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HAWKINS, REBECCA HUMPHREY. Figure Fragmentation
Directed by: Mr. Andrew Martin. Pp. 3

The thesis composed of 14 paintings was on exhibit in the Weather-
spoon Gallery of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro from May
2-9, 1971.

The paintings were done on gessoed paper or canvas with acrylic
and oil paint.

Accompanying the thesis work was a short statement about the work.
On file in the Jackson Library of The University of North Carolina at
Greensboro are 35mm color slides of the thesis.

FIGURE FRAGMENTATION

by

Rebecca Humphrey Hawkins

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro
1971

Approved by

Andrew Martin
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis Adviser Andrew Martin

Oral Examination
Committee Members Gilbert L. Casper

Andrew Martin

Stephen N. Dennis

Joan Gregory

May 7, 1971
Date of Examination

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Andrew Martin, Mr. Gilbert Carpenter, Mr. Walter Barker, Mr. Peter Agostini, and Dr. Joan Gregory, members of the Art Department, and Mr. Stephen Dennis of the English Department, for their opinions and assistance.

CATALOGUE

<u>Title</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Size</u>
Untitled I	Oil	16" x 16"
Untitled II	Oil	8" x 10"
Untitled III	Acrylic and oil	11" x 19"
Untitled IV	Oil	6" x 8"
Untitled V	Acrylic and oil	48" x 60"
Untitled VI	Acrylic and oil	12" x 16"
Untitled VII	Acrylic and oil	12" x 16"
Untitled VIII	Acrylic and oil	12" x 16"
Untitled IX	Oil	12" x 16"
Untitled X	Oil	9" x 13"
Untitled XI	Oil	10" x 13"
Untitled XII	Oil	10" x 12"
Untitled XIII	Acrylic	12" x 16"
Untitled XIV	Acrylic and oil	9" x 12"

The thesis consists of fourteen paintings exhibited May 2 through May 9, 1971 in Weatherspoon Gallery. The thesis paintings are part of an evolution that started seven years ago with an interest in drawing figures. Unlike the thesis paintings, the entire surfaces of the paintings were covered with thin, vivid colors and much linear detail. Overlapping stains of bright acrylic color were used on raw or sized canvas usually approximately 36" x 40" in size to depict figure groups in more crowded compositions than in the thesis paintings.

Cubist and Futurist works by artists such as Robert Delaunay, Marcel Duchamp, and Pablo Picasso have affected the fracturing of the image and use of movement patterns in the thesis works. The repeat element and interest in multiples in several of the paintings has coincided with much looking at and drawing from Eadweard Muybridge's The Human Figure in Motion¹ and other chronographs popular at the time of Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase." The ancient Greek kore and kouros stance has appealed to me as a pose because of its verticality and frontality. An attempt has been made to contradict this contained, rigid stance by a rhythmic treatment in the two forward advancing figure paintings in the thesis show.

The thesis paintings were done for the most part alla prima. Most of the paintings were done from a live model. In addition magazine and newspaper photographs, photographs of myself and friends, and from the

¹ Muybridge, Eadweard. The Human Figure in Motion, Dover Publications (New York, 1955).

Eadweard Muybridge book mentioned above have been used. I have worked on many drawings from the nude model simultaneously with the paintings. However, I do not draw or paint people as they appear in nature or in photographs. I used the same pose of the model and the same photographs many times.

Gessoed drawing paper or smooth cotton duck canvas was used as the painting surface. Resistance from the tooth or texture of a painting surface was felt to be undesirable in the rapid brush stroke method of painting used, therefore the gessoed paper seemed particularly appropriate. Acrylic paint was often used to start the paintings because it dries quickly. Oil paint was used to further develop and finish the paintings since the particles of pigment in the oil paint are closer together than in the acrylic suspension thus providing a greater richness and an opaqueness of color desirable in my improvisational style. Flat brushes rather than round or pointed ones were used for their inherent quality of brush stroke.

Except for one painting, the format of the thesis series of paintings is small. I reduced the format of my earlier work to gain more immediacy and directness in the work within a size that I could personally control.

The white of the gessoed painting surface is often left around and through the figure to state a preference for compositional openness. The white is left as a contrast to the multiple color areas. My paintings that immediately preceded the thesis series often included an actual rectangular, stained, neutral border around the edge of the painting to self-frame the work. The color is basically used subjectively rather than from nature.

The image of the figure is broken down and fragmented by the exaggerated directional strokes based on shifts and structural contrasts over and across the surface of the figure and its adjacent space. The color strokes and color areas are prompted by body structure as viewed in the pose being studied. Some directional patterns seen are emphasized; others are left out. The stroking often depends on hyperbole. The distortions of the human form are for structural needs of the composition and for movement patterns.

The awareness that the painting is a flat surface is ever present. The paintings are concerned with a rather shallow space. The figure is pushed up close in the foreground; indications of a natural, particular setting are minimized. There is an emphasis on horizontal movements and swinging brush strokes across a basically vertical present. Intensity, value, size and shape of color areas as well as length, color, width, and degree of curve or complication of direction of line, either with or against the trend of movement, are important factors I have worked with in the paintings to develop the rhythmic patterns of figure fused with the remaining space to the edges of the painting surface.

My concern for the figure is primarily a formal one growing out of the problems of painting itself. The thesis paintings have no interest in illustrating stories or fantasies.