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A DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPT STRUCTURE

by

Gary Leroy Keinig

B.F.A., Wichita State University, 1964

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

1967

This Thesis for the Master of Fine Arts degree by

Gary Leroy Keimig

has been approved for the

Department of

Fine Arts

by

Roland M. Reiss

Roland M. Reiss

Frank Sampson

John Franklin Sampson

Roland E. Day

R.E. Day

Date

May 5, 1967

Keimig, Gary Leroy (M.F.A., Fine Arts: Creative Arts)

A Development of Concept Structure

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Roland M. Reiss

A concept, in the context of each of my works, is both intellectual and visual in character. Once a conceptual order is initiated into the work itself the artist becomes accountable for each successive decision and attitude. A realization of the extent to which the artist can distinguish his own expressive world comes out of a personal structuring in one's methods of recognizing and confronting the issues of each concept. In the working process cues for further development are often taken from the concept rather than the pictorial image. The artist takes a stance in the conscious control and development of the interaction between concept and image. The artist's primary opportunity and responsibility in relation to contemporary developments in art is in making use of them as reference points and concept stimulators. The idea behind the piece, the physical activity involved in making it, and the product itself, all may be seen to amplify, modify, and parody one another.

This abstract is approved as to form and content.

Signed Roland Reiss
Faculty member in charge of thesis

I have chosen the word concept to identify a working visual intellectual unit. No element in my work is simply a shape, a color, a texture or a pictorial element. Each visual element is specific in nature; in the case of shape for instance, a curved shape, made up of arcs, with the centers of the circles from which those arcs are taken, falling two inches apart along a line moving back in space according to linear isometric drawing. The point in this case is that I am responsible for establishing both intellectually and pictorially the exact nature of the shape, each time I use the shape. This specifying process goes on with each element brought into the work. Each of these elements must have an established relationship with each of the other elements, i.e.; shape to color, color to line, line to texture, texture to material, material to application and application to shape. A concept then in the context of each of my works is both intellectual and visual.

The commitment to a concept or a particular set of concepts dictates a product unique to that commitment. The artist brings his attitude to each particular problem. Within this attitude the artist comes to grips with a wide range of issues. In order for me to confront these issues, initially, they must be acknowledged. There must be a very conscious and strenuous examination of the issues and a refusal to accept any pictorial devices at

face value. They cannot at a beginning stage of conceptual development be ignored because of a judgement about their comparative value in relation to any other issue. The initiation of the conceptual development is the result of an order outside of the work and is to this extent an arbitrary reference from which develops a sequence of conceptual maneuvers. Once this conceptual order is initiated into the work itself the artist becomes accountable for each successive decision and attitude.

I see the degree or kind of conceptual specification as being the product of the artist's bias. These concepts exist in great part as personal visual symbols. The concept becomes an open door out of which other concepts can emerge. The artist is completely at the mercy of his own biases and his means of manipulating them. If an issue is engaged that is in some aspect arbitrary then this specific aspect must be through careful identification acknowledged and brought into play as a determining issue. A realization of the extent to which the artist can be his own man comes out of a personal structuring in one's methods of recognizing and confronting the issues of each concept.

One very simple means of manipulating images is to take any given image and specify any particular characteristic of that image. Once this is done an opposite

er opposing characteristic becomes to some extent apparent. Another means of manipulation operates in the following way: any direct visible evidence of the image could be completely eliminated, leaving only the logic which triggered the elimination which could affect the total concept structure. These simple methods of concept investigation are used with greater or lesser refinement by many artists. They are simple and obvious conceptual tools in themselves. Their implications are neither specific nor general until they come under a given conceptual bias.

Once a beginning reference is initiated, conceptual structuring begins. It is of particular interest to me at the present time, that structuring follows a certain path in relation to other possible avenues. Identification of this development can offer new insight. In the working process I often take my cue for further development from the concept rather than the pictorial image. However, in my work I feel they do not exist apart from one another.

Concepts and images interact and thereby create new concepts and images. The artist takes a stance in consciously controlling and developing this interaction. This structuring is effected directly by both images and implied attitudes. Much of this stimulation comes from the art world.

The art work of any time is a product of the important issues of that period. Within the contemporary art product and the artist's motives lies a most fertile area of study. This has always been true to some extent. Today, with the dramatically increased exposure of the art product and the emphasis in universities and in public media on verbal explanation of art, the artist has the option of drawing from an enormous body of potentially useful information. This phenomenon offers an opportunity to direct value judgements to a larger range of art products. Declarations either pro or con about any art product are a secondary concern. The artist's primary opportunity and responsibility implicit in this contemporary exposure is in making use of it as a learning tool.

The various important personalities and issues in contemporary art exist as reference points. Important art represents an involvement to some extreme degree in one direction. The similarities, motives, and implications that exist between various references can be valuable for the artist in grasping his own position in the continuity of art activity. The individual artist is responsible for a thorough grounding in contemporary issues which affect him in his art. Even if he feels they are irrelevant he must hold himself responsible for having investigated them at length.

I have already stated that a concept exists in

part as a visual symbol. One aspect that further typifies my approach to art through concept is a strong formal, spatial awareness. Space or a derivative of a specific spatial reference acts as a key motive throughout my work. An accounting for the actual space which a work occupies is of major importance. The physical manifestation of the piece is a primary issue. The idea behind the piece, the physical activity of making it and the product itself amplify, modify, and parody one another. These various aspects encompass the total concept continuity. Each state of the piece is a specific function of an invented logic which develops in its production.

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree M.F.A. in Creative Arts.

Gary Leroy Keimig

has submitted this written thesis
as a supplement to the creative thesis

One mixed media construction and two pencil drawings

<u>42 x 90 x 52</u> Size	<u>Diddle Dumb Down</u> Title
<u>22 x 28</u> Size	<u>Spill</u> Title
<u>22 x 28</u> Size	<u>Drawing</u> Title
<u> </u> Size	<u> </u> Title

Which is in the permanent possession of the University of
Colorado and recorded with the Department of Fine Arts.

Approved by Roland Reiss
Chairman of Committee
Frank Sampson
Delbert Day
Chairman, Fine Arts Dept.
Date May 5, 1967







