

A SERIES OF COLLAGE DRAWINGS EXPRESSING  
METAPHYSICAL MOODS

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A Report of a Creative Project  
Presented to  
The School of Graduate Studies  
Drake University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

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by  
Milton B. Sigel  
August 1974

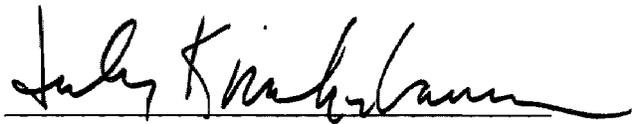
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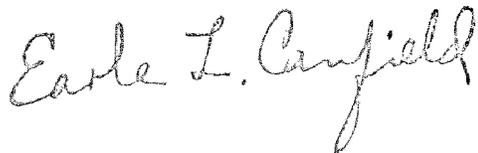
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Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

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An abstract of a Report of a Creative Project by  
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The problem. A series of collage drawings to express the artist's personal involvement with peculiar relationships between supernatural and normal conditions or events in life which form a metaphysical reality.

Procedure. To develop a large group of representational images and settings taken from the artist's past experiences, his subconscious and his dreams with the intention to experiment, interchange and unite into a particular metaphysical composition.

Findings. Working from the developmental stages of the drawings to the finished work the artist has deepened and expanded his understanding of the complex, contradictory and peculiar relationships which exist and make-up his supersensible world.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. "Truth Bearer" . . . . .	7
2. "Silenced Woman" . . . . .	8
3. "Dead Hero" . . . . .	9
4. "Pig Iron" . . . . .	10
5. "Ugly Beauty" . . . . .	11
6. "Untitled Title" . . . . .	12

The term metaphysical means a state of being, beyond or above the physical. This science of the supersensible is essential for any reality and has supernatural qualities. The supernatural, meaning anything which occurs outside the normal experiences and knowledge of man, is caused by other than the known forces of nature. The supernatural or mysterious conditions help formulate a metaphysical reality. However, in a metaphysical reality a mixture of both the supernatural and normal conditions exist. This forms an environment of security and understanding, as well as insecurity and inexplicability.

In a series of six drawings (Figures 1 through 6) done in a collage technique, using pencil and paper-cutouts (measuring 18" x 24") and uniting representational images and atmospheric effects the artist has developed some various metaphysical relationships. These relationships show the peculiar, yet necessary involvement between supernatural and normal events and conditions in life. These experiences may range from the very humorous and light to the very dramatic and tragic. By using images and settings from the artist's past experiences, his subconscious and

his dreams he hopes to illustrate his personal involvement in a metaphysical world. For example, in the drawing called "Truth Bearer," (Figure 1) there exists a sailboat in the distance, an Octopus in the forefront, a crescent moonshape and a peculiar boy-like image surrounded by disks, all set on or around a stage-like setting in a deep space. All this permits an atmosphere which suggests freedom, escape, lightheadedness, romance and playacting. However, in the drawing called "Silenced Woman," (Figure 2) images presented include a single musical instrument, a silenced tuba, as well as, a closed door, a distressed looking female figure and another female head whose eyes are covered by blinders; all drawn fairly close together to the front of a shallow chamber space. All this transmits an attitude of tightness, desperation, motionlessness, seriousness and frustration.

The use of images and the control over illusory space are two factors in creating and developing the proper metaphysical moods. The use of a particular texture, medium and composition also contribute to a successful and complete effect. The composition of the drawings are made-up of one large shape which contains many images. The large shape becomes a unifying and stabilizing force, allowing a number of

seemingly unrelated objects to have peculiar, yet believable relationships between each other. The use of a pencil collage medium also has a unifying effect. The change from the originally intended sketch-painting process to a pencil collage technique not only gave the artist more flexibility in experimenting and interchanging a large group of images, but the black and white contrast of pencil helped create a simple balance of tonality throughout the drawings. The use of illusory textural surfaces to help create more believable images vary in the drawings. By introducing a scale of textures ranging from the very smooth and uniform to the very rough and chaotic a drawing may take on characteristics either familiar or contradictory in nature. At least one texture quality which is contradictory in nature and suggests a supernatural condition is present in each drawing. Shading with pencil, a statue-like effect prevails over each illusory three-dimensional image. Each image has the appearance of a stable and unmovable object. Yet, possessing at the same time the quality of buoyancy, like a balloon filled to its fullest capacity before exploding. This paradox helps create a condition of the illusory forces of gravity and anti-gravity simultaneously fighting against each other.

