Art/Science Connection Revealed" and described connections she has discerned between the writings of the turn-of-the-century mathematician Poincaré and Duchamp.

significant for its invention; the invention is integral to the physical nature of the processes. As Robert Rauschenberg has said, "Technology is contemporary nature (not in place of anything, there like everything else)".<sup>42</sup>

According to Riva Castleman,

The same spirit of utter freedom from convention that motivated the Fluxus artists was personified by Robert Rauschenberg, the uniquely uninhibited American whose collages of found objects in the 1950's heralded the inception of Pop art. He frequently included photographs torn from newspapers and magazines on the flat parts of his canvases, and in 1962 began to make paintings onto which these black-and-white news photographs were screenprinted. When he began to make prints at Universal Limited Art Editions, he, like every other artist, was asked by Tatyana Grosman to make a book.<sup>43</sup>

For me, so-called "process art" is directly related to scientific investigation and aesthetic exploration. Castleman adds, significantly for me, that, having discovered the attraction of layering image over image in printing, Rauschenberg developed in Shades (1964) the same concept on plexiglass. He used only two words with his layered imagery, "Shades" and "Rauschenberg," thereby effectively eliminating text and turning the book into sculpture.<sup>44</sup> This method coincides with my own layering of imagery and with my concept of the importance of physical and technical

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<sup>42</sup>Letter from Rauschenberg in response to questions from the author Douglas Davis, Art and the Future (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 144.

<sup>43</sup>Castleman, p. 53.

<sup>44</sup>Castleman, p. 53.

process and their interrelationship with art; it also reinforces my association of the psyche and nature with discovery, science, math, and engineering in my prints and books. Again, in relation to Fluxus art and process art, I find the book form an excellent device for both encapsulating time and allowing time to flow from one page to the next or from one book to the next. I believe that Joseph Cornell also was an extremely time-conscious artist, relating his boxes to both the microcosmic and the cosmic, to the momentary and the eternal.

Printmaking has long been associated with invention, often arising from the necessities of technology. Gutenberg, Rembrandt and Senefelder were but a few of the many innovators who contributed to the techniques of printmaking. This tradition of invention is expanding now to encompass ever newer technologies, such as computer imaging and laser printing. It has also expanded to include new developments in art itself, such as large, conceptual, collaborative efforts, installations, and multi-media expressions, as well as art which attempts to incorporate all the senses.

The aura of my art incorporates both geometry and invention in service of archetypal and personal imagery. However, the aura of the hand-made, precious object still clings--not only because of very small editions and my preference for unique prints, but also because of the

time, energy, and emotional investment in the act of  
printmaking itself.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE VISUAL/LINGUISTIC/SYMBOLIC NEXUS: ART AND WORD

In my attempt to integrate metaphor, symbol, and myth from both visual and linguistic roots, I often feel like the mythical beast described by Woody Allen: I have the head of a lion and the body of a lion, but not the same lion. The many roots of, and influences on, my art may be seen in the myriad ways in which it is interpreted by others. The work becomes almost a tabula rasa for interpretation.

In his visit to my studio in 1996, artist Peter Halley,<sup>45</sup> on looking at To The Kiva, [Slide 1] described this wall collage as "post-Cornellian" and "Norse-mythological . . . . I hesitate to call it mysticism--not quite mysticism." He also commented that it is important not to remove the "obsessional quality" from art. He observed about his own art that, although he is interested in geometry as a timeless ideal--that is, an almost neutral phenomenon--he seeks a "social link exploiting it in a paralogical way."

Linda McGreevy, in an article describing a visit to my studio to see the book art that I was producing at the time, said "[The artist] combines xerography with a

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<sup>45</sup>Peter Halley, "M.H. Notes: M.F.A. Studio Visit by Peter Halley" (Virginia Commonwealth University, 1996).

traditional print background to create books, though--typically--she avoids the usual expectations arising from this contemporary mode. . . . Humphrey largely eschews editions, preferring to create unique books, most of which are sequential and non-narrative, being composed of collaged, multi-media imagery. An inveterate collector of paper ephemera, Humphrey's books tend to be nostalgic in content, experimental in technique, and, more often than not, Surrealistic."<sup>46</sup> As McGreevy indicates, I create books that are not meant to be published and prints that usually are not meant to be editioned.

Riva Castleman has discussed the movement known as Fluxus, which some observers have associated with my work.

Beginning in 1963 the movement's adherents created numerous printed cards, broadsides, booklets, and a miscellany of objects, often boxed together and issued as yearbooks, that comprised the neo-Dada substance of their enterprise. . . . [They] created a loose community that was productive of new attitudes toward what could be called art . . . .<sup>47</sup>

My initial experience corresponding to Castleman's description was participation in a show at Franklin Furnace juried by Lucy Lippard and Joan Lyons.<sup>48</sup> An outgrowth of

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<sup>46</sup>Linda McGreevy, "Artists' Studio Tour," Gallery: Richmond's Visual Arts Magazine. (Vol. 2, number 4, 1989), p. 11.

<sup>47</sup>Castleman, Riva. A Century of Artists Books. (New York: Harry N. Abrams and The Museum of Modern Art, 1994), pp. 52-53..

<sup>48</sup>Franklin Furnace Flue.

that show was the formation of I.S.C.A.<sup>49</sup> in New York by Louise Neaderland. I became a charter member of this collaborative group of xerographic, fluxus, and computer artists, which is still functioning today. In 1990 I co-curated with Anne Savedge a national invitational xerography exhibition, Art ex Machina<sup>50</sup>, at 1708 Gallery in Richmond, and in 1994 I curated Art ex Libris<sup>51</sup>, the national invitational book art show at Artspace Gallery in Richmond.

Unwittingly, I had much earlier become a participant in the overall book art movement in the United States. In the late 50's in Greenwich Village, on an exhibition foray for the Wofford College Art Gallery, of which I was the co-founder and director, I met publisher and gallery owner Morris Weisenthal. A loan exhibition from his Morris Gallery was arranged, presenting the silk screen prints of Sister Mary Corita (later known as Corita Kent). Seeing my interest in Kent's art and in her use of the words of e. e. cummings in the prints, Weisenthal invited me to meet the poet. I am sorry that I did not take advantage of the opportunity, but, nevertheless, I was pleased to find a contemporary artist-- Sister Mary Corita--"illuminating" poetry, as had been my wont in adolescence.

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<sup>49</sup>International Society of Copier Artists, based in New York City.

<sup>50</sup>Anne Savedge, "Exhibition Notes for Art ex Machina."

<sup>51</sup>Humphrey, Art ex Libris.

At that time Weisenthal gave me a copy of one of his recent publications: a book of poetry called The Meandering Absolute by Elise Asher.<sup>52</sup> As previously noted, I have recently re-discovered and incorporated into my bookwork Conception [Slide 20] and into this thesis some of Asher's words.

My renewed interest in Asher's poetry--coming long after I became personally active in the phenomenon known as book art--has led me to contact the poet and to discover that she also is a painter and a book artist. Because her publisher, Weisenthal, had given me her poetry, I was delighted to discover a reference to him in The American Livre de Peintre<sup>53</sup> in a discussion of 21 Etchings and Poems (an edition of fifty copies published by his Morris Gallery in the late fifties or early sixties).

