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Idego

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IDEGO

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
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Agricultural and Mechanical College
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in

The School of Art

by
Christopher M. Stanley
B.F.A. McNeese State University, 1998
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ABSTRACT

My thesis show is sort of a mock manifesto on the ephemeral making of art, especially my art. Automatic drawing and collage are major themes and redundancies that continue to find their way into what I do. I will show the dualities between what is past and what is present hoping to find the integral ingredient that caused the past to be present. I will make the viewer question what he or she believes in. We all know that the reason for the present is because of the events in the past, but do the events of the past hold a certain tyranny over the way we live or did we choose the products, philosophies and laws that we live by? Again, by the usage of automatic drawing and collage, each image will find another question for the original question. I will not seek answers because only tangible sciences deserve to find facts; art is not necessarily tangible.
1. The tension between water and land; moon and tide.

2. The silent dance of smoke and fire, as well as, the rhythmic movement of grass in the breeze; seaweed in the water.

3. The misshapen forms that move inside of mist and fog. Sometimes we move closer to these forms only to find out that these objects did not even exist, or that they have moved farther away from us. Sometimes we catch a glimpse of these forms and thus, legends become born: Bigfoot, the Yeti, Loch Ness, Martians, angels, the Devil. This is visual residue: an afterthought beginning to take concrete shape within the mind.

4. A cataclysmic moment or period of time: the assassination of archduke Ferdinand, the bombing of Pearl Harbor; the Boston Massacre; nine-eleven; the beating of Rodney King; Vietnam; the suicide of Kurt Cobain; the Cold War; etc.

5. An object which marks time and changes history: the Atom bomb, wireless communication, the electric guitar, plastic, the combustion engine, the Internet, the assembly line, robots, the Space Shuttle, the crossbow, the machine gun, a law, money, etc.

6. Pen touching paper; a chisel scraping stone.

7. A battlefield in which skeletons and blood have formed a tightly bonded union with the ground and the dinosaur fossils. The skeletons command their offspring to mark the occasion with words and stone.

8. Art of many kinds. The making of art. The acceptance of art.

When one goes about the task of creating, there is an urgency, a compulsion, an obsession that occurs. Electronic messages begin to respark, and the connections that carry these messages overload themselves. We do not usually understand what is being sent to us so we reach into our memory bank and examine our history, upbringing, facts, and delusions. When the artist finally organizes this jumbled mess of aurals and visuals, the information congeals into words, pictures, or sound. So, what am I doing? What am I trying
to convey to the viewer? There are four different undercurrents that flow through all of my work: history, pattern, social images and events as well as invented images.

History plays a very visual and metaphorical role in what I do because it is a foundation for so much of my work. Historical occurrences are important in that they shed light on modern thought and contemporary problems. A person totally ignorant of his surroundings can know what and what not to do, if that person knows a little history; hence, while modern doctors with modern machines have the ability to cure many ailments, it is sometimes best to go into the medicine cabinet and retrieve the jar of leeches. When the Atom bomb was first seared onto public’s collective mind, the public realized that warfare would be changed forever and that radiation, so concentrated, had the power to change our physical appearance. Now, without warning, Idego comes along and entertains us with movies about giant ants, crabs or spiders. The mass populace began to think that with the manufacturing and dumping of toxic waste, our bodies would be prone to develop mutations or super-human powers like the Hulk or Spider-Man. This way of thinking seemed preposterous before the advent of the Bomb. This way of thought is still silly to some extent. Now that we have full comprehension of the affects of the Nuclear Age, submarines can travel around the world non-stop, using nuclear energy, another world war has not happened because of the threat that atomic power has shown us during the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and finally, disposal: where does nuclear waste, far more harmful than garbage, go? Can a simple (or not so simple) thing such as disposal lead our societies to advance the space race? Idego. Painting aesthetics have constantly evolved throughout history, however, with the more and more common usage and the affordability of cameras in the later 1800’s, painting radically evolved and moved into the twentieth century like some mad, derailed train; the same will happen to the printmaking medium due to the accessibility of cameras, copiers and fax machines, and the computer. Idego. I suppose that in a lot of my works I try to visualize these kinds of transitions. What is the object, what is the moment? Will time and progress go into an upward or downward spiral? Idego. Sometimes it may be best to blatantly use an older work of art to make a statement of its importance in the contemporary world. This is the case of my using Leonardo’s now somewhat cliched, Last Supper. For me, this household name is a historic
symbol for art itself. This work can be found in living rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, and bathrooms in most of the world. This painting is no longer just a painting, rather, it is a symbol for belief, westernization, and Christian thought.

