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Present Access

A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Art and Design

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art

by

Garry D. Renfro

August 2007

Mira Gerard, Chair

Anita DeAngelis,

Catherine Murray

Keywords: painting, drawing, landscape, encaustic, corrugated board, charcoal

ABSTRACT

Present Access

by

Garry D. Renfro

The artist discusses his Master of Fine Arts exhibition, *Present Access*, hosted by The Carroll Reece Museum on the campus of East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, from April 2 through April 25, 2007. This exhibit contains works that span his four-year tenure in the graduate program and represent several iterations of the artist's exploration of the landscape as metaphor and discovery.

Subjects discussed explicate the development of thought and process leading to the pieces presented in this exhibition. Topics explored include the importance of form, material, media, research, personal history, experience, and memory. Also considered are the influences of contemporary artists such as Tula Telfair, April Gornick, Toba Khedoori, Ying Kit Chan, and Rackstraw Downes; the poetry of T. S. Eliot; the ideas of Theoretical Physics and philosopher Paul Crowther.

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Renfro; my Mother, Francis Renfro; my Uncle Rex and Aunt Ernestine Renfro;

Ann and Phil Ensminger

Dedication is to my Father, Mack L. Renfro, 1925-2006

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I had always intended to go to graduate school. Several school visits, applications, and interviews had offered encouragement. However, completing my undergraduate degree while I was working part time had consumed almost five years of continuous enrollment. I felt the need to take some time off.

My plan was to work full-time for a couple of years, gain more real-world experience, and create some funds to offset the cost of graduate school. As often seems to happen, the motivation to develop a career became more important than pursuing a master's degree. Seasons passed, I married and soon thereafter started a family. We were all engrossed in the schedules, events, activities, and expenses that are the family experience. Life had happened.

Thirty years later I found myself in a state of ennui. The practice of graphic design in my job had become a complex ritual of electronic cut and paste. Additionally, much of my energy was expended in administrative functions, resource juggling, and seemingly endless tasks of analysis, justification, and reporting. My imagination needed challenging and I thirsted for interaction with those who had deep involvement with the arts. I longed for a structured environment to provide support, guidance, and acknowledgement for my development. Graduate school seemed the best solution. I was over fifty years old and realized if I was going to pursue a graduate degree, it was now or never.

I needed some time off.

During three decades I had built a successful career developing skills in many areas of graphic design, industrial design, and project and resource management. It seemed a foregone conclusion that my graduate career would be spent as a Graphic Design major.

My first graduate class was Contemporary Art History, taken in the summer intersession of 2003. Much of the material covered during the first three-quarters of the class was familiar, but I was gleaning information about the topics that I had not previously known. The final quarter of the class exposed me to recent work and theory in the art world of which I had failed to keep abreast. To say that it was eye opening and exciting would be an understatement.

I enrolled in a Special Topics studio course, Landscape Painting, in the summer semester. I needed to fulfill degree requirements for electives, had agreed to install a show of my work at the end of the summer, and figured both would be satisfied by this course. As an undergraduate I had taken several advanced painting and drawing classes and had continued related, independent projects throughout my life. In recent years I had been drawing landscape subjects that were in my immediate neighborhood; fences, trees, fields, rocks, and especially roads. Through my observations I was developing an increasing awareness of the juxtaposition of these highway constructions with natural elements and the ensuing alteration of the landscape. My expectation was that this class would provide an opportunity to explore these ideas, and some enjoyment as well. I was not disappointed.

I rediscovered the nearly seamless flow of idea through hand and media and the opportunity for an intuitive response. The resultant marks were complex and

rich in subtlety. A bold, solid black mark even revealed intricate variations. One thing I disliked about working in a digital environment was that regardless of what tool was used, how sensitive the stylus, how powerful the software, how fast the processor, there was always a disconnect; a delay between action and mark, an awkwardness in the resulting mark, a lack of nuance and line quality that evidenced the image as digital.

The reality of the experience in my first two courses was more intense than I had anticipated. Professor Mira Gerard provided ideas and directions for research and exploration that I would never would have discovered on my own. Dr. Scott Koterbay had posed provocative questions about the definition and function of art that intrigued and haunted me. I was happier, more curious, and more satisfied with my intellectual and creative life than I had been for many years. I knew for certain I did not want to carry out my plan to concentrate in Graphic Design. I could not bear the reality that most of my exploration and production would be generated from an electronic environment. In the fall of 2003, the first full semester as a graduate student, I changed my major to Studio Painting.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROAD

First Iteration

In the film, “Rivers and Tides”, artist Andy Goldsworthy notes that certain forms are deep-rooted, obsessively reoccurring in his work. He is specifically speaking of an undulating line that is the path of a river. It symbolizes the flow of life, growth, and time to him.



Fig. 1. *Sunnyside Loop at Jones Bridge*, 2003, shellac, acrylic, graphite, on vellum, worked on both sides, 14.5" x 13.75",

The road is such a form for me, but it has not always been so. I began

to be aware of the visual relationships between roads and landforms a year or so before beginning graduate school. I had done some sketching, but nothing

consistent or defining. During my first graduate studio course I began a serious exploration of these visual relationships.

The road has long been a source of metaphor and symbolism in poetry and literature for journeys through life, spiritual growth, decisions, destiny, and fate. These obvious connections were part of my thinking, but I also began to think more deeply about the origins, histories, and functions of roads. Marshall

McLuhan extols

that roads are a medium, and a technology that is an extension of our central nervous system. (91). In a formal sense, roads do act as evidence of marking, as lines drawn on the land, creating visual relationships as well as utilitarian connections.



Fig. 2. *Jones Bridge at Mt. Hebron, West*, 2003, shellac, acrylic, china marker, graphite, rubber dust, on vellum, worked on both sides, 14" x 17.125"

Original roads often followed the paths that men and animals wore to connect with resources. I thought about the farm we owned and worked until I started college in 1969. The land has since been subdivided and developed for single-family housing. In driving through the current development I was surprised to find that the arterial roads followed the paths that we had used to access the

pastures, fields, gardens, and orchard. The paths were not graded or graveled, simply packed by years of livestock and machinery travel. They were not laid out on a grid but were simply the easiest routes to get to the gates. Why had the planners used these paths? I think it must have appealed to someone's personal aesthetic and whimsy.

The roads of rural East Tennessee have changed dramatically over the past few decades. The narrow, gravel, county roads that were prevalent are seldom found. They have been widened and paved, often at the expense of old growth trees that lined them. As development increases and there is greater demand placed on them, new roads are often cut to bypass the old ones. The terrain is constantly being transformed. While it is sad to see the countryside leveled and carved up, it provides me with a fertile source of subject matter.

I concentrated on drawing and painting specific sites close to my home. It was convenient and driving the roads was part of my daily ritual. I was treating the landscapes with a sharp, reductive approach. Buildings, utility poles, and signs were omitted. This allowed me to find and push the geometry and shape relationships. Even though there were subtle and not so subtle distortions and transformations I employed for the sake of the composition, the compositions remained true to their real life counterparts and are easily recognized by people who know the area. My neighbors enjoyed coming over to watch me working and delighted in being able to identify the subject of the work in progress.

Much of the painting in the course, especially in the first few weeks, was executed on site. I found the quick drying and easy cleanup properties of acrylic paint to be advantageous. When I began variations of my plein-air work in the

studio, I began a practice of supplementing the acrylic with various materials. There were traditional conté crayons and colored pencils along with shellac, house paint, white glue, china marker, and rubber dust. The rubber dust is a residue of a rubber engraving process in use where I work, and it creates dense, warm black values when mixed with a medium. I thin the amber shellac with denatured alcohol to make washes of varying densities. Shellac possesses an old world color that resonates with me. Vellum is a substrate that I worked with extensively early in my career, providing renderings to architects and engineers. It is translucent and can be worked on both sides to create atmospheric nuances. It also found its way into my work that summer.

I finished the summer with a large portfolio of work. I displayed 25 pieces at an exhibit at the General Morgan Inn in Greeneville, Tennessee during the month of August.



Fig. 3. *Pisgah Road at Haney Farm*, 2003, acrylic on canvas, 42" x 49"

Second Iteration

In the fall of 2003, my first regular semester of graduate school, I had several ideas about how I wanted to push my work. Most of them did not extend beyond the thought process. Before any real effort toward my plans was initiated, what I recognize as a breakthrough happened around the third week of the semester. I was drawing in a sketchbook during lunch while at work. It was one of those moments when the subconscious takes over. I had made a few drawings and discovered an excitement in what was beginning to happen. I did not stop to think about it but let the drawings go where they wanted. In the film, “Heart of Gold”, Neil Young refers to this as putting yourself and your trust into the hands of the muses.

My lunch hour passed and I closed my sketchbook until I was at home in the evening. Reviewing the drawings immediately shocked me. I recognized this small fragment of highway and embankment. This was the curve and gentle uphill grade where four years prior, my sister, Kathy, failed to survive an automobile accident. I had driven out to this site nearly every Sunday for a year following the accident. The loss was painful for everyone but was devastating to my father. His health had been deteriorating for a while, and he suddenly was forced to a state of feebleness from which he never recovered. I had invested a great deal of effort to aid him through his grief and illness, never stepping back to resolve my own grieving. The semester would be consumed by a furious production of studies using this location as a point of reference.

Following are four sketches from that lunch-hour drawing session.

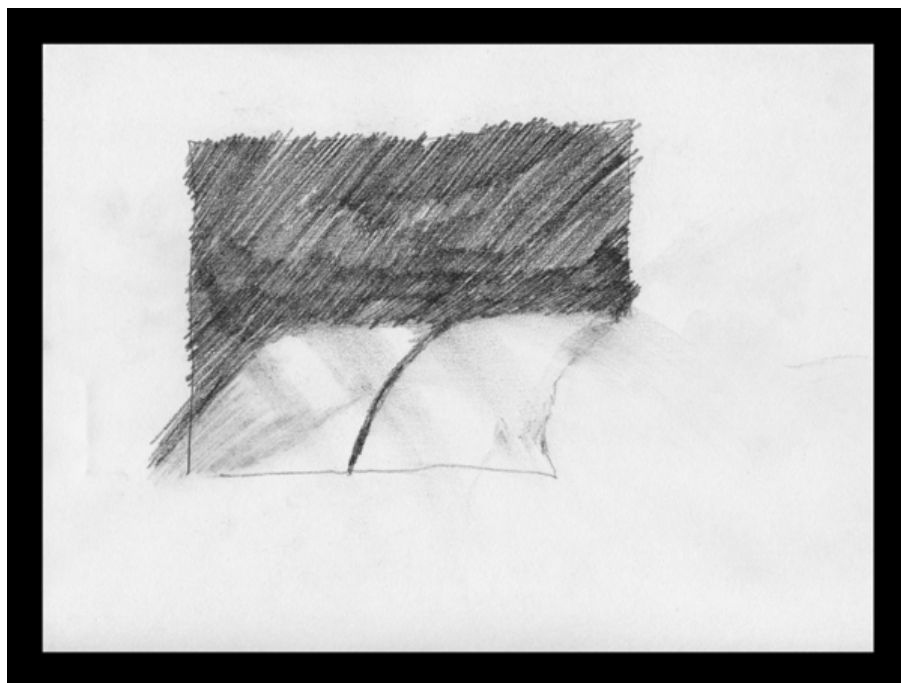


Fig. 4. *Study, Curved Grade 1*, 2003, graphite on paper, 9" x 12"

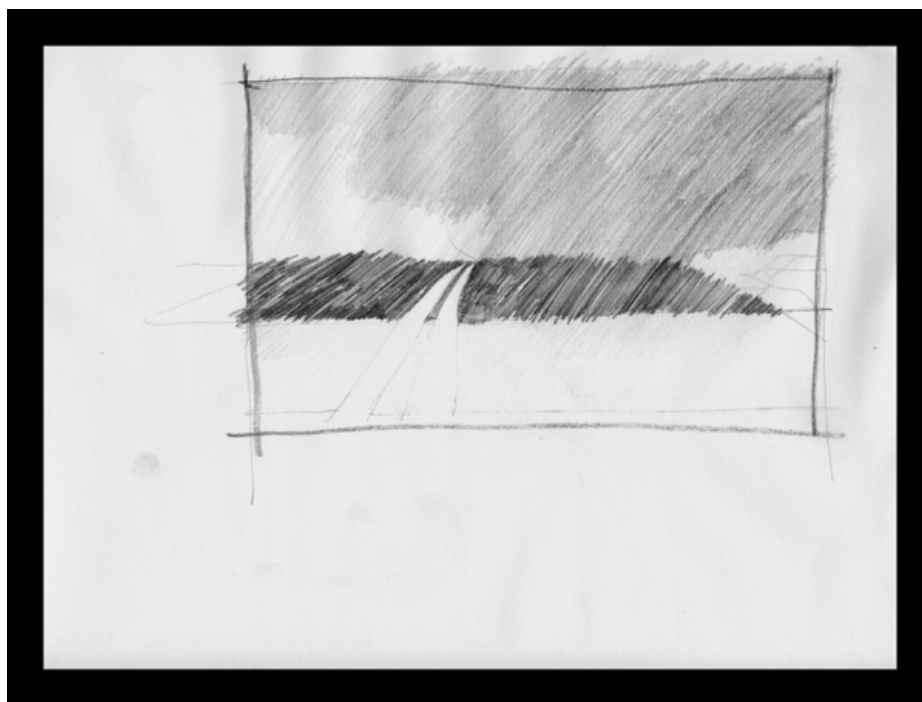


Fig. 5. *Study, Curved Grade 5*, 2003, graphite on paper, 9" x 12"

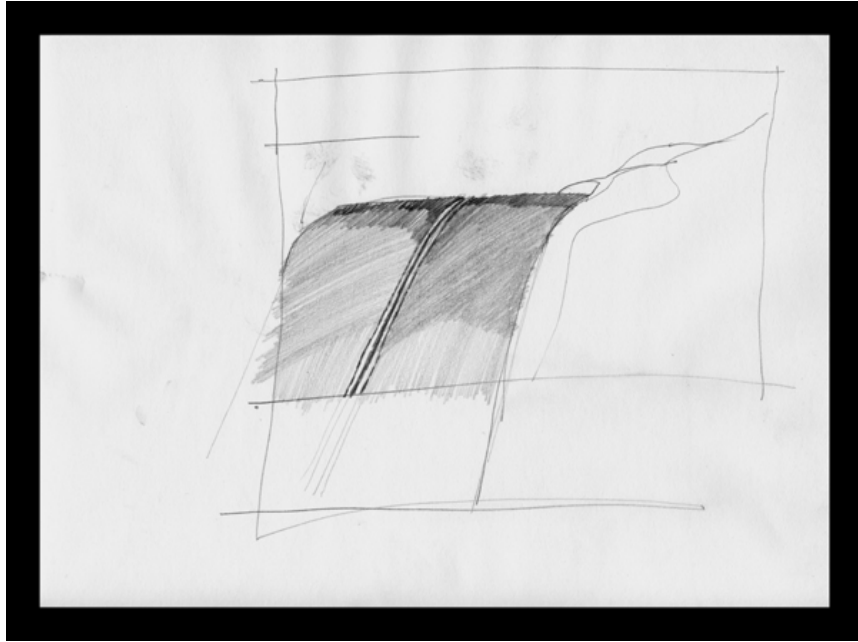


Fig. 6. *Study, Curved Grade 3*, 2003, graphite on paper, 9" x 12"

