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My spirit

Kathy Clem

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RYCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Fine and Applied Arts
In Candidacy for the Degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

MY SPIRIT

By
Kathy Clem
December 5, 1988.
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Illustration 2. Advisors, from left to right, Tony Petracca, Judd Williams, Doug Sigler, and Phil Bornarth.

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Many beautiful moments and designs were created and these will always live with me.
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The purpose of this thesis was to research the motivational force behind my spirit. The force I found was hope, faith, and a strong belief that I could accomplish my goals.

The journey inward began by asking questions like: Why am I here? What am I here for? Where am I going? The research involved studying many religions, myths and philosophies.

This led to reading books in creative visualization and to the realization that we are the creators of our lives. The understanding that the present moment is the only time we have, made me start making each moment the most beautiful moment possible. I also realized that the times that I seemed to be enjoying myself more, were the times when I was learning new things.

Many times when the answers to problems were not clear, I found that what was important was to do something; to learn from this, then to try again. The significant thing was to be persistent and to keep searching for solutions.

The Labyrinth became my spirit, a symbol of life and energy, and an ever increasing and expanding galaxy of knowledge.

The different pieces of art work that composed the journey through The Labyrinth were as follows: Dying, Emergent Spirit, and New Spirit. These three were paintings on canvas and were painted as a series. Love was the first piece designed. The installation: My Connections with Humanity took two years to complete and was designed after Love. This installation consisted of The Game Board, a wood construction; Self Portrait, a painting on canvas; and Torsos, another wood construction. The Peacock started as a painting demonstration I made for parents weekend and was done
after New Spirit. The Artist's Flowers, and Self Portraits were photographic posterizations and were done at the same time as Dying. The Artist The Warrior, The Artist The Witch, The Artist The Magician were a combination of photography, painting and sculpture. These along with the sculpture of The Labyrinth, were my most recent pieces.

The culmination of all this work was shown in two installations at the thesis show, one installation was My Connections With Humanity and the other installation included The Labyrinth: a description of the journey through The Labyrinth, which consisted of a line map of The Labyrinth and photographs of the art work inside The Labyrinth; and The Artist The Warrior, The Artist The Witch and The Artist The Magician. These two installations later became symbols for My Conscious and My Subconscious mind.

All the art works were self portraits and were expressions of the feelings I had at the time these were created.

This thesis also explains the mythological significance of most of the art works, where the ideas originated, my symbolic meanings and their relationships.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
A. THE JOURNEY INWARD

I. WHY? WHAT? WHERE?

The journey inward started by asking questions like: Why am I here? What am I here for? Where am I going? I had to clarify what my spirit was before I could find the force behind it. This involved studying many books about religions, mythologies, and philosophies. There was so much that I did not understand and it really did not become clear until after I had my thesis show and had the time to look back, read, and reflect upon what the whole experience meant.

At the beginning of this research, in 1986, I had the opportunity to see a Buddhist exhibition called The Great Eastern Temple, Treasures of the Todai-ji at the Art Institute of Chicago and a show on The Essence of Indian Art at The Asian Museum of San Francisco. These two shows were very strong influences in the ideas for the initial works. There were many things about the Buddhist Philosophy that I could relate to, such as: Happiness or Nirvana, is a state of mind. The Indian Mythology with its many gods was fascinating. I loved the tantric gods and specially liked Shiva, Lord of the Dance, and creator and destroyer of the Universe.
The first time I listened to Joseph Campbell was four months ago on channel XXI in the television program: The broadcasts of Moyers: "Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth". Campbell taught Comparative Mythology in Sarah Lawrence College for many years and died in 1987. In this television program Bill Moyers interviews Joseph Campbell. The following excerpts from this interview helped put my whole experience in perspective:

MOYERS: I came to understand from reading your books-The Masks of God or Hero with a Thousand Faces, for example—that what human beings have in common is revealed in myths. Myths are stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, for significance. We all need to tell our story and to understand our story. We all need to understand death and to cope with death, and we all need help in our passages from birth to life and then to death. We need for life to signify, to touch the eternal, to understand the mysterious, to find out who we are.

CAMPBELL: People say that what we are all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we are really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive.

MOYERS: Myths are clues?
CAMPBELL: Myths are clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life.

MOYERS: What we are capable of knowing and experiencing within?
CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: You changed the definition of a myth from the search to the experience of meaning.

CAMPBELL: Experience of life. The mind has to do with meaning. What is the meaning of a flower? There's a Zen story about a sermon of the Buddha in which he simply lifted a flower. There was only one man who gave him a sign with his eyes that he understood what was said. The Buddha himself is called 'the one thus come'. There is no meaning. What's the
meaning of the universe? What is the meaning of a flea? It's just there. We're so engaged in doing things to achieve purposes of outer value that we forget that the inner value, the rapture that is associated with being alive, is what it's all about.\(^4\)

Bill Moyers in his introduction to the book The Power of Myth/Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers states that:

> Joseph Campbell liked the insight of the Hindu scripture: "Truth is one; the sages call it by many names." All our names and images for God are masks, he said, signifying the ultimate reality that by definition transcends language and art. A myth is a mask of God, too—a metaphor for what lies behind the visible world. However the mystic traditions differ, he said, they are in accord in calling us to a deeper awareness of the very act of living itself. The unpardonable sin, in Campbell's book, was the sin of inadvertence, of not being alert, not quite awake.\(^5\)

These are beautiful words by Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers. Whatever we do could mean different things to different people, and it doesn't matter. What matters is what we learn from the process and that we are aware of the beauty and the magic of the moment.

2. MY HEROES

"In mythology the main character is a hero or heroine who has found or done something beyond normal achievement and experience. A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself."

Joseph Campbell, The Power or Myth

To me my heroes are artists who have transcended
the ordinary and who I admire for their energy, ingenuity, enthusiasm, and the positive feelings and influences they have given me with their art.

