



Doors, windows and other containers of thought [slide]  
by Timothy Scott Jaeger

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  
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December 1991

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APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Timothy Scott Jaeger

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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Date

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Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

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## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

By taking external information, internalizing it, and re-presenting it within an art language, my work attempts to derive new understanding and insight regarding culture and the self. The difficulties of this life process are analogous to entering a maze whose chambers contain hidden truths. Each chamber holds multiple doors distorting and disorienting one's choices in life. Metaphorically the maze represents culture with birth as its entrance and death as its exit. Each chamber is one's past and each door is the present as well as passage into the future (symbolizing a transformation of consciousness). Mastery within the maze (culture) consists of questioning its parameters to establish truth from illusion.

Through my eyes, present western industrial culture is a model resulting from centuries of religious, bureaucratic and patriarchal mutations. The dominant institutions, being broken down by geographical, economical, and ideological differences, follow a complex ongoing transition of power. One can learn about these institutions by looking at oneself, and inversely one can learn about the self by looking back at these institutions. As such, each individual becomes a building block of culture and is in part responsible for its evolution.

Defining my relationship to culture is fostered by maintaining an open dialogue in the art process between culture and myself. I take real objects from my environment to better develop a pictorial language about culture with the understanding that each article already has symbolic significance. This involves seeing objects (i.e., scrap metal, wood, chains,

stone, machinery, etc.) as signs that change meaning and purpose depending on the context in which they are presented. I modify or subvert these articles through an art language giving new significance to their former meanings. Conceptually, my reprocessing of these signs reflects a socio/political concern revolving around my feelings of estrangement and alienation as a result of our society's often destructive and suppressive agendas. My art process has become a regenerative act of dissolving my indifference to western industrial culture by realigning my responsibilities and beliefs.

For example, the piece "Real-germ Nation" addresses the current agricultural issue of rural vs. corporate farming. In this work, I present a standard house door with upper and lower window boxes. The upper box is half full of grain, metaphorically representing the small farm; the lower box is half full of motor oil representing the corporate farm. Within the grain box hangs a gas nozzle symbolizing corporate power seeking to douse the small farm, thus disabling it. Within the oil box is a wooden branch symbolizing the small farm's need for water that cannot be found.

The images assembled suggest the incompatibility of the outmoded small farm and the dehumanizing qualities of the corporate farm. Between the boxes is a stairway image representing a place of questioning: how does a society feed its people? The rural farm is too inefficient, but is compatible with nature; and industrial farming is efficient yet ecologically detrimental to our food chain and water resources. Without a complete restructuring of agriculture's function within global needs, what remains is the dilemma, starvation or contamination. "Real-germ Nation" is characteristic of other work in the show -- all containing recontextualized elements presenting contradicting ideas from which conclusions cannot be easily drawn.

This thesis exhibit uses five primary symbols: machines, stairways, mirrors, words and doors. These make up a visual language with each component functioning through form or metaphor to substantiate the ideas presented.

The machines function as a metaphor for power structures and systems of industrialized society and bring into question technological efficiency versus its environmental disruptiveness. The stairways function metaphorically as a place of questioning where a choice must eventually be made between contradicting ideas. Mirrors function to reflect the given space (i.e., a gallery) or an individual at a given place in time. In this way, the external world is constantly integrated with the art object so as to be a part of its ideas. Words function as ambiguous information that set up connections between the found object and the rest of the piece. These words are used randomly and sometimes have personal or cultural significance. The doors function as the pictorial container of my presented ideas. They are used, quite literally, because the door is a place of neutrality; it is located within a wall dividing two different spaces. Metaphorically, the door could be seen as the position of the self in a culture standing between one's future and one's past. Mythologically, the door is often a point of passage from one world to another and also a barrier denying entrance or departure from these worlds.

In my personal philosophy of art, I'm using visual expressions incorporating current cultural ideas and issues (the present) that are established by conclusions of former ideas (the past) and presented to form new ideas (the future). The completion of the aesthetic experience depends upon the artist's and viewer's ability to identify and personalize the given symbols and objects within my art work, leading to an increased awareness of society, culture and self.

## LIST OF SLIDES

1. der techno 6  
50" x 75"  
Mixed Media
2. Babylonian Accent (Dos Trinity Part II)  
78" x 90" x 96"  
Mixed Media
3. Dos Exploits  
26" x 70" x 78"  
Mixed Media
4. Post Production: Birth  
16" x 26" x 76"  
Mixed Media
5. Dos Trinity  
85" x 94"  
Mixed Media
6. Prophet Corporation Plant  
34" x 60" x 75"  
Mixed Media
7. New Atlanti II  
20" x 32"  
Mixed Media
8. Public Domaingo  
32" x 48" x 76"  
Mixed Media
9. Three Prisoners/Three Kings  
36" x 78" x 132"  
Mixed Media
10. Real-germ Nation  
32" x 76"  
Mixed Media

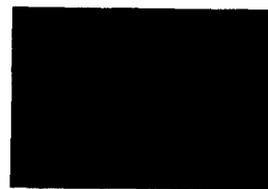
## LIST OF SLIDES (continued)

11. Aristocratic Hassles  
24" x 36" x 78"  
Mixed Media
12. Public Access  
26" x 26" x 32"  
Mixed Media
13. The Silent Document  
39" x 40" x 120"  
Mixed Media

2. Babylonian Accent (Dos Trinity Part II)  
78" x 90" x 96"  
Mixed Media



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Date:

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