

THESIS

IN SEARCH OF SELF

Submitted by

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Department of Art

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR
SUPERVISION BY KIM FERRER ENTITLED IN SEARCH OF SELF BE
ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ART.

Committee on Graduate Work

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under signature)*

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Adviser

Department Head/Director

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS
IN SEARCH OF SELF

I am a hunter and gatherer of forgotten and discarded objects I find on the side of the road, in dumpsters or in empty fields. In the studio, these materials are reprocessed and reconstituted, becoming metaphorical vehicles to communicate how life and the world impact me.

The pursuit of materials is engrained into my daily life. My interest can be aroused by an objects unique form, color, texture, gesture or translucency. This practice engages me with my instinctual nature and begins an excavation of my internal world. Intuition helps accomplish the task. Bringing an intuitive disposition into my hunt gives me the ability to measure things at a glance, to name the essence of the thing, to fire it with vitality and discover its enchantment. Through intuition I learn how to sort and understand my attraction to certain materials and how they are connected to my emotions.

As in life, the act of creation is a series of births and deaths. It relies on impulses, desires, patience, surrender, intuition and trust to complete its voyage into uncharted areas of the psyche. The evolution of this process is shrouded in mystery. It is as if I am finding my way along a path that has already been laid out for me, the pieces having already been created.

As I slowly sift through my self and let emotions filter through, I begin to uncover and unravel the mystery and discover what each artwork needs in order to become whole.

My work is a personal catechism of toil where process and materials act as a door into the psychological and metaphorical meaning of a piece. The materials can be as simple as old discarded wood fencing, rice, straw or wind blown plastic.

The creation process is triggered and fueled by emotions. Whether it is constructing, sewing, wrapping, tying, carving or stacking, the labor that ensues relates to and embodies the content of the piece. The unconscious, empathic dialogue I have with materials and how to utilize them can be equated to deliverance. Through a sacrifice of efforts I am able to release a part of my self into my work and remember who I am.

Much of my thesis work speaks to the Life/Death/Life cycle of relationships, relationships with others and oneself. Each phase of this cycle portrays elements of loss, surrender, acceptance and growth. For example, in “Metamorphosis,” the cylindrical, oval-shaped metal cage acts as a physical body to house the thick, opaque plastic sheets that take on an ethereal, sarcophagus-like form (Figure1). The texture on the plastic is reminiscent of aged or dead skin that is dry and ready to be shed. Although the plastic form seems to be nestled in the metal cage, it is also sewn in along the sides with nylon filament. These looped stitches that are randomly placed have been cut, and further suggest the shedding or transformation that is slowly taking place.

Two pieces of thick rope are tied and wrapped around the middle portion of the cage with one piece running through the middle of the interior down into the plastic form, coming out on the bottom where it is wrapped around a large, white rock. Metaphorically, this rope acts as an umbilical cord, a source of nourishment and hope for the death process that is underway. The wrapped rock anchors the piece in reality and distinguishes the external world from an internal world. By surrendering to loss, the cycle of death is embraced with new growth being its final destination.

The work in this thesis represents a journey of conflict and resolution. The themes of birth, death, home, love, loss, surrender, separation, faith and creation are both personal and universal. These themes have been an integral part of my life since childhood. My work sets the stage for an awareness of feelings and gives the emotions of the past a place to go. As I work out these struggles through my art, I am always cognizant of an underlying longing for peace and comfort. It is the actual physical work of making art that brings this sense of tranquility into my being. It is then that I am home.

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“The connections that I make in my work are unconscious connections. The artist has the privilege of being in touch with his or her unconscious, and this is really a gift. It is the definition of sanity. It is the definition of self realization.”

