5-1-1989

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Fine and Applied Arts
in Candidacy for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

INTERACTIONS & ANSWERS

BY

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May 1989
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TO

CHRIS
INTRODUCTION

This thesis report was written on the basis of addressing that which describes what I have come to believe to be the personal process, that results in the production of an art work. The thesis has served this purpose, clarifying, and justifying some personal beliefs as they pertain to my art.
INTERACTIONS

Interaction is an activity, an occurrence, observed and understood by a sensitive individual, an artist. It is a process resulting in: a comparison, a confrontation, or an assimilation of events, visual conditions or activities that may be described as life. The interaction of man with his natural environment, and its elements, may be defined as a communication or dialogue with nature, a continuous activity

PAUL KLEE
"Communication with nature remains the most essential condition. The artist is human, himself nature, part of nature within natural space." (1)

Selecting materials provided by the environment establishes a physical commitment by the artist to interact with nature. This interaction is reinforced through a direct observation, and continued to develop through a response to society, or a particular human condition.

The individual's interaction with nature is a dialogue, which determines questions, that inspire and serve as the basis for an inquiry. The inquiry is a process or means of sorting out the many questions that occur through the dialogue. This process will work, on the basis that the artist knows and understands his or her own individuality, and what he or she is most sensitive to, and responds to, through the interaction.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL
"A subject emerges out of an interaction between myself, my I, and my medium." (2)
QUESTIONS

In order for the individual to feel a sense of complete commitment, an understanding must be made.

HERBERT READ
"The will to be an artist emerges from tremendous inner conflicts..., and it is only when all these have been resolved (and it is a problem which involves the individual's relationship to society as a whole as well as to his immediate family environment) only then can he face the considerable hazards of an artistic career." (3)

Once the artist has come to this understanding, the interaction and dialogue are free to continue, with a search or investigation.

PAUL KLEE
"The father of the arrow is the thought; how do I expand my reach? Over this river? This lake? That mountain? The contrast between man's ideological capacity to move at random through material and metaphysical spaces and his physical limitations, is the origin of all tragedy." (4)

The arrow, or sense of motivation to interact, creates ideas to search for the response to particular questions.

Questions and decisions continue, contributing to making more decisions as the interaction proceeds. These decisions affect the quality of what the response to a question would describe.
JASPER JOHNS
"I was interested in what was seen, and what was not seen. One wanted to avoid the idea of an interpretation, and I know how simple minded it is - but never the less those sorts of images gave a sense of objectivity rather than of subjectivity. And then one could deal with the question of when you see it, when you don't see it, what do you see, what do you think it is, how do you change what you see, and what differences do these changes make to what you see and what you think. It's a rich area for nuance there. Its a pretty limited area if you are going to make a strong point. But I was interested in the kind of nuance, modulation, play between thinking, seeing, saying and nothing." (5)

The search for a response to a question travels a circular route. Returning to the basis of: observing one's environment, responding to a particular human condition, and an application of a material or media. Question: Shall I mirror what I see, or change it?

GERTRUDE STEIN on PABLO PICASSO
"His drawings were not of things seen but of things expressed."(6)

The interaction continues and ideas make themselves visible as questions to be resolved.

REALITY
Reality and something about it can serve as a source of ideas, initiating responses to the questions. How reality and nature are interpreted, is what the art may become. Revealing a reality about nature, that is not visible to all, is a response to a question. The artist must be able to interact, with his or her environment, and have a sensitivity, that can
only be recognized by himself.

**PAUL KLEE**
"Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible."(7)
"To reveal the reality that is behind visible things."(8)

Based upon what is observed, the artist is free to make changes in his or her observations of nature, and its appearance.

**MEDIA**

The application of ones materials or medium, is an interaction; and its relationship to the questions uncovered by the artist, reveal more questions. What can I use, and how? An answer to the question of what, and how, will only come from an interaction with a media. A direction is found, questions are resolved, and the artist's sensitivity to what media is being used, develops and grows with the interaction.

