

THESIS

FIGURATION AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

Submitted by

Stephan Kleinschuster

Art Department

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

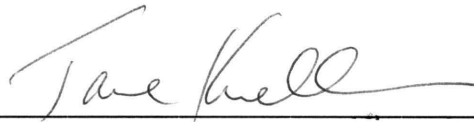
Fall 1999

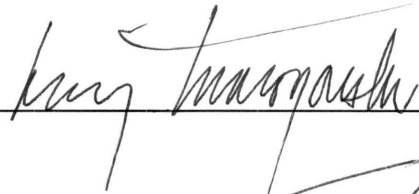
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

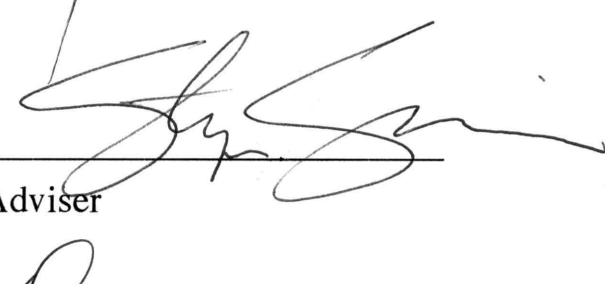

FALL 1999

WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER
OUR SUPERVISION BY STEPHAN J. KLEINSCHUSTER
ENTITLED RECENT WORK BE ACCEPTED AS
FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS.

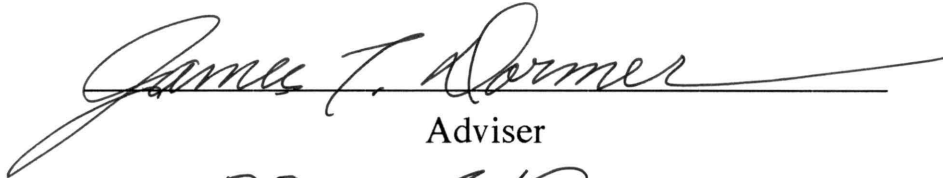
Committee on Graduate Work







Adviser



Adviser



Department Head

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

FIGURATION AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

The figure has always been what has interested me most. The desire to reach competence in its rendering was a prime concern for me before I realized the process by which this goal is sought. The everlasting struggle for this skill began to take precedence over my desire for the skill itself. I began to seek the struggle; to push the struggle into the content where before the figure was only the desired end.

As the action of the figures themselves began to emulate the struggle that I went through in trying to reach them, I became aware that the content of this struggle needed to take a more coherent form. I found that the quintessential nouns and verb of my struggle were the horizontal, the vertical and the diagonal. Further exploration revealed that the manner in which I combined these elements qualified the type of struggle that I unknowingly sought, the struggle of rising and falling. My passion became, as Rudolf Arnheim states, the acknowledgement of our relationship to...

the eccentric power of gravity that pulls us down. In response, we struggle to liberate ourselves from the coercion of our earthbound condition and to rise—with height (verticality) as an eccentric objective, the explicit target of our striving. As we shall see, this tension-laden struggle is a vital component of artistic expression because it dramatizes the pervasive human conflict between powers of trying to pull us down (diagonal) and our own striving to overcome them.

In seeking to liberate my personal interpretation of this kinesthetic action the shapes began to secede from the figures they represented. This perhaps came about via the mediums I chose to utilize. The methods of making stems directly from working in the intaglio print medium. This is a sculptural medium that allows one to access the sense of

finality in velvet blacks, the richness of tonal gradation, and the potential to illuminate volume. These characteristics began to inform even the drawings that were to become prints. I drew looking for this content with a contemplative discretion, using drawing techniques I knew to be translatable into intaglio. The violent shapes of the first soft ground impressions in zinc re-informed the drawings that were to become prints. As a result all that I paint, draw, or sculpt has the residual sensibility of problem solving in intaglio printmaking.

The abstraction that came to fight the figure also joined the content in it's struggle. The figure was not only an exciting visual referent it came to be the control. Its presence and identification act as a standpoint from which to judge the level of abstraction that is necessary to reaffirm the expression apart from the subject matter. Since the desired content was no longer a mere rendering of the figure, I realized that in the transformation of the figure there also resides the struggle of collapse and support. This collapse and support is not confined to physical dimensions, rather it now includes the contrast between intellectual recognition of the figure and the confusion arising from abstraction.

Stephan Kleinschuster
Art Department
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523
Fall 1999

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Plates.....	vi
Plates.....	1-9

LIST OF PLATES

Plate	Page
1. <i>Religare</i> , etching, drypoint on canvas, 108x168”	1
2. <i>Untitled</i> , etching, 24x36”	2
3. <i>Ipsum Esse</i> , etching, 20x36”	3
4. <i>Excerpt</i> , etching, 24x36”	4
5. <i>Seam</i> , etching, 24x36”	5
6. <i>Untitled</i> , etching, 24x36”	6
7. <i>Icon</i> , etching, 15x24”	7
8. <i>Poleis</i> , etching, 24x36”	8
9. <i>Burden</i> , etching, 24x36”	9



Plate 1. *Religare*, etching, 108x168"

