

METAMORPHISM AND SELF CRITICISM

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University of Minnesota, Duluth

Art Education 295
Problems in Art Education
Under the Direction of
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A Requirement for the Degree
Master of Arts Plan B

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To Professor Arthur E. Smith, University of Minnesota, Duluth, I owe the inspiration and the direction of my problem, the training which prepared me to undertake such an investigation and the criticism of my results.
D.E.E.

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Everything in nature is constantly in the process of becoming something else, vegetable matter gradually evolves into animal, animal into mineral in time, mineral becomes again vegetable matter. It is an endless round. Man, himself, is one of the steps in the process of change, a process which lies behind the miracles of birth, growth, death and resurrection and is the basis of religion. I consider my sculpture as a celebration of this constant metamorphosis...

John Rood, Sculptor

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

All art has as its base the desire to communicate. All art strives to communicate with someone. In some cases the group with whom the artist is able to communicate is limited--in extreme instances art speaks only to its creator, but the fact remains that art must communicate to be effective. If a work does not do this, it is not resolved. It may be finished--which is to say that the artist is done with it or tired of it--but it is not a work of art.

Pre-historic man first etched on a rock to relate information about religion, hunting or war: the thing that concerned his contemporaries most, and art, no matter how complex the world has grown, or how devious and varied the side-tracks of thought, has always, somehow, retained this basic lofty function: communicating the contemporary message.

If the success of a work of art depends upon its ability to communicate, one must consider what factors go into successful communication.

First there is creative expression. Creative expression is fundamental to art because it is a basic prerequisite of effective communication. Just as the effectiveness of language is directly proportional to the creativity of the

speaker or writer, so the effectiveness of art is directly proportional to the creativity of the artist. Related to the concept of creativity is the idea of change. Creativity is an ever changing process. Art and the artist cannot stand still. They must be changing, evolving, improving, striving to communicate an idea in a new and different way.

In his desire to communicate, man has also striven for accuracy, and this has driven him into the search for what he calls 'truth.' In his quest for truth, he has gained new insight into his own behavior and, consequently, the behavior of all men. As he found it necessary to delve deeper and deeper into his own being to unlock certain concepts of what is true, or right, or fundamental, he has applied psychiatric methods. It can be further assumed, then, that in order to communicate effectively, the artist must understand man.

First, he must understand himself. In doing this, he gains invaluable insight into the behavior of all men. Eventually, if he successfully pursues this course, he must be enriched with the understanding of the relationship of men to men and the interfunctioning of the herd. These relationships establish that complex institution called society.

No artist can hope to communicate unless another factor is also present. He must be equipped with some facts. Painting is not a technique or a formula: principles of color manipulation and application are merely rudimentary

stepping stones to an alphabet; mastery of this enables the artist to say something. The painter's real message is concerned with the role of man and, in particular, himself in his society. Painting is a way of life--a philosophy--no matter how primitive or lacking in organization. It contains some personal beliefs, and doubts, and anguish for whoever steps up to the canvas; to deal with these elements effectively, the artist must have established a conceptual relationship among men, society and himself to be expressed in his work.

The art, then, that a picture conveys has little to do with dabs and smears and dribbles of paint. These are mere tools to be used by the experienced and knowledgeable painter for the purpose of effective communication. Lacking in spirit, direction, and logic, these devices will remain meaningless. These tools and the ideas of the painter must merge. The real value of a painting, the quality which makes it priceless, is not its concern with the nominal amount of paint and varnish, the gesso or the canvas and the frame. The real value of a painting is a variable: the degree of the painter's own spirit which he has been able to capture permanently on canvas and, more importantly, communicate to the viewer.

This is certainly not to advocate a return to the Renaissance Art, an age when one finds rugged individualism as one of the supreme ingredients of an art producer. The journey toward the idyllic idealism would tarnish with

proximity. Man need not regress in time to understand himself and be whole. It can be found in any age.

People are asking what modern painting is all about. It is about communication. Some of this communication is abstract. Abstraction is not frightening. All men abstract to some degree. Abstraction is simply an attempt to communicate, to make a metaphor, to read between the lines, to say one thing when you mean another. It is modern man's ability to utilize abstractions that differentiates him from other ages.

Successful painting, then, depends upon one's ability as a painter to say something about himself. This is often the most difficult thing to do. If the answer lies on the surface and fails to probe or tends to be a cliché, it is a failure. The solution calls for the artist to use logic and observation to overcome his inhibitions and his desire to satisfy others. It demands a constant seeking and reexamination of oneself, a thrusting behind and beyond the veil of pretense: that wall of security with which we surround ourselves in order to co-exist with the least resistance. The only way to become a mature artist is to cut through the facade and face the revealed man squarely. An artist must do away with sham; he must subject himself to scrutiny and have the perceptual concepts to do something about it. This is the hard way, but the true therapy of art. Art is really an attempt to master and measure ourselves; hence, an appeal to the intellect that surpasses the limitations of pleasures

and pastimes. The artist does not let pleasure confuse the meaning of attainment. This is the secret of art: it has no limitations of depth except those within the individual artist. When he continues to grow and pursue, the limitations of the artist change because of this growth and pursuit; then another level--a higher level--of satisfaction in art is reached.

It is also the mark of the mature artist--regardless of his media--to be able to verbalize about his work. Despite what has been said about seeing abstractly, the artist must be able to verbalize the concepts, ideas, influences and changes that make up the body of his work. That is the purpose of this paper: to trace my development as an artist; to examine the creativity, the change, the philosophy, the truths that are basic to my communication as an artist.

To trace this development, however, requires an organizational principle. As a result, this paper examines my development by analyzing the influence of specific artists on my work and the changes these influences have wrought. This is a difficult task, but to slough this off as being impossible, or rationalize that language is inadequate, is to shirk a responsibility and to admit a personal lack of logic, organization and ability.