Included in 21 Etchings and Poems, a synthesis of word and image, were works by artists Franz Kline, I. Rice Pereira, Adja Yunkers, Willem de Kooning, Jacques Lipchitz, Ben Nicholson, S. W. Hayter, and Pierre Alechinsky, among others, and numerous poets and writers, such as Weisenthal himself, Harold Rosenberg, Dylan Thomas, Richard Wilbur, Frank O'Hara, Sir Herbert Read, and Theodore Roethke. I found the following disclosure:

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<sup>52</sup>See Elise Asher in Bibliography and Appendix I.

<sup>53</sup>Elizabeth Phillips and Tony Zwicker, The American Livre de Peintre (New York: The Grolier Club, 1993), p. 54.

. . . Morris Weisenthal . . . assumed responsibility for publication under the imprint of his Morris Gallery. This complex project took almost a decade to realize.

. . . The etchings were made as responses to the poems, illuminating but not explicitly illustrating them. [The artists made use of Hayter's<sup>54</sup> research on William Blake's unique method of transferring handwritten text onto the metal etching plate]. The process allowed the poems to be written in the poet's hand onto paper, which was then transferred onto the plate, creating the necessary reverse image without the difficulty of writing backwards on the plate.<sup>55</sup>

The authors further point out that such a collaboration between artists and poets "was primarily a European phenomenon until the appearance of 21 Etchings and Poems". Weisenthal's contribution is extremely significant. "The first project of its magnitude in America, it inspired two other important illustrated editions: the ULAE collaboration between [Larry] Rivers and [Frank] O'Hara's Stones and [Walasse] Ting's 10 Life."<sup>56</sup>

The geometry of composition in my work is often that of pastiche, grid, or collage--often, but not always, in combination with architectonic, organic, or laws-of-physics schema. The form of folios turning in a book is for me the form of mysteries unfolding or of time passing. It is

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<sup>54</sup>Stanley William Hayter. At Hayter's Atelier 17, the world-famous Paris graphics workshop that relocated temporarily in New York during the war, many brilliant refugee artists, such as Marc Chagall, André Masson, and Jacques Lipchitz, worked. Hayter taught methods of viscosity color printing and other techniques new to the United States.

<sup>55</sup>The American Livre de Peintre, p. 54.

<sup>56</sup>The American Livre de Peintre, p. 54.

important to note that--in another realm of the psyche, my night dreams--architectonic and furniture symbolism frequently occur. I have been told that rooms and architecture represent the inner self.

I believe that works on paper, in a frame, are like windows into the imagination. An intense interest in boxes, shadows, veils, floating or flying objects, proscenium stages, borders, windows, distorted or emphasized perspectives, and frontal, "dropping-off point" ledges or precipitous balconies manifests itself in my work. I think that these forms and images represent for me other levels of secrecy and reality, anxieties and desires, the fluidity of time, and things that are revealed/not revealed. "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face."<sup>57</sup>

In addition to the geometric and fractal<sup>58</sup> connotations of my imagery, there are compositional devices of layering, transparency, opaqueness, repetition, enlargement, diminution, patterning, and metamorphosis which suggest physical laws of time, motion, and substance. There is an

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<sup>57</sup>I Corinthians 13:12.

<sup>58</sup>Fractal: a geometrical or physical structure having an irregular or fragmented shape at all scales of measurement between a greatest and smallest scale such that certain mathematical or physical properties of the structure, as the perimeter of a curve or the flow rate of a porous medium, behave as if the dimensions of the structure are greater than the spatial dimensions; term introduced by French mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot in 1975. See also the section on Gnomonic spirals in Sacred Geometry.

attempt to heighten the tactile quality in my art; tactility is especially evident in etchings such as Rose Crown and mixed-media prints such as those on artist-made paper in the book Conception. Professor Michael Drought has observed the importance of the reflective surfaces in this work.

The turning and unlayering, kinetic, sensory, and revelatory qualities of books are described by Lippard in a way that may explain why I am drawn to them as an art form. She says about her own book, Overlay, "The external structure of the book is also borrowed from nature--its physical layers, its generative function and spiraling returns."<sup>59</sup> My prints are not only created by, but may also be viewed with, this same kind of visual, physical layering/unlayering. The layering effect is achieved in my prints by actual printed overlaying of plates and blocks and also by overlapping of translucent colors.

Such compositional and sensory devices simultaneously and paradoxically give an aura of both science and superstition. They bridge the gap between mystery and revelation, between science fiction and the natural world.<sup>60</sup> At the same time, they question even our most firmly held

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<sup>59</sup>Lippard, Overlay, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup>Today, February 23, 1997, my son called to my attention that scientists in Scotland have successfully cloned a mammal, a sheep, from a sample of DNA. Somehow I feel that this replication relates to my art.

tenets of knowledge.

At first, it might seem that art shows things that cannot be named by words and that visual art is more open-ended in interpretation than words. Words lend themselves to a closer articulation of fact, we often think. There is, however, an imagery of words, the mental visualization of the thing named. The inadequacy of words in the description and criticism of art is well-illustrated by one artist's experiment.<sup>61</sup> Rachel bas-Cohain created a series of paintings, Reviews, attempting to duplicate the attributes described in current reviews, without having seen any of the visual images which the reviews described.<sup>62</sup> The works she made, based on the critics' words describing the original works, were in some cases surprisingly similar to the original and in others looked nothing at all like the art of the reviews.

Art has a broader range of interpretation than the more exact, finite, and denotative meaning of a word, and both words and visual images often fall short of true communication. Even with all the different interpretations and connotations we ascribe to words, they are fewer than one would experience with a visual, tangible object. This is true because art is based more on the piquing or skewing

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<sup>61</sup>Sarah McFadden, Critical Notes to: Rachel bas-Cohain, 1937-1982: Selected Works, (New York: A.I.R. Gallery, 1985), p.7.

<sup>62</sup>Catalog, Rachel bas-Cohain. A.I.R. Gallery, 198?.



of personal experience, while, in general, words are founded on a stabler touchstone of agreed meaning (the obvious exception, of course, being poetic language). We use words to specify and describe that which is expressed in our art. Conversely, art may be used to diagram or illustrate what is said in words.

Claude Lévi-Strauss has said that myth is a language (I personally believe that all human behavior is language) and that language itself, being, like myth, dialectic in nature, predisposes us to try to understand the world by "superimposing dialectics, dichotomies, or dualistic grids upon data that may in fact be entirely integrated."<sup>63</sup> It seems to me that a computer, based as it is on a binary system, would cause the same predisposition; the difference, however, is the rapidity and completeness of the computer's calculations based on its stored data. "And underneath language lies the binary nature of the brain itself. Right and left, good and evil, life and death-- these are inevitable dichotomies produced by the brain that has two lobes and controls two eyes, two hands. . . ." Lévi-Strauss further points out that our common sense is binary. "[T]he simplest and most efficient way to process experience seems to be by dividing it in half, and then to divide the halves in half, reformulating every question so that there are only two possible answers to it, yes or

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<sup>63</sup>Claude Lévi-Strauss, Myth and Meaning, p. viiii.

no."<sup>64</sup> This is the way decisions and choices are made.