**JIM DINE**
"Like Giacometti - not in his drawings so much as in the sculpture, in the way it was corrected and corrected, that's about drawing to" (9)

**ARTHUR DOVE**
"Then there was the search for a means of expression... There was a long period of searching for a something in color which I then called a "condition of light." It applied to all objects." (10)

Through this media interaction, and the artist's sensitivities developing, a process of
evaluation and review occurs. A process that will reveal additional questions. What is considered as mistake to one may serve as creative process to another, a condition resolved by the individual.

MARY FRANK
"accidents are your accidents... to some degree you can feel them coming, so you harness them or throw them out." (11)

The result of an application of the media serves as an answer that facilitates a response to what was questioned or needed resolution, through the interaction.

DAVID HOCKNEY
"I use line and I think a line can somehow tell a story." (12)

SOCIETY
A sensitivity to the environment, and media, has a relationship to an understanding of society, or a particular society. Attitudes from a culture, create an influence and help determine a direction. For example, a sense of confusion and disorder, a contrast to structure and order, may serve as the basis for communicating what the artist is sensitive to. A response may be one of rejecting the ideas held in common with a group of individuals or culture. The artist's work may be arbitrary, or not clearly described.
THE METAPHOR

MARGE GOLDWATER on JENNIFER BARTLETT
"interested in the big obvious facts of natural existence, facts familiar to everyone and easily reduced to signs and systems." (13)

The metaphor is determined by the artist, and is used as a tool to facilitate the interaction with nature and media. It may be general and non specific to many. For the individual, it is an integral part of the interaction, describing his or her response to the questions found.

The artist determines the descriptive qualities of the metaphor with activity, through observation, and materials. Determining what the metaphor will be, before the art activity occurs, is fruitless. One may not determine the metaphor or what is being questioned and responded to until the interaction evolves.

PABLO PICASSO
"Its never been like this before. This is the most difficult thing I've ever done. I don't know if it's any good. Perhaps it's terrible. But I'm going to do it anyhow. I'll do thousands of them." (14)

A number of works viewed collectively can determine the nature of the artist's metaphor, developed through an immediate response, one without consideration of direction or meaning.

Having the self confidence in one's ability to respond is an aspect that serves as the
basis for the natural development of the metaphor. A sensitivity to oneself is essential, and understanding how one interacts, provides a path for the development of that personal metaphor.

MARY FRANK
"The hand has its own life. It makes marks and gestures which are not deliberate. I often think of them as tracks of animals. There is a dialogue between materials and the original intention that is both pleasure and a warfare."(15)

The artist's interactions produce work, as a response to questions, serving the individual with a sense of identity, facilitating the development of his or her metaphor.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL
"I think one's art is just one's effort to wed oneself to the universe. To unify oneself through union." (16)

ANSWERS
To a particular artist, a printmaker, an interaction persists with his environment, his culture, and his material.

He maintains a bond with the things or objects he finds; leaves, branches, vines, blades of grass, integral parts, or elements. These common elements often taken for granted are of interest because they are important, and contribute to making our environment complete. It is important to this printmaker to interact, and be near to his environment. To
be able to walk in the woods, to collect and observe.

A physical interaction continues with materials. He describes them as tools, that provide a means to an end. This physical interaction has always been with him, having a persistent desire to solve a mechanical or visual problem. A problem, where the application of some particular tool or implement is needed. The printmaker involves himself with a wide range of interactions: by drawing, using the burin, a linoleum block, a lithographic stone, a copper etching plate, an aluminum litho plate, etching needles, mezzotint rockers, zinc, acids, and a printing press. An application of tools, will always persist, searching for a response to a question.

He has a concern for those and that which so often are taken for granted. In his work, making an effort to recognize individuals, and their nature, is important. Personalities are a fundamental element, a compliment to a whole, so often ignored, or pushed aside, as leaves or blades of grass and branches. For this artist the reality of having to interact with a wide range of personalities, is an aspect of society that is unavoidable. Being selective is not realistic, interacting with a variety of conditions, related to society, and the environment, is reality. He has found an unanswered question; is our culture ignoring, or in the process of adjusting and replacing the conditions that provide us with our sense of individuality?