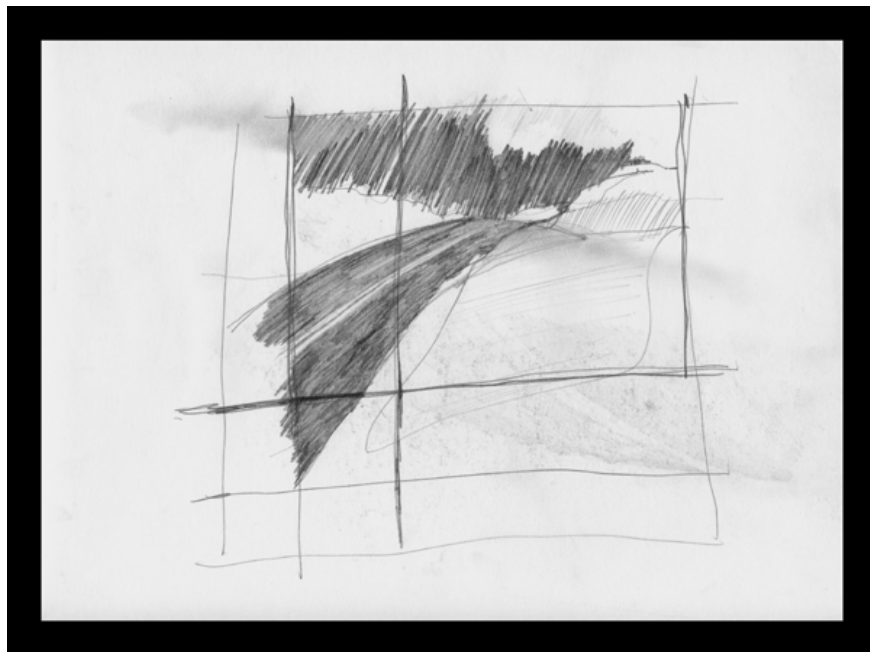


Fig. 7. *Study, Curved Grade 7*, 2003, graphite on paper, 9" x 12"

I added beeswax to my materials cache at this time. I had had a brief exposure to it in the past but never seriously worked with it. The wax was appealing because of its warm tone, translucency, surface potential, physicality, and the expressive nature of marks made with it. I had been looking at artists Cheryl Goldsleger, Tony Scherman, and Jasper Johns, all of whom use the encaustic technique. Each artist has his or her unique approach to the method.



Fig. 8. *The Talleyrand Question*, 1998-99, Tony Scherman, encaustic on canvas, 72" x 72, used by permission of Tony Scherman

Urim and Thummin was among the first finished, large piece to develop out of the initial group of sketches. Below are two others that I was working on simultaneously. The concurrent development of objects is a facet of my studio process. Sometimes it is a utilitarian practice while waiting for work to dry. It is often a method of distancing myself from a piece while I contemplate future development. It gives me an opportunity to evaluate the work formally and allows my subconscious to process the information. I believe these three early pieces to be the most successful of the entire body of work in this series.



Fig. 9. *Urim and Thummin*, 2003, oil stick, rubber dust, wax, shellac on paper,
25.75" x 38"

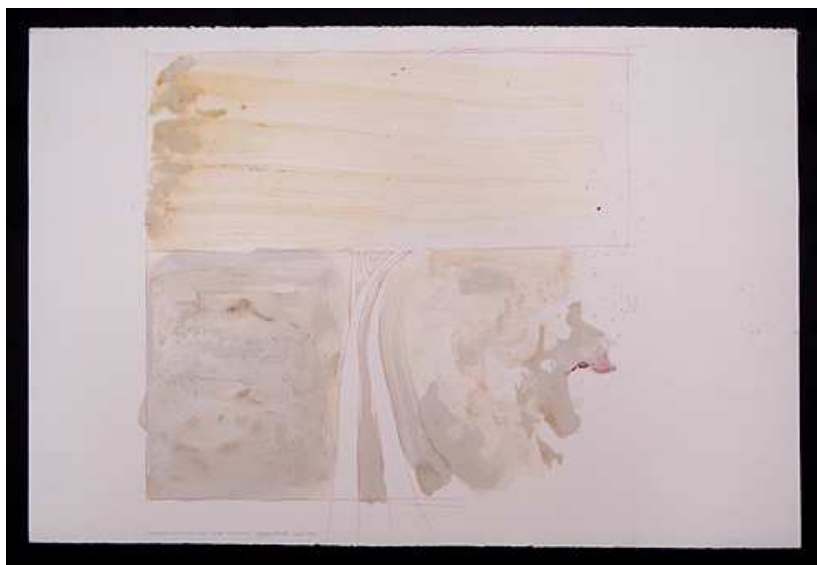


Fig. 10. *I recall a cold, white wing*, (after Sylvia Plath), 2003,
Conté crayon, wax, dammar varnish, oil, 25.75" x 38"

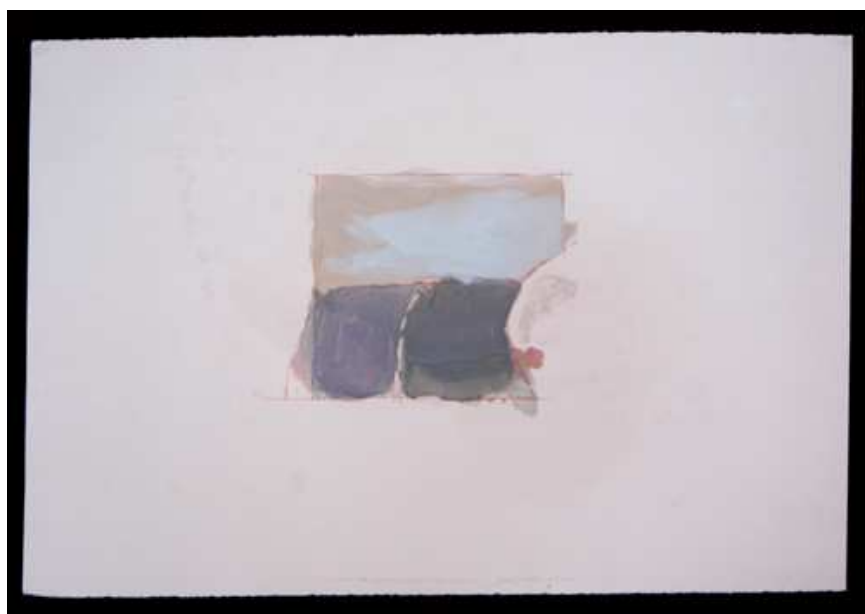


Fig. 11. *A process in the weather of the world*, (after Dylan Thomas), 2003,
oil, Conté crayon, wax, on paper, 25.75" x 38"

The experience of this semester opened my eyes to a path that connected my history and experience to my expression. I discovered a way to access what is most important to me and translate that into a visual language. My work was beginning to reflect an inner vision, to communicate something of the essence of my thought, to emit a poetic presence that is a significant part of me. I had transformed my process of research, planning, designing, and experimentation from one that was primarily formal to one that was more intuitive, produced by an organic response. I was placing my trust in my muses.

CHAPTER 3

LANDSCAPE AS SUBJECT

Near the end of a lecture in Twentieth Century Art History, Dr. Scott Koterbay was discussing Camille Pissarro. He asked an interesting question, “What does it mean to an artist to be painting landscape today”? I had not before considered that among those aware of art history and the contemporary art world that there may occur a division among artists whose subject matter is figural, still-life, landscape, nonrepresentational, conceptual, or any other genre. Neither had I considered there is any definite subject matter and content correlations that necessarily exists among those concerned with any issue; be it feminism, politics, human rights, animal rights, war, corruption, moral disintegration, society, economic injustice, and environmental; or any strictly formal concern such as color, transparency, light, volume, and naturalism.

Since the heady days of the late nineteenth century, as Modernity was expanding to challenge the social, economic, and political roles of humankind, artists have been aggressively, ceaselessly challenging their roles and the functioning of art in the world. The media used to express their concerns have expanded to encompass the totality of experience from found objects to the use of esoteric technologies to the presentation of pure idea. The demarcations between the most basic distinctions, two-dimensional art, three-dimensional art, photographic art, electronic art, and performance art are blurred and interwoven. The use of aesthetic theory, psychoanalytic readings, and philosophical speculation to construct and guide artistic investigations is ubiquitous. It seems

no longer possible to arbitrarily categorize artists based upon choices they make while executing their work.

What does it mean to me to be an artist working in landscape today? From my experience it means the same things that it means for Eric Fischl and Jenny Saville to be using the figure as a departure point, for Marina Abramovic to be using performance, for Rachel Whiteread to cast negative space, for Wolfgang Laib to use milk and marble, for Julie Heffernan to explore symbolism, or for Gregory Crewdson to use elaborate cinematic method and technology to create still photographs. I place myself in their company as an individual exploring the essence of the experience of existence in time and space. The language I choose to articulate my concerns with at the present is landscape.

Generally, I believe it is difficult to determine intent based on subject matter or form. For Plato the production of the artist was illusion, a dangerous illusion that seduced one to acknowledge "...a close, warm, affectionate relationship with a part of us which is, in its turn, far from intelligent". He offered the analogy of using a mirror to create everything around one, to illustrate that the images created by an artist are mere appearances of real objects. The artist is knowledgeable only about these appearances of reality and those who admire his work are accepting fiction as truth. (Lamarque, Sartwell, 14-25). In the Jacques Lacan concept of the mirror stage is an interesting correlation. Briefly, there is a time in an infant's early development when it can identify a reflection in a mirror as itself. A chimpanzee, at this point having greater instrumental intelligence than the child, will discover the image is incapable of interaction and will disregard it. The human infant continues to be intrigued by the relationship between the dynamics of the image with the reflected environment and the

realization that it is the duplication of its own body in space. Thus begins the process of establishment of the *ego*, constructed based on this external, fictional image. The *imago* continues this reliance on externals (primarily language) for defining one's relation to the world. (Fink, 3-4). I think that art does function much of the time as a mirror. An object, part of the world but external to the viewer, solicits a reaction, a response, or a conclusion that is relative to the experience of the viewer. In viewing Pollock's *One: Number 31, 1950* and *Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist)*, any number of interpretations and comparisons will be made by observers. Some will make little differentiation between the two, some will dismiss them, some will be fascinated by texture and color, some will see analogies to the complexity and chaos of life, and there will be countless other readings, based on what the viewer brings to and extrapolates from the event. However, what we see in any object may find no confirmation in the artist's intent. It is not a flaw; it is a consequence of our reflection in the mirror.

There are painters for whom landscape serves as a medium to explore a wide range of content and concerns that are not subjectively associated with the landscape. An artist who provides insight to me is Tula Telfair. She writes about her work:

"... I attempt to investigate how our perceptions of reality are colored by context, experience and boundaries of memory. I assemble and organize disparate elements and shifts of space and time in order to question the traditionally static nature of the painted image. ... I have been making polytychs by combining landscape panels with panels of pure color to investigate how we accumulate information, one image defining and informing another." (Snyderman-Works.com)

Her work seems to reference the majestic American landscape painting schools of the nineteenth century, but when examining the titles one sees that she is considering more than awe-inspiring vistas and manifest destiny.



Fig. 12. *Stretching the Limits*, 2000, Tula Telfair, oil on canvas, 72" x 108",
used by permission of Tula Telfair

Titles such as *Seeing Nature as a Historically Preferred Site, A Series of Exclusions That Become Significant Only in Opposition*, or *Obscured to the Eye Apparent on the Map* give us an opportunity for inquiry, doubt, and predication as to the artist's objectives. There is a level of textual ambiguity imposed on the visual complexity, providing a narrative without a specific context. The forms of the landscapes themselves, while often dramatic and idealized, are not spatially exaggerated or distorted. The compositions are utterly contemporary, often

involving a marked cropping of the foreground that serves to force the viewer into the pictorial space. Robert Fishko remarks of Telfair's paintings:

"... each painting is a continuum, a time path that includes remembrances of what preceded and anticipates what will follow. ... (the paintings) magnify our approach and deepen our desire to penetrate the suggested story of the landscape". (2-3).



Fig. 13. *Obscured to the Eye Apparent on the Map*, 2001, Tula Telfair, oil on canvas, 79" x 100"
used by permission of Tula Telfair

Telfair also creates work outside of the grandiosity of the great American landscape. I respond more deeply with these objects, such as *Obscured to the Eye*

Apparent on the Map, 2001. Compositionally this work follows a more reductive direction and replaces the overt mysteriousness with an atmosphere that is tranquil yet suspenseful. The result is a clarification of the drawing that allows the form of the compositional elements to be more dominant.

I was, for a lengthy period, unsure of Telfair's use of rectangles of colored materials on the edges of her paintings. These areas seemed contradictorily graphic, an afterthought. I felt that in the paintings of imposing panoramas these devices read as decorative, being a superfluous addition to the frame, as in a colored mat. However, in compositions such as *Obscured to the Eye Apparent on the Map, 2001*, the more intimate subject treatment seems to functionally allow an integration of the solid color border areas into the object. They begin to assume softer formatting qualities that allow a continuation of the picture plane. Telfair writes:

"Since 1993, I have been making polytychs by combining landscape panels with panels of pure color to investigate how we accumulate information, one image defining and informing another." (Snyderman-Works.com)

Although I am still pondering the solid colored areas in much of her work, I am sure that she is confident that they are suiting her intentions. Thinking about this has aided me in accessing my own fascination with edges.

CHAPTER 4

THE EDGE

The awareness of the edge and the function of the edge are of primary importance in my process. My foremost intent is to declare that the total object is to be experienced and every aspect to be considered while viewing. The edges, though emphasized, are seldom specifically defined as a point of termination. Even when the support is panel or stretched canvas, I am conscious and deliberate about what is happening at the edge and how it is affecting the gestalt of the work. These objects are not moments isolated, frozen in time, or selected and distanced from distractions. I consider my compositions to be fragments of larger observations, a contemplation of an idea that struggles toward resolution but finds no conclusion.