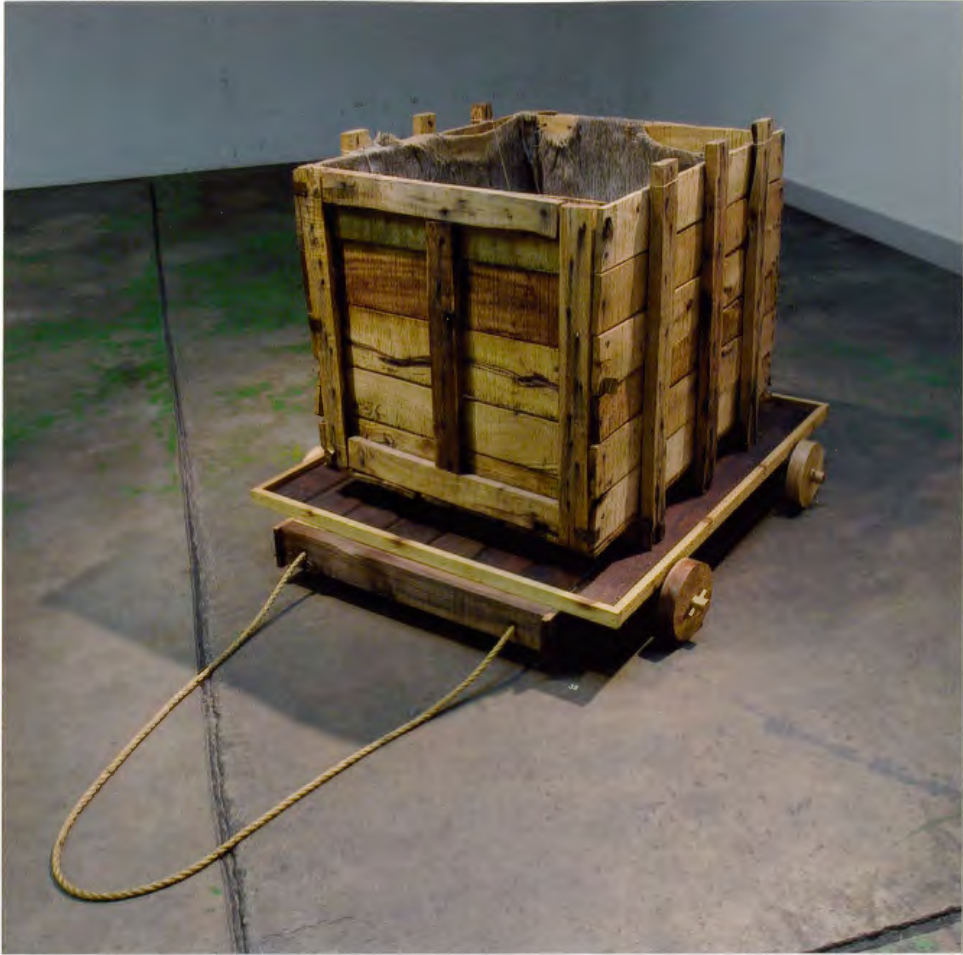
“Emotions are the primary subject of my work.”

“All the work represents a voyage.”

- Louise Bourgeois -



Figure 1, *Metamorphosis*. 2003. Steel Grate, Plastic, Rope, Stone, Nylon Filament. 4'2" x 2'2" x 8'4".



Figures 2 and 3, *Guardian*. 2003. Wood Crate, Wire, Stone, Wax, Honey, Burlap, Wood Crate. 35" x 44" x 88".





Figure 4, *Dangerous Beauty*. 2003. Steel, Foam, Wire, Straw, Wood, Metal Strapping Crate. 16" x 3' x 3'.



Figure 5, *Renewal*. 2002. Wood, Plastic, Leaves. 4' x 6' x 10'.

