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Rochester Institute of Technology

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
The College of Fine and Applied Arts  
in Candidacy for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

NEXUS:  
PAINTING AS A LINK TO A PRIMARY REALITY

By

KAREN SARDISCO

May 1985



## APPROVALS

Advisor: Fred Meyer

Date: 5/19/85

Associate Advisor: Philip Bornarth

Date: 5/20/85

Associate Advisor: Lawrence Williams

Date: 5/16/85

Assistant to the Dean for  
Graduate Affairs: Fred Meyer

Date: 5/19/85

Dean, College of  
Fine and Applied Arts: Dr. Robert H. Johnston Ph. D.

Date: 5/28/85

I, Karen Sardisco prefer to be contacted  
each time a request for production is made. I can be  
reached at the following address.

Date: 5/16/85

"Man struggles with his unborn needs and fulfillment. New unfoldings struggle up in torment in him, as buds struggle forth from the midst of a plant. Any man of real individuality tries to know and to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along. This struggle for verbal consciousness should not be left out in art. It is a very great part of life. It is not superimposition of a theory. It is the passionate struggle into conscious being."

D. H. Lawrence

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## PREFACE

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A change in one's perception of reality is generally preceded by a shift in the way one comes to "know" things. It can occur on a personal level, brought on, for example, by serious illness or disciplined meditation, creative effort, or through intense intellectual struggle. It can be generated on a collective level by scientific advancements, great technological discoveries, or by tremendously influential human beings who have the capabilities of moving large numbers of people. Whatever the case, it is evident that the way mankind views the world around him is subject to change.

This thesis is a personal confrontation with change. And, although it is not meant to document a sudden transformation, it can be viewed as a summing up (at least thusfar) of certain reoccurring intuitions and feelings, and, as a declaration of how those feelings have brought me to realizations that could only come about through serious contemplation, directed reading, and most important of all, passionate painting.

I believe that the arts, whatever they may be, poetry, music, sculpture, painting, are symbolic of a sense of reality that goes beyond ordinary constructs and leads one closer to the true significance of what it means to be alive in this world.

The painting that I have done in the past two years has served as an impetus which has enabled me to collect and sort out thoughts and feelings that were in need of discipline. It has offered me the opportunity to form a clearer picture of what it is that I am concerned about, as well as begin to provide me with answers to some of the questions

I have been pondering. The canvases that resulted are visual metaphors. They acknowledge the search that I undertook, hoping, at least, to have started on the path that would enable me to obtain a better understanding of the conflicts that exist in man's struggle to comprehend the ultimate reality. They are a personal quest for a harmony and rhythm that I feel is essential to make one's life complete.

In the summer of 1983, I came upon a short book entitled "The Silent Pulse" by George Leonard. Having just completed a year of graduate study, I found that I was becoming increasingly preoccupied with the interrelationship of all things. I seemed to be harboring a growing awareness of the threads of universal truths that manifested themselves in the guise of what appeared to me to be all disciplines. The visual arts, literature, religion, music, science, they all contained, in some form or another, man's desire to seek out some connection to the whole. I was fascinated by the analogies.

The connection between individual consciousness and ultimate form is the basis for Leonard's book. He spoke of "a silent pulse of perfect rhythm, a complex of wave forms and resonances,"<sup>1</sup> which he felt connected us to everything in the universe. He cited, among other things, the relationships between quantum physics, brain research, Eastern philosophies and contemporary thought, that pointed in the direction of a compatible world-view.

The similarity between the patterns that I was just beginning to see emerge and the inferences made by Leonard bring me to the crux of this paper. As a painter, I found that I was using my work to sort out intuitions that I had concerning the interconnectedness of the reality that surrounded me, a reality that went beyond that which was seen to that which was felt. This realization accounted for an investigation into theories of perception that looked into various interpretations of

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<sup>1</sup> George Leonard, The Silent Pulse, (New York, Bantam Books, Inc., 1978). p. xii.



how man placed himself in the universal scheme of things. The explorations that ensued brought me to the discovery that my initial intuitions had a connection to modern theories of reality, and that my conviction of the essential unity of all things was a view shared by scientist and artist alike.

"The Silent Pulse" led me to other books that were concerned with contemporary views of reality. The majority of them were based in the belief that in order to understand the deepest nature of things, a consensus between intuitive knowledge and rational understanding had to be reached, and, that in fact, there was a growing trend uniting the two.

Recent discoveries in quantum physics have begun to shed new light on the nature of matter. Physicists are beginning to find intriguing parallels between their results and certain mystical-transcendental religions. Interest in a logically based perception of reality that echoes ones steeped in intuitive understanding, has culminated in a restructuring of the dominant, rationally supported world-view that for so long has occupied Western thought.

This thesis begins first with a presentation of the historical background behind the evolution of reason as a dominant system of understanding. It leads into an examination of modern theories of reality, giving evidence to support my contention that the integration of reason and intuition gives a more balanced insight into the nature of existence.

The knowledge gained through this information has had a direct effect upon my work. The final portion of the paper is a personal analysis. It investigates the relationships between the landscape and my paintings; examines the connection between painting and meditation; and presents my discoveries about the nature of learning. It is through these inquiries and the process of creativity, that I have begun to understand my motives as a painter. The concern with

achieving a harmony between intellect and intuition is integral to my work as an artist, and reflects my goals as an individual as well.

## CHAPTER ONE:

### CONFLICT: THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN SPIRIT AND FORM

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In Western culture today, there exists a definite chasm, a lack of balance between the rational and the intuitive, the two modes of consciousness which we use to decipher the enigmas of the world around us. It is reflected in our attitudes and values, and is the result of a chain of events that have their origins in Greek thought, evolving through the ages, to what has, up until the present time, been regarded as two distinctly separate ways of viewing the world.

The intuitive mind, the mind of art, religion, dreams, is man's connection to nature. It exists as that part of the human being which is constantly acknowledging its ties to the past. It combines information from a myraid of sources and acts as codifier of sensations and feelings, organizing in an all-encompassing manner those things that are intangible and have at their core the spirit of the evolution of man.

Consciousness, as described by the rational mind, is man's ability to put in order, through reason and logic, those things that can be understood in a more concrete sense. It structures things and events into systems which allow for a clearer conception of the environment. Growing out of man's need to create some semblance of order in the world he lives in, it became the manifestation of his quest for control.

The rational mind is the mind of intellectual thought, the birthplace of science and technology. It is at the root of the human condition which describes itself as being from



nature, rather than of nature, as well as the force behind progress. It has the tendency to dismiss the cyclical patterns of the natural world in favor of the systems of the contrived, synthetic ones. Rationality, although an important facet of knowing, has unfortunately been over-played as a valid basis of understanding, in recent times being viewed as the only one.

Prior to 1500, reason and intuition coexisted in the attempt to understand the meaning and significance of things. In the sixth century B.C., the first period of Greek philosophy, the dominant world view was organic, with all things and events perceived as interrelated and connected, part of a cohesive whole. The philosophers of the Mileasian school of Ionia saw no distinction between the inanimate and the animate, viewing everything as manifestations of the "physis," full of life and spirituality. Thales "declared all things to be full of gods and Anaximander saw the universe as a kind of organism which was supported by "pneuma," the cosmic breath, in the same way as the body is supported by air."<sup>2</sup>

Heraclitus of Ephesus, viewed the world as in a state of perpetual change, and believed those changes arose from the dynamic interaction of opposites, feeling that the cyclical interplay of those energies resulted in a unity which transcended all opposing forces.

The views of the early Greeks were consistent with the philosophies of the East, which also held the opinion that the universe was made up of phenomena that were interdependent and inseparable, parts of a cosmic whole. China, during the sixth century had two distinct philosophic schools, Taoism and Confucianism. Confucianism, the ethical element of Chinese thought, was concerned with morals, government, and human relations, while its counterpart, Taoism, dealt with the aspirations of the individual to attain a mystical

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<sup>2</sup> Fritjof Capra, The Tao of Physics, (Colorado, Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1976) p. 84.

union with the universe. Together, they balanced the two complimentary sides of human nature, intuitive wisdom and practical knowledge.

In India, between 1500 and 500 B.C., the Vedas were written by anonymous sages, Vedic "seers" and are the basis for Hinduism, a vast and complex spiritual philosophy that dominates Indian thought. It too consisted of the belief that reality was a manifestation of a multitude of things and events which came together to form the ultimate reality, Brahman, which is understood to be the inner essence of things, the soul.

Buddhism, which began in India in the sixth century B.C. and quickly spread throughout Asia, centered around the quest for the direct mystical experience, called the 'awakening.' It searched for a transcendence of "intellectual distinctions and opposites to reach the world of acintya, the unthinkable, where reality appears as undivided and undifferentiated 'suchness.'<sup>3</sup>

A blend of Hinduism, Taoism and Confucianism resulted in the development of a special kind of spiritual discipline called Zen, which was adopted by Japan around the year 1200 A.D., and continues as a dominant way of life to this day. Having as its goal the enlightenment of the individual, with emphasis on the awakening in the midst of every day affairs, it was not only a path to enlightenment but enlightenment itself.

The notion that spirit and matter could conceivably be separate entities, first found its way into Western thought through the philosophies of the Eleatic school of thinkers in Greece, who believed in a Divine Principle that ruled over all. Parmenides of Elea called this principle, the Being, and believed it to be absolute and invariable. Paralleling this belief in the material realm were the Greek atomists, (most notably Democritus and Leucippus) who conten-

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<sup>3</sup> Fritjof Capra, The Tao of Physics, (Colorado, Shambhala, Publications, Inc., 1976) p. 84.

ded that everything was composed of atoms, and viewed matter as being made up of several "basic building blocks," intrinsically dead particles moving in the void. Both doctrines illustrate the tendency in early Greek philosophy to view spirit and matter as separate from each other, thus introducing a dualism which would show up more forcibly in the centuries ahead, and provide the basis for what would become one of the fundamental principles of Western thought.

As Greek thought evolved, philosophers continued to explore the nature of existence, and the ways in which it could be understood. Pythagoras, one of the most influential of the early Greek thinkers, initiated the theory that the laws of Nature could be deduced by pure thought. He devised a system based on numbers, and believed that the certainty of mathematical demonstrations provided access to a perfect reality, a realm of the gods. The idea of a perfect and mystical world, unseen by the senses would prove to be conducive to the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, and introduced logical reasoning into the spiritual domain. This belief resulted in a development which was decisive in the evolution of Western religious philosophy. As Bertrand Russell points out in, The History of Western Philosophy:

The combination of mathematics and theology, which began with Pythagoras, characterized religious philosophy in Greece, in the Middle Ages, and modern times down to Kant.... in Plato, Saint Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant, there is an intimate blending of what is timeless, which comes from Pythagoras, and distinguishes the intellectualized theory of Europe from the more straightforward mysticism of Asia.<sup>4</sup>

The alignment of religious doctrine with logic led to the formation of a spiritual system that was bound to a rational foundation. This connection resulted in an attitude that recognized the mind and spirit as manifestations of

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<sup>4</sup> Bertrand Russell, A History of Western Philosophy, (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1945) p. 37.



each other. It dismissed the body as a separate and this-worldly entity, viewed as less important, and evidently not worthy of investigation. This distinction escalated with the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle and the subsequent growth of Christianity in the ancient world, setting the stage for the further justification of the body/soul dualism. It took root in the dogmas of the Church, which, by placing the jurisdiction of man and his environment in the hands of an Absolute ruler, made a crucial step in presenting the material and the spiritual as existing apart from one another.

