SCULPTURES OF SETTING

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Fine Arts

by

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Approved by

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS

I make small-scale sculptures of house interiors which I build out of plywood and masonite and paint with encaustic. Each sculpture is based on a view inside my house. Each is generally true to the original location; however, color, texture, and detail are invented rather than copied. My attention is usually drawn, in particular, to doorways and staircases. Both imply movement: a passing through or entering into the place. They also indicate another room or rooms beyond those we see, thus extending the boundaries of the piece in the viewer's imagination. The rooms I construct exist inside wooden boxes, the scale and shape of which are determined by the scale and shape of the rooms themselves. Thus my sculptures have insides and outsides, the inside being a certain view of a room and the outside being a plain white box shape with an opening on one side. The boxes are generally made to be hung on the wall. The height at which they are exhibited is important because I want the viewer's eye level to be such that he is able to imagine himself standing in or about to enter the room. I want the eye level to be very close to my eye level when I look at the actual room. With each sculpture I hope to recreate for the viewer an experience similar to the one I had looking at an interior environment. These sculptures are about my particular sensation of being
some place. They are for me meditative, reflective, and sometimes mysterious.

Further description of my artwork, which I refer to as sculpture, must include a discussion of its relationship to both painting and sculpture. Since my background is that of a painter I choose subject matter as a painter would, in each sculpture I am interested in depicting a scene rather than single objects. In making three-dimensional domestic interior scenes past artists that I find the most in common with are painters. My pieces also share with painting a single viewpoint. The interiors are only visible from one side of the box, unlike traditional sculpture which utilizes multiple views. In addition, I am concerned with controlling the viewer’s eye level in relation to the room. This is equivalent to the painter who uses a horizon line in a realistic painting. So, like a painter, I am after a single image that will initially have one visual impact on the viewer. My choice of subject matter traditionally in the realm of painting is consistent with much contemporary representational sculpture. For one way that sculptors have explored new areas has been to sculpt subject matter hitherto reserved for painting in which they deal with the relationship of the figure to an environment. Many modern sculptors who use the figure tend to place it in a scene or else give it a social context (for example, Duane Hanson’s trompe
l'oeil sculptures are always of types or classes of people - the workman, the tourist, the housewife). George Segal's sculptures of people in diners or in filling stations are sculptural equivalents of genre paintings. It is interesting that presently Segal is making sculptures based on Cezanne's still life paintings. Environment attains more importance in relation to figure in Red Grooms' "Ruckus Manhattan" which attempts to re-create all of Manhattan, perhaps carrying on the task of the Ashcan painters.

My work falls into a general trend today among some sculptors, of depicting small narrative scenes in rooms. For example, Cincinnati sculptor Mark Soppeledand usually places figures in small interiors so that they create a narrative action or situation. My work differs from such sculpture in that I have no interest in depicting specific narrative scenes involving figures. I am more interested in interior scenes for their visual impact as spaces and as places used by people. I have never used figures in my work, although I realize that all of my pieces imply a human presence. I think of that presence as referring to me and to the viewer who becomes my proxy when he looks at that which I have seen. The format of creating a sculpture inside a box is quite widespread today, since the popularization among artists of Joseph Cornell's work. I think that looking inside boxes has a kind of universal
appeal, as do miniaturizations of the familiar. So I feel that my work has a similar appeal as some popular amusements such as diaramas, dollhouses, train sets, or nativity scenes. I would hope that my sculptures have visual interest beyond our fascination with the miniature. It does not bother me, however, to think that looking at my artwork might be a pleasant or amusing experience. Although my work might be better described as three-dimensional painting rather than as sculpture, I share interests with contemporary realist sculptors - the subject matter of interior scene or architecture and the box shape. At the same time the form of my work evolved according to its own logic. I do not feel directly influenced by other artists. Instead, acceptance of forms that sculpture can take and the general breakdown of distinctions between sculpture and painting has allowed me to move in certain directions that I might otherwise not have chosen.
CHRONOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF
MY ARTWORK AND WORKING METHODS

The following section explains the evolvement of my artwork to its present state and changes in my attitude toward and methods of making art. I concentrate in my description upon my reasons at the time for making decisions to change my work. In the back of my mind was always a general interest in images of interior spaces. However, this interest was for a certain time superceded by a concern with process and materials. I think of my past work as being generated in the studio. I think of my present work as an attempt to bring my real life surroundings into my studio. It is dependent, however, on techniques and forms explored in my earlier work.

