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### **Self-portrait: The Integrity and interdependence of objective information and subjective experience in the representation of memory**

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ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences  
In Candidacy for the Degree of  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

**Self-Portrait: The Integrity and Interdependence of Objective  
Information and Subjective Experience in the Representation of  
Memory**

by

Katherine Hannigan

June 30, 1999

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Thesis

The self-portrait is a visual record of some facet of the artist's life. Self-portraits vary in form and content - they might simply record the physical appearance of the artist or convey, in abstract terms, psychological motivations. They may realistically represent the past, or symbolically project the future. They are incapable of relating the complexity of one's life in its totality, but they can comment upon this complexity and essay a representation of certain segments or parts of existence.

The works in this thesis are, essentially, self-portraits. Self-portraits are, by nature, subjective. Although one might recall and be able to communicate objective information about oneself, e.g. one's date and place of birth, the number of teeth in one's head, one's life is not composed merely of factual data but is, primarily, a subjective experience. Factual information is essential, both to our survival and to structuring our understanding of ourselves, but it is our subjective experience of sensory data that ultimately determines how one sees oneself and the world.

Although the work is essentially self-portraits, this thesis is concerned with the subjective experience and the objective quantifiers of life events. Specifically, this thesis explores the awareness and representation of the rational and emotional, the quantitative and qualitative, or the objective and subjective aspects of experience in memory. It investigates the integrity of each of these aspects, and their simultaneous interdependence, in the process of memory. Through the process of recalling and

representing the factual and emotional elements of specific, personal memories, the symbiosis of these distinct facets of the process of memory will be described.

In general, maps are used to represent the objective or sensory aspects of experience. Figures, which represent the subjective or emotional response to the events and circumstances of that time and place, are used in a symbolic, rather than literal, manner. Formal devices such as color, distortion, the inclusion of text and the layering of materials are used to further describe the relationship between these variables of memory. Development of means with which to adequately describe this interplay, and the conclusion of the dominance of the subjective experience over objective input, will be seen in the progression of the work.

### Philosophical Basis

The work of this thesis rests on the application of the scientific theory of relativity to everyday concepts of space and time. Relativism, a central concept of postmodernism and, in some sense, the social application of the theory of relativity, is also of primary importance to the work.

The theory of relativity mathematically relates space, time, and energy. It is a physical law, concerned with physical experience. One of the major implications of the theory is that the manner in which one experiences an event, via the senses, is determined by place and time<sup>1</sup>. Relativity negates the idea of an absolute experience, i.e. the manner in which one experiences a space/time event is not absolutely True, or more true than another's experience of the same event from a different vantage point.

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<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed., s.v. "relativity."

Relativism is, in some ways, the philosophical equivalent of this scientific theorem. An important tenet of postmodernism, it negates the metanarrative, or the idea of an absolute Truth that applies to all, and advocates truth that is relative to a culture of a certain time and place. Truth is a story, rather than a science<sup>2</sup> In its application to art, postmodern work exhibits the concept of the mini-narrative, focusing on personal or cultural experiences, rather than supposedly universal ones.

With this in mind, the work in this thesis employs the personal narrative to explore the interrelationship of the types of experiences of events discussed above, in an effort to determine an understanding of this interdependence, at least within the experience of these memories in this life. The value of the objective will not be denied, but the ascendancy of the subjective will be supported.

### Structure of the Written Thesis

The thesis is divided into two written parts. The first part breaks the work down into its most significant parts, explains the significance of the part and describes the work of other artists who have attempted similar ventures or techniques, and their relation to the work of this thesis. The second part describes the evolution of this body of work, from the series of paintings that preceded it to the resolution of and conclusions from the final piece.

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, "What is Postmodernism?" in *Art and Its Significance*, ed. Stephen David Ross (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 563.

## **PART ONE**

### **THESIS RESEARCH**

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE SELF-PORTRAIT

The work of this thesis is, in essence, a series of self-portraits. The pieces are, however, self-portraits in a symbolic manner, rather than simply a recording of physical appearance. They are visual equivalents of emotional states at a certain place and during a specific period of my life. Although there are numerous artists who have included symbolic elements in their self-portraits, the following artists represent a sort of genealogy of the principles of this thesis: the recording of the physical likeness of the artist, or a symbolic facsimile for the artist in the form of a figure; symbolic information that describes the artist's emotional state during a period of his/her life; an underlying narrative that is both personal and generally applicable.

Some of the self-portraits of Rembrandt van Rijn demonstrate the artist's interest in portraying himself in various roles, in order to symbolically express certain characteristics of his life, and life in general. In self-portraits from the late 1660's, he not only realistically depicts his appearance, but gives himself symbolic roles, portraying himself as the apostle Paul in one piece, and as the ancient philosopher Democritus in another. At this point in his life, Rembrandt's wife had died, as had most of his children. He had declared bankruptcy, losing most of his treasured collections and possessions.

Christian

Tumpel, in *Rembrandt*, explains this adoption of the symbolic identity of St. Paul because, "Paul was the most important of the apostles, and it was owing to him that Christianity remained a joyful message. He constantly stressed that people could not be happy through the formal observance of the law...The only true liberation was the love of

of God, which again and again turns us into new people.”<sup>3</sup> Tumpel believes that the work is a visual admission of Rembrandt’s imperfection and reliance on the grace of God.

Tumpel describes Democritus as the ‘laughing philosopher’, not only because his fellow citizens gave him ample reason for mocking, but because he adopted an agreeable temperament, which led to what he called cheerfulness - the highest good<sup>4</sup>. In this symbolic self-portrait, Rembrandt aligns himself with these characteristics and beliefs. Unlike the work in this thesis, however, Rembrandt’s aim was to realistically record his appearance and symbolically record his state of mind, or emotional state, at various stages of his life. Memory, or description in retrospect, was not a consideration.

Frida Kahlo “used the details of her own life as powerful symbols for the psychological pain of human existence.”<sup>5</sup> A Mexican artist, Kahlo painted herself in costumes, positions and environments, employing Surrealist techniques, to symbolically describe physical and psychological states. Initially derived from her own experience, these insights are applicable to humanity, in general. In *The Two Fridas* (1939), Kahlo depicts different aspects of herself in a double self-portrait (see Fig. 1). Objects, dress, exposed organs and background relate to specific information about her life, but also have a general, emotional impact. In addition, information is ‘layered’ in the two-dimensional surface - the sky is not necessarily real, or truly of that scene, and is almost abstract, but it provides another layer of understanding for the work. Kahlo’s work records her

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<sup>3</sup> Christian Tumpel, *Rembrandt* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 368.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Horst, de la Croix, Richard G. Tansey, and Diane Kirkpatrick, *Gardener’s Art Through the Ages*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1993), 987.

appearance but, more importantly, records her thoughts and feelings about her past, her relationships, culture, and existence in general. Although not focusing on memory, her work invokes past events, such as the accident which resulted in ongoing pain and disability.

Joanne Leonard, a contemporary artist, uses her own experience to describe “the fragility of life in the present day.”<sup>6</sup> Leonard, primarily a photographer, uses her camera to document the lives of herself and the women who surround her. She then uses collage and other layering techniques to add simple, abstracted, but emotionally loaded imagery. Leonard asserts that the combination of techniques depicts the effects of the interior, psychological world upon the exterior, physical one. One views two sorts of visual information: the realistic, sensuously factual photograph, and the abstract, subjective renderings (see fig. 2). The two, together, present a more complete picture than either could alone. Although not focusing exclusively on memory and its attributes, Leonard does include memories of various times of her life in her work, and distinguishes, by the medium she uses, between types of knowledge or understanding. Her work is layered in a psychological manner, if not in the concrete, spatial manner of this thesis work.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1056.





Figure 1. Frida Kahlo, *The Two Friddas*, oil on canvas, 1939.