Borders often exist, functioning in several ways. Formally, the borders are positioned to clarify and reinforce the visual structure, being instrumental in forcing the spatial relationships in the picture plane. The gestural quality of the marks asserts the artificiality and affirms the surface, which is important to the autonomy of the object. The border may be given a more active role in the composition by an application of a medium such as paint, wax, or shellac. It is not a precisely rendered frame. There are crucial incidents along the perimeter that are a result of a manipulation of medium, or a subtle, deliberate relinquishing of control in the mark making. Often the borders bear witness to the history of the work. Accidental events such as smudges, smears, drips, hair, debris, media residue, dust, and fingerprints are allowed to survive and participate in the presentation. Consequentially, there is a relationship between

those and similar occurrences inside the border. They serve as reveals to the process and to a blurring of the object with its environment, bringing it into the world. They are intended to allow the subject to extend beyond the picture plane and promote the understanding that the conscious idea, the thought process, and the subconscious source of the object are a continuum.

I am aware that the landscape is a transitory reality. The forces of nature, animal activity, and human intervention or reticence have dramatic effects that can be immediate or gradual. My work often explores this transient aspect, which relates directly to the temporal nature of biological life. The nonspecific borders focus the observer to the present state of the subject without denying the past history or ignoring the fact that change is inevitable.



Fig. 14. *And even among families, the burden of forgetfulness*, 2006, charcoal, oil, wax, powdered pigments on commercial printing kraft paper, 40" x 71",

The borders and edges evolved from my sketchbook practice. I begin drawing and at some point need to make decisions as to the composition and picture-plane relationships. The compositions develop freely, the image growing where it needs to and being cropped and redirected by the borders.

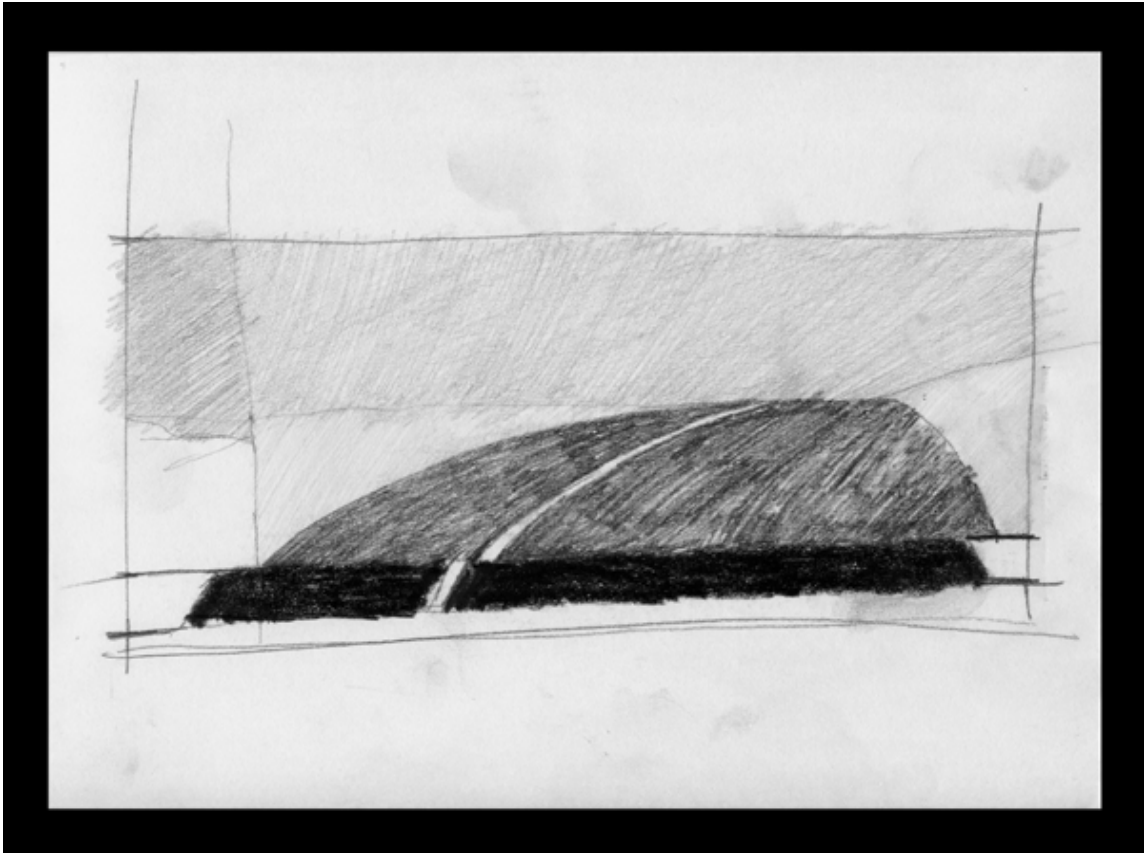


Fig. 15. *Study: Risking tension and slip (after Eliot)*, 2003,
graphite on paper, 8.5" x 11"

Another factor that makes awareness of the edge important to my process is my practice of graphic design. There are multiple edge considerations to deal with in combining text and imagery with distribution channels. Any graphic design application always resides in a specific format with specific tolerances dependent

upon the means of reproduction. An image that must appear on a two-gram vial of medicine, a two-column newspaper advertisement, a tapered drinking cup, an airplane, and an internet web page faces distinctly different preparation scenarios. The visual relationships between the complex edges of text against text against hard or soft borders of photographs, illustrations, and other imagery must be critically evaluated within the total pattern and massaged to result in a cohesive, intentional effect. The design must maintain its integrity and legibility within the physical tolerances of each final state.

In the fall of 2003 while I was involved with the second iteration of the road project, New York Studio School gallery director and art critic David Cohen suggested I look at the work of Sylvia Plimack Mangold.

I was unfamiliar with her work and surprised at how much the paintings that she was producing from the late seventies through the mid-eighties resonated with my work.



Fig. 16. *Schunnemunk Mountain*, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, 1979, oil on linen, 60.125" x 80.125" used by permission of Dallas Museum of Art

What appears to be masking tape left attached to the painting is actually a tromp l'oeil rendering of tape. Beginning in the mid-1970s Plimack Mangold began painting naturalistic, almost photorealistic images of rulers and yardsticks on her

paintings. Some were depicted on floors and in receding perspective. The work evolved to contain only the rulers and masking tape on the surface of the canvas. This is an emphatic attention to the edge, which I found fascinating. This is what the artist says about her edge treatment:

“It brings to mind my confusion as a student when the work aroused more interest as I was painting it than when I completed it. I like the issue of complete vs. incomplete. One state is more alive, the look is more vital, . . . and it is enclosing the energy of an attitude that is most important”. (Brutvan, 29).



Fig. 17. *The Inversion*, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, 1984, oil on linen, 60" x 100",
used by permission of the Brooklyn Museum of Art

I have often experienced the same thing with my work and the work of other students. Many times I prefer my studies to the more finished pieces that result.

I relish in examining an artist's studies and preparatory work because it is an insight into the creative process of the artist.

At the time of David Cohen's critique, I was using wide, clear reinforced packaging tape to join papers, often with different types of paper. I worked on the object before joining the parts so marks

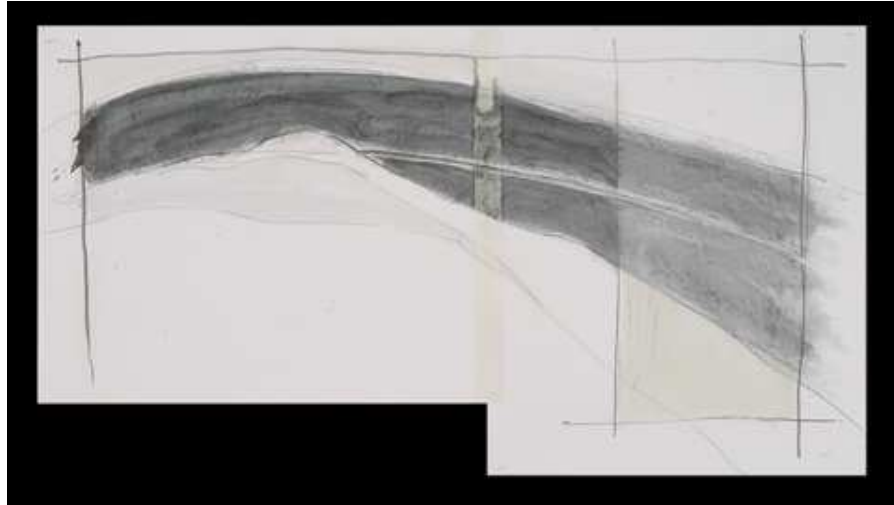


Fig. 18. *Accepting the arm of her protector (after Lowell)*, 2003, charcoal, oil, tape on joined paper, 32" x 58"

could be seen beneath the tape. I would paint over the tape also. I was thinking of this as a fragmenting and mending. The mending was not perfect and blended. It was like scar tissue, strong, but visible and tactile. These images were created near the end of the investigation. The road had become a gestural field and more abstract in my thought as well as image.

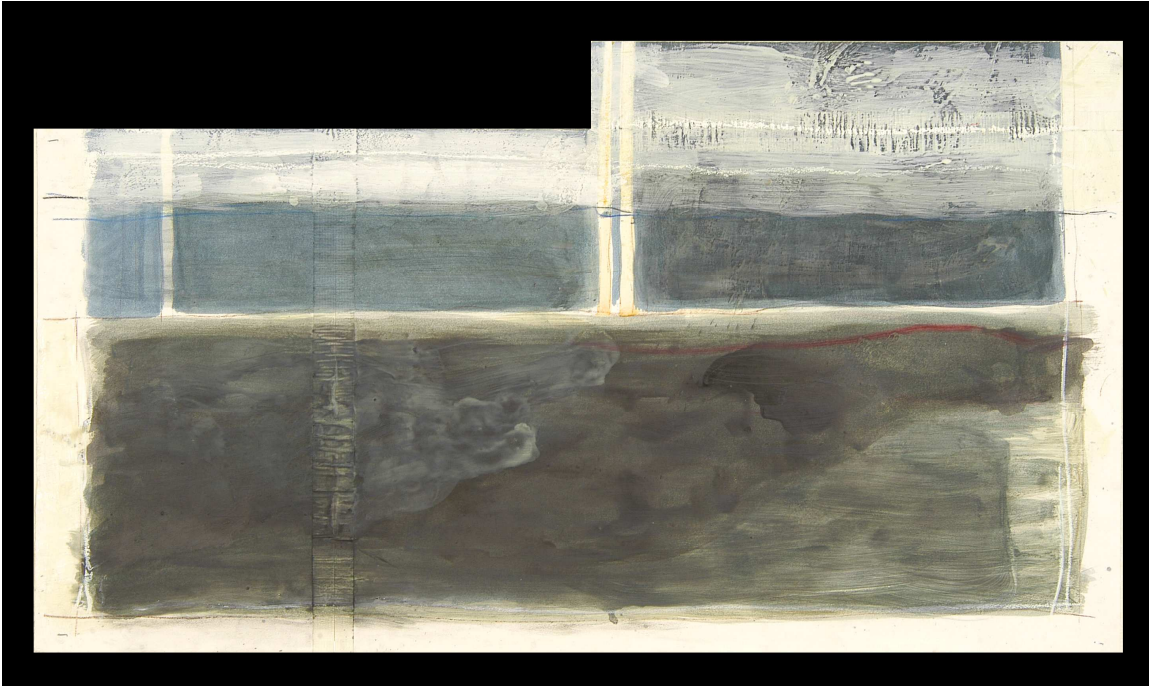


Fig. 19. *It'll fall all of a sudden, like yesterday (after Beckett)*, 2003, charcoal, oil, oil stick, wax, tape on joined paper, 32" x 64",

CHAPTER 5

PAUL CROWTHER

Art and Embodiment

Dr. Scott Koterbay recommended a study of Paul Crowther to me. He felt that Crowther's ideas were relevant to my approach for the production of art. I acquired several books written by Paul Crowther and his major influence, the French philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. I found the readings to be helpful and insightful into my experience of being an artist. I am able to find within their concepts an affirmation of some of the thoughts I have had about the nature of the creative experience and how it relates to the aesthetic experience. I will summarize the basic content of my research paper and afterward explain how it applies to my art.

In Art and Embodiment, From Aesthetics to Self-Consciousness, Paul Crowther postulates a theory, definition, and function for art by its relationship to the self-conscious being experiencing the world as embodied subject. Crowther elucidates his ideas with an expressive language, revealing his obvious passion and respect for what he sees is the necessary role of art in the human experience.

Let us first look at Crowther's definition of art and then work to see how he arrives at it:

"The work of art is an original symbolically significant sensible manifold, whose meaning can only be gathered through direct acquaintance, and whose originality is internally related to the existence of its specific creator

or creative ensemble...manifolds of this sort enhance and reflect the interaction of factors necessary to self-consciousness at the level of perception itself". (187)

Essential to the development of his ideas is the staging of various reciprocal interactions. The key relationship, extracted from Merleau-Ponty's theme of the primacy of embodiment, he calls ontological reciprocity. (2). According to Merleau-Ponty, the body and its operations make consciousness possible. Not strictly a mental function, consciousness is a result of the integral operations of all of the senses as the body relates and habituates itself to the external world. (41-42). As embodied subjects, humans do not just stare out upon an external world but engage in a constant and continuously changing process in the world of senses with *Otherness* (generally, other beings and things). Otherness cannot be held in a stable pattern because there is always more to be discovered, to be perceived, to be dealt with in any moment of cognition. This struggle and participation with Otherness is enacted as a combination of all of the body's sensory, motor, and affective capacities operating as a unified field. Through human evolution, the resultant physical and social interactions became ever more unified and complex, developing into language, the capacity for rational understanding, and a sense of individuality. Crowther claims that this process suggests this sense of our self is not a private thing. This sense of individuality is a function of the reciprocal relationship between our peculiar embodiment and the external physical and social circumstances in which we situate ourselves and are situated by forces beyond our influence. This reciprocity is also causal as it enables us to resolve Otherness as source of stimulus, to allow it contour, direction, and meaning; defining it as a world. Our structure as embodied subject and the structure of the world share an interdependent relationship.

Crowther points out that any experience between the embodied subject and the world interweaves rational, sensory, affective, and socio-historical factors into an integral whole. For our body, this experience is pre-reflective, and we do not attempt, and cannot consciously separate the different factors. Since all of the elements operate to form a whole, if any one of them is altered, it results in a different experience.