Symbolism does not play an important role in the drawings, other than expressions of general moods and feelings which are present to indicate a specific metaphysical condition. The artist created the drawings out of the need to express himself and his involvement with a metaphysical world in a spontaneous and direct manner. Abstract moods and feelings seem more in tune with the metaphysical philosophy, rather than the logical and deep-rooted explanations necessarily embodied in symbolism. The titles of the drawings are also expressions of abstract feelings or states of mind when the artist viewed the finished drawings and are not symbolic in nature.

A book entitled Metaphysical Art, which gives a history of the metaphysical movement, was the artist's first contact with the idea. Carlo Carra, Giorgio DeChirico and Oskar Schlemmer, whose art is discussed in this book probably influenced the artist faster, more positively, philosophically and magically than any other art or artists. Using these three men and examples of their work, the artist gives some explanation for his almost instant enthusiasm and subsequent attempts at developing his own personal approach in the area of metaphysical art. Each of

these three artists use definite and separate approaches in expressing their involvement in a metaphysical reality. One or two specific qualities in their work stand out in the artist's mind as a powerful influence upon his own work. A painting entitled "The Mysterious Swimmer" by DeChirico has a boldness and directness which emphasizes the artist's love for the expression of an idea clearly and concisely in a simple format. DeChirico's capacity to use simple and common objects to secure a magical effect also fascinated the artist. By incorporating or interrelating numerous commonplace images in a specific space, Carra, the father of the metaphysical school, had an uncanny way of creating peculiar and dreamlike objects, which glow with mystical involvement. This and the natural ability of Carra, in his painting, "The Builder's Son," to set any object firmly into an illusory perspective space amazes the artist. Different in his concerns over the purpose of art, Oskar Schlemmer, unlike other metaphysical artists, felt the artist had an obligation to be in contact with and describe the human condition. Believing as well in the idea of life being full of mystical involvements, he attempts to show man's struggle with the normal and supernatural events

in the environment. Working consistently with a basic figure-like form, he created a unique approach showing the many moods of man. By a constant repetitiveness of this figure in his painting "Five Men in a Room," and the manipulation of their positions among each other, Schlemmer created a strong expression of the abstract tensions and confrontations within man and between men. It is this ability to set-up a condition to express valid and universal attitudes which has intrigued and captivated this artist.

It is the artist's opinion that all men live their lives in a cycle made-up of mysterious and normal metaphysical experiences, which not only controls one's life, but permits life to function. By working from the developmental stages of his drawings to the finished work the artist's main goal has been to deepen his understanding of his metaphysical world.



Figure 1. "Truth Bearer"

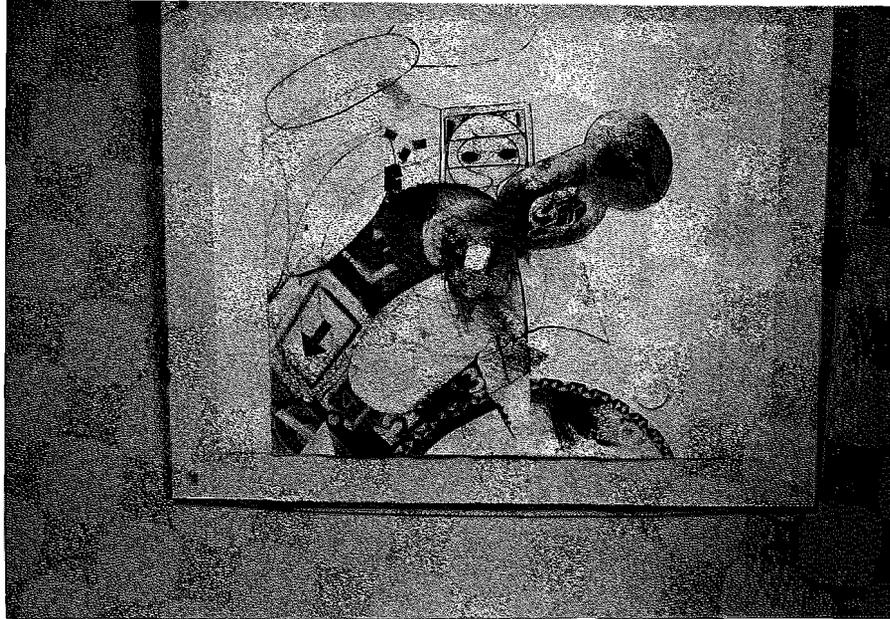


Figure 2. "Silenced Woman"