By responding to this question he has made a choice to interact with what he believes is something that is common to all, nature and it's elements. Selecting the parts from nature, and dealing with them as individuals, exploring their potential in terms of visual interactions.
Decisions continue to develop toward how. The only way to determine this, is to respond with the aspects of one's personality that come naturally. As an artist this printmaker has maintained a sketchbook with drawings and photos, serving as the means for recording: an instant, a moment, or visual condition. Drawing is the interaction, helping to redefine qualities of the originals. In turn, these drawings are redrawn, in brush and ink, then again translated to a printing plate.

The initial conditions that described the subjects of the prints are enhanced, some may have been left out in order to convey a particular something about that leaf, or branch. These conditions may go unnoticed because of the continued interactions that are occurring all around the subjects in nature, often we may recognize something special in a person or thing by a very brief glance, and wish we had remembered. It is his belief that nothing remains the same.

Change is continuous, an ongoing activity that is as much about reality as its literal appearance. His prints may appear very different from how the objects may look in reality. Colors are selected on the basis of how they interact with themselves. The printmaker's intentions are maintained by interacting with qualities that retain primary impressions of the objects. His intent is for the observer to respond to a variety of conditions that describe the object as art, through its character or individuality as an object found in nature.

The artist has come into contact with: questions, reality, materials, society, and the metaphor, all of which serve as elements in an interaction.
THE PRINTS

The subjects of the following prints were chosen through an interaction, beginning with observations of objects in their natural environment. Finding blades of grass, twigs, branches, or leaves, and interacting with them through drawing, and determining an interpretation of the object's individuality, or character. The process, in turn, contributed to resolving the question as to why the object was chosen. This interaction, of observing, choosing, and drawing, provided visual information that served as an application, of the subject, to a print medium.

THE LITHOGRAPHS

Visual interactions such as: spatial relationships between blades of grass, the long flowing almost fluid like stroke of a brush suggesting the blade, and one bending or curving in front of another, were three conditions found as answers in drawing, providing information to be translated to an aluminum plate lithograph. Additional plates, or colors for the prints, were developed through taking advantage of the negative spaces, and their relationship to the initial forms. These spaces suggested a form or shape, interpreted as a mass of visual activity, surrounding one of the original objects. In nature, this essential form may distract from the original, leaving it unnoticed. This mass in reality is something that cannot be ignored, it contributes, and is a part of the subjects individuality or character. In the lithographs an interpretation of the form, is one of a flat simply defined area,
reducing its complexity, and strengthening the initial visual interaction, transforming an overwhelming condition into one which complements or completes the prints.

The printing of these plates developed into an interaction with color. A series printed on one day, resulted in the question: what color should be printed on the next? At this point the conditions determined at the onset have been resolved with another set of conditions that became questions to be answered through continued interaction, printing, and color applications.

THE ETCHINGS

Questions evolved through examining the twisting, curving, wrap around textures of wood, branches, or limbs. Drawings of brush and wash, with additions made by pencil, crayon and ink, transformed the questions into an interaction. Identifying the individuality of the objects through drawing, resulted in a multimedia application, transferred to a print media, one that could respond with similar interactions. Etchings using a lift ground process were developed facilitating the brush drawing application, allowing for a continuation.

These prints were developed with a number of facets that contributed to each as individuals. Once images were established with the lifting, interactions continued with a printmakers hand tools, the burin and rollette. Additional plates were developed in order to contribute to the individuality of the initial lift ground prints. The contributions ranged from flat rolled colors, to a few suggestions of red line. The additional plates were
developed in order to accept something that already existed, and to take advantage of its value as an individual, resolving the print, without being destructive. This process created an interaction between printing plates, by printing two together or doing what is described as a double printing. One particular print resulted in its printing with a piece of paper made from the fibers of cat tail stalk, a process described as a china colle' print (see 23 & 24). The printmaker selected a material from nature, interacting with a subject from nature, and printing with a piece of zinc.

An unanswered question, found in another etching was resolved through an interaction with the ideas of the previously discussed prints. Unlike the others, this print originated from another point of view, an observation of nature that is confusing and chaotic, the print was developed to a point where one may describe it, as that. The print is an image full of activity, or confusion, a collection of individuals from nature: leaves, textures, lines and forms as they may be found. Often it is difficult to identify the character of objects, and it requires an investigation to understand, or appreciate them.

