

Rochester Institute of Technology

RIT Digital Institutional Repository

Theses

3-14-1996

Emotional content in gestural process and form

Robin Yates

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.rit.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Yates, Robin, "Emotional content in gestural process and form" (1996). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed from

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the RIT Libraries. For more information, please contact repository@rit.edu.

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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

“EMOTIONAL CONTENT IN GESTURAL PROCESS AND FORM”

by

Robin Yates

March 14, 1996

Approvals

Advisor: Mark Stanitz

Date: 3/14/96

Associate Advisor: Leonard Urso

Date: 3/14/96

Associate Advisor: Bruce Sodervick

Date: 3/15/96

Associate Advisor: Elaine Polvinen

Date: 3/15/96

Department Chairperson: Bob Schmitz

Date: 3-18-96

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

Robin Yates
178 Mill Road
West Seneca, New York 14224

Date: March 14, 1996

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Text.....	2
Bibliography.....	45
Thesis Show Statement.....	46
Acknowledgments.....	47
Illustrations.....	48

“EMOTIONAL CONTENT IN GESTURAL PROCESS AND FORM”

INTRODUCTION

The sculptures focus on the influences emotional content has in my work, and address processes and forms that feelings inspire. One of the main influences in my art is the spectacular Niagara Gorge; the eroded riverbed, the water, and the cliffs. In the documentation of my thesis investigation, I emphasize ritual of process. I realize that in preparing myself to work I set an aesthetic mode important to the development of form. I describe specifics concerning my process so it seems to the reader that they are directly involved while I am working. In reflection, I now realize that visual communication is an integral part of my sculpture.

TEXT

In attaining a Master of Fine Arts degree, I fulfilled a personal and professional commitment. My focus of work was to learn more techniques and to question parameters in materials and process. Prior to this, for fifteen years I supported myself with sculptural jewelry through commissions, craft shows and galleries. Marketable jewelry required restrictions in scale. The jewelry incorporated gold, silver, precious and semi-precious stones and pearls. The overall cost of materials consistently dictated scale in even my most creative pieces. I grew frustrated working in a small scale of two inches or less, craving more self-expression. I began to feel an aesthetic need to work larger and with additional volume. I entered the graduate Metalcrafts and Jewelry program at the School for American Crafts at the Rochester Institute of Technology. I intended to develop more skills, work in a larger scale, and explore unfamiliar materials, as well as the familiar materials more in depth. I believe the most important aspect of my graduate work was giving myself the opportunity to explore my internal, creative aesthetics and to work more conceptually. In The Art Spirit, Robert Henri speaks about the power of concept:

“Free yourself from your own preconceived ideas about yourself. It will take a revolution to do it.” And, “The results will not be what you expect, but they will be

like YOU and will be the best that can come from you.” (Henri 1923, 195)

For the first year I applied every ounce of my physical, psychic and emotional Self into metalwork that rewarded me with maturing artistic vision and beginnings of a visual dialogue or language that was gestural. Much of this dialogue developed when I recognized and acknowledged my sensitivity to materials. I discovered these strengths in the work I created in all of my art classes. Expressive gestural dialogue through materials and sculptural form became the focus for my thesis investigations. I committed to sculpture for thesis work because I had realized a new strength in myself as an artist working with Spirit.

This thesis documentation speaks to an indepth investigation and explores the aspects of gesture of process and gesture of form. It documents my transition from two-inch, jewelry scale to six foot metal sculptures. It documents the assimilation of the multiple technical and aesthetic explorations and transitions that I experienced during the process of earning my Master of Fine Arts degree.

My jewelry scale work began to transition into sculpture during the first academic quarter, my first year. I learned chasing techniques in metal, using a chasing hammer, a pitch bowl and small tools formed out of tool

steel. Pitch is a soft tar-like material. The steel tools resemble small three inch high by one quarter inch high chisels. I formed various shaped tracers (line tools), curved punches and domed planishing tools. The use of copper as my primary medium was a significant aspect of the early exploration stages of my thesis. Copper is relatively inexpensive compared to the precious metals gold and silver, that I was most familiar with from jewelry-making. I could explore in metal with less concern for cost, but the most significant characteristic of copper for me was its malleable quality when annealed or softened with heat from a torch.

I started to chase into twenty gauge copper sheet in three to four inch square or rectangular shapes. (Illustration 2) When annealed and then cleaned by soaking in a pickle (an acid bath), the copper surface resembled human skin. It appeared soft and flesh-like. As I chased, the effect was similar to pushing into skin. The copper felt responsive to the touch of my guided tools. This responsiveness lessened when the copper work hardened from continuous chasing. This is because as metal recrystallizes and reestablishes its molecular structure, it rehardens. I realized that metal transitions from hard to soft and back to hard again, depending on the amount of heat applied to it. The copper no longer felt so inanimate and static. I associated it with myself and how I transition with life's pressures. The pressure applied to it with chasing and hammering also

directly affected the surface. Within these first few weeks I grew keenly aware of my sensitivity to the copper medium. Its human, skin-like surface quality in the annealed stage attracted my full attention. I was captivated by what felt like a new relationship with a somewhat familiar feeling stranger.

In using the pitch bowl, the tacky black pitch reminded me of primordial ooze. After chasing in the pitch, I heated the pitch with a soft torch flame to soften it, which allowed me to pull the copper out of the pitch bowl with tweezers. The flame melted most of the pitch off the metal, and burned off remaining traces. I then quenched the hot copper in cold water. Next I brass brushed the surface, pickled the piece, and reannealed. Then I set it back into the pitch for more chasing and forming into the surface, sometimes flipping it over to work into the other side as well. The repetitive process of heating, chasing, reheating, quenching, pickling and reannealing the metal felt like a cleansing process. Each sequence offered fresh insight.

With each approach I felt more of an emerging, cognitive awareness of my responsiveness to this material and the feeling that it was mutually responsive to me. It was a reciprocal relationship, direct, and immediate, as opposed to the lost wax casting process that I was most familiar with in

jewelry work. In lost wax casting, a wax model is sculpted, invested, and burned out in a kiln. When a piece is cast in metal, a tedious cleanup process begins. Chasing afforded a more direct, expressive technique. I also chased several sterling silver and fine silver pieces. (Illustration 3) I still preferred working with copper more than silver.

During these early stages I often felt hesitant; my work seemed naive and still technically awkward. I remembered a Georgia O’Keeffe exhibit at the Dallas Museum of Art that I viewed back in 1989. How surprised I was to realize that her drawings at ages twelve to nineteen were naive and awkward. This overview of her life’s work helped me to understand, finally, that we all have our necessary beginnings as artists. We are not born the best that we can be, nor is there a limit to what we can achieve through ART. We are born with gifts that we can choose to nurture and realize through the art processes and artforms. In the process of chasing and working in a larger scale, I created new beginnings with what felt like limitless possibilities for myself in my life through ART.

As Georgia O’Keeffe taught me about beginnings, Louise Nevelson taught me about assertiveness. I was blessed to meet her in 1981 after her lecture in Temple Shalom in Dallas, Texas. I was still working with production in the commercial jewelry industry, but felt drawn to fine art

and sculpture. I also frequented the Amon Carter Museum and The Kimbell Museum both in Fort Worth, trying to keep my individual spirit alive while living in glitzy, commercialized Dallas. There was no surface glitz to Louise Nevelson. She stood, an artist empowered with creative LIFE, an outstanding successful, feminine role model. She responded pointedly to my timid questions about wanting to be an artist. "*Shyness is a waste of energy!*" I continue to recall her words when I need to be more assertive and creative, occasionally reflecting on those moments in her dynamic presence.

Faculty and fellow students encouraged the evolving dynamics of my search. I felt increasingly more compelled and empowered with communicating in expressive visual dialogue through my graduate work in metals, sculpture, clay, and printmaking by the spring quarter of 1994. Most classes had interpreters employed by The National Technical Institute for the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology for fellow students who were hearing impaired. Seeing the gestural dialogue of sign language intrigued me. The language was beautiful. It reminded me of the physical aspects of working with various art media, especially metals. The signing between the students and interpreters was enhanced by their overall body language. I stopped taking for granted that each person used the language the same. Each sign, each gesture of the body, and each facial

expression implied or communicated more than the words alone could say! I responded most to those who were very expressive, whose emotions were implied by their gestures and forms. Emotion was given visual form. Due to my observations of sign language I finally realized how important emotional content is in truthful communication.

Wendell Castle, sculptor, painter and artist-in residence at The Rochester Institute of Technology, lectured during my first year concerning *“putting everything on the line. That’s where the excitement is!”* I knew that to express more I not only needed to work in larger scale, but needed to remove my mental training wheels. Graduate school was a concentrated once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn how to push my full potential. Realization was only a step; I wrestled with feelings that were difficult to express in a scale of just two inches or less. Well known jewelry artist and metals professor Elinor Moty helped me transition from a jewelry to a sculpture mode. She responded to a letter I wrote in fall of 1993. The letter was for an assignment in my Contemporary Issues in American Art, a liberal arts class. In response to questions about conceptualizing jewelry she wrote,

“Viewers will discover in some works of art a recognition of parts of their own selves expressed in this nonverbal form...their own feelings, observations, and thoughts. Sometimes even a color or line or texture will strike a chord that moves us

a step closer to our own center."

Although my previous jewelry forms were sculptural, I recognized in the early stages of working larger sculpturally with copper, that what I was able to express grew proportionately with the scale in which I was able to work.