I can remember the first time I saw Jonathan Borofsky's work, his 1985 retrospective, at the Whitney Museum of Art, when the double doors of the elevator opened, nobody moved. From the room that we faced came a bombardment of voices, barks, jungle sounds. There was artwork that talked, moved, danced. Borofsky's work was in the floor, the walls, the ceiling. He had transcended anything that I had ever seen in art. After the initial shock we all moved into the room to experience Borofsky's installations. What was most outstanding was that there was so much life and energy in his work and so much substance and meaning behind it. All his works were metaphors or personal symbols. He struck me as being a very effective communicator not only in what he was saying but also in the way he said it. His work was playful and invited audience participation. I will never forget Borofsky's show because I remember feeling as if I had just been to a fair and had experienced a lot of fun.

Other artists that created with installations and that were a very strong influence on my early work were Robert Morris, with his labyrinths and powerful sculptural painted hydrocal works; Alice Aycock, with her magical and mythical machines; Nancy Graves, with her beautiful paintings and sculptures; and Robert Longo, with his two and three dimensional photorealistic constructions. I admired these artists for their technical ability, and their powerful and energetic works. What I had to say with my art about my spirit similarly came uniquely from within me.

As I describe the different parts of my thesis I will mention other artists that have affected my work.
B. THE FORCE

I have always considered myself limitless in my capacity to learn and take action. How did I acquire this faith? I don't know exactly. It could have been when I learned about the accomplishments of my grandfather, my father and my mother. Fortunately I had good role models as I grew up. Maybe I learned this in the analytical labs or research labs at Kodak. I know I have been fortunate to know many very creative people who have motivated me to stretch beyond my abilities at the time.

Learning to turn the obstacles that I encounter into learning experiences and to try again has been one of my greatest assets.

The research from this thesis has helped me to clarify my beliefs and to improve my spiritual values. I also learned that we can create what we want for ourselves, and that there are different ways of doing this, one of which is creative visualization.

I. CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

Much research has been done recently about the mind and how it works. You can program your subconscious mind to work effortlessly on what you want.

Creative visualization is the ability to use your imagination to create a clear image of something you want to happen. Through this concept you continue to focus on the idea or picture regularly, giving it energy until it becomes a reality. First you must know what you want, then you must repeatedly visualize it with a positive feeling. When you are visualizing, you are programming your subconscious mind. Your subconscious mind functions intuitively. Eventually you can be working effortlessly on whatever is necessary to accomplish your goals.
There are many methods of programming yourself to achieve what you want. These methods have been called by many different names, among these are: Self Hypnosis, Neurolinguistic Programming, Silva Mind Control, Subliminal Recordings, Creative Visualization, etc. All involve programming your subconscious mind in a positive way, keeping your mind on what you want, and off the things you don't want.

I used creative visualization in many aspects of this thesis. One of which was, in the production of the photo-sculptures. How I did this is described in The Labyrinth. Another way I used creative visualization, was in preparing this thesis. I visualized innovating the format. I made this visualization a reality by first buying an Amiga computer and learning how to use it. After that, I researched what kind of word processing software to use and taught myself to run it. Then, I took classes at the Visual Studies Workshop to learn to digitize the graphics and learned the following software: Digi-View, Digi-Paint, Deluxe Paint. Next, I bought the printer that would give me the best graphics for my budget. And finally I put the whole project together into a cohesive paper.

This goal made the thesis writing, very exciting and fun to do. The outcome of all this is that I am learning to write. The more I do it the easier it will get. Writing is a very necessary tool in applying for grants and fellowships. Two goals that I visualize obtaining in the near future of my career.

2. My Life a Work of Art

The following words from Shakti Gawain have been a great inspiration:

I like to think of myself as an artist, and my life is my greatest work of art. Every moment is a moment of creation, and each moment of
creation contains infinite possibilities. I can do things the way I've always done them, or I can look at all the different alternatives, and try something new and different and potentially more rewarding. Every moment presents a new opportunity and a new decision. What a wonderful game we are all playing, and what a magnificent art form...

3. MY RAPTURE

Rapture in the Webster's Dictionary is defined as the mystical experience in which the spirit is exalted to a knowledge of divine things.

My rapture is being alive and my love for knowledge.

a. BEING ALIVE

The Aztecs were deeply aware that life was transient within the apparent permanence of the world around them; their poetry likened the soul of man to a butterfly, coming to sip the nectar of a flower for a moment, and then passing out of sight.

The following excerpts from the book Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth with Bill Moyers best summarize my feelings:

MOYERS: In classical Christian doctrine the material world is to be despised, and life is to be redeemed in the hereafter, in heaven, where our rewards come. But you say that if you affirm that which you deplore, you are affirming the world which is our eternity at the moment.

CAMPBELL: Yes, that is what I'm saying. Eternity isn't some later time. Eternity is that dimension of here and now that all
thinking in temporal terms cuts off. And if you don't get it here, you don't get it anywhere. The problem with heaven is that you will be having such a good time there, you won't even think of eternity. You'll just have this unending delight in the beautifil vision of God. But the experience of eternity and now, in all things, whether thought of as good or as evil, is the function of life.

Moyers: This is it.
Campbell: This is it. And that is exactly my philosophy: This is it. So, if this is the only life we have, why not make it the most beautiful life we possibly can dream and imagine.

b. LOVE FOR KNOWLEDGE

"We are all functioning at a small fraction of our capacity to live fully in its total meaning of loving, caring, creating and adventuring. Consequently, the actualizing of our potential can become the most exciting adventure of our lifetime".

_Herber Otto.

The research for this thesis took many paths. In the following pages I will discuss each of the pieces of art work that composed The labyrinth: Dying, Emergent Spirit, New Spirit, Love, the installation My Connections With Humanity, which included The Game Board, Self Portrait, and Torsos; The Peacock, The Artist Flowers, Self Portraits, The Artist The Warrior, The Artist The Witch, and The Artist The Magician; in the description of the pieces I will explain where the ideas came from and where these ideas led me. I will relate the work to mythology and to explain what my symbolic meanings are. All the pieces are self portraits and express the
feelings I was having at the time these pieces were created. I will also name the artists that were strong influences at that time.
CHAPTER II
THE LABYRINTH

"(The labyrinth) is ...at once the cosmos, the world, the individual life, the temple, the man, the womb of the Mother (earth), the convolutions of the brain, the consciousness, the heart, the pilgrimage, the journey, and the Way".

