

1980

Ascetic Progression

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ASCETIC PROGRESSION

An Abstract

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

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by

NANCY BARTUSCH

May, 1980

This Project by: **Nancy Bartusch**
Entitled: **Ascetic Progression**

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the Degree of
Master of Arts

5-2-80
Date Shirley Haupt
Chairman, Thesis Committee

5-2-80
Date Allan Shickman
Member, Thesis Committee

5/2/80
Date Joseph M. Ruffo
Member, Thesis Committee

This is a thesis project for which a thesis manuscript is not appropriate.

Joseph M. Ruffo

5/2/80
Date Head of the Department of U

Upon recommendation of the Thesis Committee, accepted by

H. Ray Hoops
Dean of the Graduate College

ABSTRACT

The title of my Studio Thesis is Ascetic Progression. My paintings reflect asceticism because they involve a solitary, personal search. The search leads to the unknown, as in a silent, tidal progression.

I do not want to paint the things that I know. I may use a certain type of imagery or structure repeatedly as one uses the same language in new composition to express new thought. I am painting blindly in a way. I say blindly, because I want to reach beyond what I know. I may learn it at a later time, but when I paint it, it is a mystery. I have asked a subliminal question. If the painting is good, the mystery answers, as a tide, remaining a further mystery and again answering. What the mystery of painting reveals may be of a technical nature, but more importantly and more excitingly, it is of a philosophical nature. My paintings are in this sense objects of meditation. They become a means of questioning the meaning of existence. The more I question, the simpler it becomes. One has to traverse complex terrain, however, to find it. It is simpler than a circle, simpler than a dot and infinitely more magnificent than I can imagine.

What finally works best is to state simply that if

nothing is true, then everything is true. It is a sobering task to consider fearlessly the first part of this statement. One must be fearless to fully grasp it. When I do a good painting, I know more about something than I can say, because it is too simple and words are too complex. So in painting, I cannot paint it, but I can paint at it. It is a progression. The search and I are one.

Within the search and the tide, I confront information: the influences of instructors, critics, other artists and their work, life in general, the janitors opinion, the pigeon on the window sill, ad infinitum. I will cast some of it away, accept some; old information may become obsolete and wash away in one of these tides and may wash in again at a later time in the light of new information.

The ultimate truth is unchanging and simple far beyond simple. I must pursue that truth in the way I know best,—with color, light, form, texture, dimension,—with feeling,—with paint.

The Studio-Thesis Exhibition, entitled Ascetic Progression, was held in the South Upper Gallery of the Communication Arts Center, University of Northern Iowa, from April 28 - May 9, 1980.

ASCETIC PROGRESSION

A Thesis

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LIST OF SLIDES

(All of the paintings listed are 54½"x59".)

1. Fuga de Cheops, 1980, acrylic/canvas
2. Lazos en Regla, 1980, acrylic/canvas
3. Detail: Lazos en Regla, 1980, acrylic/canvas
4. Mensajero del Pasado, 1980, acrylic/canvas
5. Detail: Mensajero del pasado, 1980, acrylic/canvas
6. Sombra de Muerte, 1980 acrylic/canvas
7. Detail: Sombra de Muerte, 1980, acrylic/canvas
8. Vispera de Comprensión, 1980, acrylic/canvas
9. Detail: Vispera de Comprensión, 1980, acrylic/canvas
10. Viento Picaresco, 1980, acrylic/canvas
11. Detail: Viento Picaresco, 1980, acrylic/canvas
12. La Chispa Expresso, 1980, acrylic/canvas
13. Detail: La Chispa Expreso, 1980, acrylic/canvas