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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

Felted Constructions

by

Hollie Heller

November 15, 1986

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PREFACE

The work dealt with in this thesis paper represents the culmination of my artistic growth over the past three years, embodying the ideas and influences I have absorbed. It consists of four wall pieces that will be discussed separately and in detail in this paper. The paper is divided into the following four sections: Progress of Work, a brief survey of the experiences that have contributed to the development of the esthetic underlying the work presented here and that have led me to this stage in my academic and artistic career; Influences, dealing with the work of other artists that has had the greatest effect on my work; Techniques, discussing the methods employed in the thesis work; and Thesis Work, a discussion of the pieces themselves.

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PART ONE

Progress of Work

My experience as a student and artist during the last three years has led me to several important conclusions about the creative process. Among these conclusions are that the creative process involves experiencing the feeling of certainty and "flow" that comes with total involvement in the work at hand. Although it is not always possible to achieve this focused feeling, this sense of oneness with the process of creation, it is something that I strive for as an integral part of the creative process.

It has also become apparent to me that constant experimentation is a precursor to creating works of art of high quality. In some ways the early experiments that eventually lead to finished works of art can be likened to sorting out the bad from the good, of allowing the usable to emerge. This process of experimentation also allows one to refine one's statement, to simplify one's work, to clarify one's statements. As Gertrude Stein has written:

Everything must come into your scheme; otherwise you cannot achieve real simplicity.¹

This section, then, will present a brief review of my experience as a student, teacher, and artist that has led me to these two personal conclusions about the nature of artistic creation.

I first began to think of seriously becoming an artist when I took a weaving course during my Junior year in college. My previous art courses, including drawing, sculpture, and design, had led me to an appreciation of art, but had never led me to seriously consider

¹James R. Mellow, Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein & Co. (New York: Praeger, 1974), p. 108.

art as a career. Weaving began to open up avenues for self-expression, allowed me to begin to develop the esthetic that continues to be refined in my work today.

The key to the development of that esthetic can be traced back through my early attempts at artistic expression. Those attempts, in several different media including painting and weaving, can be characterized as abstract, having rich colors and "grand" proportions. Upon discovering the techniques of felting, I found a medium that would allow me to continue an exploration of the possibilities of color and shape in a medium that I sensed, intuitively, was right for me.

Through my early graduate education at the School for American Craftsmen at R.I.T., my explorations were primarily of the technical processes used in different media, especially painting and felting, and they continued to reflect my relative lack of concern with overall design or concept.

Two experiences, my work as a crafts instructor and costume designer and my introduction to the human figure through a sculptor with whom I became friends, influenced the subsequent development of my art toward the organic and the figurative. The costume design, for a production of Cats, can be characterized as simple, conforming to the movements of the body. The influence of sculpture carried over into my classwork, leading me to explore figure drawing and to develop confidence in a kind of intuitive approach to my drawing.

The first felting piece in which the combination of a more intuitive approach with an interest in the figure can be seen is

a large felted "portrait," entitled "Pakistani Woman." Working from a Life Magazine photograph over an extended period of time, I first painted, then constructed with fleece and fabric, a large-scale image depicting the intense desperation of a woman (Diagram 1). The work proceeded, driven by the kind of exhilaration and involvement in the "flow" of the creative process spoken of earlier in this section. This was perhaps the first time I became conscious of this aspect of artistic creation, and the experience has become one of the cornerstones of my esthetic.

The development of my work continued through a series of abstract pieces, but with a significant difference from earlier abstract work. Whereas my primary concern had been to learn technique, it now became to create a work of art with better overall design. Working from a photograph I had taken in Greece of a doorway that seemed to cut away at the space in the background, I assembled a large piece from different pieces of felt, creating a multi-dimensional, sculptural piece entitled "Island of Fantasy" (Diagram 2). Further experiments in this direction included two felted vessels (Diagrams 3 and 4).

Three other pieces created during this period, utilizing four- to six-foot lengths of copper tubing covered with felting, also contributed to the development of the thesis. The first, which began as an abstract form in blue and green, evolved into a humorous seated figure (Diagram 5). The second is a seated figure, with bent knees (Diagram 6). This piece is stitched and wrapped with dyed sisal, and its colors include bright pinks and oranges. The third

was inspired by a photograph of a Martha Graham dance, and its colors range from purple to green.

Although not totally successful, these figures nonetheless provided a means of "sorting out the bad from the good, of allowing the usable to emerge," that I have referred to earlier in this section. And they were the culmination of the development of an esthetic that is continually evolving, an esthetic whose evolution continues in the thesis work discussed in the next sections of this paper.

PART TWO

Influences

There have been numerous influences on the work presented in this thesis project. Among the most important are the paintings of Georgia O'Keefe; the works of Eva Hesse; African primitive culture; the painting of abstract expressionists such as William Dekooning, Alexander Lieberman, Jim Dine, Robert Motherwell, and Helen Frankenthaler; and the work of the fiber artists Magdalena Abakanowicz and Dominic DiMare.

The work of Georgia O'Keefe is highly intuitive and Miss O'Keefe has the ability to make the painted image convey exactly what she sees. Those characteristics draw me to her work. She wrote:

There are people who have made me see shapes--and others I thought of a great deal, even people who make me see nothing. I have painted portraits that to me are almost photographic. I remember hesitating to show the paintings they looked so real to me. But they have passed into the world as abstractions--no one seeing what they are.¹

Georgia O'Keefe was profoundly affected by the Southwest-American Indian culture which depicted natural phenomenon using crisp, atmospheric colors and contrasting designs. Her sensitivity to color has deeply affected my work just as much as her drive and commitment have affected me personally.