_Jill Purce, The Mystic Spiral_

In the book Mazes And Labyrinths Of The World by Janet Bord, there are many stories and myths about the Labyrinth. This book states that it originated independently in a number of distant civilizations.

The legendary story of the Cretan Labyrinth tells that it was built by Daedalus under the instruction of King Minos of Crete. The labyrinth housed the Minotaur, half bull, half Man. Every few years seven young girls and boys were offered to the Minotaur. Theseus, the great Athenian hero, was among those to be sacrificed. To prevent this from happening he resolved to kill the Minotaur. Minos's daughter Ariadne was attracted to Theseus, and wishing to help him she took the advice of Daedalus and gave him a thread by which he could retrace his steps and escape the labyrinth. Reaching the center,
he killed the Minotaur and left with the boys and girls intended for sacrifice.\textsuperscript{11}

In the fall of 1986 I was researching Robert Morris\textsuperscript{12} and Alice Aycock\textsuperscript{13}. These artists and the book Ornamentalism by Robert Jensen and Patrica Conway\textsuperscript{14} gave me the idea: Why not make a labyrinth that would house my art work? I had thought of making a labyrinth since the beginning of my thesis work but it actually was the last piece created.

To me The Labyrinth signified the many beginnings and ends in the journey through this thesis. It was part of my spirit, to do something, to learn from this, then try again. A symbol of life and energy and an ever increasing galaxy of knowledge. The Labyrinth houses work I produced during the journey of this thesis.

I have always been fascinated with the similarities of many things in nature: an atom, a rose, a hurricane, our solar system, and many galaxies are all circular in shape. In designing my labyrinth I was thinking of the shape of the Tarantula Nebula the heart of the Large Magellanic Clouds.\textsuperscript{15} I was also looking at the shapes of fractals generated with the Macintosh Computer.

In the thesis exhibition I had a separate plywood board with a line map of The Labyrinth indicating the location of the different pieces of art work.

This thesis includes the works that I felt were most relevant to the thesis idea of my spirit, many other works were produced that are not included. All the art work I chose to exhibit inside The Labyrinth are important beginnings in learning about myself and about painting, photography and sculpture.

The journey through The Labyrinth starts with the painting Dying.
Illustration 3. The Lab int Velcro, acr
Illustration 4a. The Labyrinth, 1989-90, wood panel, wood, metal, acrylic paint, Velcro, acrylic fabric, canvas, 78 x 66 x 20 inches.
Illustration 4b. The Labyrinth, Styrofoam, canvas, Velcro, acrylic paint (9×10) feet.
Illustration 4c. The Labyrinth, Styrofoam, canvas, Velcro, acrylic paint (9x10) feet.
Dying is a painting that expresses the pain of losing some one close and dear to my heart. Dying is symbolic on many levels. When I first painted it, I had just lost a friendship and I felt like part of myself was dying. This painting represents how we become attached to people and things and shows the fear of loss. To me this painting was very successful. I wanted to show the sadness on my face and the very fearful burning eye. For a long time, and even now, I still cry when I remember the time when I painted this painting. I like this painting a lot because it came out of my most inner feelings of disintegration and helplessness.

Death teaches us the value of time and the joy of the moment. We realize how precious time is. We don't have forever! Death teaches us to look and to see...and to realize that the people we love aren't going to be the same all the time.16

The painting Dying became one of my favorite paintings because it was the beginning of courage and later it became symbolic of letting go of fear and of words like: never, can't, no, impossible and all negative thoughts that would hold me back in my journey. That is the reason why Dying was placed at the beginning of the labyrinth.
Illustration 5. Dying, canvas, acrylic paint, soft foam, (6x8) feet. (See Illustration 22, page 74 for the transparency used in making this painting).
B. EMERGENT SPIRIT

"One thing that comes out in myth is that at the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light”.

—Joseph Campbell, The Power Of Myth

This painting was painted immediately after the painting Dying. I was starting to recuperate from the pain of loss. I was starting to experience growth and change in my life. After death, the person I cared for existed in a different form, but is always alive in my heart and in my mind. This painting was the beginning of my life as painter and a new way of looking at life.

Emergent Spirit is a painting about birth, growth, and hope. The green in this painting is symbolic of nature. Every winter my flower gardens die; every spring more beautiful flowers grow.
Illustration 6. **Emergent Spirit**, canvas, acrylic paint, soft foam, \(6 \times 8\) feet. (See illustration 22, page 74 for transparency used in making this painting.)
C. NEW SPIRIT

When the New Spirit painting was almost finished I noticed a shape of a bird in the head of the portrait. I left that shape there because when I first painted it, it looked transparent as if I could see inside my mind. At about that time I remember coming in the painting studios one morning and finding a small bird flying around. He had come in through a window that was slightly open. The bird could not get out. I finally was able to catch him and set him free. A similar incident happened another time. Intuitively I felt there a message in these events. I then did research on the mythological significance of birds.

From the very early times there was a universal Indo-European belief that souls could take the form of birds. Latin aves means both "birds" and "ancestral spirits," or ghosts or angels. 17

Becoming a bird in a visionary or trance state was a widespread symbol of initiatory death and rebirth. Shamans and prophets in the South Pacific, Indonesia, Central Asia and Siberia claimed to transform themselves into birds.18

Buddhist yogis said ecstatic flight was the first magical power to be developed by the practice of yoga.

Becoming a bird oneself or being accompanied by a bird indicates the capacity, while still alive, to undertake the ecstatic journey to the sky and beyond.19

In northern Europe, the Goddess Freya owned all the magic feather garments that enabled magicians to fly through the air like birds. The elaborate feather garments of Mayan and Aztec priesthoods probably had the same function, to facilitate their soul-flights.20

To me New Spirit is symbolic of maturity and growth, the starting to learn about myself in a more spiritual way. The bird in the headdress is in the right side of the brain, the side of the brain that controls the emotion of love.
Illustration 7. *New Spirit*, canvas, acrylic paint, soft foam, (6x8) feet.
D. LOVE

"When man has love he is no longer at the mercy of forces greater than himself, for he, himself, becomes the powerful force."

