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

by

Kathleen Kaminsky

January, 1976
The abstract of Kathleen Kaminsky is approved:

California State University, Northridge
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To my mother and father, whose pain is greatest. To Jerry, who hasn't always understood what I do, but who has been constant in his devotion and encouragement, and who has maintained equilibrium throughout. To Fritzi and Harry, who lovingly watched the children on endless Mondays.

To Fred Lauritzen, professor, advisor, good and gentle friend, who allowed me the freedom to find my own way. To Mary Ann Glantz, Richard Dehr, and John Canavier, also artists and teachers of stature, who in their kind and diverse ways, helped.

To Vida Freeman, who patiently and skillfully, did the photography.

To dear friends, Barbara, from before, Maria, Donna, Merryl, and others, whose lives have touched mine, for countless hours spent working, talking, questioning, and sharing.

My love and gratitude to all.
ABSTRACT

MIXED-MEDIA WORKS

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The vagaries, the vicissitudes of my life, and of others, are the predominant ideologies of my art. I see the human condition as a serious

middle-class
inquisitive
ego-centric
humorous
sensitive
caring
level-headed
poorly disciplined
disillusioned
demoralized
hard-working
freeway-driving
lunch-packing
husband-feuding
son-shouting
love-struggling
lady-being woman.

I am non-ethnic, non-racial, non-political, non-religious, non-radical, and non-affiliated. I instinctively know of emotions perceived, experiences felt, senses probed, thoughts described, attitudes discovered, and souls revealed. This is my milieu.

Extending beyond the simply cathartic, the revelations of this subjective aesthetic communicate in a basically three-dimensional format exploring many processes and materials, mainly with metal and fiber, and varying in scale from an intimate handheld sculpture to a large woven wall piece. From obscure impression to graphic portrayal the works often depict multiple levels of symbology. Complex in form, process, and content, they are multifarious. Ambiguities, contradictions of imagery, juxtaposition of unlike materials and objects, express the autobiographical sorting and selecting. Manifested are unconscious probings that may not be apparent to me until long after the works are completed. If they transform fact into fantasy, myth into reality, it is because that is the necessary order.
My attitudes in art have been primarily tactile. From earliest memory of playing with colored dust from brick scrapings to exploring in college the traditional craft approaches to contemporary form, my response has been to art which can be created by manipulating materials. Infused in these forms has always been my persona, but until recently I've felt constrained by the overwhelming physical presence of the medium. Now, without much more technical skill, I have with time acquired the freedom to overcome those restrictions. I can transcend the properties to have them become what I want them to be. A string is no longer a piece of string to be knotted, twisted, braided, or tied. It becomes the line of an idea, the direction of a theme, the color of an emotion; many strings become an amalgam of idea-theme-emotion. It is new image, new focus, new content. It is the zen of the experience, a state of high awareness.

I am prone to do controlled, methodical work, time-consuming and often tedious, where after awhile the germinal idea no longer has relevance, and the content-process-form looses my control. I am forced into reconsiderations, and the work and I evolve together. Intuitive decision making takes over, and the work comes to life for me again and again as it is taken further to completion. Spontaneity is at each
increment. My requirement now is not to be fettered by processes or materials requiring great time. I need to work faster, more surely, more intensely. The ideas are too certain and need to be recorded rapidly. The impetus has finally been realized and momentum and methods of working established. I cannot stop now, but feel as in a drugged state, euphoric with the high of the moment and craving with all my juices the need to remain on that high. I have brought unknown disciplines and powers together, and it is exhilarating.

It is through the sensibilities of these archetypal experiences that I am best able to relate to other people. Notwithstanding my need, it is hoped the works shown here have a strength of poetry, a sureness of purpose, and are of universal acceptance to others. One need is to reveal the self; the reciprocal need is for others to respond. Without feeling vulnerable, I am right now willing to risk that dialogue.
View of installation
SECOND MIRROR - A REFLECTION OF SELF EMERGES

copper, sterling silver

22\(\frac{1}{2}\) by 13 inches

Doors reveal - doors conceal - a slit in the helmet, the narrowest of views - a mask - a panel - the beginnings of revelation - your vision and mine.
LEGS, OH I WISH I HAD MY SISTER'S LEGS

copper, nylon stockings with polyester fill, wood
93 by 6½ by 8 inches

At first, ungainly scale. A daring, gutsy thing to do, adding those legs. Private parts contained - leg-forms flopping out - sister's legs are prettier than mine.
IUD CUP

sterling silver, found objects
8 by 3 by 3, 17 by 9 by 5 inches

Elegant egg container with common base equals dichotomy. Refined form with wrapped bundle equals dichotomy. The cord connects. The subject is conception - woman's gift, woman's requital. By aborting her pregnant self, is she destroying another to control her own body/destiny?
EVERYONE ELSE'S BIRDCAGE

copper, yarn, buttons
49 by 8 by 9\frac{1}{2} inches

Whimsical - a bauble - reminds you of Victorian architecture, they say, or maybe something Oriental. Intricate control of compound curves.
15.