The power of the Church in the Middle Ages, and its relationship to the unfolding of a perception of reality that is characterized by an extreme polarity, should not be over-looked. The early Christian affiliation with Greek pragmatism laid the foundation on which the basis of Western thought is grounded. Dealing with absolutes, whether spiritual or material in nature, created an attitude that began the gradual turn away from an organic vision of existence. It was directed instead, to one that was distinguished by its emphasis on what was believed to be the intrinsically separate nature of spirit and form. Firmly rooted in deductive reasoning, it took as its primary hypothesis the supremacy of God over man, thus establishing the polarity between the earthly and the divine.

This attitude continued to dominate the European world view through the Middle Ages, until the onset of the Scientific Revolution changed the tide for Western man. Shifting the emphasis from one extreme to the other, he realized that by learning about the inner workings of the natural world, the reigns of power could, to some extent, be held in his hands.

In contrast to Western thought at this time, Eastern cultures continued to evolve around a world view which re-

mained rooted to a perception of existence that was all-embracing in nature. In China, where this philosophy is described as organic materialism, the conception of a celestial law-giver legislating for non-human natural phenomena never entered into their line of thought. "The co-operation of all beings arose, not from the orders of a superior authority external to themselves, but from the fact that they were all parts in a hierarchy of wholes, forming a cosmic and organic pattern, and what they obeyed were the internal dictates of their own natures."<sup>5</sup> The adherence to a set of laws that were derived from the natural order of things is one of the most important elements of Chinese philosophy. The Confucian belief that man should be governed by natural law which was in accordance with the actual nature of man, and the Taoist conviction that not only did the order of nature influence the order of the human realm, but acted in a profoundly organic way in all of its systems, resulted in a perception of reality that proceeded to move in a different direction than the developments in the West.

Reasons for the rise of science in the European world that was not matched in the East are many and complex. One of the most fundamental causes of the disparity can be traced to the contrast between the conceptions of the laws of nature in the two cultures. "Without a doubt one of the oldest notions of Western civilization was that just as earthly law-givers enacted codes of positive law to be obeyed by men, so also the celestial and supreme rational Creator Deity had laid down a series of laws which must be obeyed by minerals, crystals, plants, animals and the stars in their courses."<sup>6</sup> This conception, in direct conflict with the organic perception typical in Eastern thought, so severely lacked

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph Needham, The Grand Titration, Science and Society in the East and West (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1969) p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 35.

in creativity that the development of the idea of laws ordained by a Supreme Being for non-human nature were simply not cultivated in the East. "Hence the conclusion did not follow that other lesser rational beings could decipher or reformulate the laws of a great Super-Being if they used the methods of observation, experiment, hypothesis and mathematical reasoning."<sup>7</sup>

The changes that began occurring in Europe in the sixteenth century were a direct result of the "orthodox Christian doctrine of permanent unchanging souls destined for either heaven or hell. This psychological attitude, more than anything else, prepared the way for the totally mechanistic world view of the seventeenth century."<sup>8</sup> The powerful philosophy of materialism which would come to dominate Europe at this time was in complete accordance with the geocentric perception of the world which controlled European thought. By regarding man as the center of God's universe and viewing matter as stable and inert, the notion that material phenomena may be manipulated in any way to satisfy human needs, began to permeate the culture.

In the West, the Scientific Revolution began with Nicholas Copernicus, who formulated the theory that the earth was not the center of the universe, but one of many other planets that circled a minor star at the edge of the galaxy. This heliocentric view of the universe could not be tolerated by the religious consciousness at this time, so Copernicus delayed its publication until 1543, the year of his death. Following his revelation came the discoveries of Johannes Kepler, a German scientist and mathematician, whose attempt to find 'the harmony of the spheres', led to the formulation of his laws of planetary motion. Astronomical calculations

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7 Ibid. p. 37.

8. Jose A. Arguelles, The Transformative Vision, (Boulder Shambala Publications, Inc., 1975)p. 26.



enabled Kepler to deduce that underlying the chaos of daily life was an order in the universe, evident in the motions of the planets, which he believed mirrored the perfection of its Creator.

Research in the celestial phenomena was further stimulated by the work of Galileo Galilei who was the first to combine empirical knowledge with mathematics to devise the laws he discovered. This method of examination clearly affected the way in which the mysteries of nature were unraveled, and have remained important criteria of scientific theories to this day. But, Galileo's belief that scientists should restrict their observations to the measurable and quantifiable components of material bodies began to undermine the credibility of knowledge through any other means. The ability of man to know, through intuition, various aspects of reality, was considerably overshadowed as the dominance of reason over feeling proceeded toward its inevitable conclusion.

The shift towards a greater understanding of the material world through reason, gained momentum as men like Renee Descartes set out to construct new systems that could coincide with the changing world view. Descartes, one of the first and foremost of modern philosophers, devised a system which he felt would allow him to build a complete science of nature about which he could have absolute certainty. This mind-science would be based, like mathematics, on self evident first principles. His famous dictum, "I think, therefore I am" was the result of his firm conviction that the validity of things rested on whether they could be completely known. He believed that all science was certain, evident knowledge. He rejected all knowledge which was merely probable and judged that only those things should be believed which are perfectly known and about which there can be no doubts.

Descartes believed that the essence of nature lies in thought. He felt that certain knowledge was achieved through evident intuition and necessary deduction, and, that by using an analytic method to break up thoughts and problems into pieces and then arranging them in a logical order, one could reach absolute understanding. This analytic method of reasoning was one of Descartes most important contributions to science, but it has also been one of the most misused. His assumption that all aspects of complex phenomena could be understood by reducing them to their essential parts assisted in creating a fragmented conception of the environment, and aided in promoting the separation between mind and matter.

The Cartesian division between mind and matter had a tremendous impact on Western thought, and the influence it had on the perception of reality in the European world was profound. According to Fritjof Capra, in his book, The Turning Point:

To Descartes, the material universe was a machine and nothing but a machine. There was no purpose, life, or spirituality in matter. Nature worked according to mechanical laws, and everything in the material world could be explained in terms of arrangement and movement of its parts. This mechanical picture of nature became the dominant paradigm of science in the period following Descartes. It guided all scientific observation and the formulation of all theories of natural phenomena until twentieth century physics brought about radical change. The whole elaboration of mechanistic science in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, including Newton's grand synthesis, was but a development of the Cartesian idea. Descartes gave scientific thought its general framework - the view of nature as a perfect machine, governed by exact mathematical laws.<sup>9</sup>

In the seventeenth century, following Descartes, there emerged a man who combined the work of Kepler and Galileo and formulated the general laws of motion which applied

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<sup>9</sup> Fritjof Capra, The Turning Point, (Colorado: Shambhala Publications Inc., 1976) p. 60.



to all bodies under the influence of the force of gravity. Isaac Newton devised a mathematical theory recognized today as differential calculus, which extended beyond the techniques of his predecessors. Using this method to form a complete mathematical interpretation of the mechanistic view of nature, Newton provided a consistent theory by which to describe the movement of solid bodies within the solar system. The significance of these exact laws of motion lay in their universal application. The fact that they held true throughout the whole solar system seemed to confirm the Cartesian view of nature, validating the perception of the universe as one immense mechanical system, operating according to precise mathematical laws.

The mechanistic view of the universe which spread throughout the European world proceeded to give rise to the tyranny of materialism, as the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century gave way to the further glorification of reason, evident in the eighteenth. The Age of Enlightenment began the period where scientific interpretations of the nature of existence proceeded to infiltrate various aspects of understanding. Through the philosophies of John Locke, who attempted to define society in terms of its basic building block, the human being, and Thomas Hobbes, who professed that all knowledge was acquired through the senses, Western culture was initiated into the belief that there were laws of nature, similar to those governing the physical universe, (in this case, a universe that was systematized and measurable) which legislated over human society as well.

These views, which were typical of a culture dominated by a logical, rationally supported perception of reality, continued to evolve well into the nineteenth century. Advancements in the areas of biology, psychology, chemistry and physics perpetuated change in many different realms,

yet lying at the root of them all was a philosophy steeped in the worship of rationality.

This bias, so foreign to the Eastern vision of an interwoven, interconnected universe, created the split society of the twentieth century. Celebrating the wonders of the rational mind, western man relinquished his affinity with nature. By doing so he has left unattended his vast intuitive capacities, the part of his being which knows through the connection to the natural world. This denial has left a void in the place where, as Bob Samples calls it, the 'metaphoric mind' once prevailed.

The gap between intellect and intuition widened in the twentieth century, but it has been precisely that division which finally called for a re-evaluation of those forces which influence the way in which reality is perceived in Western culture. The power with which rational thought has given man the ability to create automobiles, spaceships, and the atomic bomb, has also given rise to the immediate need for a consensus between his capacity to control nature and his capability to live in harmony amidst it.

The energy which accompanies the integration of spirit and form is slowly breaking down the barriers that for so long have been the strongholds of Western rationalist tradition. It is the force that underlies this transformation, that creates a climate which makes possible the unification of the two.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONSENSUS:

#### BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS IN THE SPIRIT/MATTER DUALISM

Change does not come easily. Beginning as an undercurrent, it rises to the surface gradually, contingent upon many factors for its eventual evolution and subsequent growth. It rejects and accepts, moving into a system slowly, working towards transformation, with a determined cautiousness, fueled by the energy of change, belief.

Today in contemporary society, there are indications of the seeds of change. Sown by decades of doubt and frustration, they have taken root to provide a viable alternative to the direction in which the powerful thrust of mechanized society has taken modern man.

At the foundation of this metamorphosis is the realization that rational knowledge and intuitive understanding need no longer follow separate paths, but can walk side by side and function together, enabling man to "see" anew. The conception that scientific discoveries can be in harmony with man's spiritual and religious beliefs is setting the stage for a new perception of reality which takes into account both facets of knowing. The union of intellect and intuition is giving rise to a vision of existence which is holistic in approach, allowing for a more complete and balanced understanding of what man and his environment are all about.

These premonitions are not part of a naive view of what could occur in a idealized society. Rather, they are feelings, based on a variety of evidence which suggest that in order to continue as a species, mankind must use



all the information that has been accumulated, both intuitively and intellectually, and, that any new information need be viewed and appreciated from both perspectives.

The mechanistic Cartesian vision of reality has had a profound impact on the Western way of thinking. It has promoted the dominance of reductionist science and has developed an immensely fragmented world view which in turn has affected technologies, institutions and life styles. Consequently, it seems evident that the reunion of the psyche and the techne offers mankind the kinds of possibilities required for the continuation of a society that looks forward to a future full of promise and potential.

Inevitable changes in man's perception of reality are occurring at all levels, gradually seeping into the mainstream of contemporary thought. In art, religion, science and various other disciplines, there are indications of the joining of the metaphoric mind and the rational mind, resulting in an integrated force which enhances creative consciousness.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the accomplishments of one man, Albert Einstein, profoundly changed man's understanding of the material world. In 1905, Einstein published two articles, one on his special theory of relativity, and the other on a new way of looking at electrodynamic radiation. Both papers signaled changes in the relationship between man and the physical world, and initiated the first stirrings of doubt about the Newtonian concept of absolute space and time.

