

Spring 1972

A STATEMENT OF OPTIMISM: FAITH IN UNSEEN FORCES

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A STATEMENT OF OPTIMISM:

FAITH IN UNSEEN FORCES

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Art

Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Nancy Louise Midles

June 5, 1972

A STATEMENT OF OPTIMISM:

FAITH IN UNSEEN FORCES

by

Nancy L. Midles

May, 1972

This series of drawings depicts a mythology in which mother nature is the central figure. She is the heart of a spiritual union between nature, the supernatural, and womankind. Her purpose is to encourage faith in the forces of good, natural and supernatural, which govern all life. She and her companions are modeled after earthly mothers and grandmothers in honor of their grace of spirit and goodness of heart. These matronly characters are combined in the drawings with landscapes representing nature, and floating forms and faces which represent the supernatural. The matronly quality of the faces and forms, plus imagery such as the fetus, ties the theme and this mythology to the archaic ritual of woman's life.

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My drawings are as much psychological as philosophical.

Discussing the philosophical elements still leaves much of the content unexplained. Discussing the psychological elements would be like trying to psychoanalyze myself. I don't entirely understand them and explaining them to others would be futile. The philosophical as well as the psychological elements are primarily the result of emotions rather than conscious thought. Therefore discussing the drawings at all involves discussing my emotions and any attempt must only prove the ambiguity and inadequacy of words in the hands of one who is not primarily a writer.

My psychological and philosophical reaction to nature forms the basis for the theme, which might be stated as a faith in the unseen forces governing all life. The feelings I have in response to nature are probably much the same as those a religious person feels toward his church.

My drawings combine landscapes with human faces and forms. Reclining matronly creatures seem to be almost an outgrowth of the landscape as they are pictured gazing toward the heavens. Cloud forms echo these motherly images and faces appear floating skyward. These forms and faces, joined to earth and floating with the clouds, depict a form of spirit life, the supernatural element.

Why do I draw these obese, motherly characters? The forms are

grotesque and rather comical; wrinkles, sags, and bulges reflect the ravages of motherhood, which often leaves its marks on the bodies of older women. The faces too are wrinkled, like a topographical map of the earth portraying nature's upheavals. Old eyes, peering sadly from their sunken depths, express the tragedy endured in years of living. These characters are a personification of mother nature and the epitome of mothers and grandmothers the world over. It is the grace of spirit and goodness of heart which these characters represent that endears them to me; the power which dominates my faith would be such a spirit.

In summary, the drawings combine a faith in nature and natural forces with a faith in unseen, supernatural forces. Coupled with nature and the forces of good is the human goodness of motherhood, probably the most loving and unselfish aspect of human life. I believe my purpose in these drawings was to combine the forces of good, those which I can still believe in, to form a statement of optimism in reaction to the negative values and attitudes which seem to abound today. My optimism springs from a feeling of harmony and unity of all life which is inspired in me by contact with nature. In the face of all dire predictions of doom, nature seems to calm and reassure. I cannot help but feel that nature or some supernatural force still has the upper hand and all will be as it was meant to be.

This belief may seem romantic and naive and the reader may now wonder if I am one of those people who fold their hands and put their heads in the sand. I choose to believe what I feel because I think people need something to believe in. Cynicism and negativism seem unhealthy to me; they preach defeat and so discourage effort, while

belief lends hope and makes it worthwhile to try. The trick is to see the evils without letting them block out the good. It helps to realize that perfection exists only as an ideal probably because man must always have a goal to strive for. I might add that this is how I feel about my drawings too: I have much to strive for and rightly so, as I have years to fill.