Primitive art's principal attraction has been its capacity to convey an ineffable elegance despite the crudeness of the native media. Regarding primitive art, Henry Moore has said:

Primitive art . . . makes a straightforward statement, its primary concern is with the elemental, and its simplicity comes from direct and strong feeling . . . It is art

¹Georgia O'Keefe, Georgia Okeefe. A Studio Book. (New York: The Viking Press, 1976).

before it got smothered in trimmings and surface decorations, before inspiration had flagged into technical tricks and intellectual conceits.¹

The startling and primitive colors of African cultural artifacts have also influenced me. The intense blues, oranges, and yellows frequently used in African tribal clothing and jewelry have helped me expand my hue selection.

The repetition of images and designs is a common motif in both African and American Indian art. The repetition of design elements throughout a work provides an internal dynamic to any work of art. In my work, I have achieved this primitive effect through repetitive stitching, wrapping, knotting, or by using a material such as nails in a repetitive manner. Unifying the primitive design elements with brilliant colors lends my work an elemental and visually unified image that presents a simple visual statement.

Eva Hesse, the painter and sculptor, has influenced me both artistically and philosophically. Her struggle to find the correct medium for her imagery is very similar to my own experience. She experimented a great deal in her early years taking artistic risks in both her painting and, more successfully, in her sculpture. Eva Hesse stated that she hoped, "to achieve a free, spontaneous painting delineating a powerful, strong, structural image."²

¹Oto Bijalji-Merin, Great Masks. (New York; Henry N Abrams, 1970), p. 78.

²Ibid., p. 43.

Her method of creation is appealing to me because of its dependence on the immediate creative emotion. For Hesse, creating art was by no means a programmed or static process:

Making art 'painting as painting' the art, the history, the tradition is too much there. I want to be surprised, to find something new. I don't want to know the answer before but want an answer that will surprise.¹

Her artistic intuition was important to her: for her art was spontaneous, and derived from the present. This philosophy of artistic creation has been useful because it encourages experimentation. Hesse has noted:

At times I've thought the more thought the greater the Art, but I do have to admit there is a lot that I'll just as well let happen . . . If I really believe in me, trust me to let some things happen without any calculated plan, let it come.²

My work has been influenced by Abstract Expressionism. The spontaneity of the works of William Dekooning, Alexander Lieberman, Jim Dine, Robert Motherwell and Helen Frankenthaler has greatly influenced my approach to art, encouraging me to allow my impulses to define the limits of a work. In addition to the expression of the moment, the Abstract Expressionist were constantly concerned with refining their medium and improving their techniques. For them, each painting was an experiment in creativity. The combination of technical ability with a belief in portraying the emotion of the moment is fundamental to my esthetic approach.

¹Lucy Lippard, Eva Hesse. (New York; New York University Press, 1976), p. 29.

²Ibid., p. 192.

Two contemporary artists, Alexander Lieberman and Jim Dine, have also been influential, especially concerning my style and my esthetic. Alexander Lieberman, like Eva Hesse, is an artist who has worked as both a painter and a sculptor. His use of color to accentuate form and unify the dynamic of a piece has taught me to recognize the dynamic that exists between form and color. Lieberman's esthetic influence has been very positive. Lieberman maintains that an art work should not be shrouded in mystery nor should it be produced to reveal technical prowess. Art is communication, and the responsibility of the artist is to communicate directly from the spirit. He states:

I believe the artist has a mission. The artist has to do what he has faith in, if it has real quality -- if it touches some inner spring, if it communicates -- that is success. Communication is the purpose of art.¹

Jim Dine's use of unusual material in his paintings has encouraged me to be more daring in my selection of compositional elements for my visual art pieces. He combines unusual materials to produce a very specific visual effect. My use of nails in my thesis work does not accentuate their "nailness," their everyday purpose; rather, I am seeking to accentuate the dynamism of their repeated shapes. Essentially, a nail becomes a medium which can convey a visual message just as acrylic or clay or felt convey an image. Jim Dine's painting, "Blue Clamp" is an example of this combination of disparate elements to convey a message. He notes:

¹Barbara Rose, Alexander Lieberman. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1981), p.16.

This was the first time I had used a real tool for a long, long time. I chose it not because it was a clamp, but because it was a beautiful piece of blue, an industrial blue. It is a distraught painting that has to do with my landscape. I can't ever dictate what people will read into my work, but to say 'the heart is being clamped by the blue clamp' is not right. All it really meant was putting a blue piece there that wasn't of paint. It didn't have any more intention than a stroke of paint except that it was another object--simply a piece of cast iron dipped in industrial paint and that's all.¹

Dine's combination of different elements broadens the creative role of the artist. We are taking these objects from reality and we are placing them in a transcendent role where they assume a different, and, at times, startling identity that can be beautiful. We are actively transforming the common into the exquisite.

The two fiber artists who have most influenced me have been Magdalena Abakanowicz and Dominic DiMare. Abkanowicz utilizes repetitive elements to convey her message. She combines multiples of the same shape to add impact to her work. The result is visually simple, but stylistically as complex as the patterns found in nature.

