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NATURE AND PAINTING

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
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I would like to thank Professor Isa Petrossani and Professor Richard Boardman for their help during my course of study in Rosary College in Florence, as well as the times they shared with me in their homes.
In trying to discuss and write about my work as part of my degree requirement and trying to determine why my work has taken on a particular style is something I have never actually thought about. Now as I write this paper and try to put my work into some sort of grouping I imagine it could be classified as traditional or classical, its roots or foundation existing before and including impressionism. However, I also must consider that neither art history nor museums have ever held my interest nor played a role until my junior year in college. I felt then, that I had to look elsewhere for the causes that shaped my work. Since Landscape has always been the subject matter of my painting I would have to say that Nature was my first and greatest teacher, secondly came my formal education.

Like most people I have witnessed throughout my life the beauty of nature: and in New England the magnificence of Nature is very evident. I have witnessed Nature's splendour by extremes in light, color, temperature, and mood. I am not sure why the works of Nature have influenced me so greatly. Perhaps it is the combination of land, sea, and sky which form a harmonious perfection that I have yet to see in anything else. It is within this harmony and perfection which has always seemed delicate and at the same time powerful that I have found closeness and truth. Possibly, it is in how I interpret this sensitivity with my own eyes that has fostered my way of depicting Nature as I see it. I hope to be able to capture the same qualities of harmony and perfection in my painting.

Assuming that my interpretation of nature is responsible for my style, I can now understand a lot of the com-
ments made to me by my teachers during my undergraduate years in art school. The comments made usually centered around the fact that my work reminded them of George Inness or Winslow Homer. These comments usually dealt with the depiction of nature such as land masses or cloud formations in terms of the revealing qualities of light.

In dealing with the above comments the one thing I have found rather interesting is that these men spent the greater part of their lives in New England and were probably influenced by the same qualities of nature which had shaped my work as an undergraduate art student. Without previously having been aware of these artists other than quick glances of photo reproductions of their work, it gave me a sense of satisfaction that by just working and learning from Nature my talent was shaped in the same way that Nature had probably shaped their work. As a result my undergraduate years were spent trying to find out more about these artists and other artists who were painting in a similar fashion and who expressed their ideas in written form.

Studying their written ideas I felt I could draw upon them for knowledge and inspiration at that time and later on. Because of the fact that I am working in a traditional manner, it has naturally led me back in time to artists and their works which I have a natural affinity for and I can learn from. The style of my painting and the artists whom I have been impressed with were presented to me in a more tangible manner during my summers in Europe, one of which was spent in England and the other in Florence. In my course of study in England I was exposed to the great figurative and landscape painters of the Northern Schools. These included artists like Van Ruisdael, Gericault or Van Dyke to name but a few. The following summer brought me to Florence and to history
which was previous to the painting I studied in England. It was in Florence that I actually found a supportive basis for my ideas in painting. It seemed that all the groundwork concerning figurative and landscape painting was established during the Renaissance, and it was the artists of the northern and southern schools with their tradition, that formed a foundation for the many generations to follow. The structure that for me provided the groundwork was the reality of the artist as artisan.

The artist for me became a craftsman who worked traditionally, spending many hours drawing and painting from life or nature and labouring over the grinding of his pigments or the incessant compiling of notes about his work and observations from nature.

I feel that my two years in Italy have brought me to the realization of the importance of Renaissance ideas which are the foundation upon which the great European Schools would follow in the next centuries. It is in realizing the importance of the latter ideas and attitudes toward painting and nature that I hope to develop my own artistic talents.

My heart and mind made this decision many years ago because of what I am convinced is the truth for me. This is the way that I must continue to work because to do anything else would be for me, a lie.
CATALOG OF WORKS

1. Landscape with Natale and Antonio, oil.
2. Landscape early evening, oil.
3. Landscape behind the Villa, oil.
4. Landscape with Cypresses, oil.
5. Landscape sketch on the Arno River, oil.
6. Arno River and Torre di S. Nicolo, oil.
7. Landscape behind the Villa, oil.
9. Still Life with Cistern, oil.
10. Still Life with Silver cup, oil.
11. Still Life with Cistern and Flowers, oil.
15. Watercolor Sky Study.
17. Watercolor Sky Study.
18. Watercolor Sky Study.
22. Copy after Annibale Carracci, conte crayon.
23. Copy after Annibale Carracci, conte crayon.
24. Copy after Annibale Carracci, pencil.
27. Copy after Ventura Salimbeni, Pencil highlighted with white conte.
28. Copy after Ventura Salimbeni, conte and charcoal.