The rendering of a work of art may be said to be exact (in likeness and so forth), but the meaning and interpretation is much less an exact science. We use words, among other things, to fill in those areas of uncertainty. Furthermore, that a word such as "imagery" is used in speaking of both art and words lends to the notion of a profound, even inextricable, marriage between the two. It is important to recognize the beautifully complementary nature of art and word, and not to feel compelled to see one as exclusive or pre-eminent to the other. Artist's books (Conception [slide 20], for example), and prints (Prières de papier [slide 11], for example), interrelate art and language; the visual images do not illustrate the words, and the language and alphabet forms do not describe the prints--they simply feed on one another.<sup>65</sup>

Ultimately, the positing of a word or idea, and the subsequent "painting" of a picture of those words in the mind, must surely be seen as in some way akin to the ideas and visions which the artist transposes into and onto the material artifact. In this transposition, art is formed. This notion is, I believe, fundamental and axiomatic to an understanding of the interrelationship between art and

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<sup>64</sup>Lévi-Strauss, p. ix.

<sup>65</sup>Mitzi Humphrey, Art ex Libris: The National Book Art Show at Artspace, 1994. Videocassette, 62 minutes.

word. It might be said that the artist is making more retrievable and accessible, to a greater or lesser degree, that which is temporally and abstractly bound up within the vernacular of the mind.

Semiotics, or semiology--the science of decoding signs and sign-systems--is today a subject of intense study, investigating both art and language.<sup>66</sup> In the visual arts, since the 1960's, the field of semiotics has centered on the treatment of images as a kind of language (with its grammar, rules and usage analogous to the contribution of the artist). The language of the visual arts, just as the language of literature and poetry, can be deconstructed into its component parts and examined from differing perspectives. The ostensible aim of such an endeavor is to break the flow of communication, at least temporarily, and to encourage a questioning approach.

This questioning approach--the deconstructionist's attitude--is a natural element in pluralism, post-modernism, multi-culturalism, and even historical revisionism. My art is oriented toward deconstruction of the signs, symbols, and forms transmitted from the psyche, and, in an open-ended way, toward a re-constructed solution to the dilemmas presented. Of the works presented in my

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<sup>66</sup>Claude Lévi-Strauss, Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture, 1978; and Structural Anthropology, (United States of America: Basic Books. Translation from the French, 1963).

thesis exhibition, probably the Tantra Cards most demonstrate a deconstructionist sensibility and an effort at a re-synthesis of seemingly discordant perceptions.

Jean Baudrillard is a deconstructionist's dream, full of paradoxes, challenges, and unanswered questions. In articles such as "The Ecstasy of Communication,"<sup>67</sup> Baudrillard sets forth his ideas of the simulacrum, hyperreality, and the relationship of the signifier to the signified. As Professor Morris Yarowsky has observed, Baudrillard believes that simulated "realities" are beginning to overcome and displace original realities in the human consciousness and that art will eventually act out its own disappearance. Professor Yarowsky concludes that ". . . [W]hether or not this view is extreme, it is worth heeding."<sup>68</sup>

Formerly, according to Baudrillard, the referent and the sign were in a fixed relationship to each other. Reading between the lines and extrapolating backward in time from our own experience, we know that they were not in an absolutely fixed relationship; there have always been failures of communication. But Baudrillard tends to speak in absolutes. He manufactures a construct for analysis in

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<sup>67</sup>Jean Baudrillard, For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign. (Telos, 1981).

<sup>68</sup>Morris Yarowsky, "Reviving the Creative Spirit in a Spiritless Age". Art and Academe Vol. 7, No. 1 (Fall 1994), p. 56.

which every creation is part of a code, everything is replicated, and only the replications are real, or, as he prefers, hyperreal. Making art becomes part of a coded nexus.

According to this argument, individual autonomy no longer exists; robot-like, we are freed from the necessity of making choices and are henceforth endowed with the ecstasy of drifting. Baudrillard's simulacrum is somewhat reminiscent of theological arguments about free will and "just who is in charge here?" Unlike Baudrillard, who himself appears to have overcome existential angst and to have accepted comfortably a world filled with simulacra, artists must look for the quintessence of things. And the place to look is in nature and in our inner selves.

Among the signifiers of our world are the symbols, languages, logos, alphabets, signs and fragments of signs which assault our eyes and ears daily. Much of what we encounter is "coded" into a shorthand form of communication, signifying much more than the simple, single artifact. In our rush against time and our defense against chaos, we filter out that which we think does not signify for us personally.

Unfortunately, enlightenment does not often ensue from such a filtering process. The linear thinking which so many of us have adopted for survival eliminates our peripheral vision. As we approach the end of the century, with ever-

expanding technology and with an ever-increasing number of ethical questions about our own and others' creativity, the words of Neil Postman seem prescient indeed. In a 1984 New York Times article comparing the dystopia described by George Orwell in 1984 and that described by Aldous Huxley in Brave New World, Postman said that Huxley and Orwell did not prophesy the same thing.<sup>69</sup>

In Huxley's vision, "no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity and history." As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think.

What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. . . . Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture.<sup>70</sup>

Huxley's prophecy now seems the more prescient of the two. It is important that artists remain sensitized to the nuances of the signifiers and the signified. We should be more aware of the context and the source of the signifiers around us. Donald Kuspit says that Andy Warhol, in his portrait-simulations of popular icons was both meditating "in a fantasy of consolation of inadequacy" and also anaesthetizing himself "against the fate of forever feeling

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<sup>69</sup>Neil Postman, Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business (New York: Penguin Group, 1985), p. vii.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

inadequate, empty, meaningless, unlovable, even non-existent."<sup>71</sup>

We must acknowledge that signifiers, omnipresent and coded though they may be, have an infinite variety of interpretation and that we are in charge of our own choices. In our response to the world of symbols and electronic displacement described by Baudrillard and Huxley, it is important, above all, that artists stay in touch with the truly real, not just the virtually real or the hyperreal.

More and more, artists and writers are not just saying one thing monolithically, but are instead thoughtfully observing the interrelationships of many things, mirroring shifting paradigms. This simultaneous expression of many voices has been termed "heteroglossia."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Donald Kuspit. The New Subjectivism: Art in the 1980's (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993), p. 400.

<sup>72</sup>I first heard this term used by Dr. Robert Hobbs, the Rhoda B. Thalhimer Endowed Professor of Art History at Virginia Commonwealth University, in a lecture at Artspace Gallery in Richmond, April 1997.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Art is to me more than just a bridge to (or a reflection of) the natural world. Rather, I see art as a natural force in itself. The idea that the creation of art has the strength and inevitability of a natural force may seem foreign because it sounds out-of-control--as though the artist is only a mediator and not the creator. To me, the artist is both the mediator of nature and the creator of a natural and spontaneous (as opposed to an unnatural or aberrant) product.

As Professor Yarowsky has mentioned, "Art has often been a task and a useful job, understood by the societies in which it existed and needed for day-to-day functions."<sup>73</sup> It seems that recently, at least since the advent of Modernism, art is seen as a cultural addendum to nature, a superimposition for which one must contract a Faustian bargain and remove oneself, romantically and heroically, from both society and one's own unified nature. This view of the "apartness" of the artist has been over-emphasized in our culture. It is, admittedly, necessary to set priorities, to focus on what one perceives to be most true,

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<sup>73</sup>Morris Yarowsky, Notes on the final draft of this thesis, May 5, 1997.



to act according to one's own principles and vision, and not to give way to chaos, despair, or entropy; however, one must not be so egotistical or paranoid as to think that a concentration on creativity is unnatural or that the world works in a different way for artists.

