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[The usage of line]

THESIS STATEMENT

by

JOHN DAVID ELLSWORTH

B.F.A., University of Colorado, 1971

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of Colorado in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

Department of Fine Arts, Creative Art

1973

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This Thesis for the Master of Fine Arts Degree by

John David Ellsworth

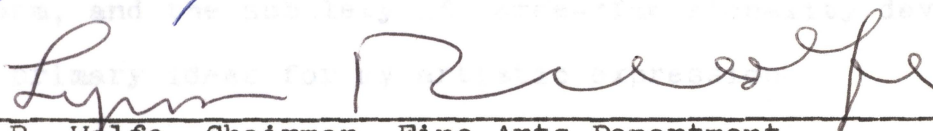
has been approved for the

Department of

Fine Arts

By


Jerry Kunkel, Assistant Professor, Fine Arts Department


Lynn R. Wolfe, Chairman, Fine Arts Department

Date:

4 May 1973

THESIS STATEMENT

The work which I am presenting for my Masters Thesis represents a culmination of ideas which I feel are intergal to an understanding of my art as a whole. Although I began the period of my masters study working in a direction of minimal concerns, I have moved toward more complex presentations of my work in order to satisfy my artistic needs. I use cast flexible resin because it allows me to demonstrate these theories and needs in a highly dynamic and comprehensive fashion.

The major concern of my work deals with the usage of line. In the beginning, I dealt primarily with woven lines and patterns, as one might experience in a piece of cloth viewed under a microscope. Color, transparency, the multiplication of form, and the subtlety of three-dimensionality developed into primary ideas for my artistic expression.

By casting several sets of strips in flexible resin, weaving them together, and setting them up in specific configurations, I discovered several things which I now consider to be fundamental to the success of my work at the present.

First, I found that the traditional concepts of three-dimensional space could be greatly enhanced by altering the

tightness of the woven patterns in terms of the width, length and thickness of the strips. Second, natural or artificial light interacted uncontrollably with the colors I had used in the resin. Taking advantage of this problem, I developed the system of diminishing the strength of my colors in direct proportion to the opacity of the strips. By controlling these changes in color and opacity throughout the strips, I found I could use light to my advantage. The result was a new dimension of visual movement and direction which, previously, had only been accomplished by the configuration of the strips themselves. Third, the concept of scale became primary to each piece as they existed in specific environmental situations of my choice.

It has not been my intention to display microscopic blow-ups of cloth materials, but to allow the material of flexible resin to transcend this concept into a new dimension of comprehension to the human psyche. The basic human experience is related to one's understanding and acceptance of his environment. Spatial relationships, color variations, transparency and texture are intergal to that understanding.

Therefore, the work I display is specifically designed to initiate certain reactions in the observer. These reactions are different, of course, for different individuals. It is my feeling that to display art to be observed is to force a

reaction on the basis of one's own experience. In this way, each new piece being observed becomes a meaningful part of one's repertoire. If there is no reaction to the piece, then the piece itself becomes a meaningless part of that repertoire.

As my work developed, I found it necessary to take better advantage of each space I used. By this, I mean, that to define a space is to accept the fact that humans exist in, and use, that space. By placing a piece of sculpture in the middle of a room, one is only allowing for circulation around that object. Because of this, my work must exist on both floors and walls. In this way, I develop a situation of integrating at least two surfaces which are known elements of the total human experience. Also, because flexible resin allows me to cover large surfaces at moderate expense, I would be denying my form of expression if I did not use these spaces thoroughly.

The piece which I present for my thesis exhibition was designed for a variety of reasons. Primarily, it is a culmination of the concepts and attitudes I have described in this paper, and which are primary to my art. As well, it employs a new dimension beyond my previous work. That is, the implementation of compression and expansion, as important elements in the human experience.

I have developed these ideas only slightly in previous works by employing knots into the strips. But, now, the entire piece is designed to express these attitudes as follows:

First, lateral expansion beginning at one end and moving toward the center, experiencing total compression in the wrapping of the central portion, and then a burst of expansion and freedom to the other end of the piece. Second, I have used three basic colors which diminish in intensity from very bright, to almost total non-existence. This was done to create a subtle feeling of three-dimensionality as the strips invert their direction when passing through the confined central portion. Third, by diminishing the opacity of the strips from opaque to transparent, this three-dimensional feeling which began with color changes is further enhanced. Finally, by extending the strips of the centrally confined area to the floor, I am demonstrating the force being applied to the horizontal strips, as well as integrating the entire piece more cohesively with the space being used.

