

MASTER OF FINE ARTS EXHIBITION: DANIEL CAMPBELL August 31-September 11/87

<u>Title</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. "Nova Scotia"	6B Pencil on paper	16"x13"	1985
2. "Pennsylvania"	6B Pencil on paper	10"x16"	1986
3. "Middle of The Road"	6B Pencil on paper	12"x17"	1985
4. "Drawing Boad"	6B Pencil on paper	14"x16"	1985
5. "Epithet" Collection of Hans Holtkamp	6B Pencil on paper	11"x16"	1985
6. "Running Horse"	6B Pencil on paper	9"x14"	1987
7. "The Blind"	6B Pencil on paper	9"x14"	1987
8. "Tuesday Evening"	Oil on canvas	18"x24"	1986
9. "Monday"	Oil on canvas	18"x24"	1987
10. "Storm Warning"	Oil on canvas	21"x21"	1986
11. "Labyrintine"	Oil on canvas	26"x33"	1986
12. "The Oracle"	Oil on canvas	24"x24"	1986
13. "Formal Attire"	Oil on canvas	18"x18"	1986
14. "The Waiting Room"	Oil on canvas	24"x30"	1986
15. "The Studio"	Oil on canvas	26"x26"	1987

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| 16. | "A Musical Stand"                          | Oil on canvas | 10"x13" | 1987 |
| 17. | "The Bridge"                               | Oil on canvas | 10"x11" | 1987 |
| 18. | "Sentinals"                                | Oil on canvas | 21"x30" | 1987 |
| 19. | "The Unconscious Decision"                 | Oil on canvas | 24"x33" | 1987 |
| 20. | "Inner, Outer and Secret"                  | Oil on canvas | 26"x33" | 1987 |
| 21. | "An Open Door"                             | Oil on canvas | 18"x24" | 1986 |
| 22. | "A New Direction to Nowhere in Particular" | Oil on canvas | 24"x24" | 1986 |
| 23. | "The Secret                                | Oil on canvas | 18"x26" | 1987 |

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS  
EXHIBITION PAPER

The Language

Discussing and creating visual art is a difficult proposition when we consider that it is a language, a visual language that utilizes symbols or metaphors as its medium of communication, with no guarantees as to how it will be interpreted. As an artist I am continually reminded of these difficulties in communication, and the relative nature of my choice in style and methodology. I do not seek, nor believe in a universal language that speaks to all. Instead, I am attempting to add another voice, another viewpoint into the arena of the visual arts, a field steeped with a multiplicity of forms, manners and orientations.

The work presented in my Master of Fine Arts exhibition is a visual representation of my voice as an artist, and these words are an attempt to add clarity to that vision.

The Work

My work has undergone many changes since I first

entered art school twelve years ago. Until 1982 I worked in a semi-abstract style where I explored formal qualities with a strong emphasis on emotional content. Subsequently, my style and orientation has shifted towards realism in order to pursue elements I now consider important, and which previous styles inhibited; these will be explained shortly.

While first pursuing this new direction my images were based on photographs. I did this to sharpen my technical ability, and to re-orient myself to a more literal form of observation, a process that I considered necessary, but not an end in itself. These images were stiff and mechanical, but did provide a concrete point of departure into a new methodology and perspective. Even at this early stage of my development as a realist I had a goal, or better yet an intuition into where I wished to go. The work presented in this exhibit is close to that place, a place where the separation between ability and vision no longer creates disunity within my work.

~~My concern as an artist is no longer to depict reality, or represent specific aspects of nature; instead, I use a recognizable ~~vision~~ to explore my internal world of thought, feeling and intuition, based on life experiences.~~ These visual symbols are recognizable, but are not intended as real, concrete realities. They refer to ideas or

What comes first - idea  
work and put on the symbolic  
not signed - no date -

experiences in a similar manner that maps refer to specific places, or general areas. The map is not the thing depicted, and vice-versa, they only have reference to each other. The map is essentially a metaphor, a symbol of, and not the thing in itself. Maps offer us a sense of familiarization in foreign surroundings, a sense of placement, providing that the symbols used are recognizable, or at very least approachable. My work is like a map in the sense that it utilizes readable symbols to portray an idea or quality. They vary from the very plausible to impossible, metaphorically, but maintain credibility through my adherence to conventional rules of perspective and form. Without a strict adherence to these rules the works would not maintain their atmosphere and sense of calm, their sense of a moment in time. Instead, the activity would speed up into a more surrealistic fashion, a tempo that I prefer to avoid. I see my work not as surreal, but as a form of symbolic realism where the idea itself is suspended in time, and no particular concept is attached to the objects within the image. Instead each object used is a prop to create the general atmosphere, or ambiance of the image. This is not to say that no ideas will be attached to the image; on the contrary, they will, but these will be left up to the individual viewer to extrapolate.