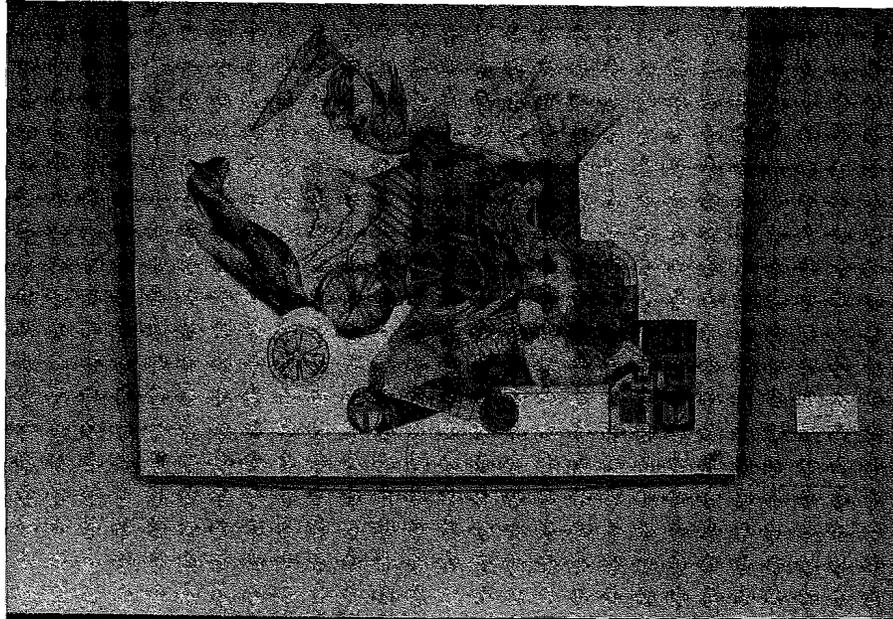


Figure 3. "Dead Hero"

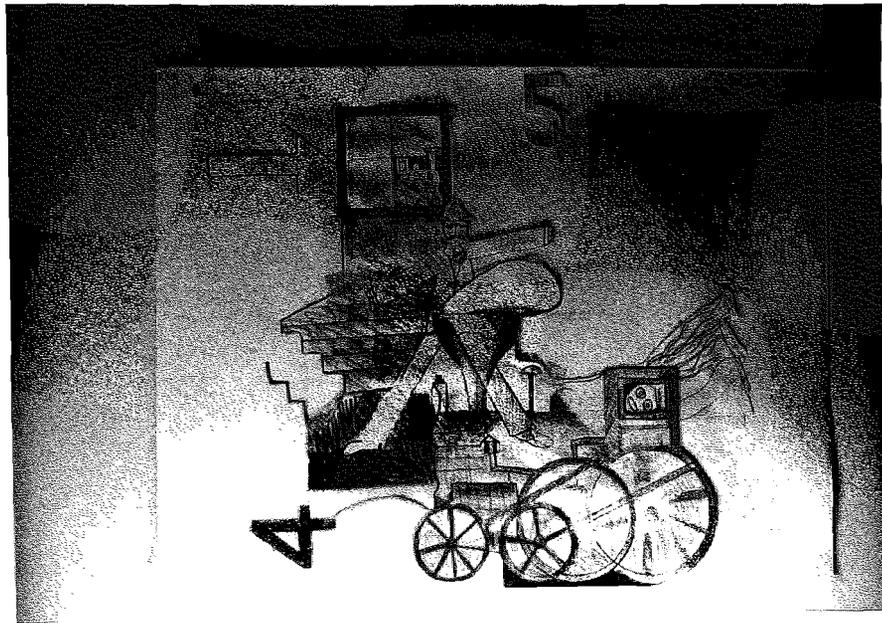


Figure 4. "Pig Iron"