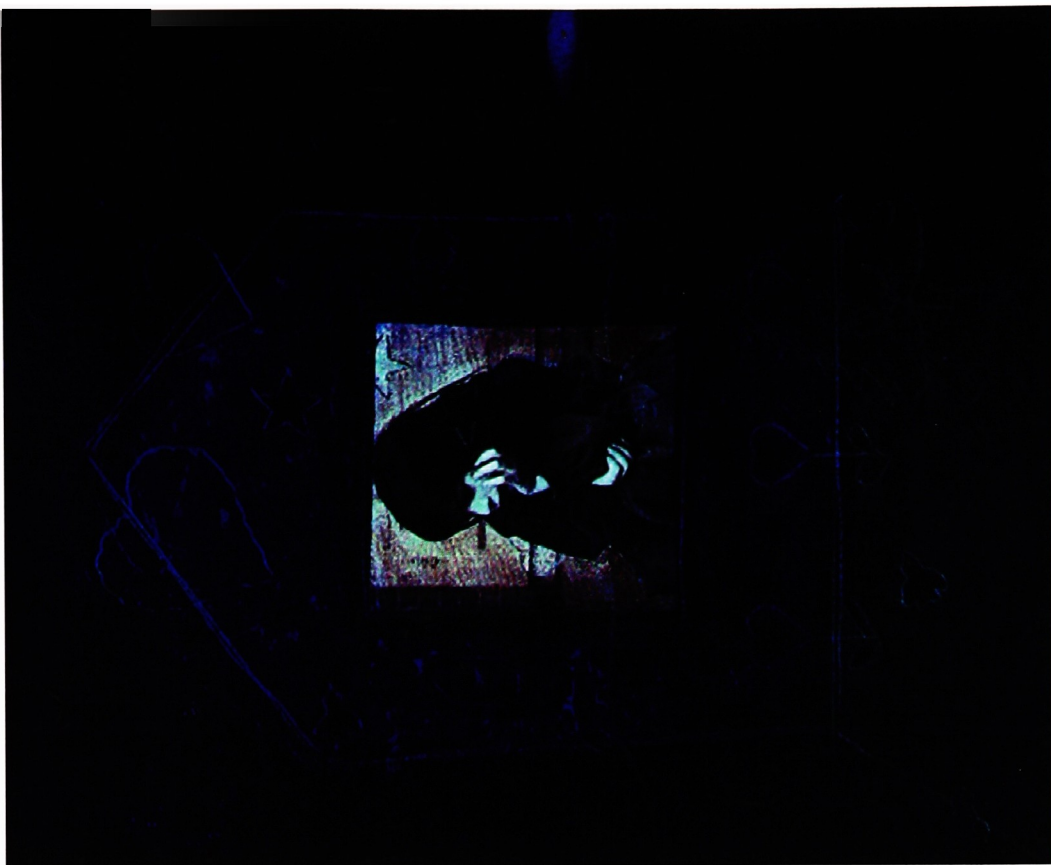


Figure 2. Joanne Leonard, *Julia and the Window of Vulnerability*, chalk pastel on photograph, 1983.

## CHAPTER THREE

### MEMORY: THE SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF AN EVENT

While the works in this thesis are essentially self-portraits, the underlying concept of this thesis is that of ‘memory’. Specifically, the work deals with the marriage of the subjective and objective experience, or the interdependence of the emotional and the reasoned in our understanding and retention of experience. It is both a personal exploration, using events specific to myself, and generally applicable in its explanation of the interactions of fact and feeling in memory.

Basic definitions are often a useful starting point for sustained discussion of a topic. Webster’s defines memory as “ the faculty by which sense impressions and information are retained consciously or unconsciously in the mind and subsequently recalled // a mental image or impression of a past event, something learned etc., *happy memories of childhood.*”<sup>7</sup>

Notably, in this definition, the quantitative (sense impressions, information) and qualitative (image, happy) aspects of memory are separate and distinct. In fact, according to Daniel L. Schacter in “searching for memory”, most historical studies of memory have focused on the anatomy and physiology of the process and the retrieval of information, or the quantitative, objective attributes of remembering. This sort of retrieval calls upon semantic memory and procedural memory, two of the brain’s major memory systems, “but there is something special about the subjective experience of explicitly remembering past incidents that separates it from other uses of memory...In order to be experienced as a memory, the retrieved information must be recollected in the

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<sup>7</sup> Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language, Encyclopedic ed., s.v. “memory.”

context of a particular time and place and with some reference to oneself as a participant in the episode...any analysis of episodic memory must consider the subjective experience of the person who does the remembering, ... Remembering, for the rememberer, is mental time travel, a sort of reliving of something that happened in the past”<sup>8</sup> The subjective experience would include, then, both external and internal sensations, or sensory data and emotional attachments. Schacter describes that, although both kinds of input or responses are present in memory, they are distinct. This separateness is demonstrated by two modes of remembering: field and observer memories. In field memories, we recall the event from our perspective at that time, i.e. we are in ourselves as the memory reveals itself. In observer memories, we observe the memory from a detached viewpoint, i.e. we are outside of ourselves, watching ourselves and the rest of the memory as it reveals itself. The distinction between the affective and sensory aspects of memory are illustrated by a study, cited by Schacter, conducted by Nigro and Neisser in 1983. Subjects were asked to recall events, focusing on either feelings associated with an episode or objective circumstances surrounding an episode. Those asked to recall using feelings associated with the memory had a high incidence of field memories; those relying on objective data to remember had a high incidence of observer memories.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, memories include sensory data and emotional attachments. Although the two types of information coexist in memory, they have distinct identities, but influence each other.

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<sup>8</sup> Daniel Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996) 17.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 21.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### LAYERING OF IMAGES (AS A METHOD OF REPRESENTING MEMORY)

The Surrealists' layering of (unconscious) symbolic imagery on a two-dimensional surface or the collages of Pablo Picasso or Kurt Schwitters demonstrate that layering bits of information or imagery has been both a constantly evolving formal innovation and a vehicle for personal expression in art. It is also not a coincidence that almost all of the artwork used to illustrate Schacter's *Searching for Memory* use layering of imagery in order to visually communicate ideas about memory.

It is with Robert Rauschenberg, and his ability to combine the abstract with the concrete, the subjective and objective in one integrated whole that one can view both a sort of record of a time and place, and the artist's reaction to and involvement with it. Though rarely approaching anything like a traditional self-portrait, Rauschenberg's prints, in particular, are a highly personal record of the times and his attention. Like a visual trip through his mind and heart, images are fast-paced, multi-viewed, focusing on objects, places, times, concerns and beliefs, as well.

The closest Rauschenberg comes to a traditional self-portrait is *Booster* (1967)<sup>10</sup> a color lithograph and silkscreen on paper (see fig. 3). An x-ray of Rauschenberg dominates the piece, with images of an empty chair, parts of a calendar, an athlete jumping, diagrams of bombs collaged around, under and on the central image. Objective information that measures and quantifies is combined with subjective imagery so that they are integrated, but retain their individual significance. Interestingly, it is the

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<sup>10</sup> Roni Feinstein, "Rauschenberg: Solutions for a Small Planet." *Art in America*, February, 1998.



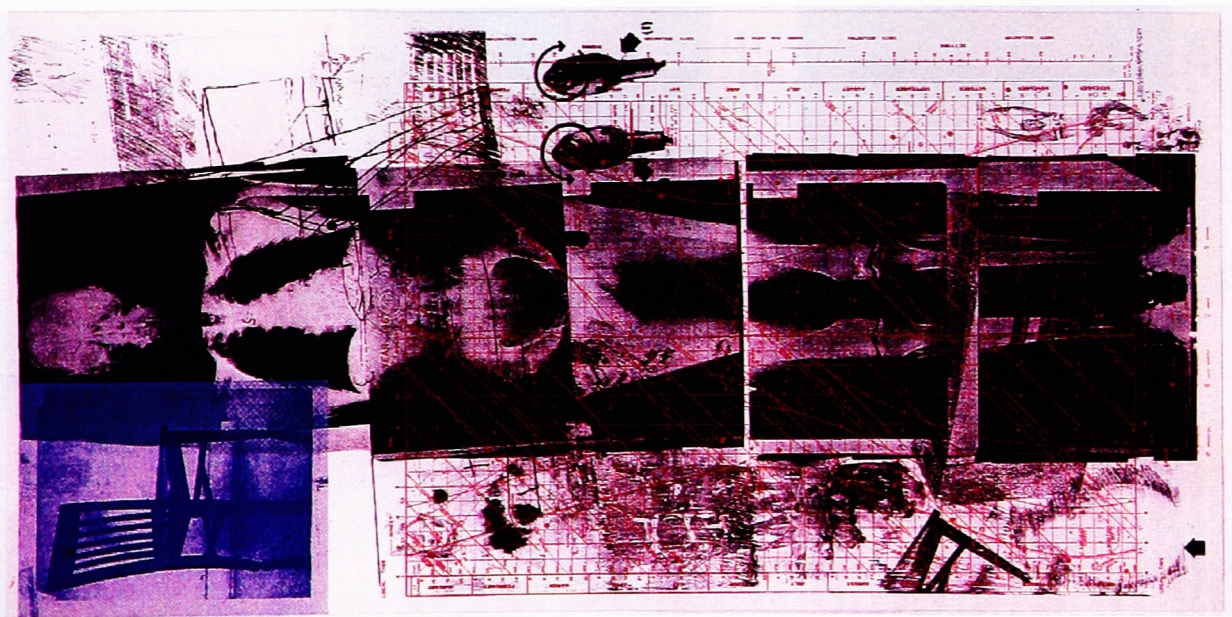


Figure 3. Robert Rauschenberg, *Booster*, silkscreen on lithographic print, 1967.



