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Thesis Diary: September 1971- May 1972

Bonnie Johanna Gisel
THESIS DIARY: SEPTEMBER 1971 - MAY 1972

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Candidate for the Master of Fine Arts in the College of Fine and Applied Arts of the Rochester Institute of Technology.

May 23, 1972

Advisor: Fred Meyer
This thesis diary and my studio work would not have been possible without the assistance of; Buffalo Savings Bank who lent me $7,000.00 for my education, Peter Densberger, Fred Meyer who let me do my thing, and Judd Williams who gave me the opportunity to become a graduate assistant in the Printmaking Department.
Paul Klee: notes: Thinking Eye, June 1902

"It is a great handicap and a great necessity to have to start with the smallest. I want to be as though a newborn, knowing nothing absolutely about Europe; ignoring poets and fashions, to be almost primitive. Then I want to do something very modest; to work out by myself a tiny formal motif, one that my pencil will be able to hold without any technique. One favorable moment is enough. The little thing is easily and concisely set down. It's already done. It is a tiny but real affair, and someday through the repetition of such small but original deeds, there will come one work upon which I can really build."
December 1970 having returned from New York, I discovered making things that did not have to be flat, two dimensional creations; but could be more dimensional, more alive, more personal through other means. Painting had begun to seem lifeless, unhuman, mechanical, and I needed something more tangible, more alive, more palatable, and more me.

The first piece I did was uncolored and consisted of canvas units filled with cotton stuffing. Trying to force these forms onto stretchers was a tie with painting I finally broke. They didn't work on stretchers so I took them off.

The second piece I constructed was an accident. Too much sizing in the units I was using for the first piece led me to machine wash the units. After washing and drying they were frayed and irregular, no two exactly alike. They were still circles, a hard linear form becoming somewhat soft and tangible.

Dyeing added another dimension. The color was absorbed through the material. It was complete color not surface color but one that penetrated and was held in the cloth, becoming part of the form.
SEPTEMBER 23, THURSDAY

Knowing that I always start everything much too late, but well assured that I am only one of many who do, I am writing for my thesis. It is hard to see the needs for the future.

I find myself very confused. The beginning of a school year is always a difficult time and this year is by far the worst yet.

The due date of the proposal for my thesis came without my knowing exactly what I was going to be doing for my thesis.

I think happiness is a short period of time between long periods of frustrations.

The only thing that pacifies me is my work, and that frustrates me.

In all the things I have had and lost and kept and done, constructions and paintings are the only things I really had that ever stayed and grew with me, are the only things that I really came to know.

It's not hard to make things you want to see; it's not very hard to look at things if you take the time.
I try to take the time to look and make the things I want to see.
I guess these are my moments of happiness.

SEPTEMBER 24, FRIDAY

I like to have materials to make things with; I really like
I noticed about 12:15 that the clean-up men had emptied a container that I had put supplies in. The worst loss was the footpedal to my sewing machine.

This evening I called the Albright Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo. Going to enter the Western New York Show by October 18. It would be nice to get in.

Called several stores that sell sewing machines regarding the footpedal. Cost of the new pedal $18.00, the machine only cost $7.00.

Sometimes I feel my pieces are graphically oriented, but they really aren't. They are definite in construction as far as shapes and placement of shapes, but I guess that is the order in my life.

SEPTEMBER 25, SATURDAY

This afternoon I found a new thing to work with. I decided to try giving the dyed canvas a misty quality by spraying acrylics onto the canvas. I backed the canvas with mattress padding so that I wouldn't spray the wall. I dyed a section of the mattress pad--looks good, a new material to work with. I am excited about spraying paint onto canvas. It is hard to really consider subtle colors, transitions, uses, between dye and spray. The dye doesn't penetrate the paint--looks like Easter eggs.

I was thinking about fur. I'll try it, but I think it is too sophisticated for my work.

Going to try to find some old mattress pads.

When I think about next year and trying to find a position teaching, I get a little jittery.
I was given a watch a few days ago; it seemed to open a new world for me. It's funny how such small things can change one's life.

SUNDAY

Have been reading Skinner, he makes me wonder what I'm doing in school. I wonder what I'm doing here even when I don't read Skinner.

It is hard to decide the relevance of things, the importance. One must establish priorities, but so often they seem so inconsequential.

It seems so relevant for me to be here working, but that's my opinion.