As well as working larger, I began to work in thicker, eighteen gauge copper. This allowed forms with more dimension and volume, because I could hammer the thicker metal deeper into the surface of the pitch. Figurative elements began to appear, moreso as I responded again to the soft texture of the heat-softened copper. I enhanced these shapes further, sometimes hammering directly into the metal with the small one-half inch wide round face of my chasing hammer. Then I would chase lines that accentuated the parameters. These shapes were evocative of miniature female breast forms and nipples evolving through my explorations.

These experiments in pitch were still just sketches, but I enjoyed the relief chasing so much that in the full furied process of chasing, I started to realize that these visual results were surfacing from more than just a conscious mode. How exciting that my intuitive, subconscious self was beginning to transcend beyond a more technical base in chasing! Eager to

explore this further I challenged myself to recreate this marriage between the intuitive with the cognitive modes, consistently.

From an eight inch pitch bowl I moved to chasing into twelve inch by six inch sandbags. I would be able to increase the size of copper sheet again. These one foot long sandbags were moldable and receptive to the annealed copper forms. I chased larger impressions with hammers and chasing tools. Then I switched and worked specific areas of the copper into the eight inch pitch bowl for detail work. In working with both the sandbags and pitch bowl, the breast forms emerged again as well as other organic lines. Many of the new figurative lines I had begun to chase reminded me of rock formations. I have felt an affinity with rock since I walked along slate bottom creeks as a child. In the two years before graduate school I often hiked down in the Niagara River gorge, about a mile down stream from Niagara Falls. The gorge walls are rock strata and formations that evoke a sense of protection. Much of the linear texture of the rock strata looked like figures or elements of human figures, both feminine and masculine. They were similar to the visual imagery I saw as a child in rock walls of creekbeds. (Illustration 4) This was an outstanding metaphor to me, the metaphor of the human figure seen through nature's stone formations. This became part of a new visual vocabulary that I was able to carry into my graduate work. I applied the figurative metaphors to the thesis art

materials and processes through texture and form.

The gorge was a natural resource, wealthy with examples of formal design elements and principles, including form, volume, line, texture, and dimension. I continued to chase and hammer the copper, shifting the work back and forth between a pitch bowl and sandbag, pushing further and deeper into the metal, then, finally breaking through the thinned metal. The torn areas of copper skin looked like fissures or clefts that develop in rocks. I noticed negative space beginning to enhance form. I then hammered areas of the copper skin further with the round face of my chasing hammer, again breaking the foil thin sheet into delicate, lace-like asymmetrical patterns. The visually soft, lacy results were similar to fossilized patterns I had seen in sedimentary rock and lichen that grows on moist cliffs near creekbeds at both Watkins Glen and Letchworth State Park in New York State. I hammered the metal lace areas into folded edges and creases surrounding larger openings, integrating the laced negative space into wide openings. These were similar to the round, eroding, gaping holes that the river gouged deep into the surface of the Niagara River bedrock. (Illustration 5)

Remembering the holes in the bedrock, I continued hammering copper into three inch to five inch concave holes carved in tree stumps. The larger

work surface of the two foot wide stumps allowed me to use various heavier hammers. I used sharp-tipped chasing tools with the metal resting on pliable sandbags. I then hammered directly into the copper in the places where the sharp tools had almost pierced through the metal. Fissure lines and splits in the metal resulted. This looked similar to rock formations. With more hammering, the metal began to split apart creating negative space. I saw the negative space as a reference to eroding rock. This was another metaphor between rock eroded by the forces of nature in physical gesture. Chasing was an expressive, gestural metal-working process. In the gesture of process I was combining techniques.

I believe that the intrinsic value of art is directly related to hands-on creation by the artist. Combining specific techniques was teaching me more about the intimate language and possible range of my art. Part of my vocabulary was chased lines emphasizing form in my metalwork, so similar to the lines in gorge bedrock. The folded, wrinkled quality of rock eroded by wind and water through ages of time, reminded me of human skin and the human body. The eroded rocks inspired me to chase similar forms into a **Fine Silver Vessel** and another **Copper Vessel** during my first fall quarter. (Illustrations 6 and 7)

In beginning stone carving during fall quarter, we worked from a live

model for sculpting. This reminded me of figurative elements I had also seen in the gorge. The soapstone already had innate figurative elements in its shape, lines, and textures. In its unique qualities or “gifts of the stone material” I imagined some of my own features. The model’s physical shape was similar to my own, although more petite. In the past I felt intimidated when trying to draw human form. The physical familiarity helped me bypass my old obstruction with drawing, and now carving, human form. Using chisels and a stonecarving hammer, I sculpted selected parts of the model’s form. I left some of the stone intact; I recognized my sensitivity and respect for the qualities innate in the stone. Being sensitive to the aspects of the marble encouraged an intimacy with the stone. I allowed the soapstone to define where I chiseled stone away and where I left it unaltered. As a result, in this sculpture **Jessica**, I carved out and shaped the lower back and torso, the shoulders and the left breast. (Illustration 8)

“Some artists are unusually willing to allow materials to play a significant role in the discovery of form; it is the essential and limitless source of inspiration for those who are material-oriented. The belief that the source of ideas may exist within material often contradicts established thinking in Western art that material is a crude resource to be exploited...merely the stuff that bears the imprint of the artist’s style and technique. Materials actually contain clues that allow us to discover our own personal reality through a subconscious process, an intuitive, creative journey in which material is an active partner.” (Jacobi 1994, 33)

As in carving stone, I developed a relationship with copper, investigating what it would do in response to my hammering. I had created an increasingly sensitive interface between myself and my media. I felt challenged by copper and other media that I used in my thesis investigation. What would I like the materials to be? Early in my search I felt inspired to articulate mental impressions of small, one inch or less breast forms and figurative lines in chasing. I felt encouraged to pursue a larger, visual vocabulary starting with these beginning elements or symbols.

I continued exploring in copper using my new insights from soapstone carving. The next piece of copper was cut out of a large piece of sixteen gauge sheet. I instinctively sketched out a shape on the copper's surface with a permanent marker. The shape I sketched was similar to a painting palette, about one and one half feet long and one foot wide. I used a band saw to cut out the organic palette shape. Then I cut several lines from the outside edge towards the center of the shape. After annealing the flat copper sheet, I sank the sphere-like form into sink holes in the wood with hammers. I continued shaping into sandbags adding chased details, until a large human size breast form with a nipple emerged. The reannealing and hammering continued as an interplay of organic shapes, feeling and looking like body lines, developed. Many took the shape of internal and

external organs.

This new realization of the interplay between creative subconscious with cognitive, visual appreciation for the human body, was startling at first. The scale I was working in offered a fresh outlook and a freedom to explore life-size features. The larger breast form provided an insightful vantage point that I had searched for in these early explorations for thesis work. About the artist, Carl Jung wrote,

"His own work outgrows him as a child his mother. The creative process has a feminine quality, and the creative work arises from unconscious depths - we might say, from the realm of the mothers." (Jung 1950, 222)

I felt these forms emerge through a perpetual gesture of process. I began to ripple the well-annealed copper, which looked like folded skin. This was the first time I could document the odd new sensation of a pulse from the medium, with a compelling want to respond to it. It felt like the form breathed on its own. In Secret Correspondence, Marcia Golub writes,

"The wish to merge. We want to lose ourselves in something big - art, God, death. Are all fantasies of union, oneness with the breast of life that magically appears when we're hungry or cold, tired or scared?" (Golub 1990, 58)

The breast form was symbolic of the nurturing strength I was given unconditionally as a child. It also represented a more universal symbol of the creative unconscious- of Spirit (God). With this symbolism, it felt as if the copper medium was communicating with me on an aesthetic level. I felt impressions about how and where to form the metal. When I felt this reciprocal communication flow stop, the work still did not feel complete. I anguished over the next step. The tortured, anguished image of the character Gollum from the J.R. Tolkien novel The Hobbit, came to mind. A fellow student accused me of treating the copper piece as too precious. She taunted me to throw the vessel into the air. It landed with a thud on the studio floor, which released the hesitant pressure I had felt. This became an outstanding, cognitive gesture of process. With fresh perspective, I hammered through the breast form, leaving a full sphere of negative space. This opened the vessel, which now felt less contained. However, it was still full with fluid organic form, and had a strange sensation of breathing on its own. I purged all hesitation in the process of forming this important transitional vessel. I titled it **Precious**. (Illustration 9) I began to understand that more physical interaction with the metal employed an intimacy and better expression in my materials-oriented art process. I recognized the breastform as a vantage point to build on. My figurative symbols intrigued me. They generated a creative mystique. I questioned the allusive sources of them.

"It falls upon the artist to impute meaning and express a personal aesthetic gesture to the mystery of life." (Kooyman 1994, 4)

I continued my search in the forge on a piece titled **Relief Investigation**. (Illustration 10) I found that the space in the forge provided the room to respond more freely. This contributed to overall aesthetics in my gestural process of forming with hammers. I was able to stand and move with minimal restrictions around the work. I was able to work maximizing the strength in my arms and legs. This enabled me to manipulate and interact better with the metal. I acclimated well to the forge environment. Its characteristics affected me. The flames and colours of the gas forge inspired me. It commanded respect. Hot fire, the smell of various metals and coal residue were reminders to be cautious. With safety concerns, I set up an aware work mode- a mode for my physical well-being. This included appropriate dress: cotton clothes, leather apron and gloves, respirator, ear plugs, safety goggles, and steel-toed boots. It was necessary to dress appropriately in protective clothing, but this did not distance my interaction with the materials. This preparation time became a ritual in my gestural process, setting safe physical conditions for an aesthetic sculpture mode. This process accommodated response to my internal dialogue and assertion with my hammers and copper.

