

THESIS

HIDDEN PLACES

Submitted by

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Department of Art

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado


Spring, 1983

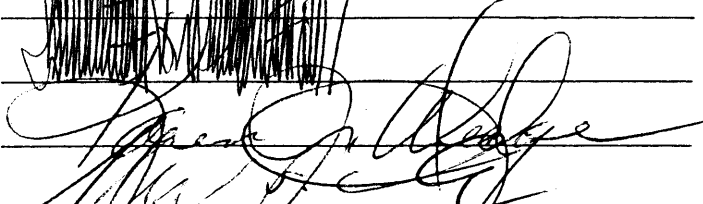
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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER
OUR SUPERVISION BY THIA NEVIUS ENTITLED HIDDEN PLACES
BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS.

Committee on Graduate Work







Adviser



Department Head

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

HIDDEN PLACES

The objective of this thesis is to create paintings of an organic flowing quality that are emotionally expressive. Art that is not representational has more possibilities for interpretation and leaves more room for an open-ended expression of feeling. Concern lies with eye movement through the painting by the placement of line, shape, color, and texture. The process and product are equally important as no final ideas are established before a painting is begun, but rather a burgeoning idea of composition. As a painting proceeds, spaces are pushed and pulled to facilitate flow and desired arrangements. Often figurative shapes or colors are used as points of departure. Serious color considerations are made concerning value and temperature where a dynamic quality may be achieved. Juxtaposition of line and shape, active and inactive areas, hard and soft edges, impasto and transparent areas are employed with balance in mind. These and other rational and intuitive thought and decision making processes proceed as the painting is developed.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis
to
all struggling women artists

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Text	1
Figures	6

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	Turbid Patriarch, acrylic - 37" x 47"	6
2	Birth Process, acrylic - 40" x 44"	7
3	Separation, acrylic - 59" x 72"	8
4	Ensconced, acrylic - 58" x 71"	9
5	Apotheosis, acrylic - 60" x 72"	10
6	Stasis, acrylic - 60" x 71"	11
7	Fecund, acrylic - 60" x 72"	12
8	Uranus, acrylic - 59" x 72"	13
9	Duality I, acrylic - 57" x 71"	14
10	Duality II, acrylic - 57" x 71"	15

HIDDEN PLACES

My works are based on emotional responses to the world around me. They are personal in nature but at the same time encompass universal emotions in all of us. They are expressive representations of unconscious or intuitive as well as conscious thought processes. In the contemporary world of today, life can be very complex and the relationship we have with our inner self is disturbed by how the outer world, in all its complexities, is dealt with through our thoughts and behavior. These abstractions are an attempt to portray the feelings I have. Thus, abstraction has given me this freedom. Previously, I painted figurative, representational watercolors. The closer to representation, the more likely one is to conform to that external appearance and perhaps more limited in emotional expression as well. The last two paintings I completed here are more representational than the others, having definite female figures. Anytime a figure is represented, one cannot deny an emotional response because of the identification. Intuitively, perhaps, I wanted a more limited response in these last two works, yet retain an abstract quality, so that the statement has a more concrete interpretation.

My relationship with my inner self and as a product of this society have caused a great deal of re-evaluation and disturbance in my life the past few years. So often we deny our emotions or hide them so as not to confront them, internally justifying this by rationalizing that

other things are more important--our job security, emotional security, our ego and self esteem, the consequences of our actions on tomorrow or next year. However, I feel that these things cannot really be separated from our emotional lives and inner responses. Thus, the title for my thesis, "Hidden Places"; places that we keep guarded and hidden from view.

These paintings have a basic underlying theme, that of traditional role concepts as being destructive to the development of a feminist alternative. In traditional roles women are often defined and valued by the food we cook the house we keep, the size of our bodies in specific places, the behavior of our children, or the notion of being extensions of our husbands. It is not that these roles are invalid, but they become destructive when one no longer wants to be defined by them. To me, a feminist alternative is the realization of and the action toward the development of one's fullest potential. Often we keep our feelings about the roles in which we are conditioned well hidden from view.

I am dealing with my sensitivity as a woman artist in a society where separations of different realities are apparent between groups of people, i.e, white women, white men, black women, black men, Chicano women, Chicano men, etc. On the one hand I have felt the need to conform and fit into a reality not my own, while on the other I have felt a push to speak to that which my inner self dictates. These paintings seem to reflect that struggle. Some of them appear to move in one direction with a tighter, more controlled quality while others seem more flowing and at ease. After all, art is that raw stuff which comes from a struggle and assertiveness in the need for

survival. My intentions are to show strength but vulnerability, power yet accessibility. I like to think of my work as rough but sensuous.