_Léo Buscaglia, Love_

Love, the most beautiful of our emotions is in the center of my labyrinth. My version of love is the torsos with auras and is the strongest force that holds The Labyrinth together.

I wanted this piece to show the radiating energy of the force of love. The force of happiness in love is shown in the dancing cut-out figure and the red colors changing from orange-red to violet-red.

These colors were chosen intuitively. Later I read the book _Color and Human Response_ and found that the Luscher color test describes that, the color red, used freely, may show a simple and uninhibited love of life. Orange-red may indicate vital force, desire, action. Violet to Luscher means:

- mystic union (of red and blue),
- enchantment, a dream made fact, a magical state in which wishes are fulfilled.

Those were the feelings I wanted to express in the sculpture Love.

For ideas on how to design Love I looked at Matisse and his dancing figures and cut-outs. I liked the energy and life within the figures.

When I looked back at the sculptures that composed Love I noticed that these are somewhat heart-shaped. This developed into other meanings that I was not consciously aware of at the time I built these.

Ab was the Egyptian word for heart-soul. The Egyptian
hieroglyphic sign for ab was a dancing figure, and as verb it meant "to dance". This referred to the mystic dance of life going on inside the body—the heartbeat.

The idea of the heartbeat in Oriental Religions was so vital that the very center of the universe was placed "within the heart" by tantric sages. This place was Chidambaram, where Shiva danced to the basic rhythm of eternity. The sages said:

Sound (Nada) represents the State of Power. It is experienced by the yogi when he plunges deep into himself. It is made manifest in the heartbeat. And since the microcosm is finally identical with the macrocosm, when the yogi hears the Nada, this Sound of Power, he is listening to the heartbeat of the absolute.

In this expression of the basic mystical idea that deity is within the human being, the sages in effect admitted that man creates God. The heartbeat was also said to establish the fundamental tempo for poetry, song, music, and dance.
Illustration 8a and 8b. Love, plywood, canvas, acrylic paint, (4 x 6) feet, each panel.
D. MY CONNECTIONS WITH HUMANITY

When I thought about designing this installation I wanted to work in a large installation format. I admired the work of Robert Longo. Technically I liked the way he combined two and three dimensional works. I decided to create an installation that would combine many dimensions. What I had to say in this installation came from my own feelings of wishing to improve my connections with humanity. I had been reading Leo Buscaglia's books and the book Connecting with all the People in your Life by LaUna Huffines. This book states that:

All of us are limited in our relationships by boundaries we drew in the past. We may have set this boundaries long ago to protect ourselves from getting hurt. But, sooner or later, the limits that have protected us will also isolate us from making deeply satisfying relationships—from really connecting.

Fortunately, if we've put up fences, we can learn to cut gates in them; if we built walls, we can add doorways. Through these openings we will find the way in.
1. THE GAME BOARD

"People who have studied perception and sensation know that everyone sees the world in a different way. Yet, it's the same world. We don't observe a tree in the same way. Yet, it's the same tree. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could share that tree and see it in two different ways? Just the concept sends me in orbit. And yet, I hear people constantly saying, 'What have I to offer?' You know what you have to offer? A central piece in the crossword puzzle. Unless you assume the responsibility that picture will never be completed. I'll never see your tree and I'm convinced that we still have misery, despair, agony, all those things, because people didn't actualize themselves and share their worlds. Because if they had, our picture would have been clearer. You have something to paint in that tapestry, or weave, that's uniquely yours. Don't miss the opportunity. You are wondrous. You are magical. There is only one you."

—Leo Buscaglia, Living, Loving and Learning

The Game Board was to me the most important piece in this installation. It was symbolic on many levels: First, in the recognition and celebration that each individual is unique and different. Second, it was also important to me in the different types of connections that we have with different people. Third, it was also symbolic in the many ways I hope I can continue to improve my communication skills from superficial conversations to more meaningful communications. Finally, The Game Board took so long to build that it truly was a labor of love, like many of our most important and significant relationships.

The idea for The Game Board started when a friend of mine was going to teach a class in design. I hoped that I could help in one way or another, and started looking at the work I had done a few years back in my two dimensional design class at Nazareth College. I found a
puzzle was that different designs could be made by moving the pieces around. That inspired the idea for The Game Board.

Different people would make different designs with my painting and in that way they would be making their own paintings.

The important aspect was to recognize that we all are one and at the same time we are all different. As I have learned more about human relationships I have learned to celebrate and accept each individual for what they are. I keep reminding myself not to judge other people, I know I still have much to learn...

As I start making all these beautiful patterns in The Game Board of My Connection with Humanity I can summarize all the designs in two words: "Unconditional Love". This means to me to love people for what they are because each person is unique and different.

I chose a flower shape for the design because flowers are beautiful things. We give flowers to the people we love. When this flower design moves it becomes a flame, like the flame in Shiva's hand, which burns away the veil of time and opens our minds to eternity.32 To me the flame is symbolic of our own eternity, because we live in the minds of the people who love us.

A strong inspiration for the design of the game board was Jack Youngerman.33 I had just seen his 1986 retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NYC., and I liked the simplicity and strong color of his wood reliefs and screens.
Illustration 9a, The Game Board, plywood, acrylic paint, (5x7) feet.
Illustration 9b, The Game Board, plywood, acrylic paint, (5x7) feet.
Illustration 4c, The Game Board, plywood, acrylic paint, 5x7 feet.
2. SELF PORTRAIT

"The images of myth are reflections of the spiritual potentialities of every one of us. Through contemplating these, we evoke their powers in our own lives."


At the time I was working on The Game Board design I was thinking of other ideas and pictures that I could combine with it. One of my original ideas was to incorporate the Indian God Shiva, Lord of the Dance. I was interested in Shiva because at that time I was taking dancing lessons at the YMCA in Rochester, and because he was such a powerful God.