Two years ago I was working on a group of drawings (pastels and oil crayons) that all depicted small objects in a large, empty, interior space. I would always work from setups in my studio, and drew in a spontaneous way, concentrating on the relationships among objects - the spaces between and around them. I began to imagine the spaces in the drawings as increasingly awesome, white, intensely bright, and threatening to the objects. I imagined that the objects would much rather not be pictured in my drawings. One day I solved one of my drawings by adding a field of glitter behind the images of shoes and gloves. I began experimenting with various other new materials - aluminum foil and vermiculite -
until I became much more interested in developing rich, tactile surfaces than in drawing from the setups. It is apparent to me that all through this time my main concern was the "process" of drawing. How I made an image was much more important to me than what the image was. So I had a tendency to create my own working methods, and in fact, the form that my work took became more idiosyncratic. The importance of "process" over subject matter at that time is evidenced by the fact that changes in my work were mostly changes in materials and methods. The images and compositions that I used stayed fairly constant. Clearly, my exploration occurred with media and technique.

My way of working changed very definitely during this period from a spontaneous to a methodical approach. Previous drawings done from setups were mostly spontaneous. My goal was to capture my immediate response to what I was seeing and to emphasize the mood in the situation. So my techniques were a means to that end. When I began using collage elements (glitter, foil, vermiculite), the time required to lay down these surfaces drew my attention away from the setups. I began to concentrate on developing a variety of related tactile surfaces in each collage. My working methods became slow and methodical. This marked a change in what the activity of making art meant to me. It suddenly no longer involved representation
of things around me. Artmaking became a physical ac-
tivity of manipulating materials. I would hunt for new
materials, bring them in to my studio, and invent pro-
cesses for generating new textures and patterns with
them. My pleasure in this was the power that I felt in
"taming" each new material. I used caulk, gravel, sticks,
straw, and encaustic. My textures and patterns were made
by repeating a single, small act. For example, I would
repeat a blob of caulk to make a raised dotted surface.
At this time I was actually using these surfaces on
sculptures, which I will describe later in this paper.

In doing this sort of art I was influenced by
"pattern painting" and other types of contemporary art
that use decorative processes. This attitude toward
making art became widespread in the 1970's and has re-
cently come under attack from art critics, as in, for
example, Robert Morris' article, "American Quartet"; 
Morris condemns decorative art, which he defines in
part as the procedure of "the repetition of the homog-
eneous bit" for being mindless and for lacking address
to either universal meaning or to what he terms the
"modernistic dialectic," i.e., art about art. I, how-
ever, cannot see the danger in exploring the possibili-
ties of another approach to making art which has a strong
tradition in the crafts. Related influence for me were
naive "environmental" artists, who were recognized
in an exhibit by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, in 1974, called Naives and Visionaries. All the artists in the exhibit apply craft methods to found objects in order to create for themselves fantasy environments. What interests me about these artists is that their art becomes a world to them. Often they live in it, so it can be seen as an extension of decorating one’s home.
For example, Clarence Schmidt started by building a cabin for himself in the mountains near Woodstock. He continued building until he had made a huge structure with a maze of rooms and hallways and also decorated the surrounding woods with assemblage junk sculpture. “Grandma” Prisbrey built a bottle house village on her trailer house lot near Santa Suzanne, California. Originally she made one bottle house for display of her pencil collection. Simon Rodia built linear towers in Watts, Los Angeles of reinforced concrete which he completely covered with complicated mosaic patterns. Most of these structures are characterized by having evolved out of the obsessive repetition of a kind of building activity. They thus grew by accumulation rather than by having been planned and then executed. They represent for me art as a daily activity without specific goals which however results in a sort of monument to the individual.