CHAPTER II

PAUL HAPKE

PLATE I



When I

reflect back on my college courses and the instructors who influenced me, I can actually say my painting started in 1958. An instructor who impressed me and influenced me a great

PLATE II



STILLIFE, 1956

deal was Mr. Paul Hapke. I can say: Mr. Paul Hapke started me on my painting career.

When I began painting, I had been concerned with realism. Mainly, I was concerned with a representational type of presentation. I could see that my paintings were slick; they were commercial; they were full of cliches; they were very strict--they were dead.

Mr. Hapke influenced me because, in his early works, he thought of things in big, bold terms. He liked to let himself go: covering large areas with bold, intense color in non-objective designs. Mr. Hapke's work takes on a characteristic of dimension. He paints with auto enamel and hard-board. One who works with Mr. Hapke cannot help but be overwhelmed by his personality and his work. It is easy to emulate him, and this was a problem I had in my work.

This particular instructor was so strong that, in his class, I just automatically emulated his work. Through discussion and criticism, he--in one way or another, consciously or unconsciously--coerced one into working in a particular manner. Since I had never before worked abstractly, I found it difficult. The forms were unfamiliar to me and therefore cumbersome. I was not familiar with design principles; I did not understand organization; I did not understand paint; I did not understand the materials I was working with. Mr. Hapke forced me into coping with all of these things. I worked abstractly, Mr. Hapke's way, and I began to understand.

I worked abstractly and learned. As I worked with him quarter after quarter, he molded me into what he believed was a painter.

When I was Mr. Hapke's student, I believed I was expressing myself, but in reality, I think one emulates him. Many students and faculty felt that his whole class was just a small group of 'Hapkes' and that he turned out replicas of himself, one after another.

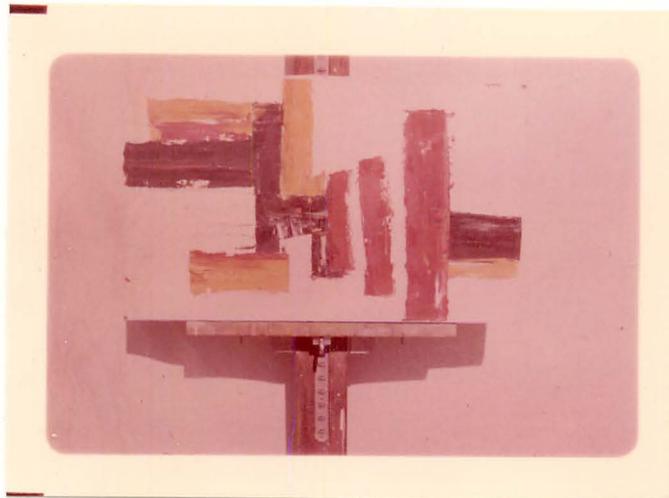
Emulating Mr. Hapke is one of the real drawbacks and hazards of having him as an instructor, but I also think that one of the advantages of being his pupil is that he teaches you what painting is all about. He tried to free my soul and let me

speak through my paintings about how I felt.

My early work lacked organization. I can see it as I review my canvases. I did not know exactly what I was doing. I

was throwing paint around; I was manipulating areas; I was searching for different techniques; I had trouble with muddiness in my work; I lacked color association; I lacked good line and strong areas. I could not control large works at all because when I increased my work in size, the areas became so large that I could not comprehend how to organize

PLATE III



ABSTRACTION, 1956

them; the whole form of the painting changed. For me, this experience was a challenge and initiated change in my painting.

I began working from forms familiar to me, that I was safe with. Now I could get a certain amount of positive response from others which had not been forthcoming when I was working abstractly with unfamiliar forms. Within this process of change I was creating poor work, but still, I felt inside, this was the right way to go. I felt more comfortable. This was a way of painting that I enjoyed. I knew my paintings were bad--very bad--but this approach to painting was fulfilling and rewarding to me personally.

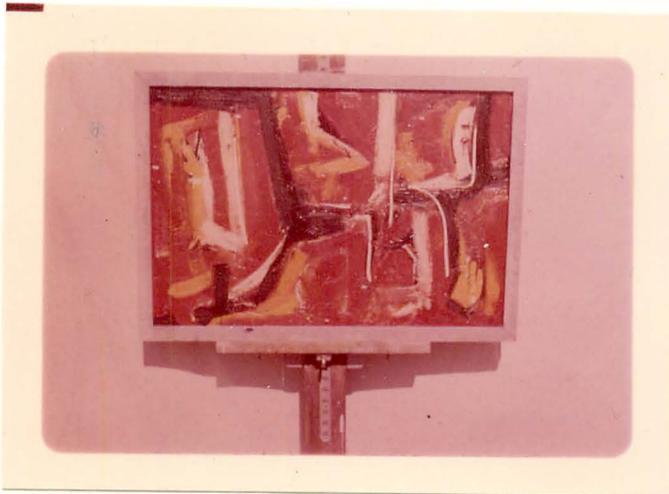
When I view these paintings now, I cannot find words to describe how bad they really are. One of my earliest paintings was one I had fun doing: I worked with a palette knife; I completely broke away from the realism in my painting with the use of simple vertical and horizontal lines. For me, this was a big step. This is the most primitive of organization, but I felt my painting was not too badly organized--even though it was quite simple--and I felt it to be quite good. I am using this as one of my examples. White--Black--Yellow. Mr. Hapke helped me in breaking away from reality to working non-objectively and abstractly. He provided a way for me to stress an increase in size, although I did not have the courage to work larger paintings. He loosened my attitude toward the application of paint. My paintings had quality--we termed it paint quality: they were not flat or muted. My paintings had a radiance about them.

PLATE IV



However, I am aware now, upon reflection, that Mr. Hapke was too strong a personality. I did not have the freedom to

PLATE V



ABSTRACTION, 1957

express how I felt about my work, or what I wanted to do, or what I was trying to do. I was rushed into my painting without a sufficient background in design. I did not understand what I was doing in an organiza-

tional sense. I could not work on a large scale and control my areas. I did not have the maturity to do this. Working abstractly presents a vast number of problems to the artist,

problems which never present themselves when working realistically.

