“I’M HOLDING THE BRUSH”:
MYTH AND MEMORY IN THE PAINTINGS OF LINDA ANDERSON

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of Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

by
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A special thanks to Linda Anderson, for taking the time to meet with me and answer my questions, and to both her and Susan Schlaer for welcoming me into their home. I am also grateful to the people of Mt. Vernon Pentecostal Church for allowing me to attend a service and photograph the church. I would also like to acknowledge Cecil Thompson, of the Timpson Creek Gallery, and the people of the Barbara Archer Gallery, for speaking with me about Linda Anderson’s work.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Contemporary self-taught artist Linda Anderson is a brilliant painter capable of telling stories and capturing imagination with a single scene. She depicts far off exotic jungles with the same ease as she depicts her local rural Georgia landscape. Her inspiration comes from her vivid imagination and the visions she claims to have received from God during a difficult time in her life. These visions take three forms: memory flashes of her family and community, visions of places she has never visited but has read about in the Bible and other books, and the aura visions that accompany her migraine headaches.\(^1\)

While she is a rather successful folk artist, very few scholars have examined her work in detail. She has had several gallery shows, with one major museum exhibition at Atlanta’s High Museum in 2003; she has won awards, and was named Atlanta’s Artist of Excellence in 1989.\(^2\) However, her paintings have never received a close study. Within folk art, she has been classified as a memory painter, which means she paints events and practices from her community from personal reminiscence.\(^3\) However, this terminology does not encompass her entire oeuvre, as it ignores her Biblical scenes and her abstract migraine vision paintings.

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\(^1\) Linda Anderson. *Flashes of Memory: An Appalachian Self-Portrait.* (Kennesaw, GA: Kennesaw State University Press, 2009).
When art historians study folk art, they generally focus on an artist’s environment and the catalyst that led them to create art, rather than on the work itself. In addition, the terms used by art historians and curators to describe folk art, such as primitive and naïve, come out of a comparison to academic works. Other times, the historian focuses on the feelings the works inspire within the viewer, such as a sense of nostalgia, patriotism, or a longing for an idealized past. This focus denies the agency of the artist. Self-taught artists certainly have a different style than academically trained artists, but they still communicate ideas and make artistic choices, and these choices are worthy of analysis.

I discovered Linda Anderson in 2005 at the Museum of Biblical Art in New York. A few of her paintings were included in the museum’s opening show, *Coming Home! Self-Taught Artists, the Bible and the American South*. I was immediately drawn to *Mount Vernon Fire Baptized Holiness Church, 1984* [Fig. 1] because I had never seen a painting of Pentecostal worship. *Mount Vernon* depicts a scene from Anderson’s childhood community church, where people speak in tongues and roam the church in religious ecstasy. This exhibition was also my first experience with self-taught artists, and I have continued to study this area because of my interest in religion in America. I believe that these artists provide unique insight into contemporary religious practice.

This thesis examines Linda Anderson’s memory paintings and biblical scenes, specifically those featuring Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. I decided on this focus because other scholars have concentrated only on her memory paintings, and have not accounted for her biblical scenes. Yet, Anderson is a deeply religious woman, and the

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4 The definition of “folk art” and other terminology will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.
visions she received from God served as the catalyst that turned her into an artist. In addition, I will demonstrate that many of the same elements that Anderson inserts into her memory paintings also appear in her Eden scenes, which do not fit the “memory” label.

Anderson’s works are a mixture of the nostalgic and the realistic. In Anderson’s 2009 book, *Flashes of Memory*, inspired by her 2003 exhibition at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, she writes narratives to accompany her works. She tells the stories of her childhood, such as her experiences in the Pentecostal church, and memories of her father’s whiskey stills. Anderson writes, “I’m holding the brush,” therefore claiming explicitly that she paints whatever she wants, whether or not it is true to either her memory or her vision. This thesis examines her works that depict her family, her community, and her religion, with attention to the way she inserts, consciously and unconsciously, her own voice. My primary source material includes both her book, *Flashes of Memory*, and my own personal interview with the artist, held in her home in Clarkesville, Georgia, on September 19, 2010.

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6 Anderson, 107 and 113.
CHAPTER II
STATE OF RESEARCH

Biography of the Artist

Linda Anderson was born in 1941 in Floyd County, Georgia. As a child, Anderson lived with her parents, her grandmother, and her four siblings. Her father worked as a tenant farmer until he grew ill with cancer and was unable to work. He died when Anderson was thirteen, and she was forced to drop out of school to help support her family. Her mother was employed as a maid, and Anderson also worked as a maid and nurse’s aide, later returning to school to become a licensed practical nurse. She married at age seventeen and had three children. Her first child, daughter Betty Jane, known as B.J., was born in 1960 with an unnamed syndrome that caused mental retardation. In 1978, B.J. suffered a stroke that kept her bedridden and in need of constant care for two and a half years. This was a painful period in Anderson’s life, and ultimately led to her transformation into an artist.

As Anderson describes it, she became an artist during the winter of 1981-1982. Feeling isolated and depressed while caring for her daughter, Anderson turned to God and prayed for B.J. to be healed. One night, during “the millionth prayer asking God to heal B.J.,” she had a vision of a messenger from God, who told her that things were as they were meant to be, and that Anderson herself would receive a gift in order to ease her in her loss. According to Anderson, that is when she began to receive other visions,
mental pictures of her family, community, and life as a child. She describes the visions as her “own picture show.”9 “I start seeing pictures in my mind just like photographs-some clear, some not…the pictures come in clear, but they do not stay long, just flash like a camera.”10 At the suggestion of her sister, she began to record these visions on canvas in 1981. She has built a near thirty-year painting career on these visions.

Anderson achieved artistic success fairly quickly. In the summer of 1982, less than a year after she began painting, she brought twenty of her works to the Banks County Fair in Homer, Georgia. She sold all twenty to a single collector, who connected her with art dealer Judith Alexander, who represented Anderson until Alexander’s death in 2004.11 Alexander opened Atlanta’s first folk art gallery, the Alexander Gallery, in 1978.12 An advocate for local artists, Alexander also discovered Georgia visionary painter Nellie Mae Rowe (1900-1982), and Georgia wood carver Ned Cartledge (b. 1916).13

Anderson had her first one-person show at the Alexander Gallery in 1983.14 She has had several more one-person exhibitions throughout Georgia, as well as a few gallery shows in Massachusetts, a show in New York City at the Sidney Mishkin Gallery at Baruch College in 2001, and an exhibition at Atlanta’s High Museum in 2003.15 Anderson’s works have also traveled with group shows around the world. In addition,

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9 Ibid.
12 Ibid., 1.
14 Spriggs, 2, and Kraskin, 12.
15 Kraskin, 12, and Anderson.
she has received several awards, including the Georgia Pen Woman Award for Art in Atlanta, 1988, and the Southern Arts Federation/National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship Grant, 1994.\textsuperscript{16}

Through the course of my research on Linda Anderson, I have come across 120 of her paintings, but the overall size of her body of work remains unknown. When I met with Anderson at her home in Clarkesville, Georgia, I asked if she photographed her work or kept any type of archive, and she told me she does not.\textsuperscript{17} She said that once she has completed a painting, if she is free of the vision the painting captures, she is able to sell it and forget about it completely. However, if she is unable to let go of the painting, she will keep it for herself.

In examining her work, I discovered that her visions appear to take three different forms: memory flashes of her family and community, visions of places she has never visited but has read about in the Bible and other books, and the aura visions she has when experiencing a migraine headache. On her earliest paintings from 1981-1982, she simply signed her name, but by 1983, she started signing her paintings with her name, the month and year, and sometimes even the exact time she has completed the painting, as if declaring it the absolute culmination of her vision. Anderson’s first few paintings in 1981-1982 were acrylic on canvas, but in 1983 she began using oil paints on either linen or canvas. The reason for the change in materials is unknown, but, based on the timing, I would speculate that her agent, Judith Alexander, provided new supplies. Her migraine aura vision paintings are done in oil crayon, as oil paints can worsen the symptoms of the

\textsuperscript{16} Kraskin, 12.
\textsuperscript{17} Linda Anderson, interview by author, Clarkesville, GA, September 19, 2010.
In addition to painting, Anderson also carves and paints wooden figures. She has used butternut and tulip poplar, but says her favorite wood is linden. For some of her paintings, she also builds and paints custom frames.

Anderson’s paintings feature brilliant colors, and she is clearly drawn to lush outdoor scenes, complete with wildlife. Often, Anderson paints with a flattened perspective, both with her landscapes and her interior scenes, as can be seen in Living at the Foot of Mount Yonah [Fig. 7] and What Goes on in the Barn Stays in the Barn [Fig. 13]. Other paintings, including Mount Vernon Fire Baptized Holiness Church [Fig. 16], feature scenes with an invisible fourth wall, as though she has painted a theater set. The action is meant to be hidden in the interior, but Anderson exposes it for the world to see. As a self-taught painter, she struggles with the creation of a convincing sense of perspectival space. The houses and barns that dot her landscapes are awkward with angles that indicate an attempt at representing dimension. Her trees are always flat, which I believe is a stylistic decision. In her artist statement for a 2001 exhibition at the Sidney Mishkin Gallery, she writes, “Now I know in real life a pine tree doesn’t look like I paint it. But that’s how the image is in my mind, so I must paint it that way.” The trees in Zebra on Jungle Road at Midnight [Fig. 10] are flat against the night sky, but the branches still convincingly sway in the breeze. Her paintings skills have evolved, but it is not her intention to depict scenes with complete realism.

19 Anderson, 65.
Anderson never received any formal art education. Her painting skills are entirely self-taught, inspired by the gift of visions from God. However, Anderson pursues knowledge of art. She told me that she enjoys going to museums to look at art and study the brushstrokes and methods of other artists.\textsuperscript{21} Her agent, Judith Alexander, as well as other admirers of her work, have given Anderson books on artists, including one on French self-taught artist Henri Rousseau. Anderson has a particular affinity for Frida Kahlo, who she recognizes as a fellow traveler on the road of love, hardship and loss, and has painted several portraits of the artist.\textsuperscript{22} Anderson also studies the work of contemporary folk artists, and has a collection in her home with works by Nellie Mae Rowe, James Harold Jennings, Benjamin Jones, and others.

Anderson’s works have been very popular on the folk art market, and she has a long waitlist for commissions.\textsuperscript{23} I asked her if the patrons ever dictate the content of a painting, and she told me no, that she and the patron only discuss canvas size, and if they want an indoor, outdoor, or religious scene.\textsuperscript{24} Anderson will then start the painting and see what direction her vision takes: if the patron is unhappy, she will keep the work and start another. In addition to her commissions, she also sells through the Barbara Archer Gallery in Atlanta, and the Timpson Creek Gallery in Clayton, Georgia. I spoke briefly with Cecil Thompson of the Timpson Creek Gallery, and she told me that people do not re-sell Anderson’s paintings.\textsuperscript{25} From this we can conclude that while the folk art market

\textsuperscript{22} Anderson, 131.
\textsuperscript{23} Sprigg, 6.
\textsuperscript{24} Linda Anderson, interview by author, Clarkesville, GA, September 19, 2010.
\textsuperscript{25} Cecil Thompson, phone interview by author, March 12, 2010.
is huge, Anderson’s paintings are beloved as works of art, rather than commodities. Clearly, the art she creates connects with people.

The History of Twentieth-Century Folk Art

The study of American folk art is relatively new to the field of art history, and it is still developing. Folk and outsider art first attracted the attention of modern artists in America and Europe in the early twentieth century, including Americans Walt Kuhn, Charles Sheeler, and Andrew Dasburg; Russian Wassily Kandinsky; and German Franz Marc, who were all experimenting with abstraction. They saw the works as inspirational to their own art because they believed these folk and outsider artists could tap into their creativity unconstrained by training and supposedly uncorrupted by the modern world. American artists were especially proud of the folk art tradition, because it established an art scene in America that was separate from Europe. While people were looking at, exhibiting, and collecting folk art in the 1920s, it was the 1932 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, “American Folk Art: The Art of the Common Man in America, 1750-1900,” that really established folk art as an area worth studying. This exhibition, organized by Holger Cahill, and its accompanying catalogue describe the

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27 Ibid., 5.
works as the art of the “common man,” a claim which emphasized the distinction between high art and folk art. The dates used for the exhibition demarcate a timeframe for folk art. Cahill and the other modern artists and scholars studying folk art saw the art as a product of people removed from the modern world, therefore they believed this art would not continue into the twentieth century.