My own use of decorative surfaces I soon applied to three-dimensional structures. Because I had been
interested in depicting interior spaces in my earlier drawings, I decided to build small models of rooms and cover the walls with textures. I built complexes of rooms out of plywood that fit together to make one big three-dimensional form. I made three sculptures in this way. The first (see Plate 1) was a grouping of boxes (rooms) with floor plan as in Diagram 1. This piece is made up of five different rooms. First, I had done a piece in a simple box (see Diagram 2), but I was not interested in the outside walls and wanted to eliminate them. So I did a second piece with three rooms to be placed against a wall (Diagram 3). My next step was the structure in Diagram 1. It was designed to not have any outside walls (except for the two small walls on either side of room 3). This way the viewer could walk completely around it and see only inside walls of rooms. Then my problem was how to exhibit the piece. I did not want the viewer to be able to see over the top of it. I wanted him to experience the rooms sequentially instead of all at once. So I built a table that elevated it to a height of 4'8". I hoped that the majority of people would be tall enough to see into it but not tall enough to see over it.

The design for my next piece (see Plate 2) came about because I liked room 5, which was like a hallway, in my first sculpture. I was trying to design a piece
with many long hallways. Also, I wanted to have a view into another room at the end of the hallway. My original floor plan for the piece (Diagram 4) was to have four large corner rooms (1, 2, 3, 4) alternating with four hallways (5, 6, 7, 8) leading into a central space, A. I added the four corners (9, 10, 11, 12) inside so that each hallway would give on to a different corner. That way all the views could be different. I also did this so that when the viewer looked into one hallway he would not see out the hallway on the opposite side. I was ready to reject this design because in order to make the hallways long, rooms 1, 2, 3 and 4 would have to have been impossibly large. I finally decided to build it leaving out rooms 1, 2, 3 and 4. This made the piece very different for me since it had outside walls which also formed a more complex shape. I elevated this piece in the same way I had done the first one. It made an even more odd-looking structure, with access to the inside restricted to the four openings at the ends of the hallways.

There were two new elements in my second sculpture. One was the use of mirrors to make the spaces in the four views different from each other. I made one in particular appear to be much longer than it actually is. I like to create the illusion that the inside dimensions of a piece are different from what they appear to be from the outside.
My use of mirrors was inspired by seeing the Joseph Cornell retrospective in New York City, December of 1981. I was intrigued by one of his "Dovecote" pieces which has a shelf with balls on it built into a shallow box. He set mirrors in the corners of the box on either side of the shelf adjusted so that one can see the shelf also from both ends. So simultaneously one can see all three views of the shelf - like the three muses. Another aspect of my second sculpture is the situation where the viewer cannot see all of the inside of it. His view is limited and controlled by the hallways. He looks down the hallway and sees part of the inside, aware that there is more that he cannot see. This creates a sense of frustration. I think that my decorative style makes the most sense in this sculpture because of the element of denial. The viewer can see highly tactile, sensual surfaces which, however, he cannot reach. I think of this piece as the archetypal gingerbread house.

My third large sculpture (see Plate 3) has a floor plan as shown in Diagram 5. I went back to the format for my first sculpture because I had the idea that the piece would be a very tall table with little rooms hanging upside down under the table top. After I had built the structure I found that the legs were too weak for it. It did stand up but gave the impression it would fall any minute. To me it was very awesome that way, and
it also caused a lot of anxiety for me to look at it. I decided to hang it from the ceiling instead. This made it more stable so that one could get closer to it and walk under it. However, it lost presence as a structure that it had before. I still consider this piece unresolved. My treatment of surfaces became decorative and excessively elaborate. I began to hate it and worked on it with a vengeance. I had built it because I wanted to see what my rooms would look like upside down, but then I found myself committed to doing something with the interior and I did not know what to do. At this point, my interests had once again shifted. Designing and building the wooden structures was more meaningful to me than the use of decorative processes. I thought that at best I could get the decoration to a point where it would suggest something that is sickeningly sweet. I tried to combine disturbing qualities with the decorative. I had in mind a scene from William Faulkner's *Light in August*. Joe Christmas as a child in an orphanage discovers that the nurse has toothpaste, which is like candy for him. One day he goes into her room to eat the toothpaste. She comes back with her lover and Christmas hides behind a curtain and eats the whole tube of toothpaste out of fear and guilt while the couple has sex. I hoped that the excessive decorativeness of my sculpture would have a similarly nauseous effect.
My dissatisfaction with my third sculpture made me question what I was doing. I began to compare my work to an amusement park in that I was giving the viewer a "fun" experience looking at decorative surfaces in perspective. I felt that my work was superficial and lacked content. I had developed a system for presenting something but had nothing to present. These doubts led to another major change in my work, the realistic sculptures of my house that I described in the introduction of this statement.

