The Discovery of Self Through Creative Exploration

Stephanie Jo Pointer

The University of Montana

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THE
DISCOVERY OF SELF
THROUGH CREATIVE EXPLORATION

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B.A. General Art, Berkeley, Ca. 1976

Professional Paper
presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Within these pages lie reflections and descriptions of a voyage into unknown territory. A voyage, which has ended, yet is just beginning. Here for your consideration follows a documentation of an artistic process. Humbly, I put before you a modest attempt at presenting a number of personal discoveries made within the last four years.

First I had chosen to participate in a program of Integrated Arts, the Creative Pulse. My participation in the Artist-Forest-Community Residency in the Helena National Forest the week before I began the program initiated a desire to present my artwork and become a better teacher. Expanding upon the theme of becoming closer to nature is also addressed herein. I needed to gain first-hand experience of what nature means to me in order to produce a confidence based upon knowledge. Developing an authentic voice grounded in experience leads to an ability to nourish and expand the learning of others. I had proposed to continue with my artwork and develop a body of work and present that work in a public venue.

The following is an ichnolite of that process. This presentation primarily documents a voyage of discovery into the business of mounting a “solo” show. More importantly, the purpose of this paper is to give the reader a feeling for the creative encounter. This paper strives to provide an ability to view the work and experience that transformational moment which is so captivatingly elusive. For this reason I have included a section devoted to a selection of my imagery and Haiku poetry to accompany them. The transformation is up to you, just as it is for me.

In summation one shall encounter a number of perceptions regarding the experience and process of showing artwork. These ponderings reflect the impact of my experience within the Creative Pulse, pathways I stumbled upon and where I am currently heading.

If you are further interested in my work please take a moment to glance at the Appendices.

Beginning again
Discovering new terrain
Shining worlds within
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEGINNING VISIONS</td>
<td>1-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMAGES AND POETRY</td>
<td>12-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDING OBSERVATIONS</td>
<td>37-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>44-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>47-48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF IMAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nemesis</td>
<td>frontispiece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Flats Sketch</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Periodic Table of Elements</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Prairie Tree</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee Space</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moth Origin</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Mandala</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firestorm</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nail-head</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scar</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic Table</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterline</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Magic of PI</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For De Kooning</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; (close-up)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ange</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labyrinth for a Ponderosa</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wing Feather</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centerline</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Are Here</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poet’s Moon</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanishing</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dream Within a Dream</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For more information on images see the Appendices

All imagery accomplished by the author c 2006
“…Allow me to make use of a parable, the parable of the tree. Take an artist sufficiently well oriented in the world and in life to be able to organize phenomenon and experiences. This orientation of things in nature and in life, this complex organization with multiple ramifications, I would like to compare to the roots of the tree. From here the sap mounts towards the artist, trying to pass through his/her eyes. The artist is thus taking on the function of the trunk, urged on and agitated by this powerful flux, he transmits to his work what he has seen. And the work, like the tree unfurls into time and space. No one would demand the tree should form its top in the image of its roots. It is clear that, in different realms diverse functions conclude in considerable differences. But, we attempt to prevent the artist from shedding his models. We even accuse him of impotence or willful falsification. But like the tree, he is doing nothing other than gathering and transmitting forces welling up from the depths. Neither serving nor dominating, just transmitting. He has then an extremely modest function. He himself is not the tree top, he simply lets it pass through him…”

Paul Klee

“Art is everywhere, it only has to pass through a creative mind”

Louise Nevelson

The forest of ancient cedars drapes a cloak of soft green across your shoulders. Listening, the silence becomes not silence, but, whisperings, rustlings, squeakings, creakings, trickling; yet, there is a calmness one equates with silence now. A stillness, a centering, a oneness, an inclusion into something primitive surrounds your being. One might call it the heart of silence. Five years ago, when I was here with two friends, we had brought a drum and honored the ancient cedar tree.
The bark had been worn smooth by so many caressing hands; the patina of human hands touching nature desiring to renew that portion of themselves so undernourished in this day and age. Today I ask myself… Have I changed since then? I would like to think that I have. The experience of the way I have chosen has certainly enriched my being and deepened my commitment to pursue this artistic path.