However, folk and self-taught artists did in fact continue to work and thrive in the twentieth century in the United States. Several self-taught artists, including painter Grandma Moses (1860-1961), and sculptor William Edmondson (1882-1951), had museum shows and gained public attention around the world in the mid twentieth century. The Museum of American Folk Art opened in New York in 1961, and nine years later, in 1970, held an exhibition called “Twentieth Century American Folk Art and Artists.” The show was curated by Herbert W. Hemphill, Jr., art collector and founder of the Museum of American Folk Art. In 1974, Hemphill, with Julia Weissman, wrote a book also called Twentieth Century American Folk Art and Artists. In it, they write,

If there is any one characteristic that marks folk artists, it is that for them the restraints of academic theory are unimportant, and if encountered at all, meaningless. In effect, the vision of the folk artist is a private one, a personal universe, a world of his or her own making. There exists only the desire to create, not to compete, not necessarily to find fame.

This is a pivotal statement in the study of folk art, because Hemphill and Weissman deny that folk art is a period-style; rather, they claim that folk art continues to thrive in the twentieth century and beyond because folk art comes from a private vision, uninfluenced

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30 Ibid.
31 Delacruz, 78.
by formal training, critics, or collectors. This has given a new dimension to the term folk art; no longer does it only describe utilitarian or decorative objects made by the member of a group or isolated community – now it also describes the aesthetic creations of an individual. Hemphill and Weissman continue their argument by saying, “Folk artists are just as likely to come from crowded Bronx environments…as from the mountains of Appalachia.” The authors argue that the artist does not need to be geographically isolated from society to create folk art; rather, the artist can develop and flourish in any location.

Hemphill and Weissman’s book was a turning point in twentieth-century folk art, and it inspired a flurry of exhibitions and publications. Museums and private collectors used Hemphill and Weissman’s book as a buying guide. Scholarship on contemporary folk and self-taught art grew exponentially in the 1970s, with several academics establishing themselves as leading scholars in the field. Art collectors also played a large part in the growth of recognition of contemporary folk art. Julius and Florence Laffal, a psychologist and art teacher, are avid collectors who created the newsletter “Folk Art Finder,” which ran from 1980-2000. They also conducted surveys to analyze the background and education of contemporary self-taught artists.

The Hemphill and Weissman book featured art and artists with diverse styles and subject matter all under the heading of “folk art,” and subsequently collectors and

33 Ibid., 10.
35 Ibid., 12.
36 Ibid., 12, 294.
37 Laffal and Laffal.
scholars questioned that classification. This ongoing discussion has resulted in a so-called term warfare among scholars, as new labels and classifications emerged. Art historians generally categorize and sort the artists by their location, race, and mental state. Many of the terms have overlapping meaning, and some of the terms used to describe the artists, such as naïve or primitive, are pejorative and really only consider the art in comparison with those by formally trained artists, or “academic” art.

“Self-taught art,” has become the catch-all term to cover all artists outside of the academic, established art community. However, this term does not describe the art itself; it is not a stylistic classification, but rather, a description of the training of the artist, although, of course, even that is not always accurate, as some self-taught artists have also had formal training. The term “outsider” was used in the nineteenth and twentieth century to describe all artists without formal training. Now, scholars use the term to refer to artists that might be creating art from a prison or mental institution, like Henry Darger (1892-1973) [Fig. 1], who was institutionalized as a teenager, and whose artwork was only discovered after his death. The term “visionary” refers to artists who claim to be producing works under the direction of God, such as Howard Finster (1916-2001), who has created an entire environment meant to proselytize, and spread the “Word.” Finster’s Paradise Gardens [Fig. 2] in Summerville, Georgia, covers a four acre

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38 Ibid., 12.
39 Ardery, 11; Laffal and Laffal, 12.
40 Ardery, 11.
plot, and includes paintings, metal and concrete sculptures, mosaic, and a chapel.\textsuperscript{42} While Linda Anderson can be described as a visionary artist, because she is painting her visions from God, she has been categorized by curators Sandra Kraskin and Nyssa Hattaway as a memory artist because of the content of most of her works.

Memory Painting

Art historian Roger Cardinal, in his chapter “Memory Painting” from \textit{Self-Taught Art: The Culture and Aesthetics of American Vernacular Art} (2001)\textsuperscript{43} explores the category of memory painting in American Folk art, and provides both the original, narrow definition for the term, as well as the wider application the term has taken. He conceptualizes memory paintings as being one position on the whole spectrum of genres dealing with the lives of ordinary people.\textsuperscript{44} He traces the roots of memory painting to the late eighteenth-century, when mourning or memorial pictures were painted, embroidered, drawn, or stenciled by women in the family to provide a visual focus for grief and emotional release.\textsuperscript{45} Cardinal suggests that in a time of high death rates, portraits commissioned from artists, came out of “a desire to stabilize the features of loved ones,”\textsuperscript{46} or perhaps the preservation of a memory. Following these commemorative portraits came the tradition of portraits to commemorate estates, which exist as records of property ownership. One example is Paul Seifert’s \textit{Wisconsin Farm}, 1875, [Fig. 3].

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 95.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 96.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
These paintings would include the main house, any additional buildings, like barns or warehouses, the livestock, fruit trees, and fields. Seifert included small details, such as fences and trees. These were inventory paintings, meant to catalog one’s property, and act as records. Cardinal writes that to the patrons, an accurate record was more important than an aesthetically pleasing painting.\textsuperscript{47} However, all traces of weeds and shadows are missing. Cardinal explains that the records were meant to reflect the space at its best – perfectly cultivated, the way one wants to remember it, not the state it was in on a bad day.\textsuperscript{48}

From these estate paintings, Cardinal draws comparisons to the original, narrow definition of memory painting. Cardinal defines these memory paintings as works by self-taught artists, typically country women of advanced years, who document locales, situations, events, and practices of a bygone era drawn upon personal and collective reminiscences.\textsuperscript{49} Much like the commemorative paintings, the artists depict perfectly cultivated spaces, without weeds, shadows, or any sense of decay, and like the commemorative paintings, the works capture people and events into record.\textsuperscript{50} Figures are painted as happy in their farm life, and struggles are either ignored, or played up for sentimental value. The most famous memory painter is Grandma Moses, who painted scenes of every day country life from her farm and home in upstate New York. \textit{Balloon}, 1957 [Fig. 4] features an important community event taking place on a rural landscape dotted with several farm houses. Like Seifert’s idealized inventory painting, Grandma

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 97.
Moses painted blue skies and lush, green crops. The town’s community has gathered in excitement to watch a hot air balloon float overhead. Memory paintings depict events that become a part of the community’s history and folklore.\footnote{Ibid., 97-98.} The artist herself may have been present, or it may have been something she heard about. In *Balloon*, the joy and excitement can be seen in the posture and movement of the figures in the foreground, and the smaller figures in front of the yellow house in the middle ground. This was an exciting episode that was probably talked about and remembered in the community for years. While farm life can be extremely difficult with a lot of hard work, Grandma Moses focused on a happy day in the rural community.

Cardinal describes Grandma Moses’ work as “obvious propaganda of yesteryear,”\footnote{Ibid., 101.} but while I would agree that the nostalgia factor created her enormous popularity in the mid twentieth-century, I doubt that Moses herself was creating any propaganda. She was merely painting what she wanted to paint, in the style that was appropriate to her. The gallery owner, Otto Kallir, who discovered her in the late 1930s and presented her art to the world with a one-woman exhibition in 1940, and the American art critics are the ones who placed her in the narrow box of nostalgic memory painter. Kallir named her first show “What a Farm Wife Painted.”\footnote{Kallir, Jane. *Grandma Moses: The Artist Behind the Myth.* (New York: Tabbard Press, 1982), 14.} He pitched her to the art world as a naïve rural housewife, ignorant of the ways of the modern world, a view which was very attractive to the public. Soon after her first show, Grandma Moses was invited by Gimbels department store to participate in a Thanksgiving Festival.
promotion. Immediately, she became linked in the popular imagination with families, holidays, and sentimentality. With the guidance and direction of Otto Kallir, her paintings were made into commemorative plates, put on drapery fabric, and made into calendars and greeting cards. Her fame came from her association with a simpler time of romanticized farm life and family. To the urban dwellers in 1940, viewing her paintings at Otto Kallir’s New York gallery, farm life was mythical, and foreign to their modern world. Farm life is difficult and a struggle, but Grandma Moses’ paintings did not depict hardship. Other twentieth-century self-taught painters found fame following this pattern of nostalgic memory painting, including Clara McDonald Williamson (1875-1976), known as Aunt Clara, who began painting at age 68, and Hattie Brunner (1889-1982), who Cardinal quotes as saying “everybody has a lot of stuff that’s depressing – we just leave that out when we remember.” As with the commemorative paintings, these memory painters depicted community life at its happiest, because that is what they wanted to remember.

Yet, Cardinal concedes that not all memory painters ignore the difficult aspects of life. African-American self-taught artist Clementine Hunter (1886-1988), came to painting later in life, much like Grandma Moses. She depicted her life on the plantation in Louisiana, including cotton picking, fights, and even funerals and wakes, scenes Cardinal describes as taboo for white memory painters. Hunter’s *Funeral on Cane*, c.1948 [Fig.5] is a drastic contrast to Grandma Moses’ *Balloon*. Hunter has painted the

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54 Ibid., 15
55 Ibid., 25.
56 Cardinal, 106.
57 Ibid., 107.
58 Ibid., 113.
figures walking in a solemn procession. There is no joy or nostalgia in this scene. However, this event was considered worthy of record because it will be remembered and discussed in the community for years to come, and therefore becomes a part of the folklore, even though it is painful to recall. African-American Horace Pippin (1888-1946), one of many male memory painters, is most famous for *John Brown Going to His Hanging*, 1942 [Fig. 6] a painting of an arrested abolitionist. This was not an event that Pippin witnessed, but one that was described to him by his grandmother, who stands in the bottom right-hand corner of the painting, dressed in bright blue. Again, this scene preserves the memory of an important event, without any idealization. Cardinal concedes that the original definition of memory painters as elderly, rural white women is too narrow, as there are younger artists, African-American artists, and even male and urban artists that create works that could be described as memory paintings.\(^{59}\)

A memory painting can capture a moment in community history, recording the event and making it legendary. Sometimes these moments have been idealized by the artist, and other times they are depicted with the same sense of pain and struggle in which the moments were first experienced. The term “memory painter” can describe the work of many artists, with a variety of backgrounds. However, while it is a useful descriptor, it should really only be a starting point when approaching the work of any artist.

**Classifying Linda Anderson**

Most of Linda Anderson’s paintings are considered memory paintings because she depicts life as she knows it in rural Georgia. She paints her parents and family, farm

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 114.
life, religious life, and community events. Like the paintings of Grandma Moses, her landscapes feature farm plots with rolling hills and blue skies in the background, as seen in one of her first paintings, *Living on the Foot of Mount Yonah*, 1982 [Fig. 7]. In many ways, we can fit her paintings into Cardinal’s narrow, original definition of memory paintings, because they are the work of a white woman in a rural environment, painting serene farm life with a sense of nostalgia. *Living on the Foot of Mount Yonah* is a beautiful landscape with trees in neat rows, houses that look well-kept, and people peacefully going about their business. It is a tidy depiction of the community, without any sense of drama or hardship. However, this example is not representative of Anderson’s oeuvre, and she has proven herself capable of scenes with more depth, which I will discuss throughout this thesis.

While very little has been written about the work of Linda Anderson, most of the exhibitions in which she has been featured focus on her memory paintings. In 1998, some of Anderson’s paintings were a part of a group exhibition called *Womenfolk* at Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, curated by collector Nyssa Hattaway. The exhibition featured other memory painters, such as Mattie Lou O’Kelley, Nellie Mae Rowe, and quilters such as Jessie Telfair and Lucinda Toomer. In the exhibition pamphlet, Hattaway writes that the work created by women self-taught artists is very different than that created by self-taught men. Women, Hattaway writes, typically do not include conflict or sexuality, and instead focus on their roles as mother, wife, and

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The Anderson paintings Hattaway chose to include in the exhibition depict Anderson’s mother, her daughter BJ, and other family scenes. Hattaway provided the audience with an incredibly limited view of Anderson’s work. Like Clementine Hunter, Anderson also paints scenes of religious practice, family tension, funerals, and gambling [Figs. 11, 12, 16]. Hattaway ignored a significant amount of Anderson’s oeuvre in order to make her argument work. She labeled Anderson as a Grandma Moses-type memory painter, which is not accurate.