I don't intend that my work be instructive or educational but to make statements concerning how I feel. The need to share and support each other in the face of a world full of conflict is becoming ever more apparent. For me, art as a product of society, sensitizes us to the human condition. It must be recognized that nothing in life is ever really completed but that every struggle has the potential for strengthening and solidifying.

The size of my work is indicative of the size of emotional expression. They are not meant to dwarf or overwhelm but to be met on an equal level. They cannot be denied or overlooked but ask for serious consideration. Perhaps my physical size (5'2") has unconsciously dictated this need in a world where bigness holds an authoritative, domineering place. (Although in no way do I wish to be domineering.)

The colors are chosen for their expressive qualities. A predominance of cooler tones are used with warmer hues to give philosophical depth, contrast and unity. I have often chosen colors that have been traditionally associated as feminine and used them to portray power and strength.

I have attempted to choose techniques that are compatible with desired expressionistic qualities. The dynamics that take place by the use of color combinations, value contrasts and organic flow of lines and spaces facilitates the visibility of feelings. Direct painting is employed but sometimes an underpainting of a contrasting color is applied. I use sprayed water a great deal in order to facilitate the flow of color, wipe away freshly painted areas, or to create desired

drips. I strive for spontaneity and assurance of line. Acrylic allows speed and direct application, resulting in spontaneous expressiveness. Gel medium and modeling paste are used to create lines and mottled surfaces, juxtaposed to glazed areas with thin transparent layerings.

Philosophically, I like the idea of transparency by seeing through form and recognizing content as we can see through to the meaning of human behavior. At the same time, on another level there exists the contradictory feature of hiding the content inside the structure.

I am not so concerned about volume or figure/ground but with flow and eye movement across the surface. Form and line are used as tools of expression with which to guide the eye from one area to another in order to create a flowing movement. They are formal as well as conceptual devices, tying areas of space together as well as tying together common feelings.

My interests lie in painting through discovery, beginning with a vague concept and compositional layout, as opposed to a more set preconceived idea. I consider the process of painting as well as the product important. Technique is less important to me than concept. However, the more one knows about technique, the more one is able to carry out concepts. After a work is basically completed I feel a potential for the next one to emerge and be even better and closer to my intentions.

Through concentrated painting I have made numerous discoveries that have better enabled me to complete ideas. Discovery is an on-going process, and perhaps it can be said that coupled with imagination it is the base from which knowledge is derived. Esthetic considerations

are sometimes derived from a conscious level of the decision making process. At other times, paint quality or brush stroke intuitively "feels" right. Perhaps herein lies the mystery of art. I marvel at times when others gain something from observing art which wasn't necessarily intended. I hope that mystery will always be retained in my work.

