CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

ANOTHER STEWART'S DEVELOPMENT

Its Stylistic Development

An abstract submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Art

by

Michael B. Stewart

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ABSTRACT

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The well stocked shelves of the store at Christmas this year brought me in touch with remembrances of childhood play. All of the models were neatly stacked in their boxes promising a shiny finished product that any child could be proud of. It was just what I could never achieve when I was a child. The challenge to me as an adult was overpowering.

I continued to stare at these models. An idea developed that brought together the work I had been involved in at that time and expanded the concept in a different direction.

Several years ago I had travelled in the Southwest collecting sand of various grades and colors that were used in plexiglas to create geological paintings and layered landscapes contained in boxes.

Here was the opportunity to experience a fantasy of cherished toys and models that has plagued me since childhood, to combine
these child's toys with the esthetic of the adult artist--all within the context of social commentary.

As the work evolved I realized the patience that was needed. A model took approximately forty hours to construct. Each piece developed its own character and function in the sand; its own composition that united it naturally with the sand in a surreal way. This is further suggested by raising the boxes above the floor level which also distinguishes the piece as "not a toy" and gives it a feeling of permanency.

The central box which is on the floor evokes in one a desire to participate on a childlike level during the period of construction. The viewer is able to comprehend the unlimited possibilities of the models and the composition in the sand. The progress can be viewed step by step in the center stage created for the development of the drama.

The room contained five boxes of barren green soil as the show began. For five days the piece progressed, each day the central construction was transferred to one of the four smaller boxes (4' x 4') from the large box (6' x 6').

On the first day the bulldozer cut a diagonal swath across the empty terrain exposing the white sand beneath.

On the second day the dump truck appeared and covered over the white stripe with green soil again accompanied by the statement "Your State Highway Taxes At Work."
On the third day the concrete mixer appeared and laid a foundation adding a new form to the composition.

A lumber truck brought in the construction materials on the fourth day and a framework was erected.

And seemingly overnight the structure was finished, complete with seductive advertising, a quaint A-Frame, flowers and the American Flag all in five days time.

The final statement was left in the Central Box in its completed form--ANOTHER STEWART'S DEVELOPMENT. The Real Estate dream--creating civilization in the wilderness or contaminating nature? Desire for this social commentary stems from years of observing people being manipulated by poor taste and the rape of the environment by the "get-rich-quick" merchant.
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"Bulldozer"
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"Dump Truck"
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