When I look at Mr. Hapke's early works, I am aware of a relationship between our work. I can see how he contributed a great deal to my development. I can also see that, even though subconsciously much of his teaching influenced me, my work is, in a sense, different from his. Mr. Hapke works with line more than I do. Prevalent in most of his work (discovered when I looked at his paintings and reflected on his teaching) is a dominating influence with the use of black. Mr. Hapke, in order to bring out his forms, outlines them, not necessarily literally or completely, but he uses black in most of his works--in almost all of his works. He uses big, bold black areas to bring out his forms. At times he lacked organization as he worked. His work looked chaotic, unrelated and splotchy. It was difficult to establish a good association with

PLATE VI

his forms or to make them relate and look organized. Mr. Hapke tried to overpower the viewer with the work's size and its bold color. Even though he lacked a good



LANDSCAPE, 1951

organization in his early works, I think many of his paintings are outstanding. I consider him to be an outstanding painter. He would usually limit himself to four or five colors, or the bright primary colors and to the use of white and of black. For example, he uses bright oranges, bright reds, bright blues. When you view his paintings, the impact of the colors demands your response. I like Mr. Hapke's paintings because they are never subtle: they are intense and you respond to the colors and to the shapes and to the tremendous size. His paintings are representative of his personality.

Mr. Hapke's influences are very dominant in my early paintings. I think my work, now, shows Mr. Hapke's influence in my use of color, in the larger canvas size with which I work and in the way I work from realism. He forced me to work from realistic forms: stilllife, landscape, portraiture, into the pure non-objective and abstractional. Mr. Hapke forced me to work with forms and shapes and colors, an approach to my painting which I had never handled before. I had not thought myself capable of handling this approach, but I was, and because of this experience, I came to a better understanding of what painting is all about. Mr. Hapke forced me to express myself abstractly and freed me from my inhibitions. I found that I enjoyed my painting more than I ever had before.

When I reflect about my work and the way Mr. Hapke has influenced my painting, I think of the ways in which I have changed since my early paintings: 1958, 1959 and 1960

compared with my later works: 1964, 1965 and 1966. In my earlier work I tried to work from a simple idea to a more complex one, to one that was more involved. Now I try to stay away from the simple presentation of three or four colors, instead I use as varied a color spectrum as I can; I try to organize form; I stay away from black as a strong characteristic (it has turned out that instead of using black, I use red); I also try to develop more paint quality in my work and to develop a center of interest. Developing a center of interest is something I never did in my early paintings. I seek a very strong center form which I consider the most meaningful in the painting and to which I relate my ideas through principles of design, line, shape, texture, and color. Many times I do not lay the form out. It depends upon the painting whether I start with a sketch or not, whether I start with an idea, or whether I start directly on the canvas--but there is always a center form.

When I decide to work, I begin. If I am going to paint today, I go to my easel and start painting. I do not sit and doodle. I put the color on the canvas. I start working. If I get frustrated, I start another canvas. Having made the decision to work, I work--this is important. As I work, I become involved; I become absorbed and my painting develops.

My paintings, today, are more complex. They are more intellectual now than in my earlier years. I feel my paintings are more stimulating. My paintings have increased in

size. The lines, the colors and the balance of relationships are much better. My paintings are now more mature and more massive than ever before. A realistic image is no longer the ultimate goal of my paintings. Abstraction is a freeing of oneself from visual reality. One paints what one feels, and not what one sees.

CHAPTER III

RALSTON CRAWFORD

A modern concept of art accepts the artist as an interpreter. His work is, then, a comment rather than a copy. This does not imply prejudice against traditional painting, but it does accept abstraction as a creative form. Ralston Crawford speaks of his work:

Certainly I am interested in communication. But this doesn't mean that immediate communication with anyone is at all inevitable. My work is usually charged with emotion, and is not of a basically geometric character. I realize that this comment is quite at variance with many responses to my pictures. (Which are strictly non-objective.) But I am never concerned with a pictorial logic to the exclusion of feeling.¹

Mr. Crawford's work is in the non-objective category. His painting is directly inspired by subjects that have a fascination for him: ships, docks, bridges,

PLATE VII



RALSTON CRAWFORD, 1961
No. 2 Oil 45 X 30

¹ERNEST W. WATSON, "The Art of Ralston Crawford," American Artist, (April, 1960), 49.

grain elevators, railroads and all manner of industrial constructions. Mr. Crawford not only sees abstractions in the things around him, but believes that this 'seeing' is one of the pleasurable visual experiences of each one of us everyday. The beauty we enjoy has nothing to do with representation. To say that no one can claim aesthetic perception who can experience beauty only when it has an idea significance is an exaggeration.

Nothing comes from nothing. Everything in an artist's work is drawn from the world outside himself except for the energy to discover, prefer and combine, thereby creating an interpretation.

I was enrolled in Painting Workshop under Ralston Crawford during the Summer Session of 1961. Mr. Crawford's workshop was a uniquely stimulating experience because we would go down to the docks and the junkyard to visualize form abstractly and sketch. Sometimes we would spend three or four days just looking at forms abstractly and drawing. While we sketched and worked out ideas for our paintings, Mr. Crawford would literally sit down in the railroad tracks, load his camera and shoot as many as two hundred pictures in those two hours. When he had this film developed, he would have $8\frac{1}{2}$ " by 11" enlargements made and he would pin these up on the classroom board. During the following week, we viewed all of these photographs which he had taken at the docks. We would have informal sessions when he would explain abstraction. He would teach us how to look at this pile of

junk: how to 'see' and pick out form and design. He would try to relate this to our work. He would say:

...see what you have looked at? Can you see how you can relate this to painting? Can you see how you can work from the general to the specific? Can you see the organization of this picture? This photograph?

He gave us a source, if we needed a source, for subjects for our painting. This perceptual approach had a great influence and one tried to emulate what he was trying to do and say. He emphasized this method of 'seeing' and the need for this kind of awareness when designing and organizing forms.