I began work with a four foot square piece of fourteen gauge copper sheet, cutting it about six inches from the edge towards the center of the sheet. This was my way of searching for the center or heart of myself in the art process. The gas forge annealed the industrial looking sheet that I lay on the furnace's surface. The heat coloured the copper with a skin or oxidized surface as it did in my earlier, smaller, heat-patinaed copper studies. These deep, flesh-like colours induced immediate familiar human body elements again. My affinity for the copper developed as I used this metaphor with copper and skin. As I interacted more with the metal, the more I saw it respond through form. The more I trusted my relationship with the copper in the gestural process of hammering, the more I felt open communication with the material and the better I was able to express in hammered forms. The reciprocal communication and established trust allowed full emotional content and physical response through hammering. In No More Secondhand Art, Awakening the Artist Within, Peter London writes,

"The body literally DOES feel different, palpably different in different emotional states. This connection between states of mind and body is most important for our thesis that the hand guides the eye and eventually guides the mind in the creation of transformative images." (London 1989, 99)

My images in this relief piece were folding, rippling, torn skin, similar to waves of water in wind. Parts of this piece vibrate with a quick pulse. A

few areas are more quieting. This was a passionate mode of creating. I felt fully immersed in the process of forming with hammers. I began to harness emotion with hammer strokes from light to pounding. The process centered me, I felt attuned to my emotional, physical and psychic body rhythms. The breadth of this sated me. When this rhythm and connection with the piece stopped, I stopped hammering. I learned to stop at this signal and resume work after a rest period. If I forced my hammering, I would obscure the guiding aesthetic mode or overwork the metal.

This **Relief Investigation**, inspired during winter quarter break of my first year by my father's heart surgery, was a relief sculpture of sinuous winding curves, figurative lines, and supple forms- metaphors between the human body, and water and rocks in nature. I hammered pulse and breath into the body of the piece, charged with passion for life and the healing aspect of Nature. Where I had broken through, the hammered-over edges appeared to be healing scar tissue. The rippled, formed surface also resembled water- always a healing symbol in my work. The forged, stretched, skin-like areas seemed to reach for me and my strength.

"Artists have a powerful advantage. They can visualize fear, take it, use it, and reach some resolution that helps them affirm being alive." (LaLanger 1989, 132)

Viewers thought the finished sculpture was leather because the surface

appears supple and soft. I grew increasingly aware of the allusive qualities of my work. I wanted to allude to content and feeling, but did not want to define them explicitly. I wanted to use gestural dialogue as a meaningful reference to express aspects of human Spirit and invite viewer response. Sculptor James Surls once wrote,

"If the message in art is so blatant and so obvious that it can't be subject to different interpretations, then a work becomes something other than really art. It becomes like a logo." (Surls 1979, 132)

With my work, I hoped to convey emotional content that invited viewer introspection.

After the four foot relief sculpture, I began a full volume sculpture during this first winter quarter. (Illustration 11) This was my first investigation with copper that transformed from vessel form to sculpture. I named it **Aquifer**, a water-bearing rock or stratum. (Illustration 12) I still hiked along the Niagara Gorge riverbed, where voluptuous eroded sink holes bared themselves more with the lower level of the river in late winter. Some of the sandstone holes held pockets of water. I cut out an organic shape in fourteen gauge copper sheet. I then cut fluid lines from the outer edge towards the center. A few cuts ran a bit more parallel with the outer edge of the sheet. The basic cut-out form resembled an octopus with its

many legs. I hammered this piece, working it with full volume in mind. I moved in a circular pattern around the piece. The freedom of space in the forge allowed what became a gestural ritual in the process of my thesis work. It felt like a circular dance around the artwork. This allowed intimate reciprocal response between myself and the sculpture.

“Jung says that the circle is one of the great primordial images of mankind and that, in considering the symbol of the circle, we are analyzing the self.” And, “The circle represents totality. Everything within the circle is one thing, which is encircled, enframed.” (Campbell 1988, 214-215)

I hammered several of the cut metal limbs into circular spheres of metal. They alluded to water swirling around the deep holes in sandstone. These enhanced the voluptuous, full-rounded form of the interior. As part of my circular ritual around the sculpture, I carried the hot, heavy metal from the forge and quenched it by throwing it into snow drifts. This was still the winter quarter of my first year. This quenching evoked a cleansing feeling. Then I returned it to the gas forge where it was reannealed, carried it back to the stumps and continued the process of hammering.

Occasionally I also hammered copper on steel anvils. I wore ear plugs, which turned the harsh sound of hammers on metal into a rhythm of soft drumming. This reminded me of the pulse which I felt while hammering

earlier copper forms. My own heartbeat became attuned to this aesthetic pulse. I believe that this synchronicity allowed me to express my internal dialogue. Sometimes the grinding of metal by other students would distract me from my rhythmic pattern of forging. Due to this I would sometimes listen to recorded music on a radio. Although somewhat subdued by my earplugs, the background radio music enhanced this ritual of dance around the piece in my gestural dialogue by providing a beat.

After completing the form, I coloured the piece with a solution of ammonia and salt mixed well into a mulch of dry leaves. I packed the metal lightly with the mixture in a plastic trash bag, leaving it slightly open to the air overnight. The results in this organic and chemical colouring process were variations of aqua greens and blues. Heating with a soft torch flame on some areas produced a glazed effect, which resembled the surface of water. With an acetylene torch I fused a pool of blood red enamel inside the bottom of the sculpture. This was a direct reference to female menses and nutrients of the earth. I also fused some blue and green enamels around the red. This complimented the colour of the beginning patina with ammonia and leaves. I realized here that in my gestural process, I treated the torch and hammers as extensions of my limbs, of myself.

I continued my explorations for thesis work during spring quarter of my

first year. In my printmaking class, I etched shapes that resembled wings onto a zinc plate. Then I pulled a two dimensional print through the printmaking process using black ink. (Illustration 13) I referred back to this print in sculpture class later in spring quarter, when I assembled a series of wood maquettes (models) that referenced projecting wings. When the weather grew warmer, I moved outdoors in my sculpture class and constructed an assemblage that employed various found media. I used one of the wood maquettes as a model. I gathered eight to thirteen foot-long, by three to six inches wide beams of old barnwood, railroad ties, a rusted saw, and rusted steel beams. I assembled an outdoor sculpture called **Spirit Guide Me**. (Illustration 14) I cold-connected the forms with steel roofing nails and copper boatbuilding tacks and nails. I worked in a gestural way again, circulating around the piece. I assembled it into a wing-like pattern, using tension to brace the boards tightly together at connecting areas. I riveted long nails through a couple boards at a time where they lay side by side. This created a sense of tension. The projections of wood symbolized ascension to the sky above. I painted the wood black and sheathed parts of the boards with pieces of copper that I had cut from a large sheet on the band saw. The copper was annealed and etched with patterns referring to gorge walls and rock strata. The metal was heat patinaed and nailed to the wood after I sheathed it around a few of the black boards. I then painted some ammonia and salt solution on

parts of the copper. It turned these painted areas an aqua green. The sculpture projected upward and outward from a centerpoint. It guided me into thesis work in the fall of my second year. Its gestural dialogue of projections alluded to wings and flight upward from an allusive, boat-wrecked body. It felt rather sinister, but alluded to vulnerability. It would erode in the elements of climate, returning to the earth. Before this sculpture was completed, I was already cutting shapes that resembled wings into the outer edges of my metalwork. The long projections, or wings, of the wood assemblage encouraged further investigation of these emerging symbols.

"The artistic process is more than a collection of crafted things; it is more than the process of creating those things. It is the chance to encounter dimensions of our being and to discover deep, rewarding patterns of meaning." (London 1989, 7)

I used the knowledge gained from sculpture class in my thesis work. After exploration of gestural forms using various techniques, I was ready to begin my thesis work. I hammered wings projecting from a forged and chased torso in my first thesis sculpture, **Fledgling**. (Illustration 15) Its gesture of form alludes to a bird landing on or lifting in flight from a marble rock. Its torso is barely mated to the marble. The bird sits with the marble behind it, symbolic of rock offering protection. The marble sits on a dark slate base which helps to elevate the white rock.

I decided to incorporate hammering and sandcasting techniques. I began by hammering a copper form in the metals studio. Then in sculpture class I cast bronze into my formed metal. **Eve** (Illustration 16) was a sculpture combining copper, bronze, graphite, and steel rod. It alluded to a bird form again, as in **Fledgling**, with projecting wings. This piece, and several other explorations related to it (Illustration 17), led me into my second thesis sculpture which I titled **Bird of Passage**. (Illustration 18) In the **Bird of Passage** sculpture during fall quarter of my second year, I hammered a copper form with wing-like projections about sixteen inches wide. The center of the bird form was its almost full-volume torso that alluded to a human torso or chest. Wings extended out from the center. I formed them to appear as if they were floating in air currents. With this gesture in the hammering and in the form that was emerging, I felt lifted in Spirit. The form felt like a visual search for soul or spiritual flight.