Einstein's theory of relativity stated that "space" is not three-dimensional and time is not a separate entity. Both are intimately connected and form a four-dimensional continuum, "space-time." "Different observers will order events differently in time if they move with different velocities relative to the observed events. In such a

case, two events which are seen as occurring simultaneously by one observer may occur in different temporal sequences for other observers. All measurements involving space and time thus lose their absolute significance."<sup>10</sup>

The modification in the concepts of space and time, which are so basic in the description of natural phenomena, entail a modification of the complete framework with which we describe nature. The result of this change was the realization that mass was nothing but a form of energy. Einstein's breakthrough clearly implied that the concepts of "empty space" and solid material bodies, had lost their meaning, and that classical Newtonian physics could no longer provide for an adequate description of physical reality.

In the 1920's, a team of physicists joined forces in the attempt to formulate a theory on which to base the activity of subatomic particles. They discovered that the electrons, protons and neutrons, in the nucleus of the atom were very abstract entities which had a dual nature. Depending on how they were observed, they appeared sometimes as particles and sometimes as waves. This dual nature was also exhibited by light, which could take the form of electromagnetic particles or waves.

Quantum theory, the description of the dualistic nature of matter and light, provided information which showed ~~that~~ at the subatomic level, particles could only be understood as interconnections, or correlations, between the various processes of observation and measurement. This viewpoint led physicists to the understanding that particles existed, not as independent entities, but as sets of relationships. It removed them from their role as objects and delegated them instead, to the realm of probabilities rather than certainties. It also reintroduced the concept of an interconnected, interwoven universe back into the domain of

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<sup>10</sup> Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, (Colorado, Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1975) p. 51-52.

science.

The perception that everything exists only through its relationship to everything else, lies at the core of contemporary thought. The "quantum revolution" of fifty years ago has evolved to a point which indicates a discernable historical trend. The parallels between recent discoveries in physics and mystical-transcendental religions have opened the doors to a way of viewing the world that incorporates both the intuitive and rational faculties present in human consciousness. The similarities which occur are operating at levels which transcend 'normal' sensory experience and emerge instead, from frequencies transcending time and space.

The explanation of events which seem to defy conventional constructs has taken many forms. Through religion, the timeless and spaceless ground of being (or "Godhead") has been universally described by the worlds great mystics and sages, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist. In science, one of the most recent, most intriguing and perhaps the most plausible, is the holographic theory of reality set down by physicists David Bohm and neuroscientist Karl Pribram. Their theory contends that:

Our brains mathematically construct "concrete" reality by interpreting frequencies from another dimension, a realm of meaningful, patterned primary reality that transcends time and space. The brain is a hologram, interpreting a holographic universe.<sup>11</sup>

and appears to account for all transcendental experience, paranormal events, and even "normal" perceptual oddities. Their interpretation suggests that although there may not be a strict identity between science and mysticism, there are important analogies. It is evident in the holographic

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<sup>11</sup> Ken Wilber, ed. The Holographic Paradigm, (Colorado, Shambhala Publications Inc., 1982), A New Perspective on Reality, A Special Updated Issue of The Brain/Mind Bulletin. p. 5.



theory that the new science, honoring its basic principles must prepare for the integration of spirit into a formally spiritless domain.

The mathematical principle of holography was discovered by Dennis Gabor in 1947, earning him a Nobel Prize, but had to await the invention of the laser beam for its practical application. In the 1960's, Emmett Leith and Juris Upatnicks successfully constructed the first holograms, and in 1969 Karl Pribram, then working as a neurosurgeon, proposed that the hologram was a powerful model for brain processes.

In 1971, David Bohm, a physicist who had worked with Einstein, suggested that the organization of the universe may be holographic, and in the late 1970's, both Pribram and Bohm speculated on the unifying metaphysical implications of the holographic analogy.

A hologram can best be described as a special type of optical storage system. For example:

If you take a holographic photo of, say, a horse, and cut out one section of it, e.g., the horse's head, and then enlarge that section to the original size, you will get, not a big head, but a picture of the whole horse. In other words, each individual part of the picture contains the whole picture in condensed form. The part is in the whole and the whole is in each part -- a type of unity-in-diversity and diversity-in-unity. The key point is simply that the part has access to the whole.<sup>12</sup>

The hologram is produced when the wave field of light scattered by an object is recorded on a plate as an interference pattern. When that photographic record, produced without a focusing lens, is placed in a coherent light beam, like a laser, the original pattern is regenerated and the meaningless swirls on the plate reconstituted, forming a three-dimensional image, at a distance from the plate.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Introduction, by Ken Wilber. p. 2.

Pribram saw the hologram as a model for how the brain might store memory. Just as the pattern on the holographic plate has no space-time dimension, storing the image everywhere on the plate, he viewed brain functions in the same way. He believes that the information from which the consciousness works, is not stored in a particular place, but is accumulated all over the brain, and each time information is used, a selection is made by gathering it from all over, as happens with the hologram.

David Bohm, taking the holographic analogy a step further, describes the stable, tangible, visible world as an illusion. He believes that what really exists is a universe that is dynamic and kaleidoscopic, not really "there." He feels that the true nature of reality is in another dimension, where there are no "things". He believes that it is the lenslike focusing of the brain, through its mathematical strategies, which makes objects out of frequencies.

Both Pribram and Bohm recognized the similarities between their research and the perception of reality described by Eastern mystical philosophies. They found that the world view emerging from modern physics paralleled ideas inherent in the spiritual disciplines of the East. Acknowledging the patterns, both scientists began to seriously view the connections. Together, they realized that the combination of new scientific theories, and mystical intuition, provided for an understanding of the world which could far surpass the knowledge that each discipline could individually provide.

Holography is essentially a photographic process, originally formulated according to strict mathematical laws. Its relevance, lies not in its practical applications, but in its capacity to provide a model on which to base new ways of looking at the world. The holographic



model is an integral theory that has the capacity to enrich and enlarge many disciplines, having the power to make sense out of old phenomena and raise new and pertinent questions. The assumption, implicit in the holographic vision is that "harmonious, coherent states of consciousness are more nearly attuned to the primary level of reality, a dimension of order and harmony....There are implications for learning, environments, families, the arts, religion and philosophy, healing and self healing."<sup>13</sup> Used as a stimulus to aid in our understanding of consciousness and the universe, and emphasizing the interdependent, parallel and simultaneous processing of events, the holographic paradigm is an important consideration when looking for new ways in which to describe reality. It has the potential to enlighten as well as instruct, and signifies considerable interest in the integration of scientifically formulated knowledge with intuitively known experiences, allowing for a healthy and well rounded perception of the things and events which constitute the level of understanding presently accessible to modern man.

Another approach in contemporary physics which deals with consciousness explicitly, contending that it may be an essential aspect of the nature of the universe, is Geoffrey Chew's "bootstrap" hypothesis. Derived from Werner Heisenberg's S-matrix theory, proposed in 1943, Chew has developed the bootstrap idea into a general philosophy of nature, as well as constructed a theory on which to base the strong interactions evident amongst subatomic particles studied in quantum physics.

Heisenberg developed the S-matrix theory to explain the interactions between particles, formulating a mathema-

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<sup>13</sup> Marilyn Ferguson, The Aquarian Conspiracy, (Los Angeles, J.P. Tarcher, Inc. 1980). p. 183.

tical framework which was suited to describe the strong interactions. The most important concept in S-matrix theory was the shift from objects to events; its basic concern not with the particles themselves, but with their reactions.

Geoffrey Chew's bootstrap approach is considered the philosophical foundation of S-matrix theory. It contends that nature cannot be reduced to fundamental entities, or basic building blocks of matter, but has to be viewed through self-consistency. Chew and his followers believe that no fundamental constants, laws or equations could possibly describe a universe that is constantly changing and is seen as a dynamic web of interrelated events. "None of the properties of any part of this web is fundamental; they all follow from the properties of the other parts, and the overall consistency of their interrelations determines the structure of the entire web."<sup>14</sup>

The bootstrap philosophy proposes a new world view - a vision of the universe as a dynamic web of interconnected events. It is a perception of reality not unlike the view of nature presented by Eastern philosophies. Contending that all phenomena in the universe are uniquely determined by mutual self-consistency, it abandons the notion of fundamental laws of nature, derived from the Judeo-Christian belief of the divine law-giver, and, instead, opts for a description of the universe which illustrates an ever-changing, dynamic world.

Inquiring into the essential nature of things; into deeper realms of matter in physics, and deeper realms of consciousness through spiritual exploration, man discovers a different reality behind the mechanistic facade

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<sup>14</sup> Fritjof Capra, The Turning Point, (Colorado, Shambhala Publications, Inc. 1976). p. 93.

of the everyday world. What comes to light is that the organic world view, evident in mystical religions and sub-atomic physics, seems to give a clearer picture of the dimensions of reality than does the mechanistic view of the macroscopic environment. At the least, it is an important realization, at the best, it promises to open the doors to an understanding of consciousness and the environment, in an attempt to reconcile the history of separation that has been so persistent in isolating the two.

In the early 1930's, noted historian, Arnold Toynbee concluded that one of the most significant developments of the age would be the influence of the Eastern spiritual perspective on the West. In 1931, scientist-philosopher-mystic, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, on a visit to China, set forth his major thesis in an essay entitled, "The Spirit of the Earth". In it he stated his most profound realization: that mind has been undergoing successive reorganizations throughout the history of evolution, and that it had reached a crucial point, the discovery of its own evolution. Teilhard believed that this new awareness would become a species-wide enlightenment which he called the "Omega Point".

In his introduction to "The Phenomena of Man", the book in which Teilhard published his views on the subject, Sir Julian Huxley describes his version of 'point Omega':

If I understand him right, he considers that two factors are cooperating to promote this further complexification of the noosphere (a term Teilhard uses to describe the realm of the spirit and the mind). One is the increase of knowledge about the universe at large, from the galaxies and stars to human societies and individuals. The other is the increase of psychosocial pressure on the surface of our planet. The result of one is that the noosphere incorporates ever more facets of the cosmos, including



the facts of its general direction and its trend in time, so as to become more truly a microcosm, which is (like all incorporated knowledge) both a mirror and a directive agency. The result of the other is the increased unification and the increased intensity of the system of human thought. The combined result, according to Pere Teilhard, will be the attainment of point Omega, where the noosphere will be intensely unified and will have achieved a 'hyperpersonal' organization.<sup>15</sup>

One of Teilhard's firmest convictions was the supreme importance of personality. He believed that the integration of the self with the outer world of men and nature, created not only a more highly individualized individual, but one that has crossed the threshold of self consciousness to a new mode of thought and thus, has achieved some degree of conscious integration. He felt that a developed human being was one that had transcended individuality in personality. He believed that love was the only energy in the world that was capable of personalizing by totalizing. It alone was able to promote synthesis without destroying personality and united in such a way as to complete and fulfill, creating a total human being.

Teilhard pointed out that the reason for this was that in any domain, whether it be cells of the body, or members of a society, union differentiates. He stressed that in any organized whole the parts perfect themselves and fulfill themselves. "The grains of consciousness do not tend to lose their outlines and blend, but to the contrary, accentuate the depth and incommunicability of their egos. The more "other" they become in conjunction, the more they find themselves as self."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Sir Julian Huxley, introduction to The Phenomenon of Man by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, (New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1959). p. 18-19.

<sup>16</sup> Christopher F. Mooney, S.J., "Christianity and the change in Human Consciousness", in Teilhard de Chardin, In Quest of the Perfection in Man, an International Symposium, ed. Geraldine O. Brown, Joseph L. Alioto, Seymour M. Farber, M.D. (New Jersey, Associated University Presses, Inc., 1973). p. 154.

