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CALDWELL, ROBERT CLYDE. Passage (Metamorphic Drawings).  
(1973) Directed by: Mr. Walter Barker. Pp. 3.

In doing the drawings for this thesis, it was my purpose to create a fantasy experience intended to explore selected phases of transition in the life/time sequence in a personal manner which would be open to individual interpretation.

PASSAGE (METAMORPHIC DRAWINGS)

by

Robert Clyde Caldwell

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  
1973

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.

Thesis Adviser Walter Barker

Oral Examination  
Committee Members

David Kellher

Andrew Martin

[Signature]

Walter Barker

December 7, 1972  
Date of Examination

CATALOGUE OF WORK

Title:	Size:	Media:
<u>Traveling in the Dark</u>	7½" X 9¾"	Pencil
<u>Death Masque</u>	7½" X 9¾"	Pencil
<u>At the Edge of the World</u>	7½" X 9¾"	Pencil
<u>Blind Sight</u>	12" X 5"	Pencil
<u>Looking Backward</u>	7½" X 9¾"	Pen & Ink
<u>Innocence</u>	7½" X 9¾"	Pencil
<u>J.C. '72</u>	7½" X 9¾"	Pen & Ink
<u>Self Portrait as God</u>	7½" X 9¾"	Pencil

The thesis consists of eight drawings and was exhibited in The Weatherspoon Outer Gallery, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro from December 11 through December 17, 1972.

A 35mm transparency of each work is on file at The Walter C. Jackson Library of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

My drawings are an attempt at dealing with universal themes in a highly personal way. There is grotesque imagery, garish colors, irreverence, and melodrama involved which make the work highly complex, and perhaps pretentious in certain respects. Despite the serious nature of the subject matter, the work is approached as a fantasy carnival in which I am able to evolve form, lose myself in detail, and create a totally illogical reality of my own.

There is also an underlying theme of metamorphosis which pervades the work. The forms, organic for the most part, are in a constant state of activity--breaking apart, coming together, moving, twisting, all in a chaotic manner. Inner pulsations of light, when combined with the varying degrees of movement, form an illusion of the possession of life. The vibration, intense colors and contrasts, and tonal gradations are meant to heighten this effect.

More specifically, I am dealing with the flow of birth, life, death, and rebirth and the constant transformation of form which takes place therein. The aging process is perceived as a disintegration of the physical as it is caught up in the flow of time. I am concerned

with the expressive qualities inherent in facial expression in this area. For example, some of the decomposing faces are painfully aware of what is happening, while others are not. Some are stripped of feeling and emotion and are carried passively on, while others enjoy their life odyssey.

There is a great deal of imagery dealing with the isolation of the individual. Some are sensory images such as the lack of sight, or the lack of a mouth. The theme of traveling through life without actually taking part in it is repeated.

Each drawing is a peephole from this world into a separate plane of existence which seems to abstract, distort, and combine aspects of the familiar with visions of the absurd. The viewer hopefully will use his own imagination to broaden the physical boundaries of the work and create his own extension of what I have provided. In a sense, the more involved a viewer can become with any single drawing, being drawn into the physical illusion, and the more of his own fantasy experience that he can relate to what is there, the possibilities of individual interpretation become varied and vast, transcending the limits set by my own imagination.

The drawings are allowed the freedom to follow alternative directions when and if interesting possibilities

present themselves during the process of production. At first I worked toward the creation of a chaotic pattern, devoid of manipulated formal design construction, but am now moving toward a more design influenced presentation in an effort to tighten the overall effect by imposing a preconceived order on the work. The ideal presentation would be one in which the viewer is unaware of the manipulation of the elements and feels that he is viewing a random sampling of some larger tapestry.

In a way, the drawings become an abstraction of our world as well as a reality in themselves. The elements are caught up in volcanic activity, unable to control their fates, barely noticeable in their mad struggle to survive. They are manipulated, isolated, snuffed out of existence without warning--particles of physical matter which change constantly for no purpose other than the continuance of the existence of an unthinking, unfeeling entity.