I set the finished copper form into a sandbox, bracing it in place with wet sand. I packed the inside of the torso with paper and then inserted woodsticks or “leaders” into the body cavity with the paper. I covered and packed the entire piece with more sand. The wood sticks lead from the buried piece to above the surface of the sand. I pulled the wood out, leaving open channels to the center of the copper form. I then cast

aluminum into the open channels, which filled the inside of the sculpture. After it cooled I brushed remaining sand off the piece. Then I pickled the entire piece in a used bath that contained much copper residue from previous work. Immediately after casting, the white/blue aluminum had looked like water foaming and gushing out of the top of the copper torso. But when I immersed the metals into the used pickle bath, the heavy copper-loaded bath plated over the white aluminum, leaving a thick, volatile, blackish, dark copper plating on the surface. I heat-coloured the copper part of the sculpture with a torch. The exploratory time spent during the first year in experiments with heat patinas added to my knowledge of materials. I was able to apply some expertise with this method of colourization on the piece. The heat patinization is difficult to control because of copper's high thermal conductivity. As copper is heated it runs through a sequence of colour changes. The hotter the metal, the more rapidly the colour changes occur and the more difficult it is to control them. I was able to achieve the range and tones of colors I wanted by alternating the heating and cooling of the copper, and by using a soft flame on the torch. With this process I achieved vibrant colours on the copper surface, which surrounded the dark plated aluminum. It enhanced feelings of strong contrast in the sculpture.

Bird of Passage was about the process of passing from one condition or

stage to another. I began to realize the responsibility with titling artwork. Titles are a form of communication between the artist and the viewer. They can offer guidance in reading an artwork's visual language. I did not want to define or mislead a person's response. This gesture of casting into a hammered form was an exciting transition in my art process. The thesis investigation, combining multiple materials and techniques, indicated unlimited possibilities for future work.

During fall quarter of my second year, I wanted to cast in a larger scale but the centrifugal casting machine could only cast less than a pound of bronze at a time. In the casting room, with the help of my advisor, Mark Stanitz, I set up a furnace that had not been used for several years. I was then able to gravity cast almost three pounds of bronze at a time. I cast several maquettes (models for sculpture), using this furnace. Then in a relief sculpture class, I built three relief models out of wood. Each model was about two feet by six to eight inches wide. We had access to the furnace, downstairs in the raku area. This furnace would melt at least thirty pounds of bronze! I invested the wood models in cardboard constructions. The next day I burned them out in the raku kiln. My classmates helped me pack the hot molds in sand. Then my casting partner and I poured bronze into the three molds. The pour was a gestural dance between my casting partner and me. It was as if we were drawing with the molten bronze as it poured

out of the crucible. (Illustration 19) After cleaning, grinding, and colouring the relief castings, I mounted them on finely sanded and lightly oiled walnut boards. The results were beautiful, but the gesture in the bronze forms felt too limited for me to include **Relief Triptych** (Illustration 20) in my thesis show.

I began to assemble bronze sculptures from several bronze relief forms that I cast in winter quarter of my second year. I cast several pieces from styrofoam that I had sculpted into wing shapes, using cutting tools and a torch with a soft flame. I pushed each shape into investment that was poured one and one-half inches deep, into shallow boxes that I constructed for each piece. I constructed the boxes out of wood and cardboard, and these became a mold that I let dry outside for several days. Then I melted the styrofoam with gasoline that I poured lightly on top of the mold. After several more days of drying, I cast bronze into the open molds.

After casting from styrofoam molds, I chose several weathered, well-textured wood boards and pushed them into prepared three and one half foot slabs of wet clay. Then I manipulated the clay further using other pieces of wood to build up relief patterns and enhance textures. After letting these dry for several days, I cast bronze into the open molds. These relief pieces were more structured and masculine in feeling than those cast

from the styrofoam, or from the sandcast forms which I poured next. The sandcast molds were created by pressing a wood board into a mixture of play sand and West System #5 epoxy-resin. I removed the board, which left an impression that hardened overnight. I let it dry for several more days, packed sand around it in a sandbox, and cast bronze into this open mold.

The tedious preparation time for all three mold-making techniques rewarded me with a variety of forms for assemblage into three-dimensional sculpture. I assembled two sculptures from these cast relief forms, **Gorge 1** and **Gorge 2**. (Illustration 21 and 22) I chose to show **Gorge 1** as my third thesis show piece, as it was the more gestural of the two. One of the brazed pieces in this sculpture resembles a wing projecting from the center of the piece. It also alludes to the spray of water in the Niagara Gorge rapids. One piece juts upward and outward, as a tree projecting out from cliff walls, blown from its straight stature by gusty winds. There is a gestural ascending and a tension between elements of Nature in this sculpture. Its textures resemble landscapes of eroding rock. (Illustration 23) In several areas, the textures resemble the lacy fungi that I have seen growing on the wet cliff walls of Watkins Glen.

These gestural references to nature influenced my choices in patinizing the

Gorge 1 sculpture. I applied chemical green and brown Jax to some areas. In other areas I sparingly applied an ammonia and salt solution. Then I heated several areas with a torch flame which deepened the colours. I reapplied the chemicals to some areas and rubbed some lightly with a cloth. This changed some of the colours to a softer, more subdued moss green. After seeing this colourization effect, I felt a complete sense of closure with the sculpture.

“Where we are is determined by how we feel about where we currently are. We know when we haven’t gone far enough because we’ll feel that there is a reservoir of untested strength, endurance, skills, and knowledge still in reserve. We’ll feel flat, missing something, not necessarily knowing the identity or the quantity of what is not sufficiently there, but definitely being aware that we are not sated.”
(London 1989, 95)

When **Gorge 1** was completed, I scanned a slide of it into a computer using Photoshop in a 2-D computer visualization class. I realized I had found the beginnings of myself as a fine artist in this thesis work. I used the image as the primary design element in my computer-imaging self-portrait. It represented art as the structure for my life. Above it, I scanned a baby photograph of myself. I drew celestial wings onto my image descending in stages into physical life. Below it, my sculpture’s image projected upward implying a gesture of union between spiritual and physical life. (Illustration 24) I felt my visual as well as sculptural birth

had truly begun.

During this time, I was casting in my sculpture class, combining images and symbols on the computer, and forming my fourth thesis show sculpture **Birthing**. (Illustration 25) I believe that this sculpture exuded the most visceral, earthly presence of all my thesis work. My mother underwent abdominal bypass surgery at this time. As in previous hammered pieces I began this work by cutting out an organic shape. This shape was four feet long by three feet wide. Then I cut several lines in from the outside edge of the metal shape towards the center. However, in this piece, I only cut these lines a few inches deep toward the center of the shape. I believe that the vulnerability I felt regarding my mother's surgery was an influence; because the cuts were short, the evolving sculpture had smaller wings and limbs that curled closer to the dominant center of the form in a more contained gesture of protection. I felt more intimate with this sculpture than any of my other thesis work. I believe that in **Birthing**, I harnessed the emotional content that saturated this reflective period in my life. In the copper, I hammered a two foot breast form that symbolized my mother, and transformed this later into forms alluding to a womb and fetus. This symbolized, for me, an intimacy and vulnerability with both life and death.

"You put someone back into the womb of mother earth for rebirth. Very early images of the Goddess show her as a mother receiving the soul back again."

(Campbell 1988, 216)

This sculpture was influenced by my intimate feelings and concerns about my mother's welfare and feelings regarding my own maternal instincts. Her body had given life to mine. She represented the source of my beginnings. In concern for her health I was returning home again, through the process of creating sculptural form. As writer Joseph Campbell states,

"The temporal aspect of the circle is that you leave, go somewhere, and always come back. The circle suggests immediately a completed totality, whether in time or in space." *(Campbell 1988, 215)*

I continued my ritual circular dance with this sculpture as I had with previous pieces. Occasionally, I turned the sculpture around me, dancing with it in gestural dialogue. The sculpture was saturated with emotional content in gestural form. As in earlier explorations, I intuitively forged the copper surface of the sculpture as if I were forming parts of the human figure. The breasts, torso, belly, and abdomen pulsed in a rhythm of copper forms alluding to contractions in the birth process. This resembled a figurative landscape.

"The body is the soul presented in its richest and most expressive form. In the body,

we see the soul articulated in gesture, dress, movement, shape - in countless expressive forms." (Moore 1940, 155)

It exuded a voluptuous fertility, constricted by outside edges that contained and protected the inside form. This piece helped me maintain a balance in my life with school, my jewelry business, my family, and my friends.

At this point, physical considerations began affecting my work. My right wrist was in pain every day because of the repetitive hammering. Because of this, I decided to wear a wrist brace day and night throughout the rest of my thesis work. (Illustration 26) I utilized both arms, offering relief to my right arm which I used more often. I discovered an ambidextrous approach to hammering. This integrated both left brain and right brain modes of communicating with the copper medium, which enhanced the aesthetics of my process. It provided a sense of balance between masculine and feminine aspects of myself and my work. I believe this was another breakthrough into insight in communicating with my piece as I worked. I realized that elements and symbols in my art work reflected the human aging process. As humans respond to physical, emotional, and psychic elements of life, the earth erodes in response to physical elements of wind and water. In the **Birthing** sculpture I continued to hammer with this

metaphor in mind, preferring a more eclectic variety and use of hammers. This encouraged a wider range of expressive techniques and an enhanced aesthetic vocabulary with the tools. I still used some of the metals studio and forge hammers as well. I used both the pointed end and the chipping end of a slag hammer and began to use a wood splitter. (Illustration 27) These new hammers enhanced my hammering techniques and gave me more options for forming and surface embellishment of lines and textures.