Dominic DiMare's constructions are intriguing because they convey a spiritual sense through his ability to combine his elements in a very fluid manner. He uses natural materials such as felt, wood, and horsehair. And it is customary for him to alter these materials with paint and other surface treatments.

To conclude: I have been most influenced by artists who are willing to experiment and take risks to communicate their message.

¹Graham W.J. Beal, Jim Dine: Five themes. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985). P. 108

Artists whose esthetics are based on conveying the emotion of the present have had a profound influence on me. And I have been given positive direction by artists who employ a wide range of materials to convey their visual idea, and who depend on repetitive forms to communicate their unique message. But more important than the esthetic and technical influence of both the primitive and modern artists has been the insight that these artists have given me concerning the creative process. The artist's role is not to mirror reality, but to create a new perception of that reality -- to offer the viewer a new reality never before seen and thus, to beneficially enhance the viewer's life by broadening his or her perception of the world.

PART THREE

Techniques

Felt has been my principal artistic medium for over five years. My fascination with felt is not only due to its tactile nature and its dimensionality, but primarily because it is a medium that provides an infinite possibility for experimentation with color. Felt has not received the attention that it should be accorded by artists, who may be discouraged by the painstaking processes required by the medium. In this section I will discuss the techniques of felting, concentrating principally on the dyeing process.

It is important for the felt artist to work with the raw fleece to learn the process that creates felt. The extensive scouring of the fleece to remove the dung, urine and dirt is a lesson in patience. To avoid frustration, the felt artist should buy roving (fleece that has been pre-cleaned and carded) from a shop specializing in fibers. Felting is an inexpensive medium: roving runs about \$2.95 per pound.

In my thesis work I used two types of dye -- Benzyl and Cushing. They have distinct characteristics and deserve special attention because of their importance to the medium.

Cushing dyes are very common and may be purchased in most fiber shops and art stores. The common complaint with Cushing dyes is that they are not colorfast; however, I have not noticed any fading in the works that I have created over the past six years. Cushing dyes are more expensive than other types of dye because they contain chemicals that facilitate dye retention in almost any fiber. This means that when one uses Cushing dyes on wool, the

chemicals that would facilitate dye retention in cotton, silk, or synthetic fabrics lay dormant. Thus, every time a material is dyed a minute part of the dye is wasted.

Benzyl dye is an acid dye. It is effective only on silk and wool. Benzyl dyes have fascinated me because of the deep hues one can achieve with them. In order to understand the dye, I compiled a notebook in which small squares of silk and wool fabrics, fleece and wool yarn were dyed in carefully measured proportions. The notebook contains gradations in intensity of eight basic colors, and also contains combinations of those colors in different precise combinations. These samples were organized in plastic slide mounts according to color and shade. The notebook was intended as a technical aid to which I could refer whenever a specific color was required. Because of my extensive familiarity with this dye, I very seldom use this notebook and prefer to respect the experience of my sight and my artistic intuition.

Benzyl dyes are ideal for attaining very dark hues, especially dark shades of blue or black. Black is an especially difficult color to produce when dyeing white fleece. It has been my experience that the black is best achieved by dyeing the fleece a dark brown or blue using Benzyl dyes. After it dries, overdyeing with black benzyl will result in a very deep, blue-grey hue that is quite beautiful. Another technique which has been effective has been dyeing a natural dark brown fleece with a black Benzyl dye.

Once the fleece has been dyed, the felting process begins. The total process for one piece can consume up to four days, most of

which is drying time. The process entails four basic steps: the carding, the layering of batts, the soaking of the batts, and, finally, the manipulation of the felt after it has dried. While each step in the process is fascinating, I will focus on the carding of the fleece and the manipulation of the batts, because these steps require the most artistic input. It should be noted that the steps in which the felt is produced is important, but felt production is more of a mechanical than an artistic process.

Carding is the simple process of combing out the wool from the fleece using a hand driven carding machine (See diagram 7). The fleece is evenly distributed on the tray of the machine and the crank is turned slowly pulling the fleece onto the teeth of the small drum. A thick layer of fleece, called a "batt," is produced. It is necessary to have the fleece in batt form in order to achieve a consistent piece of felt that is strong enough to withstand manipulation.

The carding process enables the artist to mix colors and to create a batt that is multi-hued. This is a very exciting step for the artist because it allows him or her to work with as many as four colors carding them together into the fleece to attain a very attractive blends of colors and gradations of hues. At this step, the felt artisan can experiment by combining two different colors of fleece by carding and recarding them together. The visual effect can be striking.

The next step in the felting process involves arranging and layering the batts of fleece. The method I have developed is to use

a large matchstick window blind to hold the fleece in place during the felting process. The four- by eight-foot blind is laid on an open spot with good drainage, then the batts are laid out side by side, all facing in the same direction and almost overlapping to create the first layer of felt. The piece of felt is laid out some twenty per cent larger than the finished size to allow for shrinkage.

After the first layer is arranged, the next layer of batts is placed on top of it, with the fibers facing in the opposite direction. This insures a strong bond between the layers and, consequently, stronger felt. This process continues until the desired thickness of batts is reached. In my work this thickness usually ranges from four to eight layers. In the finished work, only the top and bottom two layer show, except along the edges, thus it is important to arrange the batts to achieve the desired look in the final presentation.