In Linda Anderson’s 2009 book, *Flashes of Memory*, inspired by a 2003 exhibition at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, she writes narratives to accompany her works. In these short essays, Anderson tells the stories of her childhood, such as her experiences in the Pentecostal church she attended as a child, and memories of her father’s whiskey stills. Often, her stories do not exactly match her paintings, as she has made revisions. As Anderson writes, “I’m holding the brush,” and therefore, she can create whatever she wants, accurate or otherwise, as memory does not equal truth. Her paintings come from her visions, her “flashes of memory.” In her artist statement, Anderson writes that she paints the visions God gave her, which appear like photographs in her mind, but she makes intentional alterations. Her paintings may not match memory, and they do not necessarily match the visions, either. Anderson is an artist who makes purposeful choices when she works. She frames her scenes to focus on specific figures or moments, and uses color to inspire feelings in the viewer. If we accept her paintings as simply her visions put to canvas, we deny her agency as an artist.

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62 Ibid.
63 Anderson, 107, 113.
The terminology she uses for her book title is suspect: Does Anderson describe these visions as “flashes of memory” because she was told, by a gallery owner or art historian, that she was a memory painter? Her 2001 exhibition at the Sidney Mishkin Gallery in New York was called, “Flashes of Memory: Paintings by Self-Taught Artist Linda Anderson,” presumably named by curator Sandra Kraskin, and Anderson later took this phrase for her own book. However, not all of her paintings fit within this category. She has a series of abstract paintings that she calls her “migraine paintings” because these visions occur when she is experiencing a migraine [Fig.8]. Anderson is also drawn to Frida Kahlo, and has painted several portraits of the artist [Fig. 9]. She also paints biblical scenes and imagined jungle scenes [Fig.26, 27, 30], and she paints self-portraits and portraits of her cat. Her “flashes of memory” may have initiated her career as an artist, but it is clear that she has a variety of sources of influence. Anderson claims the inspiration for her work comes from visions sent by God, but she has also made several subtle manipulations to these visions. Clearly, the terminology we use must allow for some fluidity.

This thesis examines Linda Anderson’s memory paintings and her biblical scenes, with attention to her role as creator and narrator. Anderson’s personal religion and her relationship with God cannot be ignored when analyzing her art. Not all of her scenes include a sense of her religion, but all of her paintings are inspired by God because they are based on the visions He gave her. Yet, even though she is painting the visions, she contributes her own voice and background to all of her paintings. I have decided to concentrate on her Garden of Eden scenes because she has painted several variations of
the events in the Garden, and she wrote about her feelings on Eden in her book. I have chosen not to include her migraine aura paintings because I was only able to find two examples, and I do not believe that is enough of a sample to analyze. Using her paintings, her writings in *Flashes of Memory: An Appalachian Self-Portrait*, and the interview with the artist I conducted in her home in Clarkesville, Georgia, I will situate Anderson’s work within Cardinal’s definition of memory paintings, analyze the terminology she uses to describe her visions, and explore how some of the same qualities in her memory paintings can be found in her series of Garden of Eden scenes.
CHAPTER III

OBSERVER/PARTICIPANT: THE ARTIST AS AN UNRELIABLE NARRATOR

In Anderson’s 2009 book, *Flashes of Memory*, she writes anecdotes to accompany several of her works. Her account for her painting *Zebra on Jungle Road at Midnight* exposes her feelings about critical analysis of her paintings. *Zebra on Jungle Road at Midnight, 1995* [Fig. 10] features an incredibly large, long zebra that dominates the canvas. He runs on a dirt road that splits a field of tall grasses. The zebra recoils in fear as he comes across a small owl with a very long, skinny snake in his mouth. Anderson writes that once a psychiatrist visited her house, and upon seeing this painting, he “started seeing all kinds of stuff in that picture – you know, father images and all this sexual stuff. Not so. Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar.”

Anderson may not be comfortable with this scrutiny of her work, but any piece of art offers different interpretations to different people, and a cigar is not always just a cigar.

When art historians examine folk art, they often look at the life of the artist. Education, location, religion, economic status, mental behavior, criminal behavior – all of these qualities will determine how an art historian categorizes the artist. As I wrote in the previous chapter, I think these categories are limiting and distract from the work itself. However, I will concede that these categories can be a good starting point, and that this information can also help to interpret the work. With any artwork, folk or academic,

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64 Anderson, 125.
art historians look at the context of both the artist and the piece. All artists make conscious decisions about what is depicted and attempt to convey a specific meaning. However, artists are also influenced in ways they may not realize. Anything an artist reads, hears, or sees might stay in his or her subconscious, only to later appear in a painting. In addition, each viewer brings different knowledge that influences interpretation. As I discussed in the previous chapter, art critics in New York City brought their urban world experiences to the works of Grandma Moses and interpreted the farm scenes as a nostalgic and romantic vision of the past. The psychiatrist who looked at Zebra on Jungle Road at Midnight brought a Freudian perspective and assumed the snake was a phallic symbol. Maybe the painting is about Anderson’s father and she did not realize it, or maybe the snake is simply a snake – both sides could be argued.

In this chapter, I will examine Anderson’s paintings that have been classified as memory paintings with attention to her role as narrator and the conscious decisions she has made when composing her scenes. Memory paintings capture moments in her personal life, and in the life of her community. In memory paintings, we trust the artist to tell us the story. Anderson functions not only as observer but also as participant: She makes decisions about what she wants to communicate to the viewer. In fact, Anderson also includes a portrait of herself in several of her memory paintings, because it reminds the viewer of her presence, and her role as artist in recording the event. It is rare, and fortunate, to have an artist’s personal musings on her work, and I will be using what she has published to analyze the paintings. Sometimes her written thoughts match what she has depicted in the scene, but sometimes there is conflict. Clearly, memory paintings are
interpretations of events, not simply “flashes” from the past. Anderson decides how she wants the memory to look, and she makes the decision to include certain people, or depict herself as innocent. Her writings reveal her manipulation of memory.

_Oasis_, 1992 [Fig. 11], is a wild scene of debauchery taking place in the lot in front of a brothel and a bar. The scene has a flattened perspective, which is typical for folk artists. It is night, with the sliver of a crescent moon visible at the top center of the canvas. On the left is Sids Mobile Home, a place that houses strippers or prostitutes, and several of the women stand in front of Sids protesting “Poleece Brutality.” On the right side is Oasis, a blue brick bar with saloon doors. Through the large windows, we can see several couples making-out inside. In front of Oasis, provocatively dressed women fight over a half-naked man on the ground, while other people smoke, drink beer, and watch the action. A police car approaches from the bottom right, only its roof and siren lights visible on the canvas. Directly beneath the crescent moon grows a tree that splits the lot and the canvas. At the base of the tree a woman sits in a conservative dress, reading a book. She is the only person who does participate or observe the activity in the parking lot. This woman is Linda Anderson.

In her paragraph on the painting, Anderson writes that one night she accompanied her brother to the Oasis while he settled a gambling debt. She was waiting for him outside, reading an “Indian love book,” when a fight started in the bar. Apparently, the men were thrown out of the bar and into the lot near Anderson, but she told the police she was too involved in her book to notice any details. She writes, “When the law asked if I’d seen who was involved, I said I had heard stuff, but I was reading and at a heavy-

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66 Anderson, 85.
breathing point of Indian love. So, no, I hadn’t seen a thing. I guess they believed me. Maybe they read Indian love books themselves.\textsuperscript{67}

*Oasis* is a memory painting because it documents a memorable scene from Anderson’s life and community. It is also a brilliant display of her awareness of her role as artist: She obviously observed the action of the evening, but she told the police she did not see anything because she did not want to get involved.\textsuperscript{68} She has recorded the event for all to see, but she has preserved her story of the evening by depicting herself, in the very center of the scene, ignoring all the action. She could have left herself out completely, but instead she perpetuates the story she gave the police. Anderson portrays herself as an unreliable narrator, one who lies to the police, and can, we might infer, just as easily lie to the viewer.

*Oasis* is also an example of how Anderson straddles the line between Cardinal’s narrow and broad definition of memory paintings. It is not a nostalgic scene of a simple, rural life. *Oasis* contains violence, conflict between authority and the common man, and implications of sin and sex. However, while this may be a gritty depiction of life, this painting lacks the gravity of Pippin’s *John Brown Going to His Hanging*. Bar fights and prostitution are real issues with real consequences, but *Oasis* was painted with a sense of humor. With the misspelled signs of the prostitutes, the t-shirt of the man in front of the bar, each couple sharing an intimate moment within the bar, and her own quiet self-portrait – clearly Anderson wants viewers to look at this scene and smile. While *Oasis* is certainly a seedier scene than Grandma Moses’ *Balloon*, it is just as romanticized.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
Anderson’s evening at the Oasis was not the first time she encountered law enforcement. Several of Anderson’s memory paintings feature illegal activity, or so-called sinful behavior. Nyssa Hattaway, curator for the Wesleyan show, completely ignored these paintings when putting together *Womenfolk*. This behavior does not fit into the perceived ideal of a rural, older woman. *Womenfolk* portrays the women artists as family caretakers, not as gossips, or witnesses to anything unlawful, but Anderson is both. Anderson’s brother gambles at cockfights, which she painted in *The Cockfight*, 1984 [Fig. 12], and *What Goes on in the Barn Stays in the Barn*, 2004 [Fig. 13]. Again, with her title, Anderson is being playful with the viewer. Obviously what happened in the barn was not a big secret, as she has painted a permanent record of the event. In her essay on *The Cockfight*, she writes that she knows all the attendees she represented personally, and discusses her relationship with them.\(^{69}\) She even points out that the man in the white shirt and orange hat on the left side of the painting is dating the woman in the fur coat, and is married to the woman “with long blond over-volumized hair.”\(^ {70}\) Anderson is not an artist focused only on her role as wife and mother. She is also a proud gossip. This is her community, and she has captured the events, both public and private, in a permanent record.

Anderson did not paint herself in either of the above cockfight paintings, and of course she portrayed herself as an innocent bystander in *Oasis*, but that does not mean she avoided trouble in life, or avoids depicting her involvement with illegal activities in her art. *Still Life*, 1984 [Fig. 14] is a painting of her father’s whiskey still under siege by

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\(^ {69}\) Ibid., 83.

\(^ {70}\) Ibid.
four revenuers. Anderson is the young girl in a red dress hiding beneath tree branches in the bottom right-hand corner. She writes that her father supported the family with his stills. On this particular day, Anderson’s mother sent her to the site with two buckets full of breakfast for her father, brother, and two other men working the still. Densely planted pine trees grow in the background of this scene, suggesting that the still was well-hidden. The revenuers had been watching the site, and just as Anderson’s father noticed them, the revenuers were attacked by a wild hog. The men were able to flee as the revenuers dealt with the animal, and Anderson hid beneath the pile of pine saplings. *Still Life* depicts the moment when the revenuers have returned to the still, prepared to destroy it. The two men on the left hold sticks of dynamite, while the other two revenuers overturn barrels and destroy the supplies. The hog hides in the trees just behind the steamer. Small and pink, the hog does not look threatening, which I think might be a little joke from Anderson: how could the revenuers be afraid of this harmless pink pig?

In *Still Life*, Anderson participates and observes. She brought the food to her father: the red and yellow buckets lay on the ground, as she dropped them in her rush to hide. Clearly, Anderson feared getting caught by the revenuers. This scene is more personal than *Oasis* and *The Cockfight* because the revenuers destroy her father’s livelihood. However, like *Oasis*, it depicts what could be a dramatic scene in a light-hearted fashion. We only know that it was her father’s still because she told us in her book. Anderson has chosen to paint the moment before the revenuers dynamite the still

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71 Ibid., 57.
72 Ibid.
rather than the moment her father and his coworkers flee. She purposely excludes her father from the scene, which prevents the painting from becoming sentimental.

At first glance, *Dip in the Soque*, 1985 [Fig. 15] looks like a simple landscape scene. Like many other landscapes by self-taught artists, this one has a flattened perspective, so the viewer can see both the immediate foreground, and the distant houses in the background. The sky is blue with fluffy white clouds, and there are rolling blue hills at the horizon. The Soque River splits the canvas, with tall yellow grasses on the immediate right river bank, and red fields with symmetrically planted, white-flowered trees covering most of the right side of the painting. The repetition gives the viewer a sense of order and balance. The left side of the river features golden fields, and tall trees with gold and red leaves. Anderson has chosen a bright, warm color scheme that soothes the viewer, and conveys a calm, late summer day. Several boys skinny-dip in the river, and it seems to be a peaceful scene. However, a closer look reveals a young girl hiding behind a tree at the bank of the river. She has a big smile, and it might appear that she is simply spying on the boys, but Anderson’s comments on this painting reveal her sinister actions: This is actually a self-portrait, and Anderson is there to steal the boys’ clothes.