Experience with specific hammers allowed more spontaneity in choosing the appropriate weight, size, or shape of hammer. The hammers had become an extension of myself. This technical familiarity with the tools nurtured a greater intimacy in my art process. I expressed with the hammers much as a writer expresses with pens. Each hammer provided an individual result in forming, cutting, and texturing the copper. The gestural process partnered my individual aesthetics. I worked intuitively in fluid rhythm with these tools and the emerging sculpture. Referring to creative mode and expressing ourselves, Peter London states that in the creative mode and expressing ourselves:

“Breathing is full and unencumbered, our limbs move easily in unselfconscious ways. We take cognizance of our situation as lovers do of one another.” (London 1989, 95)

I felt the highest level of gestural, physical, tactile, and emotional involvement with **Birthing**. Its core drew me inside because of the form, lines and textures in the metal. Its outside pushed me away. It felt as if I were looking at myself from inside a mirror because the sculpture was a visual reflection of my inner feelings, my emotional content. I questioned whether or not I should create more three-dimensional volume, but this felt intuitively and aesthetically wrong. The piece evoked a sense of centered caring and protection through its present form.

"Art is a kind of innate drive that seizes a human being and makes him his instrument. The artist is not a person endowed with free will who seeks his own ends, but one who allows art to realize its purposes through him. He is a collective man. One who carries and shapes the unconscious, psychic life of mankind."

(Jung 1950, 221)

When the sculpture form was completed, I soldered a one and one-half foot long by one-half inch wide copper rod into the bottom of the sculpture. This later connected and secured the sculpture to its base. After this, to clean the oxidation off of the copper's surface, I borrowed a six by four by four foot trash bin from the school's physical plant. I mixed a pickle bath (acid bath) in this large bin so I could immerse the entire piece into the bath. Then I patinaed the finished sculpture form with multiple techniques. I first mulched leaves from my family's yard with a small

amount of ammonia and dried excrement from my cat. I packed the mixture around the entire piece and covered it with plastic overnight. The next day I removed the piece, let it dry in the sun, and brushed off the dry residue. Then I used a dry brushing technique- adding some Jax Green and Brown chemical patinas in a few areas. I torched several areas as in previous work to deepen tones. I buffed out several areas to turn them a soft, moss green. The effect was earthy and quieting, an undisturbed woods. I added liver of sulphur (another chemical colouring agent) to a few places and finally felt the sculpture was complete.

One of my committee members suggested, *"The more experimental and expressive a piece is, the greater need for presentation concerns."* I chose a four foot stump as a base. The stump alluded slightly to figurative form evoking a torso. I carved a shallow, three-inch deep concave dome into the top of the stump. Into this I drilled an eight inch hole to accommodate the rod that was soldered to the bottom of the copper sculpture. Then I painted the entire stump flat white. I inserted the rod that was soldered onto the finished sculpture, into the eight inch hole. I had forged this rod so the sculpture sat at a slight angle. When I filled the concave hole with play sand, it hid the rod. The sculpture now appeared to barely touch the sand in a three inch area. This also set it visually apart from its base. I integrated the base with the floor slightly by filling the narrow gap

between the base and the floor with sand. My intent was to use the stump as a base, not to integrate it fully with the sculpture.

I titled my next thesis piece **Tryst**. (Illustration 28) It alluded to the support and influence of friendships. It was another investigation incorporating the gestural processes of hammering copper and sand-casting. Thrusting, elemental, vestigial remains in bronze, projected upward and through a sensuous, organic, copper form. This was the most straightforward, cognitive sculpture in my thesis show. A friend had offered valuable straightforward advice in regards to preparing for the thesis show. This piece alluded to that gesture of friendship. Joseph Zinker, an artist and therapist wrote,

“In the process of making anything, a person not only illuminates and illustrates his inner life, but moves beyond personal expression to make something which stands by itself. The work acquires its own internal validity, its own integrity. It is in this process of making something which stands on its own integral structure that the creator contacts a concrete reality outside his subjective life and moves into the realm of the transcendent.” (London 1989, 13)

Seraph (Illustration 29) was the last sculpture in my thesis investigation series and the most transcendent piece. This essence evolved through gestural process and form. Author Peter London states,

"The creative process is, to a significant degree, a somatic act, one in which the physical body expresses what is known in those portions of the brain that operate nonverbally and that rely upon image and gesture to convey their knowledge." And "Creative people, whatever else they know, also know how to connect with the signs being sent by the subconscious mind in the form of sound, image, or gesture, and they know how to accurately relay those signs into coherent expression." (London 1989, 97)

I began with the ritual preparations for working with copper in the forge. I dressed in the appropriate protective attire, and I followed my previous sequence of cutting a shape out of industrial-looking copper sheet. With this piece I used thicker, fourteen gauge metal sheet. As in previous sculptures, I intuitively cut out an organic outline with lines cut inward towards the center of the piece. However, in contrast to the earlier hammered sculptures I cut these lines deep into the center of the shape. Then I cut away excess material, leaving a large shape that looked like the outline of a six foot creature. Three foot long limbs stretched outward from the center of the body. I annealed the flat shape on the gas forge, which changed its shiny industrial copper colour surface into a range of sensual, smooth skin-like textures and colours. I was keenly aware of the ritualistic drumming sounds created by my rhythmic hammer strokes into the soft copper. In this gestural forming process, I felt highly attuned and centered with my body rhythms. My consistent breathing and the oneness or unity

I was already experiencing with the form continued. In this process I felt an interaction of both earthy and spiritual elements. I felt ethereal, yet grounded and an aesthetic balance. Concerning the transcendent process, Joseph Campbell wrote,

You have moments of ecstasy...into transcendence. This is an essential experience of any mystical realization. You die to your flesh and are born into your spirit. You identify with the consciousness and life of which your body is but the vehicle."
(Campbell 1988, 107)

I believe that the form evolved as an introspective and truthful reflection of myself. It felt as if a reflection of my Spirit self (my higher self) was emerging through my hammered forms. I worked again in my gestural dance around this piece. I noticed that I responded to the the long limbs in the shape. They reminded me of wind blown trees that I had seen projecting out from the Niagara Gorge cliffs. They were vulnerable to the erosion process, to severe winds and temperatures, but their roots still clung to the rock and eroding earth.

I continued to reanneal and hammer the sculpture. In visualizing these trees, I realized that they resembled the wing shapes I had used in previous thesis investigations. I felt the essence of a survival of Spirit. I developed the metaphor between the trees and wings further. In the

process of feathering these limb extensions, I transformed them into wings. To feather them, I repeatedly split the edges on both sides of the wings with the sharp edge of a wood splitter. This type of hammer is typically used for splitting stumps of into firewood. I bought and used this hammer for its ability to cut and texture the metal. I continued the splitting in a ritualistic rhythm. I often paused to rest. This was the most physically demanding hammering technique I had used so far. The center of the sculpture alluded to human figurative elements. In one area I hammered a breast form and incorporated both male and female form in other areas. Then I textured these, using studio hammers and the pointed tip of my slag hammer head. I broke the breast form open and hammered its edges back, leaving a cavity of negative space. I felt satisfied with the basic hammered form. I began to suspend the metalwork periodically on a chain that hung from the roof of the forge building. This allowed me to view the piece from all angles. At one point, the piece looked as if it was damaged from the wind. The sculpture's wings looked tattered and worn, but in my hammering process, I retained a firm, projecting quality of the wings and a stature of form. The wings began to tear near the center body, as in life's tears; I reinforced them with folded edges and brazed them back together. This was a healing gesture of process. The tears reminded me that sometimes humanity tries to break creative Spirit in order to retain or to gain control.

When I suspended the form, I realized that it resembled a celestial being, an angel with three pairs of wings. I titled it **Seraph**, an angel of the highest order (a guiding spirit). This inspired me to embellish body details from the center of the being to the beginnings of the wings. The sculpture appeared to soar with its wings spread. They reached outward and upward. The gesture induced a sense of joyful release and resembled flying in my dreams. It also felt similar to soaring on air currents in a glider plane. The soaring form was completed with a few more gestural accents in hammering the tips of the wings that resembled fingers and hands. In the process of working on **Seraph** and in response to its completed form, I felt a freedom of heart and soul.

In early investigations, I found that too much comfort in a piece deflated the aesthetic content of a sculpture. **Seraph's** overall form, lines, dimensions in human scale, and negative space enhanced the feelings of release and freedom in the piece. The colouring further enhanced these aesthetics. I left only traces of copper skin color on the body, in reference to the human aspect from which it transcended into Spirit. I coloured most of the sculpture by painting it with a variety of iridescent acrylics. This was inspired by its form, alluding to a celestial being. I also chose these metallic paints because I was inspired by Louise Nevelson's gold painted

abstract sculpture, **Sky Cathedral**. The iridescent paints also enhanced the ethereal quality of the suspended form. I painted **Seraph** during the late night hours, sitting alone, listening to classical music. I suspended it in the metals studio, then lit the piece with a few small spotlights and turned off all the other studio lights. I do not remember stopping until the piece was finished around sunrise. The iridescent paints induced sensations of light radiating from within the sculpture. This sculpture alluded to ascension from physical to spiritual life, inferring a rebirth. Being alone with my sculpture was a gift to myself; I felt a quiet rapture in my painting process. I also felt a sense of impending closure, as this was to be my last thesis investigation. This sculpture became a metaphor to rebirth, my last transition prior to leaving graduate school. It helped my transition out of graduate school.

