



Swim or fly  
by Theresa Welty

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:

Propelling myself through water, or wind, I must consider the resistance against me. 'Swim or Fly' has evolved from my continued fascination with the movement of other animals. I have combined an animal known for its land speed with appendages from a sea creature. I chose the greyhound and the humpback whale because of their efficiency in design for movement. The greyhound is simultaneously a docile and humble animal, but in contrast, it is also associated with speed, grace, and agility. The humpback whale also shares a reputation for being gentle and non-threatening however, its size in relation to our own is very intimidating.

The humpback whale fins, being very wing-like, also imply air travel. The dorsal fins, in union with the greyhounds' bodies, creates a fanciful situation in which the dogs must meet with a unique and unlikely circumstance. It appears that they have the option to either swim or fly.

Initially, the absence of the greyhound leg may not be noticed by the viewer. Although the dogs are impaired, they are still larger than life, strong and independent. It is my intention that the viewer may either chose to marvel at the dogs' resiliency and stamina, or to dwell on their disabilities. The three-legged hounds, now lacking the physical ability to run, must adjust to this new situation. The prosthetic limbs may seem to be either a burden or an aid - an awkward substitute, or an elegant addition.

One may distance themselves from the animals through pity, or feel connected to them through compassion. The appendages are what the animal has gained, in opposition to its disfigurement. How the animal has adjusted; how resourceful or inventive it becomes in order to move in a different way, determines its success.

In addition to this work being humorous and light, my goal is to also celebrate the diversity that surrounds us, and to realize the respect and compassion that we owe to other life forms. In reality, the quality of life for these two animals has changed dramatically, in an environment not separate from our own. How well equipped are we to meet our own created or unexpected situations effectively?

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Fine Arts

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Bozeman, Montana

April 2001

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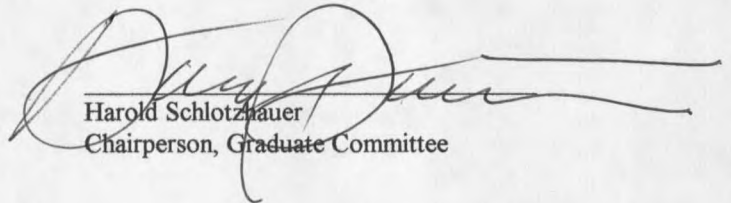
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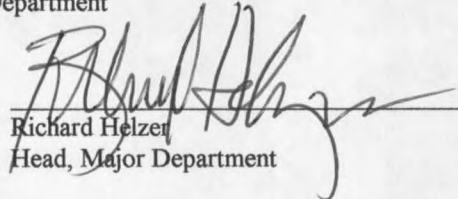
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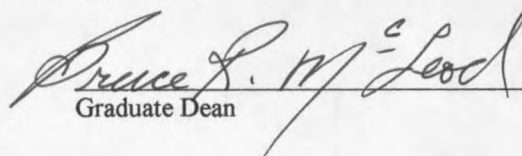
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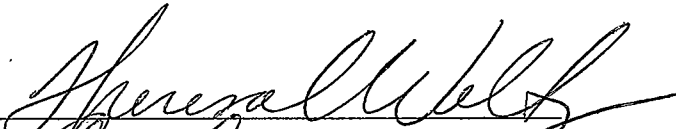
  
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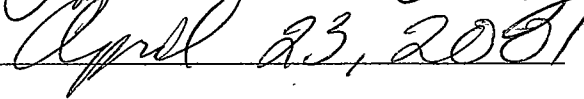
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## LIST OF SLIDES

1. Gallery installation view.
2. Gallery installation view.
3. Gallery installation view.
4. Gallery installation view.
5. Detail of *Bertha*, *Bondo*, and *Mantilla*.
6. Detail of *Bondo*, 17' x 8' x 3'.
7. Detail of *Mantilla*, 18' x 6' x 3' 10".
8. Detail of *Flamingo*, 16' x 8' x 4' 2".
9. Detail of *Bella*, 19' x 12' x 3' 2".
10. Detail of *Willa*, 14' x 20' x 3' 8".
11. Detail of *Mona*, 44" x 10" x 4' 2".

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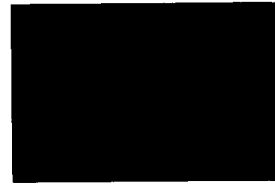
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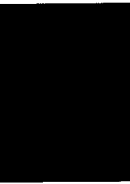
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Gallery installation view



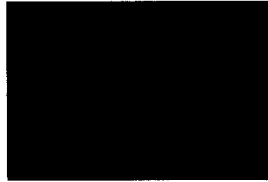
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Gallery installation view



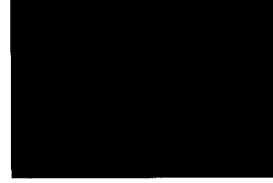
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Gallery installation view



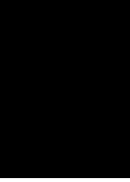
THERESA WELTY 2001  
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THERESA WELTY 2001  
Bertha, Bondo and Mantilla detail



THERESA WELTY 2001  
Bondo detail



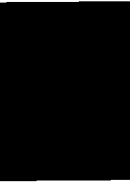
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Mantilla 22'8" x 6' x 3' 10"  
detail 2001



THERESA WELTY 2001  
Flamingo 25'6" x 8' x 4' 2"  
detail 2001



THERESA WELTY 2001  
Bella detail



THERESA WELTY 2001  
Willa 31'4" x 20' x 3' 8"  
detail 2001



THERESA WELTY 2001  
More 36'4" x 10" x 4' 2"  
detail 2001

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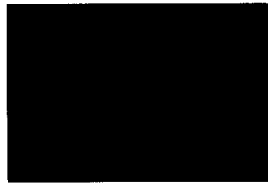
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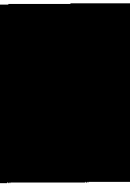
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THERESA WELTY 2001  
Gallery installation view



THERESA WELTY 2001  
Gallery installation view



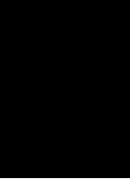
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Gallery installation view



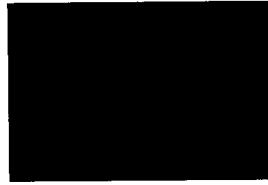
THERESA WELTY 2001  
Bertha, Bondo and Mantilla.  
detail



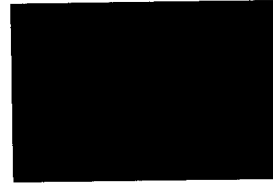
THERESA WELTY 2001  
Bondo  
detail



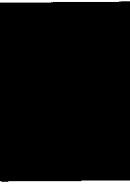
THERESA WELTY 2001  
Mantilla 22'8" x 6' x 3' 10"  
detail 2001



THERESA WELTY 2001  
Flamingo 25'6" x 8' x 4' 2"  
detail 2001



THERESA WELTY 2001  
Bella  
detail



THERESA WELTY 2001  
Willa 31'4" x 20' x 3' 8"  
detail 2001



THERESA WELTY 2001  
Mora 33'4" x 10" x 4' 2"  
detail 2001























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