Figure 4. Robert Rauschenberg, *Revolver*, printed images on Plexiglas on mechanized base, 1967.

objective imagery that is, ultimately, the most emotionally evocative - what could be more intimate than an x-ray, or more suggestive of illness, death or the fragility of life?

*Revolver* (1967) is one of a series, and consists of images silkscreened on Plexiglas discs assembled in a mechanized structure so that the discs rotate, constantly forming new combinations of information and imagery (see fig. 4). Here, Rauschenberg has left the limits of two dimensions, exploring the possibilities of multiple relationships in three dimensions. Images of male figures, a chair, a motorcycle, a map, and words such as 'vibration' and 'water', constantly form new relationships, like an active, loosely structured mind, as the plexiglass discs rotate independently of each other. It is both a sort of portrait of Rauschenberg - what is significant to him and his thought processes, and a portrait of the viewer - by the meaning the viewer determines or intuits from the associations.

Also applicable to this thesis is the work *Rodeo Palace* (1975-76). It measures 144" x 192" x 5 ½", and is a wall-mounted panel. Images have been transferred to its surface, and a pillow, fabric and doors are affixed to it, as well. Created for an exhibition entitled "The Great American Rodeo", Rauschenberg used contrast in fabrics and imagery to suggest rural opulence. Although figures are not actually depicted, lives are powerfully evoked by the factual imagery: a horse, a sneaker, a bucket, and the doors, behind which are fabrics and more images. Even the pillow attached to the wall and covered with glued on text and images provides, something of the tawdriness that characterizes the transient life of rodeo performers.

Through the selection and placement of things and data, Rauschenberg communicates the feeling of a way of life, as well. Rauschenberg relates objective information in a

subjective manner so that both knowledge and a wordless understanding can be simultaneously achieved. Rauschenberg, however, deals with observation of the contemporary, rather than focusing on the past and memory. He also does not categorize information as subjective or objective, or divide it into certain spaces or layers according to its type. He does, though, by layering image and text, provide a model for creating interrelationships between different aspects of experience.

Larry Rivers, a contemporary of Rauschenberg, is mentioned here for his use of windows in layering imagery, the collage of imagery including maps, the diagrammatic labeling of figures and body parts, and the abstraction of environment combined with realistically rendered figures one can find in his work. Rivers' work often includes the apparent objectification of emotionally charged subjects: the labeling of body parts of a female nude (nipple and nose are labeled with the same detached, stenciled writing). Rivers' aim is an ironic commentary on the inability of the rational to negate the emotional charge of certain images, rather than a respect for the interaction of both in experience and memory.

*The History of the Russian Revolution* (1965) is a mixed media construction on a grand scale - a huge, modern 'history painting' (see fig. 5). Cutouts of guns, a painting of a map of Siberia, portraits of Communists and royalty and plumbing parts are assembled to both provide information about the past and relate Rivers' impressions of Communism, Russia and revolution. The work is a sort of narrative of the circumstances leading to, the actual events of and the outcomes of the revolution. Like a visual stream of consciousness, it is as if Rivers is relating any and all impressions. For Rivers, the

subject matter both evoked emotions and provided a great deal of information that made a work of this scale possible. “As an event it mixed fact and fable, the personal and the objective, and those collisions of value, content, and attitude that seemed best to set off the dynamic interactions of Rivers’ creativity.”<sup>11</sup> Rivers utilizes certain formal devices, such as a portrait painted on a window and a loosely painted map, that relate to aspects of this thesis. Although the map designates or implies objective information, and the window might connote time, Rivers does not distinguish between the types of information he is considering and relating. In fact, the work was criticized for having no point of view. However, Sam Hunter notes that “it is as close to an encyclopedic, historical painting as is perhaps given the modern artist to bring off. The point of view the painting lacks is itself a point of view.”<sup>12</sup>

As a modern work, it might allude to the personal, but it would certainly never openly discuss it. Rivers’ work may, as is his work with the nude and anatomical labels like *Parts of the Body: French Vocabulary Lesson III*, create a curious split between perception and knowledge, i.e. he is interested in the play between the objective and subjective experience, but the lack of a personal point of view differentiates it from this thesis remarkably.

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<sup>11</sup> Sam Hunter. *Larry Rivers* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969), 40

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.



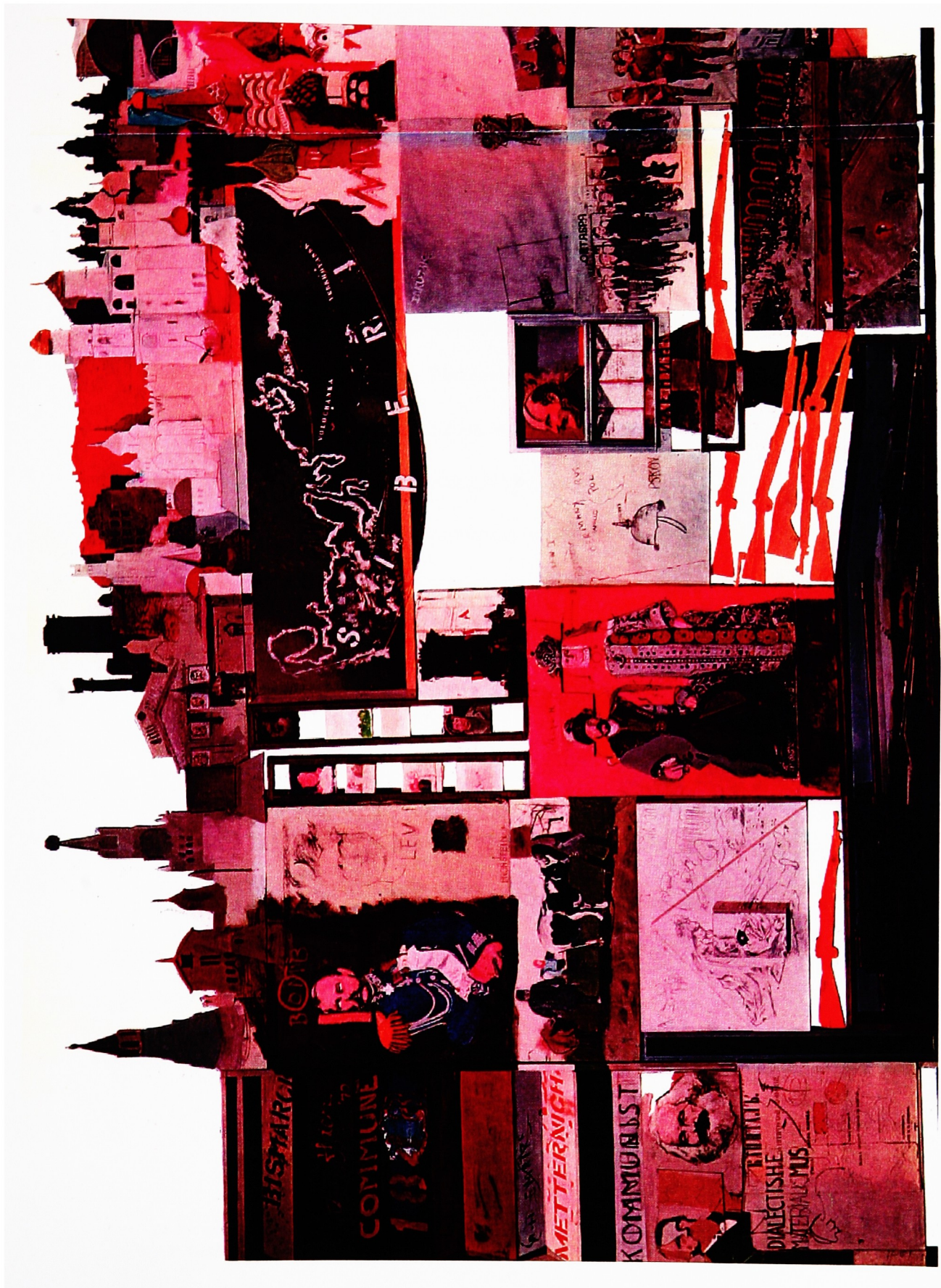


Figure 5. Larry Rivers, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, mixed media construction, 1965.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MAPS: THE OBJECTIVE ELEMENT IN REPRESENTING MEMORY

With the practice of layering imagery in order to facilitate a dialogue between the different sorts of available information established, maps were determined to be the constant by which to represent the objective elements of memory in the thesis work. Maps, practically, make place navigable by providing objective information about space. They are sensory data abstracted. They can also signify time through their content and style. Maps are used, in all of the pieces, as signifiers or partial records of experiences, as anchors for memories of experiences in specific time and place, as the seemingly objective or factual element of the narrative, as a tool for dissonance in color and abstraction against the realistically rendered figures.

