

This volume contains accompanying media (slides, audio recording, etc.) which was not scanned.

The accompanying media is available with the original print version of this volume. Ask at a Library help desk for information on how to obtain the print version.

Due to age, some media may be deteriorated or unusable.

IN SEARCH OF AN ART

by

EUNICE WILSON STRUNK

B.F.A., Kansas City Art Institute, 1973

A STATEMENT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Department of Art

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1981

Approved by:


Major Professor

A11200 395139

SPEC
COLL
LD
2668
.R4
1981
S77
C.2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--------------------------|------|
| In Search of an Art | 1 |
| Bibliography | |
| Copy of Program of Study | |
| List of Exhibitions | |

The earth is new each day, although it is the same old earth. Water flows continuously under the bridge and everything has become new with each glance I make at the stream, yet it remains water, not the same water, but water still. I recognize the new by my remembrance of the old; consequently, the transformation loses its terror for me and I can accept the flux knowing there is nothing new under the sun.

For that reason words like truth and beauty, art and reality have meaning for me still, although these are meanings which have changed with time and will change again. Nor would I attempt to define them verbally, except in a very personal way and in an indiscreet moment. These are the sort of words that mean everything and nothing and for that reason have been thrown on the dungheap by some. To me, they are like small jeweled arrows that give a certain direction to my life. I do not expect them to lead to exact destinations; they merely indicate possibilities. They are private words, more like compressed dreams which cannot be forgotten. They resemble a quest for the Holy Grail which began for each Knight of the Round Table from wherever he was at that moment; there, he entered the forest where it was thickest to begin his search for the holy relic.

Joseph Campbell in his The Masks of God: Creative Mythology calls this age one of "unbridled, headlong adventure," for it is a time that forces us to build our own individual mythologies and quests. Because many of us have lost the defences of a traditional mythology, we have no choice, he states, but the one he has proposed: that we perform an inward heroic search for our own being. "Since in the world of time every man lives but one life," he writes, "it is in himself that he must search for the secret of the Garden." Like those knights of old, he explains, "we today...must (italics not mine) enter the forest...the pathless way is the only way now before us."

That pathless way introduced me to art, an art which has given order and meaning to my life. I did not recognize immediately its importance, for it was an awareness that took place over a period of years. My definition of art and of myself has been a progressive one and has encompassed a lifetime of education, only part of which has been conducted in the classroom. Art has become for me a skill, a wrap and a world; and while I have been making it, it has made me.

It took me half a childhood to admit that brownies, elves, fairies, angels, nymphs and dryads were not to be discovered in the woods and open places and not even a lifetime has reconciled me to their absence. Art, I think, has something to do with that feeling.

It is a half-remembered dream, a moment of sudden color, a ripple of irridescence sweeping under the bridge that we can catch and hold in our consciousness for only a brief unmeasurable time, for moments so limited that we can recollect only the pain of recognition and not the substance. Unexpected as they are, we cannot even prepare for them; they awake us and are gone, leaving us only with feelings that cannot be put into words. We gather baskets of these impressions which we cannot name and try to translate them into visual images, musical scores or choreography, remembering Heraclitus who wrote that: "The fairest universe is but a heap of rubbish piled up at random." Unlike Heraclitus, however, I have not been able to see the rubbish.

Words and books more than people have been influential in my life and always a bit too late because learning what to read takes time, and much of what I have learned in that manner might have been accomplished more easily and quickly within a more intelligent environment. A particular book or books can generally be related to important decisions and changes I have made and the story of my life is almost synonymous with the story of my library card. One such book was W. H. Auden's Van Gogh A Self-Portrait which I read several years before entering the Kansas City Art Institute. For a while it served me almost as a Bible and many of its passages I read aloud to my family at the dinner table,