Anderson writes that she and the boys were working the fields.\(^{73}\) She was about ten, and they were twelve or thirteen. The boys decided to go swimming, but she could not join them because she was a girl. Instead, while they were in the water, she took their clothes and hid them, presumably in retaliation. Anderson painted herself as an observer to the scene, but in her text, reveals herself to have been a participant in the mischief. In her book she writes that she has painted the location of the hidden clothes on the backside

\(^{73}\) Ibid., 93.
of the canvas. This secret belongs only to the owner of the painting. Again, Anderson plays with the viewer, and with her own role as artist. She paints herself as a witness to the scene, but she chose not to paint herself as a participant. *Dip in the Soque* depicts Anderson as a spy, but not as a thief: The painting only reveals half of the story.

As a memory painter, Anderson preserves and documents moments in her life. She does not try to shock city folk with cockfights and barfights, just as Grandma Moses was not concerned with appealing to her urban audiences’ sense of nostalgia. Instead, Anderson paints her world, its characters, complexities, and colors. Her body of work suggests she has a sense of humor. That tiny pink hog does not look very threatening, and her teasing the police with tales of heavy breathing Indian Love is meant to be funny. She plays with the viewer, and is clearly aware of her role as an artist and memory painter. In illustrating these memories, she has chosen specific moments of the action in order to tell an entire story. In *Still Life*, we can see buckets of spilled food, and the pig hidden in the distance. In *Oasis*, the fight might be wrapping up, but the police have just arrived. There is a clear sense of what happened before and of what is about to happen. The artist is both observer and participant, dictating what the viewer will see, but also joining the viewer in the joke.

Clearly, memory is not precise and can be manipulated. In *Dip in the Soque*, Anderson depicts a beautiful, brightly colored landscape with boys who skinny-dip and a girl who spies. It is only because of her book that we have the full story of the events of the day. Casual viewers of the painting are unable to tell the girl’s motivations because there are no painted clues in the scene, and the viewer is unable to see the hidden painting

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74 Ibid.
on the back of the canvas that reveals the location of the stolen clothes. Anderson depicted the moment before the event, without any indication of what was to come. In this instance, she is an unreliable narrator because she portrayed only one aspect of the story, and chose not to expose her own behavior. *Dip in the Soque* reminds the viewer that memory paintings are not meant to be exact records of events.
CHAPTER IV

MEMORY FLASH: VISION AS PHOTOGRAPH

Mount Vernon

*Mount Vernon Fire Baptized Pentecostal Church, 1984* [Fig. 16], depicts a scene of chaotic worship in a Pentecostal church. The room is a simple church setting, with white painted wood plank walls, large windows, and few pews. The red carpet forms the center aisle on a hardwood floor, and a stage with a podium and two pews rises at the front. The church is not packed with people, but the few figures that are present take up space. Some of the figures kneel on the ground in prayer, while others raise their arms to the heavens. Shoes, socks, and unattended handbags are scattered on the floor while the barefoot figures run across the stage, or walk on top of the pews. No two people interact with each other; all are lost in their own worship, even the preacher. He stands at the altar, but he looks up, addressing God instead of his congregation. The drama of the scene is reinforced by the storm visible through the windows. We see heavy rain and yellow lines that indicate lightning. Only three figures do not appear lost in ecstasy: at the top of the aisle, two men play instruments, one a banjo and the other a guitar. The names of both appear as labels on their instrument straps. Anderson identifies Hugh, the banjo player on the left, as her father.\(^75\) The musicians have calm faces, and look forward towards the congregation and the viewer. The third calm, non-ecstatic congregant is a young red-headed girl seated on a pew on the left. Anderson identifies this figure as herself.

\(^{75}\) Anderson, 16.
Anderson was raised as a Pentecostal, and in her 2009 book, she writes that her father became quite religious after he was diagnosed with cancer in the late 1940s, when Anderson herself was only a girl.\footnote{Ibid., 16.} She also notes here that while she still lives near Mount Vernon Fire Baptized Pentecostal Church, she now attends a Presbyterian church.\footnote{Ibid., 107.} When I interviewed Anderson, she told me that she does not agree with the Presbyterian belief that the Bible is a metaphor – Anderson believes that the Bible is factual history.\footnote{Linda Anderson, interview by author, Clarkesville, GA, September 19, 2010.} However, she has stayed with the Presbyterian Church because she likes the people. Her religious beliefs are not fully encompassed by any particular denomination. I am focusing on her Pentecostal upbringing because, in her book, she writes that Mount Vernon is the church that both shaped her early beliefs and influenced her work.

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\textit{Mt. Vernon} is a portrait of her childhood church. Her mother is the woman in the yellow dress, kneeling in prayer on the left, in front of her seated daughter. Anderson writes that on this night, there was a bad storm rising, and when the preacher made the first call to the altar, asking if any congregants wanted to make a commitment to Christ, no one responded and the storm got worse.\footnote{Ibid.} The man kneeling between the two musicians at the center of the painting is Journey Benton, the man that answered the second call.\footnote{Ibid.} According to Anderson, when he walked down the aisle to be saved, the spirit moved on the church. Apparently, the women in the immediate foreground are praying for Journey far away from him, giving him space, because he was a single man.
and they did not want to tempt him sexually.\textsuperscript{81} Anderson emphasizes the trance-like state that overtakes a Pentecostal when the Holy Spirit arrives by describing Sister Rosella, the woman on stage in the blue dress. She writes that Sister Rosella was the type of woman who kept the seams of her stockings straight and who kept her hair done up in a tight bun with tortoiseshell pins. However, when the spirit moved in her and she went in her trance, the stockings went crooked and fell below her knees, and she would shake her head and all the pins would fall out.\textsuperscript{82} Anderson writes that the men grew very interested when her hair “started cascading.” Anderson has created a scene in which people lose control, and give themselves over to God and the Holy Spirit. This is not a simple service of listening to the preacher’s sermon, but one of full involvement and religious ecstasy.

**Pentecostalism**

In order to understand this scene, it is important to understand Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism is a Fundamentalist Christian sect that began in 1901 in the United States and grew exponentially throughout the century in the United States and around the world. Pentecostals believe in the gospel of personal salvation, Holy Ghost baptism, divine healing, and the impending return of the Lord.\textsuperscript{83} Holy Ghost Baptism is not a process, but a physical state where one becomes a vessel for the Holy Ghost.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
their name from the day of Pentecost in The Acts of the Apostles, when the Holy Spirit gave the Apostles the ability to speak in other languages. This is described in chapter 2, verses 2-4.

And Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it felled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other Languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.\(^\text{85}\)

Pentecostals experience Holy Ghost Baptism when the Holy Spirit enters the body of a congregant and speaks through him. This is an audible sign of conversion to Pentecostalism, and in some congregations, those that have not spoken are treated as second class Christians.\(^\text{86}\) Newspaper reports of early Pentecostal revivals were critical of the participants, and describe the Pentecostals as loud, lost in frenzy, twisting and turning in ecstasy, writhing on the floors, leaping into the air, screaming and chattering, all while rapid music is playing.\(^\text{87}\) This could be a description of Anderson’s painting.

Speaking in tongues was not a private event. Anderson captured a known moment in the community; she does not reveal a secret, as she did with the illegal events in the barn [Fig. 13]. This is a sacred occasion, and she treats it as such, forgoing her humor. To outsiders and casual viewers of the painting, the event might seem unbelievable or mythical. As I described above, this ecstasy can frighten witnesses. It was not rare for community members who were not part of the local Pentecostal

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\(^\text{86}\) Wacker, 5.
\(^\text{87}\) Ibid., 101.
congregation to speculate about the emotion, trances, and behavior of the Church.  This is where the slang “holy roller” comes from – it is a term of criticism for the emotion related to their practice. Those outside the church criticized Pentecostals, denouncing them as false, or attributing the noises made when speaking in tongues to mental instability. This ecstatic, holy state is revered within the church as evidence of salvation, but outside the church, it is regarded with suspicion. Religious scholars have studied the phenomenon, attempting to determine if there are physiological causes for the ecstatic behavior, or if the congregants are culturally influenced, picking up on cues and mimicking the so-called normal behavior of the community. Academics want an explanation for what happens during a Pentecostal service. Anderson, with this memory painting, has provided visual evidence of the sacred moment. *Mount Vernon Fire Baptized Pentecostal Church* does not explain the action, but provides viewers with an insider perspective of the event.

I had the opportunity to visit Linda Anderson’s hometown and attend a Sunday morning service at Mount Vernon Holiness Church on September 20, 2010 [Fig. 19 & 20]. This was my first experience at a Pentecostal service, and even though I have been studying Pentecostals for the past several months, I was still awed by the emotion displayed inside. Everyone was dressed conservatively, with the women in long skirts and dresses. People shouted, stood, and prayed out loud any time they were moved to, even during the sermon. At the end of the service, everyone began to sing “Amazing

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89 Ibid., 81.
90 Ibid., 146.
91 Wacker, 52, 54.
Grace.” Several members of the congregation left the pews to kneel at the altar, just as they are doing in Anderson’s painting. One woman began to make a noise that sounded, to me, like a yodel. It was a truly moving occasion, and unlike anything I have ever experienced at a religious service. To me, as an outsider, it was a sacred event that had previously seemed mythical, but to Anderson in her childhood, this was a weekly occurrence. As in her other memory paintings, she has captured an event that was known to the people in her circle. She can identify every person in the room, because these are portraits of people she knew as a child. However, this painting differs from the memory paintings discussed in the previous chapter because it does not include Anderson’s humor. In addition, while Anderson has included herself as an observer to the scene, she is depicted as an outsider rather than a participant. I will discuss this in detail below when I compare Mt. Vernon to similar scenes of worship.

It is rare to find scenes of religious worship depicted in any genre of art, in any century. Works commissioned for houses of worship offer lessons in religious history, or provide areas of focus and devotion, such as words from the Quran, or a sacrificed Christ on the cross. This art does not mirror the action that occurs within the church. However, self-taught artists focus on their own history and life experiences, and many have captured the drama of a contemporary service. These paintings include plantation worker Clementine Hunter’s Tent Revival, 1950s [Fig. 17], and Charlie A. Owens’ Church of God-In-Christ, n.d. [Fig.18], which depicts a lively scene from a Baptist church. These works of art do not appear on the walls of Protestant churches, but are instead displayed in private homes. They are not works made for devotion, but are inspired by actual
practice, experience, and memory. As scholars, we can use these works to understand religious practice. Anderson’s *Mt. Vernon* does not explain Pentecostal belief, but it does depict Pentecostal worship, which is unique, and therefore monumental.

Russell Lee

Of course, in addition to the work of self-taught artists, we also have a body of work composed of photographs by artists employed by the Farm Securities Administration, and other government-sponsored programs, that visually recorded everyday life in America in the 1930s and 1940s. One purpose of the photography project of the Farm Securities Administration was to document the New Deal programs that were being implemented to help the rural poor. Roy Stryker, the economist in charge of the project, gave his photographers detailed instructions about the information and type of photographs they were to obtain. Stryker wanted images of all aspects of American life, including family, work, and worship. The photographers returned to D.C. from the field with detailed written notes, including names, ages, occupations, and captions with explanations on agricultural or commercial processes. This was an interesting period in the history of photography, and many of the photographers hired for the FSA project later became known as great artists. One of the photographers employed by Stryker, Russell Lee, took a series of photographs at a Pentecostal service, which I will compare to Anderson’s *Mt. Vernon* in order to understand her role as artist in composing the scene.