In the mid 1930's, Teilhard de Chardin, also a Jesuit priest, was restricted from teaching by his superiors, who contended that his views were unorthodox and an embarrassment to the Church. As he continued to work in the field of paleontology, he persisted in his life-long quest of educating people about the benefits of striving for the unification of the species through the collective understanding of the evolution of the mind and spirit of man. His unique vision, the belief that human consciousness can return to the point "where the roots of matter disappear from view", has become even more relevant in a time which faces ecological disaster and nuclear destruction. The integration of body and soul becomes essential for man to liberate that conscious energy which seeks to further unify the world. Teilhard believed that it was the concentration of this energy which would realize the possibilities of human fulfillment, alleviating the pressures a fragmented society imposes on the state of mankind.

In the field of psychology, Carl Jung and Abraham Maslow stand out as individuals who have had a profound influence on the way man perceives himself in relationship to his surroundings. Both Maslow and Jung have attempted to reconcile the inner and the outer worlds which constitute the totality of man's existence, and, through their theories provide insight into the different levels of integration that are needed between man's spiritual and material needs, for the development of a mature, balanced and complete individual.

As a contemporary of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung established himself as one of the pioneers of modern psychology through his innovative perspective of human consciousness. "In contrast to Freud's conception, which was mechanistic, analytic and reductive to basic causes, Jung suggested

a model that was organic, expansive and unfolding to purposive ends."<sup>17</sup> Jung was clearly more interested in the dichotomy between abstraction and generalization on the one side and the experience of knowing on the other seeing both as aspects of the same reality, as polar opposites on a single axis. The Jungian analytic process became one of the most influential theories of human consciousness, as well as provided a bridge between the scientific/intellectual aspects of life and the religious/nonrational ones.

Carl Jung's concepts of archeptypal imagery and the collective unconscious, are indicative of his belief that underlying personal consciousness there existed a body of knowledge that held information, accumulated throughout the history of mankind that contained the principle ideas of human culture. He used the term archetype, to describe visual images, presented through dreams, that "form a bridge between the ways in which we consciously express our thoughts, and a more primitive, more colorful and pictorial form of expression. It is this form as well, that appeals directly to feeling and emotion. These "historical" associations are the link between the rational world of consciousness and the world of instinct."<sup>18</sup> These primordial images, released to the consciousness via symbol and metaphor, are part of the collective unconscious, which is viewed by Jung as a deeper level of consciousness which manifests itself through dream imagery. As described by June Singer, in her book, Boundaries of the Soul, the collective unconscious is conceived as:

an extension of the personal unconscious to its wider and broader base, encompassing contents

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<sup>17</sup> Charles Hampden-Turner, Maps of the Wind, (Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1981). p. 44.

<sup>18</sup> Carl Jung, Man and his Symbols, (New York, Dell Publishing Co. Inc., 1968). p. 32-33.



which are held in common by the family, by the social group, by tribe and nation, by race, and eventually by all of humanity. Each succeeding level of the unconscious may be thought of as going deeper and becoming more collective in its nature. The wonder of the collective unconscious is that it is all there, all the legend and history of the human race, with its unexorcised demons, and its gentle saints, its mysteries and its wisdom, all within each one of us -- a microcosm within the macrocosm.<sup>19</sup>

Jung's attempts at drawing attention to a transcendent dimension of consciousness usually ignored in the West, the union of intellect with the intuitive, pattern-seeking mind, has had a tremendous influence on the understanding of the mind, and has helped to develop an awareness of the many levels of human knowledge. Seeking to do away with the Western notion that science and religion were incompatible, Jung said that, "if we can reconcile ourselves with the mysterious truth that spirit is the living body seen from within, and the body the outer manifestation of the living spirit -- the two being really one -- then we can understand why it is that the attempt to transcend the present level of consciousness must give its due to the body."<sup>20</sup>

Abraham Maslow, one of the founders of what has become known as humanistic psychology, devoted his energies to help create a humanistic orientation of human behavior. He described an innate human drive beyond basic survival and emotional needs, geared toward a hunger for meaning and transcendence. He called this goal self-actualization and conceived a hierarchy of needs which demonstrated the stages and processes an individual must go through in order to move beyond oneself to realize

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19 June Singer, Boundries of the Soul, The Practice of Jungian Psychology, (New York, Anchor Press, 1973). p. 95-96.

20 Carl Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, (New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1933). p. 219-220.

the frontiers of possibilities and unknown potential.

Maslow's theory of psychological development was derived from his research of a group of people he believed had reached self-actualization. These people included Abraham Lincoln, Thoreau, Beethoven, Einstein and others. Their distinguishing personality characteristics included spontaneity, independence, creativity, non-conformity and transcendence. Maslow believed that these traits were essential in the drive to become fully human, and has devoted his life's work to helping people attain that goal.

Both Jung and Maslow approached the study of the human psyche from a perspective which stressed the integrity of the individual, as well as emphasized the unyielding human quest for spiritual fulfillment and growth. Contrary to earlier forms of psychological inquiry, which was limited through its emphasis on the study of deeply troubled people, humanistic psychology has begun to balance the statistics, and has shown that, through disciplined effort, the union of the rational and non-rational aspects of human nature can exist as complimentary elements, and work toward the creation of a mature and well-rounded individual.



As instruments and spokesmen of the spirit of the times, artists; poet and painter alike, have sought to give form to the nature and values of the age. As visionaries and mystics, they search for a way in which to share their unique perspectives; their creations, a result of an eternal quest for meaning, as well as a declaration of the condition of mankind which exerts itself so purposively around them.

Poet and novelist, D.H. Lawrence, like William Blake before him, can be viewed as a prophet of the future. Sensitive to the maladies of his time, he wrote of the contradictions and conflicts within the human psyche, and, through his writings attempted to come to terms with the two. Horace Gregory, in a critique of Lawrence's work, describes one of the major characteristics of his visionary abilities, and, in a comparison with William Blake, says:

If we consider Lawrence as an heir of the Romantic tradition in English literature, the resemblance to William Blake does not need proof. Blake was a seer, one who perceives in the world before his eyes enduring elements of the future and the past. The seer creates a synthesis of past, present, future from evidence that others have ignored. As seer Lawrence revived one of the ancient attributes of the poet-~~the~~ ability to see in reality what others cannot see at all.<sup>21</sup>

Gregory also points out Lawrence's demand for more than literary recognition, acknowledging his search for truth, "not merely an aesthetic truth that would satisfy any creative artist, but a truth that would solve all human problems at their source. Like Shelley or Whitman his conception of the role of poet returned to the original

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<sup>21</sup> Horace Gregory, D.H. Lawrence, Pilgrim of the Apocalypse, (New York, Grove Press, Inc. 1933). p. xvi.

conception of the bard, the wise man of a primitive people."<sup>22</sup>

Throughout his life Lawrence attempted to put forth the dilemmas which faced humanity and present them in a way in which would proclaim to his audience that the need for change was near. Striking out at the mechanized society that enveloped him, and seeking his own and the world's regenerative transformation, Lawrence found himself in the deserts of Mexico and the American Southwest. Fueled by the spiritual energy that surrounded him, he denounced the materialistic consciousness that was beginning to predominate Western culture in the 1920's, and proceed instead to reintroduce the world to what he believed was the true reality - a reality that could only be realized through the unification of opposites - an alliance between reason and intuition which he felt was the only hope for a faltering culture.

In his last great novel, The Plumed Serpent, Lawrence resurrects the ancient Mexican myth of Quetzalcoatl, the Lord of the Morning Star, and presents his case for the cure of the human condition. In Lawrence's vision, Quetzalcoatl, the serpent, "which represents the earthly material aspect, is plumed and brilliantly feathered because it has made itself servant to the Lord of the Morning Star, symbol of supreme enlightenment which embodies conquest, union, and the transcendence of the polarities of day and night, right and left, life and death."<sup>23</sup>

The Lord of the Morning Star  
 Stood between the day and the night  
 As a bird that lifts its wings, and stands  
 With the bright wing on the right  
 And the wing of the dark on the left,  
 The Dawn Star stood into sight!

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<sup>23</sup> Jose Arguelles, The Transformative Vision, (Colorado, Shambhala Publications, Inc. 1975). p. 240.

Lo: I am always here!  
 For in the hollow of space  
 I brush the wing of the day  
 and put light on your face.  
 The other wing brushes the dark.  
 But I, I am always in place...

The multitude see me not.  
 They see only the waving of wings,  
 the coming and going of things,  
 The cold and the hot.

But ye that perceives me between  
 The tremors of night and the day,  
 I make you the Lords of the Way  
 Unseen...

Deep in the moistures of peace,  
 And far down the muzzle of the fight  
 You shall find me, who am neither increase  
 nor destruction, different quite.

I am far beyond  
 The horizons of love and strife.  
 Like a star, like a pond  
 That washes the Lords of life.

Like Lawrence's search for the eternal truths, Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky's quest for a spiritual reality in art, manifested itself through his work. Concerned with expressing the inner voice instead of aligning with any one style, Kandinsky stated, "I value only those artists who really are artists, that is, who consciously or unconsciously, in an entirely original form, embody the expression of their inner life; who work only for this end and cannot work otherwise."<sup>24</sup>

Kandinsky sought to free art from its rigid constraints, and became the prophet of an art of spiritual harmony. "According to Kandinsky, Art is not vague production, transitory, isolated, but a power which

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<sup>24</sup> Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, Dover Publications, Inc. 1977) p. vii.



must be directed to the development and refinement of the human soul, to raising the triangle of the spirit... That is beautiful which is produced by internal necessity, which springs from the soul."<sup>25</sup>

The relationship between art and music, which had always fascinated the artist, led to the formulation of Kandinsky's Concerning the Spiritual in Art, an essay published in 1911, which presented his major concerns as a modern artist - the departure of art from the objective world, and the discovery of a new subject matter derived only from the artist's inner needs. Intent on providing painting with the independence from nature that he felt in music, Kandinsky believed that by having something to communicate meant to have an ego-transcending perception of reality, and "was confident that the new abstract painting could best express this transcendent perception; to him it was a step toward bringing man's consciousness to an "epoch of spirituality."<sup>26</sup>

By confronting the tradition of realistic, representative art, Kandinsky attempted to redefine the very meaning of art. In doing so he restructured the language of visual symbols and presented an art that was non-objective in its orientation and extremely personal in approach. By placing emphasis on the inner voice of the artist, Kandinsky played an important role as one of the founders of the modernist creed. His vision of an art that would transcend the mere objective representation of an object or event; that would speak instead of a reality which touched upon the subjective communication between the artist and his environment, triggered serious debate over the direction in which modern art

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<sup>25</sup> Jose Argulles, The Transformative Vision, (Colorado, Shambhala Publications, Inc. 1975). p. 187.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 187-188.

seemed to be heading. Joining others of his generation who sought to bring the spirit back into art, Kandinsky became one of its most verbal spokesman. Convinced that the only hope for a true art would spring from the artist's need for personal expression, Kandinsky voiced one of the most fundamental conflicts of the age - the struggle to rescue the human spirit from the imminent grasp of an advancing mechanistic society.