The longer I stay in school the more I seem to forget; the more specialized I become.

SEPTEMBER 28

Suffered and overcame the hysteria of losing and having my keys found... something about not liking responsibility...

The faculty opening is next Friday. Will go. Would be nice to get dressed up.

SEPTEMBER 29, WEDNESDAY

This studio is much too noisy to work in.
Too many people running around.

I feel very isolated--too much working in this area of mine, at R.I.T., out in the middle of a big field.

This year isn't starting out very wholesomely.

OCTOBER 4, MONDAY

Having not written in a few days, I thought my outlook might be a better one; it's not.

I finished my proposal.

This year seems very artifical.

I worked on my Air Mattress piece today, but I have to get more stuffing.

Must keep the library show in mind.

People tell me that one day I will work to sell, not work and possibly sell, but do the work for commission because someone wants a certain thing. I want to create because I want to make something.

Peter's father gave me 55 yards of canvas; it's only 40 inches wide, but it's free.

Dancing lessons at the YWCA are good excercise. I can't walk for three days after, but I probably won't feel that way after I've been going for a while.

Missed $8\frac{1}{2}$, one of Fellini's best.

This first quarter seems like a settling time, a final meshing of ideas before the thesis begins.
OCTOBER 6

I am sending in the entry form for the Albright Show; it will be interesting to see the outcome. I'm afraid they won't know how to deal with my work.

Started a new piece. Finishing first, Air Mattress. Takes time. I don't like to hassle with how much should I do bull shit.

OCTOBER 11

Started typing addresses to schools. I'm afraid I'm not going to get a job.

Saw Truffaut's Wild Child. It reminded me of now--of how everyone is always pressed into changing. What is right for one person isn't always right for another.

Saw The Devils, a Ken Russell film, believable and therefore frightening.

I enjoy motion pictures--seeing people being other people, illusions being made convincing.

I feel I am working for purposes now. I'm sure it is much better this way.
One can't work for himself only.

It is strange how one comes to know a new city, the streets, the areas, the cultural centers, the theaters, etc., etc.. It seems like home but it isn't.

I don't like the feeling of not being settled. One has to be settled to create; creating is so uncertain, so abstract.
OCTOBER 12

I'm sitting, writing on this ugly yellow paper. Before me are seven spools of thread, material, etching proofs, seals, receipts, garbage. I feel foreign to this room. To work it takes a sense, a feeling of homogeneity; I don't believe it exists here.

OCTOBER 13

I'm making these little forms for my second piece, Box Pod Quilt. It will be a nice piece.

Susan and I decided that the poster for our show will be done on paper; we don't have the time to silk screen them on cloth. It is too bad that people let social structures and unmeaningful codes come between them. There is so much that could be shared that isn't.

I know this year will go by and things will probably work out. I'm too determined to let anything else happen.

It would be nice to feel more like I was living and less like a martyr of sorts.

OCTOBER 18

I worked on the circles for the Box Pod Quilt yesterday.

Peter tries to dominate me sometimes; it makes me angry. I don't think he understands my commitment to my work.
Have to finish two pieces by next Tuesday. Just do it and fuck it.

It would be nice to have a book that I could put things in. Like tea cups and things.

OCTOBER 21 - 27

Things due at Albright Art Gallery...

Monday: finish getting circles ready to stitch, some machine, some hand sewn... evening: cut and sew back pieces...

Tuesday: dye backs and inserts... evening: stitch circles to inserts...

Wednesday: stitch inserts to backs and stitch forms together...

Thursday: stitch Air Mattress together and put hooks on both pieces...

Saturday: start piece for library, due November 11...

OCTOBER 27

Have been busy finishing pieces for Western, New York Show. Completed the Box Pod Quilt Monday night at 11:30, with Peter's help. It looks good, colors are very subtle. There are many things happening in it that can very easily go unnoticed. I enjoy working this way.

Last Thursday Susan and I picked out the colors for the poster,
SOFT PAINTINGS

bonnie gisel    susan russo

wallace memorial library
second level ... november 12 - december 3
rochester institute of technology
a rust red paper and a brown purple ink.

We have to cover the back wall of the library gallery. It is bright gold felt, and I might as well forget hanging my work on the wall if we don't change the color.

I made a circle form; it looks good, but is hard to make. Take material and cut about nine shapes the same size, oval-like, sew them together, looks like a ball, may work something out.