An artist sees the world differently. Most people see the world around them as a commodity, particularly the natural world. Many people only recognize that which can be bought and sold. Artists are looking creatively to see oneself in this place, but do you really see yourself? The attempt to perceive oneself in this world can be compared to the drawing process. Learning to see what you are looking at is a complicated process. When you are drawing, the brain often controls that part of the mind which says “oh yes, I know what that is. There are books dealing with this subject the best being that of Betty Edwards, *Drawing on the Right Side of The Brain*. Why even look at it, just draw it…” Then you draw and it doesn’t in the least resemble what you are envisioning so, you become frustrated and give up. The same thing happens when you look at yourself. Take a good look at yourself, are you really who you perceive yourself to be? When you really observe your actions are they what you imagine inside? So, it’s the same with drawing when you are making all those decisions you are really being personal and getting down to the real nitty-gritty. That’s when you are truly seeing. I needed to learn to see myself so that the artwork I produced could become more authentically me. Finding meaning is in the searching. The quality of the life being led affects the quality of work produced.

When the artist perceives the world using the artist’s eye there is not any buying and selling involved. They become a part of the mychorrizal network underlying the forest
floor for centuries. The breaking down of debris, creating duff, nourishment, tiny mushrooms which feed mice, ants and other small creatures is like the artistic process. The ground remains a moist, fertile environment for the rest of the forest to flourish. The outer world becomes a metaphor for the interior world. The druids of old created an entire symbology based upon the outer natural world. Groves of trees, types of trees, their protective magical forces combined with ancient archetypes and knowledge to create world and a language (ogham writing) which still survives to this day. Despite the efforts of organized religion and man’s greed to eradicate and refine the natural world out of human natures’ existence, nature still exists.

“… Nature, Mister Orloff, is something we are meant to rise above…”

Kate Hepburn in The African Queen

A tree is a real ecosystem when you examine the entire network developed around a tree. The photo of the single African tree and the thermo-photographic images of pathways made by differing life forms to it form a visual map from the air. The map resembles a mandala with the tree at the center…no wonder ancient mythology chose the symbol of the world tree, Ygdrassil (not the only name) to guard the source of all things. These thoughts came to me while visiting the Ross Creek Cedars near Libby, Mt. There I saw cut into a tree the Martenset, which was created by trappers in the 1800’s. The martenset is a square notched into the tree-trunk in order to trap the pine marten for his silky pelt, much sought after. The tree provided the trapper a means for economic gain, a livelihood; some would argue a way to survive. The trap was set. The artist sees the trap,
the pine marten and the tree. The artist is an observer a transmitter, neither serving nor dominating, to borrow from Paul Klee.

To observe clearly the artist becomes part of the magical network to see and record…a part of the fibrous, neuro-kinetic environment. This network, invisible to the naked eye, flows energetically just the same.

Our sight system is designed very much like the arboreal network of trees. Behind the eye lens the curved surface is lined with very specialized cells called ganglia. The larger spreading branches located around the outer edges of the lens pick up the peripheral vision and the smaller tree branches in the center pick up sharp focus of what we are looking at. All the roots funnel into the optic nerve. The trunk runs between the two areas conducting visual information picked up by the dendrites (branches) to the brain’s cortex, the interpreting source. It’s very complex and that’s another story. Suffice it to say, our entire being, psychological, physical and spiritual make-up is metaphorically linked throughout the existence of time to the tree, the forest and the Jungle.

“…The jungle is all about our dreams, our deepest emotions, our nightmares. It’s not just a location. The jungle is a form of our soul-fears and dreams, a fabulous, luxurious wealth of growth, form and shapes.

It’s a state of our mind…”

Werner Herzog
The beginning of this segment of self-discovery began with The Artist-Forest-Community Residency in the Helena National Forest. One week alone in a cabin without running water, indoor plumbing or electricity was the first experience I had ever had like that. The purpose was to investigate my art and that is what I did. The thing was that I had to arrive at a point where all the junk of being a modern human would fall away and the turmoil within me could settle, like muddy water and I could find clarity. The system becomes inclusive and you can interpret the environment around you. Tuning in to the environment becomes very important to survival. Man has a tendency to use the environment for survival regardless to what the natural world needs to replenish itself. This is not a sustainable attitude.