Faced with the inseparability of the factors in ontological reciprocity with the world, how can we come to a full and explicit understanding of experience? Reflectively, we can analyze the elements involved in a particular experience but not without changing the structure of the experience. The unity and the experiential quality of the reciprocity are lost. The problem here is that philosophy can explain the immediacy of ontological reciprocity only by application of a retroactive, reflective operation. Between the two is an abyss where the abstract concepts of philosophy cannot retrieve the corporeality of ontological reciprocity.

Crowther here declares that the total experience of the embodied subject in the world, the ontological reciprocity, can be explored, expressed, and understood in the creation and appreciation of art. The process of making art mirrors the process of the holistic experience of person's immersion in the world, the ontological reciprocity, involving an internal relation between the existence of the specific artist and the resulting artifact. Art consists, using Crowther's terminology, in the construction of 'sensuous manifolds' consisting of 'symbolically significant form'. Sensuous manifolds are complex wholes perceived by the senses and manifested in imagination or through emotional

identification. Such entities may be predominately physical (clay, stone, paint, sound) or linguistic (poems, plays, literature, language used expressively).

Symbolically significant form has three senses. The first is descriptive and assumes the adoption of some overtly representational format. Through use of a formalized syntactic and semantic code the work refers to some facet of the world other than itself (sculptural and pictorial representations, literature). Another descriptive sense is less formalized and based on culturally established associations. Music described in terms of mood, emotion, or gesture and non-objective visual art fall into this category. A third sense is honorific and evidenced when some object such as a piece of ceramics is transcendent in its functionality to the extent that it makes us aware of its superiority. The functionality is equivalent to the subject matter in representational art. In all three senses it is the integral focalization of the conceptual and the material that creates a symbolically significant sensuous manifold, enabling art the capacity for expression of something approaching the richness and depth of our experience in ontological reciprocity.

Crowther suggests that art is philosophically significant because of this quality. Furthermore, his argument develops to state that such expression is in actuality a need of the self-conscious itself. He finds in the concept of human ecology a juncture of ideas and notions to explore for their relationship to ontological reciprocity. Human ecology addresses the interactions of the self-conscious life form with the environment and other species in psychological as well as biological states. For the health of the entire system the reciprocity between the subject and the objects of its experience should exist in a harmonious equilibrium. We seek to be recognized by those others we recognize at the level

of interpersonal relationships and objective externalizations or artifacts actualized. This desire to realize the acknowledgment of our ontological reciprocity by the realm of Otherness is the impetus for the creative activity.

To be totally conscious of itself, a subject must be cognizant of being the object of perception to other sentient beings. The subject is aware it is sharing the same spatio-temporal continuum in a casual relationship with other agents. A poetic thought from Merleau-Ponty's The Visible and Invisible is germane:

“For the visible present is not *in* time and space, nor, of course, outside of them: there is nothing before it, after it, about it, that could compare with its visibility...time and space extend beyond the visible present, and at the same time they are *behind* it, in depth, in hiding. The visible can thus fill me and occupy me only because I who see it do not see it from the depths of nothingness, but from the midst of itself; I the seer am also visible.”(113).

Our relationship with Otherness is inherently unstable, with both other persons and objects being from time to time discordant. Regardless of the strength of our caring for another person, we cannot always intimately connect with that person. He quotes Jacques Lacan, “You do not see me from where I see you”, illustrating to Crowther the fact that the reciprocity between subject and object of experience is unstable, needing external assistance to be achieved. (6).

Once again, it is art that has the capacity to reconcile this fracture because art as a symbolically significant sensuous manifold has been created from an internal relation between experience and artifact. The work of art is a reflection of our manner of embodied presence in the world, disclosing the significance of this presence and thereby facilitating a harmony between subject and object of

experience, and accomplishing the full realization of self. This in essence means that art is the conservation of human experience itself.

Throughout my production of art during the past four years I have pushed the work in many conceptual, formal, and technical directions. I have discovered methods of creating seductive surfaces and haunting imagery. Never allowing myself to be satisfied with the status quo, I have abandoned or altered these directions to search for something else. I remember a critique from George Moldovan, a painting professor during my undergraduate studies. After a long struggle, I had in a previous project found a radical solution to make a painting work. I applied the same solution to a subsequent painting at the onset of the process. Mr. Moldovan told me that it is not productive to repeat one's successes. Painting is not an application of formulas and devices but evolves, building upon previous experiences without rote copying of them. I have always retained that idea in all of my creative activities, whether painting, graphic design, or volunteer gratis work. Like most artists, I do have favorite medium that I am comfortable with and tend to use habitually. I often remind myself of advice from a current professor, Mira Gerard, and deliberately seek experiences with materials and problems that are less familiar.

There are a couple of common threads unifying my entire art production, regardless of any conceptual or formal aspect. There is always an emphatic acknowledgment of the physicality of the object. A technique may appear arcane, but it is never disguised. The materiality is important to me and there is no attempt to create illusions that mask the medium or the support. Another aspect is the importance of the image and integrity of the aesthetics. In spite of the

emphasis on surface, materiality, and physicality, they are secondary to the image and intended to be noticed after the impact of the image has registered.

The connection between my experience in the world and my experience in art making has been difficult to articulate. I know that my understanding of the meaning of my existence is tied to the physical process of bringing my art objects into the world. Crowther's ideas have clarified and elucidated many aspects of the meaning of being an artist. I take from Crowther that art is the totality of one's internal and external experiences unified and embodied in an artifact, that because of this the object has a significance in existing, and that its existence can offer opportunities for epiphany.

CHAPTER 6

SCIENCE AND ART

English Romanticist John Constable remarked in an 1836 lecture before the Royal Institution of Great Britain:

“Painting is a science, and should be pursued as an inquiry into the laws of nature. Why, then, may not landscape be considered as a branch of natural philosophy, of which pictures are but experiments?” (Goldwater and Treves, 273).

Constable’s reference was to his belief that painting was a skill learned through instruction and observation and that the best paintings were but an inferior copy of a small sampling of nature’s effects. (Goldwater and Treves, 271). Taking this quote out of the context of Constable’s thought and interpreting it with the benefit of recent history offers a more personal resonance for me. I find the concepts of theoretical physics fascinating and seductively intriguing. In high school, even though most of my personal time was directed toward creative activity, I majored in mathematics and science. Guidance counselors, teachers, and adults in my life encouraged me to study these areas to prepare myself for a lucrative, productive career. I was not taking their concern lightly, being serious and involved in my studies. The traditional formulas, proofs, and laws we learned were absolute and always applicable in our world. However, in later years, through independent studies I came across some other real world physics that seemed like science fiction. I was aware of words and terms such as quantum physics, wormholes, relativity, uncertainty, probability, and spacetime, but discovered I had no idea of their scientific meanings and implications.

Amazingly, these futuristic sounding ideas date back to the early twentieth century.

The postulations of physicists such as Niels Bohr, the director of the Institute for Theoretical Physics in Copenhagen, seemed outrageous in the nineteen twenties, and to a great extent still do today. The nature of the world of atoms and the mechanics that govern their behavior was one of the primary concerns of physicists. Bohr made the assertion that it was impossible to apply classical mechanics to this problem because there is no deep reality, meaning that the subatomic realm does not contain classical objects. He insisted that at the subatomic level causality does not exist. The phenomena of the world we observe is real, but its macrostructure cannot be understood or described by the same physical laws. In the subatomic world no actual event ever happens; there is only potential and possibility. A quantum possibility becomes a fact when an experiment is devised and a measurement is performed. In essence, we have created its existence by the act of observation. For Bohr, this was not scientific metaphor or esoteric mathematics. He insisted that there was no quantum world at all. The only thing that exists is abstract quantum description. (Herbert, 16-17).

The concepts of Bohr and his colleagues have been met with skepticism by important physicists such as Albert Einstein; however, they have experienced wide spread acceptance. Hungarian-born John von Neumann, in 1932, put the physicists' theories into a rigorous mathematical structure and published what would become the definitive guide to quantum mechanics. His proofs lead him to the same conclusion that physical objects have no attributes without the presence of an observer's consciousness. Mathematically, his work insists that matter cannot be made of ordinary objects because the nature of an electron is

measurement-dependent (one must make a predetermination to measure it either as a wave or as a particle). (Herbert, 47, 48, 148).

The importance of the measurement process cannot be over-emphasized. One of the cornerstones of atomic research was recognized and articulated by Werner Heisenberg while working with Bohr in Copenhagen. In measuring the electron a microscope is used that employs a light of extremely short wavelength. However, the shorter the wavelength of light used, the greater is the energy of light pressure exerted on the electron, resulting in the electron recoiling. Thus, when attempting to measure the velocity of an electron, it is moved out of position. A position measurement likewise has an effect on the velocity. The more precise one tried to measure one attribute, the more impact on the opposite value. The amount of disturbance is indeterminable. We can only measure and determine one property of any particle; any other properties it possessed before we looked at it have changed and are uncertain. This is the gist of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. (Cassidy, 228).

Further attempts to describe the characteristics of this mysterious environment seem more metaphysical than scientific. An accepted concept is that there are no partitions, no separateness in the atomic arena. There instead exists a seamless whole that underlies the entire universe. Once again, this is not a metaphor such as "We are stardust, billion-year old carbon" (Mitchell). On a subatomic plane, we are not only connected to everything, we are the same thing. This is a basic precept that directs the prediction, experimentation, interpretation, and implementation of data (Capra, 68).

One of the more eccentric theories seriously pursued in research is the many-worlds concept. Hugh Everett suggested that even though we can only measure one course of a particle, it would actually take all possible paths. Expanded to encompass more than a single experiment, Everett suggested that as the universe was evolving, it continually split and followed every possible permutation. These universes exist in other dimensions, inaccessible to and each unaware of the others. The rationality for this theory is that mathematically it offers solutions to equations and paradoxes. However, its byproduct is a philosophical quandary that is difficult to manage. Although not gaining much support when proposed in 1957, recent work by Stephen Hawking suggests that there are an infinite number of self-contained universes, connected to ours by minute wormholes. This is not just imaginative hyperbole but mathematically sound speculation when defining the observable characteristics of our universe. (Kaku, 262-264).

In 1905 Albert Einstein, through imaginative reasoning and theoretical calculations declared that as the speed of light is approached an observer would notice such bizarre effects as time slowing down, mass increasing, the physical dimension of length decreasing (Greene, 47-50). (All of these deductions have since been proven by direct experiments [Davies and Gribbin, 85]). This slowing of time has the effect of the present expanding to encompass the past and the future. There is no further change wrought by the passage of time (Shlain, 125). Brian Greene, writing in The Elegant Universe, clarifies this:

“...something traveling at light speed through space will have no speed left for motion through time. Thus light does not get old; a photon that emerged from the big bang is the same age today as it was then. There is no passage of time at light speed.” (51)

In The Tao of Physics, Fritjof Capra compares the edicts of atomic physicists to the ideas in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. His use of a quotation from Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) will summarize my introduction of these topics:

“Time, space, and causation are like glass through which the Absolute is seen ... In the Absolute there is neither time, space, nor causation.” (187).

This is all provocative, but how does this affect my practice of art? The parallel between the production of art and the language of particle physics offers me an alternate way to think and speak about art. It is often difficult to verbalize why a particular kind of mark or a specific image intrigues me. I often approach it rather obliquely and have to search for ideas for which I can draw comparisons.

I can equate the making of an image to the measurement in an experiment. I most often have some predetermined idea of a basic structure, a general plan for how an image will begin and proceed. During the process, unforeseen, random incidents occur. Media may react in surprising fashion. Every line made by a piece of charcoal is unique. Although I know if I apply more pressure the line will be denser or wider, I do not know exactly how it will appear until after I have made it. Often while in the mark making progresses intuitive choices are made, seemingly too fast to have been consciously decided. Forces that are uncertain and hard to quantify influence the result. This aspect of the process is welcomed and exciting. I do not want to know exactly what I am looking for or be able to predict the final outcome. I am willing to let the image be a measurement of some quality that will emerge from the process.

The image is evidence of an observation, and its existence is dependent upon that observation. It may be an objective, perceptual representation of the natural world, generally referential to nature, or a non-objective abstraction, but it is a recording of the artist's vision and dependent upon that observation for its existence. It is always an artificial construct, brought into the real world by a measurement, by an observation.

CHAPTER 7

UNSEEN PROCESSES

Looking at the world we see things via physical functions of light and the effects registered by our optical systems. Another way to think about seeing is that we are making a series of measurements. Our eyes and brains are only reading the light from surfaces. There are unseen processes, layers of them beneath what we visually register. Sometimes there is evidence of history, but how many permutations have there been throughout the entirety of history? In a simple example, let us look at boxes stacked on a pallet. We see the

relationships of the shapes to each other and to their

environment; we are aware of the volume they occupy, and we see their color.

We can know how external factors such as the temperature and direction of light, the presence of humidity, and our viewpoint are affecting our sight. What are the



Fig. 20. *Altar*, 2004, oil, acrylic, charcoal on hardboard, 67" x 48"

factors of which we are unaware? What may be the boxes contents? Is it possible, through presentation of the image, invention used in the drawing, composition, textures, values, and colors, to suggest there are many histories here? Can I imply that this may be more than an arbitrary arrangement or that nothing haphazardly exists in the universe? A choice was made, a measurement taken, and this is the result.

There are other factors that I was exploring with this series of objects. There is an innate compulsion to build and stack, not for only providing physical protection or other utilitarian purposes. We have stacked stones as memorials for loved ones buried, as reminders of battles won or lost, to denote holy places, to track the passage of seasons, to locate ourselves in space and time. Sometimes comprised of a few simple pebbles and other times the elaborately engineered stone construction of the great pyramids, these objects evoke curiosity, reverence, and awe. Through tens of thousands of years, wherever on our planet humans have lived, they have built these stacked structures. There seems something deep and common, something immeasurable from which these rituals arise.



Fig. 21. *Lazarus*, 2004, charcoal, oil, oil stick, wax, on fabric, 59" x 140"

The office I work in has for several years now been located in the middle of a gift wrap printing and manufacturing environment. I see materials of all kinds stacked, from pallets with a few layers of small boxes a few feet high, to boxes or rolls of printing paper over 20 feet high. These huge masses exert a physical and psychological effect I compare to experiencing a Serra or Judd Sculpture. My initial rationale for making life-sized images of the structures was to attempt to articulate these effects. During the working process I discovered that working in a large scale required a different mindset. I felt as though a different part of my brain was being exercised and adapting to new challenges by my learning how to maintain the image quality I desired. I found that the work required more involvement of my entire body to bring the ideas to fruition.