I know this kind of exercise was bewildering for the realists. It was difficult for them to become emotionally involved with junk, docks, boats, locomotives being cut apart, iron and steel--inanimate objects. Some students could not relate to this approach at all. Part of this incoherence was because they did not understand design; they were

PLATE VIII



primarily concerned with realism and nature from the viewpoint of its being land, sky and trees. They tried to encompass the world in one short glance instead of looking at nature as it is specifically and looking at detail (which is as important as looking at things in the general and producing only the general in your work.)

This perceptive approach taught me to organize form, to 'see', to look for subjects and express how I feel about them from the specifics in nature or in metal with its textures and rust. When I paint, I do not say to myself, "this is a rusty piece of metal in my painting." There is a transition, an identification which takes place when you work with that which you

have 'seen'. When you have 'seen', you feel and you express this feeling, this emotion, this imagery on canvas. You try to make the feeling you have into a statement which is visual. It

is an osmosis action which takes place and you are the implicator, the motivator, the instrument of a special kind of communication.

Ralston Crawford's work displays space depth or perspective. Much of his work takes us from a realistic

PLATE IX



JERU, 45½ X 50½, 1965

impression to a semi-
abstraction impression
and then to a still more
abstract treatment in
which linear patterns
dominate. This demon-
strates what certainly
appears to be a dramatic
evolution of interest
from pictorial depth to

preoccupation with pattern which is primarily two dimensional. Mr. Crawford works mainly with purely abstract shapes or forms, patterns of light and shadow and, of course, color.

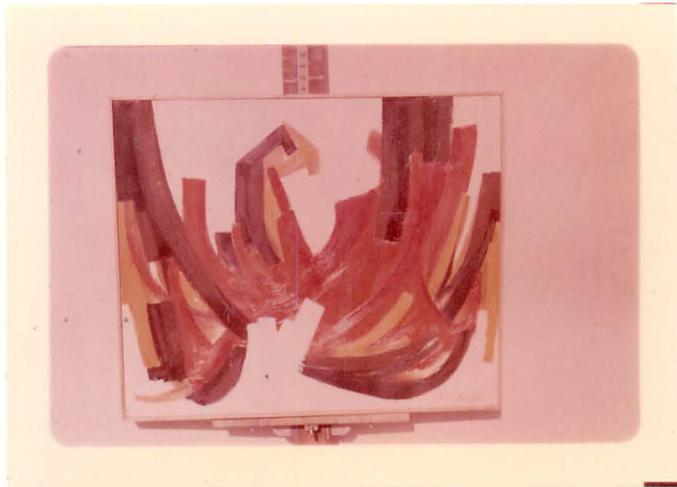
Good abstraction embodies the same aesthetics as those

PLATE XI



BLACK AND WHITE
35 X 60, 1964

PLATE X



BIRDFORM, 29 X 35, 1964

which might attract traditional painters. Design principles have been discovered through experience. They are inherent in human existence; they are eternally insistent in the art of all time. Design is the visual expression of these fundamentals. Ralston Crawford is prominent among those who are responsible for the validity of abstraction as an art form.

Mr. Crawford emphasizes the importance of enriching experiences in an

PLATE XII



RALSTON CRAWFORD, 1954
S.S. DELSUO, Oil, 30 X 20

artist's training and advised his students: "Never imitate maturity; instead you must earn it."

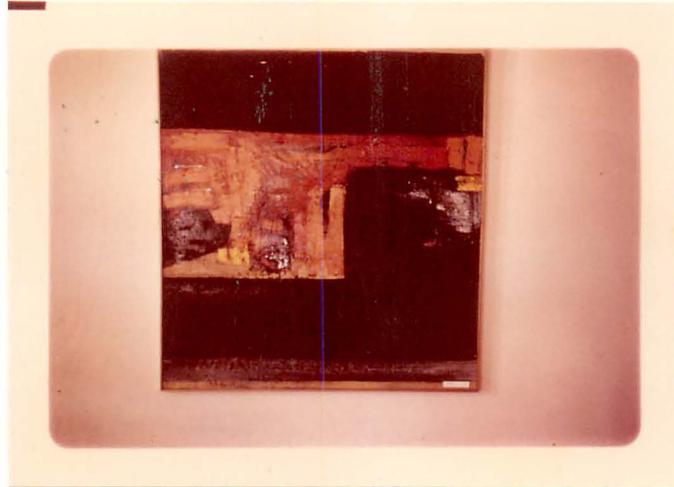
A negative aspect of Mr. Crawford's work which I feel strongly about is his static areas. These areas are related, but they are static in the sense that they are just flat total color. I do not care to work with a black and white pastel approach. I want my colors to be more intense and bold. In my own work, I stay away from pure flat surfaces--pure flat in the sense of color. I try to have subtleties and make things happen in the areas of my paintings

more than Mr. Crawford.

I dislike forms which are laid out explicitly with masking tape for the areas to be painted in. Mr. Crawford likes to work his

PLATE XIII

areas strongly, in vertical forms with a horizontal dominance. He stays away from curved forms because curved forms are difficult to work with if areas are masked out with



BIKINI, 43 X 49, 1965

tape. Much of his work is involved with angular, vertical and horizontal forms. In contrast, I like my areas to show movement, direction and texture. I want things to happen within areas, but in relationship with the totality of the painting. I do not think Mr. Crawford tries to do this in his work. He does have an intellectual, subtle approach to organization; he has a somewhat less dynamic color association than I have in my work. Mr. Crawford has a good feeling for form and a tremendous design concept showing good balance and good organization. I do not lay things out in very definite areas. I let things just happen. I control them, change them and analyze them, but I do not mask my canvases out and then paint in areas. My painting of a canvas is a long involved process which takes weeks of working directly on

the canvas itself. I work on several canvases at one time and many times I over-paint and over-paint an area to give it life. I doubt very much that Mr. Crawford does this. His paintings look, to me, as if he had worked his painting out very completely--perhaps, a sketch--and solved all of his problems. After sketching, he lays the painting out with masking tape before painting in the areas. This completes the painting. I do not think he works directly on the canvas to let the painting evolve of its own accord (letting the painting happen) nor does he let himself get "loose." I believe Mr. Crawford is aware of everything he does, he tries to keep control over his painting, and this rigidity shows.

