

THESIS

FIGURATIVE PORTRAITS/PRINTS AND PAINTINGS

Submitted by  
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In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, Colorado  
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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION  
BY DOUGLAS PHILIP ANDERSON ENTITLED FIGURATIVE PORTRAITS/PRINTS AND  
PAINTINGS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS.

Committee on Graduate Work

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS  
FIGURATIVE PORTRAITS/PRINTS AND PAINTINGS

The human figure possesses all the forms, lines and shapes found in nature. What differentiates it from inanimate objects is that it also possesses a spirit and psychological presence. It is for this reason I choose to work with the human figure.

My reaction to the model is very important but the model's response to me is also transposed into my work. It is important that I approach my work honestly and without hesitation and preconceptions. For me the act of drawing becomes the Art. It can be a trance-like experience and sometimes the results will surprise me. At all times the likeness of the model is secondary.

The print medium, as an extension of my drawing, presents a challenge that I find appealing. There is always present the problem of keeping images alive and fresh while at the same time controlling the technical aspects of the print process. I find that the intaglio techniques are a way for me to continue my exploration of the human figure in a way that is rich and vital.

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Working with the human figure has always been the most important element in my prints and paintings; however, locating and affording nude models to do figurative prints is always a difficult task for me. The only alternative is to draw from friends, family and acquaintances. These images as well as some nudes are the subject of my thesis work.

It is important to understand that the methods I use help these figurative images succeed for me. The likeness of the sitter or model is secondary in importance. If, however, the work is honestly approached in observation and technique, a likeness of the sitter, both physically and psychologically, will appear in my interpretation. More often than not, if I know the subject quite well, the image will exude these qualities.

Communication with people is more conducive when the situation is relaxed. So too is the success of my intaglio prints. Not only a relaxed physical atmosphere but a relaxed state of mind in which I can draw freely. It is at that time that I seem to get in a trance-like state, concentrating on the image that I observe and searching for what I call the "truth". The "truth" is years of practice dealing with the formalities of art such as gesture, line quality, form composition and so on. These qualities as well as what comes from my subconscious interpretations of the sitter are ways to enable me to find that "truth".

Once a subject is procured, I work fast and the sitter need only sit for perhaps 20 minutes or less. Because the gesture and feeling of

the sitter is most important, I try to get that "gist" quickly since I am not looking for a photographic representation. To achieve a more literal image would take endless hours and the work would end up being boring, stiff and unimportant. I feel my interpretation is more important and closer to reality.

To achieve this gestural and free response in my intaglio prints, I usually work two different ways. One technique uses a soft-ground surface and the other a hard-ground format. The waxy soft-ground surface provides a slick, thinner ground that enables me to slide my utensils for drawing easily across the plate surface. I then etch the line for a considerable amount of time that provides a very deep etch. This preliminary etch gives me an opportunity to apply materials and run it through the press for tonal variations and etch again without losing the original lines and without having to proof it. The tools I use with soft-ground are pencils, nails, sticks, fingers, solvents or anything I can find. I work directly on a clean plate or scraped image of an old plate. Any accidental marks that are etched in usually add to the richness of the surface and are usually of no concern.

Working with the hard-ground is a bit different because it is a harder, tar-like surface, allowing me to use nails, scrapers and diamond head scribes for scoring through the ground. For my initial lines, the gesture is put in lightly and quickly with the scribe for composition and then the scraper is utilized for line thickness and variations. Again, I etch for a long period of time to get deep, permanent lines that will hold strong through subsequent etchings. Those etchings may involve aquatints or soft-ground cloth material impressions that are

handled or applied with the same freshness and fervor that the original drawing was.

I try to make my intaglios have a fresh, painterly look, spontaneous - yet with control. I don't want to overwork a plate, yet there are times the image must be totally scraped out and redone. This also adds depth and richness to the plate surface.

To conclude, these intaglio portraits, as well as the paintings that are included in my thesis reflect my knowledge of the subjects. Being familiar with the figures has allowed me to work spontaneously and honestly without letting the technical aspects of printmaking interfere with the excitement and energy of the image.