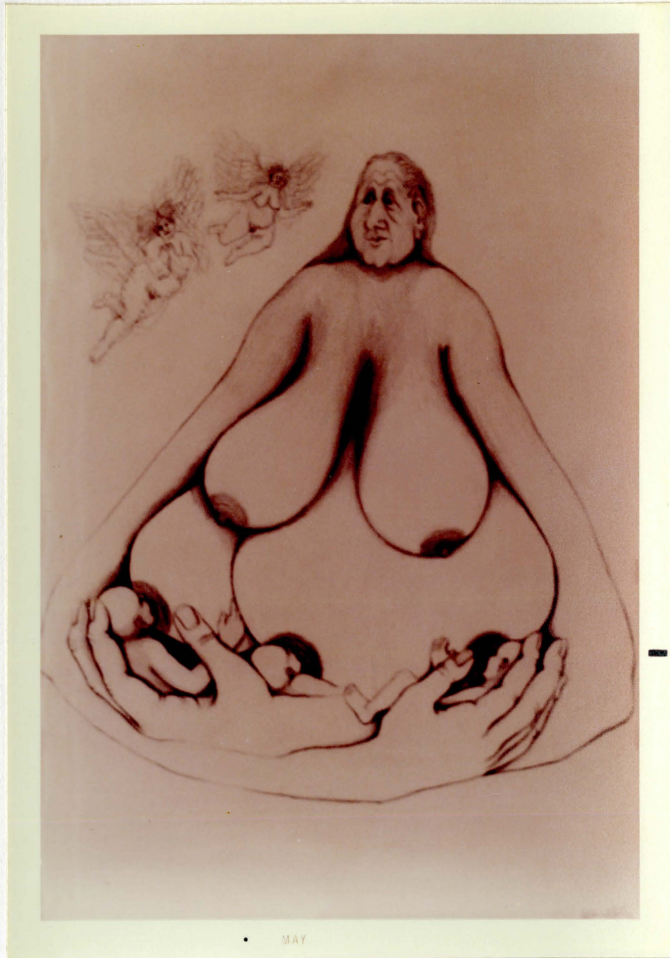
TRILOGY



SPIRITUAL UNITY



MADONNA



TRANSCENDENT



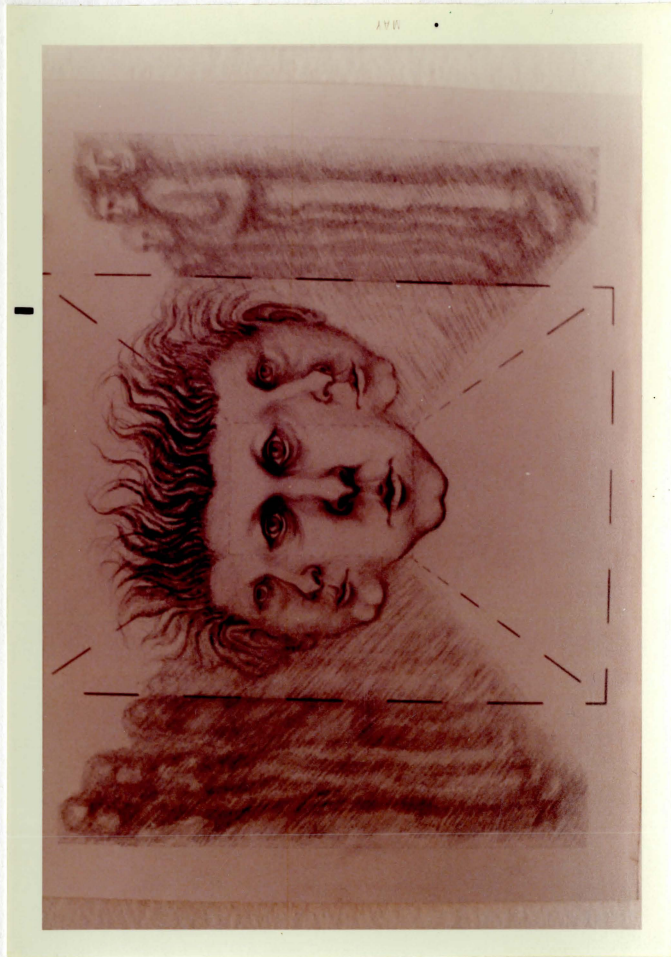
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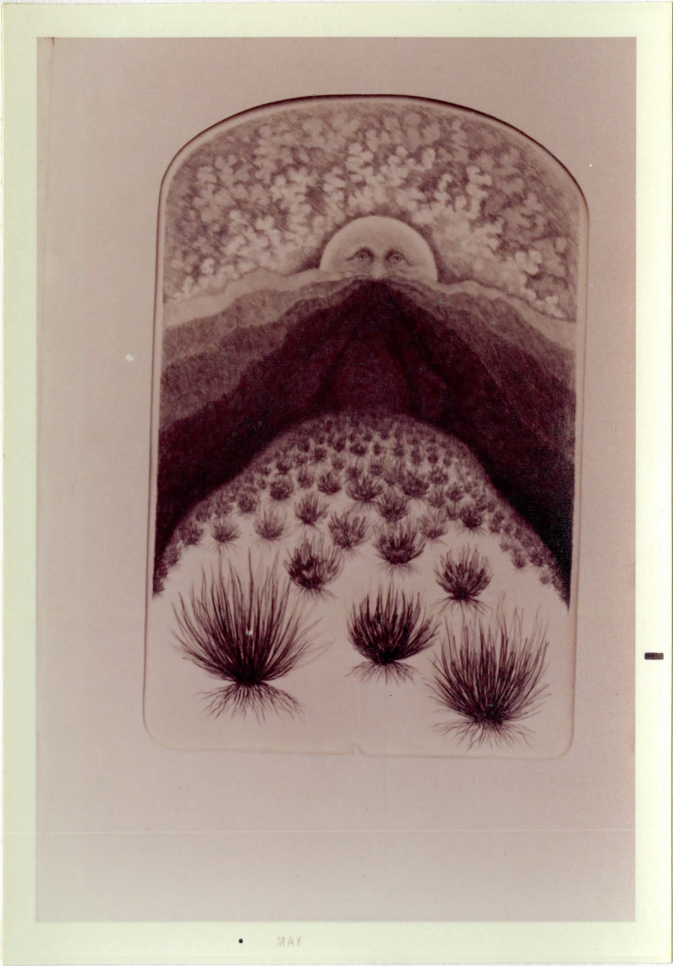
MEDITATION



