

THESIS

AMPLIFICATION OF INTIMATE IMPRESSIONS
OF NATURE THROUGH THE FLOWER

Submitted by

Alice Kurtz Vogt

Department of Art

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts
Colorado State University
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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION
BY ALICE KURTZ VOGT
ENTITLED AMPLIFICATION OF INTIMATE IMPRESSIONS
OF NATURE THROUGH THE FLOWER
BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS.

Committee on Graduate Work

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C O L O R A D O S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

AMPLIFICATION OF INTIMATE IMPRESSIONS

OF NATURE THROUGH THE FLOWER

There is a line of continuity in nature. This continuity is made up of cadence, a rise and fall of intensity, and rhythm, a certain relativity of proportion. I am using cadence and rhythm as concepts, and by applying the abstraction of nature to them, the basis for my personal statement in painting is formed.

The flower is my chosen image. Its life is short, it is delicate and it suggests animated form. By magnifying the flower and using it as the skeletal framework, the elements of form, line and color portray its exclusive spirit.

The essence of the spirit is defined as it is placed in two dimensional compositional space by form that is surrounded by interchangeable depth.

Alice Kurtz Vogt
Department of Art
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523
Spring, 1979

Through amplification, the visual skeletal structure of the flower has unfolded and arrived for me at a new elevation. This elevation is the anima, the soul, the spirit of this natural form.

The flower as a source of inspiration exposes both my direct impression of exterior nature and a spontaneous expression of my inner character. This expression has manifested itself slowly through a gradual maturation that will be disclosed throughout this thesis. Through this inspiration, I have been concerned with developing a spiritual movement within my paintings. There are key elements that make up this spiritual movement, and I believe them to be form, color, line and a musical threadwork. Abstractly speaking, this musical threadwork is the interlacing constituent. I am not approaching these things from an academic sense but rather from a personal involvement that has called for an exaggeration of these elements.

There is a mutual influence of form as defined by shape and color as defined by value. They are dependent on each other for a harmonious balance. It is my feeling that the richness of color enhances the exquisiteness of form and animates nature. The arrangement of the forms in conjunction with the color can create a guise that is jewel-like. The flower is a fragile form, a jewel in itself. Its life is short; perhaps there is almost a reverence for it. It bespeaks a spirit of form.

There is a cadence in nature, the rise and fall of intensity in color and form. There is a rhythm in nature, a certain relativity of

proportion of the elements. This is created by the intermingling flow of negative and positive space and by the ever woven thatching of light and dark. It is my belief that because of the flexibility and resilience of paint, its own rhythm is adopted from this cadence presented in nature. These rhythmic qualities are undulating, they have active and inactive areas, and they can make for a melodic composition. Line liquifies in striated form over the surface; color becomes lucid as it solidifies the form making it limp or taut as if it were stretched. The musical threadwork unfolds as these elements intermingle together.

These fundamental parts become whole as they interplay on the surface creating interchanges in depth and space. Divorcing and distinguishing planes is not of concern; it is by the collision of form, line and color and the biomorphic abstraction of the subject that the results are symphonic, organic and sometimes dramatic.

I have been working with three types of paint, oil, enamel and water color. Briefly, I will discuss the technical aspects of these mediums. The oil and watercolor paintings are approached in a traditional way. The flexibility, maneuverability and richness of oil have always been appealing characteristics to me. By using damar varnish, linseed oil and turpentine together, these characteristics are enhanced.

Through the use of watercolor spontaneous and fresh effects are achieved by contrasting opaque and transparent surfaces.

Enamel is a relatively new medium for me. I have used strathmore three-ply paper unstretched, rectified turpentine as a solvent, and

the paint is applied with various sized brushes. Because I wanted to work small, and wanted a glossy, just-painted effect, the enamels seemed to fulfill that urge. They respond with alacrity, the paint dries fast, it lends itself to opacities and transparencies, and the color saturates the surface in a very tactile way.

The luscious qualities of oil, enamel and watercolor accommodate the delicacy and elegance of the flower and help to magnify its skeletal framework.

