



Twist and Mess  
by Marianne Isabelle Filloux

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

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APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Marianne Isabelle Filloux

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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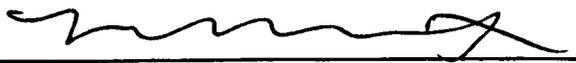
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## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

"Art and nature are siblings, branches of the one tree; and nowhere more than in the continuing inexplicability of many of their processes, and above all those of creation and of effect on their respective audiences."

-John Fowles

"Where ever there is life there is twist and mess."

-Annie Dillard

Nature continually surprises me. In natural processes I observe a brutal independence which I can only admire. I also observe an extravagance of form and mass, which suggests a richness and fierce beauty expressed in life, decay, and immensity. My involvement in the creative act is an effort to grasp at the exuberance which grew this profuse tangle.

The infinitely tangled and intricate forests surrounding Bozeman, Montana are the inspiration for this series of paintings and lithographic prints. The forest suggests to me a particularly overt manifestation of nature's inconceivable density and abundance. In the forest one is submerged in a space which is measured in distances between trees and limited above one's head by a canopy of vegetation which encloses and alters light. This is a place where space is defined, almost limited, and yet endlessly open on all sides to relationships of complexity.

I feel that I hold within myself a deep and limitless forest-space which I can enter into through the creative act. In the most spontaneous moments of creation I can access a reckless and improbable energy which mimics, and connects me to , the processes of wild nature. In my paintings I encourage this interaction by working on long movable wood

panels which I can freely rearrange and join together while painting. Therefore I have the flexibility to allow the painting's configuration and design to evolve out of the painting process. I find possibilities emerging more fluidly from the accidental realignment of forms, textures and colors than from a fixed preconception.

In these paintings I have found it essential to create a two dimensional space which depicts the forest in a life-like scale. Landscape imagery which presents nature as miniaturized often depicts the natural world as diminutive and merely picturesque. I want to convey action within the forest. These paintings are the product of my "re"action to the forests' intimate and yet potentially dangerous interior. This reaction is dependent on my observation of nature as a force which exists in spite of my presence. The undercurrent of fear often felt in nature may have as much to do with feeling we are in a domain that ultimately falls out of our control, as it does with the undeniable physical dangers which occur in this territory.

Much of nature is characterized by an extravagant waste, a deadfall of excess. John Fowles said in his book The Tree, "It is the general uselessness of so much of nature that lies at the root of our ancient hostility and indifference to it." The truth that much of nature's filigree is essentially useless to us suggests to me the possibility of a pure existence, a poetry of form and details.

The series of lithographic prints entitled "Aberrations" refers to eccentric and improbable forms and details, which are easily over-looked and occur on all levels in nature. The "deviations" of nature occur with as much regularity as the multitudes of natural entities for which we have names. These so-call aberrations of nature are nameless and ultimately have no defined use. In these prints I have synthesized memories of anomalies I have observed in the forest into objects I could conceivably pick up and

hold in my hands. The swelling, twined, disfigured and scarred quality of these forms exist as a record of the generative and disintegrating power of natural processes.

In many ways the lithographic process itself has played a large role in the creation of this series of aberrations. I work directly on the stone without preparatory drawings. Since most marks drawn on the lithographic stone are difficult to alter, each addition directly determines the direction of the drawing process. My final image always results from a transformation of the original intent. Additionally, the chemical processing for printing will further change the image. As in the paintings, I have relied on these incidental changes to heighten the visual impact of this series of prints.

I am celebrating the fearfully beautiful biological mass, the twist and mess, of the world because, all around me, I see it being obsessively cleared away into isolated and "manageable" islands. This tidying-up of nature threatens to sweep away the awesome unpredictability and various orchestration which is inherent in nature. In the twist and mess can be discovered a map to human individuality, our essential naturalness and ultimately our potential for the miraculous.