Had to leave my two constructions at the Albright's warehouse yesterday--was not a very nice experience. I hope they will take good care of them. My pieces are easy to move, but in a place like that they are very vulnerable and could get dirty. I felt I was harming my work by leaving them alone in such a dirty, ugly place. I put them in a plastic bag to keep them clean, I hope that they don't discard them thinking they are garbage.

It would seem likely that some artists have dealers so they don't have to see brutality waged against their work.

The Print Show here at R.I.T. is being juried on Monday, may enter a lithograph. There is just not enough time to do everything. At least this year things are going fairly fast, the only salvation.

Susan and I have been talking about being here, but I suppose being anywhere would have been the same. It's not where you are, it's what you do when you're there.

We all pad ourselves and let ourselves down. We put ourselves into sad states of mind.

OCTOBER 28

Critique in Painting...
Talked about the difference between illustration and painting. Illustration lies to us, sexual object, con man, leads us on. Painting provides us with a spiritual experience of reality, not lying to us, represents whole of life.

The critique was like a funeral ceremony, very solemn and discrete. Our being here, working in this studio, seems so unimportant; it seems so superfluous.

I had a fantastic dream that I was going to write a story for this diary. It was about an elephant who turned into a bird.

**OCTOBER 29**

evening...

Worked on Air Mattress, units held together by large over-stitching, long tubular forms, a form of blanket, quilt... Pulled 3rd color of lithograph, probably will enter in show... May enter drawing.

Went to dance class.

Home.

Was talking to Susan today about my work. She said she couldn't do what I do, but I couldn't do what she does. I asked her if she thought that I was so determined, positive about my work that people were afraid to criticize it. She said yes and that eventually it might effect my work, because I may need someone to criticize my work and that person won't be there.

One should learn to solve things himself. One shouldn't depend to heavily on words from others. It's harder to learn to live without something one has had, that it is with something one has had little of.
Might do some Michigan potatoe prints and lithos.

NOVEMBER 3

I am approaching my present piece with a certain naivety. I am leaving the material very much unsolved. I'm not making it conform to me, Panty Fan.

On the way to school for the past few days I have noticed two aluminium chairs with rust colored plastic webbing. They sat, seat to seat in a field near a house. Today one of the chairs was occupied by a lady, who sat knitting in the chair facing the road. The chairs need never have been occupied for they seemed so without the presence of people. It would be nice to do a piece like this, unfilled, yet filled.

NOVEMBER 11

Susan and I hung our show.
I feel like my pieces are in a museum of natural history, especially when you first walk into the library. Three glass cases, two with strange elbow-like forms that look like shriveled-up larvae from giant prehistoric worms.

It was good to have the show, a little retrospective look at work is good for the soul.

Susan's work and mine contrast well.

NOVEMBER 13

Critique in Printmaking...
One person didn't like my repetitive images. There are so many ways to alter a simple form and yet it is still the same form. I really like to work this way.

Got rejected from the Albright, Western New York Show.

DECEMBER 12 - 19

Peter and I went to New York and to New Jersey to see his parents. Not too many good things in New York Galleries. Got some webbing and wicks.

JANUARY 19

The work for my thesis largely deals with variations of box forms. I would like to complete eight constructions but will at most have seven. With writing and all it seems impossible to do very many.

Of all the things I had hoped this situation to be, the one thing I wanted it to be most was an exchange, and a time to involve myself in the written as well as the studio. There has been little time for the written portion of my thesis. It would have been nice to work on it into the summer, on second thought I would rather have it all out of the way by June.

There has been little time for reading. I hope the future will allow me to do so.

In my first piece, I have included the use of grommets as a firm, hard element—a perfect thing, mechanical, yet small. It does not overpower but works well with the canvas units.
I may try an obnoxious piece, using bright colors. We will have to see what comes from the vats on Monday when I dye #2, Remade Block Blanket.

I don't believe college is the answer for everyone. I feel I have become a prisoner in a utopian-like structure. My increased knowledge has frustrated me as an individual. I see that many things are wrong. I realize a potential; I question many things.

Sometimes I see very uncaring, cruel people and begin to wonder if it's me and not them that's cruel and uncaring. I feel insecure with people and lack trust. It makes it difficult to work. It makes it hard for me to put things together. I feel I am becoming more introverted. Making things only increases this because I only need trust myself.

