



Paintings and monoprints [slide]
by Bonnie Laing-Malcolmson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
Montana State University
© Copyright by Bonnie Laing-Malcolmson (1991)

Abstract:

Between the subject and the final painting lies a middle ground, a place of memory, response, process, and risk. My intent is that my paintings grow from this middle ground. My paintings are born of temporal things, a protracted drive through our wide western landscape may lull me into a state where a cloudburst slamming into a mountainside evokes a sharp flash of memory. Transformed, I relive a vivid moment of my life; the glimpsed landscape becomes a visual equivalent for the evoked memory. By reliving a moment of life I am more alive, simultaneously inhabiting present and past. William Carlos Williams wrote in his poem *The Descent*; "and no whiteness (lost) is so white as the memory of whiteness." The mind released from the present is an intense world. I aim to capture that intensity in paint.

The natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest has had a powerful influence on my work. Mt. Rainier towered over my birthplace. From Portland, where I lived until recently, three volcanoes are in clear view and the largest river in the west flows to the sea. Bozeman is surrounded by wilderness of incredible beauty. Landscape is my spiritual solace and inspiration. My work grows out of a response to this visually stimulating environment.

My paintings are distillations of moments in my life that trigger associations. They are attempts to re-create the visual moment that engendered the act of remembrance. They have become documents of the act of remembering.

Evolving as they do from memory my paintings often become fractured; a bit of road, a piece of tree, a section of hill or cloud becomes a key note. The process of painting is a constant tearing apart and rebuilding, seeking to express the image held in my mind with a synthesis of color, form, and surface texture. The subject and the act of creating it in paint have become of equal importance in my thesis work.

The small paintings, 11",x14", and the monoprints, completed during the early part of my thesis were more direct than my previous work. Their small scale freed me from inhibition so I could take risks by combining unlikely colors and forms. If they failed I could easily scrape back, paint over, or re-stretch, without worrying about time or money. They helped me to work more freely and intuitively with the paint, building surface and delighting in the act of painting as my image congealed.

This new, more painterly approach has carried over to the larger paintings with a positive result, achieving a synthesis between the subject and the paint that is mutually informing. The smeared, layered, often intensely colored paint has a life of its own, yet it still serves as an analogue for the intensity of the memory image that prompted me to make the painting in the first place.

Recently while looking through the book, *California Painters, New Work*, I found a quote from Elmer Bischoff that exactly expresses my process and intent, "You have to bring off a fusion of your interest both in the subject and in the painting. It's like walking a tightrope. When you are too enamored of nature, you can lose touch with the demands of the painting. Conversely with too little involvement

with the subject, the painting can degenerate into a formal exercise. My aim has been to have the paint on the canvas play a double role - one as an alive, sensual thing in itself, and the other conveying a response to the subject. Between these two is the tightrope." For me the tightrope between the subject and object is constructed from the joy of painting. In these 10 small paintings, 4 monoprints, and 11 larger paintings I have found that joy. I sincerely hope they communicate it to you.

PAININGS AND MONOPRINTS

by

Bonnie Laing-Malcolmson

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

of

Master of Fine Arts

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

May 1991

N378
L144

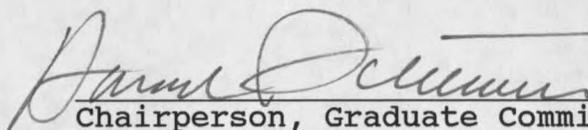
APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Bonnie Laing-Malcolmson

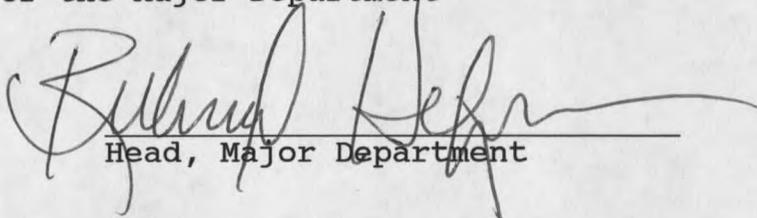
This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

5-23-91
Date


Chairperson, Graduate Committee

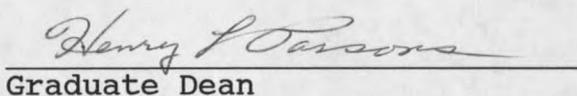
Approved for the Major Department

5/24/91
Date


Head, Major Department

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

June 14, 1991
Date


Graduate Dean

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Montana State University, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library. Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made.

Permission for extensive quotation from or reproduction of this thesis may be granted by my major professor, or in his/her absence, by the Dean of Libraries when, in the opinion of either, the proposed use of the material is for scholarly purposes. Any copying or use of the material in this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature



Date

5/24/91

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Between the subject and the final painting lies a middle ground, a place of memory, response, process, and risk. My intent is that my paintings grow from this middle ground. My paintings are born of temporal things, a protracted drive through our wide western landscape may lull me into a state where a cloudburst slamming into a mountainside evokes a sharp flash of memory. Transformed, I relive a vivid moment of my life; the glimpsed landscape becomes a visual equivalent for the evoked memory. By reliving a moment of life I am more alive, simultaneously inhabiting present and past. William Carlos Williams wrote in his poem The Descent: "*and no whiteness (lost) is so white as the memory of whiteness.*" The mind released from the present is an intense world. I aim to capture that intensity in paint.

The natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest has had a powerful influence on my work. Mt. Rainier towered over my birthplace. From Portland, where I lived until recently, three volcanoes are in clear view and the largest river in the west flows to the sea. Bozeman is surrounded by wilderness of incredible beauty. Landscape is my spiritual solace and inspiration. My work grows out of a response to this visually stimulating environment.

My paintings are distillations of moments in my life that trigger associations. They are attempts to re-create the visual moment that engendered the act of remembrance. They have become documents of the act of remembering.

Evolving as they do from memory my paintings often become fractured; a bit of road, a piece of tree, a section of hill or cloud becomes a key note. The process of painting is a constant tearing apart and rebuilding, seeking to express the image held in my mind with a synthesis of color, form, and surface texture. The subject and the act of creating it in paint have become of equal importance in my thesis work.

The small paintings, 11"x14", and the monoprints, completed during the early part of my thesis were more direct than my previous work. Their small scale freed me from inhibition so I could take risks by combining unlikely colors and forms. If they failed I could easily scrape back, paint over, or re-stretch, without worrying about time or money. They helped me to work more freely and intuitively with the paint, building surface and delighting in the act of painting as my image congealed.

This new, more painterly approach has carried over to the larger paintings with a positive result, achieving a synthesis between the subject and the paint that is mutually informing. The smeared, layered, often intensely colored

paint has a life of its own, yet it still serves as an analogue for the intensity of the memory image that prompted me to make the painting in the first place.

Recently while looking through the book, California Painters, New Work, I found a quote from Elmer Bischoff that exactly expresses my process and intent,

"You have to bring off a fusion of your interest both in the subject and in the painting. It's like walking a tightrope. When you are too enamored of nature, you can lose touch with the demands of the painting. Conversely with too little involvement with the subject, the painting can degenerate into a formal exercise. My aim has been to have the paint on the canvas play a double role - one as an alive, sensual thing in itself, and the other conveying a response to the subject. Between these two is the tightrope."

For me the tightrope between the subject and object is constructed from the joy of painting. In these 10 small paintings, 4 monoprints, and 11 larger paintings I have found that joy. I sincerely hope they communicate it to you.

REFERENCES CITED

Williams, William Carlos. Pictures from Brueghel and other Poems, (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1962), 73.

Hopkins, Henry T. and McHugh, Jim. California Painters New Work, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1989), 27.

LIST of SLIDES

1. Payette,	oil,	68"x96",	1991
2. Two Trees,	oil,	48"x66",	1991
3. Blue Shoot for Bonnie,	oil,	48"x66",	1991
4. Purple Water,	oil,	48"x66",	1991
5. Stumped #2,	oil,	11"x14",	1990
6. Mirror Lake,	oil,	11"x14",	1990
7. Sap Green,	oil,	11"x14",	1990
8. Payette Slope,	oil,	11"x14",	1990
9. Violet Water,	oil,	11"X14",	1990
10. Inness,	oil,	11"x14",	1990
11. Confetti Water,	oil,	11"x14",	1990
12. Falls,	oil,	11"x14",	1990
13. Bark,	oil,	11"x14",	1990
14. MJC,	oil,	11"x14",	1991
15. Arco,	oil,	32"x40",	1991
16. Red River,	oil,	32"x40",	1991
17. Night Drive,	oil,	32"x40",	1991
18. Payette Night,	oil,	32"x40",	1991
19. Upper Madison,	oil,	32"x40",	1991
20. Deer,	oil,	32"x40",	1991
21. Road,	oil,	32"x40",	1990
22. Geyser #1,	monoprint,	18"x24",	1990
23. Fence, Bank, Trees, #1,	monoprint,	18"x24",	1990
24. Fence, Bank, Trees, #2,	monoprint,	18"x24",	1990

VUE-ALL
ARCHIVAL

Slide • Saver

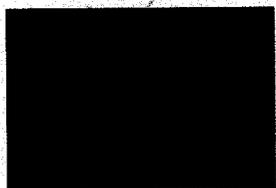
Made in U.S.A.

DATE _____ No. _____

TITLE _____



13. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



10. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



7. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



4. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



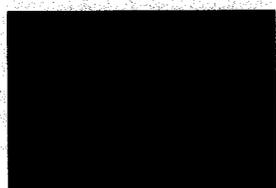
1. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



14. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



11. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



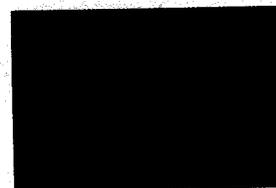
8. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



5. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



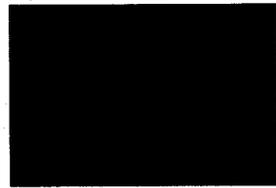
2. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



15. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



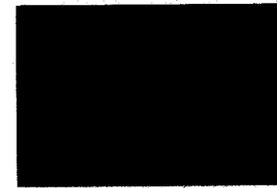
12. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



9. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



6. B. Laing-
Malcolmson



3. B. Laing-
Malcolmson

VUE-ALL
ARCHIVAL

Slide • Saver

Made in U.S.A.

DATE _____ No. _____

TITLE _____