Because I did not want to be faced with a structure already built and no ideas about what to do with the rooms inside, I decided to do some pieces where I would start with a very definite plan for the inside, and allow the outside shape to be whatever shape it had to be to contain the inside. Also, with my previous pieces, although I always alluded to rooms, I never included any references to interior architectural detail such as moldings, doors or windows. I wanted to build a vocabulary of these references with my new work. In addition, I felt that I could come up with a more interesting variety of room shapes by observing the rooms I go through every day.

I live in an older house that has three stories and a basement. The first sculpture that I made of my house was based on a view from the third floor landing down a stairway (see Plate 4). I like to stand in this spot and
look straight down at the door directly below me with the stairs leading down to it. I usually look at this place at night when there is a shaft of light coming from the door below. I tried to construct the piece so that the stairway and door would be viewed from the same angle that I experienced. I built a box with a stairway in it that leads from a landing down to a door. The stairway appears to be upside down because it is seen from above. At the top of the landing the left side is not a wall. I indicated that it is empty space by painting it blue. Also, I put half a window on the wall next to it that disappears into the empty space on that side. I painted the whole thing with encaustic which I had begun using on the last of my three previous sculptures. I found encaustic to be advantageous because it easily covers woodgrain and develops a surface of its own. My color in this piece is much more toned down. The only non-local color used was the blue that symbolized empty space. The stairway and door I painted brown. The walls are grey with muted pinks and greens. I embedded small sticks in a spiral pattern in the encaustic on the walls. This is a carry-over of my earlier decorative methods. It was a slow, tedious job. The spirals I thought of as air currents. For me they create a psychologically disturbing mood, like vertigo or claustrophobia, in combination with the narrowness of the space.
My next piece, "Stairs" (Plate 5), is a more complete version of the same stairway. It includes both flights of the stairs as seen from the middle landing. One goes down to a door and the other goes up to a landing where there are two doors. I chose the view because I liked the pairing of stairs leading to doors, and because I could imagine someone having just gone all the way up the stairs and out the door at the top. Again, I used brown to paint the stairs and doors; however, the walls are painted warm and cold blues. I had originally planned to hide a light in the bottom of the piece so that light would come through the door at the bottom and one of the doors at the top. However, it did not create the kind of effect that I wanted, so I decided to paint in the light and shadows. I chose a greyed blue to make shadows on the walls. The blue encaustic was transparent and I painted it in layers over a white ground. I could get gradations of light to dark according to how many layers I applied. I also learned that I could scrape off the top layers of the encaustic in order to go from dark to light. I developed techniques of layering and scraping to get different kinds of wall surfaces. Also, I sanded and filed the encaustic to smooth it out. I began using woodblock carving tools to make linear patterns much like the stick patterns in "View From the Third Floor." I would paint dark over light or vice versa and then carve
out flecks that expose the contrasting value beneath. These methods suggest, to many people who look at my work, layerings of paint and peeling paint and wallpaper often seen in older houses. As such, they represent a process of aging or a layering of memories. My reason for using these methods, however, is to make gradual value transitions with the encaustic.

There is a big sliding door that separates the living room from the dining room in my house. When I sit in the living room the door seems to loom above me. It seems especially large in relation to a small chair that is placed up against the wall next to it. I chose this door as subject for my next sculpture, "Doorway 1" (Plate 6). I made it as simple and straightforward as possible. It is recessed exactly in the middle of a single wall. A strip of the floor sticks out at the bottom. Otherwise it is a rectangle that hangs on the wall like a painting. The door is completely shut and there is a small chair that sits on the floor on one side. In fact, the chair is so small that there is a discernible scale change between it and the door. The walls and floor are painted grey and the door and chair are brown. The simplicity of the composition focuses a lot of attention on the door. I see it as an aggressive image that is blocking the viewer's access to the next room rather than leading into
it. I like this image of the door because it is very simple yet visually commanding.