In Indian mythology Shiva is everything: he is the root and support of the universe; he is the creative-destructive flow of life that rushes through it. Shiva is existence. He embodies the structure of the whole universe; he is also its potent all-pervasive energy—a radiant form which appears in many images (light, fire), which he uses to create, maintain, and destroy, and to release every being in the universe.34

In Hindu religion, Hindus strive to become one with Shiva. Becoming is the path of knowledge. By meditating upon the Great God, the embodiment of the Absolute, such a person comes to know that his true self and ultimate reality are one, and that the apparent differences are illusory. For Hindus becoming like Shiva lies the hope for an end to pain and the promise of release, not in the next reincarnated life but in this one.35

One day I had the final design of The Game Board next to one of my self portrait sketches, and I liked how they looked together. I decided to include my portrait in the installation instead of Shiva's portrait, not because I wanted to become Shiva; but because I liked how the two sketches looked together. In this way My Connections with Humanity became more personal.
Later, as I was listening to the tapes that describe Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) by Anthony Robbins, he said, that the way we build rapport with other people is by matching and mirroring the other person, by imitating their tone of voice, breathing patterns, body language and looks. This gives a feeling of a total mental connection. It fascinates me how this NLP idea, which is the study of how you communicate with yourself and others, relates to becoming like Shiva in Hinduism.
3. TORSOS

The idea for Torsos developed from my previous piece: Love. I wanted to show the synergy between the two dancing figures with the large aura.

The synergy of two people working together for a common goal can be best explained in the following two experiences: Recently, I was fortunate to be able to help a friend with a design problem. We worked all night; and had several working drawings we were creating. When one of us became tired of working on a particular design, we would switch problems and for awhile we would contribute as much as we could to that design. Then again we would switch problems. Every time we switched, we looked at the problem with fresh eyes and were able to significantly improve the design. We became a mastermind working together. With this synergy we did more than each of us could have done alone, in the same time.

Another example of synergy was in the construction of Torsos. Kerwin Timco, a senior wood major built this sculpture for me. It was a terrific experience to work with Kerwin. I designed it Kerwin built it, and then I sanded it. Torsos was a sculpture bigger than I could handle physically. Kerwin was very fast and knew exactly what to do. He did a beautiful job and saved me a lot of precious time.
Illustration 11. Torsos, plywood, acrylic paint, (8x8) feet, each panel.
The Peacock was a demonstration I did for parents weekend.

The idea for The Peacock came from an infrared photograph of myself. I called this painting The Peacock because the eye in the painting looks like the eye in a peacock feather. Also, the head of the painting looks like bird feathers.

In the Orient, the peacock was a Bird of Paradise. Peacocks were encouraged to wander about the precincts of any Hindu temple and in the royal gardens. Like doves in western Europe, peacocks were considered soul-birds and emblems of good fortune.37

When I was creating this art work I felt like the Webster's Dictionary definition of a peacock: "One Making a proud display of herself".38
Illustration 12. The Peacock, canvas, acrylic paint, pastel, (5x7) feet.
G. THE ARTIST’S FLOWERS

For about 6 years before I began the MFA painting program at RIT, I painted flowers. Every year I planted my gardens and watched them grow. For me cultivating my gardens has been one of my most wonderful life experiences.

My favorite artist and friend Joseph Raffael introduced me to flower painting. I first met Joseph at one of his shows at the Nancy Hoffman Gallery in New York City. Joseph sent me a print of a beautiful white flower, the name of this print was Along The Secret Path. Nearly every year since 1984 I have gone to see him at his openings. One year Joseph had a painting of a Buddha in one of his shows and this is why I became interested in learning more about Buddhism.

The Artist’s Flowers were photographs of the flowers I brought for the painters at 50 West Main Street, in the fall of 1986. These photographs became some of the first posterizations that I made.
H. SELF PORTRAITS

Van Gogh, Lucas Samaras, and Cindy Sherman were artists that inspired me at the time I was making these self portraits.

What I liked about these artists were all the different aspects of their personalities or masks that they showed with their self portraits.

These images were significant in that they were the beginning of the posterized self portraits, a technique that I later used for the photographs in the photo-sculptures.
I. THE ARTIST THE WARRIOR

"Creativity means generating new ideas, it also means doing whatever is necessary to make these ideas a reality. Often this means fighting your way past the obstacles you encounter."


Since I started my thesis work until the beginning of my last year I had been going in many directions. I had explored painting through both photographic and sculptural techniques; intuitively, I felt it was time to put everything together.

I had been looking at the work of Karel Appel and I liked the way he combined photography, painting and sculpture. I also liked the playfulness of his work. I thought that I could also combine these three techniques in an amusing way.

I knew that I had a short time frame and I had to get organized. I was listening to Roger Von Oeck's creativity tapes and he said that to make your ideas into reality you must think of yourself as a warrior. Strategy is the craft of the warrior. To have an objective and a plan is crucial.

You must strengthen your shield and develop a thick skin. When you are working with new ideas, you can expect that people will take a shot at you.

That is why The Artist The Warrior, my first photo-sculpture, had a thick shield. Courage is to have the mental strength to proceed in spite of fear. Cor is the latin word for heart and spirit, and means to put your heart into your effort. That is probably why the three photo-sculptures have the artist's hand over her heart. I was not consciously aware of this when I made these pieces.
Coming up with new ideas is easy, but to put them into reality is another issue. It takes time, money, the ability to take risks and you might have to fight to get your ideas into action.

I thought of myself as a combination of a guerrilla woman, and a samurai warrior. I did not know if my ideas would work, and I knew that there was a possibility that I might die in my battle. I had to trust myself.