Thomas' Skin, object number 9 in the show, was a breakthrough piece. It was the fifth and final completed painting in my exploration of warehouse subjects during spring semester of 2004. It was the most successful object, and it provided some resolution and logical place to hold the project. (I am still intrigued by the effects this stacked material have on the space and on me. I plan to continue the exploration at some future date). During that semester Mira Gerard was teaching a special topics class in Encaustic technique. Professor John Steele had introduced me to encaustic painting as an undergraduate. At that time I devoted a short amount of time to the method and put it aside. I had, during the previous fall, reintroduced wax into my process and was eager to explore the technique. The course provided that opportunity.

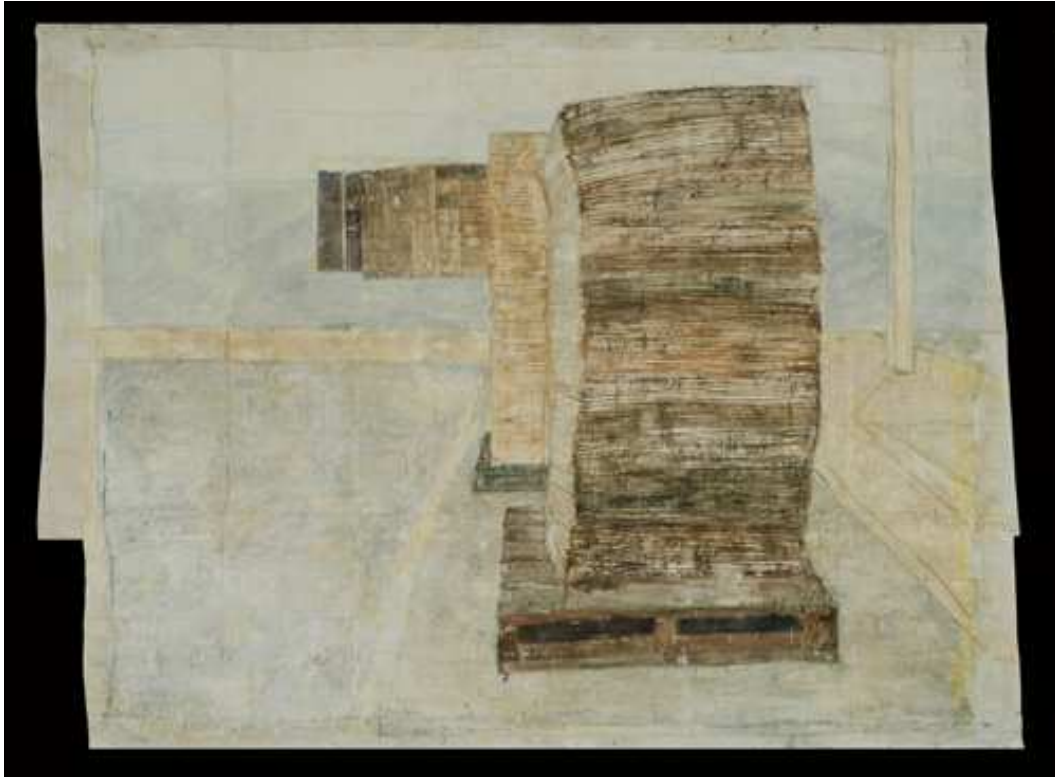


Fig. 22. *Thomas' Skin*, 2004, colored pencil, charcoal, oil, wax, oil stick, on commercial printing board, 79" x 103",

I could have been compared to the proverbial kid in a candy store. I produced several other large encaustic paintings, along with several medium and small sized works during that semester. The painting was intuitive and guided by subconscious forces yet referential to landscape and the stacking of image elements.



Fig. 23. *And we so many, crowding the way*, 2004, paint stick, encaustic on panel,
28" x 47"

CHAPTER 8

CORRUGATED BOARD

For several years I worked extensively in the design of corrugated point-of-purchase displays and shipping boxes. For many people, this humble, honest, ubiquitous material is taken for granted and over-looked, only considered when one needs to pack, carry, or store something.

However, few things are moved from one location to another that do not make that trip in a corrugated

container. In the world of manufacturing, it is

ubiquitous, important, and seriously regarded. The controlled design, purchase, and management of corrugated material can be the difference between a profit and a loss in an inexpensive product.



Fig. 24. *Route*, 2004, corrugation, carpenter's glue, tracing paper, grey cover paper, 14" x 13.75"

Corrugation is composed of a large percentage of recycled paper (sometimes the facing liner will have a significant content of virgin fibers to add strength).

Because the kinds of papers being used are variable, there is a variation in the color of individual production runs. The gamut of hue and value of the warm brown tones is wide. Corrugated board manufactured in Asia has an even wider range, which includes grays and browns with casts of color. This is a headache for designers and vendors trying to match colors and achieve consistent color in printing. However, for an artist who uses corrugation as a medium, it provides a valuable palette.

I have used corrugation as a support and as a medium in assemblages, drawings, and paintings. Figures 24, 25, and 26 are from the fall of 2004. As a point of departure, I executed a series of sketches depicting site plans of our farm.

These sketches are not to scale, not proportional, nor are

they accurate in any aspect. They are a free interpretation of what an edited view might assume when seen from an aerial perspective. The objects themselves have

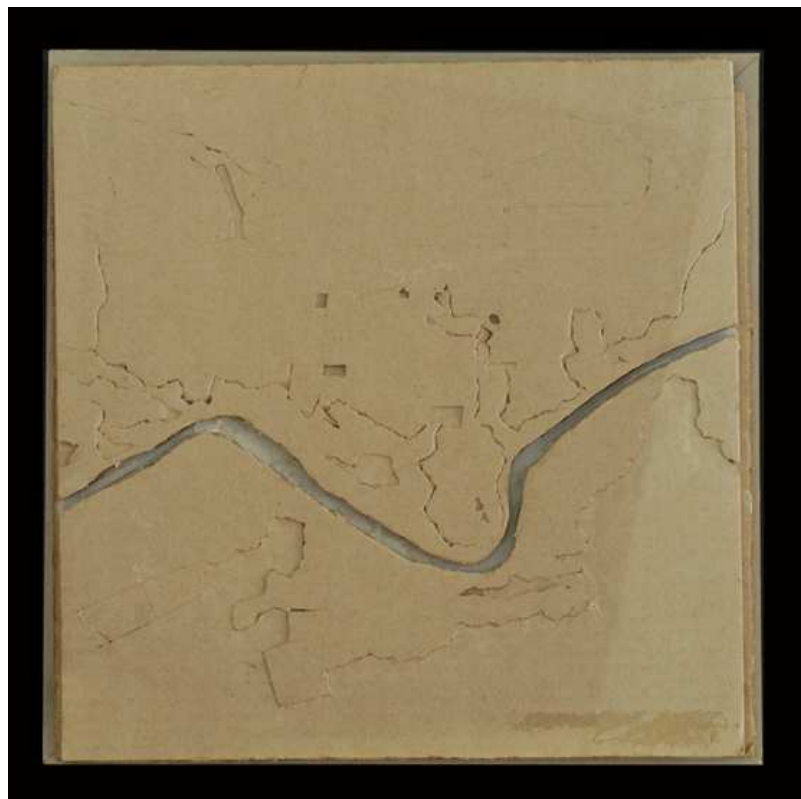


Fig. 25. *Way*, 2004, corrugation, tracing paper, 14" x 13.75"

few marks made traditionally. The images consist of cuts, glue, wax, insertions and laminations of tracing paper, plastic, and different values of corrugated board.

These pieces reference the surface and marks of ancient maps carved into stone or drawn in moist clay. Such Mesopotamian maps were found at Nippur and Nuzi and are among the oldest maps known to be in existence. (Thrower, 14-16). McLuhan explains that ancient maps did not present space as continuous or uniform and resemble

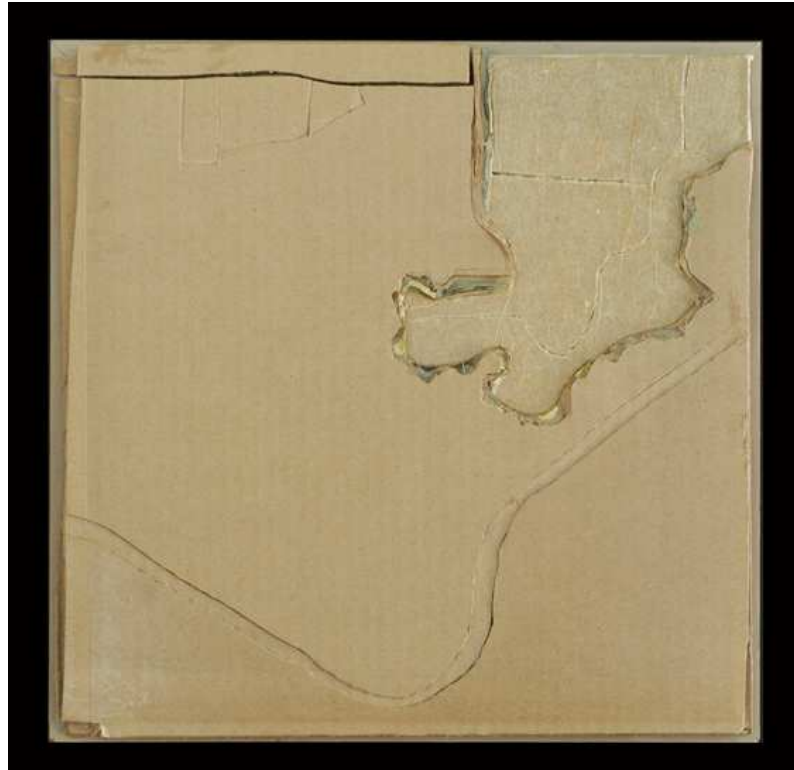


Fig. 26. *Site*, 2004, corrugation, acrylic, tracing paper,
14" x 13.75"

contemporary, nonobjective art. They are more akin to journals of experience than a means to specifically locate one in a physical place. The acquisition of maps was ardently pursued and created a demand for technologies to reproduce them. He intimates that "...without maps and geometry, the world of modern sciences and technologies would hardly exist". (146-147)

I think about these corrugated site plans I have created as responses to physical, psychological, and spiritual involvement with the external world. There is a connection to my emotional relationship with a specific landscape and to the mark of human activity on that land that forms an intriguing visual experience.

This interest in mapping and using corrugation as a medium for it is a part of my current exploratory process. I find that the concerns and intentions of the recent art assume another layer of suggested meaning when translated with this material.



Fig. 27. *What time for a long, late journey?*, 2007, dry pigment, water putty, plaster of Paris, wax, corrugated board, 11.75" x 30.75"

What time for a long, late journey is piece number 11 in the show and is one of several works using corrugation in the current investigation. It is an assembly of four pieces of corrugation glued to a wooden cradle. Through the middle of the

object is a vertical element that can function as a wide line dividing the surface into two segments. I also think of it as a third, narrow panel that creates a subtle triptych. The title is derived from Eliot's poem, "The Journey of the Magi". As with all of the titles in this show, this title was chosen after the piece was completed. The image can be seen as a direct interpretation the mapping of an astrological event. It is easy to think of the three shapes, having similar but individual properties, as representing the three similar, yet unique, entities. The ochre, tan, white, and translucent wax relate to the environment of a sharp, dead winter. A progression of movement towards the horizon acts to actively lead the eye in a journey across and into the picture plane. For me, this object evokes a similar response as does Eliot's poem. The imagery in the work is a response an earlier drawing, shown in fig. 28.

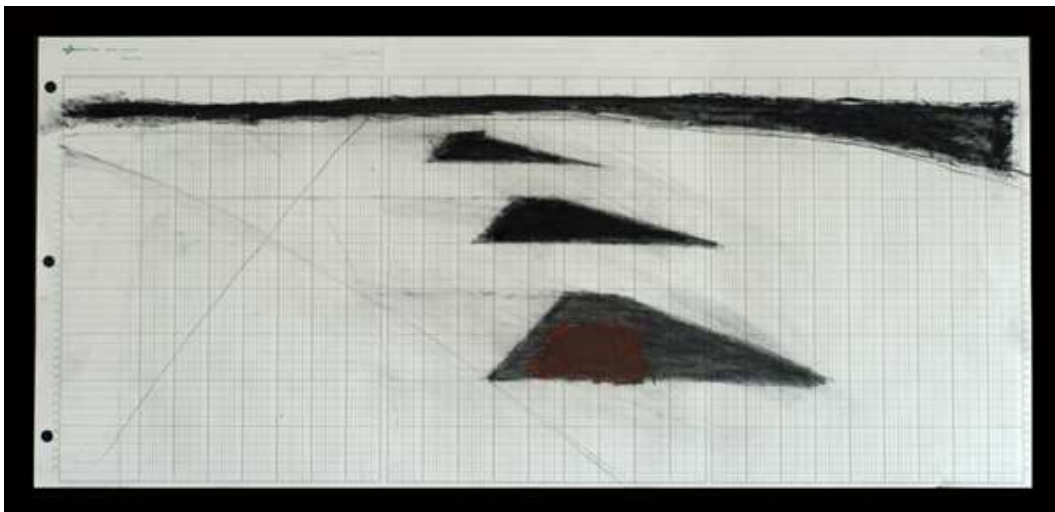


Fig. 28. *Study, Journey*, 2007, charcoal, pastel on ledger paper, 11" x 24.25"

CHAPTER 9

WORKING PERCEPTUALLY

In the spring of 2005 I decided to concentrate on working in a more perceptual fashion. I could not, at that time, articulate exactly why I felt I needed to pursue this direction. I had been looking at Rackstraw Downes (another suggestion from David Cohen) and Toba Khedoori for the past year and suspect their influence was instrumental in my choice.

I was also enrolled in a special topics course covering old masters painting techniques and felt there could be a dynamic relationship between the two explorations. What did happen was that I was able to synthesize a perceptual approach to image making with the expressive mark making I had been developing. I found a path to allow the subconscious to influence the development of the imagery. The previous semester I had began using a large pad of ledger paper I had purchased at a yard sale many years before. I found that the color value, the grid structure, and the small, printed information on the paper established a ground that somehow opened a door for me. I began to use this paper extensively in this perceptual image project.

Rackstraw Downes was, and continues to be, an important influence for my work. Even though my current investigations do not necessarily depict the world in a naturalistic form, I often refer to Downes because of his use of both dramatic and subtle sophisticated geometry. I find a resonance with his color usage and transformation of ordinary subject matter into remarkable images. During my early professional career I worked with architects and engineers, providing

renderings for projects. Downes' frequent use of architectural subject matter is interesting because of my familiarity with having dealt with it in a different aesthetic context.