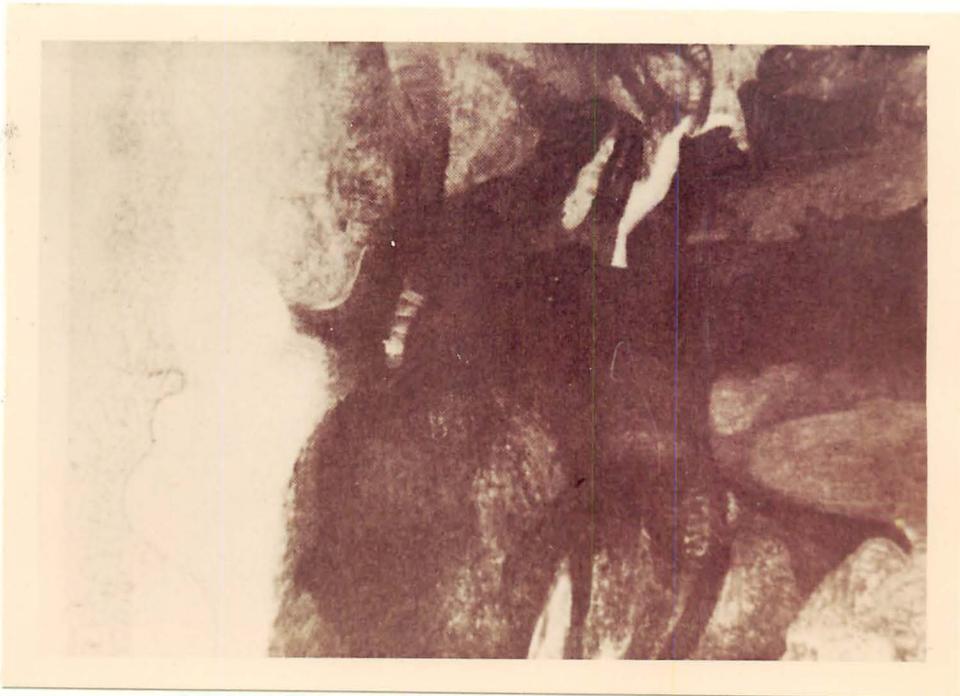
Mr. Crawford taught me to 'see.' He taught me new ways of seeing. He has an intellectual approach to his work: much of his work is literal and concerned with buildings, bridges and industrial scenes. He can arrive at order out of chaos; he can create an organization out of disorganization. Mr. Crawford tried, with no small success, to establish an awareness among his students that the total of life is a part of painting because it is a part of each of us and our environment.

CHAPTER IV.

MORRIS KANTOR

Summer Session of 1964: Painting Workshop with Morris Kantor was one of my more successful workshops. This is due to the fact that Mr. Kantor is an outstanding teacher as well as an outstanding painter. During the workshop sessions he would try to spend as much time with his students as possible. He could relate to the student and his work. When a teacher and a student can relate to each other, there develops a special kind of understanding.

PLATE XIV



MORRIS KANTOR, 1961
THE TERRACE, NO. 2, 53 X 62½

A unique rapport is established when teacher, student and painting communicate with each other. Mr. Kantor could communicate with the student. He established a relationship between his ideas and the students. During this workshop, Mr. Kantor took me further in my painting development than any other teacher under whom I had worked. Mr. Hapke started me with abstraction and encouraged me to accept the challenge of working on a larger scale. Mr. Crawford helped me with organization and being able to 'see.' Mr. Kantor pulled together the large scale work, the organization, the 'seeing' and the communication of the whole painting into a consolidated oneness. He established a relationship among these things for me and made them meaningful. I am not saying that he solved all of my problems. With Mr. Kantor, I gained perspective and produced my most successful paintings. I have reached a stage where I can paint alone and feel some success; I can understand what I am doing. I can rationalize my work and I can communicate my work to others.

Mr. Kantor impressed me during this workshop with his ability to make one feel motivated to work. He showed interest in me as a student, whereas at times, when working with Mr. Crawford and Mr. Hapke, one felt they were in a world of their own--unreachable. Mr. Kantor gave the individual attention and interest that I felt I needed at particular times. I knew Mr. Kantor was there. He would come in and instruct the class and talk to each one of us individually. He would come around and visit each of us twice during the

workshop day. He would spend as much time with me as he could and he would take me as far as he could. He would criticize my work and together we would make an evaluation. It was easy to commun-

icate with him because he could relate to my work and he could express his ideas. He treated one with importance and he treated one's ideas, painting and work

PLATE XV



COMPOSITION WITH RED, WHITE
AND BLUE, 38 X 50, 1964

with respect. He encouraged me to keep painting. He encouraged me to work. First, he would always try to evaluate my work in a very positive nature and then he would talk about its weaknesses in such a way that I could understand that his criticism would help my work and make it more communicative, logical, and organized.

He encouraged me to work on several canvases at one time which was something I had never done before. He encouraged me to build on them--on all five, six or seven canvases by starting anywhere on a canvas that I felt I wanted to work. He encouraged me to start from where I thought I was. He then took me through the canvases and at the end of the session, we could see my development. He used this approach with each of his students.

Many times he would not tell me what to do. Sometimes my colors would not relate; there would be dominate areas and the painting would not have good balance. We would turn the paintings so we could point these areas out and see which way the painting worked the best. It was such a rewarding experience to communicate with him about my work because I could feel myself becoming more involved with the painting. He could see the painting in the way that I felt it should be seen. He could help me bring out more interesting areas. My work changed from being very flat--having flat static areas--into areas with more movement and more texture. My areas showed more subtle changes of color. Mr. Kantor showed me how to re-organize form and encouraged movement within areas. He encouraged the subtle changes in colors by working through cadmium reds of all shades. He liked the freedom of my paintings and the looseness with which I painted, but he was aware that my

painting lacked organization and a relationship of color, line, shape and texture. He pulled these things together for me.