Art is a natural engagement of the intellect, the body, the spirit, and the psyche with media processes which involve chemical, mechanical, and physical alterations. You may accept such spontaneity for painting and ask where such natural automatism can possibly lie in a technical process such as printmaking. My answer is that the spontaneity comes at every step of the processes--in all the decisions made in the creation of the matrix. Ultimately, and, most significantly for me, creative and decision-making spontaneity comes in the printing of the matrix. This is where the joys of controlled and uncontrolled replication come into play.

The pleasure of the resistance and/or serendipity of the processes of printmaking, at all stages, meeting with my own marks, gestures, and choices, are what make me a strong advocate of what are known as "artist's prints," that is, prints which are conceived and printed by the artist. There is a natural sequence of actions and thoughts in printmaking which cannot be approximated by the substitution of an artist/printer collaboration unless the artist is truly involved with the printer or assistant in

every step of the decision-making and mark-making processes.<sup>74</sup> If the natural relationship between the creation of the matrix and its creative transfer to paper or other ground were to be approximated and valued, then the printer's input should be credited as much as the artist's, because the printer would be the artist.

Art for me is a unifying force fighting personal fragmentation, even as it was for Van Gogh;<sup>75</sup> My art is not about realistic pictorial space; it is about interior space --that of the mind and the heart. I am interested in creating variations on a matrix, making one-of-a-kind artist's prints or altered prints, even impure prints.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>On this point Helen Frankenthaler has said ". . . one cannot turn over an idea or program to another person or to several people in a workshop . . . the artist of quality [must create] a beautiful graphic that "bleeds" his sensibility--his feeling, magic, head, heart--within the felt embrace of a sensitive workshop . . . . I want to draw my own images, mix my own colors, approve of registration marks, select paper--all the considerations." Ruth E. Fine, ed., Helen Frankenthaler: Prints (New York: Harry N. Abrams and National Gallery of Art, 1993), p. 13. I have not yet, myself, reached the point at which I am ready to forego the actual printing, because that is the most magical moment of all.

<sup>75</sup>Cliff Edwards, Van Gogh and God: A Creative Spiritual Quest (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1989).

<sup>76</sup>". . . The Zen understanding, at its very essence, is that the mind is unreliable, it changes throughout life as it accumulates knowledge, opinions, and ideas, whereas no-mind is always the same; unpolluted, always singing the truth whether we hear it or not. Its dance is eternal . . . . Zen has been called 'the diamond thunderbolt' because it is a sudden experience." Zen. Van Gogh was apparently influenced by both Zen and Whitman. I once asked Dr. Cliff Edwards if Van Gogh had read Whitman. He replied that the evidence was that he had. Edwards, Van Gogh and God.

Sometimes my prints are investigative, instructive, meditative, or celebratory. This is not printmaking in accord with the common, albeit democratic, notion of prints as exact replications of a picture from another medium for the sake of general availability. Nor is it printmaking in accord with the atelier concept of an artist-created print matrix editioned with the aid of professional print craftsmen.

Instead, I approach art as a form of experimentation and ritual, seeing the cosmic in the microcosmic, and seeing the artist as part of both worlds, much as Whitman did in Leaves of Grass or Blake did in Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience.<sup>77</sup> I strive to create unique prints which cannot reasonably be duplicated in other media by other people--or even at another time by me.<sup>78</sup> I try to give meaning and definition to inchoate perceptions using art as visual metaphor.

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<sup>77</sup>Kathleen, Raine, William Blake (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970).

<sup>78</sup>Timothy Hugh Barrett, Zen: The Reason of Unreason, Eastern Wisdom Series (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993).

## APPENDICES

#### APPENDIX I

**Elise Asher-** Eleanor Munro<sup>79</sup> has said of the decade of the 60's that these were the years "when, slowly and still from obscurity, women artists of various ages and styles began turning out works of strange-appearing prophetic character, nontrivial experiments not intended to "sell" the public but to expand each artist's perimeter of self-revelation.

. . . .  
It was also the decade when many artists long at work came to grips with new imagery particularly grounded in their own pasts . . . . This was, for instance, the time when poet-painter Elise Asher began to merge her two talents in works of lyric, not-to-be-deciphered calligraphy on large book pages of acrylic. The material was of the moment, but the multilayered effect of light and vague drifts of color was a near-direct recovery of her childhood fascination with toys made of glass, especially the little glass balls filled with colored candies. 'I'd spill out the candies, put in colored water and make believe they were lighted lamps,' she recalls. In her most recent works Asher has foraged even further into fantasy, filling scenes, still on acrylic sheets, with curious seal-like figures that mock and pantomime the solemnities of male literary and political worlds (At the Grave of Henry James, Listening to the Watergate Committee). The oracular postures of these characters, too, come from things seen. For a while, Asher lived on the California coast atop 'dismaying drops into that wild sea' where a colony of seals lived, fed, birthed and died in their own closed society."

Charlotte Rubinstein<sup>80</sup> says that "Elise Asher wrote poetry until around 1947 and then began to paint in a kind of mysterious illegible script that weaves a gestural pattern through the painting. Today she paints this script on transparent plexiglass panels, along with curious amphibious and birdlike forms, giving her work a fantasy quality halfway between the gesture of Abstract Expressionism and Surrealism. She is the wife of poet Stanley Kunitz."

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<sup>79</sup>Eleanor Munro, Originals: American Women Artists (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), pp. 311-312.

<sup>80</sup>Charlotte Steifer Rubinstein, American Women Artists. (Boston: Avon Books, 1982), p. 336.

## APPENDIX II

Professor Ruth Bolduan suggested that a more thorough description of the development of my individual works of art, along with some information about the processes involved and the materials used, would be helpful to the reader. Therefore, I am including additional discussion of each of the major works.

**Slide 1.** To the Kiva. Wall collage installation 7'1" x 8'1"; etching, photoetching, aquatint, white ground etching, woodcut, monoprnt.

This collage (for want of a better word) is actually an installation (with tacks and push pins) of numerous prints in various techniques grouped together. The evolution of this piece went through many phases:

1) The collage on gessoed canvas phase. Rejected because of the stiffness of the canvas and the difficulty of handling, moving, and storing a piece of this size.

2) The collage on linen canvas phase. Rejected again because of the difficulty of handling, moving, and storing. The linen was too pliable, and would have endangered the prints themselves, not only from the standpoint of folding and tearing, but also from curling of the paper or cracking of the glue. It would have been too difficult to keep such a piece under pressure while drying and to even out the stresses over such a large expanse of glued paper and fabric.

3) The collage on Rives BFK paper phase. Even on paper--the way I would ordinarily create a collage--there were problems with the weight and scale of the piece. With the help of Barbara Tisserat, I began to realize the possibility and desirability of re-creating the collage on-site in Anderson Gallery, maintaining its feeling of having separate, applied, even possibly flappable or re-arrangeable parts. This, we decided, would accentuate the paper pastiche effect and eliminate the "flattening out" appearance which would be the result of gluing.