Fig. 29. *The View from Morningside Heights and 117th Street, 1976-77*,
Rackstraw Downes, oil on canvas, 16.125" x 46.5",
used by permission of Betty Cunningham Gallery



Fig. 30. *Chinati, East Concrete Building Interior*, 1998, Rackstraw Downes,
oil on canvas, 27" x 45.125",
used by permission of Betty Cunningham Gallery

My process for this semester entailed visiting sites multiple times and sketching from similar and different lines of site. I would take these sketches back to the studio and reinterpret the sketched information while allowing my memory of the experience to guide the art making. The results are not photorealistic or meticulously accurate renderings of the subjects. I freely massaged and transformed the shapes to push the visual relationships I observed. The subjects are, however, readily recognizable to anyone familiar with the locations.

The drawing, *Edit of a curved history*, is exhibited work number 4. This is a favorite site that I also visited and painted numerous times during the summer of 2003. The road is still an important feature here but is, visually, in a subordinate role. The title is a literal description of one function of this roadway. The road was built a few years ago to bypass a hairpin curve at the top of a steep grade

that has a history of tragic accidents. This was the last in a series of drawings at this site. Shown on the next page are three of the previous studies.

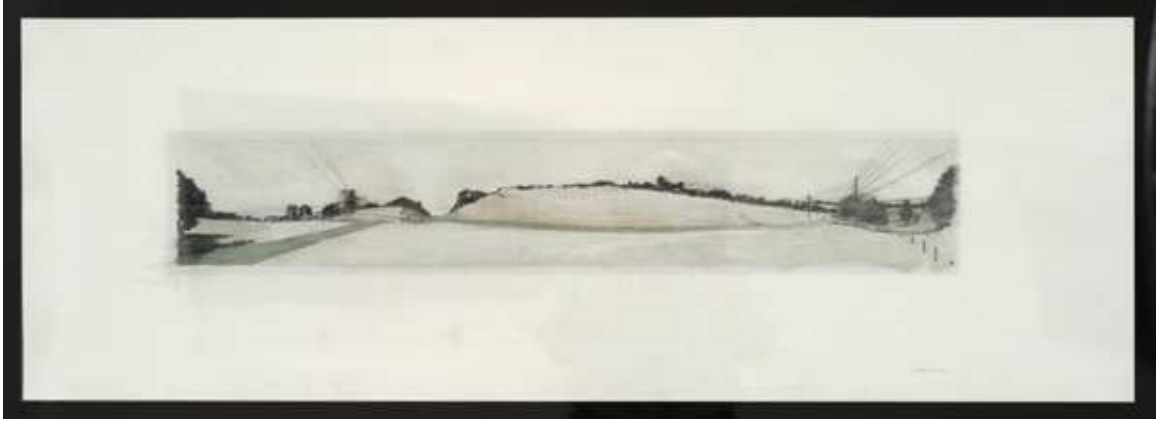


Fig. 31. *Edit of a curved history*, 2005, charcoal, oil, graphite on gessoed clay coated news back, 15.5" x 45"

Fig. 32. *Study, Jones Bridge Road*, 2005, charcoal on paper, 9" x 13"

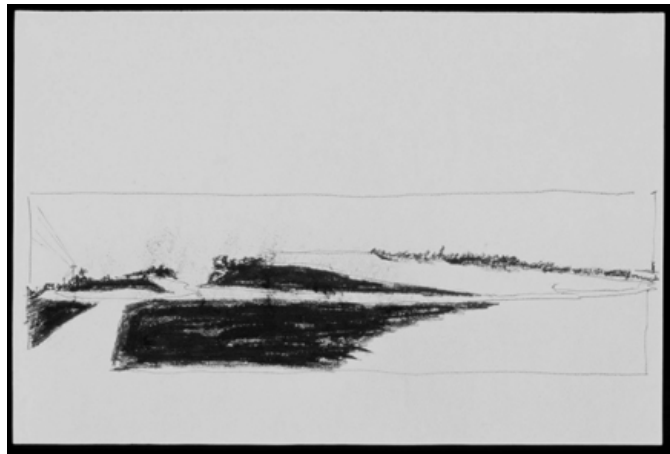


Fig. 33. *Study, Jones Bridge Road*,
2005, charcoal on paper, 9" x 13"



Fig. 34. *Study, Jones Bridge Road*, 2005, charcoal, oil on
paper, 11" x 14"



Piece 5 is titled, *Much of the winter, I read*. It is a pensive drawing taken from a series of sketches made in January. This object uses a found fragment of paper that had been arbitrarily cut and discarded. The irregular edge at the top of the paper relates to the shape created by the background trees. The margins around the image retain smudges that were initially on the paper and marks left by the drawing process.

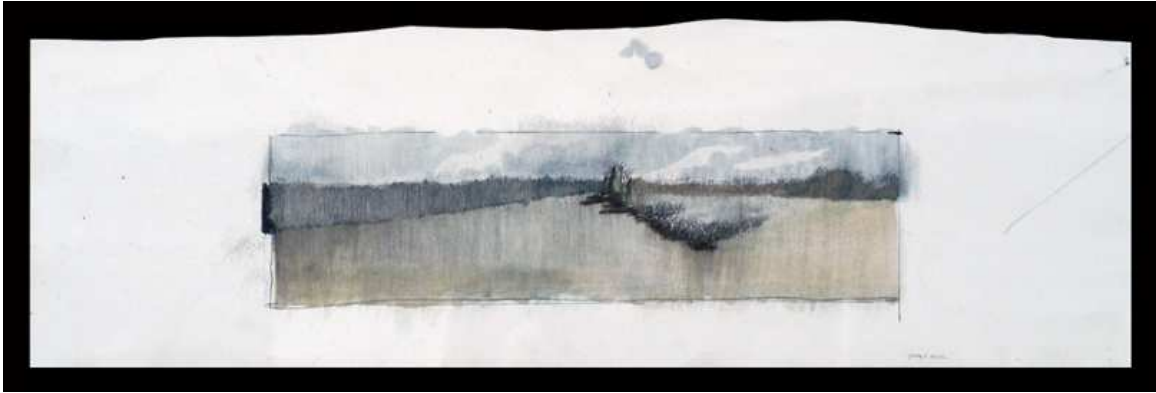


Fig. 35. *Much of the winter, I read*, 2005, charcoal, oil, graphite on gessoed clay coated news back, 13.25" x 42.25"



Fig. 36. *Sybil quiet in dry March*, 2005, charcoal, ink, oil on ledger paper, 14" x 50"

It is interesting how something one sees practically everyday for many, many years suddenly assumes an importance. The circular structure of metal tubing in figure 36 functions to keep a round bale of hay contained so that there is minimal waste by feeding livestock. These feeders are ubiquitous throughout any livestock farming community. I had ignored them in the past, choosing to edit them out as a distraction. Now, they appeared as alien objects, relics of the past, or even torture devices. There is an obvious symbolism with numerous

connotations in the cage-like configuration of the apparatus. This is the link to the title, *Sybil quiet in dry March*. The epitaph to Eliot's "The Waste Land" contains a line from Petronius referring to the Greek oracle, Sybil of Cumae. She has almost completely withered with age and is hanging in a cage (or a bottle, depending upon which translation one reads). The first lines of the poem reference the first lines of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" with its declaration that March was a month of drought. The picture plane is ambiguous, with flattened foreground elements contrasting with an indication of depth in the background.

I continued studying the livestock feeders in the landscape. Lookaway is piece number one in the

show. It is an on-site drawing done nearing the end of the semester.

There was a patch of bright light in the background, near the horizon, where the sunlight was penetrating a break in the clouds. That illuminated spot is the subject of the

drawing and the feeder is a secondary,



Fig. 37. *Lookaway*, 2005, charcoal on paper, 13.75" x 16.75"

supporting element. A gentle tension is present between the livestock path, the feeder, and the horizon. The title is romantic, matching the mood of the drawing. “Lookaway” is the name of our farm and an acknowledgment of a gentle history.

Another artist I was looking at during this period was April Gornik. Her primary interest seems to be a mystical, metaphysical illumination. Dramatic effects of light push many of her paintings to the realm of the sublime. Her deftness in understanding and translating light lends the reproductions of many of her charcoal drawings a photographic quality. There is a hyper-real, cinematic presence in her work that triggers in me a jarring, sensational response.



Fig. 38. *Winding Trees*, 2005, April Gornik, charcoal on paper, 50" x 38", used by permission of April Gornik

The strength of composition is equally strong and emphatic. As with Rackstraw Downes, I study her work more for the sheer inventiveness of spatial relationships. The two examples of her work shown here illustrate my points. Figure 38 is one of her more sedate works, with the acute angles created by the masses of the trees being contained and controlled by the faint fragments of foliage on either side at the top of the picture plane. The subtle contrast of the

vertical trunks connected to the horizon further stabilizes the angular movement. The bold structure of the composition in figure 39 is more typical of the visual impact carried by Gornik's objects. This image is at once both overtly symmetrical and ingeniously asymmetrical. The gestalt is much like that of a Motherwell painting.



Fig. 39. *Slow Light*, 1992, April Gornik, oil on linen, 57" x 120",
used by permission of April Gornik

I was taking a printmaking course in the spring of 2005, concentrating on making monotypes by a variety of techniques. The investigation was completely experimental and fun. The seventh object in the show, *Memory is more than a pattern of thought*, is the most dissonant work in the show. It is a dry toner transfer I made by running laser copies of the images through a printing press and then applying a wash of molten wax. The images had their origin in photographs that were layered with photographs of a drawing made from the same photographs. This composite was printed on a laser printer and laid face

down on a piece of printmaking paper followed by a paper shop towel soaked in acetone. This layered fabrication was run through an etching press with a great amount of pressure applied. I found that it was impossible to predict how the image would turn out. After several printings of this image, I chose the most successful one to keep, destroying the other attempts. This is the last image I have made that is overtly an investigation of the road. There are the same formal considerations that are part of my visual language, such as the horizontal, triptych format, the ambiguity of space, and the atmosphere of history and a quiet tension. Once again, I draw on T. S. Eliot for the title. In "Little Gidding" lines 48 and 49 are:

" . . . And prayer is more
Than an order of words, . . ." (201).

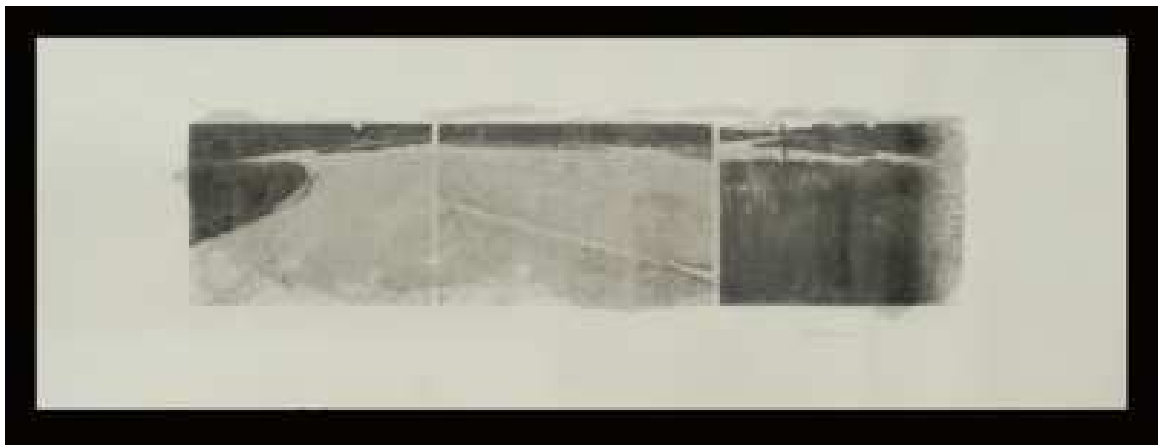


Fig. 40. *Memory is more than a pattern of thought*, 2005, dry toner transfer, wax on paper, 12.75 "x 37.75

CHAPTER 10

LANDSCAPE AND HISTORY

This I know; my histories are fixed fast in the fabric of Eastern Tennessee. Generations of my ancestors and my wife's ancestors have farmed the lands beside of the Nolichucky River. My youth was passed in the Lamar-Embreeville community where my parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts lived and worked. The days did not follow the clock but rather the seasons; the sun, the moon, and the weather set our schedule. The cows had to be milked near dawn and just before dusk. Everything revolved around their biorhythms. When the sun was directly overhead, we sat together and had lunch. After the evening milking we sat together and had supper. Often, after that there was some free time that allowed us to relax. It was a great life, not as romantic as John Denver's songs imply; and not nearly as dramatic as television shows such as *The Waltons* suggest.

Witnessing the selfless effort, tolerance, forgiveness, and perseverance of family and neighbors shaped my attitudes, work ethic, and politics. Witnessing the earth respond to our labor, although not always the way we planned, instilled a respect for the land as an active participant in my existence. This companionship forged with the fields, hills, woods, and riverbanks connects me to the flow of experience from the finiteness of my youth through the fugitive present and plasticity of what is to arrive. My response is more than an appreciation for nature's beauty and a sentimental attachment for home. The images, the sounds, the aromas, the jubilations, the disappointments, the fears, the mysteries are impressed in the fabric of the being I face in the mirror.

That way of life passed from my experience over thirty years ago. I am certain there is some semblance of it in the world, but here it is no longer feasible to practice agriculture the way we farmed. The dynamics of society, industry, and economy that Modernity set into motion caught up gradually for a generation and then overwhelmed us in a few short years. A first cousin now owns what was my grand parent's farm and has an extensive vegetable producing operation that uses dozens of migrant workers. I still go there often, but almost everything is different. None of the original buildings are standing, the maple and cherry trees are gone, there is no livestock, and the riverbank has alarmingly eroded. The land has been reconfigured and repurposed to survive a changing society, a fickle and unforgiving economy. When I drive away, I am proud and contented that this land is still a part of my family and still providing vital and beneficial produce, but I do not look in the rearview mirror.

I have come to realize that the dichotomy between the history of my youth and the ever-growing distance of memory is a primary impetus that has compelled me to make these images over the past four years. I am fortunate to currently live on another old farm by the Nolichucky River. This one has been in my wife's family since the Land Grant era. I love it and frequently transcribe the landforms, trees, buildings, and fences. There are many images in this exhibit of specific locations and others derived from general locations on and around the farm. The landscape of my present provides a passage that allows me to return to the landscape of the past, excavate the mystery, and return whole.

The year 2006, for my family was bittersweet, filled with happy events, fearful conditions, and profound sadness. Our daughter finished her master's program

in May at the University of Tennessee and began teaching in Knoxville, Tennessee. On July 2 we learned my wife had breast cancer. After her surgery we were told the tumors were removed and there was no evidence of cancer in her system. However, on the Friday before Labor Day we were told there was a large tumor in her lower stomach. The fear and disbelief during the weekend was the most intense I had ever faced. We received a phone call from the doctor Monday night. He had just gotten results of the biopsy and the mass was not malignant. It was the most palpable relief I have ever experienced. Six weeks later my father passed away.