For a while I really believed I was doing the right thing. Now I am looking back and recognizing my selfishness. But I can not go back and then there was nothing wrong or right about it, it was the only decision I could have made.

FEBRUARY 1

Things are only as relevant as one makes them.

Art Forum cover January 1977, early Joseph Albers, nice thing, very subtle, nice colors, stained glass.

My work is fine. Could make things for almost ever. One doesn't come upon this without realizing it's hopelessness as a profession.
Rundel Show comes down Monday, was nice while it lasted. Funny article in the Times-Union about the show. No insight on the part of the critic.

Called Alfred University about their Painting position. The Chairman's secretary remembered me--incredible, not so incredible.

We should not thrive on the past, but look to it as part of a learning experience; that which let's us do what we are doing now, has brought us to where we are.

FEBRUARY 2, WEDNESDAY

We returned my new typewriter to have it fixed, forgot to remove the shipping brackets.

THURSDAY

No job, I don't feel like working when next year is so vague.

Worked on Remade Block Blanket, got it all cut out, would like to finish it by next week.

FEBRUARY 4, FRIDAY

Letter from Kevin...
Rundel Library Exhibit
Superb, Well-Displayed

By ROSEMARY TERES
Times-Union Art Writer

Some new shows in town—at the Schuman Gallery—an exhibition of recent work by Robert Conge and John Pfahl and at the Memorial Art Gallery, American Architecture to be reviewed next week.

A new exhibition opened last week at the Rundel Library Art gallery—paintings, drawings, sculpture and prints by Giorgio Furioso, Bonnie Gisel, J. M. Harris, Michael James, Suzanne Russo, George Wegman and Toby Thompson. The seven are N.F.A. candidates in R.I.T.'s college of Fine and Applied Arts.

The show is an interesting one visually—a balance between works that overwhelm the viewer with the emphasis on texture and materials and those that barely intrude upon the viewer's consciousness. The exhibit is well displayed—a professional organization of objects to be enjoyed or astounded by. Most of the work can be enjoyed because it functions at a high level of competence—"astounded by" is yet to come in the careers of these young artists.

The critic Barbara Rose feels that little is happening in art today and a desperate far-out-ness or the decline of the traditions of the New York School throughout the N.Y.C. galleries and we here in the provinces would seem to be no exception to her analysis. Many of the contemporary idioms are operating in the work of these students—minimal structures, action painting, funky or fun objects and color field displays in painting.

These idioms are operating at a high degree of polish and competence, but here and there we see a return to the personal image catching hold of the young artist's imagination, and this portends a stylistic development for the individual beyond the prevailing options.

Michael James is dealing with color subtleties—bright spots glowing against earthen toned canvases, J. M. Harris is working the paint in motion aesthetic with the accident of form created by stains and drips of paint but his cinematic motion study is an eerie little image that bears investigation.

George Wegman overwhelms the viewer with texture—landscape imagery in a profusion of materials while Toby Thompson is dealing in the color field approach to painting and minimal image option in prints. Giorgio Furioso is working the boundaries between sculpture and painting in his large, shaped canvases and objects as sculpture.

The titles of Suzanne Russo's works are all "Ooze" and the peculiar connotation the word has is apt for the large fabric sculptured forms. Her drawings are technical gems of line and tone lyricism—black and white poetry on paper but on second glance the quality of oozes is frozen into a stopped motion pose although each of the pieces is interesting as form and object and very well crafted.

Bonnie Gisel works her textiles into funky imagery—things that are part of the anti-technology aesthetic of the fifties and sixties. Things must look hand made in this idea formulation, and hard to do at that. The emphasis is on texture and the serial or repeated image here—the Egg Rolls, Pod Quilt, Elbows all have the quality of torn textiles about them—fragile in their time-life but indomitable as powerful images.