In my thesis show, **Seraph** was suspended from steel wire that was connected to a swivel hook. This hook was attached to a copper ring that I had soldered onto the piece. It was free to rotate 360 degrees and to sway slightly forward or backward from the swivel hook. This free suspension, offered by the swivel hook, allowed it to move in response to air currents in the gallery. The movement of the finished sculpture enhanced its soaring gesture. Originally I wanted to hang it higher in the thesis show than it was hung, but I could not get permission due to gallery liability

concerns. Height was an issue because I wanted to hang it just beyond any human reach. I did not want to alienate viewers from my piece. I believe I received a better response from viewers because **Seraph** was hung lower than I originally intended. It became more approachable to the viewers. Due to the level that the piece was hung, the swivel hook was readily apparent. Aesthetically I did not care for this. In the future I would be sure to design a suspended sculpture so that the hook was not visible. **Seraph** was the assimilation of my thesis explorations. It represented closure of in-depth investigations in my gestural process and form.

“Creative Encounters bring about many- sometimes large- dislocations of the mind and spirit. The person who enters this arena of creative growth is not the person who emerges.” And “Once one process has proceeded through the active phases of discovering a grander self, it is time for reflection.” (London 1989, 107)

I produced this series of work in an experimental and expressive investigation of “Emotional Content in Gestural Process and Form.” The process introduced me to my evolving internal dialogue, inner voice, and internal anatomy of emotion. The more physical interaction I had in my art process, the better I expressed the emotional content through an expressive dialogue with materials. The interactive qualities of process, the exchange involved the senses of sight, sound, scent, touch, and most importantly, Spirit. My sculpture evolved best on a larger scale, and

ultimately achieved human scale. I felt that the most successful pieces resulted from the intimacy that was established through the series of investigations with multiple materials and techniques. My thesis series revealed that gestural form directs the essence of my artwork, communicating aspects of human Spirit. I developed many metaphors between forms in nature and my figurative forms. My art process seemed to induce breath and life into the animated sculptures. I responded to visual impressions that I received intuitively in my gestural process of working. I then communicated with them through visual forms, lines, textures, and colours.

The overall allusive qualities of my work invite viewer introspection and communication. I now believe that as an artist I can transform materials, through processes and techniques, into sculpture with a universal voice or theme. I also experienced a transcendence into a spiritual realm or mode with my last sculpture in the series. Finalizing my thesis documentation was a gesture of closure for myself. My thesis investigation opened doors that will never close. Finalizing this documentation is a gesture of pause and reflection, before I begin my next series.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albee, Edwards, 1980. Louise Nevelson Atmospheres & Environments. Clarkson N. Potter, Inc..
- Atkins, Robert, 1990. Artspeak. A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements, & Buzzwords. Abbeville Publishing Group.
- Campbell, Joseph, 1988. Joseph Campbell The Power of Myth With Bill Moyers. Apostrophe S. Productions, Inc.. 30, 37,107, 214, 215, 216.
- Dawson, R.J.C., 1973. Fusion Welding and Brazing of Copper and Copper Alloys. Halsted Press.
- Frank, Mary, 1995. Desert Quartet An Erotic Landscape. Pantheon Books. 9.
- Golub, Marcia, 1990. Secret Correspondance. Ticknor & Fields. 58.
- Henri, Robert, 1923. The Art Spirit. J.B. Lippincott Company. 195.
- Jacobi, Ritzi, "The Supremacy of Form Over Nature," American Craft, June/July 1994, 33.
- Jung, Gustav, 1950. Modern Man in Search of a Soul. Harcourt Brace: 221, 222.
- Kooyman, Richard, "Art Should Fill Society's Spiritual Void", The Crafts Report, December 1994, December 1994, 3, 4.
- LaLanger, Cassandra, "The Art of Healing", MS Magazine, January/February 1989, 132.
- London, Peter, 1989. No More Secondhand Art Awakening The Artist Within. Shambhala Publications. 7, 13, 95, 97, 99, 107.
- Moore, Thomas, 1940, Care of the Soul. Harper Collins. 155.
- Nevelson, Louise, 1976. Dawns and Dusks. Charles Scriber's Sons.
- Surls, James, "Nature's Imagery In Wood", Texas Homes, July/August 1979, 132.

STATEMENT

This series of sculptures
investigates gesture of process
as well as gesture of form.
These figurative forms allude to
wind water, rocks, and trees.
My works personify Spirit
and Nature through a dialogue
between concept and materials.
Spontaneous response to materials and
experimentation with techniques
assert a “gestural dialogue”.
This investigation of gestural process
and form invokes in me,
and hopefully the viewer,
an emotional response.

Thesis Show, April 28,1995

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I extend heartfelt thanks to the following people for your support throughout my thesis process:

Marina Bebak and Jeanne Sturdevant - You made the difference, dear friends, with your friendship and artistic sensitivity.

Bruce Sodervick - Your insightful teaching skills, love of expressive art, and encouragement throughout my search will always reflect in my roles as teacher and artist.

Jean and Robert Yates - My parents. Bless your ever lovin' hearts!

Ed Swanekamp - For honoring my spirit and vision.

Tom Parker

Tom Hyzan

Walter Zimmerman

Jamie Francis

Tom Lightfoot

Jack Slutzky

Barbara Hodik

Elaine Polvinen

Steve Loar

Northern Lights C. C. M. D.