After the layers of batts have been arranged, the felt must be sprayed gradually with water to wet it down. As the fleece is sprayed from a watering can, the weight gradually begins to flatten the layers. Then soap is applied, usually a mild liquid soap such as Woolite, Synthropol, or Ivory Liquid. Then the remainder of the blind is folded over the felt or another piece of material is placed over it. Then the felt is flattened by stomping on it. After a few minutes of light stomping, the felt is watered again, this time with very hot water. This shocks the wool and speeds up the felting process. The felt is stomped until it is saturated with water and soap suds are being created.

After approximately a half-hour of this, the felt is thoroughly saturated. At this point, the water is partially removed by rolling up the blind on which the felt is spread out into log form and squeezing very hard. After a few minutes, the felt is unrolled, checked for problems -- such as holes, thin spots, or distortions -- and the wetting process begins again. Problems can often be repaired at this point.

The wetting and rolling process continues. During the process, the felt is checked for bonding by moving felted matter between the fingers. If the fibers still move slightly, they are continuing to bond and the process should continue. When the fiber is about half felted, the material can be turned around on the blind so that when rolled the fibers are running opposite to their original direction.

The time required for the felting process depends on the size of the piece. The work is physically demanding, and on larger pieces is often spread out over two or three days. The material is completely felted when it no longer moves when rubbed between two fingers. Then the piece is hung on a drying rack or over a table to dry. When the felt is completely dry, the shrinkage is evident. At this time, the felt can be thoroughly inspected.

Once the felt has dried, the final process of manipulation is at hand. This process brings out the painter in the felt artist. The medium of felt is very full-bodied and bears no resemblance to the commercial felt with which we are all familiar. At this point it is a multi-dimensional medium which can assume many shapes, and reveal various layers of color and texture. By carving into the felt,

especially along the edges, the artist can produce striking contrasts in color. Some of the visual effects that can be created at this point may not have been intended when the batts were laid out. It is this unpredictability of felt that infatuates me. An artist who follows a pre-determined, carefully defined method will be driven to distraction by the medium of felt. My infatuation with the medium is based on the surprise element. To react creatively to unpredictable conditions is part of the challenge of an artist and an essential requirement for the artist who works with felt.

PART FOUR

Thesis Work

The four felt constructions that comprise my thesis work were created to satisfy a desire to embellish the medium with an unrelated material that would convey a unique visual experience. This method, which is called "juxtaposition," allows the artist to insert items from the environment into a new visual context. I chose to use a very common item, nails, as my new visual element.

Nails have always fascinated me. I enjoy the way that they are displayed in hardware stores, stressing their multiplicity. The challenge of combining two dissimilar elements, felt and nails, to establish a unified artistic presentation was exciting. The nails also provided me with a substance that could be painted in such a way as to provide a new visual dynamic to my felt constructions.

SKY

The first piece of the series is called "Sky."¹ I have always been inspired by the colors of the sky during different times of the day, and I was excited by the notion of depicting that beauty with the materials I had chosen to work with: paint, nails, and felt.

The technical process of felting is closely intertwined with the creative process of which these pieces are a result, and it deserves discussion here. The concept underlying "Sky" is the placement of the felt over a design composed of nails. The nails were to be nailed into a square piece of plywood two feet, eight inches square.

¹Photographs of these works are displayed by title at the end of this document.

The first step was creating the felt. For this work a thick piece of felt was constructed which was dyed a deep blue-gray using a Benzyl black dye. The color gradation for the piece is subtle; a blue-gray hue on the left side becoming dark blue-black on the right.

Next, I drew a half-inch grid over the board and began drilling holes into each of the squares of the grid. The three thousand nine hundred and sixty-nine 1 1/2" common nails used in the piece were then carefully hammered into place. The sense of construction during this step was very satisfying. Technically, my concern was the danger of the plywood splitting. The weight of the finished construction was great, but the plywood remained intact.

The nails were then painted with a primer. A major element in my concept was to paint the nails in such a way that their color gradient changed as the viewer moved by the piece. The color gradation is from gray to black moving from the top of the piece to the bottom. The gradation of the colors moving from left to right moves from an intense purple to a royal blue. Oil paint mixed with linseed oil was applied using a thick and painterly application. The painting of the nails demanded a great deal of control and proceeded at a slow but very satisfying rate.

After four days, before the paint was set, I returned to the piece and created the pastel hues which I hoped to capture. This was done by painting the left side of the nails with white paint using a small brush. The brush would then pick up some of the color from the semi-dry paint on the other side of the nail resulting in soft pastel colors. The paint was allowed to dry thoroughly.

The final step was crucial to the creative concept. In retrospect, it is amazing that the next step worked as well as it did. This step required that the felt material be carefully stuck onto the projecting nails without damaging the fabric or marring the painted design. This was done by pushing each nail through the fabric by hand, starting at one corner and working diagonally across the piece. This step consumed several days and resulted in a great deal of pain in my hands and fingers because of the significant pressure I needed to apply on the sharp nails.

"Sky" was a successful work because it communicated the intended visual message. The impact of the multi-hued rows of nails painted in the soft pastels inspired by the sky was strengthened by the incongruous soft, bristly texture of the projecting, sharp nails. The nails were more than nails; they had become a medium that was visually expressive.

WHEATFIELDS

In the piece entitled "Wheatfields," my intention was to portray a landscape based on the red-russet colors that are common in the wheat fields of rural Monroe County. The color is most intense during the month of August when the crop is nearing harvest.