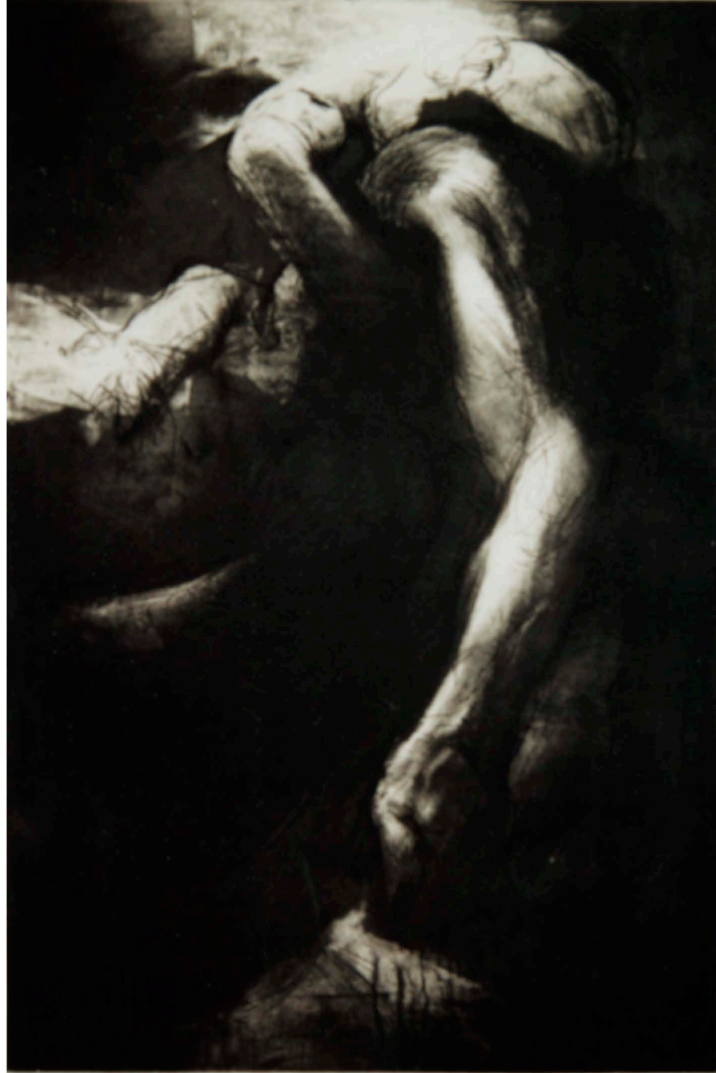


Plate 2. *Untitled*, etching, 24x36"



Plate 3. *Ipsum Esse*, etching, 20x36"

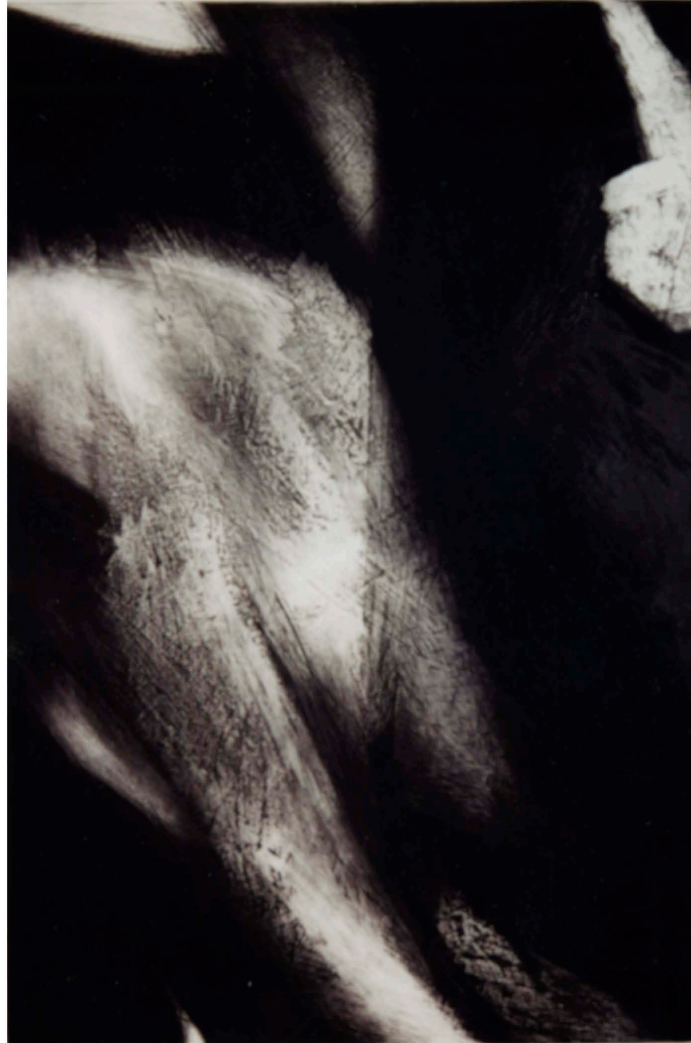


Plate 4. *Excerpt*, etching, 24x36"



Plate 5. *Seam*, etching, 24x36"



Plate 6. *Untitled*, etching, 24x36"



Plate 7. *Icon*, etching, 15x24"



Plate 8. *Poleis*, etching, 24x36"



Plate 9. *Burden*, etching, 24x36"