The problem is always with words and not generally with the work—to explain and to categorize is to remove some of the magic that the thing itself always holds for the viewer. This is a good exhibition, and we wish the students well in their respective art careers. Part of the art school emphasis is always on craft and competence and virtuosity and in this line a quote from William Ivins Jr. (authority and historian of printmaking):

"The price of virtuosity is object-slavery to a complaisant tool, that of creative artistry is willful dominance over a recalcitrant tool. The world has a curious but encouraging habit of forgetting virtuosi. Most of these students would seem to be on the way to willful dominance over their recalcitrant tools."
"...art talent scouts are going out into the country (anyplace outside of the city) and are looking for genius's. All you got to do is get together with Susan and have Peter take a nice photo of you two in your 'art genius proclamation dresses' and proclaim from a billboard. The billboard should be located somewhere along W. Henrietta Road north of the Thruway entrance-exit, but before the Holiday Inn which is right there. That way when the art talent scout from New York comes off the Thruway, he merely sees the billboard with your proclamation and knows he's found the right people and can just go in the Holiday Inn and call you two up and have you guys come out for cocktails and settle up the financial end. I'm sort of serious about all of this, not that I'm sure that you two would want any part of it but from being in N.Y. I believe this is the way things are done....I hope in two weeks I will be back making art and lots of it if I can. It seems like that is not much but wow without a place to work and live there ain't much left."

FEBRUARY 8, TUESDAY

Peter photographed my work last night. I was thinking how absurd it really was for him to be taking pictures of my work. How can I think my work is so damn important, to have pictures taken, how selfish, how single.

Saturday I went to the Sweater Store where Peter works. I took my Remade Block Blanket to work on. It is impossible to make things in an environment which is so foreign to the thing being made. I felt ashamed for my piece; it didn't want to be created in a store. I wanted to cover up the pieces as I made them, to hide them, to protect them.
FEBRUARY 17

Should start my written thesis soon, getting these diaries together.

Tomorrow I am going to spend all day writing letters.

Today I dyed the Remade Block Blanket. It shall look very fine when it is completed. Next will finish the sweater ribbing piece, then #4, Boxed Plaid.

Four pieces, would like two more, but will settle for one.

Under the pressure of completing everything, I am thinking of many constructions I would like to make.

La Strada, Fellini was here yesterday afternoon, too busy to see it, nice film.

Don't know about this summer yet.

FEBRUARY 22, TUESDAY

I am sewing #2, Remade Block Blanket, I would like a vacation, a nice shower, a good meal, money, a teaching position, sleep.

Once I referred to my creations as soft paintings. I will from now on refer to them as constructions.

FEBRUARY 23

I question my being here, the time to work, to learn more
about myself, my work, to receive my degree, buy my degree.

Remade Block Blanket will have to be larger. I am sure it is too small to create the right feeling. When I started #2, I wanted to do something which I could work on for a while. Something with a lot of small units, bombard a space with the same unit repeated over and over. Use different inserts, blanketing, rayon over wool, wool, and gathered fabric, to create boxes with different tactile qualities, some misty, some rough, some warm. Each the same hard box-like form, yet soft, all the same yet each different.

I have begun to see color as other than paint. My tubes or bottles of paints have become vats of dye, spools of thread, different materials.

Spools of thread become continuous lines, which can be broken by hand stitching, or can be used to create hard lines through a tight machine stitch.

**FEBRUARY 25, FRIDAY**

It is difficult to work on something as large as #3, Sweater Blanket. There is no way to put it on a wall without it being stitched together first. It is difficult to imagine what it will look like.

In the space I am in now small pieces are much easier to control.

**FEBRUARY 26, SATURDAY**

I am satisfied with my thesis, I feel each piece strengthens my theme.
utilizing
stitches—
to
create—entire
form—
not just skeletal,
line form—
or create an
enclosure.
I have to decide what to do with the negative space in the Sweater Blanket.

I am excited about #4, Boxed Plaid; it shall be a happy piece.
Each piece has such a different personality.

FEBRUARY 29, TUESDAY

I consider the time I have spent at R.I.T. a luxury. Probably one of the few times in my life when I will be able to concentrate directly on myself and my work.

MARCH 1, WEDNESDAY

I find myself talking to my sewing machine.
Almost finished the units for the Remade Block Blanket. Will dye it Thursday or Friday.
Got started on #4, Boxed Plaid...

THURSDAY

I talked to Fred today about my work, and tried to relate the concept of the individual pieces strengthening a theme.
Application guidance for users

- Applique
- Machine
- Hand

Manual made
tied in first case

Finish
The idea that one simple form can be manipulated into different feelings, moods, illusions, through construction as well as color. I may never again have the opportunity to create a series as such. With the ability to display the entire thesis in one show, the concept should be a rich experience, should create a flow. This is not to say the pieces are not rich in themselves, however, together they represent a complete theme.

MARCH 4, SATURDAY

Have just about finished dyeing #2. Remade Block Blanket. Will put it together Monday or Tuesday...