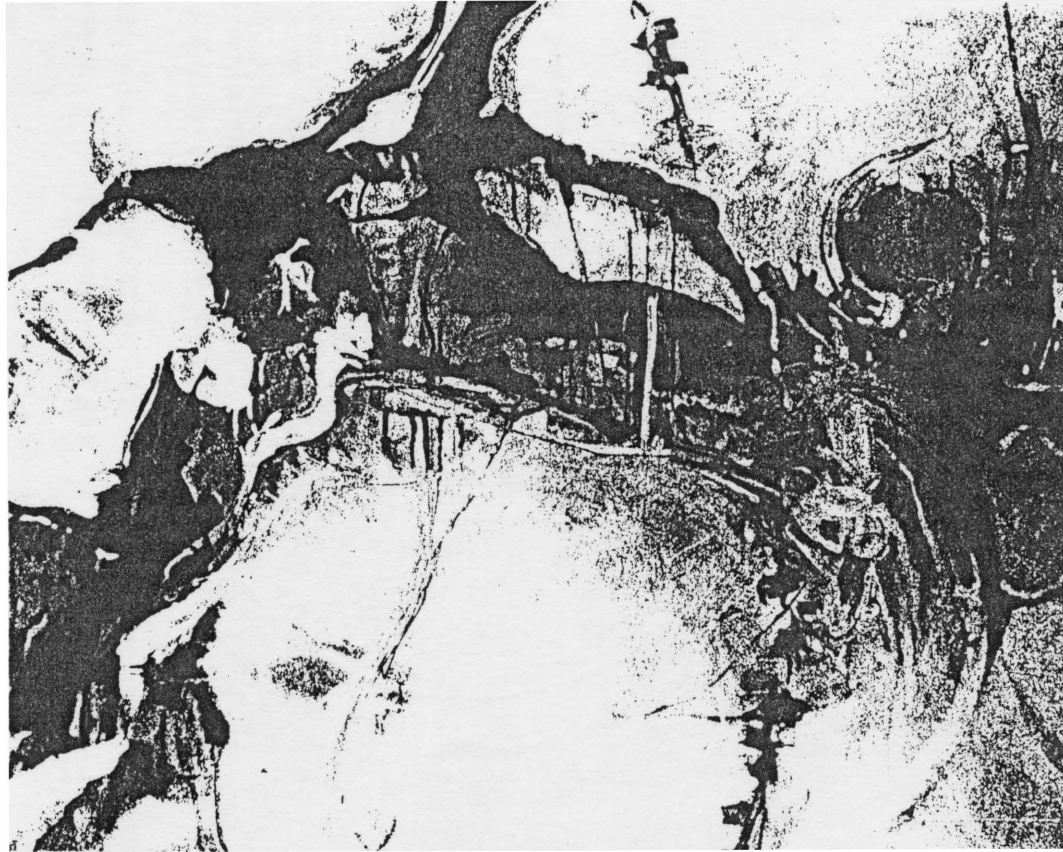


Figure 1. Turbid Patriarch, acrylic - 37" x 47".



Figure 2. Birth Process, acrylic - 40" x 44".

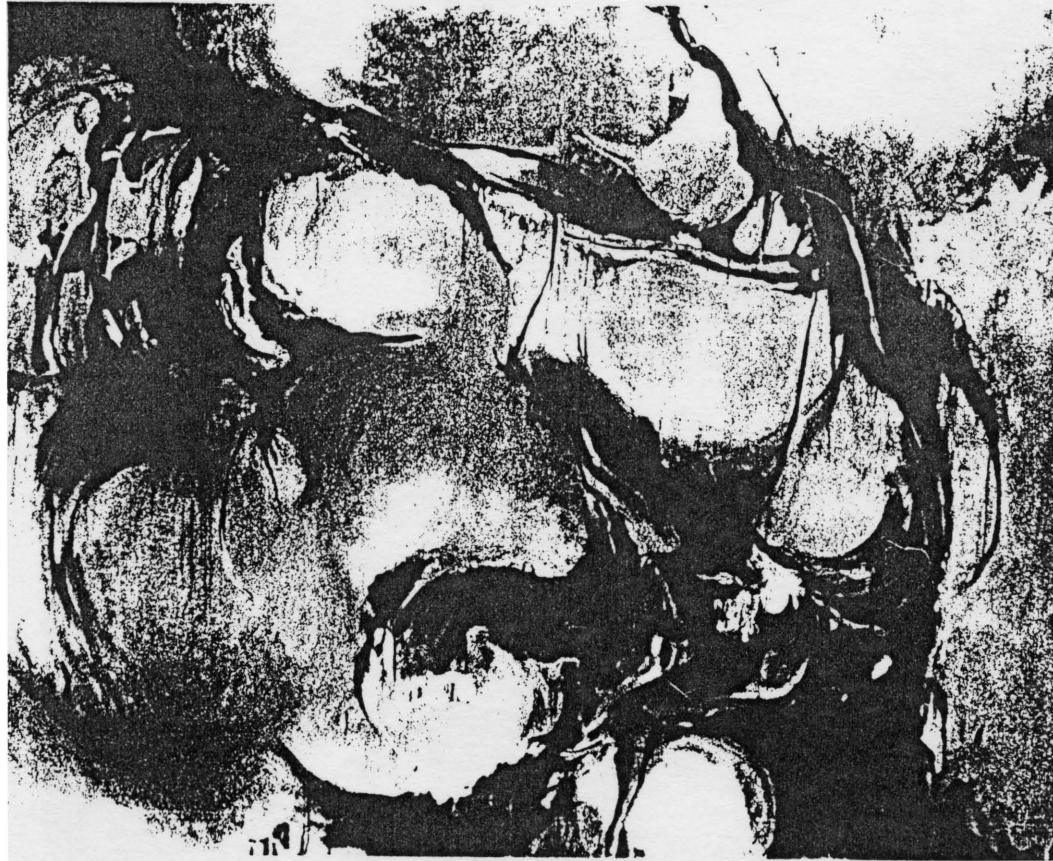


Figure 3. Separation, acrylic - 59" x 72".