This piece was the least satisfying artistically because the coloration that I hoped to achieve eluded me. However, it was an important piece in terms of technique. For instance, instead of applying the felt onto the nails, I reversed the process and hammered the nails through the felt. The piece of felt was also

less bulky and easier to manipulate. The felt layers were multi-colored containing an orange hue in the center layer; this added an additional dynamic to the piece. To communicate a sense of dimension to the piece, I used different size nails carefully arranged in a pattern across the piece.

SNOWFIELDS

The third piece, entitled "Snowfields," was started in December. This is the most successful of the landscapes because it depicts a skyline, an horizon line, and a foreground. Light blues and purples, yellows and pinks, were used in this piece to convey the pastel colors of the setting sun on a field of snow.

Several different elements of construction can be seen in this work. The felt material is very thick and white. The bottom third of the piece is braided with a thin purple wire. Concrete nails were used because of their distinctive triangular shape. The paint was custom mixed, and it was applied to the concrete nails using a small compressed air paint sprayer. This method of paint application provides the same dot-like texture as an air brush. The most important compositional element in this piece is the banana fiber, which was interwoven along the border of the concrete nails and the jutting wire. It softens the design and delineates the form of the piece.

MASAI DANCERS

The final piece in this series is entitled "Masai Dancers." This work was inspired by colors used in African Folk Art. The

contrast between the brown-black of the dancers' skin and the bright colors of their garments and jewelry has always visually excited me. Isak Dinesen described this feeling well in Out of Africa:

Up at Meru I saw a young Native girl with a bracelet on, a leather strap two inches wide, and embroidered all over with very small turquoise-coloured beads which varied a little in colour and played in green, light blue, and ultramarine. It was an extraordinary live thing; it seemed to draw breath on her arm, so that I wanted it for myself, and made Farah buy it from her. No sooner had it come upon my own arm than it gave up the ghost. It was nothing now, a small, cheap, purchased article of finery. It had been the play of colours, the duet between the turquoise and the 'negre,' -- that quick, sweet brownish black, like peat and black pottery, of the Native's skin, that had created the life of the bracelet."¹

"Masai Dancers" is an attempt to experiment with this color phenomenon.

To achieve this a deep, dark brown-black Benzyl dye was used in the production of the felt material. This color was achieved by over dyeing the complementary colors of red over green. And I then over dyed some of the brown with Benzyl black. During the batting process I had inserted an intense purple fleece which highlights the border of the piece. Additionally, flecks of purple can be seen in the top layer, creating an additional visual effect.

For this piece, the nails were inserted at different angles, some leaning to the left and others to the right. Once the nails were driven into the plywood, they were painted with a high gloss oil. The colors used for this piece were very intense greens, a

¹Isak Dinesen, Out of Africa. (New York: Random House, Inc., 1937), p.257.

turquoise, a royal blue and a crisp purple. The nailheads were painted thickly with a glossy black.

To add another visual element to this piece pine, needles were inserted into the felt material. The pine needles had been painted a glossy black which contrasted well against the flat colors of the felt material. This piece satisfied my visual concept. It exhibits the change in the color gradient of the nails very effectively. It also satisfied my artistic desire to explore the color relationships using brown as a background base for more dynamic hues.

In conclusion, my development through the fabrication of these four works has been both artistically and personally satisfying. Each piece posed new problems, demanding unique artistic solutions. Each piece became more satisfying because my ability to communicate my visual message in the medium was becoming further developed.

The medium of felt offers an infinite number of possibilities to the creative visual artist. Once the technique is conquered beauty is only a felt batt away.