#3 will take more work...
Will again begin to complete #1. Only have to stitch units together.

#4 need another drawing, more color studies...

#5 draw and figure out shapes and size of whole...

I have been getting replies from my letters. No jobs though. Will have to keep looking.
No money after June.

I really don't believe it would have been any easier in another profession.

MARCH 6, MONDAY

This morning quite a few students showed up for Printmaking class. End of the quarter rush. It wouldn't be so bad if
they would learn even the basic techniques.

Afternoon: sent out resume, letter, slides to Tyler School of Art... Sure would be nice to get a job and stop fucking around about next year.

Critique on Thursday. Want to finish three pieces.

Want to get #4 done over vacation.

Too much to do.

I think what we need is a little more artistic respect. Respect for each others ideas, materials, and final pieces.

MARCH 11, SATURDAY

Have come up with the fifth piece in my thesis. Have hassled with jobs and related data. I received information about a position at Rockford, Illinois. They want to see my slides.

How much like a fraternity structure this situation has been: stumbling blocks, pledging.

I've got everything started, the trick is to finish.

Mon.  - stitch boxes #4, stitch #5
Tues. - stitch boxes #4, stitch #5
Wed.  - dye boxes #4, stitch #5
Thurs. - N.Y.C., take #3, #2, #5
Fri.   - N.Y.C.
Sat.   - N.Y.C.
Sun.   - N.Y.C.
Mon.   - dye inserts #4
Tues.  - stitch inserts #4
Wed.   - stitch inserts #4, put together
Thurs. - finish stitching #5
Stitched on to background.

9x11 or 1/2 yard block.

Some turned out side some left rough.

2 side NR.

Colored fabrics - dyed canvas.
Fri.  - dye #5
Sat.  - put up #5
Mon.  - fix #2, dye #3 inserts
Tues. - begin stitching #3 together
Wed. - begin stitching #4 together
Thurs. - stitch in inserts
Fri.  - get board and epoxy, dye and glue #3

May do #6, plain boxes about 4' x 9' stitched together.

MARCH 13, MONDAY

Remade Blanket: inside color to overpower exterior color to bring piece together... Use variety of about 3 or 4 tones for inserts... Dye outsides various colors and then dip into green dye...

Remade Block Blanket: monochromatic, use greens, insides stitched to small blocks then dye... Inserts are already dyed. When dyed with canvas blocks many variations will occur.

Sweater Blanket: outsides and insides are soft, different forces of lines... The two surfaces of skeleton-like sweater ribbing give a depth quality. The lines of the inserts, textured and quilted, juxtapose the other lines, as do the hand stitched boarders of the front panel. Color contains dimension, is soft and deep.

MARCH 22, WEDNESDAY

I don't think having been here was a waste of time. It
could have been, had I not known that I was going to have a lot of time to make things of some sort. I am glad I had the luxury of these two years to spend learning more about me, how to express and make what I feel, see, and want to see. I do think I have become specialized and I don't think that's good.

The most difficult thing to do now is to realize that the rest of the world doesn't see things the way I do. I've been in school over six years and it has been very idealistic. Being able to spend that time doing what I wanted, making things and all.

An artist has to recognize the audience he is working for. If he thinks he can produce for all or have all people perceive on the same level, I would say he was misled. I can't tell someone exactly what he is supposed to see in my work. I can only give him what I see, want to see, and let him define it in his own terms.

It has been nice being sheltered for six years, being able to retreat within a university womb.

I feel doomed to a life within this structure in one sense or another. To hell with the outside world.

MARCH 28

New York was interesting. Finally decided how to see it. We went to shows that I felt somewhat related to me and what I do. Saw some nice cloth constructions by a black artist from Detroit. Saw some nice things in SoHo: fiber-glass sculptures, paper paintings...

Got a lot of work done over vacation.
My last quarter in school just began today. Unless I go back for another degree or to take courses, I will never register again.

I feel I'm being abandoned. I feel I've given my all and haven't been given enough. I'm being dropped, excreted from the ass of the university structure.

MARCH 31

I've been working rather feverishly on my studio work. Wednesday I got 50 yards of canvas from Peter's father. He gets it for me from the textile company he works for.

Have cut the back for #2. Will dye that on Monday. #1 has to be stitched... #2 back has to be dyed and stitched... #3 needs a lot of work: must dye inserts... Hard to decide if material is right because of the texture in the ribbed boxes... #4 stitched 9 more: dye and stitch together... #5 stitch the second half: dye and stitch together... #6 weave 60 more boxes and then finished...