Manya Fabiniak

Maria Sweet

Vicki Dodds

Doug Coffey

Sue Chan

Zerbie Sodervick

Connie Pfeiffer

Catherine Stobie

Robin Summers

Jacque Fojt

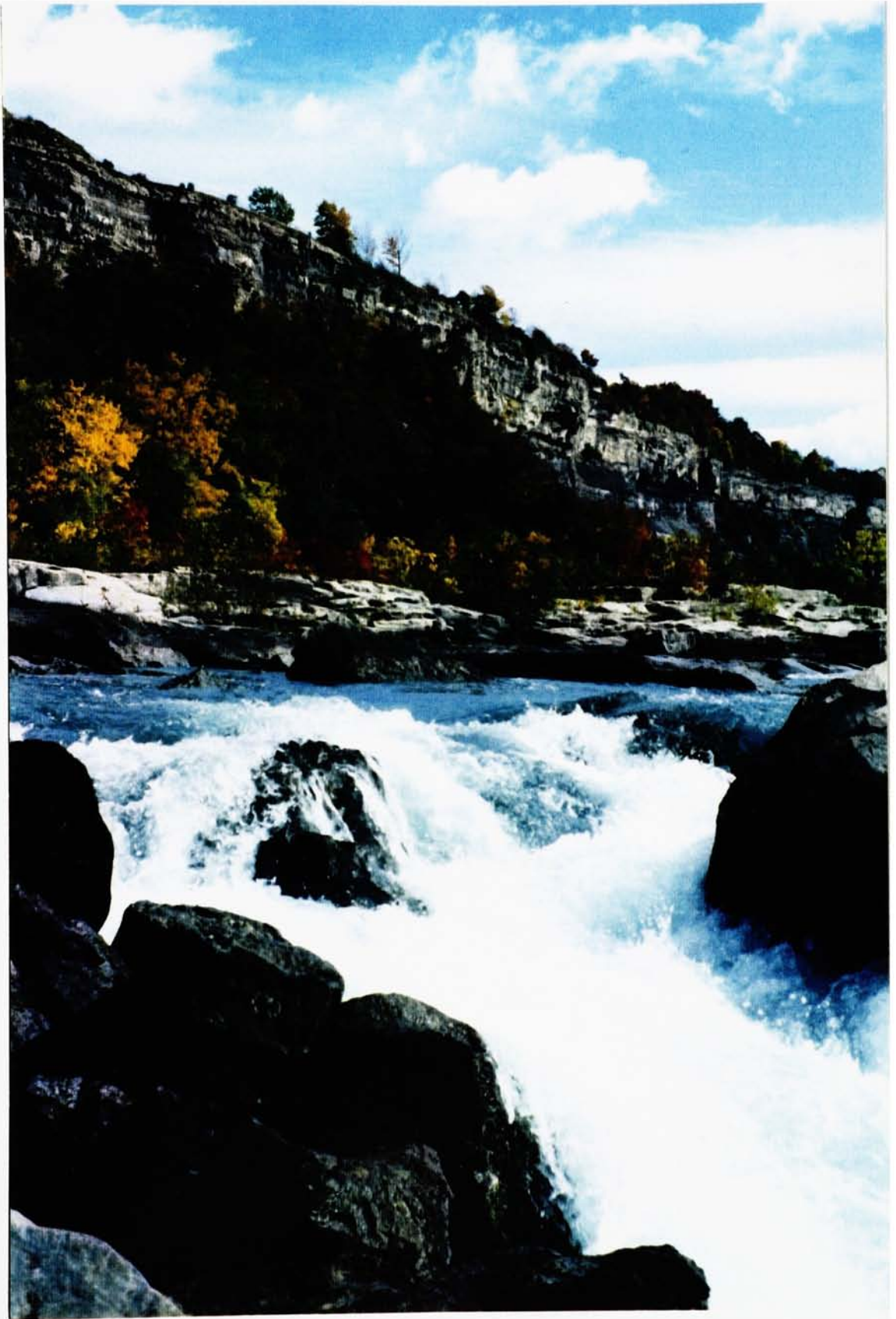
Family & Friends in Spirit

*Pearl & Arthur Wade

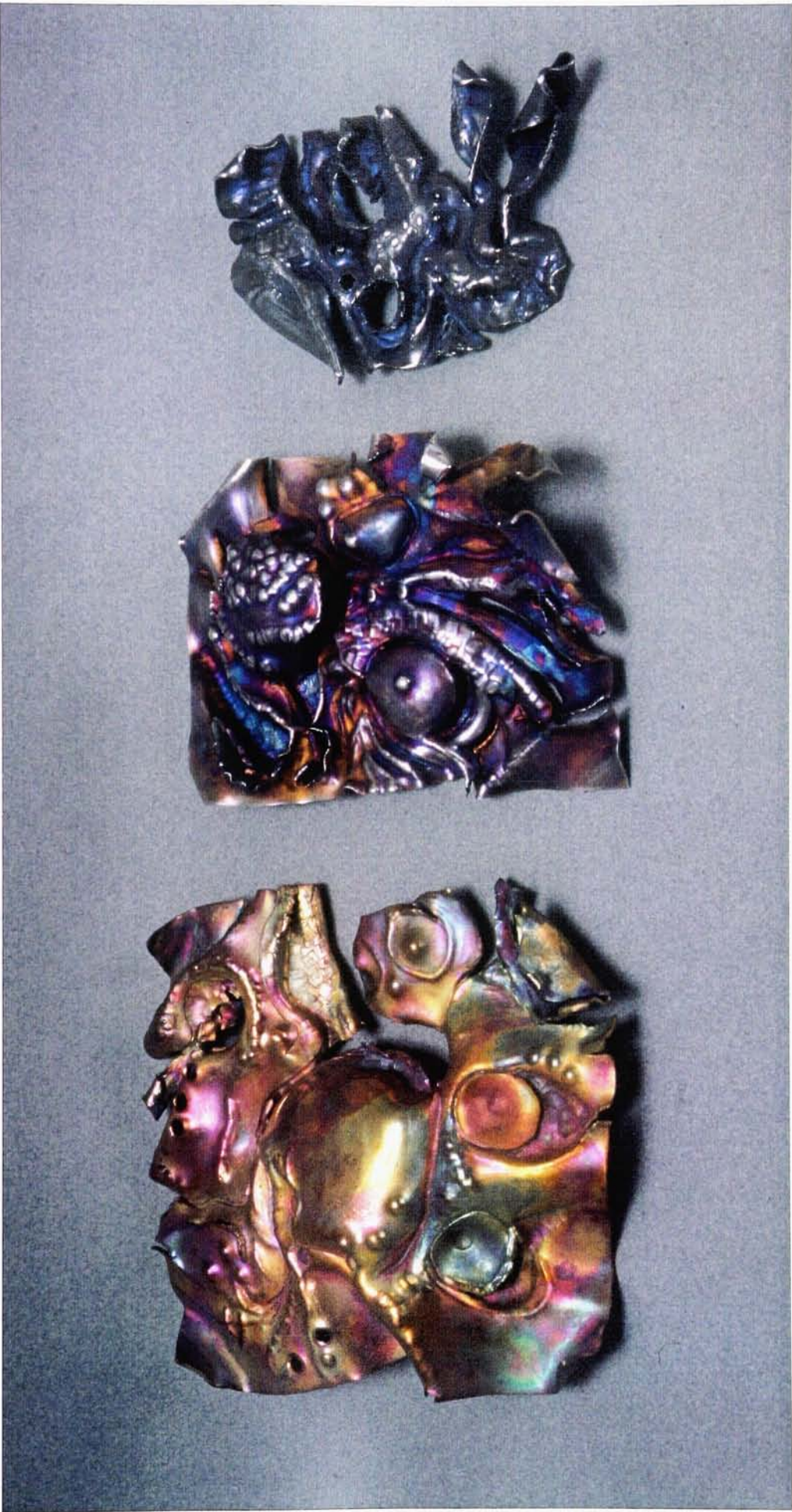
ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Niagara Gorge overview
2. chasing in pitch
3. chased pieces (copper, sterling silver, and fine silver)
4. example, figurative lines of rock formations
5. eroded sink holes in Niagara Gorge bedrock
6. **Fine Silver Vessel**
7. **Copper Vessel**
8. **Jessica**
9. **Precious**
10. **Relief Investigation**
11. working in forge using acetylene torch
12. **Aquifer**
13. etching, printmaking class
14. **Spirit Guide Me**
15. **Fledgling**
16. **Eve**
17. two sand castings

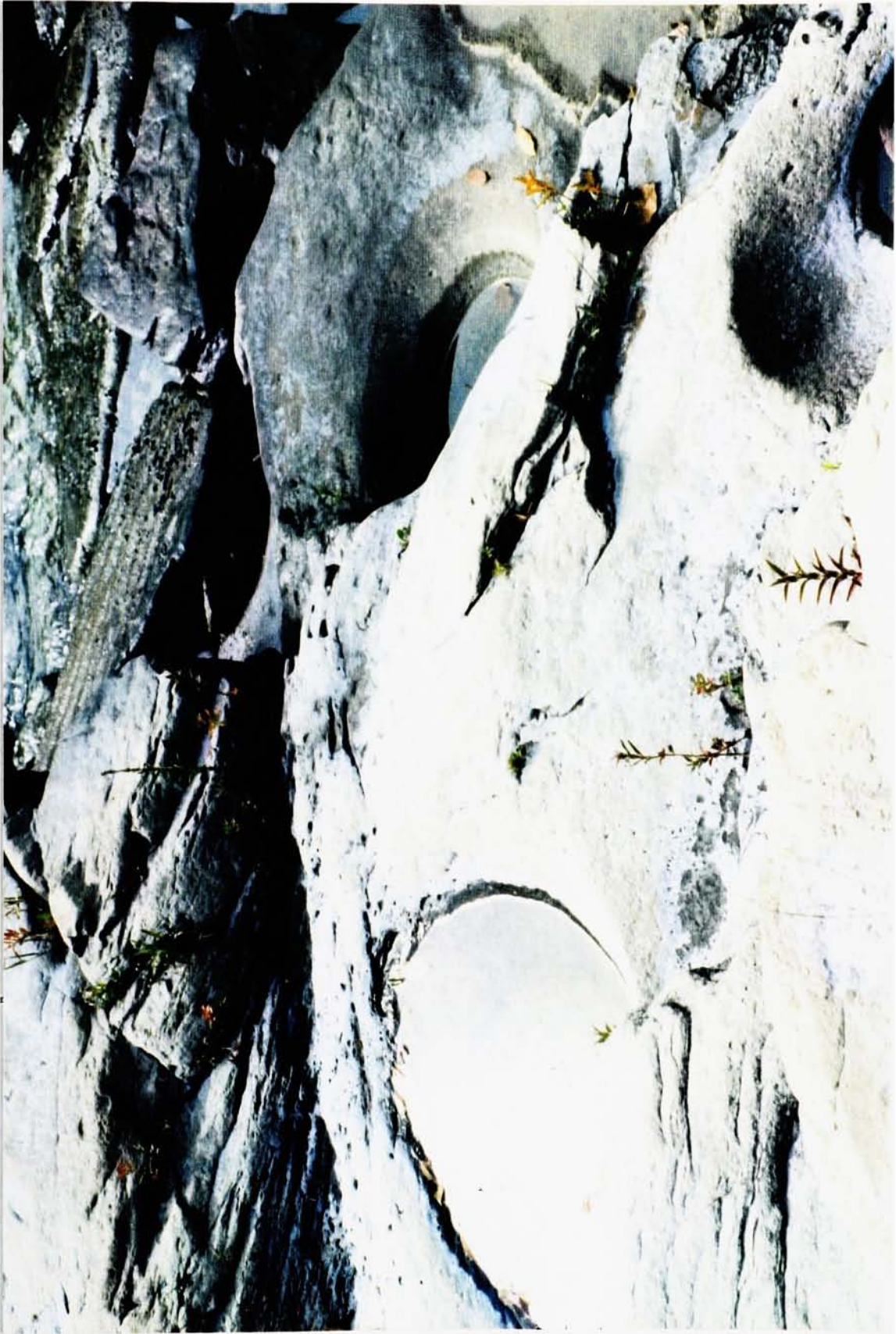
18. **Bird of Passage**
19. casting bronze in foundry
20. **Relief Triptych**
21. **Gorge 1**
22. **Gorge 2**
23. cliff walls of Niagara Gorge
24. computer-imaging self-portrait
25. **Birthing**
26. working in forge
27. forging with woodsplitter
28. **Tryst**
29. **Seraph**















