Journal Entries from Utopia

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MFA University of Georgia 2000

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Leslie Snipes

Approved: [Signature]
Major Professor

5/3/2000
(date)
Collector's Topographical Map

charcoal on gessoed paper

50 x 64½" 1999
Mine

charcoal and pastel on gessoed paper

80 x 93"  2000
Untitled

carbon and pastel on gessoed paper

80 x 93"  2000
Cut

charcoal and pastel on gessoed paper

50 x 64 1/2"
Truth is described in Antoine De Saint Exupery's words as "the language that expresses universality. Newton did not 'discover' a law that lay hidden from man like the answer to a rebus. He accomplished a creative operation. He founded a human speech which could express at one and the same time the fall of an apple and the rising of the sun." I correlate the aim of finding my visual vocabulary to this statement. Much of my process is spent searching for my truths. The images arrive through drawing with a healthy sense of release and wonder, leaving me to interpret later what the process has revealed to me about how I relate to the world.

I am an observer and an interpreter of inner and outer validities. This is the impetus for my work, and forms the interior topographies I make for myself. For this representation I'm drawn to elements which are organic, fluidly changing, and more profoundly and secretly ordered than my life. I consistently tend to revolve around the ideals of landscape: light, atmosphere, mass, earth, form, patterns of growth and organization, silence, introspection, the sublime. My working process is also modeled on an organic order, allowing emergences of the psyche and personal patterns.

Space structure and character influence the way the image develops its presence. The way the space is handled has a strong cast on the content. The logic of the structuring arises out of latent personal wishes or needs, but reflect my reality as well. Though I am a part of the organism I study, i.e. the world and the self, I feel more an observer rather than a participant. I am fond of this shell of a position and don't seek to change it, though I do need to understand my comfort.

Finally, I quote Exupery who says in his travel memoir, "If orange trees are hardy and rich in fruit in this bit of soil and not that, then this bit of soil is what truth is for orange-trees." Similarly, I attempt to find my soil's current and possible compositions through the act of drawing as thinking. The viewer is asked to empathize with the images and absorb them on a non-literal level. I present this search for posterity as a record of where I've been and have yet to go. Consider these drawings a topographical map found, formed, and preserved.
Installation View

from the MFA 2000 Candidates' Thesis Exhibition at the Georgia Museum of Art, UGA, Athens GA