Figure 4. Ensnoced, acrylic - 58" x 71".



Figure 5. Apotheosis, acrylic - 60" x 72".

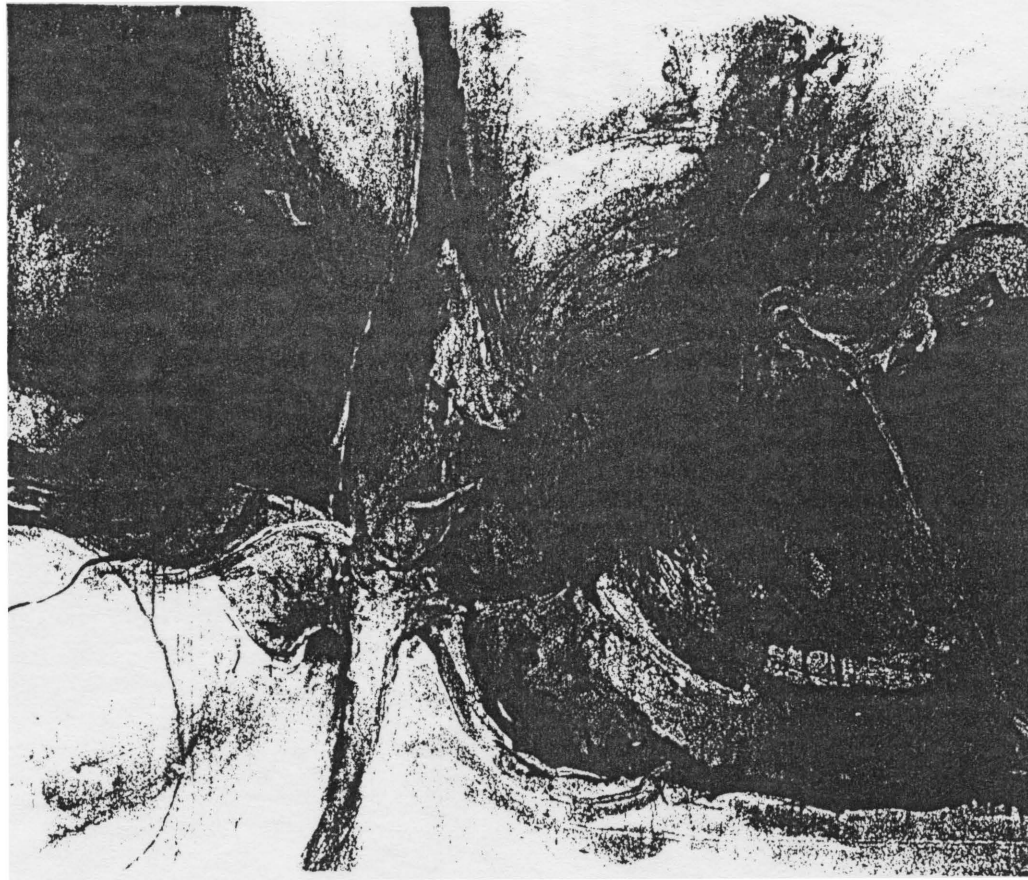


Figure 6. Stasis, acrylic - 60" x 71".