*4 artists and the map: image/process/data/place* is the text accompanying a 1981 exhibit of the ‘map works’ of Jasper Johns, Nancy Graves, Roger Welch and Richard Long. In the introduction, Roberta Smith writes that “maps condense and codify innumerable geographical facts and immense distances ... Their visual logic orients us”<sup>13</sup>, focusing on the objective nature of the map and the rational nature it provides. For this thesis, the map is the supposedly objective element of the memory but, as discussed earlier, memory has sensory and emotional aspects which are distinct but interact with each other. As if writing about the dual attributes of memory rather than maps, Smith continues with “Their visual logic orients us, in all the spatial and *emotional* senses of

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<sup>13</sup> Roberta Smith, *4 Artists and Map: Image/Process/Data/Place* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1981), 5.

that word (*italics mine*).”<sup>14</sup> Smith, however, goes on to write that “it also places maps themselves in a limbo all their own. Maps present us with highly-developed surfaces which are nonetheless not quite art; they are too restricted by function - too much a matter of survival”<sup>15</sup> One of the goals of this thesis is not to make the map itself a work of art, but to represent it and utilize it so that it is an integral part of a work of art, primarily by noting the ‘emotional sense’ to which Smith refers. By acknowledging the emotional associations with ‘place’ in memory, and representing those through use of color, distortion and text on the maps, maps become part of a visual narrative that is no longer factual information but art.

Smith briefly discusses the presence of the map in artwork throughout history. Of note is Vermeer’s use of the map in *Officer and Laughing Girl* (1655). The map locates the conversation in place and time, it enhances the worldliness of the participants and reinforces the qualities of the Enlightenment<sup>16</sup>. Although it has both narrative and symbolic qualities, Vermeer’s work is not about the past or memory. There is no formal distinction between the type of understanding conveyed by the map and that obtained through the conversation, and the figures, while they might represent ideals or types, are not symbolic of emotional responses or experiences, as is true of this thesis.

The work of Roger Welch is most applicable to the aims of this thesis, in that his work deals with the visual representation of memory, using maps to do so. Welch’s work is primarily conceptual, with little concern for aesthetics. He creates visual maps from the verbal recitations of the memories of his subjects. Welch interviews individuals about their hometowns, constructing “memory maps” which graphically convey the information

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

they have provided. The map is exhibited with photographs and printed excerpts from the interview. While Welch is not concerned with the aesthetic appearance of the map, each map is a unique object which relates to only one person's mind; each is functionless and impractical, more like an aesthetic object than a real map."<sup>17</sup> Although Welch deals with factual information in his interviews, or the objective attributes of maps and memory, the emotional aspects of the memory are dealt with, if by default, i.e. those places that are remembered vividly or not remembered at all represent not only a sensory experience, but an emotional one as well. Welch is not interested in symbolic representations of emotional experience, or visually discerning between aspects of memory. His focus on memory and its representation, though, in the construction of maps that are simultaneously subjective and objective, is closely related to the work of this thesis.

Smith goes on to write about the formal and conceptual pursuits of each of the exhibiting artists, and notes that "For each artist here, the map is merely an aspect, a symptom of a larger endeavor and attitude."<sup>18</sup> This statement could legitimately be applied to this thesis, as well. However, Smith also writes that "for these four artists, there is a shared attitude inherent in the use of the map which, if general, is also fundamental: it emphasizes what is given over what is felt, gives precedence to selected facts of the world over the expression of the artist's personal emotion, and opts for a shared, legible vocabulary of form over a private invented one."<sup>19</sup> For this thesis, facts and emotions are equally essential to the work. If precedence is given to either, it would be to subjective response rather than objective view. That the vocabulary would be

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

legible to some degree to the viewer is the ideal, but there exists in this work a necessarily private vocabulary, as well.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE FIGURE: THE SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT IN REPRESENTING MEMORY

If the map functions in this work as the objective aspect of memory, colored and distorted by its interaction with subjective experience, the figure functions as the subjective or emotional part of memory, made concrete by its experience in space and time. As the objective information is handled in an abstract manner in order to disrupt its absolute nature, the subjective matter is handled in a realistic , almost factual manner in order to establish its equal verity.

The psychologically loaded, sometimes disturbing nudes of Lucian Freud, painted so that every nuance of flesh is recorded, influenced both the method of and ideas concerning painting the figure for this series. Especially with Freud's nudes, the viewer is voyeur, looking in on usually solitary, naked human beings, sometimes in strange positions, with bizarre props (see fig. 6). Freud's nudes always evoke a sense of isolation, loneliness, and even unwholesomeness. These are highly expressive works that are painted in a realistic manner.

Freud's realism becomes even more emotionally affective than an expressive approach. This realism makes it so the jarring situation presented is not just a psychological reality that can be dismissed, and the experience is not just an emotion that can be degraded. Instead, it is fact, concrete reality that must be confronted and dealt with. Freud knows all of his subjects, and allows them to choose their pose. In this thesis, the subject is myself, and the formal considerations, e.g. pose, color, serve to symbolically convey the emotion of the memory, rather than the reality of another





Figure 6. Lucian Freud, *Night Portrait*, oil on canvas, 1977/78.



Figure 7. Jared French, *The Double*, egg tempera on panel, 1950.

person's psychology. These figures, like Freud's, are painted in a realistic manner, so that the emotional reality of the memory



person's psychology. These figures, like Freud's, are painted in a realistic manner, so that the emotional reality of the memory cannot be dismissed. Painting the figures in somewhat strange, distorted positions on windows that allude to private, domestic space may also evoke a sense of voyeurism in the viewer. And Freud's aspirations for his figures - "When I look at a body I know it gives me choices of what to put in a painting; what will suit me and what won't. There is a distinction between fact and truth. Truth has an element of revelation about it."<sup>20</sup> - would be this artist's, as well.

The figure as a symbolic representation can be seen in the work of the Symbolic Realists and, in particular, Jared French. French was interested in the work of Carl Jung, and used figures to represent aspects of the self. Decisions concerning color, composition, pose etc. were determined by the symbolic aims for the figure. For example, *The Double* (1950) presents an almost surreal scene (see fig. 7). In the foreground stands a pale, nude male, half-emerged from a rectangular hole in the ground. In the middle ground kneels another clothed white male, arms at his side with one hand turned palm out. On a fence behind this male sits a black male, clothed in a t-shirt, pants, socks and slippers, hands placed together in front of his crotch. To the left and behind the nude is an older woman, dressed in a Victorian black dress, holding a black parasol over her head and carrying a red wreath with a black bow. All of the three clothed figures stare at the nude male. According to Nancy Grimes in *Jared French's Myths*, "the three young men represent varying states of spiritual and sexual freedom, with the unclothed youth, monumental and erect, representing the naked or unrepressed self arrested midway in its upward passage from the unconscious to consciousness."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Robert Hughes, *Lucian Freud Paintings* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 20.

<sup>21</sup> Nancy Grimes, *Jared French's Myths* (San Francisco: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1993), xiii.

Thus, as with this thesis, we have realistic figures who are not characters as much as symbolic of parts of the self. Every decision concerning their representation is made with reference to the need of the symbolic narrative. French focused on the interaction of the subconscious and conscious, another pair of separate but entwined facets of existence. However, he remained within the realm of two dimensions, using symbolic rather than formal means to distinguish between the two.

Eric Fischl has made a career of painting psycho-sexual narratives. Fischl's individuals are not symbols for emotions or ideas; Fischl's characters are not archetypes. They are middle class Americans exposed, simultaneously exposing this culture's sexual ambivalence. Fischl is mentioned here because he is a contemporary figurative artist dealing with issues which are both personal and cultural. He has also experimented with layering images, not to separate types of experience but to play with narrative<sup>22</sup>. However, in work like *Study for Sleepwalker* (1979), in which Fischl has painted the nude male figure, the pool and the lawn chairs on separate pieces of glassine and then assembled them so they form a complete story with figure in a (very simple) environment, the separation into the glassine layers creates an appreciation for the distinction between place and person (see fig. 8). It is clear that, although the place supports the act being represented, and the chairs and pool give added meaning to the act, the boy acts within the environment, but is not of it. This layering, or maintaining the individuality of the parts while enabling their interaction make *Study for Sleepwalker*

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<sup>22</sup> Donald Kuspit, *Fischl* (New York: Random House, 1987), 31.

a more effective work than *Sleepwalker* - a two-dimensional painting on canvas in which figure and environment are dealt with as one.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE POST-MODERN NARRATIVE

Finally, the layering of figures with space and time in the context of personal memories results in a series of narratives, of sorts. They are individual, specific narratives that might be generalized, and are related to the contemporary 'classical narrative' discerned by Charles Jencks in *Post-Modernism*.