Specific choice of the flower image came about from an extensive involvement with organic form. Previous to the flower, I worked within a garden type format; with patterns that intruded upon each other. Space and depth were interchangeable and completely active. Small forms were juxtaposed through subtle or abrupt changes in color. The exploration of color was consequential because it was used as a catalyst to pronounce the idea of contrast. I was silencing one color by another and it was an attempt to explore legitimate and illegitimate color, or oddities and commodities of color combinations. It was an exhausting of elements. (See Garden Painting, Fig. 1.)

The first significant change occurred with the Brussel Sprout Painting (Fig. 2). This painting was a beginning of a sorting out of objectives. It represents a monumental formalized structure that gives attention to an obvious central force emerging on the canvas. Small forms are still juxtaposed but vacant reverberation is presented by the open space. This was a step toward approaching delegated space in a different way. Instead of filling space, it was an emptying of space. Using my eye as a scope to select focal strengths seemed to be the way to economize my statement.

This investigation began by abstracting the flower form and making it co-existent with another flower form (Nine Point Flower Study Drawing, Fig. 3). This drawing is a direct investigation of concept. It is the initial, elementary beginning as it is also a nine point rearrangement of composition. It is a filling of space but by the emptying of small excess forms.

The Iris Drawing (Fig. 4) depicts an enlarged rendition of the simple concept in the Nine Point Drawing. Dissection and magnification of the skeletal form show a new way of working with ascribed space; space that surrounds the drawn areas becomes both a resting and a reverberating ground to absorb and speak of the iris form.

Through drawing, be it extensive or gestural sketches, I have set the introductory initial stage for the unfolding of the painted flower images. Drawing has provided a way to propose and answer questions and to select objectives. Drawing and painting are equally viable and important in my work, I have been striving to amalgamate them as essential and workable components. Drawings are in this exhibition to emphasize the necessity of drawing in my work.

Together with sketches, photographs that I have taken capture selected compositions and secure the presence of the flower's image. They are used simply for the foundational genesis of the paintings. The paintings suggest their requisites as their evolutions are exposed. Photographs and sketches are used as sustenance for thought. They suggest ways of interplaying on the surface to create exchanges in depth and space.

Unfolding Iris (Fig. 8) is significant because it suggests what the iris can become. It is perhaps a revelation; it presents an

insight into the nature, the root and the soul of its construction. It transcends the representational form of the flower and through the paint and its outstretched form it unfolds its spirit into defined space with a changing depth.

Dead Orchid on the Table (Fig. 16) is a form resting and alone in designated space. There is an allusion to mood because of its isolation. Open and vacant space give attention to the singularity of the orchid's placement.

The enamels and the water colors are consequential in that they allow for intimate inspection of impressions of these flower forms that are exemplified through nature. Due to the smaller size in which I was working, they show a simple direct interpretation, the paint is flatter, line becomes more striated and expressive of the form.

The influence of Dead Orchid on the Table on Dying Orchid (Fig. 24) is evident although space is delineated differently. Dying Orchid also makes apparent the influence of the enamels and the water colors. There is a simplicity and a gestural movement in the direct placement of its form that extends in open space.

Each painting is an entity in itself. It arrives at its independent existence because decisions are made according to needs suggested by interrelated instincts at work for the sake of their expression. Even though each painting "speaks" for itself, there is still a point of junction that makes one painting contingent with the next. I am aware that I am stating a paradox.

The last six paintings (Figs. 37-42) reveal a more obvious conjugation. They are an active expression of my view of a specific life form, that is, the orchid. Even though I had finished two orchid

paintings previous to these, the last six seem to adopt a character of their own. I believe this is due to the fact that the orchids are more unusual in their species. Exotic in its figuration, the orchid to me speaks of an elevation of elegance and fabricates its own musical framework. It is a distinct, graceful and sensual form with a sublime rhythm that is all its own, it embroiders itself with delicate, rich color and the line contouring its form makes it a flourishing ornament. Through the tactile qualities of oil paint, form, line and color resurrect and once again suggest a new feeling, a new sensation. Form begins to speak of weight and undulating organic shape. Color shocks and sounds itself when it verges with other contrasting colors. The contours of shapes contain the fluidity of color, line mingles surfaces together and sharply separates them at the same time. Direction is concisely stated by the movement of the forces.

These paintings are an accurate visual impression of my feelings of the spirit, the essence of, and the animation in nature. The components synthesize and the elemental parts become the whole.