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93 Ibid.
On September 15, 1946, photographer Russell Lee, on behalf of the Records of the Solid Fuels Administration for War, 1937-1948, photographed a Pentecostal service in Lejunior, Harlan County, Kentucky. Linda Anderson would have been five years old in 1946, just a few years younger than she was at the service she would later paint. Lee was photographing the people of the PV&K Coal Company, and in the detailed captions to his photographs, he speculates that the people of Lejunior may have attended the Pentecostal service for entertainment, rather than worship, because the coal camp did not offer any type of modern amusement.\(^{94}\) I realize it might be problematic to compare photographs with paintings, but I am analyzing the terminology Anderson uses to describe her so-called memory flash, and arguing in support of Anderson’s agency as an artist, and the purposeful choices she makes when she paints.\(^ {95}\)

In Lee’s photo titled *Services at the Pentecostal Church of God* [Fig. 21], we see a very crowded, small room church. Lee must have stood in the back to capture the entire room, which gives the viewer a full sense of the space. The wooden pews are packed with women and children, and at the front, surrounding the podium, stand several clapping men. Two of these men play guitars, and another holds cymbals. Small religious posters and prints decorate the back wall, and on the right side wall, hanging hooks hold hats and coats. No one stands directly behind the podium, so the viewer cannot immediately locate the pastor. In the crowded room, some people simply observe

\(^{94}\) Caption for ARC ID 541340
\(^ {95}\) My inspiration for this comparison came from an exhibition catalog for the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina, where folk art and FSA photographs were exhibited together. *Myth, Memory, and Imagination: Universal Themes in the Life and Culture of the South, selections from the collection of Julia J. Norrell.* (Columbia: McKissick Museum University of South Carolina, 1999).
the musicians, and clap along with the music, while others socialize, or just sit and wait for the service to start. Lee has captured a broad view of the space, as though he is setting up the scene. However, in this photo, there is no indication of the excitement to come.

Eli Sanders, Pastor at the Pentecostal Church of God [Fig. 22], is a close-up of the pastor at the podium. Lee has taken the photograph from a low angle, which makes the man, and the shadow he casts, appear very large, much larger than the woman seated behind him. Lee’s caption describes him as a tipple worker and track loader at the Coal Company, but in this room, that position does not matter. This is highlighted by the sign on the pastor’s podium that reads, “This World is Not My Home.” For Pentecostals, home comes after death, because home is with God. Lee has made Eli Sanders the dominant figure in the photograph, which mirrors his position in the church.

There are two photos that Lee has captioned Healing “laying on of hands” ceremony in the Pentecostal Church of God. Both feature standing congregants crowded around, touching, and praying over another congregant in an effort to offer healing and to open up the person of focus for entry by the Holy Ghost. In the first [Fig. 23], the pastor stands on the left, drenched in sweat as his eyes roll to the back of his head and his hands are open and raised in an orant position. He does not focus on the woman seated before him. This is a crowded, claustrophobic scene, as Lee is taking the photo up-close, near the action. The low ceilings emphasize the smallness of the room, and figures are cropped out on the left and the right. In the immediate foreground we can see the back of a woman’s head, a reminder that Lee is right there in the crowd. The sweat stains and
frizzy hair give the viewer an immediate sense of the heat and obvious discomfort of this Kentucky summer day.

The second photograph [Fig. 24] is more visually striking. A young girl stands with her back to the camera, facing a group of ecstatic men who all reach out to touch her. At the center of the group, directly facing the young girl is a man drenched in sweat, his eyes closed and his face contemplative as he reaches towards the girl with his left hand, and reaches to God with his right hand. There is only one woman in the scene; her head visible just over his shoulder. She either sings or cries out, but she does not touch the young girl. The man at the center is flanked by three men on each side, all with hands on the girl. The pastor stands on the far left, eyes closed, while one hand strokes the girl’s hair. On the far right, a man holds a guitar, but does not play it. His hand is also on the young girl, and he clutches the guitar close to him with his other hand. Only one man in the scene does not participate in the laying on of hands. He stands on the far left, his hands holding each other, as he stares at the camera, and therefore out at the viewer. This man reminds the viewer that there is an outsider at the service. He looks at Lee, who does not belong. Lee observes the scene as an outsider. He is very close to the action, and his photos give viewers, who are also outsiders, a window into the ceremony.

Russell Lee was also a self-taught artist. He was not academically trained in art, but actually graduated from Lehigh University with a degree in chemical engineering. He was working in manufacturing when he married a painter named Dora Emrick. Together they left the Midwest, eventually settling at an artists’ colony called Byrdcliffe in Woodstock, New York, in the early 1930s, where both worked as naïve painters.

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96 Lemann, IX.
However, Lee gave up painting and taught himself photography. Stryker hired Russell Lee in 1936, one year after the launch of the FSA photography project, to replace another photographer, and Lee and Stryker got along very well. When Stryker left the FSA in the early 1940s and began a new project with Standard Oil of New Jersey, Lee went with him, and later worked on projects with Stryker when he went to Pittsburgh to work for the Jones & Laughlin Steel Company. Clearly, Lee believed in Stryker, and both considered this work to be important.

Lee did not think of himself as an artist, but as a craftsman. In Nicolas Lemann’s introduction on Russell Lee, he references John Szarkowski, Director of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, who apparently said that a photographer either uses the camera as a mirror into himself, or as a window into the world. According to Lemann, Lee was “pure window.” Lee never used that terminology to describe himself, but his goal was to document events, and his unwillingness to take on the term “artist” meant that he did not see himself as offering any interpretation of the people and events he captured on film. However, even though Lee did not see himself as an artist, he made compositional choices with his photographs. By shooting the pastor at a low angle [Fig. 22], Lee gave the viewer a sense of his powerful presence. With every photograph, he chose to crop people or action out of the scene, highlighting specific moments, and designating certain people as worthy of

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97 Ibid.
98 Ibid., X.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., VIII.
101 Ibid., XII.
attention. Clearly, there was some level of interpretation by Lee, and even if he did not want to call himself an artist, these photographs are more than mere recordings.

It is interesting to compare Anderson’s work, which she describes as a flash of memory like a photograph appearing in her mind, to photographs of similar scenes. Both Lee and Anderson were self-taught artists, yet Anderson sees herself as an artist, and Lee does not. Both observe the scene, and are outsiders to the events. Anderson is non-participatory as she sits quietly in the pew, and Lee is non-participatory as he is there to document, and does not appear in any of the photos. Yet, both are very much involved with the scenes because they have made compositional choices, which is involvement in the form of interpretation.

Both Lee and Anderson made artistic choices in how they framed the scene. Anderson’s painting presents the scene to the viewer, but keeps the viewer outside of the events. As in many of her other paintings, she sets the scene as on a stage, with the fourth wall missing. The viewer can only observe from a distance, forced to be an outsider, but Mt. Vernon is still a powerful scene. Anderson’s figures weep on the floor, or raise their arms to the sky, clearly lost in some kind of religious ecstasy, and the storm outside the window both adds to the excitement of the scene, and alludes to the presence of God. However, Lee’s photos are much more intense. Lee was described as “pure window,” but his photographs zoom in so close to the excitement that the viewer is brought into the scene, and almost feels like a participant. The obvious heat and discomfort in the room, suggested by the visible sweat stains and frizzy hair, add to the
ecstasy and spectacle. Lee may have thought of himself as a craftsman, but he was an artist who made compositional choices and offered interpretation.

In Anderson’s 2009 book, she describes the source of this particular work as a memory from one specific Pentecostal service she attended as a child. The storm, the music, and the people are all depicted exactly as she recalls. The paintings in the previous chapter showed that Anderson is not always a reliable narrator, but in Mount Vernon there is no visual evidence of deceit, and Anderson’s narrative does not reveal any additional information. The only change she claims to have made is the color of her own hair. A natural brunette, she decided to give herself a red braid, claiming “I love red hair, and if I’m holding the paintbrush I can make myself any way I want to.” It is interesting that this is the way she has chosen to exert her control over the scene. She could have portrayed herself as experiencing Holy Ghost baptism, though she told me she never spoke in tongues. However, it is important to note that she writes that even though this church is just minutes from her house, she no longer attends because she is no longer Pentecostal. She is no longer invested in that religion; she does not need proof of her conversion. In this scene, and in this church, she is only an observer, not a participant. In this instance she acts as “pure window” and lets viewers in on a moment they would rarely get to see or experience.

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102 Anderson, 107.
CHAPTER V
ANDERSON’S EDEN

Very little has been written about Linda Anderson and her art, but the few curators who have looked at her work, such as Nyssa Hattaway and Sandra Kraskin, have focused mostly on her memory paintings. However, in addition to memory paintings, Anderson also paints biblical scenes. Anderson’s relationship with God is very important to her art because she claims God gave her the visions that inspire her paintings. When looking at Anderson’s oeuvre, we cannot ignore her biblical scenes because they have much to tell us about Anderson’s visions and her religious beliefs. As I mentioned in Chapter IV, Anderson’s religious upbringing, under the direction of her ill father, took place in the Pentecostal Church, and she writes in her 2009 book that the sermons she heard there shaped her beliefs and influenced her paintings. She now, irregularly, attends a Presbyterian Church, but does not strictly follow Presbyterian doctrine. Her religious beliefs are not encompassed by any one denomination, but her biblical scenes reveal how deeply she has considered the Bible.

In her 2009 book, Anderson writes that most of the sermons preached at her childhood Pentecostal church came from the Old Testament, with a focus on Genesis. As a fundamentalist Christian, Anderson believes that the Bible is fact, and that the origin

105 Linda Anderson. Flashes of Memory: An Appalachian Self-Portrait. (Kennesaw, GA: Kennesaw State University Press, 2009), 107
107 Ibid., 105.
and history of all mankind are documented in Genesis. Anderson created several paintings of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, which she believes were inspired by those sermons and her own interest in the jungle. In her childhood, she imagined “Adam and Eve looking like beautiful dolls, fair and unblemished, in the most gloriously lush garden. Surrounded by every animal, fruit, flower and exotic bird.” Just as she has visions of her past, which she describes as memory flashes, she also envisions Eden.

When I start thinking of Eden, my mind creates other exotic and strange places. Mind travel is what I call it. I’ve never been to a jungle, but I can clearly see how it looks. Then all that’s left is to pick up the brushes and paints and put it down. There. That’s Eden. Of course, as with the paintings of Anderson’s family and community, she includes her own unique perspective in her visionary biblical paintings. Her depictions of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden are rich with her voice and cultural influences, which again proves her agency as an artist. The visions may be gifts from God, but Anderson holds the brush, and therefore decides how to interpret and depict them.

The Museum of Craft and Folk Art in San Francisco held an exhibition in 1990 called “Primal Portraits: Adam and Eve Imagery as Seen by Twentieth Century American Self-Taught Artists.” Vermont art dealer Pat Parsons wrote about the exhibition for the museum’s journal, A Report, where she speculates that some self-taught artists are drawn to Adam and Eve because it is an opportunity to “recapture briefly a sense of innocence lost in the transition to adulthood,” and that others are simply examining why people

108 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
behave the way they do. Others, such as Kentucky woodcarver Edgar Tolson, also included in the show, was inspired to carve Adam and Eve when his patron asked him to experiment with the subject. The newsletter does not offer any additional interpretation of the works, but rather provides biographical information for the featured artists, so that the viewer can draw his or her own conclusions. Parsons places the represented artists into four separate categories: folk, naïf, outsider, and academic, or those that are “indistinguishable from pieces one might see in a mainstream gallery.”

One version of Anderson’s *Banishment from the Garden of Eden* [Figure unavailable, date unknown] was featured in the show. Parsons writes that initially, with only a formal evaluation of the piece, Anderson is labeled as folk. However, Parson adds, knowing that Anderson began to paint because she received a message from God makes her an outsider. Again, this is an exhibition where self-taught artists are classified and labeled, but the content of their work is largely ignored. In this chapter, I will be analyzing the content of Anderson’s Eden scenes in order to gain a sense of the conscious formal decisions she makes when painting, as well as her outside influences.

Anderson writes that the Garden of Eden is one of her favorite places to paint because is it a place of “total innocence and protection.” To Anderson, Eden really is a place because she believes in a literal interpretation of the Bible. In her scenes, the light comes not from the sun, but the presence of God. According to the story of her origin

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102 Ibid.
103 Anderson, 111.
104 Anderson, 111.
as an artist, God answered her prayers when she was in a dark place. He could not heal her sick daughter, but gave her visions, which act as a sign of His presence and protection. Anderson is aware of her blessings, but also realizes that suffering connects people to each other and to God. In her description of Banishment from the Garden, 2002 [Fig. 25], Anderson writes about Adam and Eve as though she were describing any young couple starting out. “Now Eve has a baby, and she and Adam have to provide for that child and keep it safe. They have to hunt for clothing. They have to hunt for food.” Adam and Eve have been forced out of the place of innocence and protection, and now have to fight for their survival. “People don’t have to face infertile land to know what it’s like to survive. I’m talking about everybody, people in the cities too. No one is exempt from pain and suffering.” Anderson relates to this myth because of her own pain and suffering, and through her paintings she can reach and comfort others.