The question persisting in relation to the print was: what more can be done to complete the interaction and image? Through the development of the previously discussed images, an answer was found. By introducing a broad general form, simply stated, reducing its individuality or character to a flat tone, resolved the lithograph. The solution for this etching was found by reversing the descriptive nature of two areas, the positive and negative spaces. In contrast to the flat tones of the litho's negative areas, the printmaker took advantage of the existing area as it was. That area in the print described a natural condition, as it may actually appear, and helped to resolve the etching. Through drawing,
an understanding of the character of certain leaf and vine forms was established, and a simply described flat tone was applied, as a positive form, to interact with the active, fully involved, or negative areas of the etching. By taking advantage of something as it existed, a solution was found (see 21 & 22).

**APPEARANCES**

For the observer one may have the impression that these prints were concluded, resolved, or preconceived, and thought out by the printmaker. The qualities that described the character of each of the prints were determined through a period of time, with little or no pre-determined notions about their completed appearance.

The solutions to the prints, was found through the interaction, of the printmaker with his environment, and his media. The solutions could not have been found without a commitment by the printmaker to the interactions, accepting, and understanding that which he is most sensitive to.

The interactive process, identified by that individual, provided him with the information that will lead to continued interactions. He has gained an understanding of himself as he relates to art and his media.
LIST OF PRINTS

LITHOGRAPHS

1. BLADES IN BLACK
   27 1/4" X 40"
   Aluminum Plate

2. GRAY W/ BLUE
   27 1/4" X 40"
   Aluminum Plate

3. GRAY & PALE BLUE
   27 1/4" X 40"
   Aluminum Plate

4. GRAY AND GREEN
   27 1/4" X 40"
   Aluminum Plate

5. BLUE W/ BLACK
   27 1/4" X 40"
   Aluminum Plate

6. GRAY W/ GREEN
   27 1/4" X 40"
   Aluminum Plate

7. THREE IN A ROW
   40" X 82"
   Aluminum Plate

8. AND PURPLE
   27 1/4" X 40"
   Aluminum Plate
9. BLACK W/ GREEN
   27 1/4" X 40"
   Aluminum Plate

10. GREEN & RED
    27 1/4" X 40" on white paper
    Aluminum Plate

11. GREEN & RED
    27 1/4" X 40" on tan paper
    Aluminum Plate

12. BLADES OF GRASS W/ ORANGE
    27 1/4" X 20
    Aluminum Plate

13. THE RED LEAF
    27 1/4" X 20"
    Aluminum Plate

14. BLADES W/ SOME RED
    27 1/4" X 20"
    Aluminum Plate

ETCHINGS

15. BRANCH
    9 7/8" X 6 7/8"
    Lift Ground - Zinc Plate

16. BRANCH W/ MAGENTA & YELLOW
    9 7/8" X 6 7/8"
    Lift Ground, Rolled Color - Zinc Plate

17. BRANCH W/ RED LINES
    9 7/8" X 6 7/8"
    Lift Ground, Soft Ground Zinc Plate
18. BRANCH W/ RED & YELLOW
   9 7/8" X 6 7/8"
   Lift Ground, Rolled Color - Zinc Plate

19. A FOURTH
   5 1/2" X 7 5/8"
   Lift Ground - Zinc Plate

20. THREE WITH A TRUNK
    8" X 12"
    Lift Ground, Soft Ground - Zinc Plate

21. LEAVES, TEXTURES, LINES & FORMS
    11 7/8" X 16 1/4"
    Lift Ground, Engraving, Soft Ground - Copper Plate

22. LEAVES, & TEXTURES, WITH A VINE
    11 7/8" X 16 1/4"
    Lift Ground, Engraving, Soft Ground, Open Bite - Copper Plate

23. A TWIST
    9 3/4" X 13 1/2"
    Lift Ground, Engraving - Zinc Plate

24. BRANCH W/ CAT TAIL PAPER
    9 3/4" X 13 1/2"
    Lift Ground, Engraving, China Colle - Zinc Plate
FOOTNOTES


8. Ibid.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


