



In honor of those who died while trying to fly [slide]
by Lucy Curtis

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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by

Lucy Curtis

**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

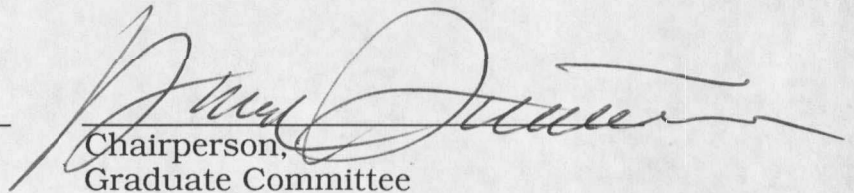
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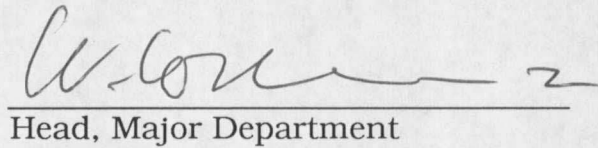
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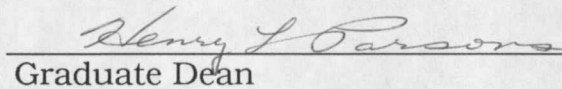
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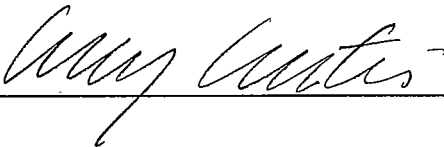

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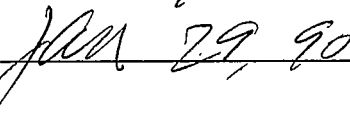
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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

When I was six I drew a crayon drawing of pioneers driving a wagon, won the first grade art contest and became a self-declared artist. The image of pioneers driving a wagon seems appropriate now as a beginning of my art career, because the people driving the wagon were drawn with a certain trust, naivete, and hope. I like to think I have not lost those qualities in approaching my work now. My folk artist grandparents and parents have greatly influenced my art, especially my father - who owned and ran a construction company - and my Grandmother Curtis - who made her own dolls.

In addition to these close influences, I am studying the Australian Aboriginal **Dreamings** - the name Australian Aborigines refer to for their ancestral beings, the various cosmic forces at hand, or the power-filled ground of existence. I am delighted at the Australian Aboriginal imagery and intrigued by the *way* of their art - in its both deeply symbolic and abstract expressions. I began by literally mimicking the Aboriginal style, particularly their method of dotting on paper or bark. As I worked through the constant repetitions and encouraged subconscious responses in the work, changes began to occur. I soon merged the pre-thesis pursuit of the dark "screamer" imagery and let the repetitions be my guide to subconscious manifestations that arose. I am always intrigued when new imagery appears that relates to my past life. Yet, with the aboriginal dreamings as influence, I am focusing more on the present and as a result I am seeing subconscious forces come out in the work that are richer and deeper in universal content.

There has been a response to the process of grieving. And the thesis has as its intent to honor those loved ones lost and to reaffirm their spirit.

An example of this emotional response is the painting and sculpture installation called **Black Rain**. The repetitive rectangles of hand-made paper are derivative of folk-art quilting. The black lines and simple atmospheric quality are from looking at oriental art's well-documented method of layering from back to front. Also of influence is the repetitive nature of Australian Aboriginal art. The sculptures on the floor are influenced by the direct approach of the closely linked folk and aboriginal arts, made of simple materials, and relate back to the paintings - which have become one painting and with the sculptures - one installation. **Black Rain** is made to evoke an emotional storm behind the work --the experience of grieving and the honoring of the past. The constant referral to past history has dominated my work and the tradition of a sculptor lives in me because I honor the dead. The ultimate hope of any public response is that the viewers not necessarily recall a specific person, but that they recall or experience part of the possibly rejuvenating power of this art.

The constancy and opportunity for sustained evolution in the work, as a result of this organic methodology, is important now. I attempt to title them as titles of poems because to me that is what they are - visual poems. **Black Rain, Blue Rain, and White Rain**, for example, are the titles of the three major repetitive combinations in the show making up one installation. They are so named so that the repetition will increase once again, emphasizing their similarities, their relationships - both visually and metaphorically. All of the works are, to me, like fragments of a conversation between myself, the Great Mystery, and the materials.

LIST OF SLIDES

1. Untitled
Ink and Acrylic
Banana paper
3'x5'
2. Untitled
Mixed Media
Bagasse paper
17"x30"
3. Untitled
Mixed Media
Bagasse paper
17"x30"
4. Untitled
Mixed Media
Bagasse paper
17"x30"
5. Untitled
Mixed Media
Indian tea paper
17"x30"
6. Untitled
Mixed Media
Indian tea paper
17"x30"
7. Untitled
Mixed Media
Indian tea paper
17"x30"
8. Untitled
Mixed Media
Indian tea paper
17"x30"
9. Untitled
Mixed Media
Indian straw paper
17"x30"

10. Mixed Media
Indian straw paper
4'x8'
11. Untitled
Acrylic on Bagasse paper
Wood stand with mixed media organic matter objects
painted with ink and acrylic
12. White Rain
Ink and Acrylic
Indian straw papers
8'x10'
13. Blue Rain
Ink and Acrylic
Bagasse papers
8'x14'
14. Black Rain
Ink on Indian tea paper
Mixed Media sculptures
8'x10'
15. Untitled
Ink and Acrylic
Banana papers
3'x5'