Nature is the sum total of forces at work throughout the universe. I have selected a fraction of one of these forces and by dissecting and investigating the subtle interrelationships of form, line, and color within that force, I have arrived at my own personal statement. It has been a matter of training my spirit as well as my visual perception.

Fig. 1. Garden. Oil paint on canvas. 48 x 36 inches.



Fig. 2. Brussel Sprout. Oil paint on canvas.
44 3/4 x 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches.



Fig. 3. Nine Point Flower Study. Crayon on paper. 17 x 19 inches.



Fig. 4. Iris Drawing. Crayon and watercolor paint on paper. 17 x 23 inches.



Fig. 5. Sketches. Pencil and crayon on paper. 12 x 24 inches.



Fig. 6. Sketches. Pencil and marker on paper. 12 x 24 inches.

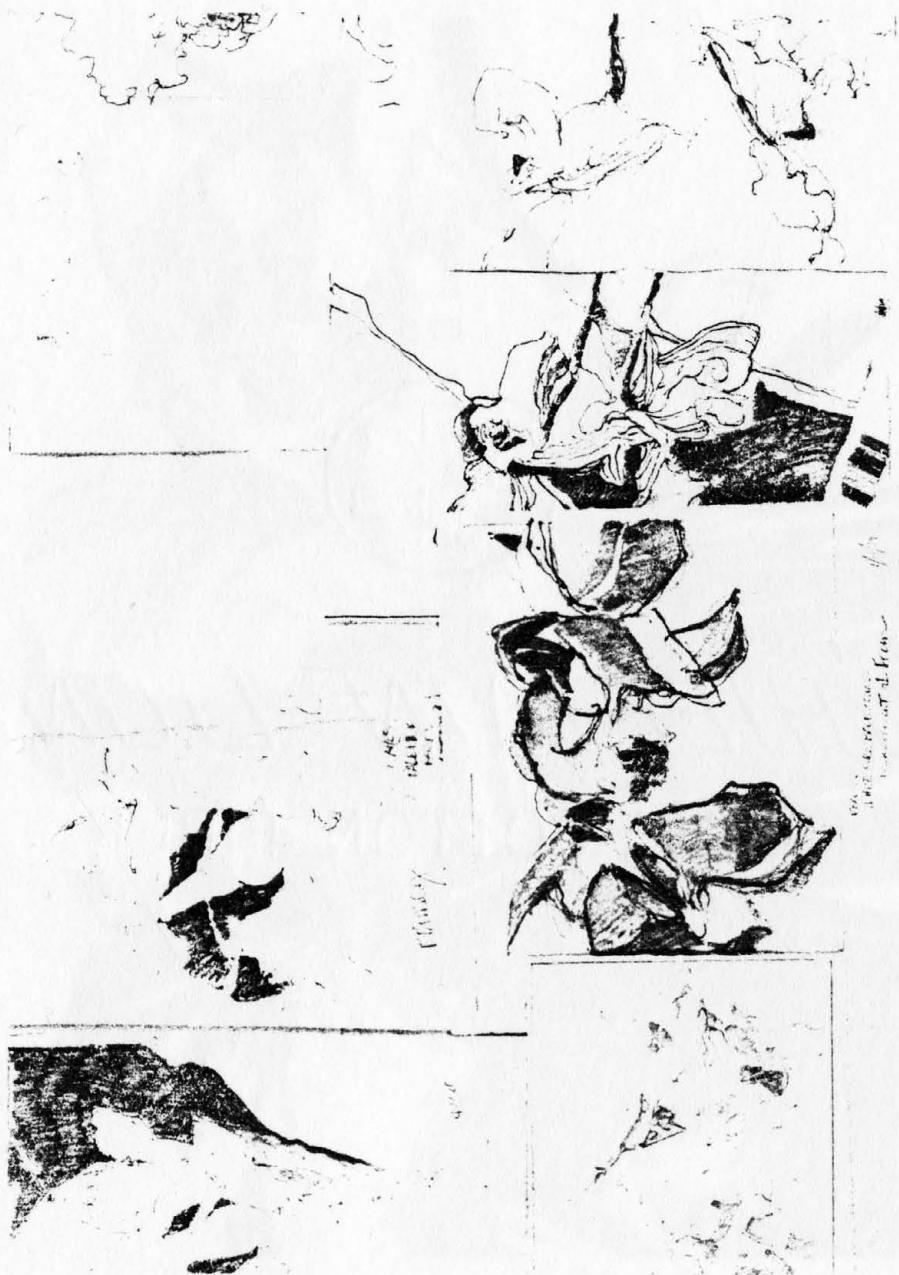


Fig. 7. Irises. Oil paint on canvas. 50 3/4 x 38 inches.