The Way of the sword means not only fencing training but also living by the code of honour of the samurai elite. Warfare was the spirit of the samurai's every day life, and he could face death as if it were a domestic routine. The meaning of life and death by the sword was mirrored in the everyday conduct of the feudal Japanese, and he who realized the resolute acceptance of death at any moment in his everyday life was a master of the sword.⁴²

Part of my strategy or plan was to work on the photosculptures and the flower and the nude paintings at the same time. I could then decide which works would be shown in the thesis exhibition, once these were completed.
Illustration 17a. The Artist The Warrior, canvas, acrylic paint, Styrofoam, posterized photographs, Velcro (6x6) feet.
Illustration 17b. The Artist The Warrior, (detail), canvas, rofoam, posterized photographs, Velcro.
Illustration 17c. The Artist The Warrior, (detail) canvas, acrylic paint, Styrofoam, posterized photographs, Velcro.
J. The Artist The Witch

I had just seen the play "Into The Woods" in New York City. This is a story about what happens after the end of fairy tales. Does everybody live happily ever-after? An ugly witch wants to become beautiful, and she does by making all the other people in the story help her. When she becomes beautiful, however, she loses her supernatural powers; and she can no longer protect herself and the towns people from the giant that wants to crush them. The people and the witch have to learn to rely on their human powers to survive.

Applying the moral of the play to my thesis I had to rely on my own powers to make the photo-sculptures work. Did I purposely want the other flower and nude paintings to fail, so that the photo-sculptures would be my best work? Consciously no, subconsciously, probably yes.
Illustration 18a. The Artist The Witch, canvas, acrylic posterized photographs, Velcro (6x6) feet.
Illustration 18b. The Artist The Witch, (detail), canvas, acrylic paint, Styrofoam, posterized photographs, Velcro.
Illustration 18c. The Artist The Witch, (detail), canvas, acrylic paint, Styrofoam, posterized photographs, Velcro.
Illustration 18d. The Artist The Witch, (detail), canvas, acrylic paint, Styrofoam, posterized photographs, Velcro.
K. The Artist The Magician

The results I produced from the photo-sculptures were amazing, well beyond what I would have expected. The design for these paintings worked at three viewing distances: far, middle and close up. I really believe that there were magical forces at work in the creation of these paintings.

When I was painting The Artist The Magician, I was thinking that I could convert the foreground flowers into doves.

In mythology, Christians adopted the feminine dove as a symbol of the Holy Ghost, originally the Goddess Sophia, representing God's "Wisdom".
Illustration 19a. The Artist The Magician, canvas, acrylic paint, Styrofoam, posterized photographs, Velcro, (8x8) feet.
Illustration 19b. The Artist The Magician, (detail), canvas, acrylic paint, Styrofoam, posterized photographs, Velcro.
Illustration 19c. The Artist The Magician, (detail), canvas, acrylic paint, Styrofoam, posterized photographs, Velcro.
Illustration 19d. *The Artist The Magician*, (detail), canvas, acrylic paint, Styrofoam, posterized photographs, Velcro.
CHAPTER III
THE INSTALLATIONS

At the thesis show, I decided to show my work in two installations. There had been a large change in the evolution of my work since I began my thesis. It was not until after I had time to think about what had happened that I decided to call the installations My Conscious mind, and My Subconscious Mind.

Recently I discovered that the most significant Aztec gods in Mexican history were Quetzalcoatl, representing the conscious intelligence and Tezcatlipoca, representing the unconscious shadow in the mind.\textsuperscript{44}

Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent, Lord of Healing and magical herbs, was the symbol of learning, of poetry and of all things beautiful, the Lord of Hope and the brilliant Lord of the Morning Star. He was the spirit who brought the beneficent power of the sun god to all humans, animals and vegetation.\textsuperscript{45} The god Quetzalcoatl was also the Lord of Life, who brought penitence, love, and exemption from the usual rituals of sacrifice and blood offering, and he was, therefore, a figure of divine love.\textsuperscript{46}

Tezcatlipoca, whose name means Smoking Mirror, formed a
total contrast to the spirit of Quetzalcoatl. He was the most powerful of the earthly spirits. Tezcatlipoca gave the Aztecs control over other nations. He was a god ruling the earth's surface. In the east his color was yellow in honour of the rising sun, and the fruitfulness of the maize plant. The southern Tezcatlipoca was the Blue Hummingbird. In the west his colour was red, and symbolized the blood of sacrifice. In the north he was the spirit of witchcraft and magic. He was thought to be present in every shoulder, whispering thoughts into the mind, suggesting violence and trickery. In all forms he was the patron of warriors and war.

These gods sounded to me like my two installations, and that why I decided to call these My Conscious Mind and My Subconscious Mind.
A. MY CONSCIOUS MIND

The conscious mind is the reasoning mind. It is that phase of the mind that chooses, and makes decisions. The conscious mind is sometimes referred to as your objective mind because it deals with outward objects. Its media of observation are your five physical senses. Your objective mind is your guide and director in contact with your environment. You gain knowledge through your five senses. Your objective mind learns through observation, experience, and education.48

In this installation my conscious mind was my outward world concerned with other people.

I call My Connections With Humanity My Conscious Mind, because, from the beginning my goal was to make an installation that would consist of three different elements. My challenge was to make them interrelate. The Game Board would be the connections, and the Torsos would be the synergy from this connections. By substituting my Self Portrait for Shiva's portrait at the creative stage of the design I made these connections mine. For the thesis show I chose to show this installation as it was designed. I could not accept showing only part of it.
Illustration 20. My Conscious Nurtured Connections With Humanity. (26x12x5) feet.
B. MY SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

The subconscious mind is the subjective mind that takes cognizance of its environment through means independent of the five senses. Your subconscious mind perceives through intuition. It is the intelligence that makes itself known when the objective mind is suspended or in a sleepy, drowsy state.49

In this installation the concept that I expressed was my inner world concerned more with who I am, or who I have to be, at different times in my life at a subconscious level. The Artist The Warrior, The Artist The Witch, The Artist The Magician and The Labyrinth made up this installation.

I was not consciously aware of the design piece's significance when I created them. Consider, for example, the photo-sculptures for the paintings The Artist The Warrior, The Artist The Witch, The Artist The Magician: These designs were made by brainstorming many ideas by myself. (See Appendix 1, page 68 for definition of brainstorming). I later selected the pieces I especially liked. I can remember saying: I like these designs, because this looks like a warrior, this looks like a witch. The magician did not appear in the picture until after I had made the photo-sculpture for this painting. As the work progressed, the importance of the meaning of these characters became more significant. At the time of the brainstorming I was just cutting pieces of paper and putting these together for ideas. I did not say: "I am going to design a warrior, a witch and a magician".