I had many discussions about this collage with Professors Tisserat, Freed, Drought, and Bolduan. Composition was a big issue, influenced by my new awareness of the importance of intuitive geometry in my work.

The prints hung in their constantly metamorphosing composition on the wall, until we decided to quit playing with the pieces and make room for new work in my studio. I photographed the work in its final(?) state, and, at

Professor Tisserat's suggestion, reinforced the corners of each section--at the point where it would be tacked--with linen bookbinding tape. The last pieces added to this puzzle, at Professor Bolduan's suggestion, were narrow vertical strips, made of two sections of a woodcut print of the "star field" image, which gives the work an additional asymmetry and suggests the spine of a book on a page about to turn--an illusion within an illusion of a memory of a sensation of awareness of limitless time and space.

This work is based on the experience of climbing 140 feet up a cliff side--on four slender, unattached ladders--to a kiva of the Anazazi Indians (the "Ancient Ones") in a ceremonial cave in New Mexico in 1992. The sensation referred to occurred after climbing the ladders and viewing the surrounding vistas before descending to the kiva. I did not set out to tell a story in my art, but I realized after a while that my associations with the work related to that event.

I believe I have been somewhat successful in communicating this experience in a non-narrative fashion. Visiting artist Dona Nelson said that the finished work causes a "swirling" and "coming forward" and "going back" reaction.

**Slide 2. Where Do I Come From? 1996**

Mixed media unique print 30" x 22"; Etching, white ground etching, aquatint, woodcut, letterpress.

**Slide 3. Primordial Breeze. 1995. Woodcut 12" x 18"; edition variable.**

This was my first editioned woodcut. I used traditional woodcutting tools on birch plywood, and I printed it as a color reduction print; I recorded with artist's proofs the various states and considered them unique prints. The single, shaped-contour block was in each print turned upside-down and printed adjacent to right-side-up, creating a yin-yang effect and a page-like reference (each side representing a page).

**Slide 4. Rose Crown. Mixed media unique print 22" x 30";. Etching with shaped plates; engraving; soft ground transfer etching, color xerographic transfer, collagraph, collage.**

The genesis of many of these plates goes back to my days as an undergraduate taking Experimental Printmaking from Professor Freed at Virginia Commonwealth University. In many cases I retain my etching plates, silk screens, and woodblocks long after they are originally printed or editioned and continue to rearrange and overlap them, printing them in different combinations, sequences, patterns, and colors.

**Slide 5.** Child's Play. 1996.

Hard ground etching; aquatint.  
22" x 30"; edition of 5.

This print was like a "finger exercise,"--a loosening-up for graduate school. Remembering the spontaneous, kinetic fun of making mud pies as a child, I applied liquid asphaltum to the zinc plate with my bare hands in a manner similar to finger painting.

**Slide 6.** Tantra Card I. 1996. 11" x 6"

Lithograph. Xerographic transfer from a computer-scanned and altered image. This is the Tantra card referred to in the geometry section. The spirals are derived from an economic diagram. I studied computer graphics with John Deeds during the Summer of 1996, and this was one of the images which I eventually incorporated into my art.

The scanned image was enlarged by photocopy and copied by transfer to a lithographic plate in a session taught by Warren Corrado.

With a review of lithography from Professor Barbara Tisserat, I used the lithography press in the Graduate Studio Building to produce one print for "Meridian/Diurnal," the waist-high stack of prints and three for the Tantra cards.

**Slide 7.** Tantra Card II. 1996. 11" x 6".

Photoetching, monoprint, letterpress.

This is the Tantra card selected for my Thesis Show announcement card. It uses two of the self-portrait photoetchings superimposed on a collagraph from a plate done in the late '80's. On top of that I printed the letterpress number "1/2" on the old newspaper proofing press in the graduate studios. This number was printed with large wooden type, with the fraction all on one piece of type. My color selection for the card was based on graphic clarity, with three different matrices printed in black on a yellow ground.

**Slide 8.** Tantra Card III. 1997. 11" x 6".**Slide 9.** Tantra Card Installation. Twenty-four double-sided mixed-media prints, installed under plexiglass with one side showing. Each card 11" x 6".

Others simultaneously on display in the Painting and Printmaking Department, Third Floor, Pollak Building, Virginia Commonwealth University.

This arrangeable, varying set of cards was originally begun as a device to enable me to simultaneously experiment in many print, collage, paint, and drawing media while focusing on a controlled idea. The form of the Tantra



cards derives from my interest in Eastern philosophies. Tantra cards, half the size of these, were traditionally used as both a stimulus and a focus for meditation by Zen Buddhists. As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, I have attempted to incorporate the aura of the Tantra with that of the art, signifiers, symbols, and archetypes of other civilizations, including our own. There is an attempt at synthesis while retaining the identity of the parts.

In her studio visit, artist/lecturer Rhonda Shearer suggested that I show one card on top of the plexiglass, standing up, showing both sides. We agreed that this might emphasize my desire to make the cards tactilely appealing while at the same time refusing to let them be handled by the public.

**Slide 10. Self-Quotation.** 1996. 47" x 51" x 2".  
Etching, collage on shaped wood.

The wood is a found object which I have saved since about 1989. It was an architectural artifact from the remodeling of the VCU building which now houses the Registrar's Office. I have attempted utilizing it in other art works, but never successfully. As I kept this piece, I became more and more attracted to its fluidity of movement and its similarity to a balloon above the heads of characters in comic strips.

After previously gessoing the wood white and drawing on it with charcoal, I decided to make it the base for some of my mechanistic and self-portrait photoetchings. I re-gessoed it black, collaged torn pieces of red and black etchings onto it, and shellacked it in some places.

Quotation is a piece which relates emphatically to the space inside and outside it, and it was, unfortunately, hung in the 1996 Student Show disadvantageously just above a heating vent, detracting from the exterior space.

**Slide 11. Prières de papier.** Five mixed media prints on various papers. Each print 12" x 4", framed together, 20 7/8" x 30 3/4" x 1 1/4".

This was my first venture using one of the old newspaper proofing presses donated to VCU--this one in the newsprint room of the Pollak Building. I chose the paper size according to the format prescribed for an AIDS benefit exhibition, "Paper Prayers," at Anderson Gallery in 1995. I continued to use the format and the little letterpress in the Pollak Building for a while, experimenting with different papers, even Mexican bark paper, and different relief inks and type faces. I also tried some etching, rubber stamping, linoleum printing, and copperplate engravings in combination on these papers.

I decided to frame five of these prints together and to

convert the name of the original exhibition to a French title in order to distinguish this set of prints from the ones at Anderson Gallery and at the same time retain a reminder of their origin.

**Slide 12. Birth Day I.** 30" x 22" unique print. Woodcut, perforation, oil stick, oil pastel, shellac.

I made myself a promise: On my 60th birthday, February 10, 1996, I would spend the day printing. This was a day when I had the graduate studio to myself; I was able to create this one-of-a-kind print in the wonderful frenzy of a single day. For about a year, I left the print untitled, but on my birthday this year, when I could not again arrange the luxury of a whole day printing, I named it. I kept the title as two words to emphasize its multiple meanings: that of the pain of being born and of giving birth, and that of birth as a symbol of resurrection and new life, as well as the record date of life's beginning.

