CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

RESIN RELIEF PAINTINGS

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

ART

by

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ABSTRACT

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Master of Arts in Painting

Painting has always been considered a two dimensional art form. Sculpture has obviously been considered three dimensional, yet acceptable in various degrees of relief. To combine, or merge the two art forms has always been a problematical consideration for me to explore. I found the incorporation of a sculptural technique of draped relief objects and painting techniques combine pleasantly for an unusual series of high relief paintings which are permanent, stable, and possessing a structure with numerous possibilities for compositional explorations.

My objectives for this sort of painting were the following: 1) to find a new overall format for shape, instead of rectangular, 2) to find a new surface in which to incorporate the above mentioned media, 3)
to find a media capable of long term stability under any atmospheric conditions, 4) to find a pleasing combination of transparent and opaque pigments suitable for these surfaces.

In my early paintings, while still on canvas using acrylic and oils, my interest was in line, form, texture and shape. I found my canvases and composition becoming that of flowing oval and freeform shapes, and minimal in color. With the paintings becoming very static and heavy, I searched for a more expressive statement. I found it to be shape, and to a lesser extent texture. With earlier paintings becoming tactile and expressionistic, I now decided to change surfaces, from canvas to homemade paper fiber. Fig. 1

Early experiments in homemade paper led me to believe that earlier linear considerations would no longer compliment the surface texture, and this led to the ceramic technique of draping the paper over "found objects". Fig. 2. Draping sheets of paper over objects was successful in that it satisfied my first objective of changing the overall shape and surface of the composition. The new overall shape dealt with the covered oval and semi-circular shapes, and free forms of the draped items. This eliminated the need for working with paints and brushes. However, as these experiments progressed, I felt that the composition became too
became too minimal. I reacted by incorporating a brush line surface that resembled marble. Fig. 3

Considerable effort and conviction from Professor Plagens encouraged me to return to the more conventional surface of canvas. As before, in the hand made paper experiments, I went about the same technique using canvas as a surface. Fig. 4. The canvas was stiffened with gesso, and relief shapes were used with acrylic paints and applied a la Pollock. These experiments led to very large pieces, which eventually became cumbersome and led to installation problems.

In February of 1978, after considerable examination of the latter technique, I explored the possibility of a more rigid surface. Fiberglass seemed the likely surface for transparency (a new consideration), rigidity, and durability. A further valuable consideration was the capability it had for holding my "draped relief objects". The opaque paint used in these was applied at right angles while wet and kept at a minimum. Eventually I found dripping color was covering too much of the transparency of the fiberglass. I began to allow breathing areas of color and transparency. Fig. 5

Early fiberglass pieces were kept to a minimum of four feet by three feet in size in order to emphasize the undulating relief shape and not to overpower the unusual
edge-shape of the canvas. I now had the feeling of achieving success in my first two objectives, a non-rectangular format and a new way of creating a painted surface.

The next series of experiments were done dealing with real draped items and collage effects. I used the transparency of the fiberglass to show the collaged items and a minimal amount of paint. Fig. 6. From this approach I attempted to solve objective four, in which a pleasing combination of pigments on the transparent surface of fiberglass would work. I discovered transparent colorant pigments could be mixed with the resin at the time of original casting or application. In a series of pieces, in which some were divisions or tryptichs, the applications of transparent pigment with opaque pigment was utilized while continuing to leave areas of transparent fiberglass. Fig. 7

As this series progressed, the paintings became increasingly reliant on the opaque quality to achieve compositional stability, and the transparency was not holding its own in the piece. Therefore, I did a few pieces dealing with only the consideration of transparent pigments and folds. Fig. 8

Having pushed the technique to its utmost possibility, Fig. 9, of full relief, color, transparency and irregular edging, I found I have accomplished my
objectives. However, I have now become interested in several new additions to the original concept. I have discovered that the incorporation of fiberglass, transparent paint, photography, and folding, (instead of "draped relief objects") could possibly work as a new approach. Fig. 10. My newest experiments are dealing with resin, transparent pigments, liquid photographic emulsion (for photographic image) and folding. Fig. 11

In conclusion, I have discovered a great deal, and fulfilled my objectives, plus introduced a new element into my work, that of photographic images. My experiments have opened up an entirely new and invigorating aspect of painting for me, while introducing new media and new media techniques which would not have ordinarily been discovered if I had continued to paint conventionally. It is my sincere hope that having done this work I have contributed somehow to an ongoing flow of creative experimentation for me and others interested in this approach in the field of art, and have successfully blended the strong points of several art disciplines.
Additional Prints of Pieces