APRIL 3

Peter doesn't understand my commitment to my work. Friday I walked some odd seven miles from the city to school so that I could do some work. I once explained to him how difficult it was going to be near the end with all the work for my pieces and the written thesis and the show.

I dyed the back for the Remade Block Blanket. It's too small.
I will have to add on to it and re-dye it. The canvas shrinks quite a bit. It is hard to make a back for something when the front has already been shrunken.

Spring is here. I never doubted that it would come, however, it makes little difference to me right now. I refuse to look outside until June.

Wrote to three schools last Thursday. Sent slides also. Would be nice to get a job. I can't worry about it anymore until everything else is done. This summer I will have to search for something if nothing comes from these last letters.

Things could be a lot worse; they also could be a lot better regarding the indecisive forthcoming year.

**APRIL 4**

I am starting my thesis on Friday; getting all the diaries together. I should have it fairly organized by the end of the day.

There is a seminar at Cornell University this weekend on Women. Judy Chicago is going to be there on Thursday. Would like to go.

I think it is more difficult for women to confront a potential.

Peter and I are having a "domestic" problem because we both realize that the past two years are coming to an end. We are both changing, concerned about our individual futures and the future together. By staying together are we diffusing our personal capabilities for the sake of our relationship.

I should think that there is no place as secure and at times removed from the world as a university can be and often is.
I am tired of dyeing units for my constructions. I can't imagine how many I have dyed and re-dyed. My fourth piece, Boxed Plaid, required two and three dyeings for each piece. There are thirty-six boxes, plus seventy-two inserts in this piece. It is difficult to dye the canvas dark colors in one dyeing. The dye only penetrates so much then the units must be dried and redyed until a dark shade is reached.

#4 is very massive, but also very feminine...

#3 only needs to be stitched...

#4 needs to be stitched together...

#5 needs a little more dyeing...

#6 needs to be completed...

#6 making my own fabric boxes with scraps, tint them greens, browns, grays, yellows, reds...

#3 is a warm piece...

It will be important to hang these pieces according to color. #3 is light and will not work next to #4, massive and dark...

Got rejected from position at Columbus School of Art. "Your work is good, but we are looking for someone with other qualifications."

I can say all I want, that everything will work out, but if I don't start getting some decent feedback regarding a position things will not work out.

Susan got a nice plant today. It has little sack flowers.

Saw Judy Chicago last Thursday at Cornell. I'm glad Susan and I went. Inspiration is good to have, especially at this time.
She said things that I didn't agree with, but she also said many things that made sense. Along with a slide presentation she talked about the imagery that has been prevalent in women artists' work: repetitive, rearrangable, phallic, protruding, circular, breast, vaginal, box.

I've been working around men and with male instructors for six years. I never thought of my imagery as being that of a woman's. I always thought of it as an artists' imagery. The funny thing is, I never knew many women artists' so I have been looking at my imagery through what I have seen male artists' creating.

APRIL 12

I have just about a month to get this finished: 18 days for the studio pieces.

It's strange to think that this will all be over in two months. Not creating, but a life style which I have been living for six years.

APRIL 15

My last piece is woven, something I have never done before. Means to ends can vary greatly within a given range.

APRIL 17, MONDAY

Working on #5, almost completed...
I've been thinking about threads on my constructions and their importance. It is important for them to be on a piece if they are there naturally. I don't force them. They should not become so prevalent that you read the threads and the individual unit before you read the piece in its entirety.

APRIL 18, TUESDAY

I haven't gotten into writing this thesis out yet—clarifying my diaries, editing them. Too busy with my studio work. I only have until Friday.

Well it will be over and then what will I do. Make another piece? It will seem meaningless in this environment. Look for a job. Do things I couldn't do before and not feel guilty that I'm not in the studio working.

APRIL 19 - 71

Stayed home and worked. 
Got more of #6 done, Recycled Boxes. 
Sewed #3 together. 
Can't figure out #4. Will have to take it back to the studio and reconstruct the basic layout.

Got rejected from the position at Alfred.

Sewed #3. Almost done. Hard to understand visually when I haven't seen it together yet.

Still weaving #6.
APRIL 22, SATURDAY

Got rejected from position at Rockford College. Now I have nothing regarding a job. Everything is pretty much up in the air.

