

Thesis

CELEBRATION AND THE SYMBOL
OF THE CIRCLE

Submitted by
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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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It is my ambition, through art, to produce a drama of high emotions, where dancers are more icons than individuals. Integral in the depiction of this drama is the idea of Dionysiac celebration. The main concern of such celebrations is a breakdown of all ties of social rules and regulations. The Dionysiac tradition was to restore man to Nature and release man from his ego -- the dance becomes then the medium through which my icons celebrate a release in appearances. Creating icons rather than individuals releases me from the bonds of appearances in the everyday world. I believe this release from appearances lets me stand as a close and willing observer, and as an observer I am able to interpret and reflect on the processes that train me for art and life.

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TO MY PARENTS
EUGENE AND MARY JO
AND ALSO TO MY
WIFE, LINDSAY
AND
THE BIRTH OF OUR NEW CHILD

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It is my ambition, through art, to produce a drama of high emotions, where dancers are more icons than individuals. Integral in the depiction of this drama is the idea of Dionysiac celebration and the symbol of the circle. The symbol of the circle expresses aspects of the psyche, including the relationship between man and nature. The Dionysian tradition was to restore man to nature and release man from his ego -- the dance becomes then the medium through which my icons celebrate a release in appearances and experience the most vital aspect of life -- its ultimate wholeness.

My presentation of Dionysian celebration concerns my kinship with psychic and sensual renewal that these celebrations represent. Through dance, the dancer frees the body of its usual constraints -- social patterns, and character armor. These dancers are bodies in different degrees of freedom. It is the ecstasy of freedom, of utter abandon, which celebrate the dancer's release from appearances. This breakdown of social rules and regulations restores man to nature and coalesces with primordial man. The patterns of dancers exist where intention and action, desire and fulfillment, are equally powerful. The result is a circle of semi-abstract human forms levitating over a landscape which defines gravity's rules -- reinventing the Dionysian theme of psychic and sensual wholeness and renewal.

Creating icons rather than individuals releases me from the bonds of appearances in the everyday world. I believe this release in appearance lets me reflect on my inner experiences and interpret

and reflect on the processes that train me for art and life. These processes are visions of a fulfillment of my own needs. What these dancers indicate is that my real model is an ideal that embraces all of human drama rather than appearances of, say a particular individual. I'm no longer constrained by the limitation that all my experience must be expressed through outward appearance. Rather, my experience is defined from within; therefore I'm freed from the need to describe a particular and my possibilities are endless. The Dionysian experience becomes my model for human drama. The Dionysian myth and the idea of the circle express to me something real and existing in ourselves, that we must look at to express our ideas.

To subjectively actualize the Dionysian expression in my paintings involved the use of a heavily tactile surface. This surface evolved out of the necessity to retain the character of the brush-stroke in avoidance of objectifying appearances and constraining my own experience. Painting large scale paintings also releases me from constraint and I'm able to create icons equal in scale to human emotions. When I initiated this series of paintings, I stood as a close and willing observer to dance and its ideals, but personally never celebrated a complete release in appearances. This inability to interact and shed the veneer constraining me became evident in the earlier paintings. These paintings deal with color schemes concerning physical distancing and the inability to experience the ecstasy of freedom or abandon expressed in Dionysian celebration. The paintings after these concern the release of my own bonds and appearances and the necessity of confronting personal and emotional states of being. As the series of paintings progressed, themes began to occur dealing with

issues in my life, issues that were removed or alienated from my own understanding or limitations. These limitations intensified my own desire to sever the bonds of self and seek release of ego. This release allowed for instinct and imagination to evolve; subsequently colors intensified and I began to celebrate a degree of psychic and sensual renewal. To rejuvenate the spirit points to the mysterious presence of the unconscious mind which Freud and Jung discovered. That the release from consciously directed and rational processes that dancing or painting represents, produces a kind of ecstatic activity, a self-hypnotism in which anything is possible. My paintings of dance become an effort to exploit the workings of my own instincts, intuitions, and states of being. These states of being point to the mysteries that still lie beyond science's material gains and explanations. My paintings therefore grapple with enigmas and their uncertainties. This series of paintings has helped me to go beyond my old limits in new confrontation of the material by the spiritual. They helped reveal to me certain aspects of myself that were limited and confining.

PLATES



Plate 3. "Intoxication", oil and acrylic painting on canvas, 60" x 72".



Plate 4. "Meminto Moiri", oil and acrylic painting on canvas, 60" x 72".



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