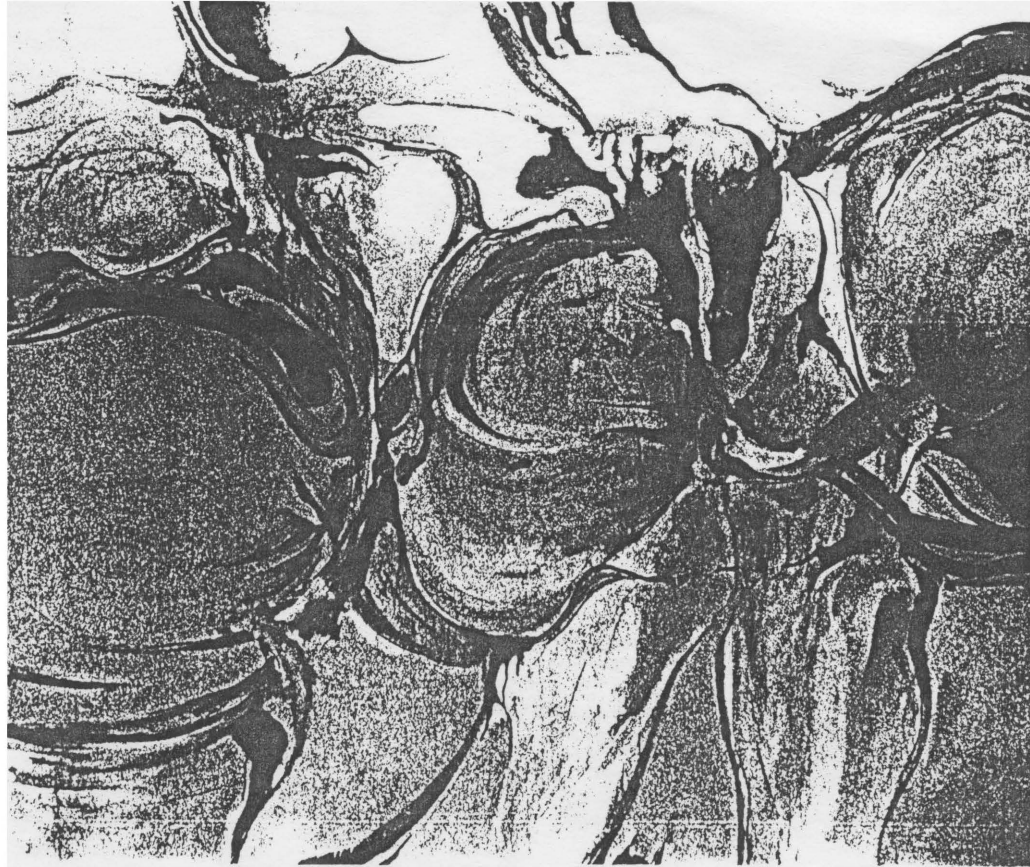


Figure 7. Fecund, acrylic - 60" x 72".