To describe what I mean by all this let us consider the image called "The Oracle." We could ask, "Is this man an oracle, is he performing an oracle, or, is this the result of a prophecy?" Each of these could be correct, and all that is needed. But this image is not about divining, it is about confusion, a general state of bewilderment. "The Oracle" refers to the tendency to seek answers, while the answer is before us, at this moment. So the image is not directly concerned with describing a situation or depicting a story, but presenting a state of mind. The pretense of a storyline is merely for reference, like signposts we follow while negotiating an unfamiliar city using a road map. They prove a point of entry and a direction to follow. The final destination is left up to the individual viewer. What I am driving at, is that my work is not meant to be crystallized into a specific storyline; they are not narrations. Instead, I attempt to create an atmosphere where contemplation is possible.

#### Methodology

When I first approached a realistic style in drawing and painting, I did it with an eye for exact detail. I rendered the details I observed in life and photographs as accurately as possible. I included every crack and wrinkle. Although the final results were impressive, they

lacked spirit and content. They were no different from the calendar picture that we happily turn over at the end of each month. In other words, they had no lasting quality, their content was finite because they gave too much information to begin with, spelling everything out and leaving us nowhere to go. Their contemplative value was lacking because we could only accept what was presented, the literalness of the image.

It is for these reasons I now pursue the direction presented in this exhibit. The following section is a description of how I use the elements of the language to achieve this goal.

In order to move beyond the bounds of naturalism I have stripped the image to the bare bones, eliminating all non-essential detail so that the image becomes iconographic, a symbol of something and not the thing in itself. Colour for instance, is not used to emphasize an object's realness, or to create high drama. Instead, it is used to promote the image's iconographic presence in a similar manner used in byzantine art, or stained glass windows. The colour is intensified to minimize natural qualities, moving them beyond the ordinary. This intensification lends the work a psychological air, an abnormality that takes the viewer beyond the apparent while retaining points of reference. That is we, (the

observers) recognize the symbols. The colour is intensified, but the shadow and cast light is understated. This is done to minimize the drama, or action, and to achieve a stillness.

My approach to colour also extends to my use of line and texture. All expressive line and uneven surface texture has been eliminated. By using tight even lines between objects, and a smooth even surface texture, a separation takes place between artist and object. The observers cannot get involved in the action of painting, and are left with the result, with a minimum of barriers between image and viewer. My intent is to provoke thought. An expressive surface is irrelevant to my intent. It would be like flapping my arms expressively while discussing a subtle philosophical viewpoint.

As you glance around this exhibit you will notice that most of the work is frontal. The action is mostly confined to the foreground with only hints of the outside environment viewed through doors or windows. This frontal quality confronts the viewer, leaving little room to move. The open windows and doors allow a minimum of expansion, but do give rest points from the claustrophobic environment. Along with composing the picture plane in this manner I also place the viewer in specific locations through the use of perspective devices commonly used by

*Eva Rubenstein*

*mirrors and doors*



artists. To illustrate this use, let us consider the painting called, "The Waiting Room." The vanishing point used in this image is outside of the picture plane to the left. The viewer's eye level is always placed at the vanishing point when using single point perspective. In this case the viewer would be standing at the extreme left, looking into the room. This gives the illusion that we are entering the image from the left, moving right. Each image has a specific viewing position according to how I wished them to be viewed.

My images are not meant to be comfortable. Instead, they are meant to stir something in us, make us curious.

### Inspiration

Throughout my life only two consistent themes have stayed with me, remained important beyond the everyday occurrences and commitments. These are my art, and a desire to understand things beyond the conventional truths of society, beyond the habitual patterns of thought. These two themes are inseparable, they are my experience, my path.

I was once asked, "Who are you?" I could have offered my name, occupation and possibly my astrological sign, but these were too easy, too surface. Labels with very little meaning. For years this simple question haunted me, and

still does to some extent, for I have no answers. A few hints and a multitude of questions are what sustain me in my work.

Politics and religion offer many answers but I am no longer a believer. Ideologies provide emotional stability and a sense of identification, but we forget they are theories. And as such they fade with time. I am left with only my experience and curiosity, and hopefully a sense of humour.

Experience and understanding begins when I open my front door, and step outside.