I made a second version of the sliding doors, "Doorway 2" (Plate 7), this time opening with steps pressing up behind it in a shallow niche. The steps are enlarged in relation to the door, so they appear to be impossible to climb. They are also illogically placed. The wall and floor are mostly purple with a little green. There is a spiral made with sticks on the floor that suggests a braided rug. The wall also has a swirl pattern on it. The door is an orange-brown and the steps are pink. This piece has a stronger element of fantasy than any of my others. I saw the door as something behind which a dream would occur.

My bedroom is a long narrow attic room. Although there are many things in my room, the two main pieces of furniture are a bed and a chair. The bed is at one end of the room and the chair is at the other end. When I am in my room I either sit on the bed and look at the end of the room where the chair is, or I sit on the chair and look back toward the bed. I decided that I would build both halves of my room and then hinge them together, because I experience my room as two halves. I thought that the hinges would make it clear to the viewer that it is a representation of one room. One half of the room has a window and a chair and the other half has a bed and a door.
I titled this piece "Bedroom in Winter" (Plate 8) because I tried to capture the kind of light that was in the room in winter. There are windows in the room at one end only, so during the winter it was always dark and moody in the room with silver light coming through the windows. When I painted this sculpture I was again interested in painting in the light. It was an interesting problem on the side with the windows since I wanted the effect of light coming from the back of the room while natural light falls on it from the front. The walls are painted various shades of army green and the floor has a green and red checkerboard pattern. The furniture, especially the bed, adds an element of Romanticism. The covers on the bed are tossed to one side as if someone could not sleep, got up, and went out the door. I wanted the bed and the chair to be shadowy, indistinct forms.

My next two pieces were taken from the hallway on the second floor. The first I did, "Second Floor Hallway 1", was of the very end of the hallway. It is a little square room with doors on all three walls. The door at the back opens up into another little room behind. I was intrigued by this place that is an intersection of doors. The doors make a circular gesture at the front of the piece. The room in the back suggests a bathroom, with tiled floor, a cabinet against the back wall, and a
hock in the wall. The color in the back room contrasts with that in the front.

The other hallway piece is a view the other direction down the same hallway. The view is of a very long hallway with a door at the end and two other doors on the side, closer to the front. So it again involves three doors but they are spread out rather than tangent to one another. The floor plan is shown in Diagram 6. It is built so that side "b" is placed up against the wall at eye level. The only view in is through side "a". Lights are hidden inside so that light comes through the two open doors "e" and "f". I placed mirrors behind door "e" so that when you look through it there appears to be a room behind that is twice as wide as it actually is. This was my first use of mirrors in my realistic sculptures. The color in this piece is local color: grey walls, brown doors, and a brown floor in the hallway. The walls and floor are very smooth. I carved a woodgrain pattern into the doors. It is exaggerated and gives them a psychotic look, which I did not really intend to happen. The floor on the inside room visible through the mirror is painted to have grey tiles. The piece combines views of two different spaces: one a long narrow hallway, and the other a wider, more open-looking room.
HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIPS

A major assumption in my present work is that I can use representation of an architectural interior to get at an underlying dramatic content that is non-specific and communicated visually. I believe that certain places seen from the right angle at the right time can have strong visual/emotional impacts upon the viewer. My function now is to search for those places and recreate them for other people. My attitude is formalist as opposed to narrative. My sculptures can be viewed as settings for dramatic scenarios without the figures acting out the scenes. They are similar to description of settings in novels, which are used to establish mood and give the novel depth. To put in the dramatic scenario would be next to impossible for me because I am an indirect narrator who wants only to imply dramatic content in my work through visual means alone. I am exploring the expressive possibilities of spatial relationships - near to far. Although my current work is three-dimensional, in which case I do not have to use perspective to translate space onto a two-dimensional canvas, it is concerned with perspective relationships. I tend to choose views in my work that emphasize depth. For example, I am attracted by hallways, which make the viewer particularly aware of perspective recession. I deliberately choose views that have obvious movement back
through space. I like the idea of seeing through a series of rooms. The painter’s use of a single viewpoint perspective lets the viewer know where the painter was in relation to the scene he has painted. (It implies having been there.) I like to think of the use of perspective as creating a kind of intimacy between the painter and the viewer, in much the same way as a first person narrative in a novel creates an intimacy between the author and reader. I want my scenes to be seen from a personal, human viewpoint because I am after a similar intimacy — that can be experienced rather than comprehended.