Race

Three aspects of Anderson’s Adam and Eve paintings express her unique voice and vision. The first and most obvious difference appears as the race of her figures. Sometimes Anderson paints Adam and Eve as black, sometimes they are both white, and sometimes Adam is white and Eve is black, or the other way around [Figs. 25-28, 30]. The angels of Eden are also depicted as both black and white. Anderson writes in her 2009 book,

I know in my secret heart that Adam and Eve must have been black, because of where they say the cradle of civilization began. But when I was a child and we

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115 Anderson, 121.
116 Ibid.
were preached sermons on Adam and Eve, I never thought of them as being black. I always thought of them as being white and all smooth. But Barbie and Ken could not have survived out of the garden, let’s face it. They had to have had some mettle to them.  

To Anderson, black skin is a sign of strength and perseverance.

It is not rare for sex to be delineated by color in art: For example, the ancient Minoan Hagia Triadha Sarcophagus depicts men with red skin and women with white skin, and ancient Egyptian wall paintings followed the same color conventions. The colors reflected the standard of beauty, with women as the paler sex because they worked indoors. This standard exists in the East, as well. An ancient Japanese proverb states that “white skin makes up for seven defects,” and Japanese women were using white powder on their faces as early as the seventh century. In Western Medieval and Renaissance art, women were depicted as fair and pale, while men were dark and ruddy. Again, this reflected the standard of beauty and reinforced gender roles, where women worked in the home, and men worked outside. Of course, it also reflected medical beliefs at the time: All people were thought to be composed of the four humors, yellow bile, black bile, phlegm, and blood, which corresponded with the four elements, fire, earth, water, and air. Men had a larger amount of yellow bile, or fire, which made them strong and ruddy in coloring, while women had a preponderance of phlegm, or water, which made them cold, weak, and pale. However, it is unlikely these beliefs influenced Anderson.

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117 Ibid.  
The science of the four humors has been out of fashion since the nineteenth century, and Anderson’s paintings do not follow these gender/color lines.

Another possible influence on Anderson was her childhood religion. Early Pentecostals had a very open perspective on race.\textsuperscript{121} Scholars of religion recognize the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, 1906, as the birth of the Pentecostal movement, and this revival was interracial. The idea that salvation could be achieved through faith and baptism by the Holy Spirit had been growing throughout the late nineteenth century. By 1901, the notion that speaking in tongues was the evidence of having received baptism with the Holy Spirit was established as doctrine by Reverend Charles Fox Parham of Kansas, a white man.\textsuperscript{122} William J. Seymour, a black evangelist from Texas, met Parham in Houston, where he was teaching and touring revivals.\textsuperscript{123} Seymour took what he learned from Parham to a mission in Los Angeles, and the Pentecostal movement was born. From 1906 to 1909, worshippers flocked to Azusa to experience Holy Ghost baptism and the prophecies of Seymour, and news of the events made the papers all over the country.\textsuperscript{124} The revival was interracial, with whites, blacks and Latinos all worshipping in the same space, which was unusual for the time. However, it is important to realize that this interracial event is not an indication that these early Pentecostals were progressive. To them, each person was a vessel for the Holy Spirit, and if He chose to

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\textsuperscript{121} Synan, \textit{The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States}, 158. \\
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 99. \\
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 103. \\
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 108.
\end{flushleft}
speak through a woman or an African-American, then people were listening to the Holy Spirit, and not the woman or the African-American.\textsuperscript{125}

Missionaries from Azusa spread throughout the country, bringing Pentecostalism to the Southeast, and while most Pentecostal denominations were originally interracial, divisions along racial lines were inevitable. In 1924, white Pentecostals withdrew from the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, claiming the mix of races prevented effective evangelization.\textsuperscript{126} The Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, founded in South Carolina, was the denomination Anderson belonged to as a child, and was interracial in its initial years at the start of the century, but split in 1908, citing criticism from the communities of the South.\textsuperscript{127} By the late 1940s when Anderson was a member, the church had been white-only for forty years. Anderson did not experience interracial services at Mt. Vernon, and therefore it is unlikely that the early history of the church influenced the depiction of race in her Eden paintings.

I had the opportunity to visit Clarkesville, Georgia, and attend a service at Mt. Vernon. The congregation I saw at Mt. Vernon was entirely white. When I spoke with Anderson in her home, she told me that her church was white, and the community in general is mostly white.\textsuperscript{128} When I asked her about the race of Adam and Eve, she first reiterated what she wrote in her book, that they must have been black because of the location of Eden. However, after a moment of thought she told me that one of them must have been white, because otherwise where would the white race have come from?

\textsuperscript{125} Wacker, 105.
\textsuperscript{126} Synan, \textit{The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States}, 158.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 174
\textsuperscript{128} Linda Anderson, interview by author, Clarkesville, GA, September 19, 2010.
Anderson still believes in a literal interpretation of the Bible. To her, Adam and Eve are the parents of all mankind.

Eve as Warrior of the Animals

The second way that Anderson expresses her own vision in her Garden of Eden scenes is how she depicts Eve as a strong, powerful woman, with a connection to the animals of Eden. Anderson does not portray Eve as an evil temptress, or a weak girl who was tricked by a snake. Instead, Anderson paints Eve as warrior of the animals. In *Eve*, 1994 [Fig. 26], the subject stands tall and dominates the canvas as a strong, black woman. Lush and exotic plants, resembling pineapples and venus flytraps occupy the immediate foreground. Eve is flanked by a lion and a tiger, the lion almost fearfully glances at Eve, while the tiger wraps protectively around her leg, his claws drawing blood, fangs bared, and eyes glaring out at an unknown threat. Even the earth itself has a hold on Eve, as the lush vines creep up her legs, and wrap around both her feet and the legs of the lion, just as they wind their way around the two trees framing the scene. A long grey snake with a diamond pattern wraps around her torso, neck, and left arm. Eve’s right hand rests on the part of the snake at her waist, while she holds a papaya fruit with her left. Her gaze is calm and steady as she looks right at the snake. Only the animals sense the danger. The only indication of threat, other than the watchful expressions of the lion and tiger, comes from the white lightning in the upper left-hand side. It is just one subtle bolt in a blue sky, similar to the lightning visible in *Mt. Vernon Fire Baptized Pentecostal Church* [Fig.16], which was a warning from God.
In *Eve on a Cheetah*, 1998 [Fig. 27], Anderson portrays a black Eve once again at the center of the canvas, but this time seen from a greater distance. Eve rides a running cheetah, her legs barely holding on, as her arms stretch overhead, open to the sky. The branches on the trees appear to match her gesture, as though they are celebrating with her. The cheetah, one in a pack, races over a hilly, brown landscape. Anderson depicts all the cheetahs with long torsos, running in a flying gallop. A white angel crouched behind some trees in the right foreground witnesses. He looks on with concern, and the cheetah closest to him turns to meet his gaze, with a similar concerned expression. In the catalog for the 1998 Wesleyan show, *Womenfolk*, curator Nyssa Hattaway writes that Eve is depicted here before the Fall, and that she is riding the cheetah “in a state of childlike innocence.” However, I think the expression on the angel’s face proves Hattaway wrong. This is Eve after she has eaten the forbidden fruit, and she is overcome with joy and knowledge. The angel and nearby cheetah sense what is coming next, and feel anxious and concerned for Eve. In addition, Anderson painted the scene in browns and oranges: there is only a hint of blue in the mostly cloudy sky, and almost no green. This is very different than *Eve* [Fig. 26], which features a brilliant blue sky, and a lush green foreground. Instead, the landscape in *Eve on a Cheetah* reminds the viewer of the barren land Adam and Eve are banished to in *Banishment from the Garden of Eden* [Fig. 25]. Perhaps, in this scene, Anderson uses color to foreshadow the imminent consequence of Eve’s actions.

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129 Hattaway.
When I met with Anderson, I asked her about this painting, and she told me I was correct.\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Eve on a Cheetah} depicts a moment after Eve ate the fruit, but before she and Adam were banished from the Eden. She told me that the fruit and what it could offer is an incredible temptation, and that any time you are told not to do something, that is all you are able to think about doing. When I asked her why she thought Adam was not tempted, she told me that men do not like change. Eden might have been a perfect place, where all of Adam and Eve’s needs were met, and where they got to walk with God, but Anderson believes that Eve might have been bored, whereas Adam was content with things as they were. While the Bible states in Genesis 3:7, that after Eve ate the fruit and shared it with her husband, “the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked,” Anderson decided to give Eve a moment of pure joy before she was punished.

This moment is also depicted in \textit{Adam & Eve}, 2001 [Fig. 28]. Here, a black Adam sits with his back to the viewer, while a white Eve sits facing forward, her gaze off to the side. Her mouth moves in a sly, subtle smile instead of the expression of complete revelry Anderson gave her in \textit{Eve on a Cheetah}. The apple core, evidence of their betrayal, lies on the ground next to her hand. The composition of the figures is reminiscent of Manet’s \textit{Le Déjeuner sur l’Herbe} [Fig. 29]. Both scenes feature a nude woman with a contorted torso and one leg bent at the knee, but Manet’s woman stares out at the viewer, while Anderson’s Eve avoids the viewer’s gaze. Tree trunks frame both scenes, and both feature a lunch of fruit. It is probable that Anderson saw a print of Manet’s painting, and it clearly left an impression. Anderson is not formally trained, but

\textsuperscript{130} Linda Anderson, interview by author, Clarkesville, GA, September 19, 2010.
she enjoys art, has a collection of art books, and frequents museums. However, I do not know if this is a purposeful homage, or an accidental one.

Of course, Anderson’s *Adam & Eve* differs from *Le Déjeuner sur l’Herbe* because she has inserted a bit of herself in the scene in the form of the animals that crowd her canvas. Jungle animals surround the couple as though waiting to see what happens now that Adam and Eve have eaten the apple. An angel also watches them, this time with a curious look rather than a concerned one. A cheetah crouches in the bottom left-hand corner, his head pulled back as though he were afraid. Anderson has a close relationship with her own pets. She has painted several portraits of her cats, and in her book, says she has twenty. Clearly, she has a kinship with the animal, and so it is not a surprise that the jungle cats are often Eve’s allies in Anderson’s Eden scenes. Anderson has placed a bit of herself in Eden. She identifies with Eve because she understands the temptation Eve faced in the Garden, and she empathizes with the struggle Adam and Eve encountered once they were banished from Paradise. By including the sympathetic cats, she has offered comfort to Eve and the viewer.

Forbidden Fruit

Another way that Anderson expresses her voice in her Eden scenes is through the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. In *The Kiss*, 2002 [Fig. 30], Adam and Eve embrace in the Garden of Eden. Adam closes his eyes, and wraps both arms around Eve, but the fruit tree has distracted her. Her lips meet Adam’s, and one arm casually drapes over his shoulder, but her other arm reaches up to pluck a peach from the tree beneath which they

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131 Anderson, 87.
stand. Her eyes focus on the fruit, and not on Adam. Anderson writes, “In this picture I painted Adam and Eve eating a peach, because that’s one of my favorite fruits. An apple wouldn’t tempt me so much, but a peach would really, really tempt me.” Anderson speaks of the fruit as though Eve was simply hungry for food, and not hungry for the knowledge the fruit could give her. Of course, the peach also represents the fruit of Georgia, Anderson’s home state. In addition, the peach might be a symbol of temptation, in general; it might be an embodiment of longing. Peaches could even be considered as an erotic fruit. Anderson writes,

When you go to a Pentecostal church as I did, you get the impression that Eve tempted Adam sexually. I always thought that might be, until I got to be a grown woman and started reading the Bible and realized that it was a sin of disobedience and not a sexual temptation. There is a snake in the picture, and the snake is leading Adam and Eve out of the garden, where they were protected. That’s how evil gets ahold of you. It slips up on you; you don’t know it’s happening; and it just kind of wireworks its way into your life and leads you away from a wonderful situation and into a bad place. That’s what happened here.”

Anderson has depicted Adam and Eve’s sexuality front and center, with the snake barely visible, and camouflaged in the hills. Eve uses her body to distract Adam while she reaches for the fruit, distracting Adam with her sexuality. At first glance, it is easy to blame her, as the true source of evil remains subtle and hidden, just as Anderson would say evil exists in real life.