Freeing form from its representational limitations, Kandinsky felt, would enlist "a new power which would enable man to reach an essence and content of nature lying beneath the surface."<sup>27</sup> He believed that the importance of great works of art did not lie "in externals, but in the root of all roots - in the mystical content of art."<sup>28</sup> By combining spirit and form, Kandinsky joined the ranks of the visionaries whose journey into the self, became a voyage into the future, an intuitive voice, asserting itself through visual symbols, proclaiming the enduring bond between the spirit of nature and the spirit of man.

It becomes evident, by exploring the insights of scientist and artist alike, that the search for meaning lies at the foundation of many facets of human activity. In modern society, the attempt to reconcile the intuitive mind with the rational mind, is a way in which to achieve a broader understanding of the dimensions of reality, clearly illustrates the contemporary need for fulfillment that goes far beyond the materialistic appetite which has governed the quest for knowledge in recent times.

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27 Herbert Read, A Concise History of Modern Painting, (New York, Fredrick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1959). p. 189.

28 Carl Jung, Man and his Symbols, (New York, Dell Publishing Co. Inc., 1964). p. 307.



Through the visual arts, sciences, religion, literature, music, man's desire to comprehend the meaning of existence has found significant modes of expression. Men like Einstein, Jung, Kandinsky and Lawrence, as well as countless others, have realized that, throughout the generations, the cultures, the continents, there exists amongst mankind a bond that exemplifies the unity of life. It is by means of this realization, gained through inquiry and exploration, that these individuals have come upon universal qualities of man's existence. They have bridged the gap between intuition and intellect, using both facets of knowing to speak their cause.

The joining of the metaphoric mind and the rational mind creates endless possibilities, and it is through this potential that man learns and grows. Forever discovering solutions to the endless challenges that may confront him, he continues to seek new and innovative ways to improve his world and his understanding of it.

## CHAPTER THREE

### NEXUS:

#### PAINTING AS A LINK TO A PRIMARY REALITY

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Throughout the past two chapters, I have attempted to present the conflicts that have prevailed in the development of the rational and intuitive modes of perception, as well as give a brief summary of some of the events which have contributed to a consensus between the two. In this final chapter, I would like to describe the roles that intellect and intuition play in the unfolding of my own work, with my major contention being, that the nexus between individual consciousness and ultimate form, results in a more complete insight into the nature of existence, connecting into an inseparable, harmonious whole.

I believe that the meditative power which the process of painting cultivates, has enabled me to get in touch with a part of myself that I had previously left unexplored. The focusing of awareness, which I feel is an essential element in the construction of a painting, has been the primary agent in the development of what I have experienced as a more sophisticated level of consciousness. With emphasis placed not so much on the final piece of work, but the creative process that preceeded it, it became evident to me that what I sought to investigate as a painter, were not only the visable, physical manifestations of ideas, but the knowledge gained through the exploration of them. Using the painting as a medium of meditation, I discovered that a profound need for self-expression, as well as a desire for understanding, had found a viable route to follow.

Through disciplined concentration and determined effort, the "way" of painting has become the means by which I see the world. Exercising both my intuitive and intellectual capabilities, I feel that the potential for reaching a heightened state of awareness increases with each new work. Feeding an unresolved search for meaning and working as a conduit for information and ideas, painting for me, has become a link to a reality that reaches beyond the limitations of the material world to a more primary form of existence. Becoming the manifestation of spirit and form, it has enabled me to come into contact with a place that contains information on the multi-faceted nature of being alive and records my unique experience of it. In April of 1984 I wrote:

My paintings are me. They are mirrors that reflect my hopes and my frustrations, my unity with the world and my alienation from it. They are the vehicle through which I see reality, and by which I express my vision of it. They are testimony of a quest for truth, evidence of intuition and intellect working together towards an understanding of existence, a connection to the whole.

The metaphorical implications of the painter's vision are of considerable interest to me. Studying what I paint, how I paint, and why I paint has initiated an exploration which has resulted in a greater understanding of myself, providing insight into the path I choose to follow and the direction in which it promises to lead.

## LANDSCAPE AS METAPHOR

From as far back as I can remember, the power of land forms has had a significant impact on the way in which I looked at the world. The variety of shapes and textures, and the seemingly endless supply of rhythms and patterns provided access into a world that had a way of teaching me things that were nowhere else to be found.

The information that I learned from hiking through the rainforests on the Olympic Peninsula or gazing out at the ocean from a Cape Cod beach was knowledge that tapped into a broader spectrum of understanding. That knowledge seemed to come from an intimate contact with the earth, a connection that reached back into history, speaking of times past and times to come. In The Metaphoric Mind, Bob Samples talks of nature as being the ultimate source of metaphor:

Metaphor is born in the natural processes and humans, despite their cultural setting, are first and foremost a product of nature. Humans are natural animals first and cultural citizens second....Humans have lived the metaphors of both their biological heritage and their cultural heritage...As we encounter culture, we raise the ghosts of only the last ten to twenty thousand years of human existence. As we encounter nature we raise the winds of five billion years of natural existence.<sup>29</sup>

It is man's propensity to see nature as metaphor that has drawn me into using the rural landscape as a motif for my paintings. Symbolic of growth, integration and the continuum of existence, natural design harbors clues to the array of questions asked in man's attempt to understand the workings of the universe.

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<sup>29</sup> Bob Samples, The Metaphoric Mind, (Massachusetts, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1983). p. 62-63.



Underlying the visual harmony found in a grove of trees or a running brook, there exists a rhythm that alludes to the power that created them in the first place.

My experience with nature has not been out of the ordinary. As a child, I played in the fields around my home, rode horses on the trails in the park, and spent time climbing the apple trees at the farm down the road. Although not a rural upbringing, I had a sense, very early on, that there was something extremely potent about land. I was both excited by it and calmed by it. I felt it to be a part of me that somehow influenced my thoughts and permeated my being.

As I grew older and began to travel about the country, I became even more convinced that the lessons that nature had to teach were of paramount importance in relationship to one's perception of life. Viewing the cave dwellings in the American Southwest, I could not help but think of the Indian's reverence for their land. In Europe, driving through the French countryside, I was overwhelmed by the sight of humble farmers nurturing the bountiful earth.

I also began to read a great deal and found that the books I choose to spend time with, and the words that touched me most, were the ones that divulged a sense of connection between the characters and the land:

from Leo Tolstoy's, Anna Karenina

If Levin had felt happy in the cattle yards and the barns, he felt even happier in the open country. Rhythmically swaying on his good little ambler and drinking in the warm, fresh scent of the snow and air, he rode through the wood here and there over the crumbly, sinking snow with melting tracks, rejoicing in every one of his trees with its swelling buds and the moss coming to

life again on their bark. When he had ridden out of the wood, a vast expanse of green winter corn spread out before him like a smooth, velvety carpet without a single bare patch anywhere and only stained here and there in the hollows with remnants of melting snow.<sup>30</sup>

or Robert Louis Stevenson's Travels with a Donkey

Night is a dead monotonous period under a roof; but in the open world it passes lightly, with its stars and dews and perfumes, and the hours are marked by changes in the face of Nature. What seems a kind of temporal death to people choked between walls and curtains, is only a light and living slumber to the man who sleeps afieid. All night long he can hear Nature breathing deeply and freely; even as she takes her rest, she turns and smiles; and there is one stirring hour unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping hemisphere, and all the outdoor world are on their feet. It is then that the cock first crows, not this time to announce the dawn, but like a cheerful watchman speeding the course of night. Cattle awake on the meadow; sheep break their fast on dewy hillsides, and change to a new lair among the ferns; and houseless men, who have lain down with the fowls, open their dim eyes and behold the beauty of the night.

At what inaudible summons, at what gentle touch of Nature, are all these sleepers thus recalled in the same hour to life? Do the stars rain down an influence, or do we share some thrill of mother earth below our resting bodies? Even shepherds and old country-folk, who are the deepest read in this arcana, have not a guess as to the means or purposes of this nightly resurrection. Towards two in the morning they declare the thing takes place; and neither know or inquire further.

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<sup>30</sup> Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina (New York, The New American Library Inc. 1961). p. 168

And at least it is a pleasant incident. We are disturbed in our slumber only, like Montaigne, "that we may the better and more sensibly relish it." We have a moment to look upon the stars.<sup>31</sup>

In The Snow Leopard, by Peter Mathiessen, the well known naturalist and explorer recounts his trek into the Himalayan Mountains, undertaken in the wake of his wife's death, and offers an explanation of his ties to the earth:

I grow into these mountains like moss. I am bewitched. The blinding snow peaks and the clarion air, the sound of earth and heaven in the silence, the requiem birds, the mythic beasts, the flats, great horns, and old carved stones, the rough hewn Tartars in their black braids and homespun boots, the silver ice in the black river, the Kang, the Crystal Mountain.

Having got here at last, I do not wish to leave the Crystal Mountain. I am in pain about it, truly, so much so that I have to smile, or I might weep. I think of D and how she would smile, too. In another life - this isn't what I know, but how I feel - these mountains were my home; there is a rising of forgotten knowledge, like a spring from hidden aquifers under the earth. To glimpse one's own true nature is a kind of homegoing, to a place East of the Sun, and West of the Moon - the homegoing that needs no home, like that waterfall on the upper Suli Gad that turns to mist before touching the earth and rises once again into the sky.<sup>32</sup>

Just as Tolstoy presents his personal response to the land through the character of Levin, and Stevenson communicates his sensitivity to the changes in

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<sup>31</sup> "Bookends", Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, sec. 1, date unknown, from "Travels with a Donkey", by Robert Louis Stevenson.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Matthiessen, The Snow Leopard (New York, Bantam Books Inc. 1978). p. 238-239.



his environment, I too feel that the work I do is an expression of my affinity to the natural landscape. Matthiessen's spiritual kinship to the mountains is a reflection of his understanding of the relationship that exists between nature and man. The landscapes I paint, are my particular perceptions of those associations, and, my efforts to convey those insights to those that choose to participate in them.

Painting what I feel to be the essence of water running in a stream, or trees that grow deep in the forest, I attempt to portray the spirit of the landscape. Not really concerned with a certain place, I enjoy the freedom of allowing myself to just feel my responses to nature. The painting that results is usually truer to what the ocean, for example, is all about, and above all is a pure interpretation of the dynamics involved in an intuitive/intellectual inquiry into land shapes and forms.

The "real" landscapes, the setting of archetypal images, the universal clues that speak metaphorically of timelessness and the continuum of existence, are the true subject matter of my paintings. Pervading the formal structure that reaches out from the forests and swamps that dominate my canvases, there prevails a sense of the energy that is so much a part of the living environment. Through the use of color and calligraphic line, the attempt is to seize upon the constant rhythms and fluxuations that occur in the systematic rituals evident in the natural surroundings.

Initially relying on a grid system, and finally on the structure inherent in natural formations, I have concentrated on presenting the life force that lies behind the seemingly passive settings that I choose to suggest on my canvases. By doing so, my



decision is to communicate the attachment and the familiarity that I feel to nature, in the hope that my work will somehow touch on the intuitive link that I believe ties all of humanity to common beginnings.

I am interested in the ways in which consciousness can be brought more fully in touch with the nature of its true origins. By painting my response to the natural environment, I feel that, at least in terms of my personal understanding, I seek those connections that suggest a powerful bond between nature and man. Like the Chinese painters who sought to express the Spirit, (Ch'i, the Breath or Vitalizing Force of the Tao), in their work, I hope to capture the spirit of life in my paintings.

## PAINTING AND MEDITATION

Realizing the power of art as meditation, has been one of the most important personal discoveries I feel I have made as an artist. I have come to believe that painting is not only a way to express an inner vision, but an activity which nourishes spiritual and intellectual growth as well.