Fig. 8. Unfolding Iris. Oil paint on canvas. 38 x 65 inches.



Fig. 9. Dying Orchid. Watercolor paint on paper.
8 x 10 3/8 inches.



Fig. 10. Two Blue Flowers. Watercolor paint on paper.
7 5/8 x 10 7/8 inches.

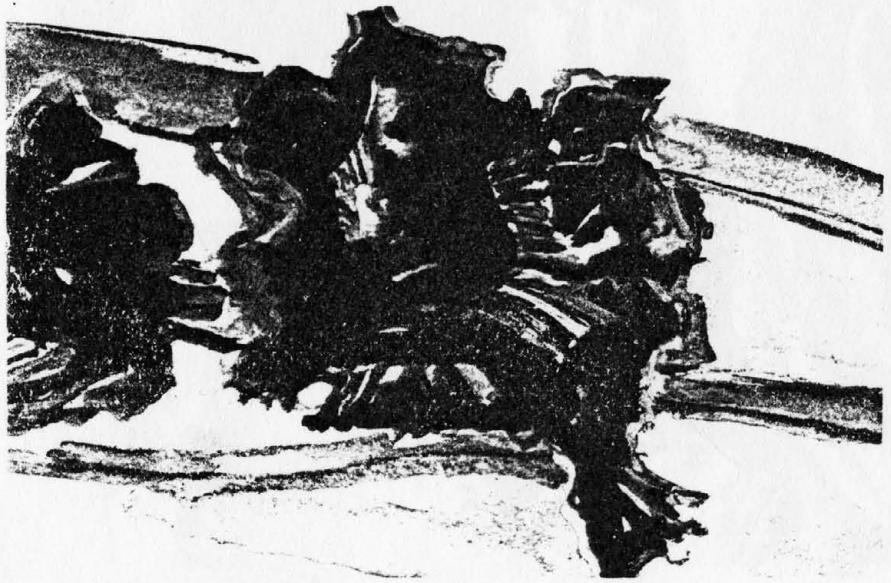


Fig. 11. Two Blue Flowers. Oil paint on canvas. 34 x 52 inches.





Fig. 12. Orchid. Watercolor paint on paper. $8\frac{1}{4} \times 13$ inches.



Fig. 13. Six Years Ago Today 11/1/78. Watercolor paint on
paper. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ inches.



Fig. 14. Garden Close-Up. Watercolor paint on paper.
 $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{4}$ inches.



Fig. 15. Two White Flowers. Oil paint on canvas. $44\frac{1}{2} \times 34$ inches.



Fig. 16. Dead Orchid on the Table. Oil paint on canvas.
22 3/4 x 44 inches.



Fig. 17. Dying Orchid. Enamel paint on paper. 10 x 7 7/8 inches.



Fig. 18. Arrangement. Enamel paint on paper. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10$ inches.



Fig. 19. Unfolding Iris. Enamel paint on paper.
7 x 11 3/4 inches.



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Fig. 20. Iris. Enamel paint on paper. 6 3/4 x 9½ inches.



Fig. 21. Two White Flowers. Enamel paint on paper. 14 3/4 x 11 3/4 inches.



Fig. 22. Hundertwasser Blue. Enamel paint on paper.
 $7\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ inches.





Fig. 23. Gold Orchid. Enamel paint on paper.
10 x 13 3/4 inches.



Fig. 24. Dying Orchid. Oil paint on canvas. $47\frac{1}{4} \times 31\frac{1}{2}$ inches.



Fig. 25. Moth Orchids. Enamel paint on paper. 12 3/8 x 10 1/2 inches.



Fig. 26. Two White Orchids. Enamel Paint on paper. 11 3/4 x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches.