In *Post-Modernism*, Charles Jencks writes that members of this movement are divided as to "whether their activities and programme represent a fundamental break with the recent past and a negation of Modernism, or alternatively, a reweaving of this tradition with strands of western humanism. This book argues the second position, supporting it with the evidence of recent art and architecture, particularly with work which can be termed classical."<sup>23</sup> Jencks proposes that post-modernism is characterized by Free-Style Classicism, which includes borrowing from classical traditions without being bound by all of its rules." According to Jencks, the human figure has returned to painting and architecture, but "(t)he figure of man and woman that emerges is sometimes frail, occasionally mutilated and often paradoxical - an acknowledgment that our place within the universe, or even a technological civilisation, is no longer as central as it was in the Renaissance. But the human presence is back, even if it's on the edge."<sup>24</sup> Jencks is not proposing that we are not our own central concern, just that we don't assume that we are the center of all else that exists. The human figure is not on the periphery in the works Jencks uses to illustrate his point - they dominate the paintings. It is the ambiguity, the

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<sup>23</sup> Charles Jencks, *Post-Modernism: The New Classicism in Art and Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 7.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

schizophrenia that the work reveals that is 'on the edge'. Control - of nature, the future, one's self - that seemed possible in the Enlightenment now is seen to be fallacy.

Jencks proposes two principles of Postmodern art, that "the realist tradition continually gathered strength and diversity from the 1980s onwards and that it is largely, though not exclusively, based in America. A further point should be emphasised: although all Post-Modernists are interested in figuration, not all figurative painters are Post-modern. Some have never faced the Modernist predicament - the secularisation and fragmentation of culture - and thus have never absorbed this into a greater synthesis."<sup>25</sup> One of the goals of Post-Modernism Classicism today, then, is "reviving the classical languages to call up an idealism and a return to a public order, but it is doing so without a shared metaphysics or a belief in a single cosmic symbolism."<sup>26</sup>

According to Jencks, rebellion against the absolutes of Modernism resulted in their disavowal. In the absence of those absolutes, however, there evolved a return to some sort of stability in the form of a revival of Classicism, with a touch of irony and without a strict adherence or reverence. "Where absolute values have lost credibility, tradition and the historical continuum replace them as the new departure points."<sup>27</sup> A key element in this movement is use of the human figure. Jencks defines classicism loosely, including an idea of order, a simple dignity or gravitas, the archetypes of characters, buildings and landscapes, the clarity of volumes revealed by shadow etc. and, in painting and sculpture, denotes five categories: metaphysical classical, narrative classical, allegorical classical, realist classical and classical sensibility. For Jencks, these categories are clear; the reality is an overlapping. Lucian Freud and Philip Pearlstein are considered realist; Ron Kitaj

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 33.

and Eric Fischl are narrative; Francesco Clemente and Odd Nerdrum illustrate the metaphysical, etc.<sup>28</sup>

While the human figure is central to the work in this thesis, there are narrative and even allegorical elements, there is a sense of order and respect for the formal and 'classical', and the focus on memory, and its subjective qualities deals directly with the dominant post-modern theme of relativism, the work breaks with Jencks definition and examples in various manners. This work deals with the general theme of memory, but from a highly personal viewpoint. And while there is deconstruction of absolutes, e.g. the idea of place as completely objective, there is also a reconstruction of another system, that respects the role and interdependence of the external and sensory and the internal and emotive. Jencks writes of the deconstruction of the old absolutes, and looking to socially constructed traditions for order, but this work aspires, and the work of post post-modernism will be, to construct new systems that move beyond negation or retreat to the past.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 41.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### POST-POSTMODERNISM?

In *Mixed Blessing*, Lucy Lippard exhibits and discusses the work of minority contemporary artists. These artists create work that is of their experience, as individuals and members of a minority group (including women). Though much of the work is figurative, much of it also has an order that is not defined by any recognizable classical principles. Many of the pieces are symbolic, some are narrative; some involve text and the layering of images. The subject of Clarissa Sligh's 1989 cyanotype, *In Seeking Comfort, I Sucked My Thumb* is the memory of her own childhood abuse<sup>29</sup> (see fig. 8). She layers text, photographic imagery and simplified figures to convey the impact of this personal memory. Pat Ward Williams layers photographic images with windows and text in order to express her horror and outrage upon viewing certain images in *Accused/Blowtorch/Padlock* (1987)<sup>30</sup> (see fig. 9). What is common to all of them is their directness. They are not veiled in mythological guises; they are in and of their experience, and not just about it. They represent an effort to find truth from experience and, hopefully, construct new systems from the honesty of experience and the resultant dialogues, rather than regurgitating formulas in an ironic manner.

Lippard writes, "Both women and artist of color are struggling to be perceived as subject rather than object, independent participants rather than socially constructed pawns. Since the late '60s, the feminist movement's rehabilitation of subjectivity in the face of the dominant and loftily "objective" stance has been one model in the ongoing

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<sup>29</sup> Lucy Lippard, *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), 21.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.



Figure 8. Clarissa Sligh, *Seeking Comfort, I Sucked My Thumb*, mixed media on photograph, 1989

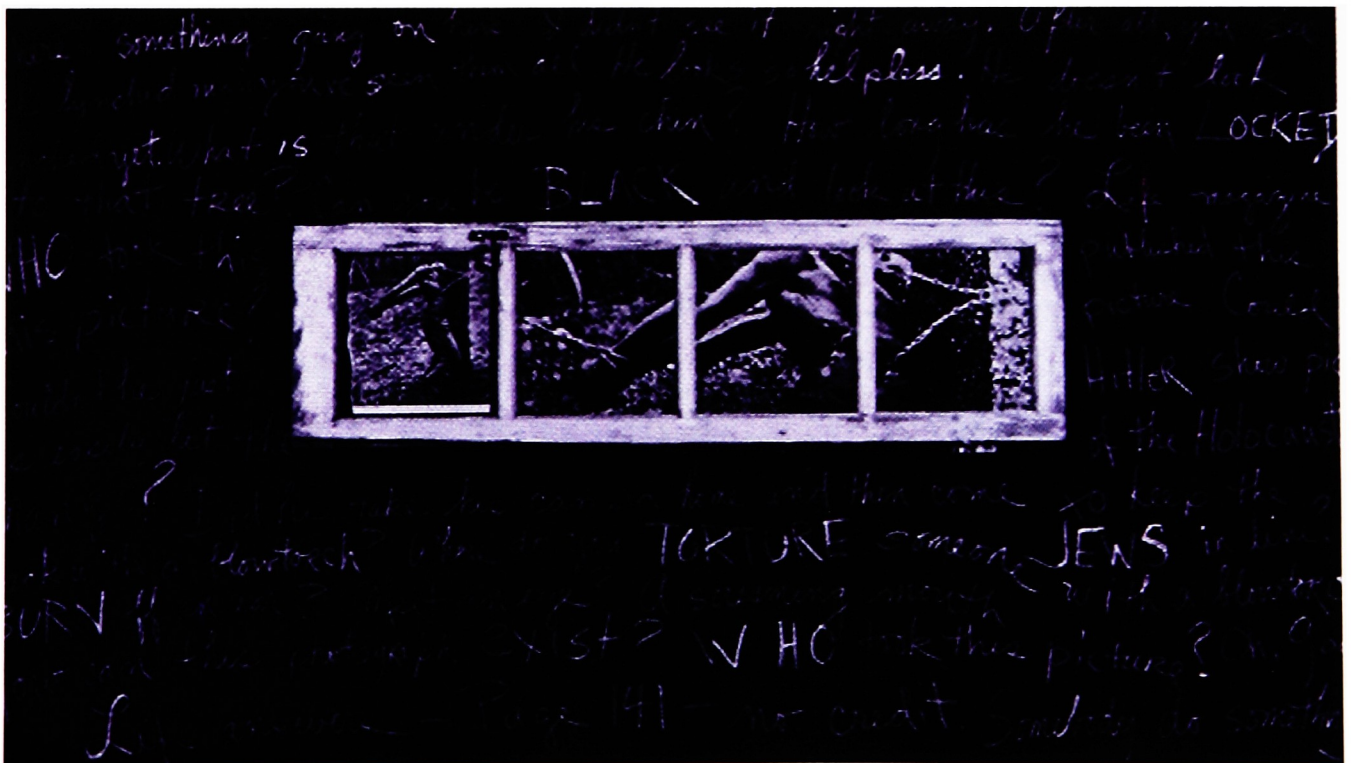


Figure 9. Pat Ward Williams, *Accused/Blowtorch/Padlock*, mixed media, 1987



search for identity within so-called minority groups. It is precisely the false identities to which deconstructionism calls attention that have led women and people of color to an obsession with self-definition, to a re-creation of identity from the inside out.”<sup>31</sup> The work of this thesis, then, while it speaks of general themes and common concepts (memory, subjective and objective information), uses traditional methods and contemporary innovations (layering, use of found objects), it is , as stated at the beginning of the section, a self-portrait in contemporary terms. Like Lippard’s artists, it aspires to new constructions and relationships formed from a basis of individual and small group truths and the conversations that might arise form the expression of “our common ‘anotherness’”.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 6.