During this time at the cabin, I noticed the wonderful patterns on the stumps of the old growth trees. I doubted if I could get a rubbing using the thick paper I had with me but, I was led to try. I was amazed to find the definition of the pattern appearing in black and white. Even so, the designs were very messy and I had to do a lot of work to get them to a place where their beauty would shine. These graphite rubbings became the nucleus of the first art show I hung in the Middle annex Gallery on the University campus during the first year of the Creative Pulse. One week after the Artist-Forest-Community Residency experience, I was attending Creative Pulse.

The ability to manifest what you perceive to be of value in an acceptable way and show it to the community takes clear vision, determination, drive, persistence and a supportive environment. The Creative Pulse allowed me space to act upon these aspirations. The ability to experience these encounters informed my personal ability to teach. Knowing what it
takes to assemble and organize a show of artwork helps create a solid basis of knowledge, which then enables you to speak from experience to others.

This process, which began simply enough as putting a common stick of black graphite to a blank white paper placed on a wooden stump elicited a vast array of new directions which I can only hope to continue exploring. Of course, as I worked and explored many other people working along similar veins came to my attention. I discovered the work of James Balog who was photographing the trees of the world perceived to have ancient status and his ensuing book, *Trees, The New American Forest*. I viewed an exhibition of photographs by Robert Adams in San Francisco along the same vein. His show was an inquiry about the value of older trees in our lives; questions such as, What are we doing to the world? Where is our place? Why do we destroy our inheritance? What shall we replace it with? What makes a survivor? All rich questions that as a teacher, perhaps, I can get some of my students to grapple with as I continue to ponder these and other questions in searching through my own personal pathway of visual art.

The large painting *Dream within a Dream*, included in The Goldust Show, June 2006, was a search to explore my feelings about where we are in relation to all the cultural pressures and trajectories imposed upon us from birth. Other imagery from visions combined together to form another world. That painting was an attempt at dealing with this confusion. Artistically, even I don’t understand everything about that painting. The piece was difficult and different from anything I have ever done but, it seems recently, that most of my work is something I have never done. This includes the encaustic work which I began developing, exploring, learning to do with the help of my mother. My mother has taken several workshops in encaustic and she has the whole set-up. You need
a lot of equipment to make encaustic art…. heat, wax, panels, colors, tools and imagery to name a few items. Several of the original graphite rubbings were later translated into encaustic pieces.

“Honeybees are the only creatures that make beeswax. Theirs is a lively enterprise. In the U.S. each year their keepers (beekeepers) retrieve 4 to 5 million lbs. of wax. The combination of biology and energy is astonishing for it takes 2 million flowers to yield 1 lb. of honey and 6-10 lbs. of honey to yield 1 lb. of wax

For more on encaustic work see appendices
The Encaustic process is a fascinating ancient process dating back to Egyptian times. I find working with wax very enriching. Wax enables me to create multi-layering to the previous work. Writing about doing artwork tends to get convoluted since, the artistic process is alchemical in that everything tends to get turned back within itself and the artist uses what came before as manure. Musically one could compare it to entrainment, like one beat feeding upon the next beat creating a continuous rhythm. This is extremely difficult to explain in words to a person not involved in the arts in some way. Thus we, in the arts, whether it’s drama, dance, writing, music, sculpture, or painting, use our mediums to communicate with the world.

The aim of working creatively is to continue solving more details, which leads to new problems and facets. This aids in developing critical thinking and an ability to design clear learning experiences. Ownership of knowledge helps in walking the labyrinth of everyday. My elision.

The resulting product of this train of thought became the Duct Tape Labyrinth or Meditation Maze. This was created at the end of my second year in the Creative Pulse. After a certain amount of time the labyrinth was removed. The thought came to preserve somehow the ragged edge of paint and prayers. I needed to preserve the evidence of a process residue that was remaining. I did some rubbings, which I felt were terrible. They were put into a folder and there they sat for quite some time. One evening I unrolled the largest of the five and began working upon the surface, enhancing some areas, erasing others. The results were somewhat bland and I had been wondering about adding color. I believe the resulting works spoke for themselves with beauty and eloquence. Areas
began speaking to me about visual alternatives suggesting a graphic territory, which you can accept or reject, give or take.