My emotional equilibrium was relentlessly challenged. I had had contact with many people from my past. Friends I had not seen in many years exchanged kind words and anecdotes from our youth. They had shared a good part of their teenage summers

helping us with the tobacco, hay, and silage. Their wages paid for their first cars and provided money for movies and records. They too, attributed much of their success to the lessons learned from my father. I found myself inundated with a fresh deluge of memory.

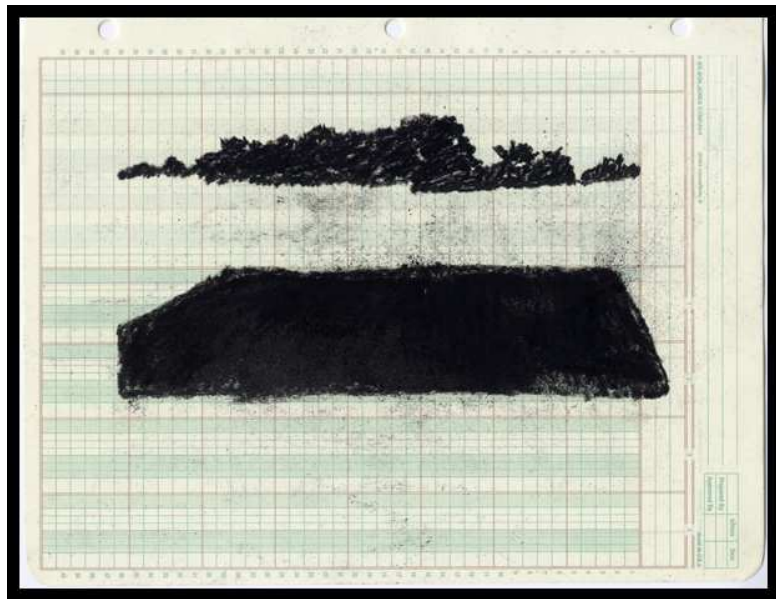


Fig. 41. *Burnt Norton Variations, 4*, 2006, charcoal, turps, fixative, on ledger paper, 8.5" x 11"

This was next to the final semester in my graduate program and I had several ideas I was developing, a new material discovery, and was reasonably satisfied with events transpiring. During the first and second week in November I finished some pieces that had been in progress, and postponed further work to concentrate on a melancholy Thanksgiving. That Friday after Thanksgiving Day I returned to the studio and opened a sketchbook to several drawings I had made around the farm earlier

in the fall. Taking out my favorite tools, a charcoal pencil, a piece of compressed charcoal, and a ledger pad, I began to reinterpret the sketchbook drawings. Once

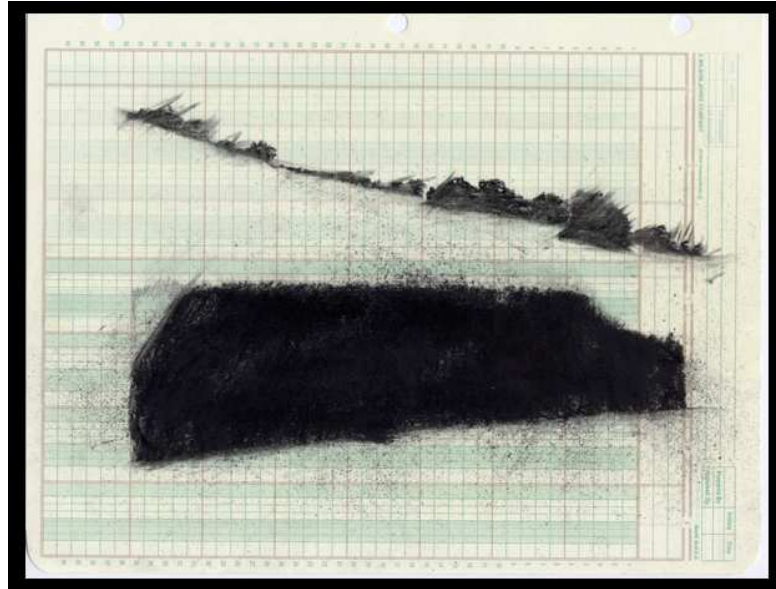


Fig. 42. *Burnt Norton Variations, 5*, 2006, charcoal, turps, fixative, on ledger paper, 8.5" x 11"

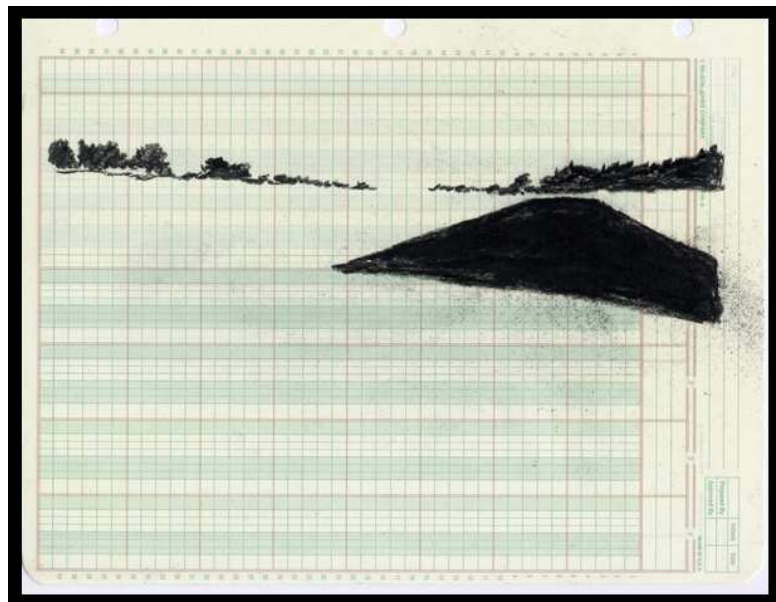


Fig. 43. *Burnt Norton Variations, 6*, 2006, charcoal, turps, fixative, on ledger paper, 8.5" x 11"

again, my subconscious directed the images I was creating. Shadows and Mondrian lines became geometrical polygons in tension with gestural masses describing trees and landforms. The geometry became trapezoids, ambiguously pushing back into the picture plane and flattening the landscape to an abstract pattern. The trapezoids evolved into violent wedges, I was working fast, grinding the charcoal into the paper, and a great deal of residue was scattering around the drawn shapes. To intensify the density of the charcoal in specific areas I selectively brushed on turpentine, again working quickly and allowing splatters of the wet charcoal-turpentine mixture. I sprayed the drawing with a liquid resin fixative out of a pump bottle. The gentle stream of air and liquid displaced by the spray further scattered the charcoal debris. Where the liquid pooled, it dissolved the charcoal, creating subtle stains, washes, and patterns.



Fig. 44. *Burnt Norton variations, the leaves were full of children*, 2006, charcoal, turps, fixative on ledger paper, 10.75" x 23.75"

Sometimes the fixative would cloud and leave whitish fogs. I wasn't sure what these drawings represented but felt I had tapped into something visceral, primordial, and somehow, familiar.

Figure 44 is work number 2 in the exhibit and is the initial drawing of the current investigation. I was not sure what the dark shape in the foreground represented. These rectilinear elements have long been part of my drawing vocabulary, relating directly to the representations of the road. These, however, take on a different emotional characteristic, being less an artificial objectification. They seem to be an ever-existing element in nature, perhaps adapted, revered, and feared by humans, but belonging to the earth.

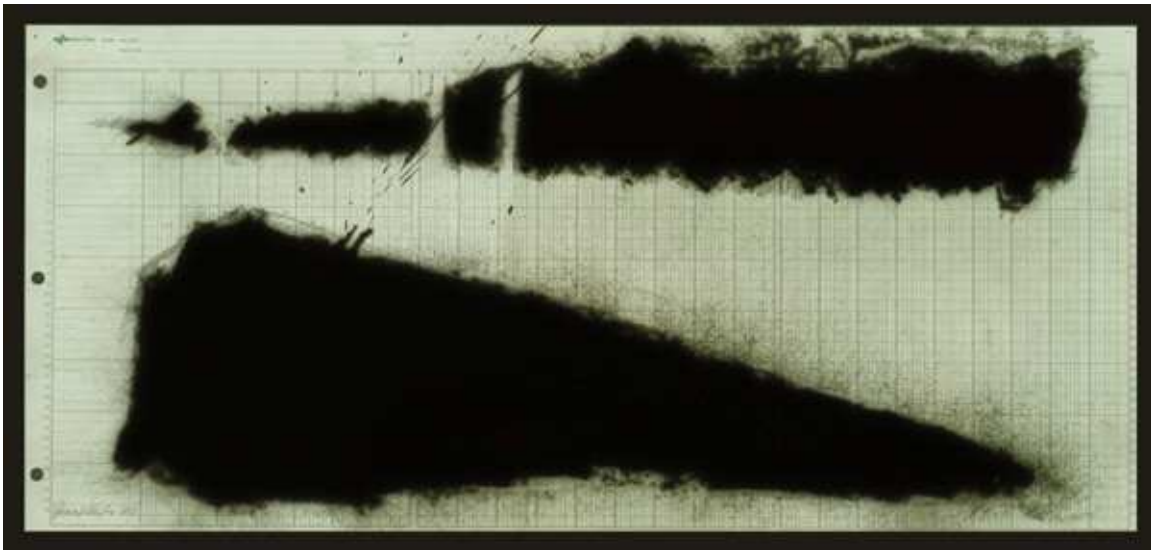


Fig. 45. *Burnt Norton variations, time past and time future*, 2006, charcoal, turps, fixative on ledger paper, 10.75" x 23.75"

Exhibition work number 3 is *Burnt Norton variations, time past and time future*. This drawing was completed in a session a few days later. Here there is an

introduction of a couple of staunchly upright elements created by breaks in the top mass. These negative areas assume an existence apart from the paper ground and are intended to notate the presence of human construction. The shapes are simple and can be seen as recent installations or as artifacts of the past, even a remote past.

An artist I have recently revisited is Ying Kit Chan. His large charcoal drawings refer to the urban landscape and the resultant anxiety created by the conflict between the natural environment and the untidiness of human activity.



Fig. 46. *Locks and Barge*, 1994, Ying Kit Chan, charcoal on paper, 37.8" x 57.875",

used by permission of Ying Kit Chan

(Chan, artscouncil.ky.gov) Sometimes the images are dark and the contrast is subdued as in the two drawings shown below. The drawing is heavy, energetic, and intense to the point of being almost violent. Often the formal emphasis is directed toward the relationships of the shapes he has selected to depict, leaving the content and narrative ambiguous.



Fig. 47. *Industrial Site*, 1992, Ying Kit Chan, charcoal on paper, 42.125" x 84.25",
used by permission of Ying Kit Chan

These qualities of spatial, objective, and narrative ambiguity frequently emerge in my work. I deliberately emphasize them, allowing the marks and the atmosphere an opportunity to operate both subliminally and consciously on the viewer. It is my intention to present an image that can persistently offer new possibilities for contemplation for both the viewer and me. The most recent objects in my show are evidence of these thought processes.

The painting, "*At dawn, the trumpet. That which lives only, dies only,*" is piece number 8 in the show. It is executed on linen primarily because of the color and value of the raw material. It is similar to the tonality of the corrugated board I often use. I have long admired the visual strength that the raw linen lends to the work of Francis Bacon and have wanted to work with it. There is a clear gesso primer beneath part of the image along with several applications of oil paint beneath most of the image. Most of the paint was covered in the final drawing

stages, consisting of some heavy applications of powdered charcoal. The entire surface was soaked with liquid resin fixative followed by an application of wax medium. I discovered a surface quality different to that of my previous fabric-based objects that I am anxious to further explore.



Fig. 48. *At dawn, the trumpet. That which lives only, dies only*, 2007,
charcoal, oil, pastel, fixative, wax on linen, 28.125" x 72.125"

There is a triptych suggested by the under-painting and some other lines that establish a structural grid. This is enhanced by a couple of squares implied by white line fragments in the upper center of the painting. I often work on this type of structure, either via the grid of ledger paper or a drawn grid. Gary Cawood, a professor at the University of Arkansas, suggested to me that it is as if I am trying to measure something that is immeasurable. I feel that this is a profound insight into my unconscious intentions. The idea of the art object being a measurement defining the art experience has long been part of my descriptive language.

The title is extracted from Eliot's *Burnt Norton* and from the *Book of Revelations*. *Burnt Norton* is written in a style that is apocalyptic and existential. Elementarily, it is a contemplation of human existence in the physical and spiritual natures of time. Eliot uses an unkempt rose garden and a drained pool as metaphorical devices in the poem. My painting recreates for me a similar set of emotional responses.

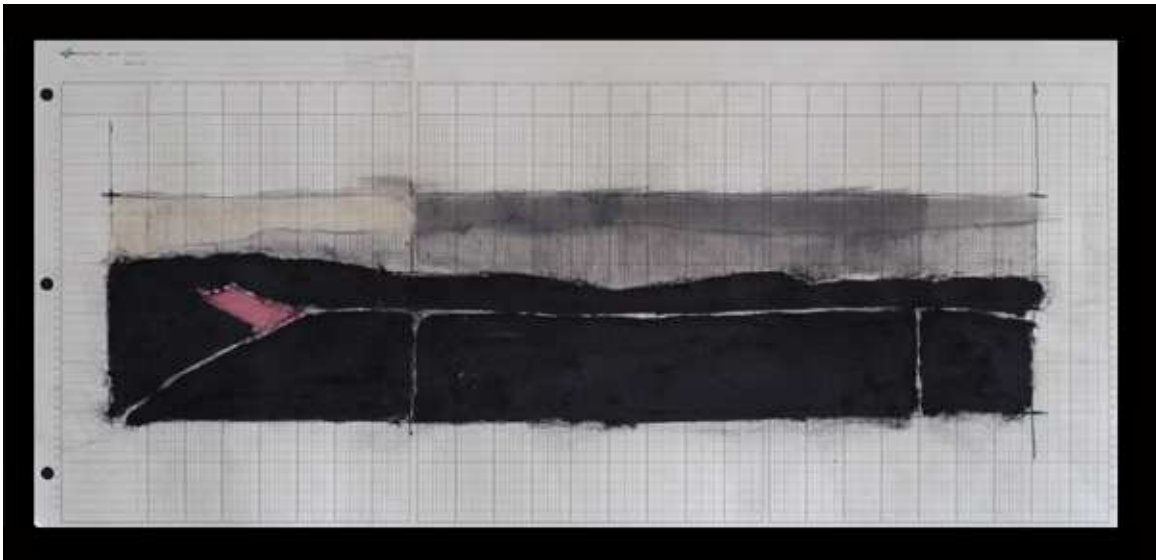


Fig. 49. *Study, At dawn*, 2007, charcoal, pastel, fixative on ledger paper, 10.75" x 23.75"

I have discovered another material to use for a support that offers my work new surface possibilities. This is a cement board used to underlay ceramic tiles on floors. I had some of this material left over after a kitchen renovation. It has a grid, molding tool marks, and manufacturer identification lettering incised into the surface. Even though it is a hard, industrial surface, it is remarkably plastic and responsive to various media. Through the process of applying pigment, sanding, fixing, and painting, the surface acquires a sensual context. Exhibit

object number 14, *The knowledge that draws our feet*, is fabricated from this material.