**PART TWO**  
**THE THESIS PROJECT**

## CHAPTER NINE

### BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS CONCERNS

During the 1997-1998 academic year, I produced a series of paintings which were concerned with repression and transcendence. They were large, two-dimensional oil paintings, on masonite or canvas, that introduced figures, as divers, in various spaces (see fig. 10). Initially, the figures displayed diving postures in simple interiors with simple, geometric architecture. Eventually, they were shown in the process of actual dives, in Gothic or Romanesque church interiors (which were also complex geometric architectures) (see fig. 11). The paintings involved several concerns, both technical and conceptual.

I had been interested in the representation of the specific human figure as an example of a general feeling or idea, i.e. symbolic figuration. Thus, though the models were specific, they were involved in obviously symbolic activities. The figures never looked directly at the viewer, which allowed them to be impersonal.

I also wanted figure and environment to interact formally and conceptually, but for their integrity to remain intact. I chose environments that approached the abstract in their geometry but had a complexity and uniqueness that distinguished them from the figures while making them equally visually interesting. The poses of the figures were symbolic, as was their interaction with the space.

I hoped to achieve a sort of formal abstraction of both the figure and the space while, at the same time, a charged symbolic narrative. My interest in the simultaneous representation of objective (geometry, architecture) and subjective (spiritual concerns) elements of experience was present at this time, as was a focus on figurative work and the

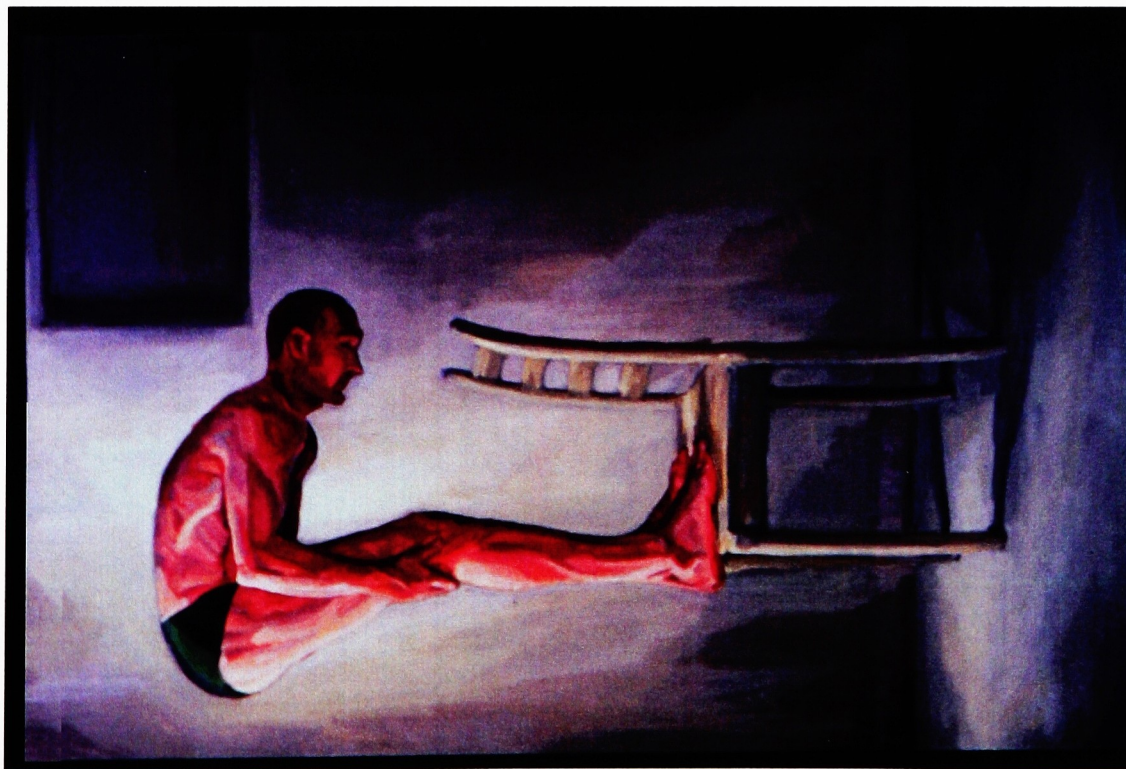


Figure 10. Author, *Diver Series: Balance*, oil on masonite, 48" x 32", 1997



Figure 11. Author, *Diver Series: Westminster*, oil on canvas, 48" x 48", 1998.

interplay of figure and ground. Also, the paintings represented personal beliefs or experiences that I sought to generalize through the presentation. However, the symbolic narratives were fairly simple, and the relationship sought between figure and space - that of simultaneous independence and interaction - was hindered by a two-dimensional format.

During the year, I had also experimented with gridded paintings, regarding the work of Agnes Martin, in particular. Grids represented the measured, the rational, the objective. Each gridded painting, however, ended up suggesting something real and concrete, rather than remaining purely abstract. The final work of the year was a male diver, in a tuck position, painted in neutral tones on a sheet of acetate. He was superimposed over another gridded piece, painted in pale neutrals in oil on canvas. I had achieved the separation and interaction of space and figure, the coexistence of order and disorder (both within each of the layers and in their relationship), but without a clear conceptual use or end.

## CHAPTER TEN

### FIGURE AND SPACE

The first work of the 1998-1999 academic year was a large (5' x 6') oil on canvas double portrait in an interior (see fig. 12). Although the two figures occupied the same room, they inhabited two separate worlds, spatially and psychologically. The space was a complex geometry of colors, light and shadow, and opacity and transparency. The significance of the piece was the connection between the two figures - the composition relates them, they occupy the same room and are involved in the same activity - and, at the same time, their complete solitude in the midst of each other.

It seemed essential, then, to find a way to formally deal with the environment so that it was distinguished from the figures. The space was as important as the figures in providing the psychological meaning of the piece, but its role was significantly different. The figures were painted in a realistic manner. I had derived some of approach to painting the figure from the British artist, Lucian Freud. In Freud's work, planar changes are clearly delineated in detail, paint is applied directly, thick and textured. The content of Freud's work often involves isolation and alienation, and he paints only those he knows (the figures in this work were my parents). Unlike Freud, however, who paints directly from the model and allows the model to select a pose, this work was about creating a condensed or symbolic version of my view of a relationship. The use of photographs, which provide psychological distance and enable pictorial manipulation in service of the idea, served the goals for the work.

The objective for the environment became, then, to find a way, through formal means, to distance it from the idea of this specific home or room, and to emphasize the geometry

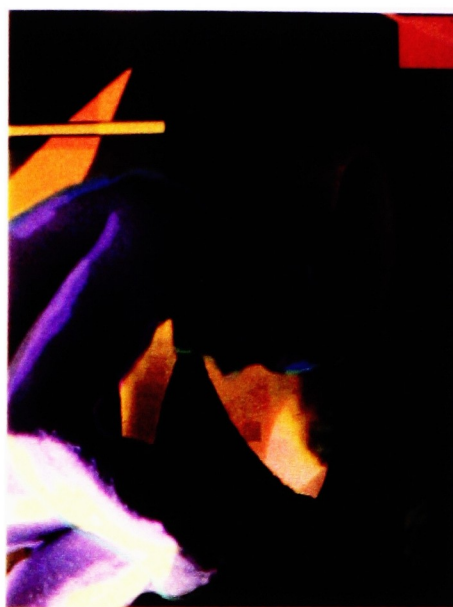
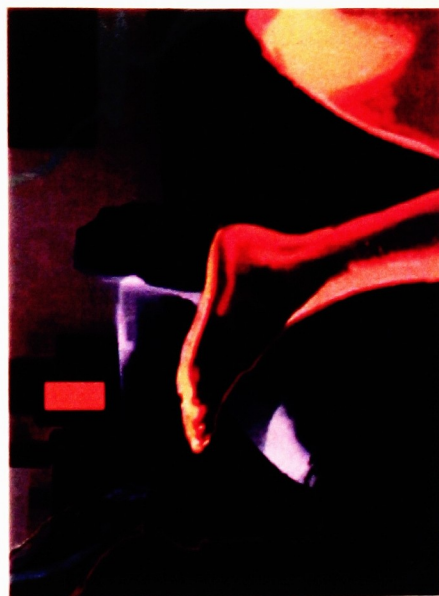
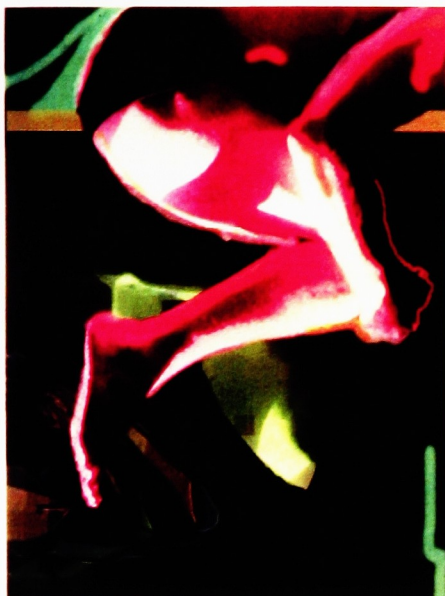


Figure 12. Author, *Diver Series: 4 Stages*, digital prints, 2 x 17" x 12", 1998

that provided the overlaps and divisions between the figures, and give the painting its meaning. The figurative work of Richard Diebenkorn provided an example of abstraction of space in figurative painting, but Diebenkorn's figures were abstracted as well, so the paintings remained unified. An attempt was made to apply this use of arbitrary color and simplified geometric forms to the environment, in order to achieve a delineation between the objective and subjective realities present in the work while emphasizing the characteristics of the space that supported the isolation of the figures.

