A DISCUSSION OF THE EMOTIONAL, PERSONAL AND INTUITIVE FACTORS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO MAKING ART

A Thesis

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by

Deborah Frances Schindler, B.A.

The Ohio State University
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Approved by

[Signature]
Adviser
Division of Art
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis is dedicated to Sidney Chafetz, Charles Massey, Jr., and Bill Montross.
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Introduction:

Even before I knew what was involved in creating them prints attracted me. At the age of twelve I visited the Henry E. Huntington Library and Museum in San Marino, California. The old books and letters interested me, but it was the Hogarth engravings of the Harlot's Progress and Marriage a la Mode that affected me most. Looking back, the two aspects which particularly impressed me were the clear incised linear work and the narrative character of the series. Although differing from Hogarth in style and message, I believe my use of narrative and satire is partially attributable to his influence.

Sources:

Basically my approach toward making art is emotional, personal and often intuitive. It is not an analytical, or theoretical approach. This does not mean that my mind is uninvolved in the decision-making process but, rather, that other cerebral functions take precedence over the analytical. In the most simple sense what I present as art is the formalization of responses to stimuli which have affected me emotionally.

Primary stimuli have been places where I have lived, worked, or visited and people whom I have known. These are actual first-hand visual experiences, but many of my influences have come from vicarious sources, such as pictures
on museum and gallery walls, reproductions, posters, photographs, magazines, illustrations, plans and diagrams. I am attracted to what is visual. Upon entering a library I head straight for the picture books. The subject of the book matters little, since I enjoy looking at all types of illustrations.

Not only do pictures within books interest me but I also relate to books as objects in themselves. Strong value contrast, linear patterns and sequential imagery are all aspects of books which have influenced my choice of medium and technique. The ideas, symbols and information contained in books have been fuel for my imagination. Much of what I read -- novels, stories, plays and histories -- has to do with people, places and events. These literary forms use story and occasionally symbol as their vehicles of presentation. I use story and symbol as a starting point for making visual art. Often, the story is altered or obliterated as the work progresses, since visual art must function primarily on its own terms. Philosophy and reportage are the main subjects of literature and history with story as the vehicle. The ideas and information must exist within that structure. It is the same in art. Ideas might be based on the literary but with the vehicle of two dimensional art, the literary must yield to the visual.

Three examples of work that have been influenced by literature are *Langmals Legion* based on a Flemish legend,
Order and Progress based on Brazilian folklore and history and Call Me Ishmael based on Moby Dick and a personal fantasy.

I incorporate memories, experiences, fantasies, impressions and dreams as well as literature in my images. The Goldberg Girl's Fantasy Book, the etching with the three children before three windows, and Hollywood Lanai are totally based on personal memories and fantasies. Other works such as Retablo de la Mujer, Art Opening, Infanta Margarita Throws a Party and Red Square Dancers are combinations of historical sources and imagination.

I cannot ignore the influence that friends, teachers, and fellow students have had. Sometimes, however, it has been difficult to determine how much influence by others is healthy for me. A common dilemma among artists is being either overly confident or overly insecure. I believe I tend toward the latter. Now I have enough understanding of where I am headed that I shall be able to discriminate between influences and suggestions which are consistent with my goals and those which are not.

Methods of Presentation:

The process of drawing is challenging and educational because one must use one's own skills, knowledge and imagination in solving certain artistic and technical problems. Drawing also seems to be a traditional method of synthesizing
images from various sources to make something new. A picture can be composed of parts which have had their origins in photographs, reproductions, life or imagination, but when arranged together and drawn in one style become integrated. This is a way of creating events on paper. *Infanta Margarita Throws a Party, Red Square Dancers, Art Opening and Retablo de la Mujer* were all constructed in this manner.

Since I like to combine and alter found images, the photographic processes of printmaking have proven a bit too cumbersome for my purposes.

My interest in books and stories coupled with my somewhat indecisive nature has led me to work ideas out serially. A series develops through experimentation with images, color changes, composition, and format. In this way the same basic picture is presented in many variations. I have done many states\(^1\) of the same print, as *View From My Studio Window* (3 states), *Call Me Ishmael* (2 states), and *Beached Whale* (3 states). Sometimes the image undergoes radical changes but the meaning remains consistent, while other times the image is hardly altered but its significance changes completely.