The underlying woodcut print on the lower half of the work was offset-transferred to the top half by folding the print in half and running it through the press a second time. The structure which evolved, somewhat resembling stactites and stalagmites, and somewhat resembling the dentata of some feminist imagery or the vesica pisces mentioned in Sacred Geometry, was overlaid with the strong fold line. I emphasized the overlying structure with red oil stick and obliterated the white margin with black oil stick.

In an effort to erase a line which I did not like, I applied my Dremel tool (which I had used to cut the original block) to the paper. Done lightly, this serves to make a clean erasure on a good rag paper. I was so pleased, however, with the haptic qualities of the roughened paper, that I began to press harder and to make various perforations in the paper.

Some of the above processes were continued in Birth Day II, which I finally got around to doing several weeks after my 61st birthday.

**Slide 13. Birth Day II.** 22" x 30" unique print. Woodcut from two blocks.

Birth Day II was done with the same woodcut block as Birth Day I, but this time the dentata are pointing away from each other. The overlying image is that of a round woodblock, carved to suggest a tunnel, a maze, a birth canal, a cave, the growth rings of a tree, a target, or a path into or out of oblivion. The work is more graphic, has higher contrast, and the surface is not as roughened or perforated as in Birth Day I.

**Slide 14. Sentinels.** Installation of three, four, or six life-size silhouette woodcut prints on varying paper and fabric surfaces.

May also include wooden matrices in seven pieces.

This has been a very problematic series. It began with my recurring memory of the satisfaction I derived from an art assignment in Junior High School. I was a shy, transplanted little twelve-year old with a "Yankee" accent in a large school in Knoxville, and my self-esteem had been completely devastated by a cruel Home Economics teacher who repeatedly embarrassed me in front of my sewing and cooking classmates.

The art teacher, on the other hand, was like my fairy godmother, taking me away from the cruel stepmother. I loved art class and responded to Miss Reynolds' kindness with an intense desire to please her and to escape the rigidity of Home Economics. Among the many stimulating exercises assigned in the art class was one in which we drew life-size, cardboard silhouettes of ourselves and painted them with tempera. They were made to stand like paper dolls around the art room.

I think that this particular early experience was the germ of the idea of cloning myself via woodcut. Professor Bolduan agreed to draw my silhouette on brown paper with Magic Marker as I lay on the floor. I lay in a position similar to the complete relaxation pose in Yoga and wore a leotard. I transferred the drawing to a large plywood panel which I had trimmed to simulate the pressed size with two extensions. Fellow graduate student Quint Marshall cut the puzzle-like pieces out with an electric jigsaw. The cutting required both strength and skill because of the size and weight of the large piece of plywood and because of the curve and proximity of the lines. The fingers and toes were especially difficult to cut.

I first printed the center panel of wood, inking the positive figure in Venetian Red relief ink and the negative figure in Carbazole Violet with my large roller. I then folded under the side panels and printed the outer wings of the triptych-like composition. This color print on Rives BFK paper eventually became the print underlying the scrim of Draped Overlay.

**Slide 15. Draped Overlay.** (Sentinel I) Woodcut on polyester gauze overlaid on color woodcut on Rives BFK.

The scrim addition to Overlay came after all the other sentinels had been printed, but the idea of a transparent print had occurred to me much earlier. The notion of many transparent woodcut prints on fabric hanging together was

entertained and may yet be realized. However, the effect of movement and color change of the fabric overlaying the paper print was irresistible. The fabric was printed using a large bare to ink the central, positive woodblock. Those, in addition to the two, separate, hand blocks, rested on an improvised sawhorse table in the hall of the Graduate Building. Kristin Onuf generously gave me a long-term loan of the supporting piece of Luan plywood forming the table.

**Slide 16. Photosensitive.** (Sentinel II) Woodcut on linen. 82" x 40". Unique print.

According to Dona Nelson, a visiting artist who came to my studio, I should do the "really radical" thing and make this the only work in my thesis show. If I should decide to include two things, according to Ms. Nelson, I should balance the "direct frontality of this decorporealized 'Everywoman'" with the complexity of To the Kiva. Photosensitive was handrubbed on the beautiful linen cloth which I had rejected as the support for To the Kiva. I did not attempt to smooth or iron it or to hem or stop the fraying of its edges. Ms. Nelson compared it to the "Shroud of Turin" and said that the comparison is inevitable. Professor Freed agreed with this assessment. Ms. Nelson said that this print makes her love linen. In the markings of the ink, I left the ever-more-noticeable blemish of the wood, which Josh Eckels dubbed my "appendectomy scar." There are medical and scientific allusions in all of these "sentinels," but I think this one has the look of an x-ray image or of skin that has been exposed to too much sun or to radiation. Ms. Nelson read a new meaning into these marks, seeing them as an echo of the galaxies of To the Kiva, a transparent body through which one can see the universe.

**Slide 17. Mutant Message.** (Sentinel III) Woodcut on seven pieces of Mexican bark paper, each 14" x 18"; overlaid on linen. Unique print.

The bark paper segments of this work were printed separately and at different pressures and with different inking techniques. They were arranged as a not-quite symmetrical cross. The reference is not so much to the human body as a cross, but to the fact that the crucifix, letter forms in the shape of a cross, grave headstones, Gothic cathedral plans, and the geometric forms of the square and the circle all derive from and relate to the human body.

According to Sacred Geometry,<sup>81</sup> "multiplication is

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<sup>81</sup>Lawlor, p. 90-95.

symbolized by a cross, and that graphic symbol itself is an accurate definition of multiplication." Since the early days of human awareness, the four orientations of the body have been related schematically to the four constituents of creation: earth, air, fire, water. The body and the cross form have also been related to the directions, north, south, east and west.

"Through an identification with the essential universal proportions expressed through . . . ideal human form, individual man may contemplate the link between his own physiology and universal cosmology, thereby envisaging a relationship with his own universal nature. This array of universal proportions within the body of Ideal Man becomes the basis, in many civilizations, of a canon which governs the metre for chant and poetry, the movements of dance, and the proportions of crafts, art and architecture."<sup>82</sup>

At first I used push pins to hang the bark paper segments on the wall. Later, I shellacked them to enrich their color and to strengthen them against tearing. I then used carpet tacks to attach them to a piece of linen.

**Slide 18. Simultaneous Pause.** Woodcut on burlap, hung from wood. Unique print.

This print was a hiatus from difficult printing tasks, being a straightforward rubbed version of the negative portions of the figure image blocks. Although the fabric is coarse and not as wide as the linen, it achieves presence by hanging from a two-by-four attached (or by being hung by large nails) to the wall and by its paradoxically delicate appearance (the consequence of the open ground in the central figure area).

**Slide 19. Meridian/Diurnal: A Waist-High Stack of Prints.** (in progress). A Stack of 9 1/2 x 9 1/2 mixed media prints in steel holder. Total height c.40". Includes silk screen, lithography, etching, paste grain papers, monoprint, monotype, letter press, collage, and chine collé. Steel holder was fabricated to my specifications by Patti Beachley.

This project is an on-going collection of mixed-media prints in a holder designed to accommodate their height and flat dimensions. The height of the stack at this point is only about 20 inches to 25 inches, and the iron holder has yet to be completed. In many cases, these are new prints on top of old prints, such as letterpress on top of silk screen or aquatint on top of monotypes. There are many

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<sup>82</sup>Lawlor, p. 93.

papers, boards, and fabrics used as the surfaces on which to print. Changing the top print frequently could serve as both an exhibition and a conservation device, minimizing exposure to light and rotating the featured (top) print. There is additional aesthetic and tactile interest in the sides of the stack, exposing torn and cut edges, frayed and burned edges, and edges of different thicknesses and colors.