Attempts at distinguishing between space and figures, while having them interact as a unified concept were, however, unsuccessful. The coexistence of realism and abstraction did not effect a unified piece. The final piece displayed a recognizable room with familiar objects, although somewhat simplified in form. The solitude of the figures, in the midst of each other, was apparent; but one could too easily become involved with the familiar - the objects, room, people, - and lose sight of the underlying interactions, or lack thereof.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### LAYERS

A course entitled 'Digital Painting' with Professor David Dickinson, introduced me to the Photoshop program, and the capabilities one has, through its use, to digitally manipulate images and create digital art. In Photoshop, imagery can be dealt with in 'layers', or distinct digital spaces, so that the visual components maintain the integrity while interacting with each other in a unified image. Continuing with the figurative work, the digital media facilitated success with integrating figures and an abstracted space in a symbolic piece. The concept and practice of layering became an integral part of my work, and permitted more sophisticated conceptual ventures. Layering allowed the consideration of multiple aspects of experience. It granted the maintenance of their integrity and a description of their symbiosis.



Figure 13. Author, *Points of Intersection*, oil on canvas, 60" x 72", 1999.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### FIRST EXPERIMENT

The use of maps in the work was an outgrowth of my previous interest in grids, mathematics, architecture and geometry, and the fascination with the idea of the absolute, regular and true. Maps are man's objective understanding of space. They are rational renderings of the sites of subjective experience, symbols for control and a belief in the ability to maneuver in the world successfully. Maps can even represent both time and space - certain labels or configuration of a map would designate a specific time period, as well.

Continuing with my pursuit of representing psychological realities in abstracted environments that supported the symbolic content of the piece, I determined to use maps as representations of space and as the space themselves. Maps would both refer to a time and place and be the space for the work. I selected places in which I had had significant experiences and held vivid, emotional memories, and located the corresponding maps for those sites. I decided that the other element of the layered work would be the subjective experience of the space and time, to be represented by a symbolic figure. The figure's pose, its placement and color would symbolically represent my experience of that place.

My first experiment with layered paintings included, as the lower layer, a map of Boston, painted in oil on canvas, in pale browns and blues. The upper layer, consisted of a female figure, in a semi-fetal position, also painted in pale neutrals in oil on Plexiglas. The map was abstracted even further, so that a pale grid existed, certain sites were emphasized through the use of color or thickness of line. Plexiglas was employed because it was not breakable. A frame which could hold multiple layers and maintain

some distance between them was envisioned, but not constructed. The work, although it was an experiment, was too small for the content at 18" by 22". The muted colors used over the entire piece negated any intensity or dialogue between the layers. The map was without sufficient focus or interest, and using a full figure at that scale had little impact. Finally, the cleanness and precision of the Plexiglas did not forward the idea of memory or subjective experience. The concept, based on the lack of success of this piece, did not appear promising.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THESIS WORK

I had accumulated a collection of discarded windows of various sizes, shapes and colors. The wood was, in most cases, worn. The glass was fragile, and sometime irregular. These windows suited the concept of memory in a fairly direct manner - worn and aged, they were a pre-existing structure through which persons and places, as well as private events, are viewed. They were, literally, part of the structure surrounding domestic life. They readily conformed to the element of subjective experience. (Ultimately, they evoked an unexpected sensation - that of voyeurism. Viewers gazed at and through someone else's window at semi-clad figures in strange positions who were, seemingly, unaware of the viewer's presence)

For the next piece, I determined to deal with, as 'place', my hometown and my experience of it during the years 1978 to 1980. A window of medium size was selected, and I decided to use figure fragments, rather than an entire figure, for a work of this size. A facial expression and gesture - eyes closed, cheeks full, lips puckered with a finger placed at their center like holding back the flow from the hole in the dike - was intuited and painted in oil on the window. The map was painted in acrylic on canvas, to be placed behind the window as a backdrop for the figure. It was painted in middle to dark values of blues, yellows and grays, with a thin red grid. Divisions were taped and painted, for precision and in order to maintain the illusion of exactness inherent in maps. Although the map represented the factual material of the work, the colors used reflected the emotional aspects of the memory. The figure represented the emotional content of the

memory, but it was painted realistically, or factually. The layers had identities, but not absolute ones. They interacted with, and affected each other.

The next two pieces continued with the smaller scale and the use of body parts, as well as dealing with the years and cities that chronologically followed *Lockport, 1978-80*. (The three pieces, assembled, produced a single, warped, distorted figure.) For *Boston, 1980-82*, a distended, fatty, painfully red belly, placed on its side and painted in oil on canvas, serves as the background layer. The foreground layer consists of a minimal, abstracted map of key areas of my experience of Boston, which were sand-blasted onto the window and then stained with oil paint. To further develop the idea of layers, and the subservient nature of place and time to subjective experience in memory, the grid of the map became the uppermost layer of the piece. Holes were drilled, at measured intervals, through the frame of the window, and orange thread was woven through them so that the figure and the map were bound by the delicate but dominant grid. The grid - a device to facilitate measurement and a vehicle for facts - had become a tool for the communication of subjective experience, through the use of color, materials and placement, rather than a means for reason.

The final piece of this triptych, *Canterbury, 1983*, involved a simplified map of England, Ireland and the surrounding bodies of water, in acidic greens and blues. Acrylic paint was used (as in *Lockport*), for its quick drying time, as the bottom layer, the flatness of color and the matter-of-fact tone this would create. It was also used for the precision of contour that can be achieved by taping off areas and painting them in acrylic, which was necessary in conveying the exactness of a map. On the window,

placed over the map, were painted two legs, greatly foreshortened from the thighs to the feet. The legs concluded with two bare feet, one placed , in embarrassment of reluctance, over the other. A global grid (that is curved, allowing for the measurement of a sphere) was sandblasted and painted in red on the back of this glass, so that the legs overrode it. Two strands of fishing line, painted red and repeating the pattern of the grid below, were stretched through the sides of the window and over the lower parts of the legs, as if to trip them if forward movement were attempted. As before, the symbol of the subjective reality, because of the realism with which it was represented, became a sort of fact. The objective tools for communication became tools of expressive description. Together, they communicated more than either could independently. The resulting triptych formed one figure, united by certain sort of experience in different places and times (see fig. 14).

*Tri-City Travaille, 1997-1999* and *Topography of a Search, 1962-1999* are more ambitious variations on the same theme. Much larger in size than the aforementioned triptych, they are also more complete, both formally and conceptually. *Tri-City Travaille* involves two four foot by six foot panels of canvas on luan plywood, attached so that a standing, six foot by eight foot map of Rochester, Buffalo, Lockport and the surrounding areas is possible (see fig. 15). The map is to scale, but the colors are emotionally rather than geographically descriptive: the water is an intense cobalt blue, Buffalo, Rochester and Niagara County are an orange-yellow, Lockport is red, and the mediating areas are burnt orange or an acidic green. Connecting roadways are a pale purple that vibrates against the orange, as do the vibrant red grid and corresponding letters and numbers against the blue and green. Elementary and playful, like an enlarged child's map, it