While the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden is traditionally

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132 Ibid., 119.
134 Anderson, 119.
thought of and depicted as an apple, the Bible does not specifically identify it as such.

There is a lot of exegesis on this short section in the Bible. Some Jewish scholars have argued that the Tree of Knowledge might have been an olive tree or grape vine, because apple trees would not have existed in the Near East in Biblical times.¹³⁵ I think Anderson would argue that God could put any kind of fruit tree in Eden, native to the area or not. Some Christian artists have depicted the fruit as a fig, because after Adam and Eve eat the fruit, they grow ashamed of their nakedness, and immediately cover themselves with fig leaves.¹³⁶ However, the Bible pointedly refers to the leaves as fig leaves, and does not refer to the specific type of fruit, so I do not think the fig theory works. The idea that the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge is an apple comes from the Greek myth about the Gardens of Hesperides, a pagan counterpart to Eden, where an apple tree produced fruit that promised immortality.¹³⁷ The type of fruit that grows from the Tree of Knowledge remains unknown, and therefore open to interpretation and exploration by the artist painting the scene.

Anderson knows the Bible well, and her religion and relationship with God is very personal. The Pentecostal preacher she heard as a child may have shaped her early thoughts, but she has attended services of several Protestant denominations, and her beliefs are not encompassed by any one sect. She may be aware of biblical exegesis, but she also interprets the Bible for herself. She paints the fruit as an apple [Fig. 28], a papaya [Fig. 26], and a peach [Fig. 30]. These fruits refer to both her home in Georgia and the tropical jungle she has never visited but likes to explore with her “mind travel.”

¹³⁶ Ibid., 511-513.
¹³⁷ Ibid., 512, Appelbaum, 227.
She puts just as much of herself in her Eden scenes as she does into her memory paintings. While her Eden paintings are not literal self-portraits of herself as an observer or participant in the scene, she is a student of the Bible, and has observed the actions of Eden in her mind. By including peaches, her favorite fruit, and playful, wise jungle cats, she has, in a way, included herself as a participant.

Clearly, Anderson’s religious scenes are an important part of her body of work. These “mind travel” visions reveal much about her life, beliefs, and artistic influences. Not only is Anderson a self-taught student of art, she is also a student of religion, and she sorts through her ideas through her paintings. Just as her memory paintings record community events and important moments from her past, her Eden scenes depict moments from the history of all mankind.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Linda Anderson is a memory painter, but not all of her art can be encompassed by that label – it is only one aspect of her role as an artist. Her collection of Eden scenes must be considered when scholars examine her œuvre, because it is a subject she keeps returning to and exploring further. In addition, when speaking with her and looking at her origin as an artist, it is clear that her faith in God and religion play an important part of her life, and Anderson’s beliefs inform her artistic choices.

My research suggests that the art historians who study self-taught art have created definitions that may be too narrow. Categorizing the artists by topic, circumstance, or source of inspiration is limiting and can prevent further exploration into the art itself. Self-taught artists do not necessarily lack insight, innovation, or invention. They are not naïve, primitive, or pure, but rather inspired artists and narrators, capable of capturing myth, memory, and even deceit on canvas. Anderson is mindful of her position as an artist and storyteller, and she makes purposeful design decisions every time she picks up her paintbrush.

Memory painting is a useful term for describing the content of the work of many folk artists, but it cannot be used as the sole descriptor of the artist herself. Yes, Anderson paints from memory and she paints memories, but the label and all it implies is not accurate. She started painting later in life, but not at an advanced age. She has a few scenes that are sentimental, but many are humorous and show genuine insight about her
role as an artist. With the witty wordplay of her titles, such as *Still Life* [Fig. 14] and *What Goes on in the Barn Stays in the Barn* [Fig. 13], and her own self-aware but completely unaware self-portrait in *Oasis* [Fig. 11], Anderson cleverly plays with the viewer. Anderson does not gloss over her past, or ignore the aspects of life that may be violent, painful, or sinful. Of course, she paints portraits, abstracts, and religious scenes that cannot be called memory paintings. The category of “memory painter” is far too limiting, and should only be used as a starting point when looking at her art.

Folk art is not just a conduit for the viewer and collector to sort through their projected nostalgia for the past. Looking at folk art through the eyes of the collector is only one approach, and it tends to deny the agency of the artist. Anderson holds the brush, so she exerts control over the story. Sometimes that means simply changing the color of her hair, as she did in *Mount Vernon Fire Baptized Holiness Church* [Fig. 16], and other times that may mean hiding her own role in community mischief, as she did in *Dip in the Soque* [Fig. 15]. She communicates her ideas about life, and her interpretation of the Bible, consciously and unconsciously. So much of her voice can be seen in her work, and it is impossible to disregard. In her memory paintings, Anderson depicts herself as an active participant with a self-portrait, and in her Garden of Eden scenes, she depicts herself as a participant by including elements from her own life and community. How a viewer experiences art is certainly important, but the motivations and creative influences of the artist are also worthy of analysis.

If, as Hemphill and Weissman claim in their monumental 1974 study and catalog, “the vision of the folk artist is a private one, a personal universe, a world of his or her
own making,"\textsuperscript{138} then the religious interpretation we find in folk art might help historians better understand the religious practice of the people. Folk works are not formal commissions from clergy patrons. They do not exist to teach; rather, they result from what the artist has learned and understood on his or her own. Folk art can be a clear, unhindered expression of belief or criticism, and as scholars, we can learn about these beliefs and practices through examination of the art and study of its social and historical circumstances.

\textsuperscript{138} Hemphill and Weissman, 9.
APPENDIX A

Interview with Linda Anderson
9/19/10
Anderson’s home and studio, Clarkesville, GA

Patricia Gimenez: Can you tell me about your experiences at Mt. Vernon? How long did you attend services there? Did you ever speak in tongues?

Linda Anderson: Well, I don’t know how long we went there. I was a young girl, and I would say 3 or 4 years. No, I never spoke in tongues...but people did there. If you spoke in tongues, you had to have an interpreter, to say what you were…to tell everybody else what you were saying. If it was a woman, it had to be a man that was the interpreter. And if it was a man, it had to be a woman that was the interpreter. And I remember people when the spirit came down on them, they would get happy, that’s what they called it. And they would go into um, an ecstasy, I guess, is what you’d call it, and they’d kind of lose themselves in that, and, lose all, uh, well it would just be a different person. And they wouldn’t have any inhibitions, but it wouldn’t be like they were doing bad things, it would just be they were shaking and throwing …they would kick off their shoes.

PG: In your book you said you now attend a Presbyterian church now – was that after the three years at Mt. Vernon?

LA: Well, my mother sent me to a Baptist church, which I didn’t like at all. I just didn’t fit into that. And there was a lot of girls in my school that went to that church, but since I was poor, very poor, I was not treated very well in that church, by those girls, or anybody really. For some reason, I don’t know why, my mother made my brother and me go to the Methodist church in Clarkesville and that was…it was just awful. I liked what they said better than the Baptist church, but you can imagine coming from…and I can’t remember why we didn’t go back to Mt. Vernon, except my Daddy was real sick off and on and he might not have been able to drive and somebody would take us to those other churches. But then the Methodist church…I guess I just decided one day and stood up to Mother Figure and said “I’m not going to that church anymore,” and so I didn’t. And I didn’t go to church then for years and years, until, um, there is a very liberal church here in this valley, and it’s a Presbyterian church. And they thought like I thought…kind of. Kind of. Not as far as, they don’t believe that the Garden of Eden was real, a real place, and they don’t believe that certain things in the bible really happened, they don’t believe that.

PG: Right, it’s metaphor -

LA: Yeah, but I do! And that’s the way I was brought up to believe, but I like the people there. The doctrine, I could look over, you know, ok, they can believe what they want to,
I know what’s real. So that’s why I go – I like the people at the Presbyterian church, but I don’t really go that much anymore.

PG: I’m very interested in your Garden of Eden paintings, and especially the race of Adam and Eve. There’s a tradition in medieval art, where men are dark and women are fair, but you go both ways – sometimes Eve is black and Adam is white. Why do you think do that? What do you think of when you think of Eden?

LA: I think in the real Eden, they were dark, and I think they were tough, you know? I said in my book that I thought of Eve and Adam when I was a child as being like Ken and Barbie – we didn’t have that then, but you think on those lines, that they’re smooth and white and blonde, and you know? But that’s ridiculous because that type of person could not have lived in, even though Eden…they could’ve have lived in Eden, because that was perfect, but once they were out of there, no, they could not have lived like that. And um…so, I can’t really tell you why sometimes the man is black and the woman is white, or vice a versa, it just, I just see that when I see the vision of it, I see that. But I don’t really have a problem with thinking that they were black, and I don’t have a problem thinking one was white, as a matter of fact, one had to be white, because where did the white race come from? Someone had to be white in there.

PG: My main source to look at your works is your book, and I’ve noticed that most of your Garden of Eden paintings are from the last twenty years, so more recent in the chronology of your work. Is there something that made you switch from memory paintings to your biblical paintings?

LA: I did do Biblical paintings – I did Ezekiel. That was a long time ago. And uh you know when Ezekiel saw the wheel, and the being with four faces – that’s always fascinated me, because I wonder if it was some type of alien, or what was that thing that Ezekiel saw. So I painted that many years ago. And then, um, I painted Noah’s Ark, but, Noah’s Ark it’s like…I don’t know, it’s hard to paint Noah’s Ark without looking at…you’ve seen Noah’s Ark so many times in other paintings, until some of that rubs off on you, it’s got to, so you always make the ark just like everybody else made the ark instead…And now they say the ark was probably round, so you know. As far as the jungle thing and Eve and Adam, and uh Adam and Eve thing…uh, I can’t remember when I started doing that but I …I know that I read a book about these bro- I’m not sure if it was brothers, one of them was a Rockefeller, I think, and they went into the Indonesian archipelago and they were looking for the bird of paradise, and they were going to do a study on this bird of paradise and so, this book is called, uh…*Ring of Fire*, I think the name of the book, and I was so fascinated by that, the way they described that jungle, and never had seen a jungle. And I started thinking, well, you know, that must have been some place like Adam and Eve lived in, but before that, I thought it was…I really can’t remember what I thought it was, but I didn’t think it was as lush as the jungle really is, and so, so I just decided to put all kinds of jungle stuff in there. But nothing -
everything was harmless, you know? Everything was perfect. And it didn’t – and I’ve always been real afraid of thunderstorms. It didn’t come thunderstorms there, the moisture came up from the earth.

PG: So always perfect weather?

LA: Uh-huh, yeah, and they had nothing to fear. And they…and they walked with God. He actually came into that Garden and walked with them.

PG: So why do you think Eve was tempted? Where do you think that comes from?

LA: Well, I think…I don’t think she should get all the blame, but, I think that - in my experience, the women are more…they’ll take chances more. Especially in this area then men will. And so, uh, they have a – I’ve noticed that a lot of women have much better imagination than a man, so if somebody offers you something, even though it says it was an apple, and I say I believe literally in the bible, I think it was a fruit or something.

PG: Yeah, the Bible never specifies – it just says fruit.

LA: Fruit, so, I mean everybody thinks it’s an apple, but you know, I can’t say that. So here’s something that you’ve been told, “Don’t mess with – leave it alone. You can do anything else in this Garden.” Ok, that set’s you up right there. (laughter) You’re gonna want to know what that is and what it’s gonna do. And of course, you know, here is this thing that says “if you eat this fruit, then you will be a God.” And, um, if you’re a God, then you have all this power. And I think it was just too much, you know? I mean, of course, I probably would do the same thing. I know I would! You can’t say that you, you can have all this power and you can live forever. And you can…uh, you can have everything that…I don’t mean possessions, but the possession of Godly knowledge, I can’t - you’re gonna do it!

PG: Yeah, that’s pretty hard to resist.

LA: Yeah! And I always think Adam was kind of, I don’t know, I think he was kind of a like goofy guy, you know? “Ok, I’ll just hang out here, I’m happy with things.” Men don’t like changes. Maybe she wanted a change? Who knows?

PG: Yeah, it’s true, it’s all put on her, and I don’t think that’s fair.

LA: No.