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Diagram 1



Diagram 2

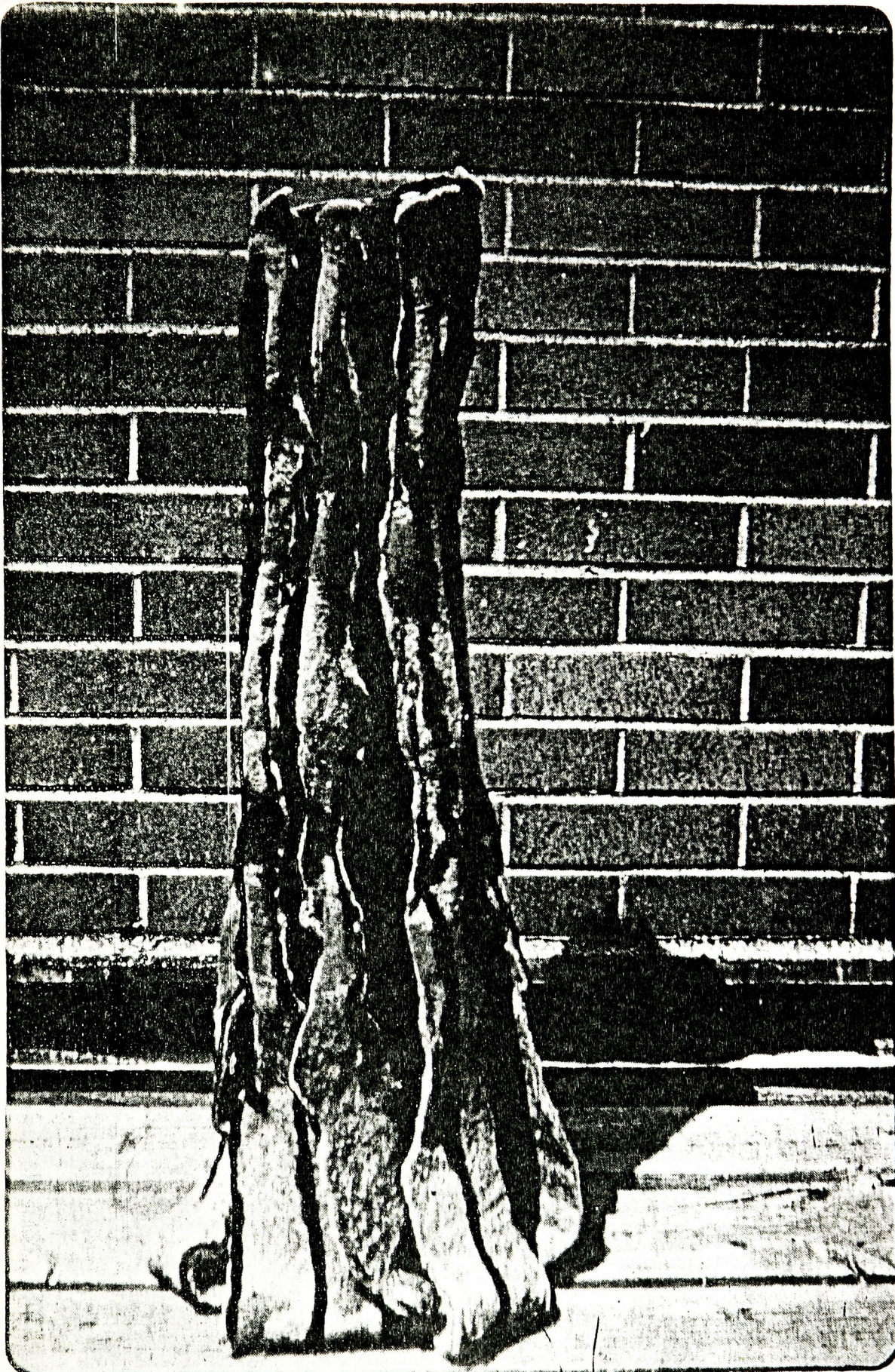


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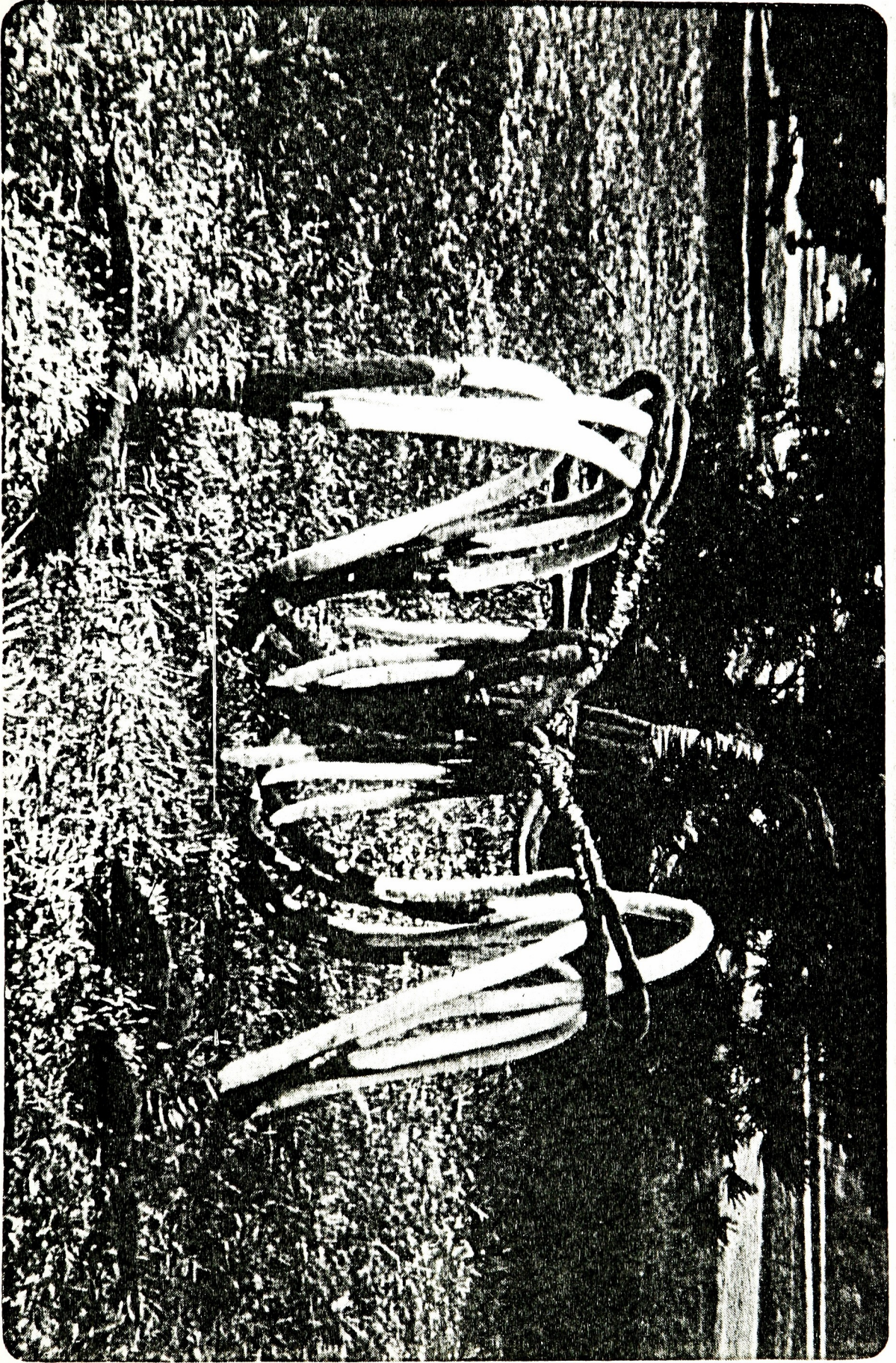