Fig. 27. Rosemary. Oil paint on canvas. 44 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 27 3/4 inches.



Fig. 28. Fuchsias. Oil paint on canvas. 34 x 46 inches.





Fig. 29. Paphio Pedellums. Enamel paint on paper. 10 3/4 x 9 inches.

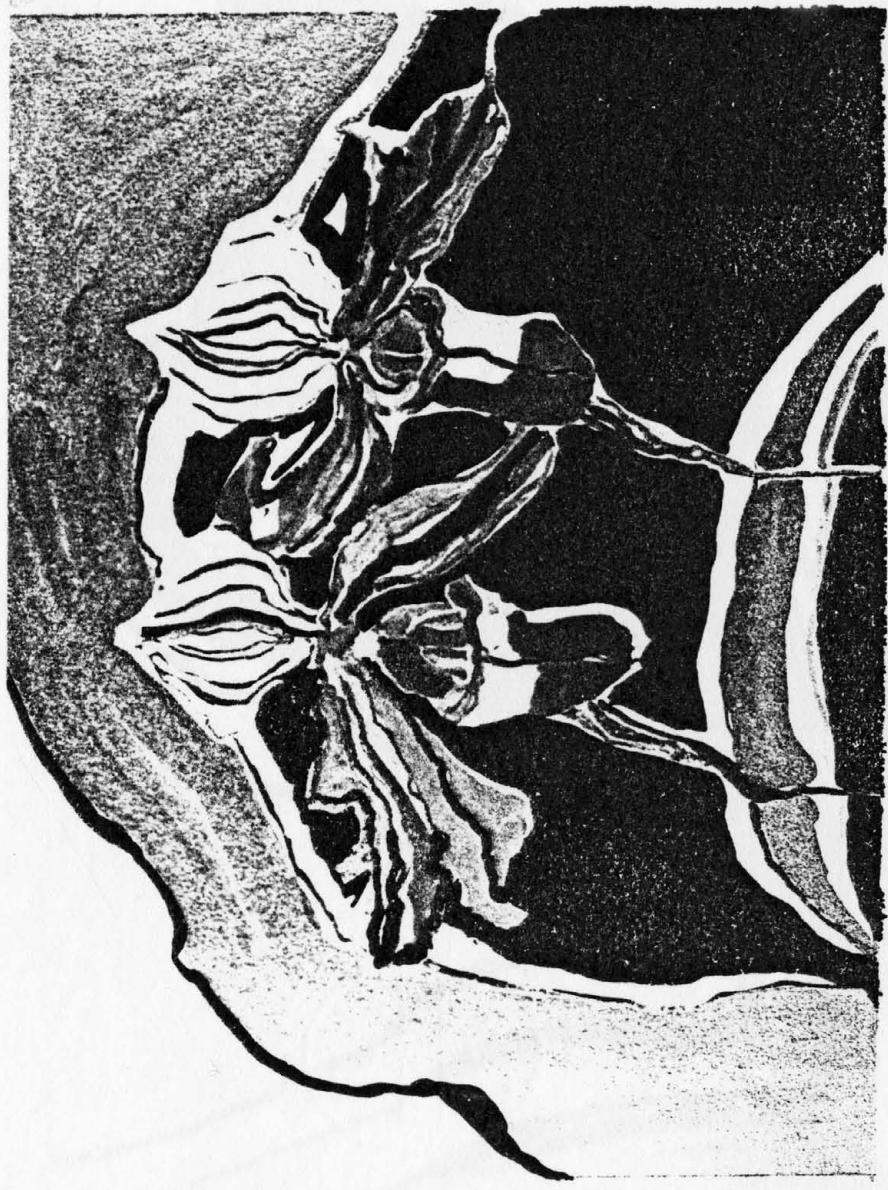


Fig. 30. Bending Orchids. Enamel paint on paper.
8 3/4 x 12 3/4 inches.





Fig. 31. Close-Up. Enamel paint on paper.
 $7\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$ inches.



Fig. 32. Quartet. Enamel paint on paper. $12\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$ inches.



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Fig. 33. Court Jesters. Enamel paint on paper,
5 3/4 x 12 3/4 inches.