PG: I went to visit the Barbara Archer gallery on Saturday, and Barbara Archer wasn’t there, but I spoke with the assistant that was there, and she was telling me that your paintings are very hard to find in galleries - mostly you have a long list of commissions. Do the people that commission your paintings dictate what they want?
LA: No, they don’t dictate, because I can’t do that, but I can say, are they, I can say, “well, do you want a pastoral scene? Do you want a religious scene? Do you want an inside picture?” but I can’t paint – don’t even ask me to paint your house, you know, or something. It’s very hard to paint a picture somebody’s face. I can paint a face, but I can’t paint that person’s face, for some reason. That’s about as far as I go. Of course then we discuss sizes, you know, what size. For some reason, I like to see where it’s gonna go, but I don’t have to see that. And I think that it just depends on what type of painting I’m doing if I want to see where it goes. I don’t know. Once I painted a jungle painting…Eve on Leopard, you know that one? Or Cheetah - Eve on a Cheetah. This woman called me and said that she was having it put into an antique baroque frame, and I thought, man, I can’t see that in that, but she sent me a picture of it, and it looked really good. So, its best I guess you don’t know what… then you just are free, the more information you know, the more it ties you up in your head.

PG: Speaking of Eve on a Cheetah, you have an angel in the scene that looks very upset - he’s watching her from behind the tree. What do you think the angels are thinking when they see Eve like that? Do you think the angel is predicting what’s happening?

LA: I think the angel is saying it’s all over for her. She seems free, she’s freed herself up.

PG: So this is after she’s eaten the fruit?

LA: Yes, yeah. And, I know a woman that is an anthropologist, and she said, she studies these ancient postures. And she said that was an ancient posture. I didn’t know this, but these hands up like this, this joyfulness and freedom. Of course, it’s not just an ancient posture, it’s a today posture! So, she’s free – she doesn’t have any of those things, but then with that freedom, we see what comes with it.

PG: And the angels know…

LA: Uh-huh, and they’re embarrassed about it, I think, they’re embarrassed about it because they’re such pure spirits. And something like that, you know, I mean here’s this woman riding…and as far as her being naked, and them being clothed, I don’t know why that is, I don’t know why I put them like that. Because, sometimes I think the angels should just be non-sexual, and naked, and have no…

PG: no genitalia?

LA: That’s right, no male or female indicated, but the Bible don’t say, it says all the angels were male – I mean that’s what it says.

PG: When you first started painting, did you imagine an audience for your paintings?
LA: No. No, it was just an escape. It was a horrible situation here, and so, it’s, I think, the worst thing in my life that I’ve ever experienced is seeing my child suffer and I couldn’t do anything.

PG: Yeah, you’re so helpless.

LA: Yeah. And so, I’m suffering, too, but it’s not the same. Just because I’m suffering, doesn’t relieve you, you know? I want to suffer for her so she don’t, but she still does. I have to have, I realize, there had to be something. I couldn’t go on like that. So, when I was in the prayer, I was given the realization that I would have a comfort, a gift that would be a comfort, and that’s what that was. A way of comfort, of comforting me.

PG: Did you see yourself selling those paintings? Or that came later?

LA: I didn’t think about selling them, but when this offer came up…a friend had a booth that she bought, and I think it was $15 to rent this booth in this fair, but she didn’t have enough stuff to put in it, and so she said do you want to put…and I said, “I don’t really have anything” and she said “Put your pictures in there and it’ll draw people to my stuff.” She was selling boiled peanuts. And so, it’ll draw them there, and that’s really, I didn’t have any idea I would sell my paintings, or sell them all!

PG: Has that changed? Now that you are selling your paintings, do you ever think about your audience and the people who are viewing them – does that affect you in anyway?

LA: Do you mean does that affect me, like “ok, this will sell, so I’ll paint this because this will sell”?

PG: Because it will sell, or even what people will think, or…

LA: No, I don’t think about that. I just don’t. I got…I think it kind of, when you start thinking like that, I don’t know what it does to you, but I don’t do it.

PG: So how do you feel being part of the folk art world? Has it changed things a lot for you?

LA: It’s changed things a lot. It’s kind of embarrassing if somebody, you know, recognizes me, or says something. But also, it feels good. And you know, when I say that, it sounds like I’m all puffed up, but I don’t mean to be, but I’m really, basically very shy. You wouldn’t think that by hearing me at these interviews, and the things that I do. But it’s very hard for me to do that. I have to get myself geared up to it. But basically, my life is more comfortable because of people buying my paintings. But I just like to
stay here, I’ve got everything here that I need. I just like to stay here and I like to be alone a lot.

PG: Since Judith Alexander passed away a few years ago, do you have a new agent? Or are you selling on your own?

LA: I don’t have a new agent, but I do rely on word of mouth. And also Barbara Archer at Archer Gallery - she directs people to me if she thinks that I would be somebody that would paint in the style they are looking for. And Cecil Thompson at Timpson Creek, of course, she’s always been wonderful, and she still represents me. But the truth is that I don’t get many paintings up there. And, I just, I don’t know… the older I get, the more time seems to…I spin my wheels, and I get off on these other things, and I make some little shrines, and I’ll do this, and I’ll dabble in this, but the painting will always come back. That’s my comfort. I always come back to that. But when I…that’s the thing about the question you asked a while ago. When I paint things, if I’m gonna paint something for Cecil, I’m gonna have to be very careful cause she’s up there on this recreational lake and there’s big houses and beautiful people. So I have to be careful not to paint to suit them. And so I’m kind of caught between a rock and a hard place there. So I guess I mostly just paint what I want to paint. But you have to check yourself every once in a while, and say, ok, you know, what am I seeing here? And I paint things I see in my head. And I don’t want to paint anything that has anything to do with something that I’m not familiar with. Of course, I just contradicted myself, because I’m not familiar with the jungle, but I can paint that. But, um, I don’t know. It has to come to me and it has to be pure. If it’s not, I don’t want to do it.

PG: Do you enjoy going to art museums and looking at other art? Do you feel, like you were saying you see so many paintings of Noah’s Ark, it’s bound to influence you – do you feel that way about art in general?

LA: I love going to museums, that I love doing. We just, we saw this museum at Jackson Hole. (Anderson had just returned from a trip to Yellowstone) I want to see how they do their brush strokes, and you could get up, you know most museums have this rope thing that you can’t get up too close, but this one I could get up close to see the brush strokes. I love to see how people put that paint on. I don’t know…I don’t think I copy, but I do think that it gives me ideas. In fact, I saw a painting one time that was men around a poker table, I’m pretty sure. Then I thought of women around a quilt. Well, you know, it’s so different, but it sparks some kind of thought in your head, or a vision in your head, or something. When we were looking through that museum, there were all of these Indian paintings and things. All those looked like they were in watercolor to me, I’m not sure, but it was the old ones, like Catlin, and um, I can’t think who it was, but he painted these Indians before they got the diseases that the white men brought in, and some of those tribes are totally gone now. I just like to see how they make things happen – how they take this blank piece of paper and how they make the lines, and how they, I
don’t know…I just love to look at it. And I wonder how they…I mean, it’s obvious these men travelled and they were in the Indian villages, but, if somebody… we went into an art show in the square at Jackson Hole? And these people had an hour and half to do this fabulous piece of art. So I went around and I was watching them, and I’ve never been into watercolor that much, but the oil painters, I was watching them, and some of them had pictures, photographs, of a set-up, of like fruit or something like that. And they were painting off of that picture, you know? And then, I guess 90% of them had pictures they were painting off of, and there were a few that had, that were just doing it, I guess from memory, I don’t know. But they hold their brushes different from me, they hold them way out on the end, kind of, and just wick wick wick with that brush. And I choke mine (laughter) but just things like that – it’s interesting to me.

PG: Have you seen anything that made you change what you were doing? Or something you wanted to try?

LA: Oh, I’m sure, yeah. I think Henri Rousseau affected my painting very much. Somebody gave me a book with his stuff in it, and that’s another reason I got very interested in the jungle. I had Ring of Fire plus I had that Henri Rousseau book about the same time. And so, I think, I think you can see it too, in the stuff that I do. I don’t copy his work, but I certainly think that you can see I’ve been influenced by him. And Frida, I’ve been influenced by her, too. A lot of my foliage is like Frida’s foliage, you know?

PG: Do your abstract paintings only come out of your migraines? Or have you pursued abstract works at other times?

LA: No…I’ve thought about seeing what would happen if I just let everything go, but now, when I have a migraine headache, and I don’t have them very often, I have them very seldom, because as you get older, they get less. And I don’t have the aura too long, and I just don’t go and pick up my paints when I’m having it. But this one (LA gestures to painting on her wall) and that’s not an abstract. That was painted with the same stuff – that’s Liz Taylor telling Madonna about her brain tumor. I read a lot (laughter) of the Inquirer!

PG: Oh, yeah, I love celebrity gossip!

LA: (Laughter) I keep up with the film stars. The older ones, the younger ones I can’t keep up with. I like to paint about them, and I do sometimes. I just have not gotten around to – you have to be totally freed up, I would, in order be able to go with the abstract. But I would like to try it some time. Again. But not with the oil, I don’t think, I think I’d do it with the oil crayon. I can be freer, I think, you know, I’ve got this crayon in my hand, and I don’t have to reach and dip and get more paint, and then you lose your momentum, or you lose what you’re headed for. I wonder how those abstract artists do it? Like Pollock?
PG: I’ve seen photographs, and he’s just got the canvas on the ground, and he takes buckets and would just stand over the canvas and let go.

LA: And he drips it on there? That’s a good idea.

PG: He had very little control over where the paint is going – gets to be as free as possible.

LA: OK

PG: Do you keep an archive of your paintings? Do you photograph one before you sell it?

LA: Some I do, and some I don’t. I just forget it. And um, I ought to. I used to, when I had an art dealer. She insisted on it. Now, I just…Annemarie, my daughter, she’ll take pictures sometimes when she’s here. But, basically I don’t. I don’t keep it.

PG: Once you’re done with something, you don’t have an attachment to it anymore?

LA: Some I do, and I keep those. Well, if I’m taking money from somebody, see this is how I do it. I take half the money, alright, and then I do the painting, and when the painting is finished, if the person I’m painting it for, if they don’t like it, then they don’t have to pay me the other half. But I spent, maybe, a month or two on this painting, so the agreement is that I keep that money they gave me and I paint them another painting. And I keep doing that until I reach a point where they like the painting that I’ve done. And I had to do that only one time. And the next painting this person liked, and the first one that I did, she said she had one, I’d already forgotten, of the same subject. It was a different painting, but the same subject. Anyway, that was how that worked. Sometimes when people tell me, “I have your so and so painting,” I have no recollection of that. It’s not because it wasn’t a good painting, or I really loved doing it, but my head gets full, and it simply won’t hold anymore, I guess.

PG: You said you’ve slowed down a little bit with your paintings –

LA: A lot.

PG: A lot – do you have any idea how many paintings you have out there?

LA: I have no idea. I don’t have any idea. I’d say – I don’t know.

PG: In the Kraskin catalog, there’s a list of your gallery showings and your awards. Do you have an updated list? Do you keep track of this?
LA: No, I don’t.

PG: It’s from 2001, I was just curious if you had a list of your exhibitions, if that’s something you kept.

LA: No, and I don’t really like to do that. I mean, it’s not that I don’t like to keep a list. I should keep a list, but I don’t really like to do shows. It’s hard. It’s – it’s not that it’s hard, it is hard work, I don’t mind the work. But, I don’t know, it, I don’t know, it kind of pulls at you inside or something. I don’t like it.

PG: Like the pressure on you?

LA: The pressure, yup. And especially if you make a time limit, when it’s got to be, you know, and you’re saying, ok, I’ve got to do this, and your head just goes blank when you start that kind of stuff.

PG: Right, because there’s an expectation.

LA: Yeah, and so then you got to just get the work together, and after you got a body of work together, then you can, I can take it somewhere and say, “this is what I got – are you interested not?” That’s what I like, but I haven’t been able to do that, like I said, I spin my wheels, I’ve got commissions, and then, I just…you know, in the summer time the garden comes first. And so I’ve got the garden and I’ve got chickens to feed. And I don’t know, I just can’t focus like I used to when I was younger. I don’t know if its laziness or the blood pressure medicine or what it is.

PG: Do you have a vision of where you’d like your career to go? Do you think of that, or just see what happens?

LA: I don’t think like that. I just think, I think if you have good art, if a person has good art, they will surely be found, if it’s in their living time or not. If they’re dead and gone for fifty years and somebody discovers them, ok. As long as I can keep food on the table and stuff like that. I really don’t worry about where it’s coming from or where it’s going. I do know where - I’m talking about the money aspect, but the, where the art is going, I just feel like it’ll go where it’s gonna go and I’m just gonna be there with it, I reckon.
APPENDIX B

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