



Avian : Of or Pertaining to Birds
by Kerry Corcoran Brelsford

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
Montana State University

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Abstract:

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**MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana**

December 1997

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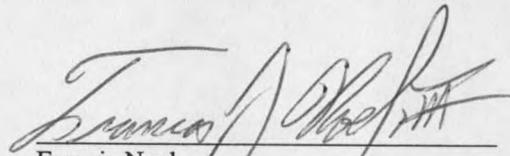
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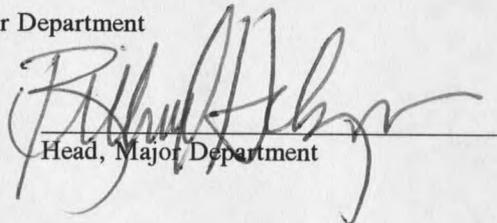
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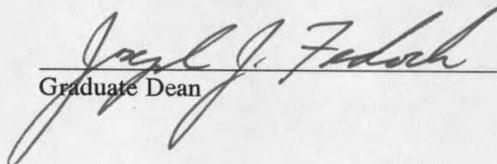
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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

The autographic directness of black and white lithography allows me to express my ideas of avian energy and motion in the freest form possible. My earlier magpie prints were more representational and the birds had fewer human-like elements, my later works adapted more expressive qualities and the magpies began to develop different identities.

Some prints have an apparent fullness while others are spindly and have an empty, boney quality. In certain compositions I contrast the physical bird with an image of semi-chaotic, unbridled energy expressed through spinning lines. These lines also allude to air waves and motions of flight. I try to create a sense of pushing and pulling or give and take between energy and biomechanical forces. My goal is to create a visual dialogue in which the birds appear to be moving in separate directions yet there is an overall sense of oneness or unity.

There are components of uneasiness and tension present since some birds appear to be trapped or wound up. My images often refer to certain traditional magpie myths with two or more birds forming an emblem or symbol. The myths associated with magpies usually present these birds in a negative context. They are often bad omens. (I believe these myths reflect our own insecurities as humans.) In English folklore if a magpie taps at a window this is to be taken as a death threat. In the bible, the magpie refused to walk through Noah's arc and instead chose to perch on the roof and jabber at

the drowning world. Lewis and Clark thought them interesting enough to send four live magpies from Montana back to President Thomas Jefferson.

I find it intriguing that magpies seem to choose to live close to humans. Magpies do live in colonies and often build false nests to deceive their enemies. In my work I symbolize the confusion regarding the magpie with a whirling tornado, in which emotions, ideas, myths and reality all brew together.

When I draw these birds on the printing surface, I try to establish a balance between the representational and the nonrepresentational expressive elements of the magpie. There is usually a sense of some undermining energy trying to flip or overturn these birds. These forces can either create havoc or uplift for flying.

In the final analysis I suppose I am expressing my admiration of winged creatures in general and their amazingly athletic feat of flying.

LIST OF SLIDES

1. "Suspension," 22" x 30", lithography.
2. "Locomotion," 41.5" x 37.5", lithography.
3. "No. 1, Sorrow," 41.5" x 37.5", lithography.
4. "No. 2, Mirth," 41.5" x 37.5", lithography.
5. "No. 4, Birth," 41.5" x 37.5", lithography.
6. "Seven Magpies," 22" x 30", lithography.
7. "Magpie and Dog," 22" x 30", lithography.
8. "Magpie Curve," 22" x 30", lithography.
9. "Magpie in Compost." 22" x 30", lithography.
10. "Buoyancy," 22" x 30", lithography.
11. "Uplift, Downstroke - Continuum," part of series of five, 22" x 30", monoprint.
12. "Uplift, Downstroke - Continuum," part of series of five, 22" x 30", monoprint.
13. Installation view.
14. Installation view.
15. Installation view.

8



'MAGPIE CURVE'
CORCORAN, '97 - LITHO

7



'MAGPIE AND DOG'
CORCORAN, '97 - LITHO

9



'MAGPIE IN COMPOST'
CORCORAN, '97 - LITHO

6



'SEVEN MAGPIES'
CORCORAN, '97 LITHO

11



'UPLIFT, DOWNSTROKE'
CORCORAN, '97
MONOPRINT

12



'UPLIFT, DOWNSTROKE'
CORCORAN, '97
MONO
PRINT

10



CORCORAN
'SUSPENSION' '97

4



'NO. 2, MIRTH'
CORCORAN, '97
LITHO

5



NO. 4, BIRTH
CORCORAN, '97
LITHO

2



'LOCOMOTION' - LITHO
CORCORAN, '97

3



'NO. 1, SORROW'
CORCORAN, '97
LITHO

10



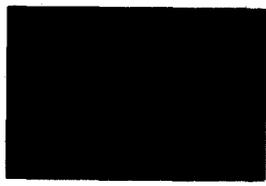
CORCORAN
'BOUYANCY', '97

13



CORCORAN
THESIS / IN GALLERY

14



CORCORAN
THESIS / IN GALLERY

15



CORCORAN
THESIS / IN GALLERY