When my paintings became too slick,

PLATE XVI



SOLO FLIGHT, 37 X 50, 1964

Mr. Kantor would encourage me to change things. He would never paint on my canvas, but he would take construction paper and he would talk to me using the construction paper instead of a brush. I was receptive to this approach and I could see what he was talking about. I could understand him. I could understand his theory. The weeks I spent with Mr. Kantor gave to me the most successful and enjoyable painting experiences.

Many of my teachers made incorrect assumptions about the background of their students. This was especially true when working on abstract paintings. I think teaching abstraction is very difficult. It is difficult to reach the student's level of understanding and to communicate ideas and theories of abstraction to him. It is difficult to explain an abstract concept to adults. I responded to Mr. Kantor because I felt a mutual communication. I experienced a communication depth with Mr. Kantor which was never reached with any other teacher I had ever had.

Mr. Kantor explained that in his own work he worked several canvases at one time. When he became frustrated with one canvas, he would just put it away and not try to solve the problem, but he would start another canvas, or another painting, and return to the problem painting the next day, look at it and analyze it. When I was getting ready for my Master's Show, this approach became especially significant. It was an enormous help to me with my painting. I worked on as many canvases as I could. I worked three to seven

canvases at one time. At times I had ten canvases going at one time. Each canvas would be an operation in itself and when I would paint, I would paint as long as I could or until I became tired. I found that when I approached my work this way, my most successful painting took place. Painting, for me, is dedicated painting--not spasmodic painting. I cannot paint one painting today or one painting this week and then start a new painting the next week. I have to dedicate

PLATE XVII



RED FLOW, 51 X 65, 1965

myself to paint and paint and paint and paint, regardless of the time factor. This continuous painting produces my most successful work. This straight, hard, dedicated painting is my way of painting.

My most successful painting comes from hard work. My paintings are abstractions and they often appear as loose, fluid, quick, immediate productions, but they are not. Days and months were spent painting these abstractions. The fluid, yet energetic qualities of my paintings were brought into existence by dedicated painting.

Painting is rewarding to me. It is difficult to explain how one feels about one's work. Mr. Kantor understood this feeling that the artist has when working on a

painting. After you have finished a canvas and you reflect upon it, you feel like taking it down and changing a few things. You feel like working it over in parts. With Mr. Kantor, however, when I had finished a painting, I felt that there it was: that painting was done and I had no compulsion to change it or to fix it up. When it was hung on the wall, I enjoyed it and I felt better about my canvas the longer I looked at it. Other paintings that I had done, under other instructors, left me with the feeling that the painting was incomplete. There was something about Mr. Kantor's teaching, something about his mannerisms, something unknown that I cannot name which was present and made me feel that my paintings were there and they were complete. At that time, those paintings were me and the way I felt and the way I expressed myself best. I had a sense of accomplishment. I worked hard and Mr. Kantor encouraged me to work hard: he brought out the best in me.

Significant to the "feel" of Mr. Kantor's workshop was that occasionally, in the morning before workshop, I could go upstairs to the cafeteria and Mr. Kantor would be up there having breakfast. He would invite the students over to have coffee and we would talk about painting and art and he would tell us of his experiences. A communication was established between the students and a teacher who understood our needs. This receptiveness impressed me. He told us about his work and some of the things about his studio and about where he taught. These were things which helped us to relate to him and we could appreciate him more.

PLATE XVIII



MORRIS KANTOR, 1961
ARCADE, 45 X 36½

Anticipated mornings of conversation and coffee with Mr. Kantor were an important part of that workshop. They had a great deal of meaning for me.

Each and every student was important to Mr. Kantor. In his workshop, many of his students were concerned with form and figure drawing. He would ask them what they would like to do. He would acknowledge their frustration and ask them what they thought

would help them. The students felt they needed more understanding of the figure. Mr. Kantor brought in models. At this particular time, I was not interested in the figure as subject matter. I think it takes a deep understanding of the human body and years of experience in figure drawing to make the figures become expressive--to show sensation or feeling that is meaningful. I am not talking about technique when it is applied to imitating life. I am talking about the

expressionism of the painter and the meaningfulness of his work. I believe Mr. Kantor tried to bring these things out. He worked with you and brought out the best in you. He tried sincerely to do so; I doubt very much that there was a student in his workshop who did not feel that the workshop was successful.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Change is the fundamental basis of all art. This cannot be overemphasized. Change, itself, is closely related to communication and art has, as its basis, a desire to communicate. If art is to have meaning, it is in its ability to interpret a changing world and this is only possible if art itself changes in form and concept.

When I reflect on my work, I realize that there are things that have happened to me: experiences of awareness. There are many painters to whom I relate, who relate to me and with whom I can communicate. When working with Mr. Hapke, one was overwhelmed by his personality and his works. It was easy to emulate him and I believe this created the problem of evercoming his dominance in my work. Mr. Crawford emphasized the importance of enriching experiences in an artist's training--earn maturity, do not imitate it. This challenge, when accepted, is itself significant to the maturity of the artist.

Each person is an individual and each must express "himself." I believe one's work must have aesthetics, be creative and be communicative. Painters like DeKooning and Picasso relate to me in the sense that they can adhere to a

subject. Picasso has had many subjects and he researches his subject and his area to the point of understanding. Understanding one's subject comes with experience and this experience develops from maturation. DeKooning was concerned with "woman." The very looseness with which DeKooning paints, the fluidity of his painting, the way he expresses his sensation of "woman" exemplifies the depths from which he paints. This adherence to a subject is something which I have not done.