When I designed The Labyrinth, I was not consciously aware of the direct path from the outside to the center of The Labyrinth. This perhaps would be interpreted as not having to get lost to find my center. I was not consciously aware that the photo-sculptures were located near the exit of the journey, which is also the entrance. I felt that this might suggest that these
alternate personas of my psyche have existed in me since the
beginning of the journey through The Labyrinth, and
one could easily start there and finish with the self
portrait Dying.
Illustration 21. My Subconscious Mind, (26x8x12) feet. (the Artist The Witch is not shown in photo)
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

"Schopenhauer, in his splendid essay called 'On an Apparent Intention on the Fate of the Individual,' points out that when you reach an advanced age and look back over your life, it may seem to have had a consistent order and plan, as though composed by some novelist. Events that when they occurred had seemed accidental and of little moment turn out to have been indispensable factors in the composition of a consistent plot.

So who composed that plot? Schopenhauer suggests that just as your dreams are composed by an aspect of yourself of which your consciousness is unaware, so, too, your whole life is composed by the will within you. And just as people whom you will have met apparently by mere chance became leading agents in the structuring of your life, so, too, will you have served unknowingly as an agent, giving meaning to the lives of others. The whole thing gears together like like a big symphony, with everything unconsciously structuring everything else. And Schopenhauer concludes that it is as though our lives were features of the one great dream of a single dreamer in which all the dream characters dream, too; so that everything links to everything else, moved by the one will to life which is the universal will in nature."

—Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth
That is exactly how I feel about this thesis. It was as if I had dreamed the plot from the beginning. Again the concept of The Game Board comes back in a slightly different form. Everything we do is connected to everything else. Our challenge is to experience the magic and beauty of the moment, because each of the beautiful pieces of the puzzle we are creating become part of the different designs we are painting with all our lives.
APPENDIX I

THE PROCESS

To realize the learning process was probably the most significant aspect of this whole journey, because the work produced would ultimately be either sold, destroyed, stored, or given away. The learning experience of how to make the most effective use of my time in the creation of future works is what I keep for myself.

A. WHOLE-BRAIN THINKING

Researchers have found that the brain has two distinct thinking processes: one is the sequential, analytical and verbal housed in the left half of the brain, and the other is the holistic, visual and intuitive in the brain's right hemisphere.

These two lobes are above the primitive brain or limbic system which is a network of nerve centers above the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus is the regulatory center for vital activities, many of which lie outside our conscious awareness: endocrine levels, water balance, sexual rhythms, and the autonomic nervous system. It is also the command center for many complex mood and motivational states, including anger, placidity, fatigue, and hunger. The primitive brain serves as the connection between the right and left hemispheres and the
This brain is referred to as the subconscious brain. The book, *Whole-Brain Thinking*, recommends that in order to make the most of your mind you should think about how you think. You need to know how it feels to be processing thoughts primarily in your right or your left hemisphere. When you can identify these thinking experiences you can purposefully alter, recreate, heighten, or move between or among them.

This book also says that you can make better use of your mind. It involves exercising both sides of your brain and relating the two. You go through variations of this process constantly. This does not mean that one side of your brain shuts down completely while the other one is active; it means that one side is active more than the other and that the shifts occur because of changes in activities or perception.

When I first started doing three-dimensional constructions coming up with the ideas and designs for what I wanted to do was very difficult. I had not yet learned that I could make better use of my mind and my time by dividing the process into three parts: the creative, analytical, and completing stages.

1. **THE CREATIVE STAGE**

The creative stage is the right brain mode. One quick way of inventing new ideas is through brainstorming.

The book *Whole-Brain Thinking* explains the brainstorming process. When you are brainstorming you want to generate as many new ideas as fast as possible. You do not worry how far-fetched the ideas are. The impractical ideas might serve as stepping stones to new ideas. What is important is to generate as many ideas as fast as possible, this way your left and analytical brain
will not have time to interfere. Once you start looking at the design too long you start to analyze it and to ask questions like: Is the design right? Does it make sense? At this stage you do not want this to happen. You want as many new ideas as fast as possible and it doesn't matter how fantastic these are.

A good way to program a shift to the right brain mode is to listen to music, because the right brain is the musical side. Try to concentrate and do not talk, because the left brain is the verbal side.

The tapes on How You Can Be More Creative by Roger Van Oeck explain many methods on how to be more creative. The following suggested methods were most helpful to me in designing the photo-sculptures:

1) Use discontinuity. By this I mean use ideas that disrupt our thinking pattern and force us to make new connections. In my case, the incorporation of photography in my work forced me to develop new ideas.

2) The use of the manipulation verbs such as: Enlarge, fantasize, compare, reverse, combine, adapt, reduce, eliminate. Manipulation, means to change by artful means so as to serve one's purpose. I manipulated the shapes for the photo-sculptures. This activity was done by making copies of the photographs and by cutting these into many different patterns, while keeping to the outline of the photographs. These pieces were later combined into new designs through the brainstorming process.

3) Note the times when you think that you are more creative, and do your creative thinking and designing at these times. For me it was during the mornings on weekends, because at these times I was rested and more relaxed.

4) A good way to come up with a good idea is to come up with many ideas. Look for many answers.
2. THE ANALITICAL STAGE

The analytical stage is the left brain mode. This stage was probably the easiest for me to do, I would select one or two of the designs that I thought I liked from the many I had done, and then consulted with my advisors. During critique, final selection was based on the following considerations:

What is interesting about the design? What are the drawbacks? What feelings are elicited from the designs? Why? What aspects should be emphasized? What minimized? How the design should be constructed to make it physically strong and easy to move.

3. THE COMPLETING STAGE

The completing stage was when the actual construction of the work began. Previous training in three-dimensional design gave me the impression that I had to have everything worked out in the model stage, through to the last detail. When I did this in the three-dimensional constructions I built, I realized that once I began building the art work, and after clarifying the visual image, I would lose interest in the project. Usually it was then torture to finish the construction.