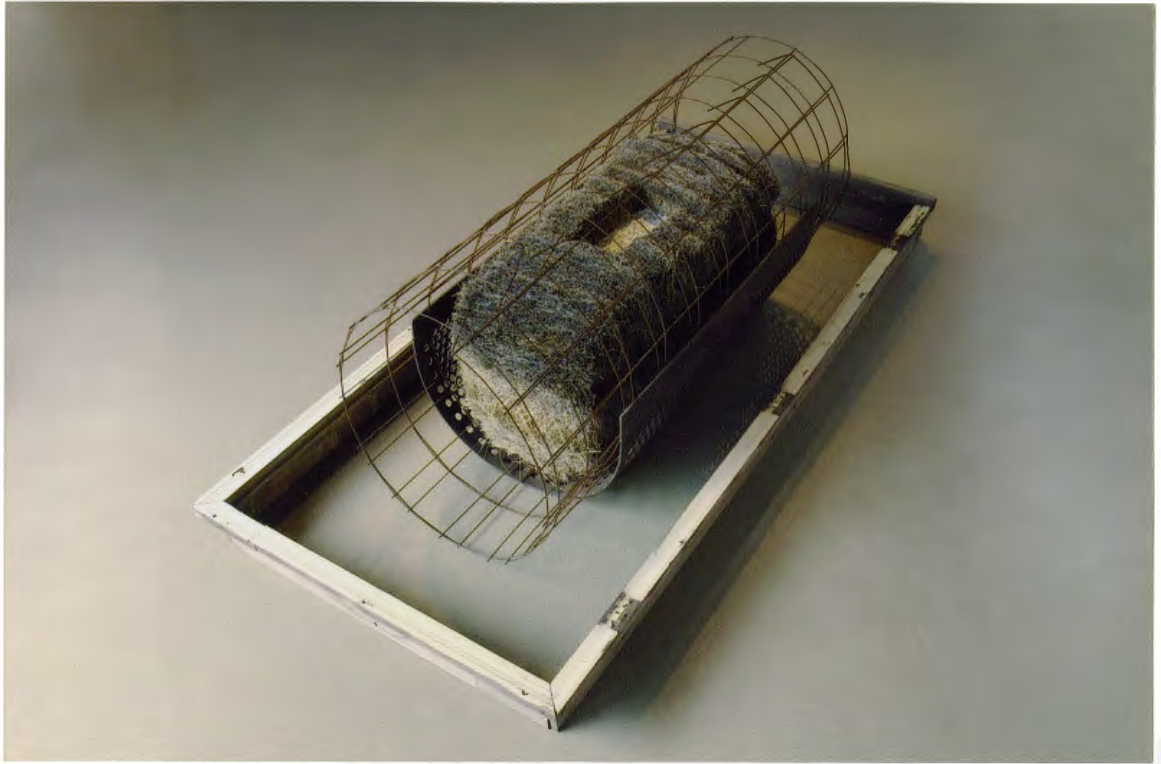


Figure 6, *Homecoming*. 2003. Hay Bale, Flour, Steel Forms, Door Jam. 28" x 40" x 84".



Figure 7, *Cutting Loose, Diving In.* 2003. Rubber, Shellac, Wax, Fabric, Plastic, Twine. 48" x 24".



Figure 8, *Dispersal*. 2003. Sheet Metal, Wax, Human Hair, Plastic Bag. 45^{3/4}” x 19^{1/2}”.



Figure 9, *Transparent Self*. 2003. Wax, Screen, Plastic. 36" x 13".

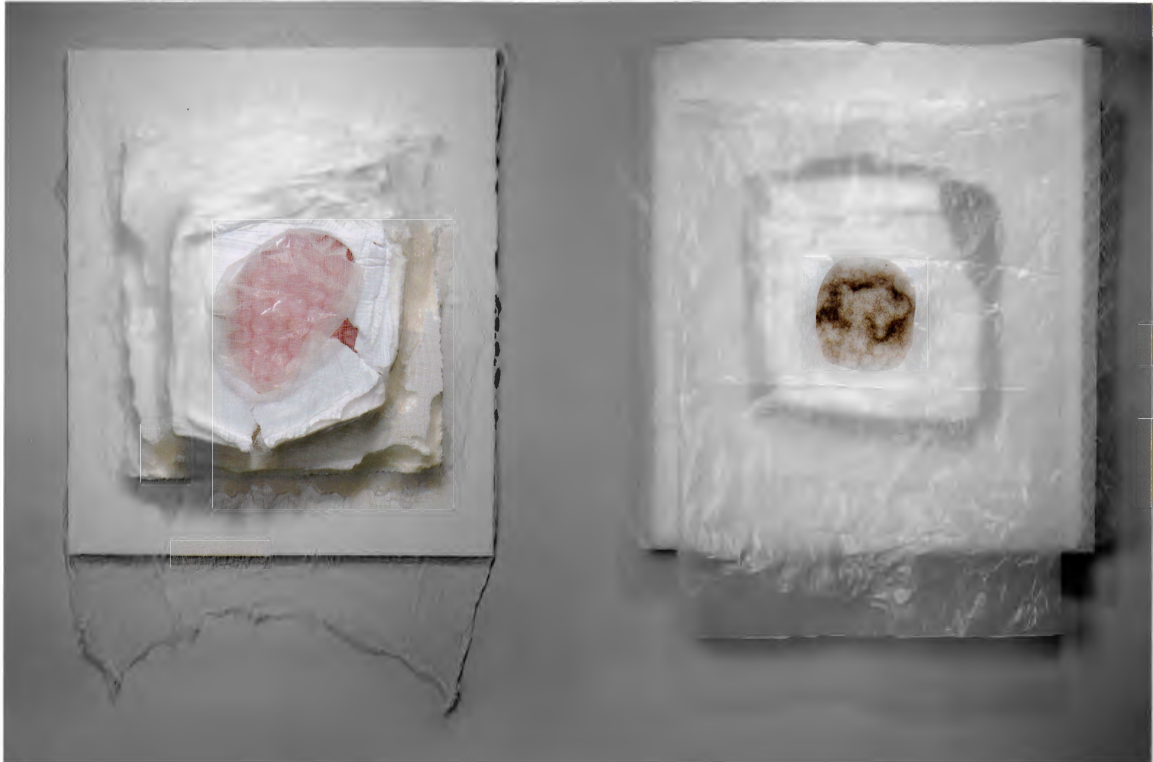


Figure 10, *Seekers Heart*. 2003. Plaster, Rubber, Plastic, Cheesecloth. #1 43" x 27"
#2 37" x 31".