View of installation
REPOSITORY

copper, found objects, mixed fibers
36 by 21 by 21 inches

Secret place - container for past memories, future events. Presently in use.
View of installation
BLACK COLUMN

stainless steel, mylar tape
9 ⁴⁄₅ by 10 by 10 inches

Exercise in form - upward thrust - downward fall -
strong presence. Rustles in the wind - shadows flash
in kaleidoscopic patterns.
RAINBOW WITH CLAIRE'S PIECES

copper wire, mixed fibers, found objects
12 1/4 by 21 inches

Shimmering moire of color - gentle tinkle of metal if it happens to move.
WHITE COLUMN - A STUDY BEFOREeva HESSE

polyester fill, copper wire
102 by 16 by 16 inches

Anger and hurt brought under control by groping and grappling. The wire wraps around and around, terminals of delicate twist catching the light. Eva's seemed more definitive, more forceful; mine, somewhat tentative, rather fussy.
HYDRA

bamboo, cord, copper wire; copper screen, found objects, rope, cable
72 by 12 by 10: 12 by 12 by 4 inches

Two-headed - serpentine - water-form. Connection of two parts - which dominates? Threatening to Barbara, not so to others. Yellow not one of my colors, but somehow right for this.
DA NANG VASE WITH RED ROSES

copper strips, willow, brass, plastic
96 by 11 by 11; 16 by 14 by 14 inches

Contradictions of form, process, materials - eccentric elements brought together - held by a thread - tenacious. Roses recalling a time that should have been better, and the vase a gift from the person who could have made it so.
EMPTY HOUSE

copper strips, copper cable, wood, found objects
90 by 18 by 18; 22 by 33 by 11 inches

Conical length above or beside the box - it doesn't matter. Joined by the cord - the juxtaposition is the thing. An enclosure with a few objects set in order - lonely being alone.
LETTER

copper, wood, fabric
31 by 12 by 4 inches

Cryptic markings - a silent message - broken communication - different words - dissimilar ethics.
No knowledge - no understanding - no appreciation - no together - no love.
COUPLING

wool yarn, bronze, nail
216 by 24 inches, extended

Network of units, varying in shape, always constant. Circle of white closing on itself, the arc joined by hardness and abruptness. Two parts becoming one.
FRAGMENT SUGGESTING A CODE

copper strips, ivory, bullet shells
28 by 12 inches

Random pattern - punches of white against the dark - surely it translates into language.
LONG STRETCH

raffia, copper wire, metal panel
166 by 8 inches

Extending, reaching, being tall. Repeating the shape, completing the phrase. The arch is ended with rigid, hard measures. Shadows repeat the curve.
View of installation
SWEET DISH

bronze, fabric, string, candy, plexiglass
16 by 12 by 4 inches

Container which doesn't function as a coffee-table ornament. Saccarine colors and shapes, a purple field of sugar surrounding the empty bowl. You can't have any.
TONGUE JAR

bronze, latex

9\frac{1}{2} by 12 by 4 inches

Animated vessel - visceral extension to the tip of the tongue.
TREE OF LIFE WITH PAPER CURLERS

bronze, yarn, miscellaneous materials
21 by 22 by 22 inches

Erect form laden with good life fruits. Adornments for the hair - blue rinse for greyed ladies makes them younger? Life in its cycle - the tree endures - the fruits are spent.
TRANSFUSION

bronze, plastic tubing, dye

11 by 15 by 8 inches

Infusing energy into rigid form - density criss-crossed by the flexible length - the red fluid absorbed with time.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY

bronze, glass, miscellaneous objects
12\frac{1}{3} by 12\frac{1}{4} by 12 inches

Child's fantasy - everyman's horror - the flag as centerpiece describes the place.
INSTANT BEAUTI-NAILS

bronze, fabric, plastic
18 by 6 by 5 inches

Cupping the hand - extending the hand - an act as common as blinking. Glossy nails promote false beauty rather than function - a superficial dressing. Do you paint your toenails too? I search for reasons.
REMEMBRANCES OF "THE GARDEN OF DELIGHTS"

bronze, yarn, plastic
15 by 15 by 10 inches

Your family - and family - alienation and separation, the dominant forces eroding the core of love and union. The center - an umbrella, outreaching limbs of a shadetree, a mushroom cloud, an ominous force: pervasive, whatever it is. Mysterious, mystical, the unknowns of medieval times are upon us. I wonder about psychic phenomena and extra-terrestrial life. One panel of Bosch's triptych came to mind - it's presence stayed with me for so long.
View of installation
Commentary on the 1970's plight of women could be what this is, but it isn't. The deforming, brutal surgery for breast cancer has changed the lives of two of my friends, and depicting my feelings was the only way I could cope.
BEGIN EVERYDAY WITH A NOURISHING BREAKFAST

mixed media, aluminum
32 by 20 by 4: 19 by 14 by 5 inches

Conflicts and tensions with children and spouse commence before the day has hardly begun. Morning glories with sunshine it should be, but seldom is it at our table. Why has no one run away? Maybe the breakfasts are sufficiently good.
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AND I WAS HOPING IT WAS THE NICE DREAM MAN

brass, yarn, found objects
90 by 38 inches

Fantasy of wishful thinking - situations that are - which probably won't ever be much different. The nice dream man won't come with his excitement, sensitivity, verve, color, unless I wait at the corner to listen for his bell.
BLACK CENTER

copper, fiber
14 by 69 inches

After the slowness of raising the IUD Cup, a need for spontaneity and immediate response. A series of five works in rapid succession, distilling emotions and attitudes introduced previously. This, centering the self, in harmony and balance, inwardly, outwardly. The black center, or circle, extends downward for support and security.
QUIET CERTITUDE

copper, fiber

31 \frac{1}{2} by 32 inches

Folds, layers, over, under, the complex structure of basket weave, to give integrity to the form. Surface offers opportunity for variables of spiral, circular repeats, textural subtleties. The oneness, the coming together of self, with maturity, tranquility, and, hopefully, grace.
Enlivened spirit, the happiness of being almost finishes. Striving for many years to reach a goal, and attaining it. Exhuberance and satisfaction.
View of installation
OVAL IMPRESSIONS

copper, fiber
122 by 93 inches

Scale, large mass, a challenge, a feat. I did it; it works. A theme of sources — the oval, the egg: the layering, the internal depths; the fiber, the hair — erotic and suggestive. The woman, the self, the color, the brilliance, the endurance, the calm.