**Slide 20.** Conception. Accordion book in wooden frame: 31 1/2" x 24 1/4" x 6" closed; 31 1/2" x 97 3/4" x 1 1/2" open. Each frame is 31 1/2" x 24 1/4" x 1 1/2". Frames contain mixed media unique prints relating to a poem by Elise Asher from The Meandering Absolute.  
Woodcut, etching, photoetching, artist's hand-poured paper, collograph, copper engraving, collage, monoprint, monotype, chine collé, and letterpress.

The genesis of this work was in the mid-1980's when I poured the pulp to make the round paper circles in a papermaking workshop at the Richmond Printmaking Workshop. Perhaps it was even earlier, when I studied book art with Bruce Schnabel, also at the RPW. Basically, I never liked the circles in their pristine pulp state; they looked too much like the cardboard circles for pizza.

However, I began in the late 80's to cover them with prints, some etched and some with collagraphs. Still dissatisfied with them, I began in 1995, about the same time as the first "paper prayers," to place more etchings, collage and letterpress on them. With the introduction by Professor Freed to the new pre-sensitized photoetching plates, I made copies of the poem "Conception" by Elise Asher and "Sailing to Byzantium" by William Butler Yeats.

It was with some unease that I used the poetry of Asher, still presumably (to me at that time) a living poet. I started to investigate and to try to find out more about Elise Asher. In the Spring of 1996, Kristin Onuf brought me a brochure from the Charlottesville book festival with a reproduction of a photograph of one of Elise Asher's books. Later, I saw in an old art magazine an advertisement for a show of Elise Asher's paintings. I wrote to her in care of the gallery requesting permission to reproduce her poem. I wrote January 12, 1997:

"Dear June Kelly Gallery (June Kelly?):

I am trying to locate the artist Elise Asher who had a show called "A Place Apart" at your gallery in May 1994. I believe she may also be the Elise Asher whose book of poems was given to me by Morris Weisenthal at his gallery in Greenwich Village in the

late 50's or early 60's. I am an artist, printmaker, and book artist, and I would like permission to use her poem "Conception" in some of my monoprints/books. She can contact me at the above address(es). Thank you for your help."

I was greatly relieved when, on January 22, I found the following message from Elise Asher on my answering machine:

"This is Elise Asher speaking. . . . I just received your message through June Kelly Gallery. Well, of course you can use "Conception." We'll talk some time, but I don't know why not . . . . I wanted to let you know this much. Okay. Thank you, and thank you ahead of time for being able to understand and like it well enough to want to use it. We'll be talking some time, but I did want to tell you that much."

### APPENDIX III

In her discussion of the lithography program at Virginia Commonwealth University in the catalog of "Printmaking Perspectives,"<sup>83</sup> Professor Barbara Tisserat presents an evaluation which I think applies equally to my own experiences in the total printmaking program at VCU as an undergraduate and graduate student in classes with both her and Professor Freed. She wrote, "At Virginia Commonwealth University, students . . . are provided with a foundation of technical information. Once the basics have been mastered and the student demonstrates the skills necessary for consistent editioning, experimentation and personal interpretation are encouraged.

"Classes are structured to promote the exploration of diverse drawing and transfer techniques, the investigation of a variety of paper types in printing, and the manipulation of images through multiple states and color solutions. The central philosophy is that technical competence is liberating, and that the . . . process should not be used for its reproductive capabilities alone, but as a unique and flexible tool for expression."

I feel compelled also to mention the liberating and affirming influence I experienced in the 1970's in the Virginia Museum Workshop program (under the direction of Marilyn Bevilaqua) in the company of such fine printmakers as Henrietta Near, Jane Ware, Nancy David, Carolyn Garner, Aline Curran, Mary Watt New, Etta Edwards, Suzie Singer, and Bea Klein. It was at that time that printmaking became for me a serious endeavor.

In the 1980's I profited greatly from association with the artists and instructors at the Richmond Printmaking Workshop, including Laura Pharis, Gail McKennis, Nancy David, Diego Sanchez, Judy Little, Mary Holland, Carol Barton, Deborah Roth, John Field, Margot Blank, Bruce Schnabel, Gloria Blades, Willie Anne Wright, Jorgé Benitez, and Steve Fishman.

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<sup>83</sup>Barbara Tisserat, Perspectivas en Grabado/Printmaking Perspectives, Discussion of lithography, p. 4 in catalog of Virginia Commonwealth University's printmaking exhibition at the 1997 Festival de Lima, Galeria Juan Pardo Heeren. January 15 - February 20, 1997. Edited by James Miller.