In my future work, I want to select a subject--a specific subject--and study and learn more technique to express how I feel about it. My paintings have been thematic. I want to make a series of paintings based on one subject and explore it thoroughly. To accept the challenge of such an undertaking will require a tremendous amount of research and thought. I believe I am ready to accept it.

I want my paintings to carry impact. They have impact now because of their color and their size and the shapes. I want my paintings to have communication impact; I want them to communicate now. Boom!

I cannot think of myself doing controlled, tedious work. I sometimes begin a painting with no preconceived problem to solve: with only the desire to use brush and canvas, to make line, colors and shapes; there are no conscious aims, but as my mind takes in what is produced, a point arrives--some idea becomes conscious and

crystallizing--then a control of ordering begins to make itself felt. I begin consciously to build an ordered relationship of forms which will express my idea. If a work is more than a painting exercise, unexplainable jumps in the thought process occur and imagination plays its part. Inside myself I feel great emotion making me work very loosely, freely--an emotional spirit that must be expressed sweepingly. In my paintings, the emotion must be there. If I feel that the painting I am working on does not have imagery or emotion, I paint it out. If I lose communication with a painting, I start again or discard it. I organize, at least, to that extent. Disorganization can be a form of organization.

An artist who wants to explore painting will naturally reflect: How can I, in my work, be most expressive? Then the form develops. My work is an example of 'action painting'. This is a term coined by abstract expressionists to describe projection of muscular and psychological tensions in the moment of creation. When I look out of the window--I have always lived in the city--I do not see trees in leaf or mountain ranges. I see movement. I have to move. My areas have to move. I cannot be static. My forms have to move; my lines have to move; my work and I must relate through motion.

Paul Hapke and Franz Kline have freedom with the brush and freedom with the arm; you can see and feel and emulate this freedom of action in the painting itself. I can feel the color and the impact of Hans Hoffman. I can

feel the subtlety of DeKooning as he worked and the freshness and the strong theme. I do not have this completeness in my paintings.

I am on a threshold. I am just beginning to understand my work. I am just beginning to understand technique. I am just beginning to relate to other artists. I am just beginning to feel that I can paint. I recognize my problems. I have not been able to work in extensive size without having control problems: static areas and flat color developing. I have not had the vision to see in great size. I have difficulty in controlling sizable areas. When I work small, my problems are smaller, my areas relate and they do not become boring. When painting areas in a small painting, those areas are easier to control: the larger the areas, the larger the problems which will arise. When I think of great size, the problems seem monumental. I lack the experience--possibly the confidence which experience gives--and I lack the understanding of great size and its control.

My future work will concern me with a more extensive canvas size and selecting a subject to treat thematically. I think I will like approaching my work in this way and such an approach will be meaningful to me. I will stay away from cliches--express myself, not what is 'mod' today--op or pop or minimal art. I cannot visualize myself as a painter of realism, cliches, trite subjects or pretty pictures. I do not believe I will ever paint that way.

Someone, Picasso I believe, has remarked that the best criticism of a work of art is another work of art. Each painting I do becomes more difficult. I am working towards an ultimate--the one painting that the artist holds in more esteem than the others. Each painting is a part of the artist. Each painting I paint is a part of me. I can relate, in some way, to every painting I have done. A part of the artist's psychological make-up must come out through his paintings. A part of the artist's internal responses to life is transferred to his canvas. I am interested only in putting down the things which are meaningful to me, individually: transmitting to canvas the bigness and the powerfulness of this country as they are reflected in details. Possibly this is a reflection of the environment and the world I live in and is, therefore, a reflection of me.

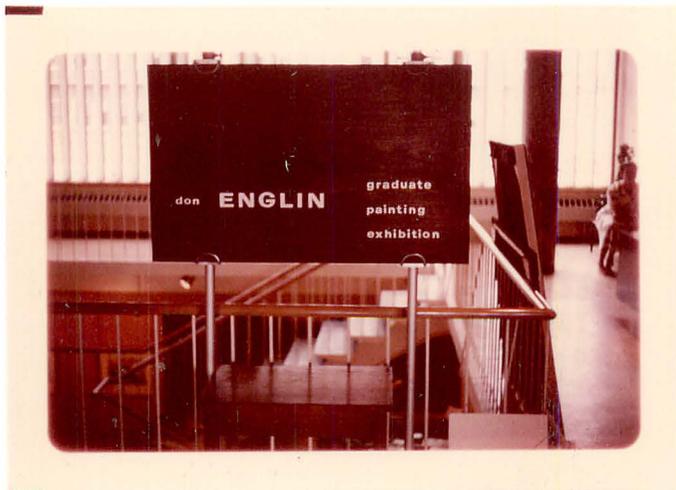
Every painter, every student, has his own expression, and I believe that he has to be honest with himself about his work. There is a saying, "painting by emotion sets the heart free." I believe this is the way my paintings develop and this is what happens to me. I feel a strong desire to make my statement on canvas and express how I feel about life. The feelings aroused in me by my looking and 'seeing' is what I paint. My painting, then, is a composite picture of my Self.

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APPENDIX I.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Graduate Show, Tweed Gallery, 1965

