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**Explorations in Painting**

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EXPLORATION IN PAINTING

It was the purpose of this study (1) to explore the possibilities of a variety of painting media—tempera, watercolor, oil and a combination of the two in order to develop a more systematic means of approaching the painting from all arts understood by the author of the study (2) to explore the plastic elements of the feelings and emotions involved in pasting the painting, and (3) to try some of the possible techniques.

An Abstract

Presented to

Dr. Joel Moss
dand the Faculty of the Graduate School

Fort Hays Kansas State College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Art Education

by

Keith Lowry

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PURPOSE

It was the purpose of this study (1) to explore the possibilities of a variety of painting media--tempera, watercolor, oils or a combination of these--in order to develop a more dynamic means of expression in painting than hitherto accomplished by the author of this study; (2) to explore the plastic elements (line, form, texture, color and space) as conveyances of the feelings or emotions that the artist attempts to inject into his paintings; (3) to develop a knowledge and better understanding of usable techniques.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

For the artist's purpose, each medium explored might work equally well with an adequate amount of experimentation and time. However, the intrinsic qualities of certain media seem to lend themselves better to the emotional atmosphere the artist wishes to create. Experimentation was done in each medium, exploring color harmony; the relationships and dimensions of forms; textural qualities; line as a means of creating forms or dimensions by overlapping, interlocking or interlacing; and the spacial tension created by lines, forms and colors as they are related to each other on a flat surface. Using these elements as a means of expression, each medium was explored. Watercolor and oils or a combination of the two seemed best suited to convey the
desired effect. Watercolor provides a medium adaptable to rapid spontaneous growth of feelings into forms, while oils contain a permanency and surface quality not obtainable in watercolor.

Whether in watercolor or oil, paintings often seemed to grow from large flat planes of contrasting color experimentally placed on the surface of the paper or canvas. In watercolors, these larger planes were then overlaid with smaller patches of color contrasting in value or intensity to the larger areas. Lines were then added which varied in thickness and intensity, creating a relationship of forms and a feeling of dimension in the painting. At the beginning of this study, many forms of different values were sketched quickly into the small color patches, creating a textural pattern within each area and in turn over the complete surface of the painting. This technique was later almost completely eliminated because of its tendency to curb the spontaneous growth of the watercolor which in turn resulted in rigid, mechanical paintings. A few well-placed lines secure the desired effect more readily than a large number of lines that become dominant and obscure other important elements in the painting.

The same basic techniques used in watercolor were applied to oil. As in watercolor, the oil paintings grew from large, flat planes of color, quickly applied to the canvas. However, the smaller, contrasting patches of color which overlay them were applied with a palette knife rather than a brush. The palette-knife technique employed in the oil paintings resulted in an
interesting textural pattern. The surface quality of the oil paintings also seemed to contain an animate quality not obtainable by the artist in watercolor.

A combined medium of watercolor, oil and tableau paper on masonite created the most dynamic effects yet obtained in this study. This technique involved applying freely the basic parts of the painting to tableau paper with watercolor. Overlays of color were applied to tableau paper in a manner similar to that used in watercolor and oil. The extremely absorbent quality of the paper caused some difficulty. These paintings were then glued to the smooth side of sheets of masonite, which had previously been painted white to retain the brilliancy of the watercolor which was lost when the transparent tableau paper came into contact with the dark surface of the masonite. Varnish was then applied to the surface of the painting and allowed to dry. After one coating of varnish, color areas, lines, textures and forms were added to or changed with oil paint. The end product contained the desirable elements of both watercolors and oils. The paintings retain the spontaneity desirable in watercolors while their surface quality obtains the inviting animate qualities found in oils.

**CONCLUSION**

The methods and procedures outlined above have contributed to the artist's growth in painting and to his better understanding of useable techniques as a means to a more dynamic self-expression. He has explored several established media and eliminated those
which are not seemingly well adapted to his purposes. He has experimented successfully with combinations of media and techniques.

However rewarding this study has been in enriching the artist's understanding of technical means to self-expression, its greatest value lies in the artist's deeper appreciation of the areas of artistic achievement he has yet left untouched.