The first piece became “The Magic of Pi” a number I have a great fondness for due to its infinite nature. This led to an energy, which sustained itself through four other pieces all eliciting different aspects of ourselves within the framework of nature and mythical, metaphorical realms. One might draw the analogy of photographic development to the working process. The picture was taken (rubbing) and put into the canister (file) then when taken from the folder I became the developer (chemical). The image was already there I was just the facilitator. I find these pieces spiritual landscapes replete with map imagery, archetypes mythological primitive and mystifying because they evolved from something common…paper and pencil. Valuable to me because they preserved the moment friends walked a labyrinth I created in a time before I took the rubbings of the residue.

“Art shouldn’t have to be explained”

Louise Bourgoise

The art is there for all to see, but, everyone is always asking the artist to explain what has been done by including commentary, thus the dreaded artist’s statement. For me it is agonizing to put into sentences all the confusion and trust which enters into the artistic investigation of space, intuition and our world. The voyage through the process functions as a transmitting vessel. The content nourishes the product. There is no content without process. There is no process without product. The jungle canopy is a visual product of numerous forces frightening and wonderful all at the same moment. Like lightening in the sky summoning the powers that be.
Consider the following selection of prints and accompanying Haiku. The Haiku poetry form was reintroduced to me during The Creative Pulse. The sparseness of space and few words matches the minimal nature of my art. The moment of creation is a suspension of time in time. When one puts a piece of paper on an old wooden stump and rubs graphite over it to see what will happen you learn. If, on first thought that it won’t capture anything then the moment ends but, if you see what happens then you learn. There has been failure on many levels not just artistic, I guess that is what makes success deliciously exhilarating. The first visual imprint, the initial impulse to capture, comes from a visceral sexual impulse to possess. I found the work lends itself well to the Haiku format because of the distillation of what is essential. Immediacy of the imagery suggested the poetry. The visual tactile moment associated with the rhythmic verbal poetics of the succinct Haiku moment.
BEE SPACE

(the small space needed for a bee to enter the hive)

Smallest bee doorway
Snug spatial separation
Hive dimensions

HONEYBEES ONLY

Encapsulated
Frozen flowers transformation
Immobile sweetness

FROZEN WINGTIME CHAMBERNOISE

Droning wings drowns buzz
Sawblades ferocious humming
Within surrounding rings

Smallest hive doorway
Encapsulated honey
Bee compartment

Geometric humdrum
Droning sun buzzing fuzz
Head hum strumming

Humble resonance
Circular circumference
Time traveler

Hot wax liquid flows
Octagonal compartment
Condominium

HOME SWEET CONDOMINIUM HOME

Ten thousand flowers
Honeybees gather pollen
Magnetic foot game

WOODEN BEE-HIVE ONCE A TREE
FOREST MANDALA

Forest heart motion
Circular observation
Spinning feather frame

World song vibration
First primordial essence
Here for the taking

Humming energy
Singing forever off-key
Hammer thumping nail

Nail head hammer heat
Stars falling down zenith path
Circular motion

Oneness of all things
Forest mandala feather
Divine protection

SPECKLED FEATHER STARS

Backyard guardian
Sheltering branches above
Humanity below
SAW

Hammer, nail, saw, axe
Man’s tools wreak havoc
Changing habitat

Chainsaw gnaws through wood
Buzzing chips flying airborne
Crashing quietly

Mingle fir scent with
Gasoline fuel driven noise
Soundless fallen giant

Fierce noisy hunger
Quickly gnaws tree trunk thickness
Another man’s purpose

FOLLOWING NOTHING FEARING NOTHING REVEALING NOTHING
FOLLOWING THE BEAR
PICNIC BENCH

Once being little
Reaching bench important
So far from ground
Feet dangling

Splinter in my finger
Come from some long ago tree
Old pain returning

Sunshine picnic park
Swing legs carefully over
Rough peeling green paint

Warm wooden bench
Long-ago standing forest
Human production

Funny to think the picnic table
Holding hamburger fixin’s
A food support for our gathering
Once was a majestic forest tree
A picnic table for squirrels and ants

