

THESIS

NOTHING STAYS UNCHANGED

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Colorado State University

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1989
THESIS

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

MARCH 23, 1989

WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR
SUPERVISION BY UN-MI KIM ENTITLED NOTHING STAYS UNCHANGED
BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS
NOTHING STAYS UNCHANGED

The concepts of time and memory have been the dominant influence in my work for a number of years. The two are inextricably linked to the reality in which we live and the manner in which we perceive that reality. It was not my intent to explain or interpret the extent to which these two elements influence the individual's visual perceptions, but rather to accept that influence and utilize its existence as the fundamental concept for the series of paintings completed for the Masters Thesis Project.

The paintings presented here represent my attempts to utilize the concepts of time and memory as an integral element in the development of a visual imagery and in the viewers' perceptions of that imagery. It was my desire to create works which conveyed a sense of history and familiarity designed to provoke the imagination and memory of the viewer; to suggest a mood or atmosphere in an environment which calls on the viewer for individual interpretation.

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My original intent in approaching the painting in this series was to develop them on a primarily material level; that is to limit the imposition of a personal iconography and rely more on the particular qualities of the materials used and the process of application to define structure and form. In my work I have tried to develop what I consider a more vital relationship between the viewer and the art product by trying to maximize the art historical context of time and memory.

By the process of layering transparent and semi-transparent materials, I was able to build up the surface of the paintings while allowing the application of paint or previous levels to show through, thus creating a luminous or atmospheric quality where desired. In other areas I relied on the use of paint applied directly on the surface in a thin or translucent state to gain these effects. It was my feeling that this atmospheric effect and the actual tactile property of the surface lent the paintings a sense of history essential to the mood I was trying to establish in the works. In contrast there were areas where thick opaque paint was applied, often to accentuate or negate the structure implied by the application of materials on the surface of the canvas.

The visual imagery of the early paintings was heavily dependent on this approach to material concerns, as well as to the relationships of painted areas suggested by those concerns. In most cases the formal structure was determined exclusively by the application of materials. The internal structure and references to shape were often the result of explorations into the inherent properties of those materials. Through the manipulation and integration of these elements I was able to create an imagery that is at once tectonic and ambiguous, suggesting specific spatial relationships while calling on the viewer for interpretation of definition. The paintings assert a definite mood or atmosphere which becomes a dominant force in determining personal response to the works.

In developing the series, I was able to introduce a personalized gestural calligraphy that, while creating an anomalous quality within the works, suggested a means of developing a scale that would be more supportive of the environmental qualities I was seeking.

In conjunction with the introduction of a limited gestural calligraphy, I felt the paintings required further manipulation and definition of internal structure and the resulting spatial relationships to facilitate the integration of those symbols. I contrast a very active, almost chaotic underpainting with a more reserved, analytically-based surface configuration. This treatment symbolizes for me the meeting point of conflicting

orientations in the world of human action. The soft, peaceful feeling which results from the synthesis of these at first conflicting tensions expresses my own desire for a certain quality of life.

By using symbols and intergrating them with the structural divisions of the composition I was able to create a symbiotic relationship which has resolved the problem of scale without disrupting the sense of mood and emotion. The development of personal symbols, which has grown to include the use of shapes in the most recent works, and the narrative associations inherent in their use has combined with the formal structural divisions of the surface to give the paintings a lyrical quality that in some cases suggests a melodic interpretation of the imagery. The conscious imposition of illusionistic structure succeeded in further emphasizing the paintings environmental scale, thus increasing their visual impact and interaction with the viewer.

The psintings are environments dependent on mood and atmosphere to stimulate imagination and memory; their surface and structure reflect and represent the world of human action. I hope to convey through the chaotic underpainting a sense of suffering which is subdued by layered, structured configuration.

As the works progress they rely more heavily on the use of personal symbols. These symbols interact with the formal structural divisions of the composition and the

spatial relationships established through the manipulation of paint to develop the paintings' environmental quality. Because I have kept the number of personal symbols to a minimum the impression is an imagery of limitation whose visual impact has been strengthened by the infrequency of their appearance. Their juxtaposition in the paintings suggests to me an anomalous, almost surreal environment that serves to enhance the provocative nature of the work.