The history of Western painting includes the tradition of painting dramatic scenes — from mythology and from the Bible, as well as History painting and genre painting. In all there are figures acting against a background, or setting, which is usually subordinate to the human action. Certain painters, however, have been more interested by the settings and have given them at least equal weight with the figures. I, of course, am more interested in interior environments than in landscapes. I have chosen to write about Dutch Delft school painters and about Edward Hopper, both of whom can be seen against the tradition of genre painting. They, however, are not so much genre painters as painters of interior scenes or urban places in relation to figures. I find much to relate to in these artists' work.
From about 1650-1700 a school of painting flourished in Delft, Holland, which focused on genre scenes of domestic life in bourgeois households. Emphasis was placed on the orderliness of the homes and with that a high degree of spatial clarity was achieved in the paintings, which are like portraits of people's homes. These painters developed a masterful use of perspective for depicting interior scenes. The two painters from the school given most recognition today are Jan Vermeer and Pieter de Hooch. Of the two, I am more interested in de Hooch because he emphasized a deep space architectural setting in relation to his figures, whereas Vermeer was more focused on painting figures and objects usually in shallower although well-articulated interior spaces. Most of Pieter de Hooch's paintings during what are considered his peak years - 1655-1665 - contain views through a series of at least two or three rooms, the last often open to the outdoors. Each of his paintings usually contains a front room with doors at the back leading to a variety of other rooms, some dark and mysterious and some flooded with sunlight. Figures (usually mothers or maids with children doing household chores) are placed in both the foregrounds and backgrounds. The figures seem to be there mostly to give a sense of scale to the rooms. Also, furniture and household items are usually minimized in de Hooch's scenes. Nearly all of them have tiled floors.
that emphasize the perspective. In "The Pantry," 1658, a woman and child stand in an empty front room before a door on the left side. The view through the door seems to lead down a stairway to the cellar. The stairway is not shown but suggested because there is a cellar window placed very low at the back. On the right side of the painting another doorway leads into a sunny room with a window that opens onto a courtyard. In "The Linen Cupboard," 1663, a woman and her maid are removing linen from a linen cupboard on the left side of the front room. On the right a door leads into another room. At the back of the second room there is an open door, through which we see a house across the street. To the right of the first doorway there is a winding staircase that gives the viewer a glimpse of yet another space above.

Delft school painters experimented with perspective effects and optical devices. They sometimes used perspective distortions to create psychological effects in their paintings. Some of these painters (like Samuel van Hoogstraten and Carel Fabritius) also made perspective boxes, which were wooden boxes with peepholes to view the insides. Interior scenes were painted on the inside walls with vanishing point coinciding with the peephole. This created trompe l'oeil spatial effects. The insides gave the illusion of large interior spaces with more depth than the dimensions of the boxes. The intention was to
surprise, fool, and delight the viewer with the illusion. I have similar intentions with my use of mirrors in my boxes. The resemblance of perspective boxes to my own work is striking.

I also relate to Edward Hopper's depiction of interior scenes in his paintings. All through his life he pictured in his paintings places that were meaningful to him. He painted theatres, focusing on the audience. In New York he painted diners and offices. And then he painted places he encountered while traveling, which he loved to do. He painted motels, the insides of railway cars, and gas stations and highways. Also, he did landscapes at his summer home in Maine. Besides this he painted houses, and views through windows into other people's houses. And finally he painted the austere, light-filled interior scenes. I admire the attempt to reconstruct all the places in his life that had particular meaning for him. I use the term reconstruct because he usually did not paint the particular place exactly as it was, but put together in a sense an ideal version of it that epitomized, for example, the office at night, the hotel lobby, the diner, etc. for him.