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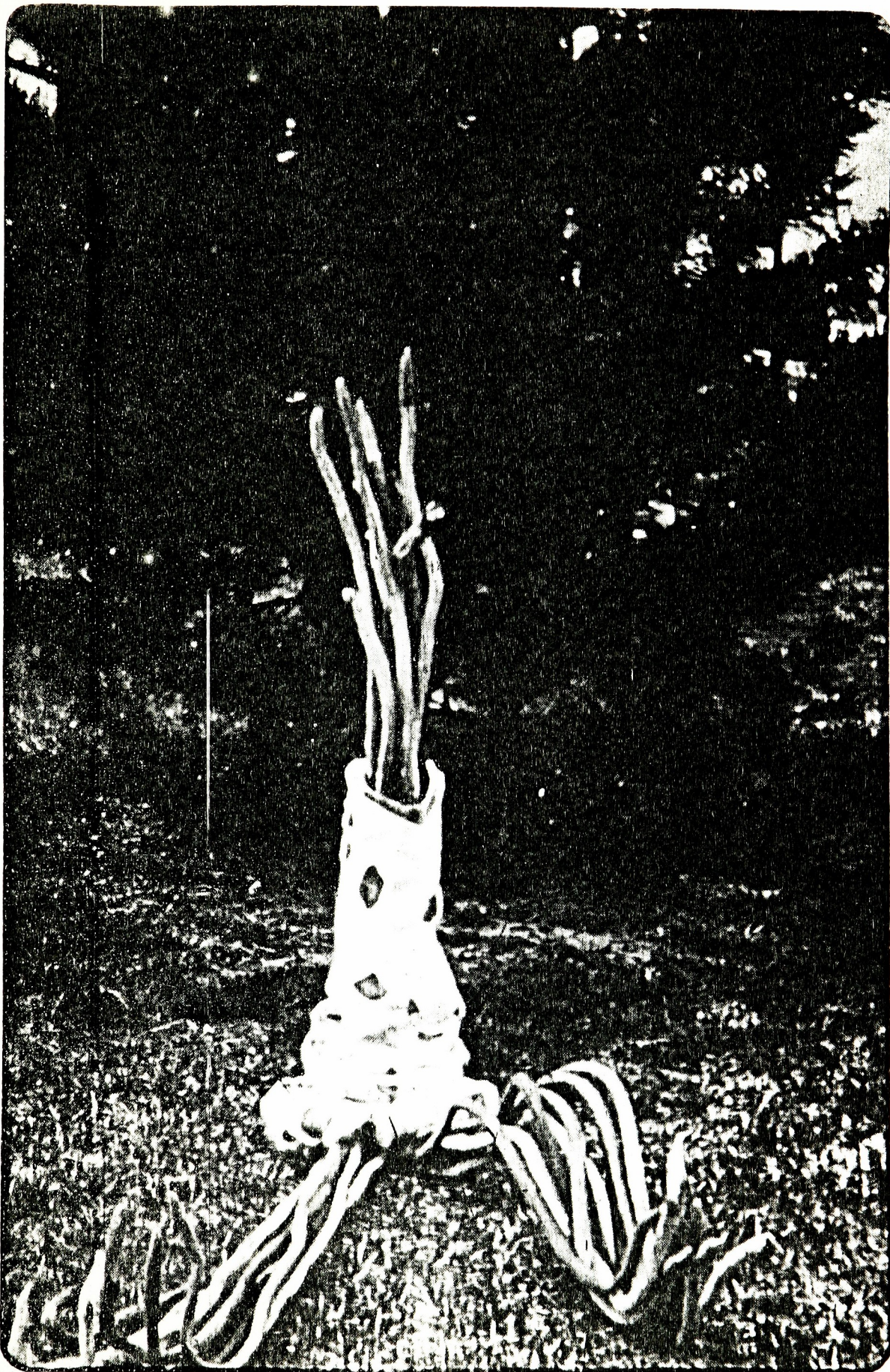