This diptych forges a connection between the recent works that are more literal landscapes and the drawings and corrugated objects that I consider to be maps. The picture plane is radically flattened, and the forms are reminiscent of

plotted fields. The twin masses separated by a thin reveal relate back to the reductive geometry

of the road discussed in Chapter 2. While the drawing makes no attempt to be elegant, the object has a respectful presence, like that of a timeworn icon. The



Fig. 50. *The knowledge that draws our feet*, 2007, charcoal, pastel, dry pigment, fixative, matte lacquer on cement board, 36" x 21" each, overall 36" x 42"



Fig. 51. *Study, knowledge*, 2007, charcoal, turps, fixative on ledger paper, 10.75" x 23.75"

title is taken from Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral" and relates to the necessity of our co-existence with the land.



Fig. 52. *O late, late, late, and grey the season, late*, 2007, charcoal, oil, dry pigment, fixative, wax on SBS paperboard, 57" x 97"

The process of production for *O late, late, late, and grey the season, late* was different from that which I usually engage. Rather than working from specific studies, I was responding to a general direction of earlier work and allowing the image to emerge out of a more intuitive, subconscious consideration. The large black area began as panels of green and gray oil paint with a void, unpainted area in the center flanked by the red rectangular shapes. After several days of painting and sanding, I began applying charcoal to some sections. Eventually, almost the entire painted surface was covered. The red areas had become covered with charcoal dust and were pushed into the dark picture plane. Applying more red pigment brought these geometric shapes sharply forward. They appear to be floating above or standing upright. After spraying with liquid

resin fixative, I covered the entire surface with wax medium. The title is taken from fragments of text in Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral", relating to the poverty of winter, the erosion of relationships, and the providence of fate and destiny.



Fig. 53. *Questions for a builder of bridges*, 2007, charcoal, oil, dry pigment, fixative on canvas, 40" x 40" each, overall 40" x 124"

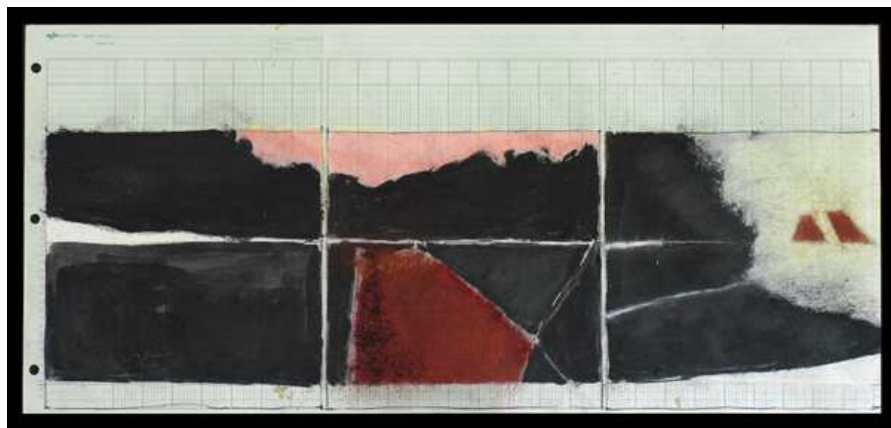


Fig. 54. *Study, Questions*, 2007, charcoal, pastel, fixative on ledger paper, 10.75" x 23.75"

Piece 12 in the show is the triptych painting titled *Questions for a builder of bridges*. It is a direct development of the study shown above. The supports are discarded Marimekko fabric panels salvaged from the office building where I work. They were gessoed, painted with oils, sanded, and scored with a grid pattern. Parts of the image were reductively drawn with a power sander before applying pigment to the surface. The scored grid pattern was heightened when powdered charcoal was brushed on the surface. The pink and yellow areas of the drawing are higher in chroma than the finished painting. I had a difficult time determining if I liked the ambiguity between the somberness of the object and the bright colors. I decided the original coloration looked almost decorative, sanded it down, and glazed it with quieter tones. The title is taken from a passage in Eliot's "The Dry Salvages".

The metaphor of the bridge figured heavily in my work during the fall of 2004. I was intrigued by a dream I had of standing on a long, arched bridge. The dream's setting seemed to be at the verge of dawn on a misty spring morning. The ends of the bridge faded into the gray obscurity; behind me it was totally black. I could see over the side in front of me and observed an idyllic country scene containing narrow gravel roads, lush foliage, creeks, cottages, and churches. I did not see any figures there but was aware of people beneath the bridge also observing the same things. In contemplating the dream at that time I felt like Moses standing on Mt. Pisgah, being allowed a view into a land of perfect peace and not being allowed to enter there. At first I was unsettled by the opaque blackness that was behind the bridge. I then remembered that there is an area on the far reaches of the universe where there appears to be only void. Astronomers refer to this as the horizon. However, it does not mark the limits of the universe. It is so distant that the light from the stars there has not yet reached

our solar system. This is a comfortable resolution for me. Whatever is behind me is not oblivion; it is the light from a distant past that will illuminate the future.

The drawing, *Brief transit where dreams cross and are crossed*, is exhibit object 10. It originates from the period when I was investigating the meaning and the visual aspects of this dream. My point of view at this juncture is one of an observer beneath the bridge, seeing only the broad silhouette of the landscape beyond in the mist. The washes of thinned shellac and oil paint reinforce the moist, unknown, yet familiar environment.

As I mentioned earlier, I have discovered this study of landscape provides for me a process and a visual language that can bridge the past and the future, allowing me an access to the present.



Fig. 55. *Brief transit where dreams cross and are crossed*, 2004, charcoal, oil, shellac on ledger paper, 10.75" x 23.75"

Items 15 and 16 are developed from impressions and studies made along the riverbanks that form the southern boundary of our farm. The Nolichucky River is an important presence in my history. We used its water for our livestock and gardens. It was a site for building fortresses in the sand, camping, picnics, fishing, romantic strolls, and Sunday afternoon baptisms. I know that there is art to be extracted from those experiences but I have not yet found that portion of the language. These are the first successful pieces to have a direct connection to the experience but do not articulate it as the river. I do feel closer now to being able to approach the subject matter in a fashion that is not trite or sentimental and am anxious to pursue it.



Fig. 56. *The clay and the water and I*, 2007, oil, wax, graphite, dry pigment, fixative on corrugation, 11.75" x 30.75"

The clay and the water and I is made from pigmented encaustic medium left over from the spring of 2005. The support is a remnant of one-inch thick honeycomb corrugation from a display project I worked on over twenty years ago. This history of these materials was not part of my conscious thought while working

on this painting, but I now feel is an important aspect of the work. The corrugated edge is left bare and the edges are dented and uneven. The surface of the encaustic and the patina of powdered graphite, combined with the physical aberrations of the support, give this object the appearance of a relic. It seems to exude a history and share a semblance with an ancient map. The source of the title is from "The Waste Land" by Eliot. Line 182 is "By the waters of Lemn I sat down and wept . . .". (60). The poem contains many references to water and rock, to physical and spiritual thirst.

While revisiting my river studies and developing reinterpretations of them, I drew several in the thin, long panoramic format that lends itself so well to landscape. Feeling a need to break out of this configuration, I began redrawing the scene as a series of vertically stacked shapes. One of these studies was done on tracing paper. I was excited by the result of the charcoal and fixative on this surface and decided to do a drawing on a large piece of vellum.



Fig. 57. *Ceremony for the present gravity, iteration VII, 2007, charcoal, dry pigment, fixative, oil on vellum, 42" x 85"*

In this work, *Ceremony for the present gravity, iteration VII*, the stark whiteness and subtle texture of the vellum impart a sense of frozen winter cold. There are recognizable landscape forms that dissolve into abstract gestures. A delicate balance resides here, with the heaviest mass being located at the top of the composition, yet resisting the tendency to settle. I extracted the title from Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral". Thomas Beckett's martyrdom takes place in deep winter during the Christmas season.

The last two pieces in my MFA show act to bridge the perceptual methodology and the more abstract production. *Map to home* is a spare, schematic piece with contrasting warm and cool green tonalities. This is a sweeping view greater than 360 degrees over my front yard with our house to my back. The image depicted is opposite ends of the house, overlapping beyond the mid-point. There is only one path, but is seen from three perspectives as one's vision turns in space. A

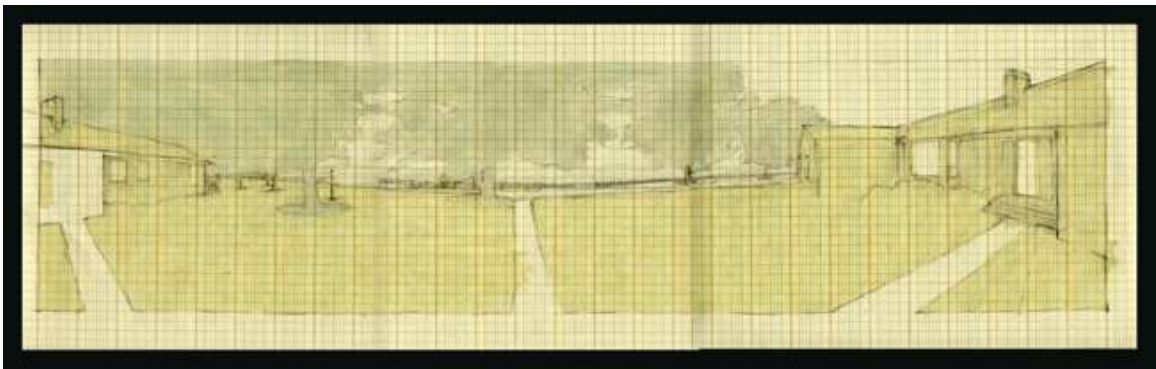


Fig. 58. *Map to home*, 2006, charcoal, wax, oil on ledger paper 13.75" x 33.5"

perspective foreshortening is apparent, but without any dramatic distortion that would reveal the truth of the image. The reality is buried in the normality, the quiet mood presented to the viewer. There is an informal architectural quality to

this drawing that is a connection to my working history and to the renderings of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Experiences are covered by the currents of action is the eighteenth and final work in my MFA exhibit. The conceptual considerations are a continuing development of those in the previous work and relate to my interest in theoretical physics. If the universe is curved, and our vision had no limitations, the most distant thing we



Fig. 59. *Experiences are covered by the currents of action*, 2007, colored pencil, oil, wax on SBS paperboard, 57" x 85.5"

could see would be the back of our own head. What is not obvious about the subject here is that it is not two adjacent buildings but is rather a juxtaposition of

the front and back views of the same section of one building. This explains the shadows seemingly falling from two different times of the day. When observing and drawing this I was intrigued by the equal strength of the shadows over the winter lawn, up the sides of the house, and across the roof. There was an interpenetration of the non-materiality of the shadow with the substantial objectiveness of the house that brought to my mind some of the concerns of the Cubists and Futurists.

This is the third large piece completed from the studies in this exploration. Infusing the paper with wax creates the overall gray value. The surface has subtle textural variations, which result from various layered applications of oil paint, molten wax, and wax medium applied with a cloth. The title is derived from a line in Eliot's "The Dry Salvages", "For our own past is covered by the currents of action". (195).

CHAPTER 11

PRESENT ACCESS

My graduate work is almost finished. I walk into the gallery of the Carroll Reece Museum and look at the objects on the wall. They represent four years of work. I am not being self-serving when I say it was a lot of hard work. It may be an unfortunate obsession to please others or to overachieve, but work is what I do best, who I am, and what I know. With the guidance and nurturing of the faculty and students at ETSU, I can say unabashedly that I have been successful. I have no regrets or disappointments with the experience. My decision has resulted in far more gain than the investment I have made.

I take a deep breath and look at the objects on the walls. Staring back at me are the manifestations of the concerns, joys, and pains of my life. I see the influence of countless souls and am awestruck at how much I have learned, how far the art has progressed both conceptually and formally. I feel that this work is uncompromised and as honest as I can make it.

I turn my back and see these objects in my mind. I know now is the time to find venues for the work, to build a new career in a different segment of the art world. This thought is daunting and not yet comfortable.

I go home and look in the mirror. Already the light from this installation has traveled unfathomable distances. Already I am thinking about getting back into

the studio, nodding to the muses, and pushing myself out onto an unfamiliar edge.

I no longer need any time off

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VITA

Garry D. Renfro

EDUCATION

- 2007 Master of Fine Arts, Studio Painting
 East Tennessee State University
- 1973 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Graphic Design
 East Tennessee State University

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2006 Adjunct Professor
 East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee
 ARTA 1201: Drawing Fundamentals
- 2004-2006 Graduate Assistant
 East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee
 ARTA 1110: 2-D Design, ARTA 1204 Color Theory
- 1981-2007 Production Graphics, Assistant Manager
 American Greetings Corporation, Cleveland, Ohio; Greeneville,
 Tennessee

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2007 *Present Access*, Carroll Reece Museum, Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2007 *Artistic Evolution, Where Science Meets the Arts* Carroll Reece Museum,
Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2007 *New Work, ETSU Graduate Students*, Carroll Reece Museum,
Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2006 *New Work, ETSU Graduate Students*, Carroll Reece Museum,
Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2006 *ETSU Painters Show*, Nelson Fine Arts Gallery, Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2005 *Mute*, Carroll Reece Museum, Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2005 *First Tennessee Bank Annual Exhibition*, Carroll Reece Museum,
Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2005 *Fermata*, Nelson Fine Arts Gallery, Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2004 *Meditations*, Solo Exhibit, Artopia, Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2004 *Appalachian Art Annual Exhibition*, Kingsport Art Guild,
Kingsport, Tennessee
- 2004 *First Tennessee Bank Annual Exhibition*, Carroll Reece Museum,
Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2004 *The Option*, Slocumb Gallery, East Tennessee State University,
Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2004 *Salon Show*, AR Gallery, Johnson City Tennessee
- 2004 *Art Treasure*, Nelson Fine Arts Gallery, Johnson City, Tennessee
- 2003 *Meditations*, Solo Exhibit, General Morgan Inn, Greeneville, Tennessee
- 2003 *Burning Bright II*, Nelson Fine Arts Gallery, Johnson City, Tennessee