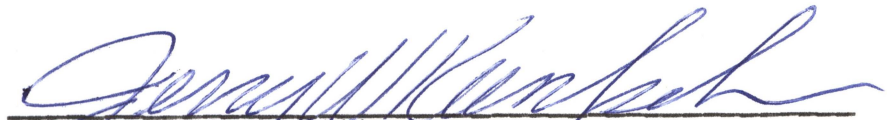
In summary, I feel that my work is inventive and expressive, subtle and emotional: qualities which are closely integrated and represented in my own personality.

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree
M.F.A. in Creative Arts.

John David Ellsworth

Has submitted this written thesis as a supplement to the
creative thesis.

Approved by

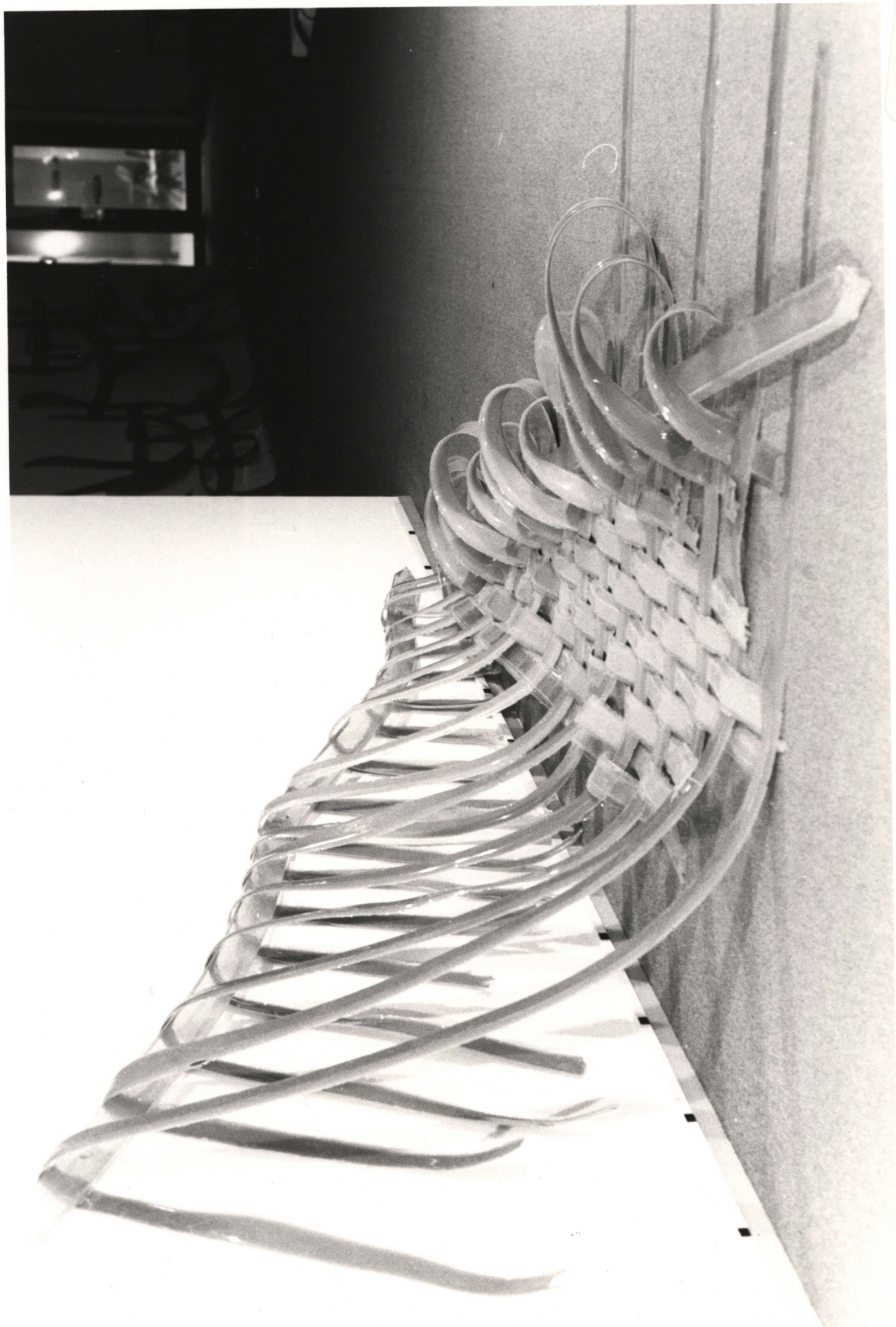

Chairman of Committee

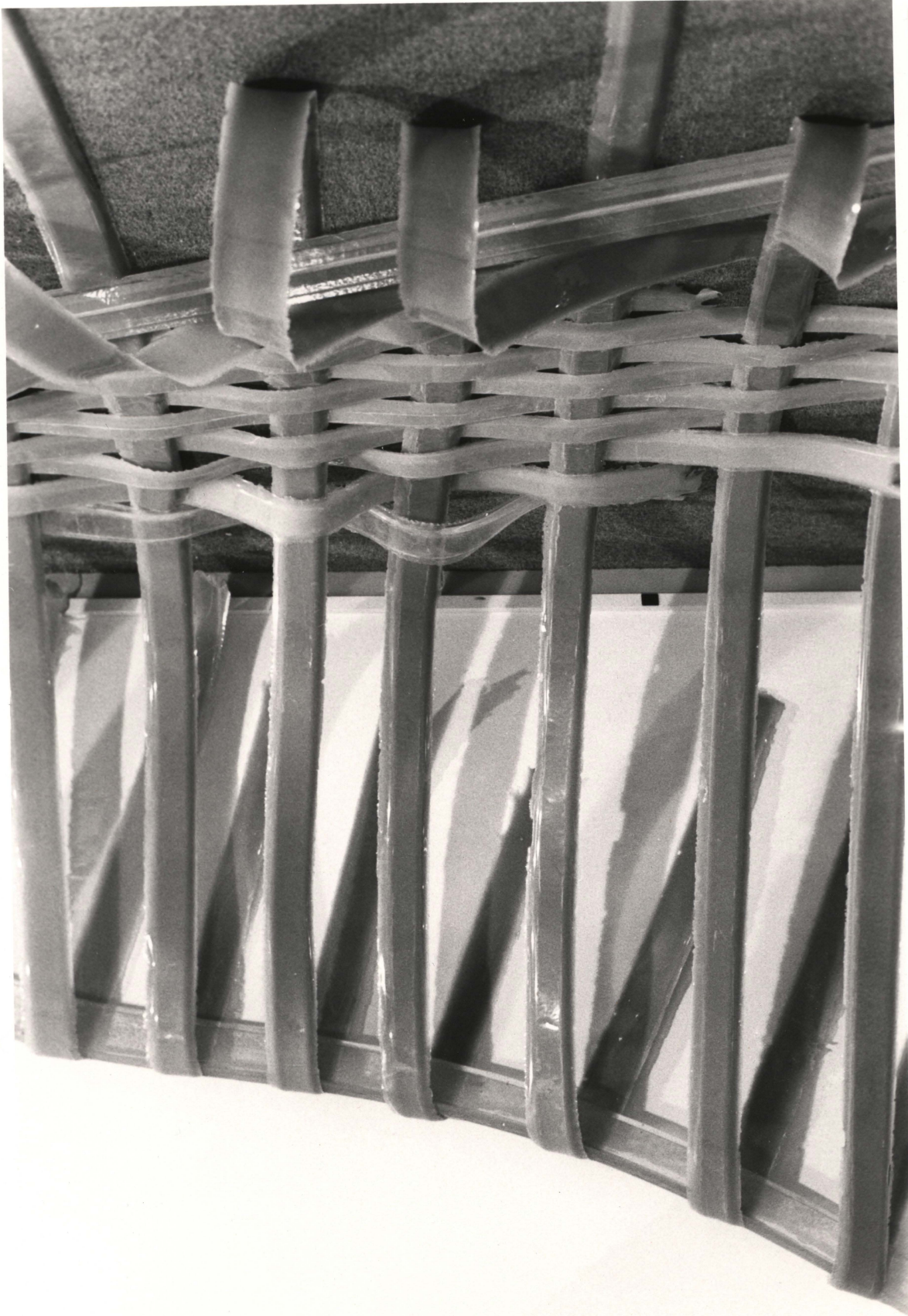

Co-Chairman of Committee


Chairman, Department of Fine Arts

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