In The Artist The Warrior, The Artist The Witch, and The Artist The Magician I did not have the design completely worked out right from the beginning. This sustained my interest as I progressed through the construction of the pieces. In these paintings the photo-sculpture part of the paintings were done first. When these were almost finished I decided to attach them to a canvas and make these a larger painting. This made the works much more interesting and exciting to complete. What I learned from here was that it was acceptable to keep building the design, and to become more open,
receptive, and flexible as new ideas influenced the work in progress.

B. TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS

Many techniques and materials were tried, I liked working with wood. However, after one of the large sculptures fell on my foot while moving it, I changed to Styrofoam.

The Game Board and Torsos were made of MDO or Signal, a very special kind of plywood, that did not split when cut with a saber saw. This plywood did not need sanding because it had paper laminated on the outside.

The Torsos were made of a particle board called MD-44. Canvas was laminated to the board to give it strength and to give me a better painting surface. The drawback with MD-44 was that it was very heavy. The MDO and the MD-44, sold by Allied Plywood NY, were easy to obtain in the Rochester area.

The photo-sculptures and The Labyrinth were made with Styrofoam. Canvas was laminated to the styrofoam for strength. These pieces were attached to the main canvas with Velcro, glued with gel medium.

I used acrylic paints for my palate. These were purchased from Golden Artist Colors, Inc. Bell Road, New Berlin, NY.
1. MODEL BUILDING

The first models I made were made of plywood. These became sculptures. I know I spent too much time making and painting the models. The colors that I used in the models usually did not work for the larger pieces.

Later I made my models out of paper or Foamcore, as part of the brainstorming process. When I was making the photo-sculptures I had just seen the Frank Stella exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, New York City. I liked the way he made his models, by cutting and glueing paper and Foamcore. This became the media for my models.
2. THE PROJECTIONS

Vermeer,57 and Canaletto,58 used the camera obscura, the projection of images in a darkened room or box, by creating a small hole in a shutter.59

Many contemporary artists project small drawings images, or photographic transparencies to make larger images. Two artists that utilize this process are: Jonathan Borofsky and Joseph Raffael. The projector, which could orient and situate images in any place he chose, enabled Borofsky to experiment with inverted imagery and to paint around corners and doors and onto the ceiling.60 Joseph Raffael projects his images from slides and paints the light on the objects.61

I used Kodalith film to make the transparencies for the photographic projections. The images were projected and traced on the canvas. This was a quick way to make large images on the canvas with only a small amount of distortion. The transparencies were sometimes solarized on the Kodalith film. The process for making these photographic images is described in the book Experimental Photography by John Warren.62 The design for the flower of The Game Board was a small drawing on Mylar. This was projected on paper that I then used as a pattern when tracing the wood shapes.
3. THE PHOTOGRAPHY

The Artist Flowers and the Self Portraits were a combination of solarization and posterization processes.

The color photography for the photo-sculptures The Artist The Warrior, The Artist The Witch, and The Artist The Magician, were posterizations.

The photographic transparencies in the photo-sculptures were made with Kodalith film.
Illustration 25. Copy of photograph for *The Artist the Warrior*, and *The Artist the Magician*. 
I incorporated the Macintosh computer in my work. The first sketches of the Labyrinth were created by using the Pro-3D program. I used the MacPaint computer program as a brainstorming tool for generating new ideas for the labyrinth design.

Fractals were used during the brainstorming. These were cut into pieces using the cut and paste features of MacPaint. Many fantastic drawings were generated and observed. I was trying to break set patterns and to come up with new designs. After I did this activity for many days, I put all the drawings away; and without looking at any of these resource drawings I cut several pieces of Foamcore. Using a glue gun, I made my foam core model. This took me approximately about two hours.
Illustration 26. Pro-3D sketches for The Labyrinth.
Illustration 27. Pro-3D sketches for The Labyrinth.
Illustration 28. Pro-3D sketches for The Labyrinth.
5. PAINTING AND DRAWING TECHNIQUES

Many painting and drawing techniques were studied as I developed my thesis.

Dying was painted with the palette knife.

Emergent Spirit and New Spirit were painted with large brush strokes. Paint mixed with gel medium gave my work density. For more texture, I used gel medium as a glue to adhere soft foam on the canvas.

Love, The Game Board and Torsos were painted with large flat areas of paint.

The Self Portrait from My Connections with Humanity combined many layers of thrown paint and paint applied by brush.

The Peacock was a combination of pastel drawing, thrown paint and applied painted areas.

The Artist The Warrior, The Artist The Witch, and The Artist The Magician were a combination of flat areas of paint, pastel outline drawing, brush strokes, and thrown paint. These paintings were on the plywood that supported the canvas when it was painted. In this way, the artist studio, my inner world would be brought to the gallery. This was in contrast with the installation of My Connections With Humanity, my outer world.

The Labyrinth was painted with flat areas of paint and areas that expose brush strokes.
Illustrations 31 and 32. Works in progress.
Illustration 33. Works in progress.
Illustrations 34 and 35. Works in progress.
Illustrations 36 and 37. Works in progress.
APPENDIX II
RESOURCES

A. NOTES


3 Floyd H Ross, and , Tynette Hills. The Great Religions by which Men Live. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1983), 64.


5 Ibid., xvii.


8 Ibid., 11.


18 Ibid.


21 The Luscher color test was developed by Max Luscher a swiss scientist. The short edition of this test includes eight colors, which are described as orange-red, bright yellow, blue-green, dark blue, violet, brown, neutral gray, and black. In undertaking the Luscher Test a person arranges the eight colors from left to right in order of preference—the ones he likes best at the left, and the ones he likes least (or dislikes) at the right. The book is then consulted. Interpretations are given of best-liked and least-liked hues, for pairs of colors, and for combinations of best-liked and least-liked.


23 Ibid., 116.
24bid.
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35Ibid., 98.
39Roger Von Oech. How You Can Be More
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Ibid., 43, 45.

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Ibid., 18.


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58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., 29.


63. Ibid., 58, 120.

64. Pro-3D, Chicago, Illinois: Enabling Technologies, Inc. (Macintosh Computer)

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3. CHAPTER III


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