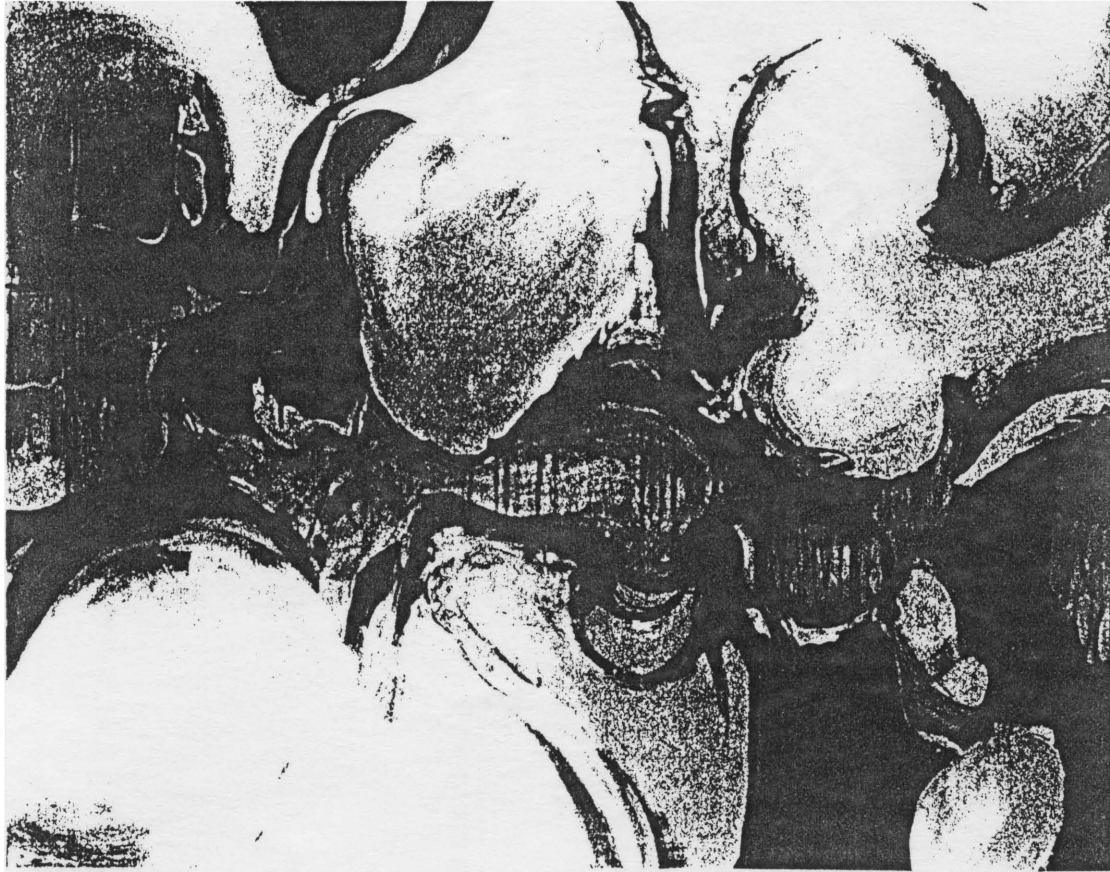


Figure 8. Uranus, acrylic - 59" x 72".



Figure 9. Duality I, acrylic - "57" x 71".

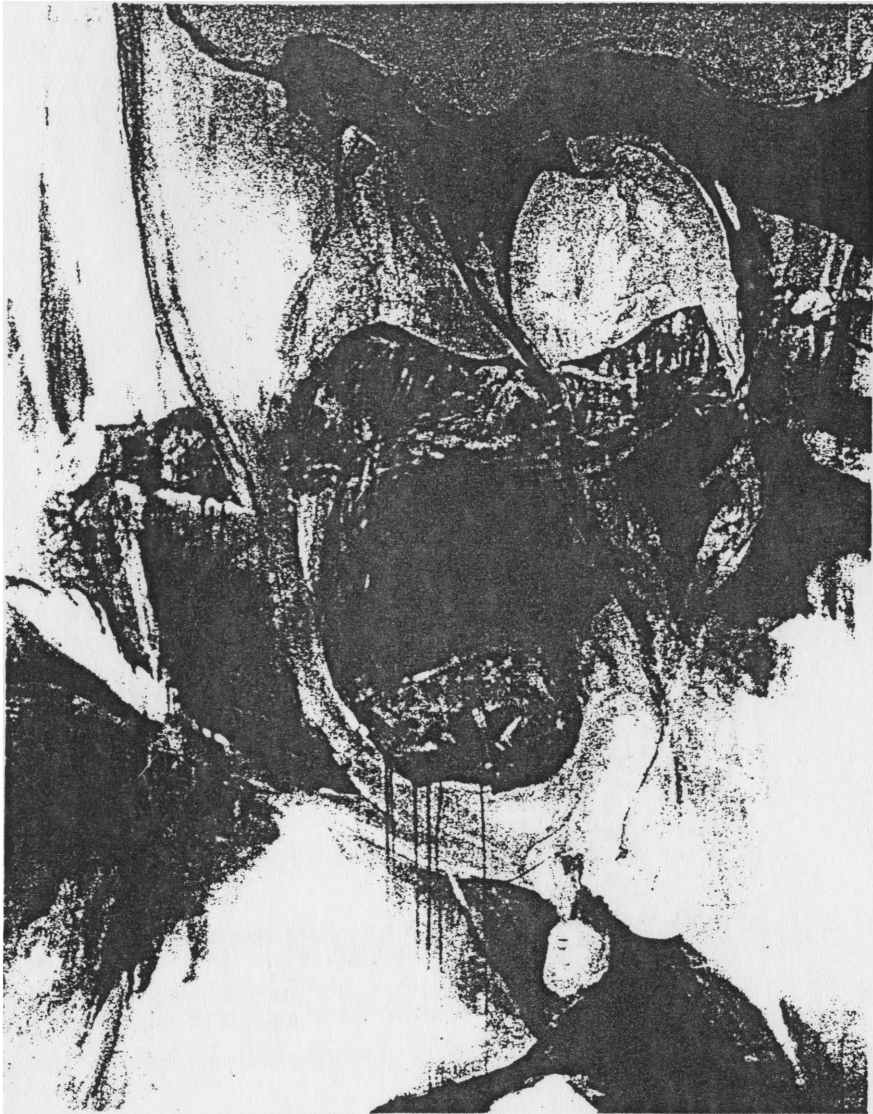


Figure 10. Duality II, acrylic - 57" x 71".