## LIST OF SLIDES

1. "Aberration No. 1," lithograph, 30" x 22", 1993
2. "Aberration No. 2," lithograph, 30" x 22", 1993
3. "Aberration No. 3," lithograph, 30" x 22", 1994
4. "Aberration No. 4," lithograph, 30" x 22", 1994
5. "Aberration No. 5," lithograph, 30" x 22", 1994
6. "Aberration No. 6," lithograph, 30" x 22", 1994
7. "Aberration No. 7," lithograph, 30" x 22", 1994
8. "Twist and Mess," oil and paintstick on wood, 96" x 132", 1993
9. "X Marks the Spot," oil and paintstick on wood, 96" x 96", 1994
10. "Marguerite," oil and paintstick on wood, 96" x 72", 1994
11. "Deadfall," oil and paintstick on wood, 96" x 96", 1994







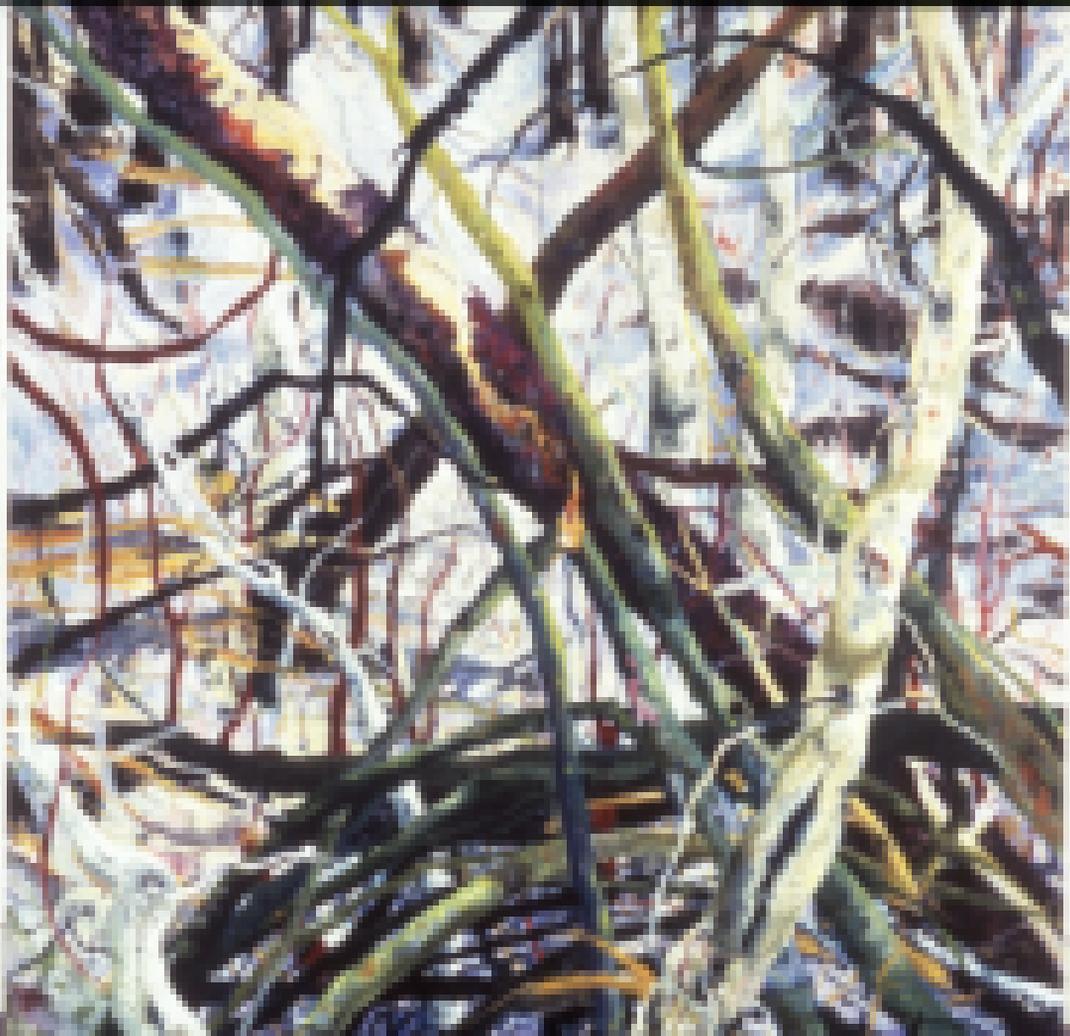
















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