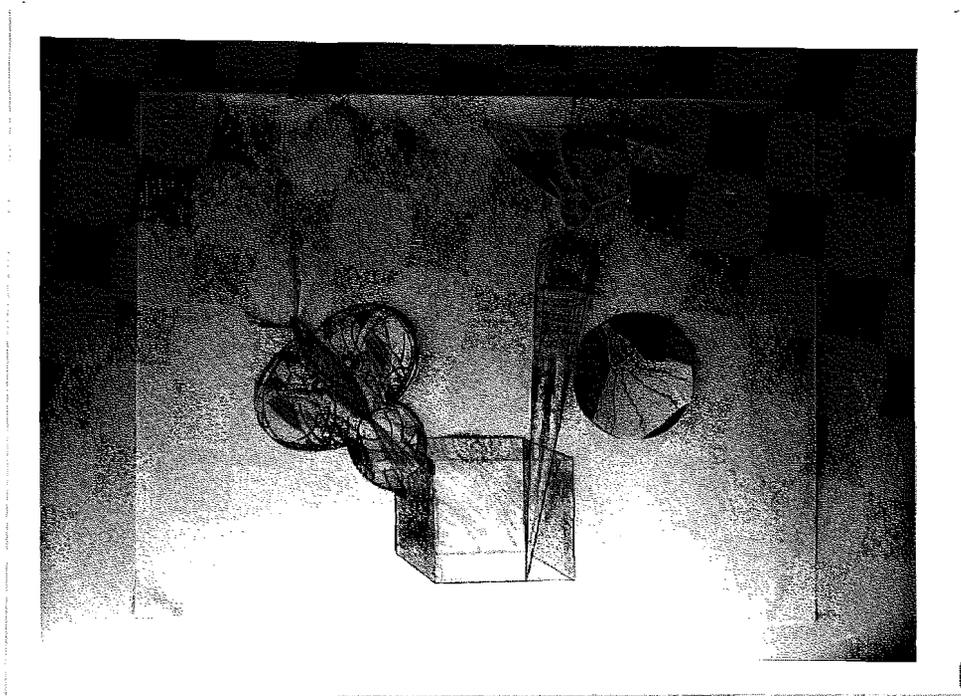


Figure 5. "Ugly Beauty"

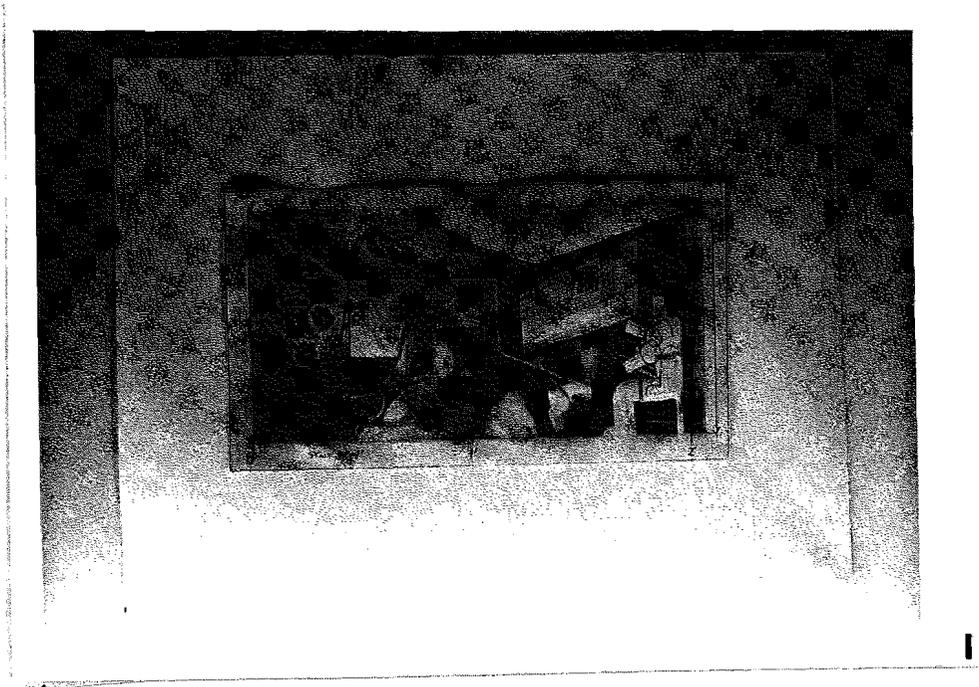


Figure 6. "Untitled Title"

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