Acting as a means of integrating logic and intuition, the focusing of awareness, a ramification of the painting activity, becomes both the culmination and genesis of the creative process. Using painting as a medium of meditation, a dialogue ensues between the intellectual and intuitive resources required for creative activity. Through this communication, a meditational consciousness, rising out of a reservoir of personal archetypal images, transforms spirit and form into a synergistic whole.

In April of 1983, I wrote a paper on the creative process and described it as follows:

### CREATIVITY

The need to create, the desire from which the creative act receives its first sparks of inspiration, is a complex necessity. Its origins within the creator lie hidden, concealed so as not to reveal its treasures prematurely. Yet, once set free, the creative urge takes precedent, and leads one on a journey that will provide for its ultimate escape - the transformation of vision into reality.

The metamorphosis that ensues once that urge is released can be a slow and painstaking process, or, it can be realized just moments from its conception. But no matter what path it follows, the result of its development and birth can be a sense of satisfaction that few experiences can surpass.

The creative impulse, the force that drives each artist towards an unforeseen

goal, when viewed as a regenerative process, may be understood more clearly than the vague notion of a "light" that appears from nowhere. The concept of a child being born, the creation of life from life, is an excellent analogy. Creativity too, can be seen as following the same process. Acting upon outside stimulus, (environment, experiences), the creative urge, in response to that stimulus, takes matter in one form, converts it to another, and by doing so transforms feelings (response), into reality-poems, paintings, sculptures. So, in a sense, creativity can be viewed as a birthing process. Inspiration, the seed that is nurtured within the creator, becomes the idea, which matures into a form that becomes tangible evidence of the objectification of feeling and sensation.

Thus, the need to create is a drive that is difficult to ignore. It exists within the creator as an energy that lies waiting to explode into a new form, one that captures the essence of life and preserves it for humanity as a celebration of it.

Since writing those words, I have been working to clarify and expand this statement. My most recent attempts at working out the dynamic relationships between the spiritual and material aspects of the creative process, (specifically painting), are presented in the following diagram, illustrating the complex inter-connections between spirit and form; inspiration and meditation:

I N S P I R A T I O NSPIRIT

Essence  
Intuition  
Feeling

## DIALOGUE

FORM

Object  
Activity  
Response

## POTENTIAL

M E D I T A T I O N

Associations  
Sorting/Encoding  
Reflections

Form, Color, Etc.  
Choice  
Transformation

## PROCESS

I N T E G R A T I O N

Sense of Collective  
Unconscious  
Sense of Personal  
Unconscious  
Conscious Spiritual  
Reality

Archetypes  
Personal Archetypes  
Recapitulation

## DYNAMIC SYNTHESIS

The intuitive/dialectic combination  
of thesis and antithesis into  
a higher form of truth

P A I N T I N G

This diagram should be viewed as a personal exploration, analyzing the process which I engage in during the construction of a painting. I have come to understand painting as an intricate web of relationships, where any aspect can represent either the initiation or solution of the intuitive/intellectual inquiry, with all elements eventually working together to form a visual representation of the journey to a higher level of consciousness.

The meditational state induced by the process of painting produces a sphere of interactive forces which become the impetus to record and communicate inner experience. Using the source of inspiration as a means of instigating a dialogue between the canvas



and the feelings I have in response to a setting, I begin to make decisions about the way in which I am going to transform those associations and reflections through the painting medium. Choices concerning color, form, composition, etc., are made by sorting through the collection of personal and collective archetypes I have access to through the painting/meditation experience.

As work proceeds, the colors and shapes arriving on the canvas, begin to suggest memories of places and events that have connected with them spiritual associations. This recapitulation, the re-ordering of observations and sensations is expressed through the metaphorical symbols generated by the strokes of paint on the canvas. The dynamic interplay between form, color, size of brushstrokes, etc., creates a tension on the canvas, with all elements coming together to produce an image which is the synthesis of spirit, form, inspiration and meditation. The final painting becomes the result of the combination of forces which work with each other, as well as against each other, (thesis and antithesis). It is the consequence of logic and intuition which forms a cohesive visual statement, a dynamic synthesis working towards a more sophisticated level of awareness, a connection to the whole.

For me, this method of painting provides a way in which to get in touch with another level of reality, a primary reality that extends beyond the boundaries of the day to day dimensions of existence. The painting process is an exercise in centering, in essence, a way in which to focus upon my own identity.

Painting puts me in contact with the significance of the simple as well as the complex. By realizing

the relationships that occur between colors on the canvas, past associations, surface texture, the direction of the brush strokes, and the myraid additional inter-relationships revealed through the painting process, I have come closer to an understanding of the universal qualities of human experience.

In Claudio Maranjo's essay on meditation, entitled Meditation; Its Spirit and Techniques, there is an excellent explanation of the domain of meditation. In it he so aptly describes the attitude that I find that I am developing while painting:

The very diversity of practices given the name of "meditation" by the followers of this or that particular approach is an invitation to search for the answer of what meditation is beyond its forms. And if we are not content just to trace the boundaries of a particular group of related techniques, but instead search for a unity in diversity, we may indeed recognize such a unity in an attitude. We may find that, regardless of the medium in which meditation is carried out -- whether images, physical experiences, verbal utterances, etc. -- the task of the meditator is essentially the same, as if the many forms of practice were nothing more than different occasions for the same basic exercise.

If we take this step beyond a behavioral definition of meditation in terms of a procedure, external or even internal, we may be able to see that meditation cannot be equated with thinking or non-thinking, with sitting still or dancing, with withdrawing from the senses or waking up the senses: meditation is concerned with the development of a presence, a modality of being, which may be expressed or developed in whatever situation the individual may be involved.

This presence or mode of being transforms whatever it touches. If its medium

is movement, it will turn into dance; if stillness, into living sculpture; if thinking, into the higher reaches of intuition; if sensing, into a merging with the miracle of being; if feeling, into love; if singing, into sacred utterance; if speaking, into prayer or poetry; if doing things of ordinary life, into ritual in the name of God or a celebration of existence.<sup>33</sup>

Through the painting/meditational experience, I am able to participate in as well as express a personal response to the reality of existence. Painting is both the path toward that realization as well as the goal.

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<sup>33</sup> Claudio Noranjo and Robert E. Ornstein, On the Psychology of Meditation, (New York, Penguin Books, 1971). p. 7-8.

## PAINTING AND KNOWING

The development of this paper has been quite like the evolution of a painting. Both endeavors have as their framework, the process of reaching out for an interpretation of a perception that would be a successful integration of the patterns and relationships that are the result of earnest inquiry. The research that has gone into the body of this work can be traced back to the same source which instigates the creation of a painting. Originating from the same inquisitive quality of questioning the contextual associations inherent in the manner in which things work, the natural tendency of recognizing relationships was developed. I discovered that what painting was about and what research and reading were about, was learning. I realized that what I have been doing all along, was broadening my capacity to learn about learning.

The main purpose for the theme of this thesis stemmed from what was essentially an intuitive sense, that feeling and reason were just different ways of accumulating information which would provide man with a better understanding of the meaning of life. Having spent a major portion of my education devoted to the development of the intuitive capabilities that I have access to, I decided to delve into an area that I found to be just as mysterious, but a little intimidating.

Familiarizing myself with the historical background behind the growth and sophistication of rational thought, gave me more insight into the causes surrounding the dominance of logical processes in Western culture. Learning about contemporary trends



in science, which were also associated with recent theories in perception, enabled me to look at my motives as a painter. Through the application of those perceptions, the results being the body of paintings I developed and the research and contentions of this paper, I feel I have strengthened my convictions of the necessity of the integration between the intuitive and rational modes of human consciousness.

I am reminded of a conversation that I had close to five years ago that dealt with the topic of science and art. I clearly remember my frustration in attempting to clarify why I felt they were so closely related, knowing that I didn't have enough information to back up my case. Discovering George Leonard's book, The Silent Pulse, was the beginning of what turned out to be the opportunity to look into the harmonies between the structures of scientific and artistic inquiry. Contact with Leonard's book, confirmed the sense I had of the relationship between science and art, and helped me begin to understand how they were connected.

The excitement that I felt when I first read about quantum theory was easily contained. Being able to understand some fairly complicated formulations, with an extremely limited background in the field, began to support an emerging sense of connection between science's new logic and my intuitive beliefs. Standing in the studio, working on a painting, I was able to relate Leonard's description of "a silent pulse of perfect rhythm" to the way in which I applied paint to the canvas. Somehow, I knew that the dynamic integration that was needed between the basic elements of design in painting

had a lot to do with the complex operational relationships of sub-atomic particles. Geoffrey Chew's bootstrap theory, that nature cannot be reduced to fundamental entities but is rather a dynamic web of interactive events, made sense to me when I painted out a section of a painting and discovered that by removing it I had destroyed the life and rhythm of the work as a whole.

The discipline of painting proved to me that whether investigating movement under the microscope, or meditating on the way water moved ceaselessly over the rocks in a swollen stream, the goals involved were initially directed towards achieving an understanding of the manipulation and techniques of the particular process. I came to understand that it was the ability to relate the experiences of those discoveries which invariably led to the integration of those experiences into other facets of life.

Painting is able to teach me a great deal about the way in which I manage and understand living and the many life processes.

"Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny", one of the more metaphoric scientific statements, is a phrase which suggests that the human egg develops in a way that is parallel to the way that the species has evolved from more primitive forms. I can't help but compare this assertion with the development of a painting, or for that matter the creation of any work of art. If the individual, through the prenatal stages, reflects the evolution of the species, so too may the creation of a painting characterize the conscious attempts at illustrating the maturation and development of man's consciousness.

Being able to relate this concept to the work I am doing as a painter, enables me to sort out feel-

lings that I have concerning the connection between producing a painting, and the energy that creates life. Finding out what I was attempting to instill in painting, were the qualities and characteristics of living structures was a breakthrough for me. The satisfaction of finally discovering that one of the sources of my need to create rested in a pro-creational drive to produce life from life, enables me to continue painting.

It seems that, in many different ways, natural processes run parallel to the methods and procedures that seek to comprehend and explain them. Karl Pribram and David Bohm's attempts to understand reality through their holographic theory had a tremendous influence on the way I viewed myself and my work. Discovering that there was a possibility that the world that exists before our eyes is an illusion, and that our brains could be interpreting and transforming frequencies to create the appearance of objects, not only confirmed what my paintings had been about, but provided more information to broaden and expand my vision. I realized that the ambiguous nature of the content of my work exhibited an intuitive sense of a 'holographic' reality.

The subdued color combinations on my paintings; the interlocking and overlapping qualities of the brushstrokes; even the decision to restrict myself to the allusions to various types of land shapes and forms, instead of specific objects or locations, pointed out that my concerns were directed toward a personal expression of my response to the multifaceted nature of reality. The style and content of my work, as it began to show a sense of confidence, proceeded to illustrate the philosophy that I was



beginning to develop. As I realized that matter was only one aspect of reality, through the research I had done, my paintings started to take on an enigmatic quality that was evidence of my preoccupation with the mysterious complexion of everyday life.

