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O'NEAL, EUGENE. The Use of Eyes and Objects to Express A Personal  
Theory of Art. (1973)  
Directed by: Mr. Walter Barker. Pp. 2.

This thesis of twelve pastel drawings done on charcoal paper  
was on exhibit in the Weatherspoon Gallery of the University of  
North Carolina at Greensboro from April 22 to May 7, 1973.

A 35mm color slide of each drawing on exhibit is on file at  
the Jackson Library of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

THE USE OF EYES AND OBJECTS TO EXPRESS

A PERSONAL THEORY OF ART

by

Eugene O'Neal

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  
May, 1973

Approved by

Walter Barker  
Thesis Advisor

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 18, 1973  
Date of Examination

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I have witnessed man's failure to set limitations to his existence. For example, he fails to see obstacles, that might harm him. It also seems that he has no strong need to focus his attention on this problem or seek a solution. He looks around in the world, full of life, motion, and ceaseless progress, and feels in himself all the vigor and spirit to keep pace with it. Yet he does not foresee in any of the present conditions, how he is destroying himself. This thesis of pastel drawings depicts the results his reality has created, as it appears to me. Suicide, despair, and isolation are three of many of the results I see.

Inspiration to create my art comes from the comprehension of this tragedy and my experiences of the unawareness of self-destruction. My goal is to show its substance, color, and form. Through plastic movement, form and color, reveal its truth and disclose its inspiring secret.

Having always been fascinated by the iris and pupil of the eye, because of their mysteries and superstitious powers, I chose to combine them with single objects. These objects carry with them personalized symbolic meaning. For example, each tragedy was characterized by some important attribute which has personal meaning to me. The visual comprehension of the objects I represented is not connected with the understanding of the surrounding space. For me, each object was confined to its own space and generated its own spacial conditions. My intention was to create the illusion of a deep space. This was my way of representing reality.

In conveying the mood of the pictures, color was an important aspect. After using many mediums such as acrylics and oils, pastels presented me with the effect that I wanted. First, I used a smooth surface paper, but I was not satisfied with the results. Experimenting with other paper having various surfaces, I concluded that the best results came from charcoal paper. The textural surface of the paper combined with the soft color of the pastels emphasized the best dramatic contrast.

I applied the pastels to the surface of the paper with short horizontal strokes. After the application of the pastels I used my right index finger and rubbed each color into the other, always rubbing horizontally. To get the right mood for the picture, I then rubbed the whole surface vertically, until I obtained the desired effect.

Size presented one little problem, but after working on various scales I achieved the best results from a size of 17" x 23".

I am especially drawn to the works of William T. Wiley. His works, as far as symbolic connotation have a striking relationship to my own work. His attitudes about art and the processes of making and accepting art and art ideas are very inspiring.