Fallen majestic
Tree becomes picnic table
Another lifetime
EO MUGNA

Druid mythology
Guarding ancient river source
Roots grow deeply

Primal oak tree
Old grandfather’s twisting roots
Far below surface

The well of Connia
Conceptual renewal
Never ending source

Images entwine
Surrounding hidden secrets
Finding ancient grove

UNTRANSLATABLE DIALOGUE IN AN UNKNOWN LANGUAGE

THE MAGIC OF PI

Inward outward growth
Flowing mathematical nature
Spiraling design

Creative moment
Uncharted territories
Infinite puzzle

Surface receding
Pastel colors softly pose
Beside gray ladder

Design nowhere’s map
Create worlds unknown before
Pencil and paper
FOR De KOONING (L’ANGE or MESSENGER)

Bleu cobalt yellow
Grinning big woman high heels
Artistic struggle

Spaces lines reworked
Painter’s canvas left behind
Inevitable

Forward backward now
Before pink erasure
Subterranean drawing

Viaduct villa
Messenger bringing water
Future remembrance

Blinking eyes quickly
Today’s linear catwalk
Varnishing act

Blankly existence
Standing before a mirror
Sees only itself

Dancers wildly dance
Wearing pathways between lands
Becoming angels

Those spaces between
Positive and negative
Glimmering softly
LABYRINTH FOR A PONDEROSA

The colors of Franz Kline
Black, dark green, yellow ochre
Listing empty space

Circular pathway
Always myself coming back
Aimless wandering

Fallen ponderosa
Five hundred long years growing
Gone now in seconds

Purple pine embrace
Mysterious existence
Everything seed

Pinecone container
Spiraling shadows swirl around
Encapsulated

Seedlings silent growth
Forest prayer ascending
Green, black, yellow ochre

Beetle whispering
Feet treading reluctantly
Aimless wandering

WING FEATHER TURTLE FUR

Lost territory
Knowing not knowing where
Mindless Nirvana

Twig tea music
Leaves, roots, moss, needles, lichen
Green air symphony

Wingless turtle fur
Intense river flight rock sinks
Stinkbug jello man
CENTERLINE

Segmented fragments
Linear dreaming section
Dancing pine needles

Feathering outwards
Pine needles curling focus
Bulls-eye echo

Segmented fragments
Pine needle hieroglyphics
Feathering outwards

Natural rhythm
Mystical intersection
Mathematical bridges

Stars resist movement
Wobbling celadon moss
Hangs longingly

Meadow waterways
Quilted animal remnants
Reedy reflections

BIRD SHIT PUZZLE WAX
STICKY SAP SNOT FINGERPRINT
VELVET ANTLERMAN
YOU ARE HERE

Somewhere between lines
Circular expanding time
Pinpointing today

Existence before
Becoming smaller spaceless
Inches measure years

Centuries long gone
Frozen within amber drops
Translucent remains

This moment and the next
Before lines intertwined
Mingled tangled now
Inexplicable

Fingertips measure
Mapping that place between time
Continuum space

Territorial map
Standing on the stone cliff edge
Not knowing which way

Open ledger page
Colored lines reveal stories
When hard times counted

Rugged edge line
Reverberation lingers
Stone energy

Uncharted seabed
Ancient fossilized diatoms
Miniscule fraction

Unknown territory
Hiding crystallized fish bones
Covering map signs
“Creativity is a fundamental element of existence just like Earth, Air, Fire, Water. Take away creativity and the world stops. Everyone has a creative muse trying to inspire them—but hearing it, listening to the inspiration, and then having the courage to act is the hard part.”

James Balog

The courage to navigate unknown territory profoundly alters the voyager. The Creative Pulse provides opportunities for exposure to new methods of navigation. Teachers of the arts cannot truly understand the student’s struggle in their development, the nature of mastering new directions, refining styles and approaches unless teachers increase their understanding through their own courage to assume personal risk and personal development of the issues at stake. The teacher remains flexible in remaining also a student thus always growing and avoiding stagnation as a person. The quality of life affects the quality of output. Gaining more personal knowledge allows oneself the ability to be more perceptive and maintain a connection with others. This knowledge allows empathic teaching. Inventive, intuitive modes of thinking encourage outside experiences. Thinking outside the box becomes more comfortable, less scary.

Reflecting upon the past highlights, such as A.F.C.R (artist-forest-community-residency), Creative Pulse acceptance, the Middle Annex/Forest Visions show, The Duct Tape Labyrinth in the Middle Annex, The Goldust Gallery Show/Forest Observations, I can see how one event conspires to fuel the next. Since that time I have continued my
encaustic work, had three shows locally of different work, continue as member of a plein-
aire painting group that paints outside every Monday, set up three more shows for the year to come, and been offered a class to teach this spring at F.V.C.C. I guess I am out of the depression I had found myself in four years ago.