It's been nice working home, quite.

I entered the Finger Lakes Show, Box Pod Quilt and Pink and Blue Quilt. Would be nice to get them into the show.

I find it difficult to price my pieces. I am too biased towards them.

APRIL 23, SUNDAY

Working on #6...
Finished #3...

APRIL 24, MONDAY

No poster for our show.
I'm getting nervous about the show: no poster, finishing my work, and compiling my diaries.

Sweater Blanket can be adhered to the wood across the top with hot melt glue. Won't need epoxy. Will make it a lot easier to put together.
Only need 22 more pieces for #6 out of 81...
I never thought I would get this last piece done. Peter has helped very much.

APRIL 28, FRIDAY

Finished making and dyeing #6...
This was the last time that I will be dyeing anything for my thesis. I dyed about 1700 pieces all together.

APRIL 29 - 30, SATURDAY and SUNDAY

Hung the show. Lots of work. Too much to come down in two weeks.

MAY 1

Show opens tonight. Looks good so far.
I'm happy with my work. My constructions look the way I pictured they would. It's interesting that different people are drawn to different pieces, with different justifications.

Interest at the conclusion of something is natural, but not always truthful.
MAY 2

The last two days have been successful ones. The opening went well. I got two pieces into the Finger Lakes Show. There is a possibility of a position in a small college in Michigan.

MAY 5

It seems strange to be staying at home writing and typing. It doesn't seem to go along with two years of working in the studio. One spends all that time working and conversing with people and then crawls into a hole and writes a paper.

MAY 9

These last few days have been filled with mixed emotions. Withdrawal symptoms from the studio, from being with so many people. I've been thinking about pieces I want to make this summer, about things I want to do this summer. I think I will take a short vacation first and just rest for a few weeks.

Life Magazine, May 5, 1972 has a small article on quilts. Interesting to see the forms and compositions used by women back in the 1800's.

There is no work to be coming along, no colors to look at, to make.
Index of Illustrative Material
listed according to sequence of construction

Slide
1. Pod Piece, 7' x 4', 1971, canvas pods, stuffed, stitched
2. Hard Forms-Soft Pods, 16" x 12'. 1971, dyed canvas, wooden forms
3. Pink and Blue Quilt, 9' x 7', 1971, canvas, stitched, dyed
4. Untitled, 5' x 7', 1971, canvas, stitched, dyed
5. Shoe Bag, 1$\frac{1}{2}$' x 5', 1971, canvas, stitched, dyed
6. Landscaped Tapestry, 2$\frac{1}{2}$' x 3$\frac{1}{2}$', 1971, canvas, stitched, dyed
7. Soft Boxes, 3' x 4', 1971, canvas, stitched, dyed, stuffed
8. Elbows, 24" x 18", 1971, canvas, stitched, dyed, stuffed
9. Carborator Forms, 1$\frac{1}{2}$' x 3$\frac{1}{2}$', 1971, canvas, stitched, dyed, stuffed
10. Air Mattress, 3' x 6', 1971, canvas, stitched, dyed, spray painted with acrylic, stuffed
11. Box Pod Quilt, 3$\frac{1}{2}$' x 6', 1971, canvas, stitched, dyed spray painted with acrylic, stuffed, mattress padding
12. Panty Pans, 4$\frac{1}{2}$' x 3$\frac{1}{2}$', 1971, canvas, cotton tubing, stitched, dyed, stuffed
13. Ego Rolls, 4$\frac{1}{2}$' x 6', 1971-72, muslin, mattress padding, dyed, stitched
Index of Illustrative Material
Thesis Constructions

Slide

1. Remade Blanket, 7' x 5½', 1972, canvas, wool blanketeting, elastic, grommets, dyed, stitched, stuffed

2. Remade Block Blanket, 8' x 6', 1972, canvas, wool, rayon, cotton, dyed, stitched

3. Sweater Blanket, 9½' x 5½', 1972, sweater ribbing, wool blanketeting, mattress padding, dyed, stitched

4. Boxed Plaid, 7½' x 6', 1972, canvas, taffeta, dyed, stitched

5. Flap Thing, 7' x 6', 1972, canvas, muslin, silk, rayon, dyed, stitched

6. Recycled Boxes, 8½' x 5½', 1972, scraps of cotton and wool, hand woven, dyed, knotted together