



Organization [slide]
by Lisa Rachel Cooperman

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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of

Master of Fine Arts

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

April 1996

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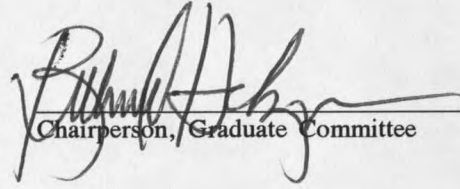
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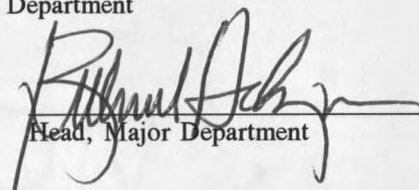
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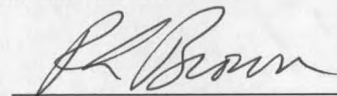
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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

But what need I thus My well known body to anatomize?

II Henry IV

This show is about my recurring emotional experiences like joy, dread and frustrations, which elicit responses in the body. Using anatomy as the organizing structure, I link the body's physical responses to mechanical activities like hammering, cutting and scooping. The sculptural elements represent the physical response to emotional experiences; the paintings help locate that response. Shapes of organs, bones and internal systems intersect with the physical world of iron, silver and beeswax to create a composite anatomy.

Because emotion doesn't have a specific location in the body the way digestion or respiration does, I assign it location using x-rays and anatomical illustrations as reference materials. I select anatomic shapes based on their formal suitability to represent emotional experience. In particular I am drawn to container and joint forms: the container form expresses the body's metaphoric ability to hold, collect, and store emotions; the joint form represents its ability to connect with and repeat emotion. The joint and container forms, linked with shapes that evoke utensils, tools, and musical instruments, become the formal vocabulary for representing emotional experience.

The sculptures make reference to the language of hand held objects; although not utilitarian some have handles and move. *Eyeball* for example was inspired by an illustration of the optic nerves; criss-crossing in the brain they look like scissors to me. It is a combination of the feeling of isolation with the activity of being cut off. It is built of an insubstantial container and a rusty jointed scissors handle. The intimate scale invites the

viewer to look closely and speculate on how the object might work.

The paintings are diagrams of sites in the emotional body. They are inspired by a series of dreams I had after returning from work at an archaeology field camp. Employing a process of layering and abrading, their construction evokes archaeological excavation and discovery. Imagistically more recognizable than the sculpture, the paintings serve to locate the viewer. By imbalancing the relationship of positive and negative space I mirror the struggle for balance in emotional experiences. *Ribcage* is an example of a positive space, the container, attempting to control a threatening negative space.

My aesthetic is inspired by the contrast of industrial surplus with unique fabricated elements. I begin with found objects that refer to machine or tool parts. I then fabricate original elements that complement the industrial objects. I like to balance dense with delicate textures, opaque with translucent surfaces, and inert with mobile mechanics. When combined, these disparities create tension and intrigue. I employ simple connections, rivets, strung washers, and wrapped parts, to allow the primary elements, materials and enigmatic forms, to take precedence. Similarly, I use materials, sawdust, string and wax rather than illusionistic rendering, to create volume in the images in the paintings. The hairy, rough and bumpy texture invites the same kind of close inspection the sculpture does. Both metal and wax evoke qualities of the body for me. Metal is simultaneously plastic and structural. It is the mineral representation of our composition. Wax is also malleable. It evokes the sweet and viscous fluids of the body.

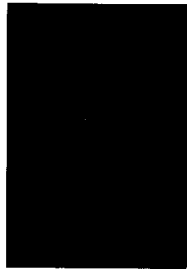
I am not interested in evoking specific emotions in viewers but rather in calling attention to the activities of emotional experience. I draw from anatomy in order to explore the "well known body" and discover in it new enigmas and relationships. It is up to viewers to observe their own systems of emotion.