I was stuck in a world of my own creation and in order to get unstuck I needed to venture outwards. The interior growth process of learning and loving learning is continuous for me. Improvement involves risk, confusion, and conflict. Destruction is a part of the growth process. Cohabation is needed to transform experience into product whether that be teaching, writing, drama, dance, music, painting and so on. You can’t create in a vacuum. Through destruction and chaos meaning arrives.

Opportunities presented themselves and everything just seemed to fall into place for me to be able to pursue them. The difficult thing was that I had to pursue them. Jumping the hurdles, paying the bills, not settling for less than what I imagined I could attain or at least trying to go there. I am reminded of a story written by Hymonestes Storm about a mouse, who wants to see the Great Spirit. He finally jumps high enough to see The Great Spirit, but, quickly falls back to earth. That moment of transcendence guides the little mouse for the rest of his life. I know it could be stretching it to say that my experience in the Creative Pulse was transcendent but, I can’t think of any other way to explain it. Now, I have returned to my life/space but my sense of place has been radically altered. It’s not something I talk about much because I am still feeling my way for the good direction. I have learned that accomplishing anything takes determination and a lot of work. That having an art show isn’t just about making art but there are many details involved. Persistence and determination often were the only things that pulled me
through. Doubt, rejection, failure are not strangers and I have accepted them as part of the process. That doesn’t mean they don’t hurt. It just means you know you can pick yourself up and get back on track. Promising to do is not doing, so I learned that following through is also extremely key to manifesting your imagination. The goals you set may be accomplished through exploring the options, trusting your own vision, and choosing a direction to proceed. It’s easier to get help if you ask for it instead of waiting for someone to see you need help. Without other people’s aid I wouldn’t have been able to accomplish what I did. From leads to gallery spaces, to tools, to framing issues, to photographs, computer work and a simple “I believe you can do this” I am grateful for all their help.

The Goldust Show was a logical outgrowth of my initial proposal. In fact I think it was one of the major goals I set out to accomplish in my first proposal and a continuation of bringing the work shown in the Middle Annex into a much broader forum. The Goldust Show included the work shown in Forest Visions and New Work. The new works were a logical outgrowth of the previous work and allowed the previous imagery to expand to another level. The learning of the encaustic process and working with my mother was also mentioned in this proposal. Of course my research into the whole tree thing is based upon the imagery gathered and my experiences with the natural world, which I have sought out and continues to fuel my artwork. A large oil painting on canvas, which consumed much of my time incorporating many spiritual and cultural metaphors were included. This piece acts as more of a visual paper. Entitled “Dream within a Dream” This painting deals with searching for a meaningful place within various cultures and times. The work continues to suggest new directions, which defy verbal
explanations. Difficulties arise when I feel restricted to constrain what is created into certain parameters. Much of what happens artistically is an intuitive process, very much like what the quote from Paul Klee said in the beginning. The artist is just the transmitter, the developer of the moment given. I am just passing along the information from some deeper source.

When I reflect upon The Goldust Show there are many interesting observations about it. My goal had been to find an off-campus space in which to bring my work to a broader audience, the Missoula community. In pondering about whether this show was a success I needed to sift through quite an array of thoughts. Mainly, what is success based upon? If success is based on what I intended then, yes! I regard this show as a personal success. The show hung in a “real” gallery, not a coffee house, restaurant, bank or spa (not to discount those venues, since, I have had other shows there and upcoming ones also). It was a “solo” show. A “solo” show involves immense amounts of personal commitment. The artist must produce more work. I have learned that a group show where the event is shared has much less stress and expense involved. The gallery has a great artistic reputation, so it looks good on my artistic resume. The space was what I envisioned as the perfect space for art. On the negative side, even though I had timely press releases, mailed out cards, had delicious food and music, the opening attendance was low. This I would like to attribute to not being from the area and the gallery is not near the other galleries. I was glad to have the attendance I did. Everyone who showed up was just right. Financially, I did not recoup the expenses, but I did sell a couple of the smaller encaustics. This has also led me to learn that showing is not always selling. The
important thing for me was to be able to show the work. Although, I must admit selling is fabulous and I am not against that by any means.

