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MYTHS: PERCEIVING AND ORDERING

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WITHIN HIGH-INTENSITY

PHENOMENA

by

Michael Poole

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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
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Approved by

Walter Barber

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.

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Date of Examination

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CATALOGUE

<u>Title</u>	<u>Media</u>	<u>Dimensions</u>
1. Sinai	Wood, canvas, incandescent bulbs, mirrors	8' X 4' X 28 3/4"
2. Eden	Canvas, wood, plaster	48" X 48"
3. Gilgamesh	Canvas, wood, acrylics	48" X 48"
4. Dev	Canvas, wood, incandescent bulbs	48" X 48"
5. Ammon	Canvas, wood, plaster, incandescent bulb	48" X 48"
6. Hammurabi	Canvas, wood, plaster, acrylics	16" X 16" X 48"
7. Om	Canvas, wood, acrylics	48" X 48"
8. Gisa	Canvas, wood, acrylics	48" X 48"
9. Carmel	Canvas, wood, plaster, foam rubber, heating element	48" X 48" X 48"

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I remember once as a child coloring a nativity scene. My sister questioned why I had added a figure above the others. I answered only that it was God. She said there was no need to put Him in because He was understood to be there already. I explained that I needed to put Him in and so I did.

Art, like language, is a primary means of philosophy. Philosophy is a system of ordering. Language and art are measurable means for ordering. The method of ordering with language is mostly conscious and analytical; with art it is mostly primary, unconscious and non-analytical. A word, a sentence is like a line, a painting.

A gesture is a myth; a merging of the measurable and the unmeasurable at one point in time and space. Most needs stem from doubts. Doubts allow imagination to conceive other myths, other means of ordering.

Why's are like nature: both are unmeasurable because of their transcendence. What's are measuring tools that allow myths. Why's need to be unconscious, primary; what's need to be conscious and analytical.

The shaman is the mutation of his tribe. For some why's he developed uniquely--physically or psychologically--acquiring different means of perceiving and thereby means of ordering. Not having the comfort of the normal means of perceiving and ordering, he was forced to find an order in his own seemingly chaotic psyche. He became philosopher, theologian, artist--the myth-maker of his tribe. Finding better ways of looking at the tribe's world, better myths, better pots, he realized the primary nature of his concerns, the need for all in his ordering, the use of all as measurable means of ordering the unmeasurable.

Wallace Stevens describes a bare, gray jar on a hill. He sees the jar as a point of perfect order in the midst of the "slovenly" nature of the hill and all that surrounds it. For an ordered object, a subject is necessary. This myth of merging subject and object--a jar, a man--is a believable one, coming from a need to merge.

This exhibition deals with ordering of subject and object within environmental or perceptual limits of high-intensities. The objects make use of canvas itself as a found gesture of order possessing limits of high tonality. Wood, paint, plaster were used in relation to the canvas: wood as support, paint as chemical allowing canvas to reveal better its own colors and textures. Plaster was used to create a relief effect which works also as a reflector of light revealing the spectrum of colors contained within the canvas.

The cast, heated piece deals with the tactual dimension, especially in ambiguities of temperature and softness or hardness. It is placed atop a cube at hand level to encourage touching. The three small paintings on stands work visually as well as tactually.

The use of heat as energy led to the use of incandescent light as heated and visual elements. They are controlled, ordered, measured forms merged with seemingly infinite random light and form variables. The mirrors reflect actively, continuously, the unmeasurable effects added by the environment.

Aurally, the electronic music adds to the effect of the visual-tactual high intensity created in all the works by high tone pigment and raw, intense lights, as it is limited to high-pitched sounds. In terms of form, line, texture, space, no limits have been fixed--but concern with

the merging of their extremes is obvious. Primary elements--straight lines, flatness, squares, cubes, circles, equilateral triangles, pyramids--contrast seemingly arbitrary lines, random, organic forms and textures and use of connotations of infinite space. The extremes merge into a whole of high-intensity potential for all. The musical composition deals with a somewhat random line of high-pitched tones operating simultaneously with a series of high-pitched, repetitious tones. The two lines merge in silence, both reaching an inaudible point: the "random" line reaches a point of pitch above the human audible range; the repetitious line decreases in volume, becoming likewise inaudible. After a few moments of silence the two lines continue their former pattern, but in an augmenting manner.

The exhibition itself creates a merging of extremes. The rectangularity of the area and the placement of the objects within it are static and controlled in relation to the dynamic, unmeasurable quality of natural and artificial light variables and colors, forms, space, textures, and lines of the viewers and their movement within and above the exhibition area. The limits once again, then, are of high intensity.