Hopper had a distaste for directly narrative painting. This was in part a reaction against his need to earn a living as an illustrator. Talking to Lloyd
Goodrich about his days working as an illustrator, Hopper said:

I didn't want just to paint people gesturing and grimacing, what I wanted to do was paint light on the side of the house. 6

So he avoided painting figures that seemed to be communicating with each other. His figures are fairly anonymous. More than anything they seem to be communicating with the place they are in. He was interested in capturing the mood that he thought was the essence of the place. Usually he had a certain quality that he wanted to bring out about a place. For example, he writes of his intentions in painting "Office At Night":

The picture was probably first suggested by many rides on the "L" train in New York City after dark and glimpses of office interiors that were so fleeting as to leave fresh and vivid impressions on my mind. My aim was to try to give the sense of an isolated and lonely office interior rather high in the air, with the office furniture which has a very definite meaning for me. 7

The paintings by Hopper that I relate to most are the ones of simple, empty rooms, sometimes with women standing or sitting in them, and always with sunlight entering through a window. These paintings seem to be about the spatial qualities of the rooms and also about the way light from outside hits the walls. The lack of furniture makes the rooms more abstract and more universal. In "A Woman in the Sun" there is a nude woman
standing in a room that is empty except for a bed and two paintings on the walls. She is standing in a patch of light entering through a window in the wall opposite her. There is very little in the painting to indicate what kind of a woman she is or why she is standing there. She is gazing into the sunlight. "Sun in an Empty Room" depicts a room with a double corner and a window on the right wall. Light comes in through the window and makes two rectangles as it cuts across the two corners. So the light from outside is shaped by the room. This painting, as do many of Hopper's paintings, uses light to establish a relationship between indoors and outdoors. The light defines the walls at the same time as the walls and window shape the light. In "Rooms by the Sea" there is a front room with two doors. The one on the right opens directly to the sea. The one on the left reveals another room behind that has furniture. The sea so close to the room is startling, and again plays with the relation between outdoor elements and the indoors. The painting is full of light and has a gay mood. I am interested in Edward Hopper and in the Delft painters because architectural setting and perspective are important expressive elements in their paintings.
CONCLUSION

Over the last two years my artwork has developed in three distinct stages: (1) I made drawings and collages which led me to a concern with surface and a use of craft methods in a non-traditional context; (2) I made the three large sculptures with decorated rooms. The interest that emerged was in presentation. I began to ask questions that I had never considered before in my work, such as: how would the viewer approach the piece - what would he see first? Should I try to disorient the viewer (for example by making him look at rooms upside down) or should I be straightforward with him? In summation, just how much could I control a viewer's experience of my artwork? This was a problem-solving stage. In addition, when I decided what I wanted then I had to figure out how to build it. I developed carpentry skills that I did not have before. (3) My realistic sculptures grew out of a desire to make my art a more direct response to my environment. However, the form they have taken continues interests from the earlier stages. In them, I am still concerned with surface texture and pattern on the walls and floors, but in a more subtle way. I try to use these textures to enhance the mood of the piece, so they have a reason for being there. My present work also continues to deal with problems of presentation. Now the problem is focused on how to make the viewer experience a place the
same way I did. I also still consider inside vs. outside and how much of a room should be visible from what angle. Time is involved as in how long a viewer takes to see all of a sculpture. He first sees a white box on the wall. Then he must come closer to see what is inside, and then may take a little longer to notice a back room. I like to think of myself as coordinating a series of steps that the viewer goes through to see my sculptures. Representation of specific places gives focus and meaning to my earlier preoccupations with surface and presentation. I consider my latest sculptures as the beginning of my more mature work.
scale: one inch = 24 inches
scale: one inch = 24 inches
1. *Untitled (#1)*
2. Untitled (#2)
3. *Untitled (#3)*
4. View From The Third Floor
5. Stairs
6. Doorway 1
7. Doorway 2
8. Bedroom in Winter
9. Hallway 1
FOOTNOTES


2. Ibid., p. 96.


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