Graduate Show,
Tweed Gallery, 1965



Graduate Show,
Tweed Gallery, 1965



Graduate Show,
Tweed Gallery, 1965



Graduate Show,
Tweed Gallery, 1965



Graduate Show,
Tweed Gallery, 1965



OPUS, 1964
43 1/4 X 51 3/4



MOONBIRD, 1965
37 X 51



FIGURA, 1965
37½ X 51





EMBEYO, 1965
37 X 50



RED, YELLOW, OCHRE
AND WHITE, 1963
17 $\frac{1}{4}$ X 24



ELEMENTS IN SPACE
37 X 51 $\frac{1}{4}$



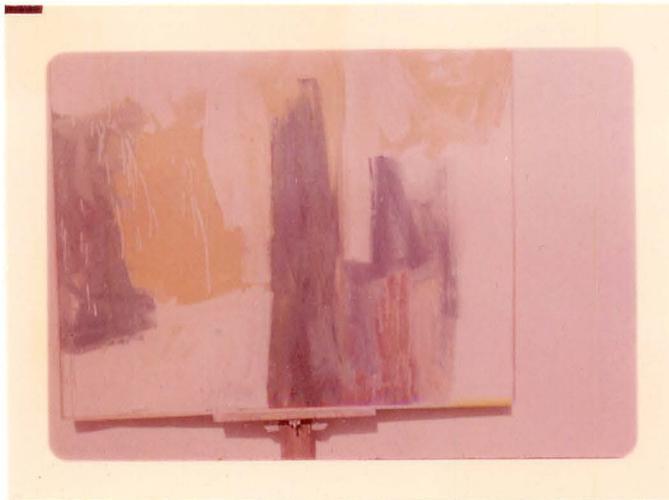
BLUE NUDE, 1964
43½ X 50



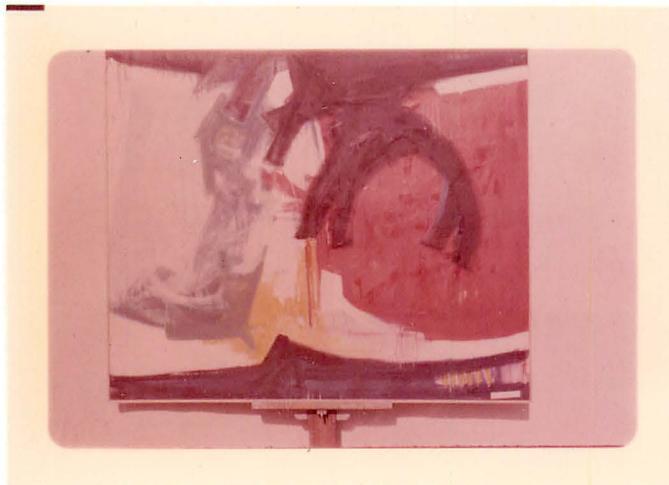
EMERGING FORM, 1965
37 X 51



EXPANDING
ELEMENTS, 1964
34 3/4 X 41



HOMAGE
TO DEKOONING
50 3/4 X 39 1/2



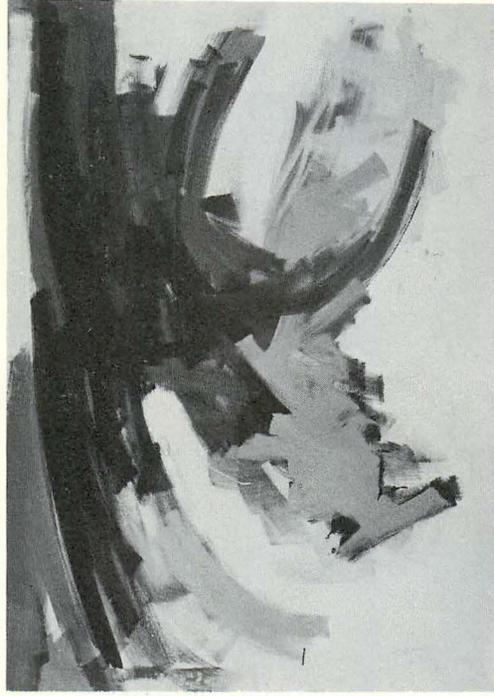
SIGN OF THE
TIMES, 1965
46 X 54



RAVEN, 1965
38 X 51



COMPOSITION
38 $\frac{1}{2}$ X 50 $\frac{1}{2}$



DONALD E. ENGLIN *Graduate Exhibition of Paintings*

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my appreciation to the artists and teachers who have contributed so much to my personal development.

PROFESSOR ARTHUR E. SMITH
HEAD OF ART DEPARTMENT AND
DIRECTOR OF TWEED GALLERY
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA,
DULUTH

MORRIS KANTOR, ARTIST
NEW YORK CITY
VISITING INSTRUCTOR, 1963
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA,
DULUTH

RALSTON CRAWFORD, ARTIST
NEW YORK CITY
VISITING INSTRUCTOR, 1961
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA,
DULUTH

PAUL HAPKE, ARTIST
DEPARTMENT OF ART
MANKATO STATE COLLEGE
MANKATO, MINNESOTA

Exhibition Dates

August Tenth

through

August Sixteenth

1965

Tweed Gallery

University of Minnesota

Duluth

DONALD E. ENGLIN Graduate Exhibition of Paintings

Paintings on Exhibition

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|---|------|
| 1. SIGN OF THE TIMES
46" X 54" | 1965 | 12. JERU
45½" X 50½" | 1965 |
| 2. BLACK AND WHITE
35" X 50" | 1963 | 13. BLUE FORMS
16½" X 21" | 1963 |
| 3. COMPOSITION
38½" X 50½" | 1964 | 14. EMBREYO
37" X 50" | 1965 |
| 4. HOMAGE TO DEKOONING
50¾" X 39½" | 1965 | 15. FIGURA
37½" X 51" | 1965 |
| 5. OPUS NO. 1
43¼" X 51¾" | 1964 | 16. SOLO FLIGHT
37" X 50" | 1964 |
| 6. FALLOUT
35" X 50¾" | 1963 | 17. EXPANDING ELEMENTS
34¾" X 41" | 1964 |
| 7. BLUE NUDE
43½" X 50" | 1964 | 18. EMERGING FORM
37" X 51" | 1965 |
| 8. MOON BIRD
37" X 51" | 1965 | 19. BIKINI
43" X 49" | 1965 |
| 9. ELEMENTS IN SPACE
37" X 51¼" | 1965 | 20. COMPOSITION WITH RED,
WHITE, AND BLUE
37" X 50" | 1964 |
| 10. BIRDFORM
29" X 35" | 1964 | 21. RED FLOW
51" X 65" | 1965 |
| 11. RAVEN
38" X 51" | 1965 | 22. RED, YELLOW OCHRE AND
WHITE
17¼" X 24" | 1963 |

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