The obvious structure that is clearly a major characteristic of my work has evolved as an attempt to balance feelings of instability with a need to control. Choosing a grid formation as a structure for the initial paintings, and a framework of repetitive brushstrokes in the latter ones, I saw evidence of symbolic representations of material reality. The appearance of these definite structures indicated that I was using my intuitive sense to paint the more intangible aspects of the landscapes I was presenting, (the power behind movement, atmospheric qualities, etc.), and my reasoning ability to portray the more defined elements of the work, (the layering of the paint, the panel construction of the stretchers, as well as the application of the new knowledge that I had obtained.) Together they extended my capacity to integrate and focus the communication of the vision I was trying to express.

As a departure from the arduous task of refining this paper as well as completing work on my paintings, I sat down with a simple book that I expected to be a digression from the countless expositions I had been reading concerning art, aesthetics, science, philosophy, and the variety of other subjects that I was relating to my work. Surprisingly, I found that far from removing them from my mind, the humble portrayal of a sensitive black woman, growing up in the backwoods of Georgia had an incredible perti-



nence to the ideas I was seeking to express. In The Color Purple, Alice Walker has written a passage that is a fitting summation of the explorations of this paper. It is an eloquent statement about energy, connection, shared experiences, and the on-going processes of life:

Pretty soon Sophia say, That funny. I never heard that humming before.

What humming? Harpo ast.

Listen she say.

Us git real quiet and listen. Sure enough, us hear ummmmmmmmm.

What it come from? ast Sophia. She git up and go look out the door. Nothing out there. Sound git louder. Ummmmmmmmmm.

Harpo go and look out the window. Nothing out there, he say. Humming say UMMMMMMMMMM.

I think I know what it is I say.

They say, What?

I say, Everything.

Yeah, they say. That makes a lots of sense.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Alice Walker, The Color Purple, (New York, Washington Square Press, 1982). p. 197-198.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

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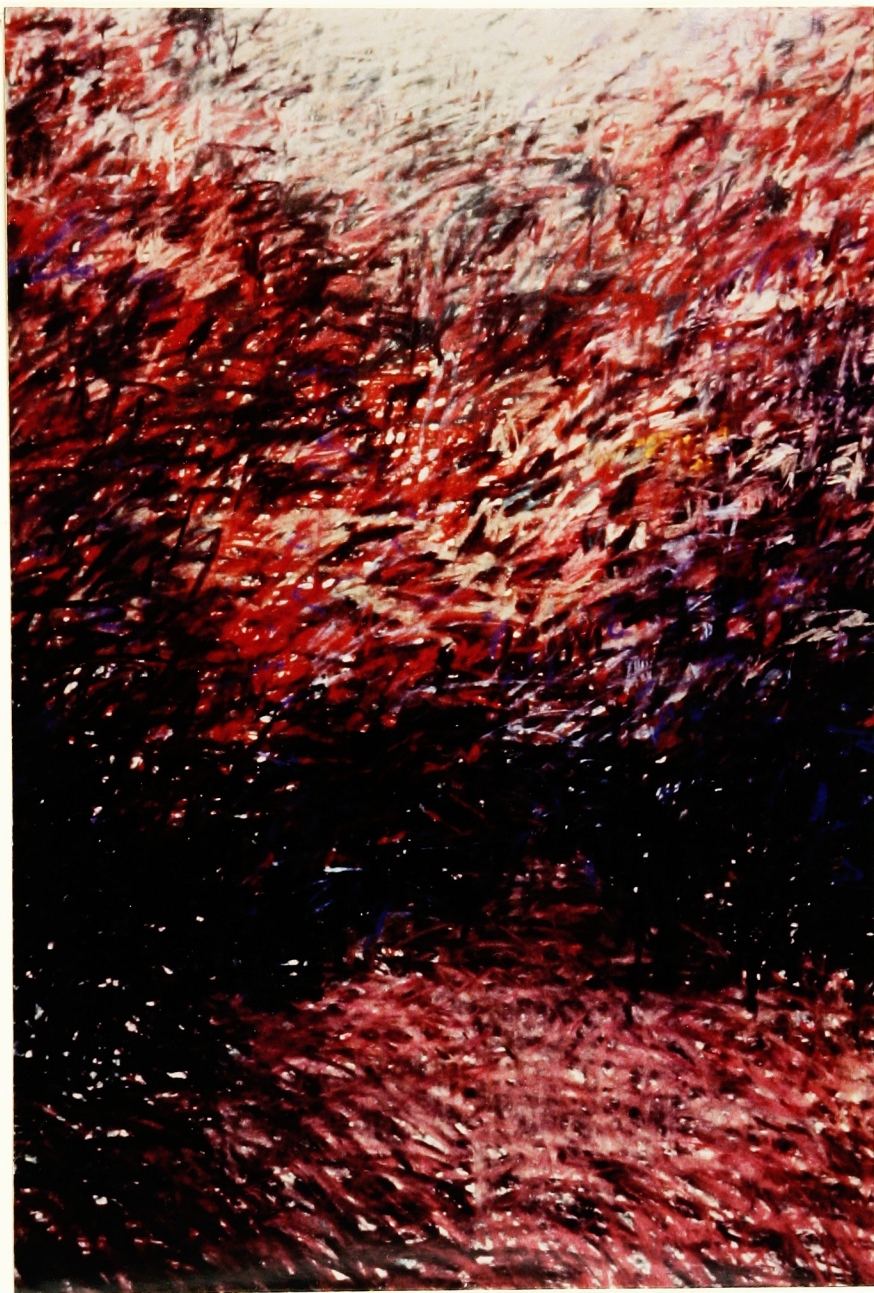
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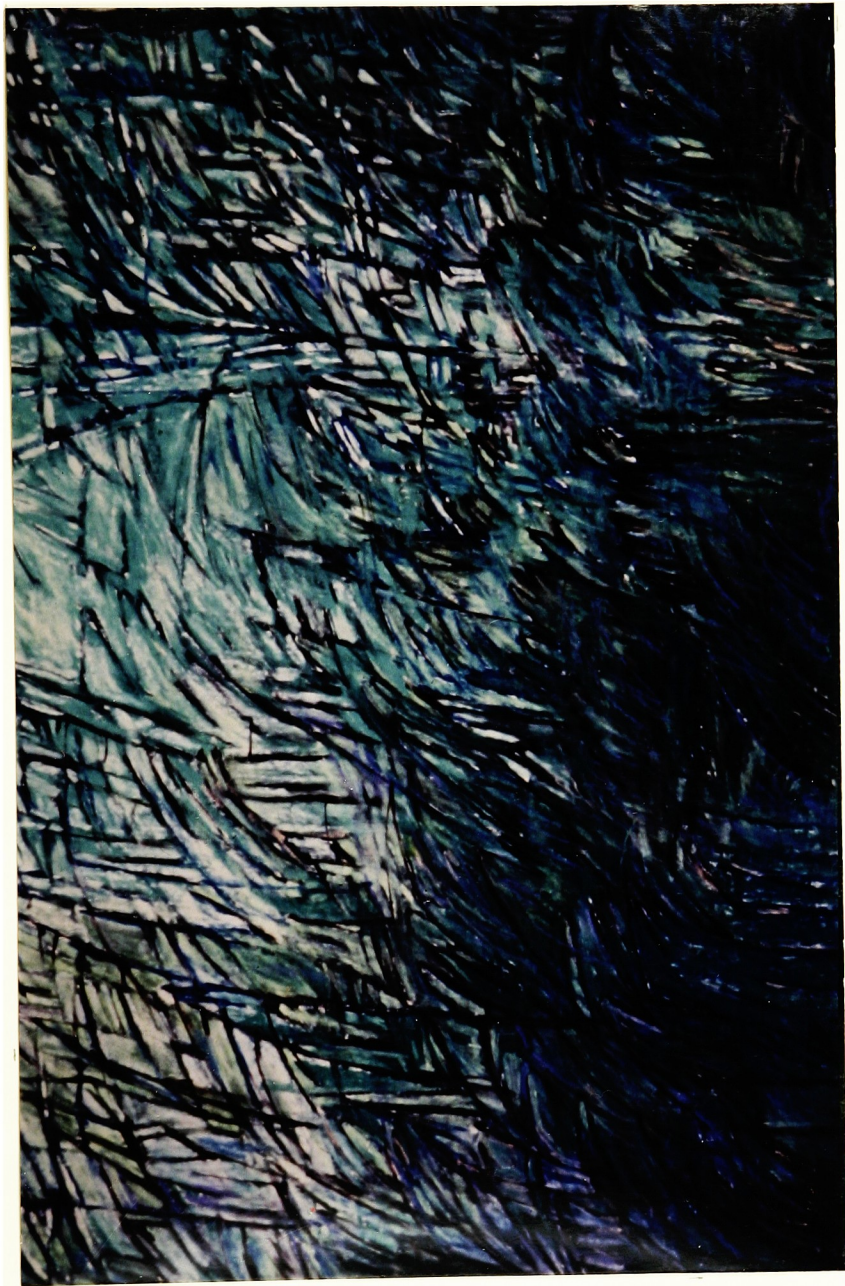
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32"x 47"

ELAN/ROUGE

1984

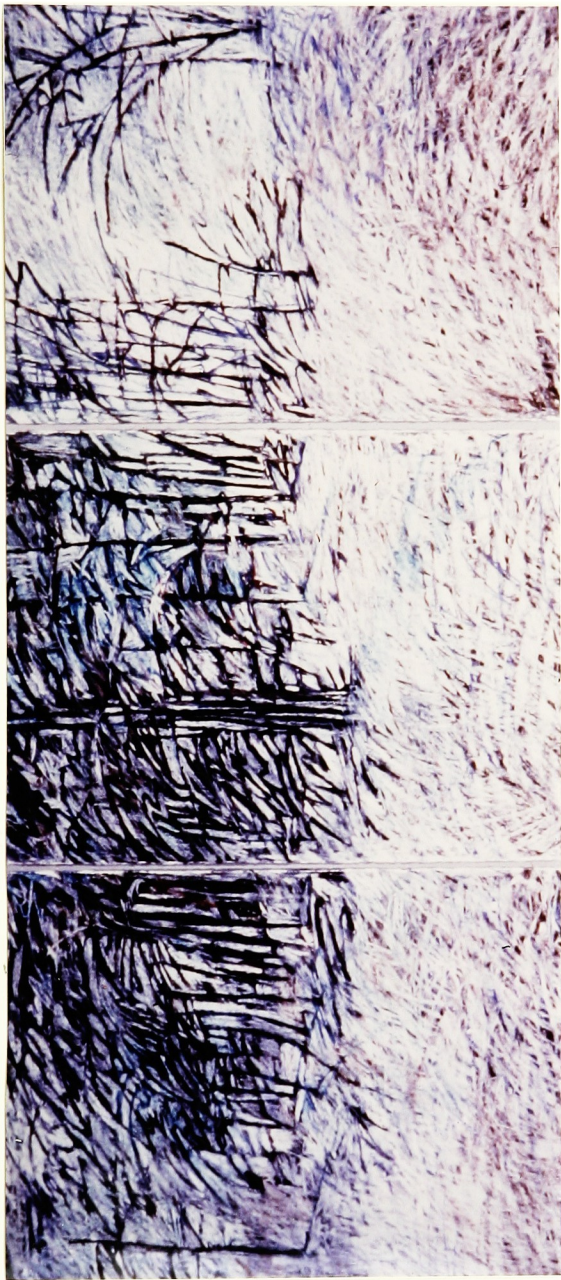


FERTILE / GROUND

32" x 47"