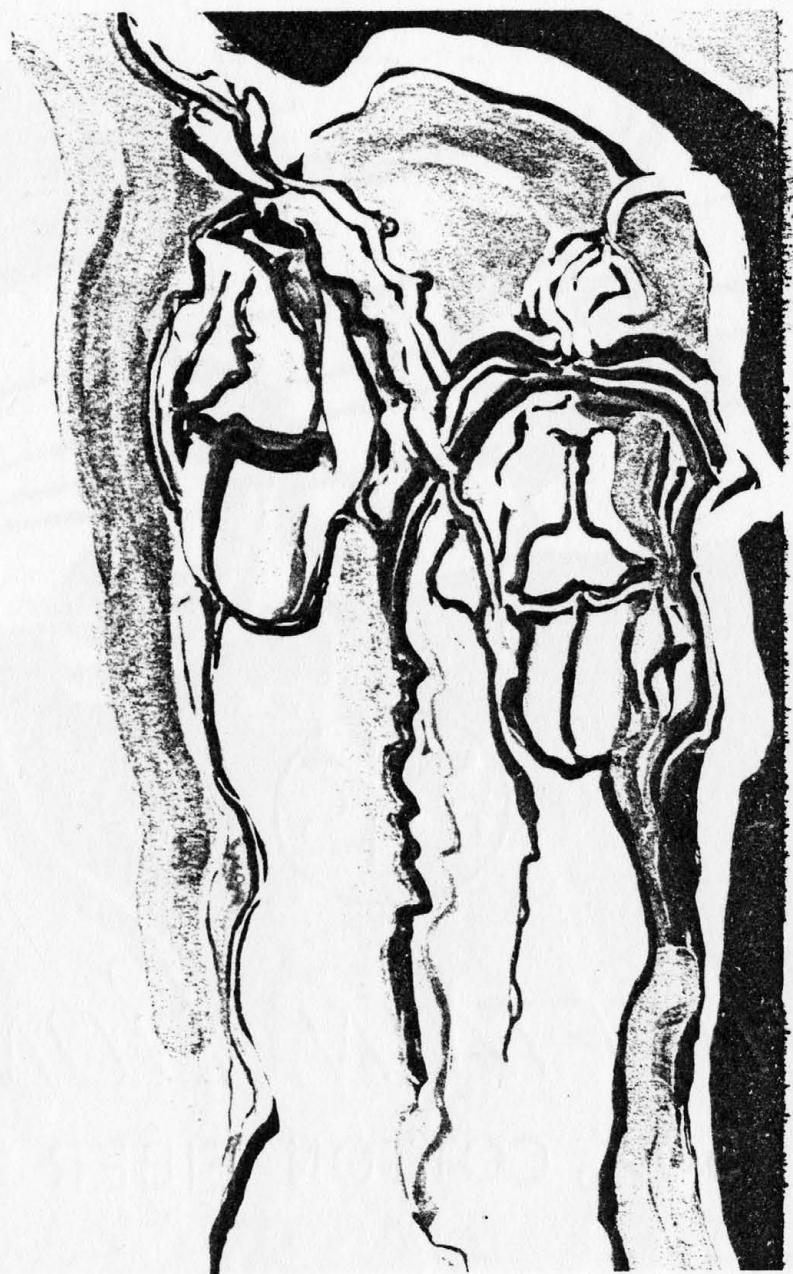


Fig. 34. Orchids Crossing. Enamel paint on paper.
8 3/4 x 11 3/4 inches.



Fig. 35. Cluster of Orchids. Enamel paint on paper.
 $7\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ inches.



Fig. 36. White Orchids. Enamel paint on paper. 8 3/4 x 10 3/4 inches.





Fig. 37. Single Orchid. Oil paint on canvas. $56\frac{1}{4}$ x $37\frac{3}{4}$ inches.



Fig. 38. Moth Orchids. Oil paint on canvas. 50 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 34 inches.



Fig. 39. Court Jesters. Oil paint on canvas. 56 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 33 inches.



Fig. 40. Two Orchids. Oil paint on canvas. 35 x 48 inches.



Fig. 41. Orchids Entering. Oil paint on canvas.
35 x 51 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches.



Fig. 42. Orchids Crossing. Oil paint on canvas.
 $33\frac{1}{4} \times 56\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

