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Painting is a visual expression of an aspect of life in  
existence as man in nature. I seek out ways to apply paint  
or materials which express an inner depth of harmony and  
balance. I work with color, form, and line, but the painting must  
be free, spontaneous and indefinable. While painting, I develop  
a focus of intention and a concentration of energy and then allow  
it to flow. The balance of the tension and the energy  
is very delicate.

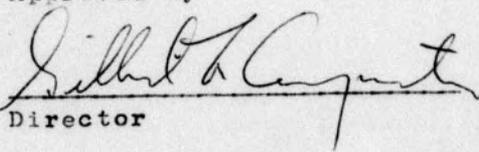
MY PAINTING

by  
Deanna Guffey Bland

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

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Approved by

  
Director

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Mr. Gilbert Carpenter. p. 1.

Painting is a visual expression of my sense of life in  
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be free, spontaneous and indefinable. While painting, I develop  
a focus of tension and a concentration of energy and then allow  
it to come alive. The balance of the tension and the energy  
is very delicate and can easily be destroyed.

Thesis  
Director

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*May 29, 1966*  
Date of Examination

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee  
of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of  
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Robert E. Smith  
Robert W. Walker

May 25, 1966  
Date of Examination

Painting is a visual expression of my sense of life in relationship to Man in Nature. I seek out ways to apply paint on materials which will express an inner depth of harmony and serenity. I work for complete control, yet the painting must be free, spontaneous and indefinable. While painting, I develop a sense of tension and a concentration of energy and then allow it to come alive. The balance of the tension and the energy is very delicate and can easily be destroyed.

Recently, my "sense of life" or reality has been mainly concerned with the contrast of Man and Nature. Throughout

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all of Man's natural world, as the "nat-wo", however, if Nature is the "nat-wo" of Man, then Man is part of Nature. Perhaps someone would have better described Nature as "another" part of the natural world of Man.

John Muir expressed the sympathy between himself and Nature in his book, *The MEREAS*:

I'm a tree, the wind gets caught in my branches  
 and shakes them vaguely. I'm a fly, I drift up  
 and down. I fall, I start climbing again.  
 Now and then I feel the current of time as it  
 runs by. At other times I feel  
 it slipping off. I'm always slipping  
 down, up, and on, and on, and on, and on.

Painting is a visual expression of my sense of life in existence as Man in Nature. I seek out ways to apply paint or materials which will express an inner depth of harmony and serenity. I work for complete control, yet the painting must be free, spontaneous and indefinable. While painting, I develop a focus of tension and a concentration of energy and then allow it to come alive. The balance of the tension and the energy is very delicate and can easily be destroyed.

Recently, my "sense of life" or reality has been mainly concerned with the oneness of Man and Nature. Throughout history, many men have dwelled upon the thought of man in relation to Nature. Ralph Waldo Emerson described Nature, or all of Man's external world, as the "not-me". However, if Nature is the "not-me" of Man, then Man is not of Nature. Perhaps Emerson could have better described Nature as "another-me".

Jean-Paul Sartre expressed the empathy between himself and Nature in his book, The Words:

I'm a tree, the wind gets caught in my branches and shakes them vaguely. I'm a fly, I climb up a windowpane, I fall, I start climbing again. Now and then I feel the caress of time as it goes by. At other times--most often--I feel it standing still. Trembling minutes drip down, engulf me, and are a long time in dying.

Wallowing but still alive, they're swept away. They are replaced by others which are fresher but equally futile. This disgust is called happiness.<sup>1</sup>

D. T. Suzuki in his book entitled, Zen Buddhism, recognizes that man must choose between his present, isolated state, where he feels he must conquer Nature or accept Nature's absolute "must" way, and the accepting state of being at one with Nature. When Man is at one with Nature, then Man is his true self. He needs no meaning, does not live in existential disgust, and is not lost. He accepts himself and Nature without resignation. Man, then, participates with himself and Nature without conflict. Thus, Suzuki writes:

Nature, it is true, lacks consciousness. It is because of this lack of consciousness that it is regarded by Man as brute fact, as something with no will and intelligence of its own. It knows of nothing but an absolute 'must' and permits no human interference except in its 'must' way. It knows no favoritism and refuses to deviate from its course of inevitability. It is not accommodating; it is Man who must accommodate himself to Nature. Nature's 'must' is absolute. Nature has something of the divine will.

Nature never deliberates; it acts directly out of its 'heart', whatever this may mean. In this respect Nature is divine. Its 'irrationality' transcends human doubts or ambiguities, and in our submitting to it, or rather accepting it, we transcend ourselves.

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<sup>1</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, The Words (Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, Incorporated, 1964), p. 59.

This acceptance or transcendence is a human prerogative. We accept Nature's 'irrationality' or its 'must' deliberately, quietly, and wholeheartedly. It is not a deed of blind and slavish submission to the inevitable. It is an active acceptance, a personal willingness with no thought of resistance. In this there is no force implied, no resignation, but rather participation, assimilation, and perhaps in some cases even identification.<sup>2</sup>

William Butler Yeats recognizes neither a problem nor an alienation between Man and Nature. He sets forth three doctrines in his essay entitled, "Magic":

- (1) That the borders of our minds are ever shifting and that many minds can flow into another, as it were, and create or reveal a single energy.
- (2) That the borders of our memories are as shifting, and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.
- (3) That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols.<sup>3</sup>

Each of these statements by Emerson, Sartre, Suzuki, and Yeats bear weight in my approach to painting. Actually, no statement can completely describe the feelings, forms, images, or visions which I wish to express in my paintings. In essence, my paintings are a visual expression of my sense of life in existence as Man in Nature.

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<sup>2</sup>D. T. Suzuki, edited by William Barrett, Zen Buddhism (New York: Doubleday and Company, Incorporated, 1949), p. 234.

<sup>3</sup>William Butler Yeats, "Magic" (London: The Monthly Review, September, 1901), p. 43.

Description of My Paintings

## (1) "Untitled #1" 44"x30"

This is an enamel spray painting. I used a wheel and a grate as stencils. These two objects are suspended in a void. The wheel surrounded by the silver-pink area appears to be a type of extension, foreshortened to push against the wheel.

## (2) "Ovoids #1, #2, #3, #4, #5 30"x40"

These are enamel spray paintings on watercolor paper. They are further steps in seeing the relationship between objects and the forms of Man as Nature.

## (3) "Ovoid and Wheels" 4'x5'

This is an enamel spray painting using sand as texture to further increase the effect of ambiguous space. I used wheels as stencils.

## (4) "Wounded Germ" 4'2"x5'

This is an enamel spray painting. Tape has been used as a stencil.

## (5) "Down" 3'x4'

This is a water-based spray painting. It embodies my expression as explained in this thesis more than any other painting.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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