I always use many patterns and/or colors. Every tribe, society, gang, religion, and sub-culture tend to use specific designs and colors to speak of their plight or belief. This is highly interesting because these designs show us how to tread in the presence of said tribe, society, gang, religion, and sub-culture. Color, symbols, and design can have a subliminal effect on the subconscious mind. Corporations will usually study color so that they can attract an audience or target a consumer. I will replicate this idea in many paintings and prints intending that maybe my designs might have a similar effect on the art viewer’s subconscious. My work is visually dense and sometimes hard to interpret. The idea is that maybe I can attract the viewer and keep him amused and engaged with the contents of my imagery with the usage of simple color and pattern. Road signs with a specific shapes, colors, and designs are intended to be guides for travel and warnings of unexpected potholes and construction found along this road. I think of colors and patterns in this manner. Wood does not necessarily have to be brown, metal objects may have a wood grain, oranges may not always be orange, bananas yellow, fire red, etc. Hopefully, these aberrations will act as road signs to a work’s narrative. If the viewer does not “get it” or form their own narratives, perhaps, he can merely be appreciative or disgusted by the work’s beauty. Animals develop colors and designs to repel predators, or attract prey and mates. It is amazing that the most beautiful animals in the world are also the most poisonous, dangerous, or worst tasting. If I mimic the patterning and colors of a rattlesnake, black widow spider, or poison dart frog, the viewer should connect to the animals’ sense of being even though these animals are not realistically rendered on the picture plane. The work will, hopefully, seem important from afar just as it is important for a person meandering his way through the woods to be able to recognize potentially harmful berries, plants, mushrooms, snakes, spiders, etc. Now, the viewer has walked up to the image to get a closer look and Idego sneaks up from behind and whispers, “This is beautiful, but why do you relate to this? What is in front of you that you fail to see?”. You may see a disorganized puzzle asking to be put together; you may see a single image begging for a
question; you may see something you have already seen before and either walk right by or discover the work’s true organs and messages; you may just see insanity. Insanity is real and has a form. We live amongst and walk through it every day. My work is intentionally designed to look insane because I am trying to represent a transition, a gray line, the catalyst that lies between cause and effect. The image or story may not interest the viewer but the power of color and design are suggestive and intriguing. Again, hopefully, I have caused the viewer connect to his visual senses, the conscious sub-conscious, the Idego. Red, white, and blue, translucence, words hidden beneath intricate motif; the art is a web and Idego is its spinner.

Contemporary images and thought have a large influence on what I create as do events in the news. Show me images of children throwing rocks at tanks, airplanes knocking down buildings, the cutest pet of the week, economies rising and falling, sports, riots, weather conditions, war, health, symbols, symbols, symbols, symbols, numbers, numbers, numbers, life, god, sex, and death . . . all of these things will dictate the colors I choose and the marks I make. I may even utilize techniques that I had not explored before. For example, the Eurodollar will be used in all of Europe in the near future and it will most likely start infiltrating itself into some of my future projects. The Eurodollar itself may have absolutely nothing to do with what is being said in the work, but it may well become a metaphor within the work: a bird, a manhole cover, the eyes of an individual, etc. This is Idego: the confusing split between reality and fiction. It is reality to talk on a phone; it was once fiction to believe that sound information could be transferred electronically. It is real that we are fighting “terrorism” at the present time; it is fiction to believe that we are killing just the enemy. It is real that the human race has grown tolerant of and interested in other cultures within the last hundred years; it is fiction to believe in world peace. It is real that the video game industry annually nets a billion dollars more than the movie industry; it was once fiction to believe that video games were merely an amusing by-product created by the earliest computer programmers. It is real that almost all the world's population knows the fact and effect of gravitational pull; this was once a fiction that took centuries to comprehend.

Idego lies between reality and fiction. My work is a contradiction. I do not just observe; I observe and then create a narrative out of that observation. I give surreal
properties to non-fiction. If some thing or idea is a fiction, I will try to find the very real idea that created this fiction. Idego is a bridge between the conscious and subconscious. Idego is the news, the headlines, the tabloids. I invite the viewer to dig through my pile of images and find something disconcerting, uplifting, informative, or personal. Do not dig, and simply be amused by something that is hard to put your finger on. You know this, you have always known this. Idego knows you. Idego is eating a slice of pizza on a park bench. Idego is the observer of the pizza eater. Idego is the space, the birds, the passing exerciser, the litter, and the cracked sidewalk that obstructs the bridge between observer and eater. Idego is this bridge and here I sit, creating landscapes.

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plate 3. Missile Defense

plate 4. Vacuous Horror (Protection From Aesthetic)
plate 5. Lucky Quasi Motion II

plate 6. Billions and Billions Served (After Leonardo) detail
plate 9. Billions and Billions Served (After Leonardo) detail
VITA

Christopher M. Stanley was born November 23, 1974 in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, but grew up in DeRidder Louisiana since kindergarten. He is the son of his mother, Jean Phillips and his step-father, Jimmy Phillips. His father is Michael Stanley. Christopher graduated DeRidder High School in 1993 with a high school diploma and then went on to McNeese State University where he was awarded a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1998. He was soon accepted into the graduate program at Louisiana State University and is expected to graduate with the degree of Master of Fine Arts degree in May of 2002.