Fig. 1. "Nude" Intaglio 24 X 36





Fig. 2. "Bill" Intaglio 24 X 36



Fig. 3. "The Commander" Intaglio 24 X 36





Fig. 4. "Pin-up" Intaglio 24 X 36



Fig. 5. "Arlene (Eos)" Intaglio 12 X 18





Fig. 6. "Veronica" Intaglio 12 X 18



Fig. 7. "Eos" Intaglio 17 X 23



Fig. 8. "Jack" Intaglio 24 X 36



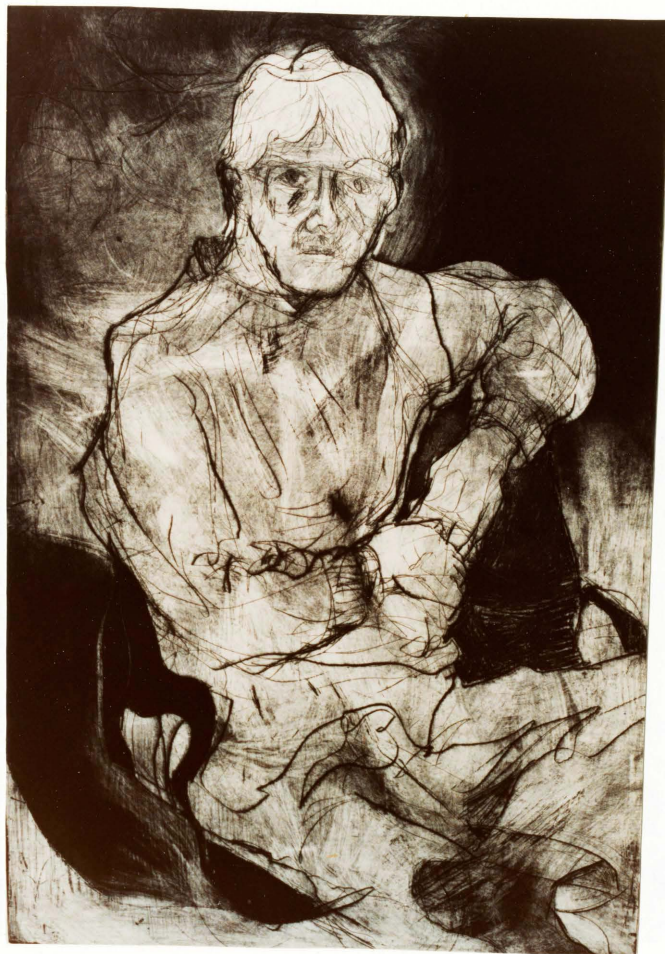


Fig. 9. "Jim" Intaglio 24 X 36





Fig. 10. "The Last Frontier". A pictorial Diary of Archer's Bar 49

Intaglios 96 X 48



Fig. 11. "Susan" Intaglio 9 X 11 1/2





Fig. 12. "Reclining Nude" Intaglio 9 X 11 1/2



Fig. 13. "Barb" Oil 60 X 48





Fig. 14. "Litho-Boy" Oil 60 X 48



Fig. 15. "Self-Portrait" Oil 65 X 48

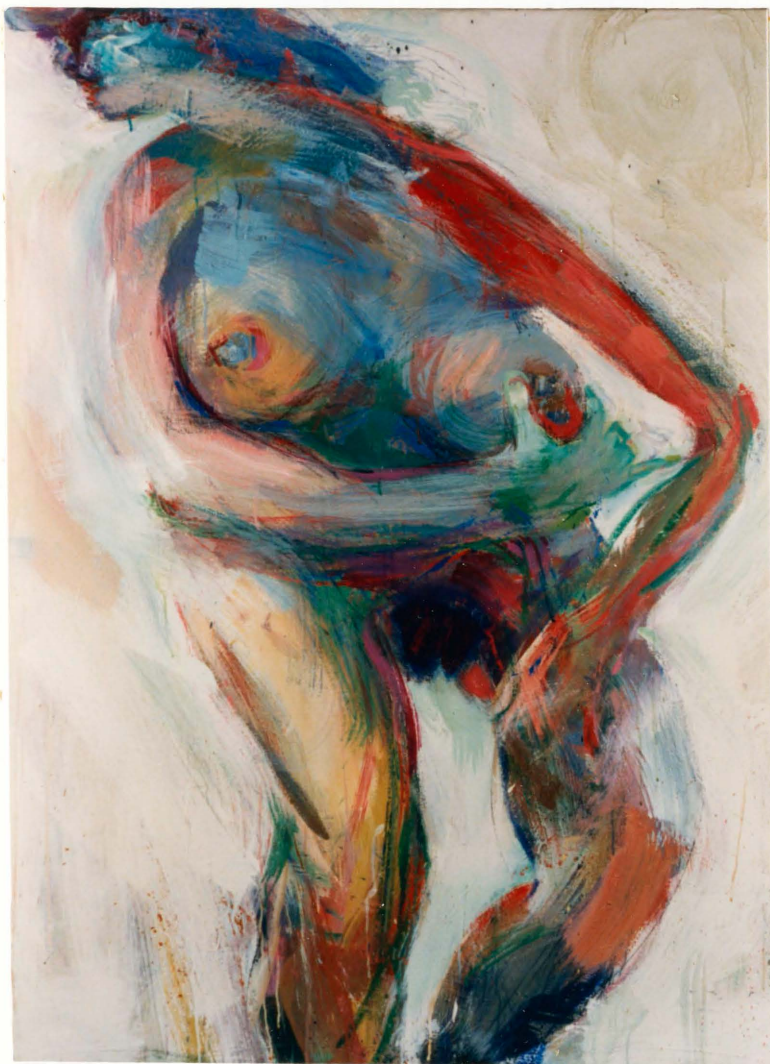


Fig. 16. "Female" Acrylic 50 X 38





Fig. 17. "Peter" Oil 58 X 48