LIST OF SLIDES

1. Installation: North & East Walls
2. "Breast," iron, copper, brass, silver, beeswax, 12 x 3 x 3", 1996
3. "Limbic 1," iron, copper, 6 x 2 ½ x 3", 1996
4. "Limbic 2," iron, copper, 9 x 1 x 1", 1996
5. "Uterus," copper, bronze, 9 x 9 x ½", 1995
6. "Testicle," iron, copper, brass, bronze, silver, 7 x 7 x 2 ½", 1995
7. "Liver," iron, brass, copper, 6 x 7 x 6", 1995
8. "Heart," iron, silver, copper, brass, 14 x 9 x 1", 1996
9. "Nostrils," 6 ½ x 2 x 1", 1995
10. "Appendix," copper, bronze, nickel, iron, 10 x 3 x 3", 1995
11. "Eyeball," copper, paper, beeswax, 9 x 9 x 3", 1996
12. "Kidneys," iron, bronze, brass, 9 x 7 x 2", 1995
13. Installation: West Wall
14. Detail: "Spine," iron, copper, bronze, cotton, wax, citrine, 62", 1996
15. Installation: South Walls
16. "Sleeping Spine," encaustic, sawdust on wood, 43 x 36", 1995
17. Installation: North and East Walls
18. "Vertebra 2," steel, copper, wax, 18 x 18 x 2 ½", 1996
19. "Belly and Half Rib," steel, copper, paper, cotton, wax, 1996
Belly: 22 x 22 x 19"
Half Rib: 29 x 11 x 4"
20. "Half Rib," steel, copper, cotton, wax, 29 x 11 x 4", 1996



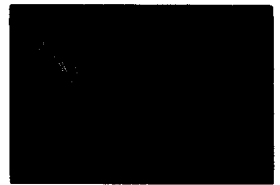
Installation: North & East Walls, 1996



Breast, 1996
iron, copper, brass, silver, beeswax
12 x 3 x 3"



Limbic 1, 1996
iron, copper
6 x 2 1/2 x 3"



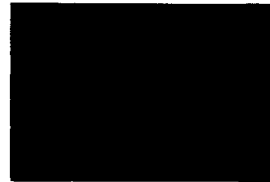
Limbic 2, 1996
iron, copper
9 x 1 x 1"



Eyeball, 1996
copper, paper, beeswax
9 x 9 x 3"



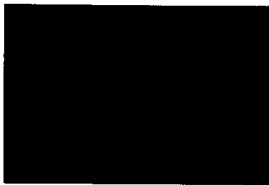
Testicle, 1995
iron, copper, brass, bronze, silver
7 x 7 x 2 1/2"



Liver, 1995
iron, brass, copper
6 x 7 x 6"



Heart, 1996
iron, silver, copper, brass
14 x 9 x 1"



Nostrils, 1995
6 1/2 x 2 x 1"



Detail: Spine, 1996
iron, copper, bronze, cotton, wax, cinne
62"



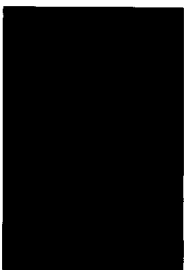
Appendix, 1995
copper, bronze, nickel, iron
10 x 3 x 3"



Kidneys, 1995
iron, bronze, brass
9 x 7 x 2"



Installation: West Wall, 1996



Installation: South Walls, 1996



Sleeping Spine, 1995
encaustic, sawdust on wood
43 x 36"



Installation: North & East Walls, 1996



Vertebra 2, 1996
steel, copper, wax
18 x 18 x 2 1/2"



Belly & Half Rib, 1996
steel, copper, paper, cotton, wax
Belly: 22 x 22 x 1 1/2"
Half Rib: 29 x 11 x 4"



Half Rib, 1996
steel, copper, cotton, wax
29 x 11 x 4"



























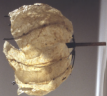




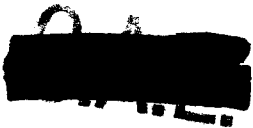












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