I see the series as developing a dialogue between the conscious and the unconscious: between formal structure and personal symbols, and the atmosphere and mood achieved through the intuitive manipulation of paint. The overall visual impression expressed by the paintings is an imagery of omission or limitation that is strongly evocative and relies heavily on the established mood for personal translation. It is an imagery of intimation and suggestion designed to stimulate the memory and imagination. The introduction of personal symbols has given the paintings an environmental quality that transcends the confines of the canvas. I want the structural configuration of the work to express the convergence of initially conflicting elements to form a peaceful, coherent whole. The integration and interaction of all the elements results in a provocative image suggesting a scale that is larger than life and whose interpretation is limited only by the perceptions of the viewer.

PLATES

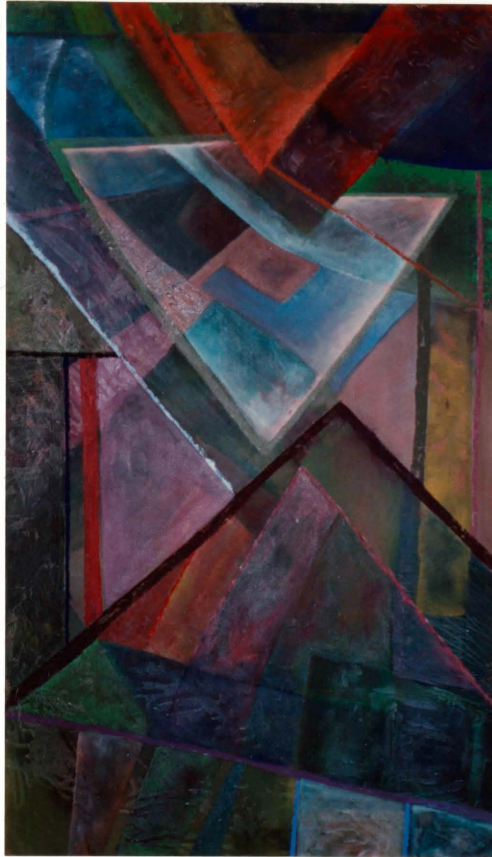


Plate 1. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 42".

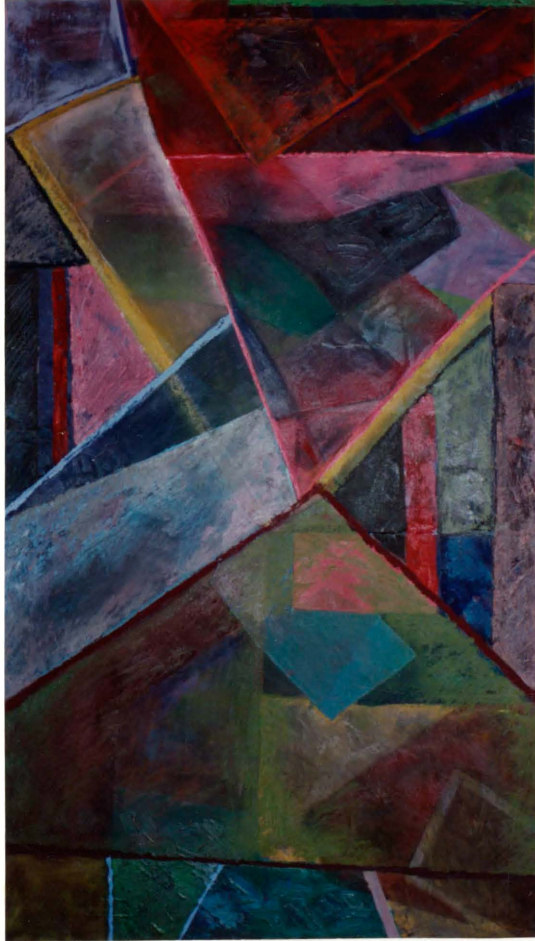


Plate 2. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 42".