On a more personal, artistic, creative level I really struggled at times to continue with the work because it was different than the cultural bias. i.e. scenic views, cowboys Indians, wildlife…you know the representational fare which is so abundant. Probably the fact of my previous education and traveling experiences in Europe and Mexico led me to other avenues. A definite part of the creative process is showing your work to others. A willingness to lay yourself bare and expose those parts of your self creates an opening for a deeper dialogue.

Art should take you someplace you have never been. Art is the articulation of discovering a feeling. Poetry is rhythmic verbal thought. The artistic feeling is natural impulse that rises from within, a definite passionate impulse beginning somewhere in the pit of the stomach and rises like the sap in a tree to the breast; the heart beats and then this rising flow comes out through the hand mouth eyes and ears as a croon, groan, sigh, tear or caress. The art force is the translation of an experience, which transcends words. The outcome constantly reveals itself over long periods of time. I do not measure. I do not create. I investigate. The best art comes from a mystical mythical land, a world between worlds where healings, mystery and magic exist.

One of the most important values I have been able to glean from The Creative Pulse has been the experience itself. Our individual beauty lies under a spell from which we only need awaken. If you can understand yourself on a deep level you can better understand the world. Anything that you tackle can be accomplished in a more meaningful and transformational way. I am learning to be responsible for what happens
in my life. When I am able to nourish, foster and protect my own spirit then I am more able to accomplish that for others. I hope to have many opportunities to do this for others and I certainly thank my teachers for doing this for me.

“200 years ago Lewis and Clark recorded finding the American Northwest, a landscape of monumental trees. Most of this forest has since been clearcut, as has later growth. We travel now to confront these facts and look for hope.”

Robert Adams

“Leftovers yield nourishment in new forms…”

M. Shapiro
BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS


Other Media

Quotes from art shows and lectures attended
Nevelson, Herzog, Bourgoise, Balog, Adams, Shapiro
APPENDIX A
A LIST OF ARTWORK FOR THE GOLDDUST GALLERY JUNE 2006

Forest Observations showing May 5 at Golddust Gallery, Missoula MT.

A selection of new work by Stephanie Barrett-Pointer comprised of graphite drawings including those, which resulted during an Artist-Forest-Residency in the Helena National Forest, encaustic works and paintings. All the pieces in this show are abstract to semi-metaphorical imagery dealing with visual, emotional and inner reactions to our natural environment. Surface content deals with an intuitive search to discover a real primitive love.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dream within a Dream</td>
<td>oil on Canvas</td>
<td>42”x32”</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vanishing</td>
<td>encaustic on board</td>
<td>6”x6”</td>
<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nemesis</td>
<td>encaustic/copper/sinew</td>
<td>14”x10”</td>
<td>225</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storm</td>
<td>encaustic</td>
<td>6”x6”</td>
<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>I See France</td>
<td>encaustic</td>
<td>6”x6”</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>encaustic</td>
<td>6”x6”</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Vision</td>
<td>encaustic</td>
<td>8”x10”</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Periodic Table of Elements</td>
<td>encaustic</td>
<td>12”x16”</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Magic of Pi</td>
<td>graphite/prismacolor</td>
<td>40”x30”</td>
<td>750</td>
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<td>And the Grace Shone Down</td>
<td>graphite/prismacolor</td>
<td>20”x15”</td>
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<td>Labyrinth</td>
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<td>Eo Mugna</td>
<td>graphite/conte</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ange</td>
<td>graphite/gouache</td>
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<td>Larch Ball # 1</td>
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<td>3”x4”</td>
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<td>Wing Edge</td>
<td>25”x13”</td>
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<td>Forest Mandala</td>
<td>15”x17”</td>
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<td>Turtle Feather</td>
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<td>Firestorm</td>
<td>15”x16-1/2”</td>
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<td>Bee Space</td>
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<td>Nail</td>
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<td>Moth Origin</td>
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<td>Picnic Bench</td>
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<td>Watermark</td>
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<td>Centerline</td>
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<td>Axe Handle</td>
<td>16”x12-1/2”</td>
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<tr>
<td>You are Here (Edge)</td>
<td>20-1/2”x13”</td>
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APPENDIX B
Information Concerning the painting “Dream within a Dream”