Diagram 6

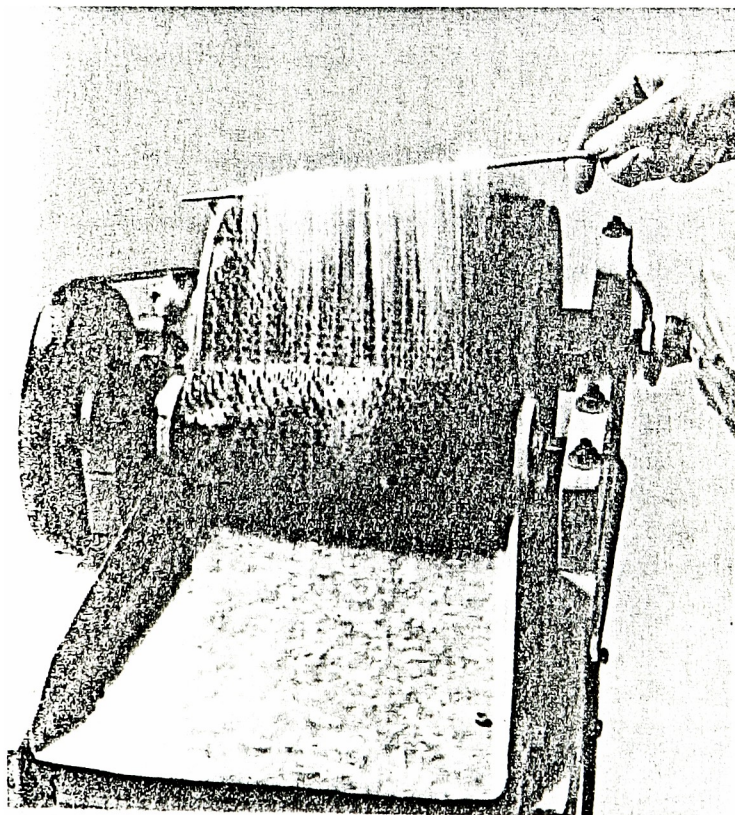
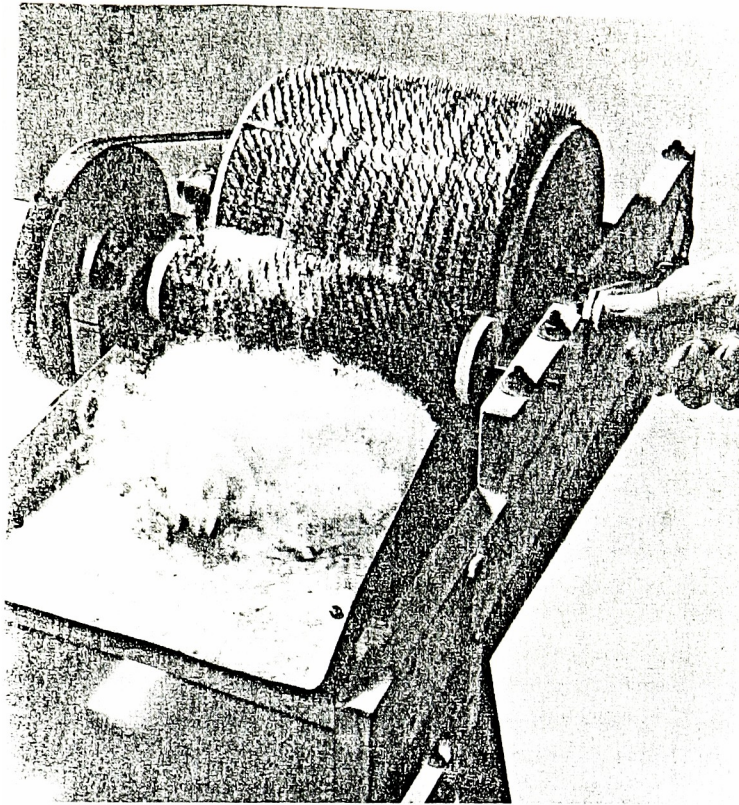
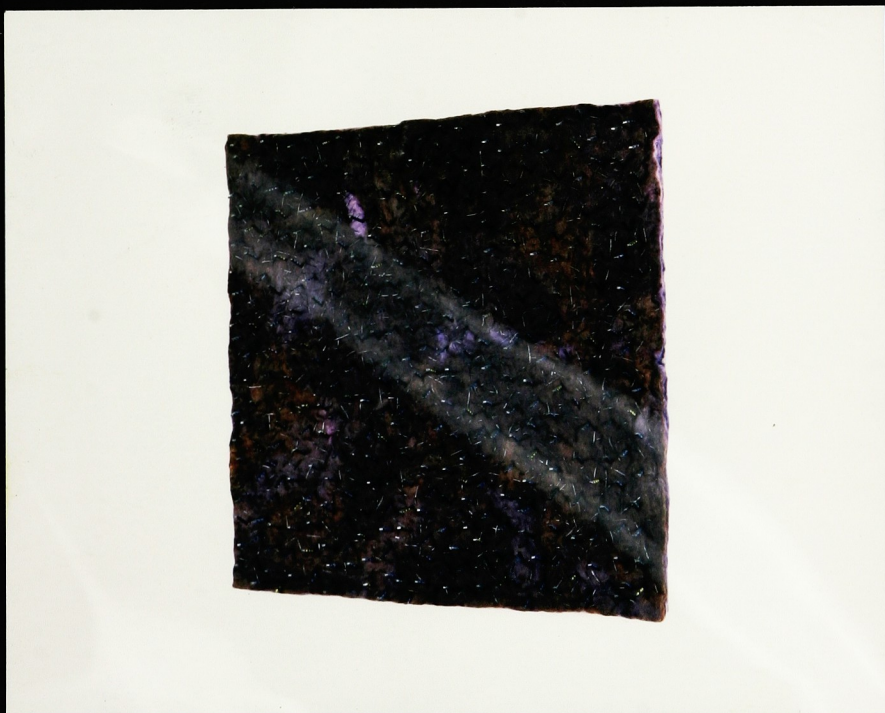


Diagram 7



Snow Fields



Masai Dancers