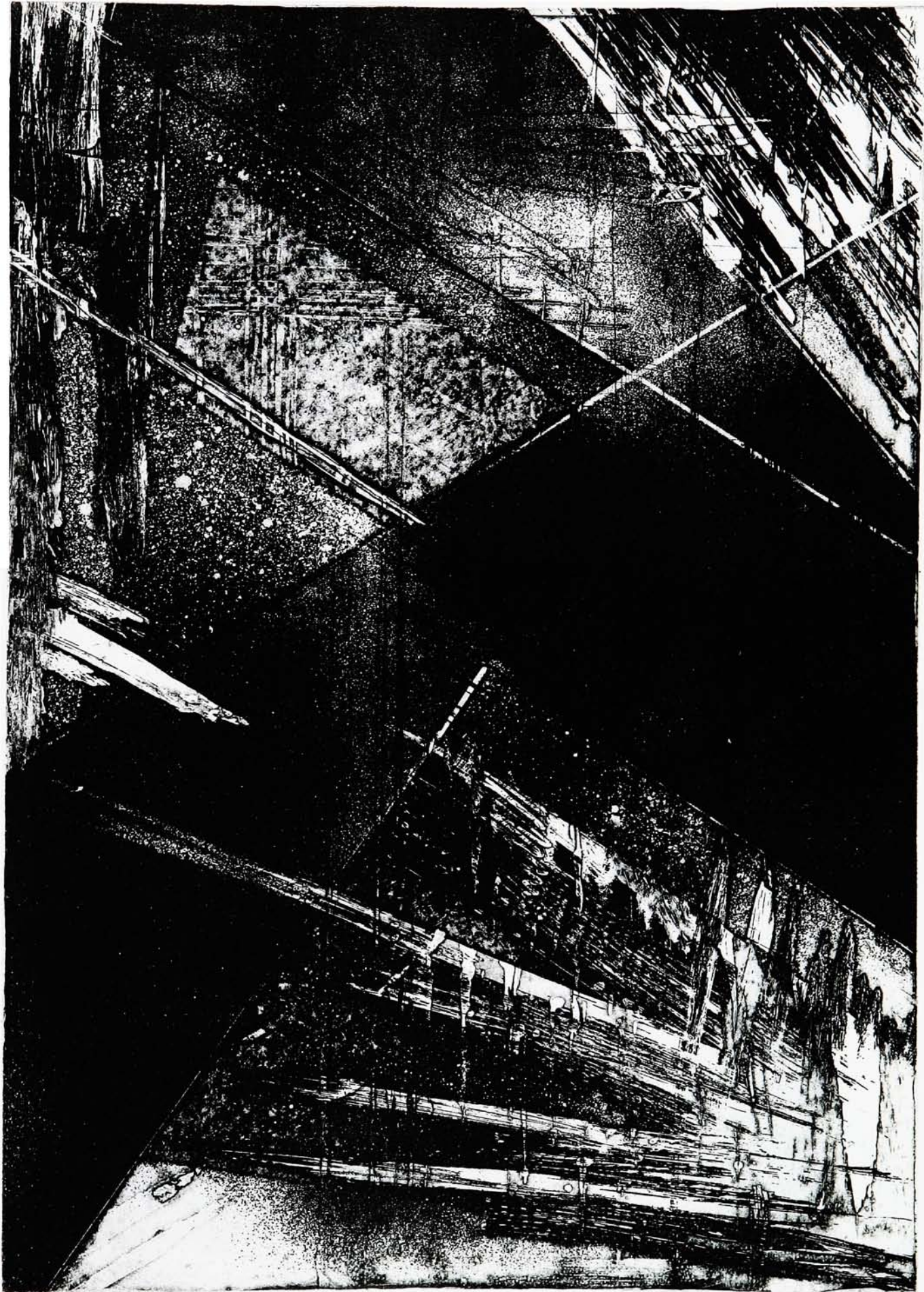
















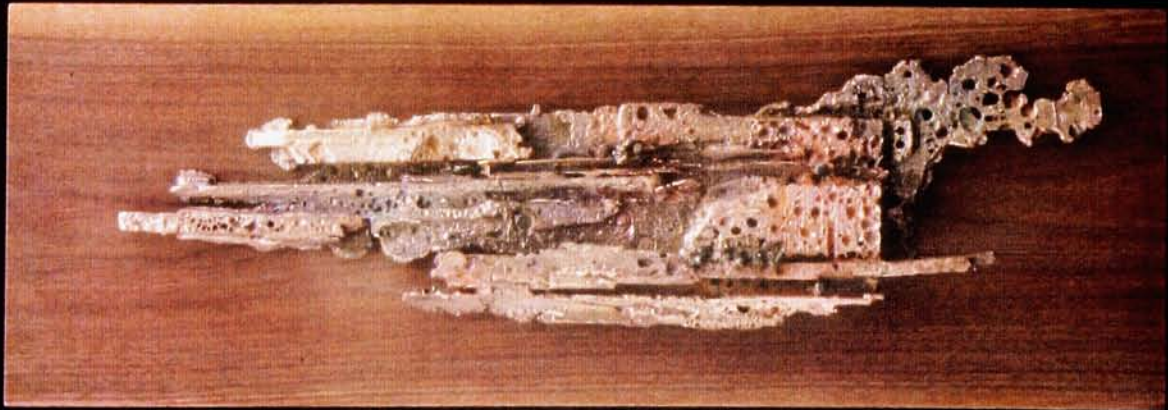
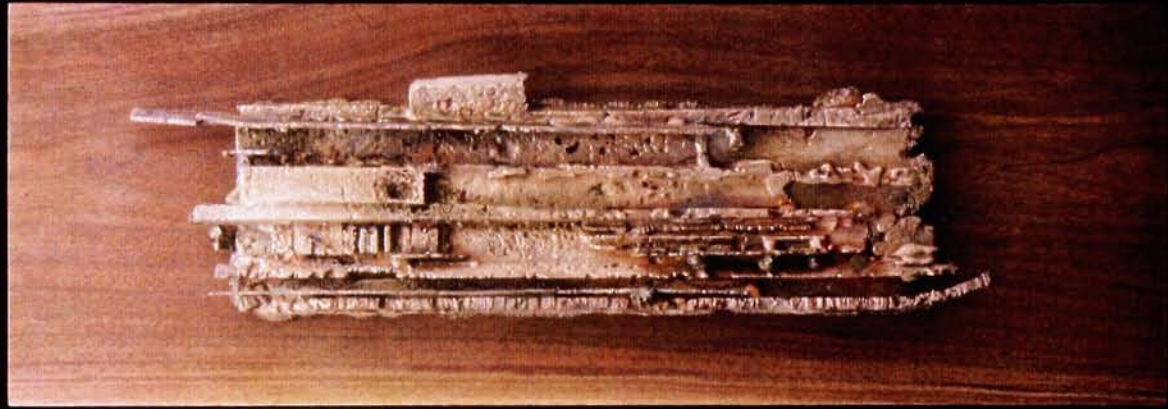


16.



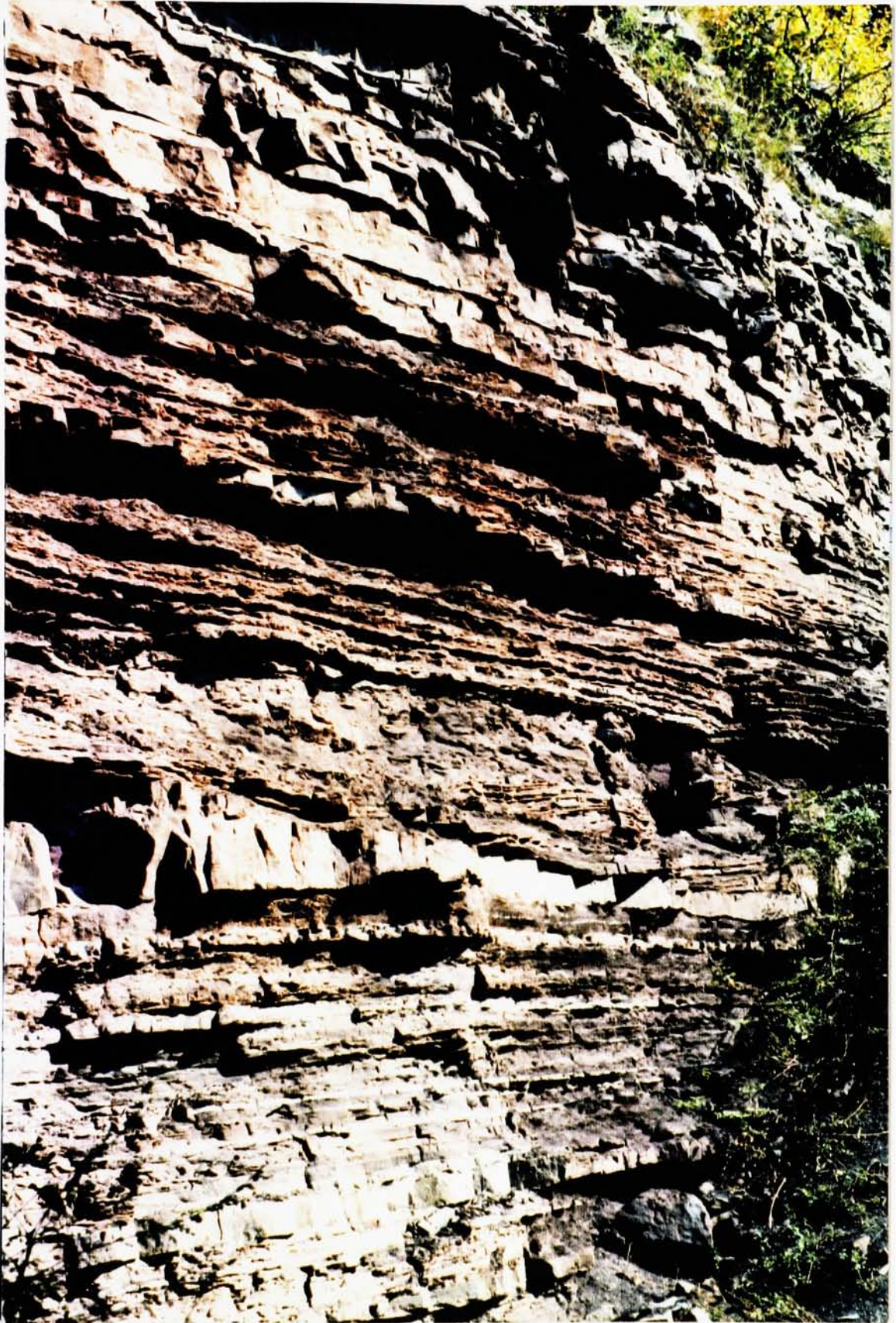














Robin Yountz '95