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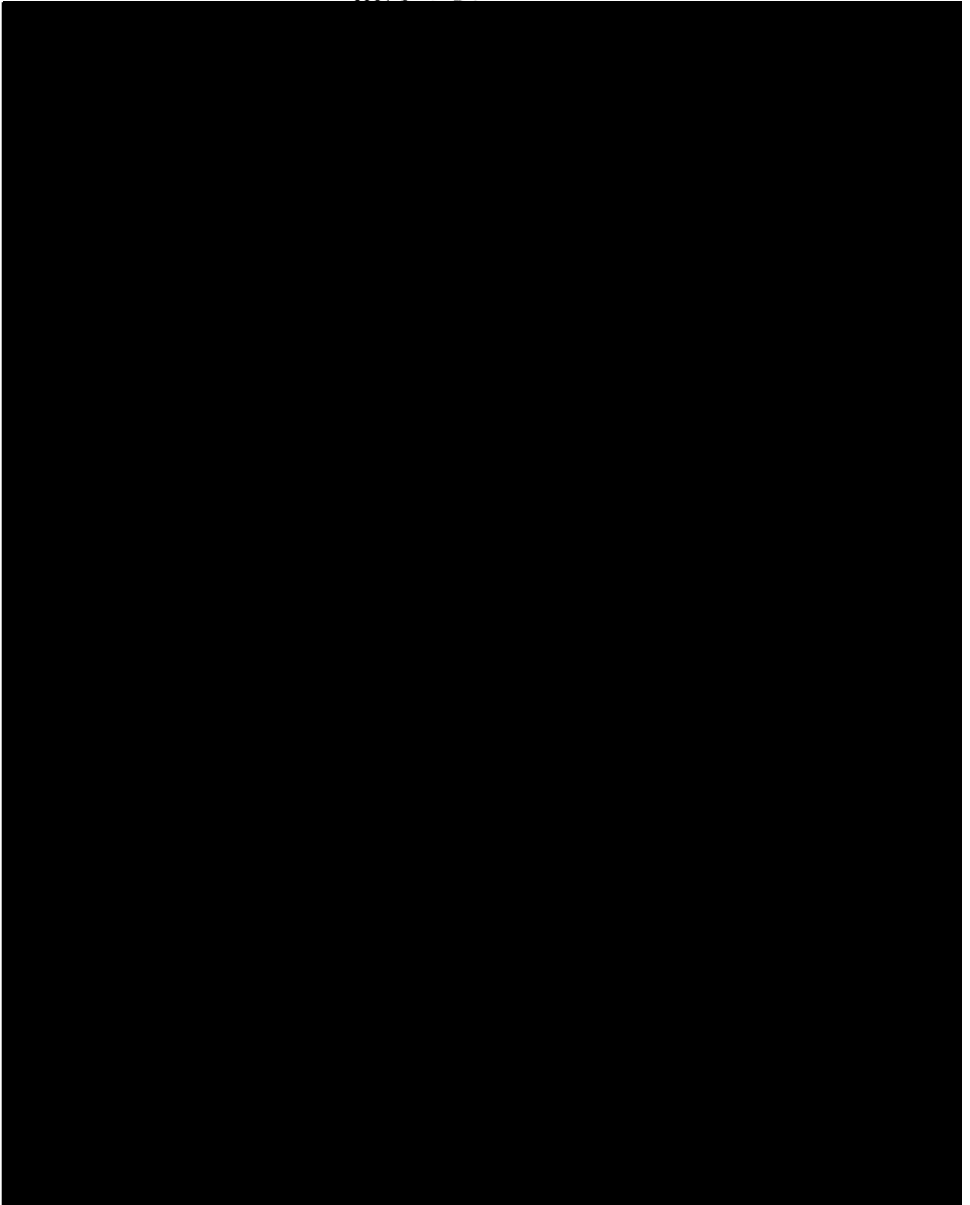
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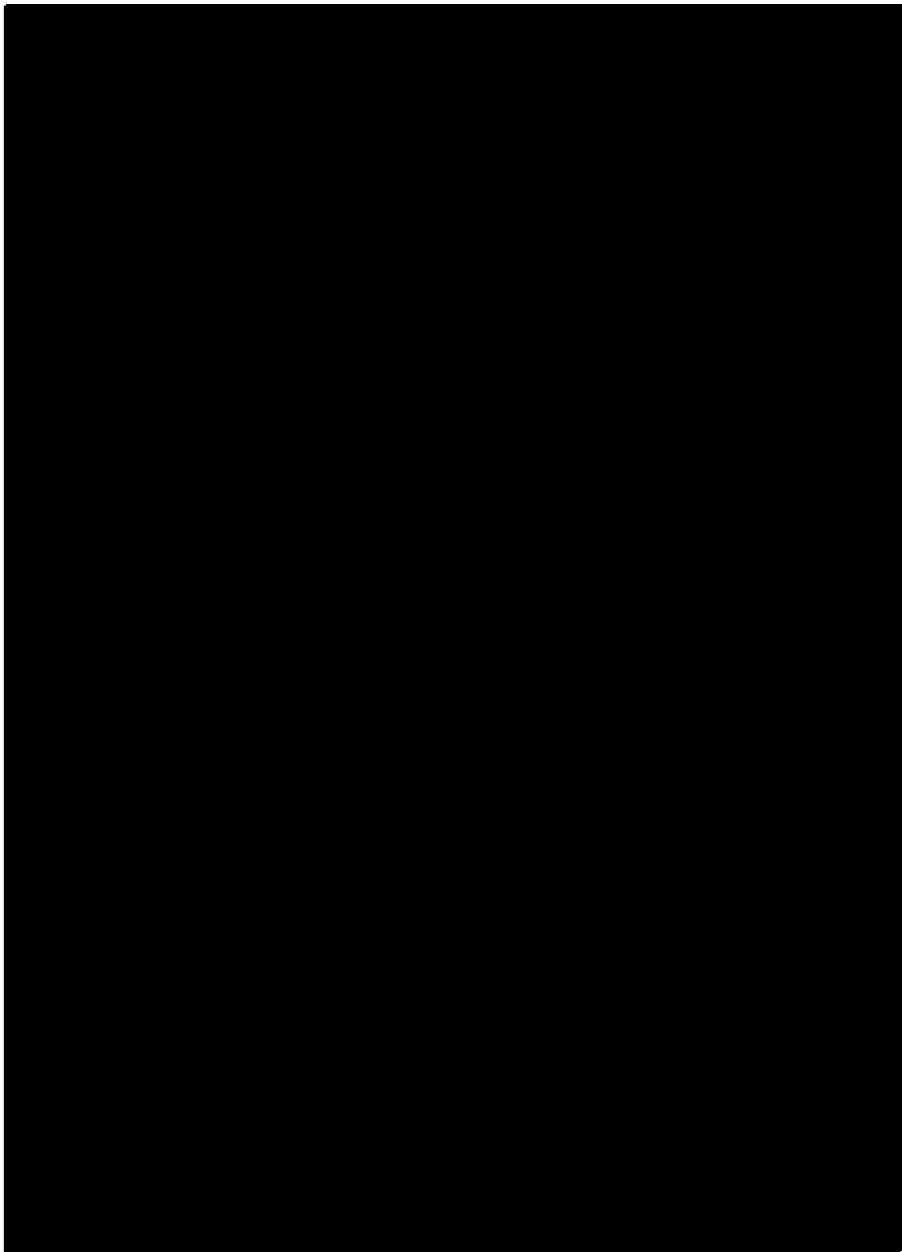
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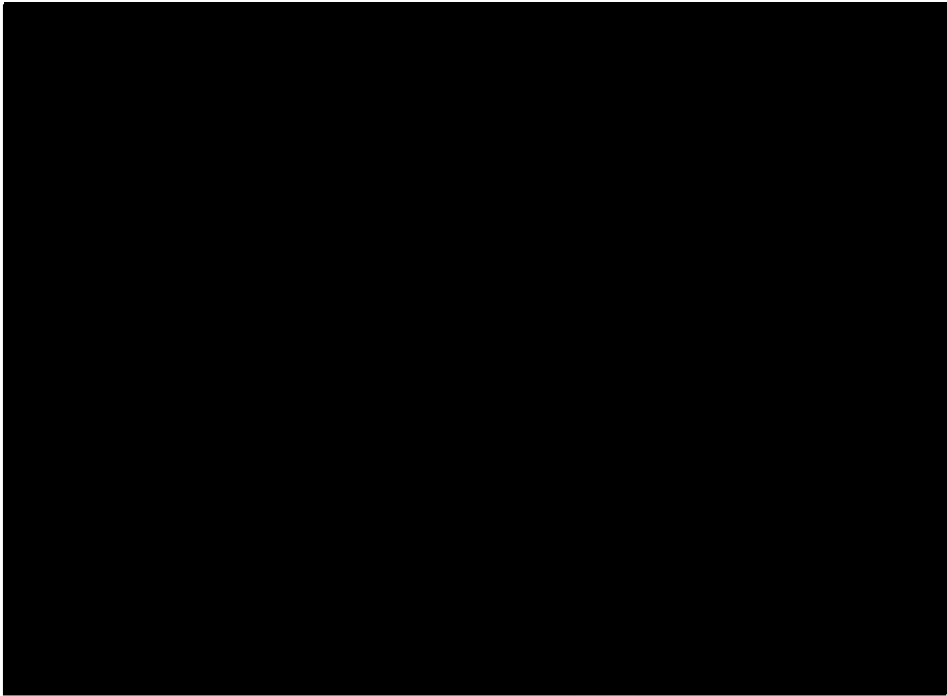


Mitzi Humphrey









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