1984



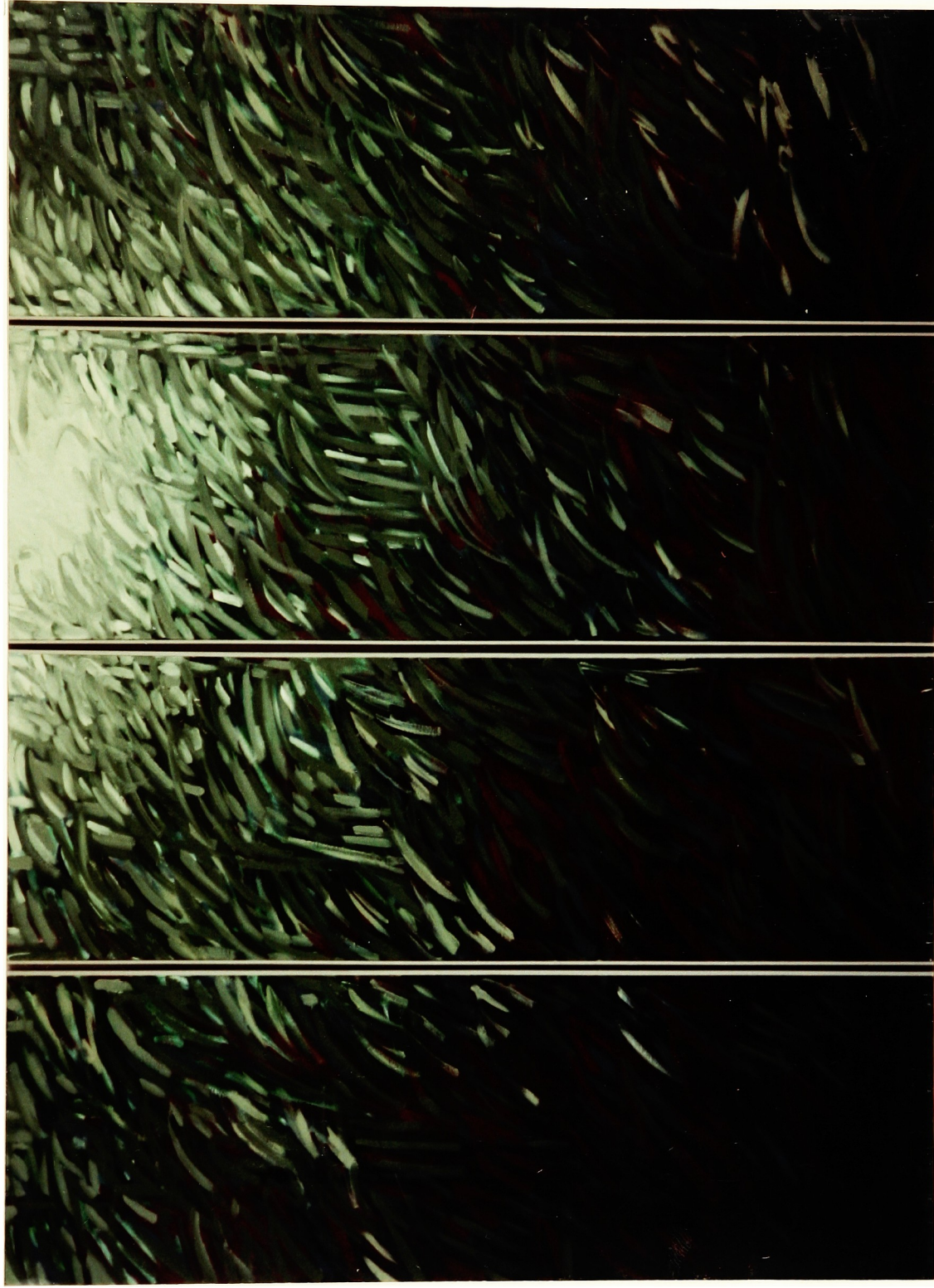


30" x 66"

TREE/LINE

1984

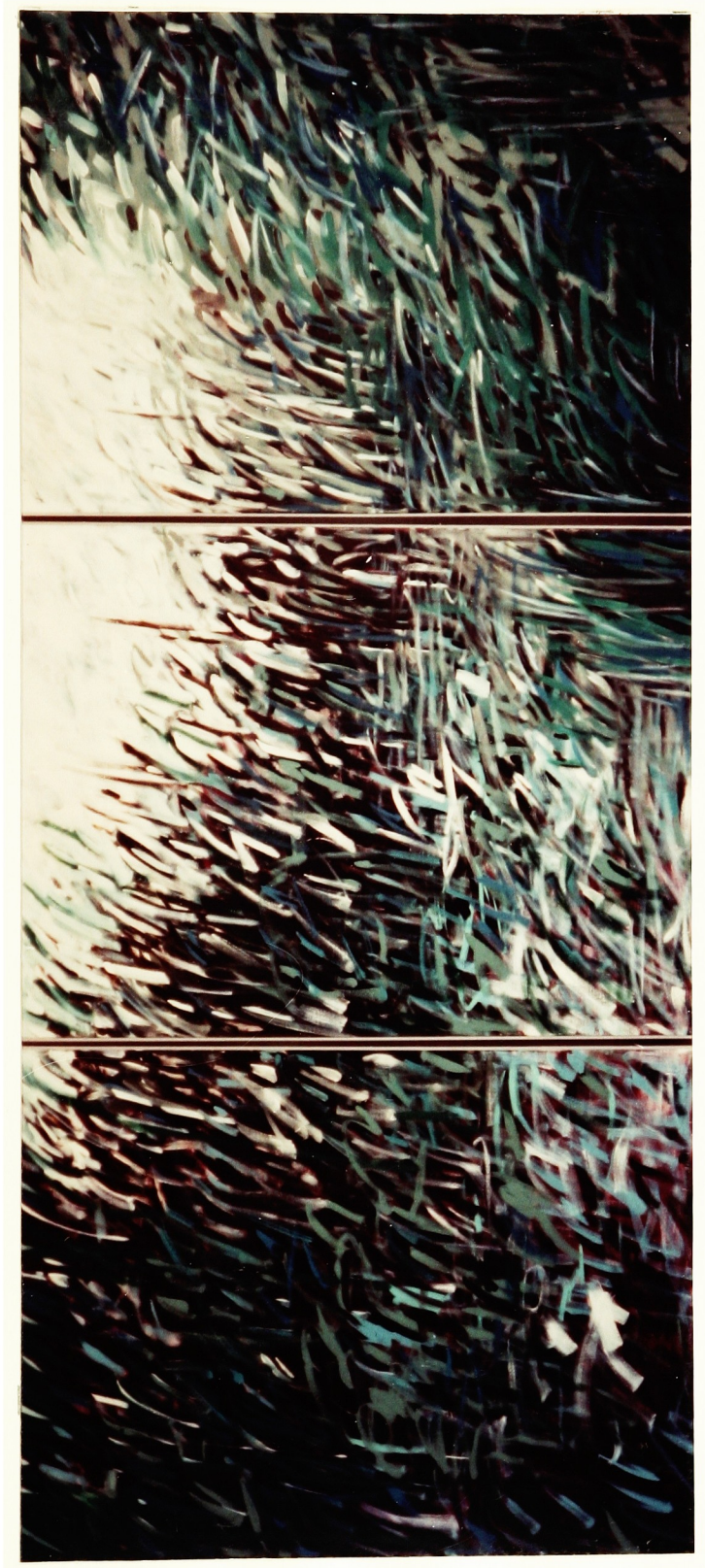




ÉLAN/VERDE

64" x 84"

1984



53" x 127"

PASTORAL / PSALM

1984





40" x 162"

AQUA/FLUX

1983

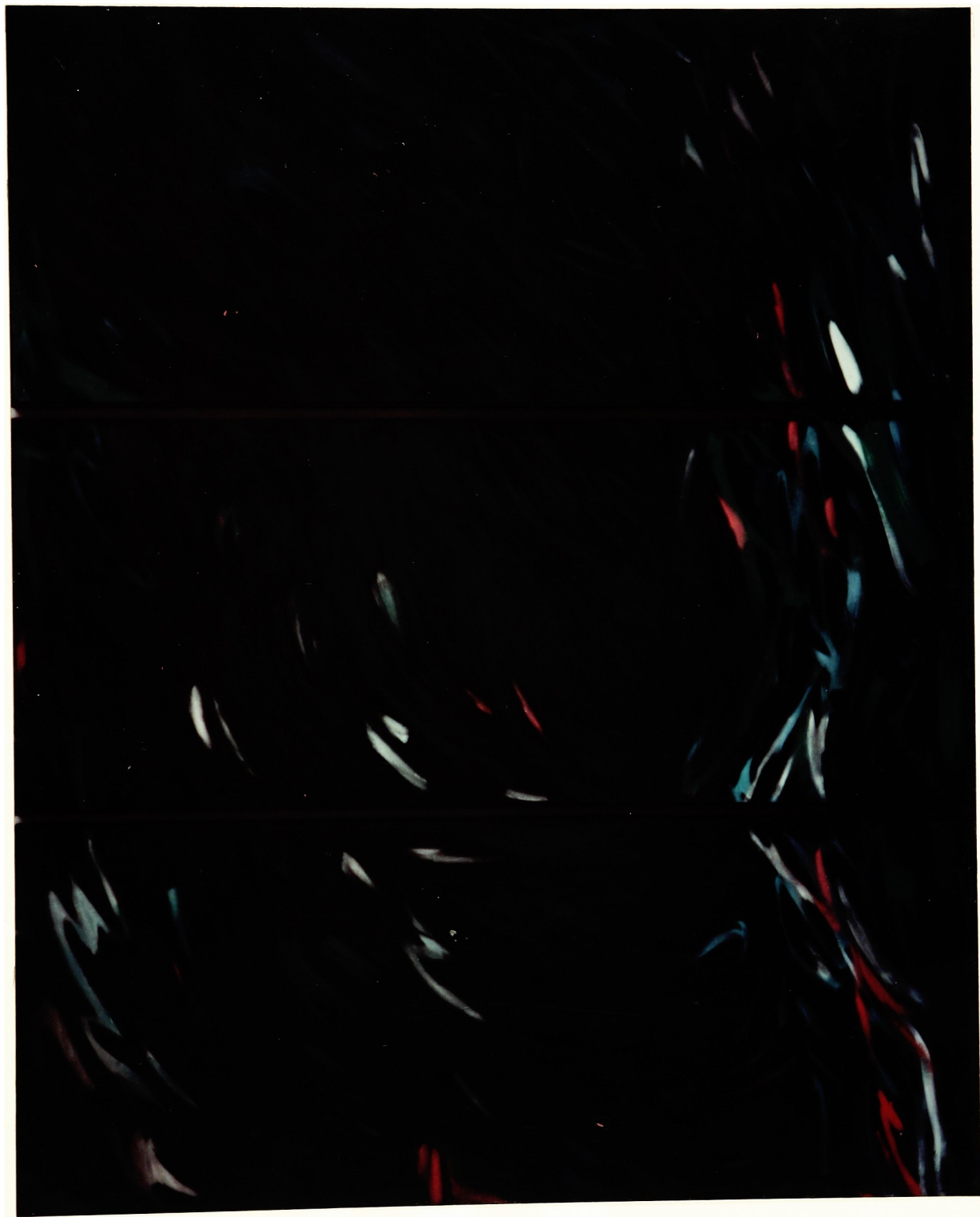


SANCTUARY

1983

66" x 90"





VENTO/NOIR

63" x 75"

1984