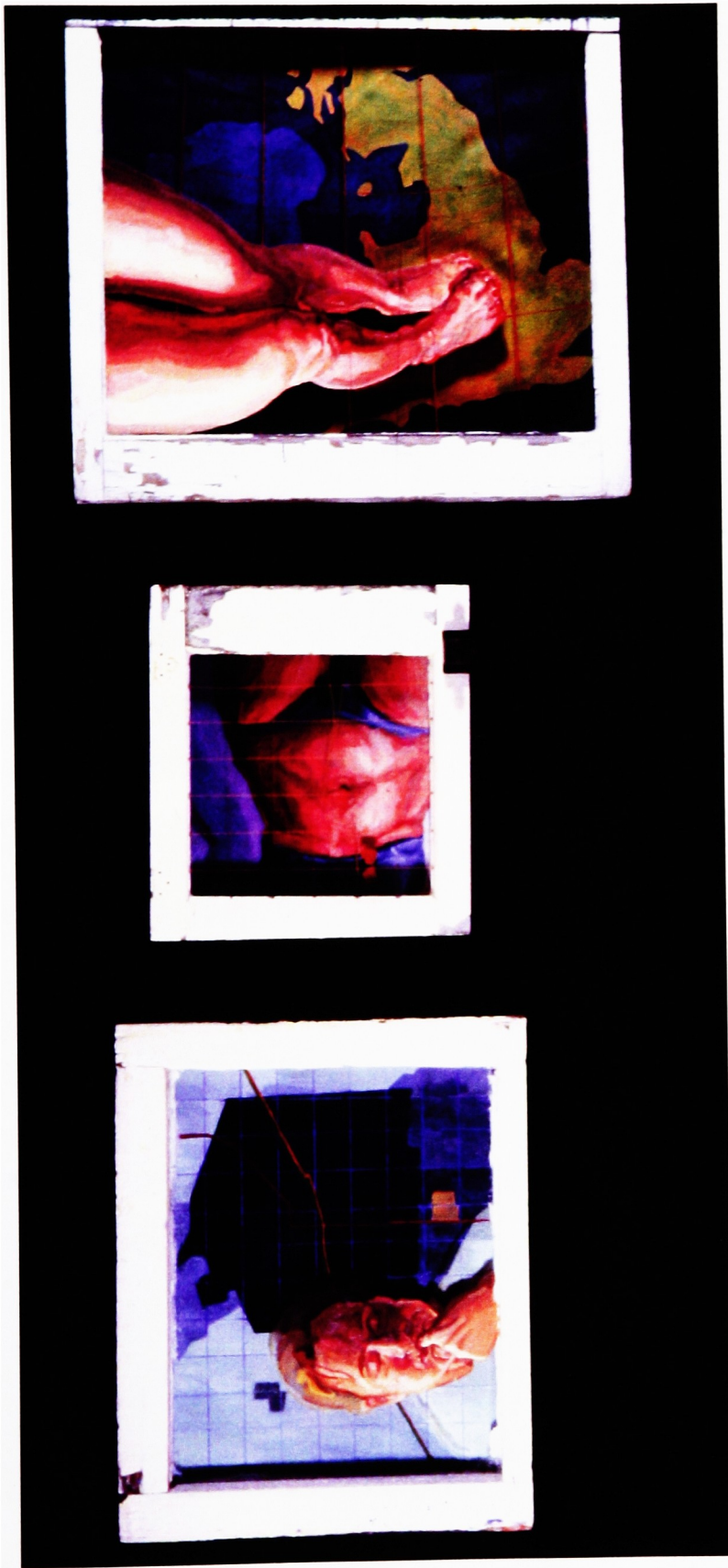


Figure 14. Author, *Map Series: Lockport*, 1978-80; *Boston*, 1980-82; *Canterbury*, 1983, mixed media, 20" x 24", 16"x 18", 26" x 22", 1999.





Figure 15. Author, *Map Series: Tri-City Travaille*, 1997-99, mixed media, 72" x 96" x 4", 1999.

conveys the information of place and time in a completely personalized manner. Text, symbolic of the emotional experience of that place, is attached to four of the areas. It includes excerpts from a children's book on castles, the Walt Disney version of the fable, "The Ant and the Grasshopper", a Catholic primer, and a mathematics textbook. The figurative element of this work consists of two figures - one painted on each pane of a six foot high window. The top figure is male, the lower female. They are, again, realistically modeled, and rendered in paler, more neutral colors than the previous work. Each figure is partially clothed, their postures are of physical withdrawal, and their faces are concealed. Both figures are permanently situated by trompe l'oeil pins inserted through their midsections. As symbolic representations of the memory of experiences of places during a specific period, the figures are meaningful independent of the map. However, these figures and this map are created to interact both conceptually and physically. More than the preceding work, they function as a unified whole. The coordination of the work, and the authority of the subjective experience over the objective details are manifested in the physical construction of the piece. The map is built so that, from its top and bottom sides extend metal tracks on which the window, which is hinged and its base is on wheels, can travel along them. There are stops at each end of the bottom track so that, although the window ( and the figures) may move, they may not go beyond this prescribed area. The previous works read like this thesis: two or more distinct sections - some containing factual data, others dedicated to subjective information - all serving a work derived from personal goals and memories. Tri-City Travaille reads like a poem: there might be a line containing data or facts, but it flows into and complements a completely subjective vision.

One might note that, in all of the works for this thesis, the figures are clothed, but minimally so. As symbolic figures, the question of their dress is a valid one. The decision had been made to rely on color, pose, relative size etc. of the painted figure to communicate the essence of the emotion being symbolically represented. It was also a goal for the work that, although the work was based on personal experience, it might not be exclusive, i.e. by using symbols that have some universality, the viewer could realize their own, personal interpretation of the work. The poses and the body parts chosen became so important to the symbolic aspects of the work that a manner of dress that would reveal these, without other distractions, became a priority. Each of the figures was dressed, then, in minimal dress, resembling bathing suits, so that the viewer would not be distracted by specificity of dress, the viewer would not be distracted by nudity, which was not necessary to the aims for the piece. The figures in the above works are not swimmers or divers, but the parts and postures of each are the basis of their significance, and so they are dressed to emphasize these attributes.

In *Topography of a Search*, 1962-1999, however, uses the same dress used in the other works to suggest that the figure is a diver (see fig. 16). In this work, the diver and water function as metaphors for a quest for immersion, and the loss of self, in a spirituality. It also uses a six foot by eight foot map as an interactive backdrop. This is a topographical map, which records both distances and depths, of a local lake to record explorations of various faiths in the chronological order of their study. Each 'depth' holds a fragment of a religious text. Glazes of cobalt blue get progressively darker as the depths increase as the chronology approaches the present. The cobalt 'water' dominates the map, and the





Figure 16. Author, *Map Series: Topography of a Search*, 1962-99, mixed media, 72" x 96" x 12", 1999.

lake empties into a rivulet at the bottom right side of the canvas. Land areas are painted in colors that resemble sherbet - pink, green and orange - and hold no text. This map has little to do with place, is a vague record of time, is 'factual' in its recording of what was read and explored but is mainly about the subjective experience of that exploration. This is the least objective of the maps - it can not be read independent from the other pieces, and it is an integral part of a symbolic narrative. A door, five foot in height and composed of four rectangular panes of glass stacked vertically in a black wood frame, stands before the map. On it is painted a female diver, in a pike position. She is divided by the segments of the door. The top three sections convey a continuous figure, but in the bottom section of the door, her feet have been disconnected from the rest of the body and inverted. A black-framed window hangs along the top right side of the map. On it is sand-blasted a fragment of a poem from Lewis Carol's "Alice in Wonderland" :

They told me you had been to her,  
And mentioned me to him,  
She gave me a good character,  
But said I could not swim.<sup>1</sup>

Below, where the rivulet concludes at the edge of the map is placed a drinking glass filled with cobalt blue water and standing on a small black pedestal. On the glass is sand-blasted the phrase, "but I could drink".

As stated above, the piece exposes a personal search. It symbolically proposes the impossibility of complete immersion in the non-physical realm, but the necessity, or at least possibility of periodic nourishment. Each element of this piece holds subjective and objective information , but the overriding experience is a personal, subjective one. The facts serve the individual experience and viewpoint. In this piece, lines between emotion

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland* (data incomplete)

and reason are no longer clear, they interact freely and cooperatively, as in life. A memory is shared, if obscurely, where the rememberer is both subject and object, so that the viewer might experience, and reinterpret, both the sensory elements and the internal responses.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### CONCLUSION

In summary, this work began as an attempt to delineate, yet retain the unity of the subjective and objective experience. In particular, the concept of memory was used as the vehicle by which to depict this interdependence. Layering provided a physical analogy for the interaction between the memory of the quantitative and qualitative aspects of life events. It became clear, however, in both the work and research that, although we may distinguish between the objective and subjective elements in our experiences, they are never disjointed. In fact, it all contributes to an, ultimately, subjective experience.

Relativity tells us that even our sensory perceptions - measurable and rational- are relative or subjective. Relativism prevails, making the subjective, in a sense, the objective. Relativism is not without absolutes, they are just not Absolutes. The paintings in this thesis are personal truths, which both the objective and subjective elements of experience serve to communicate. The separation of the sensory and intuitive elements of experience both supported current scientific findings concerning memory, and the conceptual goals for the work. It is valid, even necessary, to dissect and discriminate between elements of experience; the truth is that it remains whole and confederate.

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