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HARRY KELLS JENKINS

JENKINS, HARRY KELLS. Housescapes. (1969) Directed by:
Mr. Walter Barker. pp. 4

The thesis shows the development of an idea; the reduction of subject matter (the house image) to its essential geometric forms.

The thesis, consisting of five paintings, was exhibited in the Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University of North Carolina at Greensboro during January, 1969.

35mm color slides representing the exhibit are on file at the University of North Carolina Library in Greensboro.

HOUSESCAPES

by

Harry Kells Jenkins

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
January, 1969

Approved by

Walter Barker
Thesis Director

APPROVAL SHEET

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

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January 17, 1969
Date of Examination

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CATALOGUE

	Media	Date	Size in Inches
1.	Acrylic	1967	56½ x 56½
2.	Acrylic and Bronze Powders	1968	61 x 61 shaped
3.	Acrylic and Bronze Powders	1968	60½ x 60½ shaped
4.	Acrylic and Bronze Powder	1968	67 x 91 pieced
5.	Acrylic and Bronze Powder	1968	62 x 45 @ (two)

The works in this thesis are untitled. All were painted on canvas stretched over wood. Dimensions of the individual pieces are indicated with height followed by width.

The house image in my paintings grew from a synthesis of two directions pursued in my earlier work. The first direction was a concern for the traditional landscape and the second, the use of abstract/representational forms. The synthesizing of directions began in the early months of 1967.

The house was chosen for subject matter, not only because of my latent architectural interest but at the time the city of Greensboro instituted a city beautification program. This program called for the widening of streets and eventual demolition of some older and quite picturesque houses. I wanted to capture these houses on canvas. This was a most romantic notion, perhaps the last since the series began. I called these paintings a series because the original idea proposed a set of four house paintings, to be viewed together. The primary intention was the reduction of the house image, through gradual elimination of the traditional details associated with the house (eg. windows, doors, building materials, etc.), to its simplest form yet still retain the image.

After the completion of the first two paintings I realized the importance of the individual geometric forms. The further subject matter was reduced, the more complicated the forms' relationship to each other became. It became increasingly important that each form work in its

relationship to the other forms combined in the painting. Color also played an important part. The series had begun with a subtle, unobtrusive color (green), the third painting initiated a change. The cool gray-pink created an impersonal atmosphere, one which made the house image difficult to identify with.

It was between the second and third paintings I decided that through the use of the house image various experimental problems in paint, color, shapes, and techniques could be solved over an extended period, exhausting as many possibilities as the house image would allow. The canvas stretchers were of 2" x 2" kiln dried fir with either 3/4" or 1 1/16" fir quarter round. All corners were mitered. An emphasis was placed on craftsmanship. The painted surface was created by various techniques. Small areas were painted with a brush while the larger areas were covered with a roller, at times an electric sprayer was used. I must point out that flat, even coverage of the painted surface was a necessary part of my work. All the canvas areas received at least two coats of a gesso mixture which often was a highly polymerized latex house paint. Placement and final recognition of the house image was accomplished through the use of masking tape placed on the canvas to provide a sharp straight edge when painted. In most cases the results were excellent. All of the house paintings, with the exception of four of

the five thesis pieces, were painted with a matte LIQUITEX acrylic emulsion paint. The four thesis paintings (#2, 3, 4, and 5 in the catalogue) were painted with a combination of U.S. BRONZE POWDERS and acrylic mediums, there was no paint pigment used other than that of the metallic powders.

All my paintings were what might be termed "minimal" or "hard edge". There were no curved lines in the house paintings and all were painted to be viewed in a 180° semi-circle. This was accomplished by projecting the painting from the wall, as little as two inches and as much as five, and carrying the painted surface around the four sides of the painting. Perspective was used as a device or vehicle to aid in the juxtaposition of geometric forms, enabling the art object to be read as a house image. The type of perspective used was not a logical comprehensive perspective system, but rather an arbitrary mixture of systems plus the use of reverse perspective. Most of the paintings were designed to work within the square format, either a square canvas surface or the square representing the negative space, as in the last four thesis paintings.

The last four thesis paintings are the culmination of a thought process pertaining to the house image. All are shaped canvases. Two contain more than one unit, one contains six separate units bolted together. All are painted with U.S. BRONZE POWDERS and a blend of matte and gloss mediums. Only three of these four thesis pieces visually

retain the house image. The final thesis painting (#5 in the catalogue) no longer draws a dependence upon the visual house image.