The Latin Inscription:

EX LABORE DEO NATURAE SACRIFICA
LIBERALITER PUALATUM REDUCES
ANIMUM DEO SUBJECTUM FIRMAM
CUSTODIAM VITAE TUAE MISERI
CORDITER GUBERNANDO TENEBIT
INCOLUMEMQUE SERVABIT

The rough translation:

*After laboring sacrifice to the God of Nature liberally, in that way you will gradually lead back your spirit to subjugation under God, the secure shelter of your life will be compassionately guided, held and intact preserved.*

Which was taken from the the Hyperotomachia (the dream of Poliphilus of the War of Love) written by an Italian monk named Francesco Colonna, 1499

This intriguing text is based upon very old format of a romanza d’amore. Poliphilus falls asleep and wakes up inside a dream; pretty soon he falls asleep again and wakes up inside a dream within a dream. The whole book takes place in his sleep, except the last page when he thinks he has found his true love—but, when he tries to embrace her he finds himself alone with a lovely fragrant perfume in the air.

The text is written in the colloquial Italian language of the day but also contains Latin, Greek, and Arabic and perhaps other languages as well all intermingled. The book is admired for it’s use of innovative typography. A mysterious, complex and confusing story which has led to much inquiry in order to decipher it’s meaning.

During this time The Rebus was an intellectual game and the symbolism of the image would be tied to the text. A key to The Rebus of the latin inscription in the painting

EX LABORE –after laboring--Ox skull/ reminder of death and a classical architectural ornament/bucranium

DEO NATURAE SACRIFICA—sacrifice to the God of Nature-eye and vulture on a flaming altar resting on goat’s feet/God, Nature, sacrifice-omnipotence of God sometimes symbolized by the single eye

LIBERALITER-liberally-liberal—a basin-libation was a liquid offering poured into a basin

PAULATIM-a vase pouring-in a way that you will gradually-the thin-necked vase pours
more slowly than the basin

REDUCES-a ball of yarn on a spindle-leads back/ this is reminiscent of Ariadne’s thread which helped Theseus return from the labyrinth

ANIMUM-an antique vase tied with a ribbon-your spirit-spirit-the old conflation of spirit and spirits kept in a bottle
DEO SUBJECTUM-a sole with an eye with sprigs of palm, olive and feather--to subjugation under God- God=eye, palm, olive are the fruitfulness of his kingdom

FIRMAM-an anchor tied to-the secure-symbolizes the steadiness of divine protection, moral, intellectual virtue/confidence in God and hope

CUSTODIAM-a goose-shelter- an allusion to the geese that saved the Roman Republic through their vigilance (I guess you have to know the story)

VITAE TUAE-an antique oil lamp held by a hand-of your life/lamp symbolizes light of life-the soul

MISERI CORDITER GUBERNANDO-a rudder w/a sprig of olive-will be compassionately guided-compassionate guidance

TENEBIT-2 grappling hooks held by ribbons-to be held/grappling hooks grab and hold things

INCOLOMEMQUE-a dolphin tied to-intact-Arion the Greek poet was saved from drowning by a dolphin who loved his songs

SERVABIT-a closed coffer-preserved-the coffer symbolizes preservation

please refer to following images
Consider the larch ball.

The larch ball is formed from the needles of the larch tree. The larch tree is also known as the golden tamarack and they are the ones creating the marvelous tapestry of color draping the mountainsides in the fall. In the fall the larch sheds their needles some falling into bodies of water. The needles roll and tumble with the motion of the water. Along the shoreline the needles gather in clumps where the water knits them together in a ball-like form. Some become quite large. The biggest one I have seen is about as big as a human head. The amazing thing is that this delicate structure holds together. They shed a bit but they can also be picked up and held in your hand. Prickly, delicate, whimsical spheres of needles woven together by the natural motions of the elements, time and seasons. I contemplate a fanciful remnant of passing time. Why does nature create such a thing? Sometimes when I look at my art I wonder the same thing. Thoughts, emotions, visual reactions to the natural environment fall into clumps and are gathered by time, media, action, re-action and become what I consider to be art. The works in this show are gifts from a deep source which flows up through me, just like the elements drawn up from deep within the earth by the roots of the larch tree.