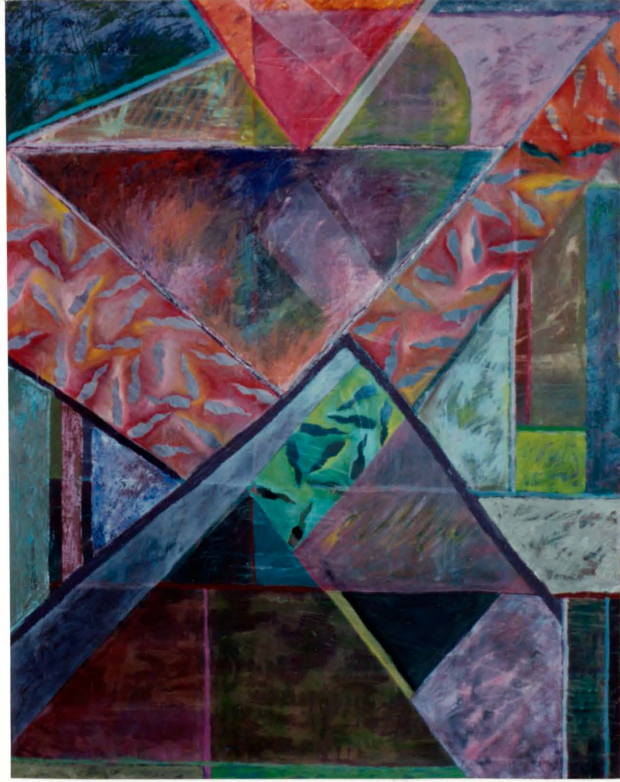


Plate 3. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 38" x 47".

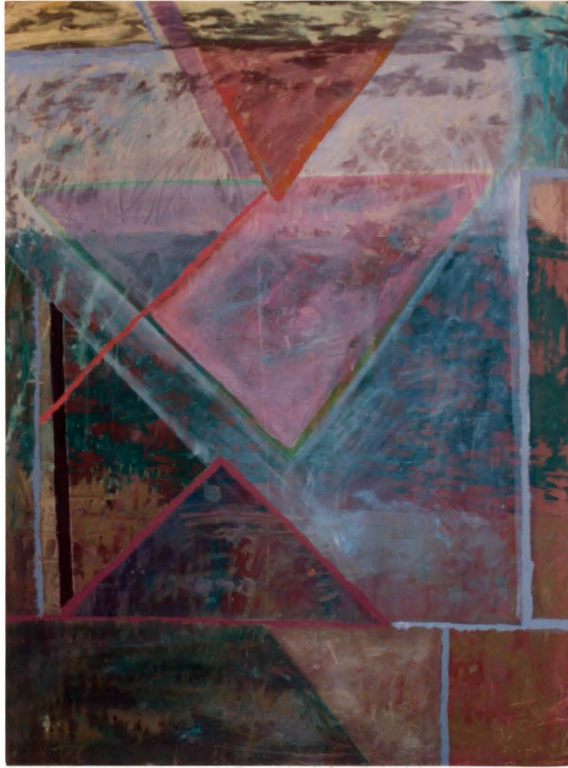


Plate 4. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 34" x 46".



Plate 5. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36".



Plate 6. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36".



Plate 7. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48".



Plate 8. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 24".



Plate 9. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 24".



Plate 10. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 24".

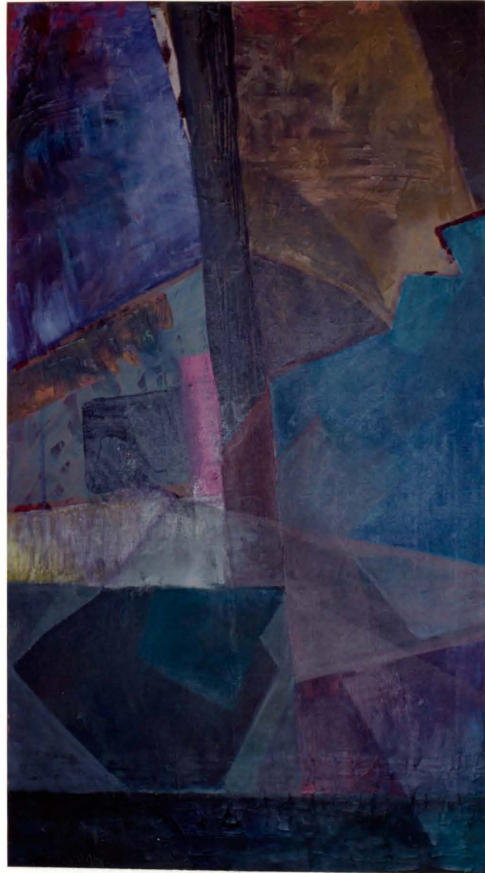


Plate 11. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 20" x 36".



Plate 12. UNTITLED, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 36".

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