Moving into printmaking was a natural extension of drawing for me. Both media have similarities in scale and marking techniques. Printmaking, especially lithography,\(^2\) can closely resemble the qualities of drawings in charcoal, ink, wash, or crayon. *Intaglio*\(^3\) may also come close to
resembling the physical characteristics of a drawing. But there are unique aspects of prints which are unattainable in other media, and it is these qualities with which I have been concerned during the course of my graduate study. Beyond the richness of the media and the ability to reproduce identical originals, printmaking has the asset of being a very flexible process. Since the printing surface can be changed after proofs have been pulled, the artist has the opportunity to consider the work in "mid-stream" and make any necessary or desirable changes by reworking her plate, stone or block. She can create states, or a series of variations on the same basic image, while still retaining an example of the earlier version.

In printmaking the working pace is relatively slow, especially with etching. There is physical involvement in work and the process is technically challenging, all of which are characteristics particularly compatible with my nature.

Although strong technique is necessary in executing a piece, one must not let technique alone determine the merits of a print. Evaluating a print might be compared with evaluating a dance performance. Technique should be thoroughly mastered so that the piece has flow and ease of execution. In that way the viewer is not overly aware of skill, but can involve himself in the deeper meaning of the piece.
Further Observations:

When making a picture I do not start out with a clear program of ideas. Often generalized feelings have given impetus to images. Although it is difficult to trace the meaning behind each piece, the body of work can be divided roughly into three groups.

Within the first group are Anna at the Station, Q-QB3, View From My Studio Window and the Bedroom series. These all contain rooms and windows and usually a single female figure. They all imply a sense of ambiguity, isolation and voyeurism. It is as if the viewer has entered into some strange and almost off-limits situation.

The second group consists of Music Party, Red Square Dancers, Infanta Margarita Throws a Party, Langmals Legion and Order and Progress. These all depict group interaction and are basically satirical of the arts, politics and certain historical events.

The third group is a type of visual autobiographical satire. In Call Me Ishmael, Retablo de la Mujer and the Goldberg Girl's Fantasy Book I am poking fun at my private fantasies.

Conclusion:

Presently I believe I have adequate technical mastery of the lithography and intaglio processes to produce professional quality prints. Of course, there is always more
to learn. I enjoy exchanging information with other print-makers, particularly my peer group associates. I am thankful for the opportunities I have had to attend two very different but excellent art programs at U.C.L.A. and The Ohio State University.

Thus far in my career as an artist I have taken fantasies and presented them as visual realities which communicate a sense of my life experiences and beliefs. I plan to continue working in this manner but, hopefully, having a less structured time schedule will provide for me the opportunity to pursue some long-term projects. In particular, I am looking forward to writing and illustrating a satirical history of Brazil, but beyond that plan my future is unchartered.
GLOSSARY

1. State -- term which describes a print or proof that shows a work in a particular stage of development.

2. Lithography -- one of the four major divisions of print-making, in which a drawing is made with a greasy substance on a stone or plate. The surface is then treated so that the image accepts ink and the non-image areas repel ink, and the print is made with a lithographic press.

3. Intaglio -- one of the four major divisions of print-making, in which an image is either cut or bitten by acid into a metal plate. Ink is forced into the lines of the image, the surface of the plate is wiped clean, and the print is made with the pressure of an etching press.

4. Original Print -- includes each successive impression created through contact with an inked or uninked stone, block, plate or screen which was worked on by the artist alone or with others.

5. Proof -- impression made at any stage of the work from an inked stone, plate, block, or screen and is not a part of an edition of prints.

6. Etching -- intaglio process in which an acid-resistant ground is applied to a plate, an image is cut into the ground with a needle, and acid is applied to bite the image into the plate.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


PLATES
ANNA WAITING AT THE STATION
Intaglio
18" X 22"
VIEW FROM MY STUDIO WINDOW
Lithograph
12" X 15"

-14-
INFANTA MARGARITA THROWS A PARTY
Hand-colored Lithograph
15" X 20"

MUSIC PARTY
Hand-colored Lithograph
26" X 20"
ART OPENING
Pen and Ink
19" x 25"
ORDER AND PROGRESS
Pen and Ink
35" X 26"
LANGMALS LEGION
Pen and Ink
30" X 35"
CALL ME ISHMAEL
Lithograph and Etching
15" X 21"
BEACHED WHALE
Lithograph and Etching
15" X 20"
RETABLO DE LA MUJER
Intaglio
18" X 27"
GOLDBERG GIRL'S FANTASY BOOK
Intaglio
8" X 8"
GOLDBERG GIRL'S FANTASY BOOK
Intaglio
8" X 8"
GOLDBERG GIRL'S FANTASY BOOK
Intaglio
8" X 8"
GOLDBERG GIRL'S FANTASY BOOK
Intaglio
8" X 8"
Untitled Intaglio  9" x 12"

HOLLYWOOD LANAI  Pen and Ink  18" x 24"