ALIENATION



COMMUNION



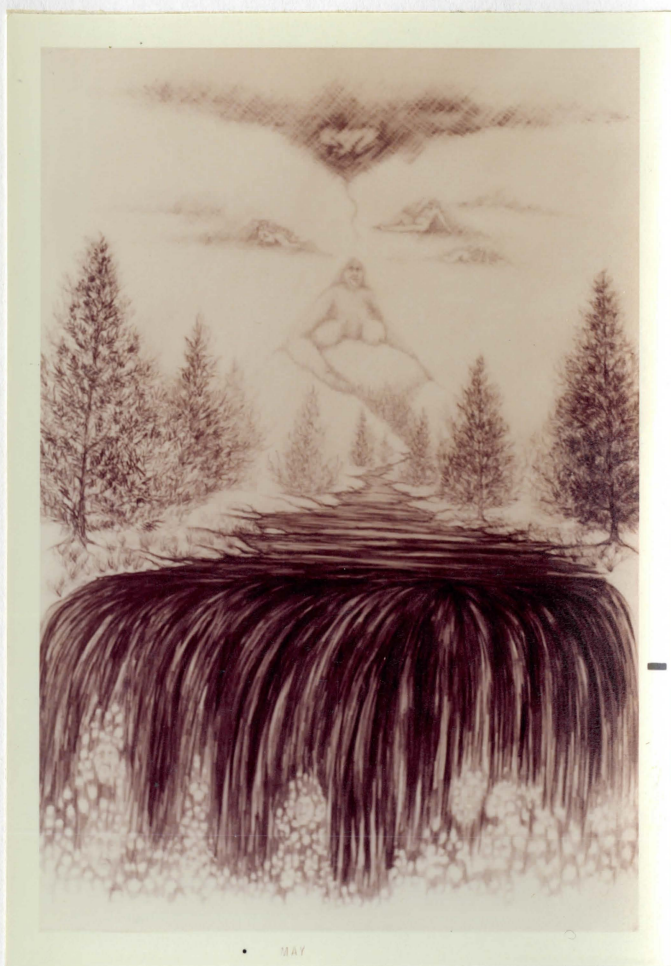
NATURE'S CATHEDRAL



SISTERS



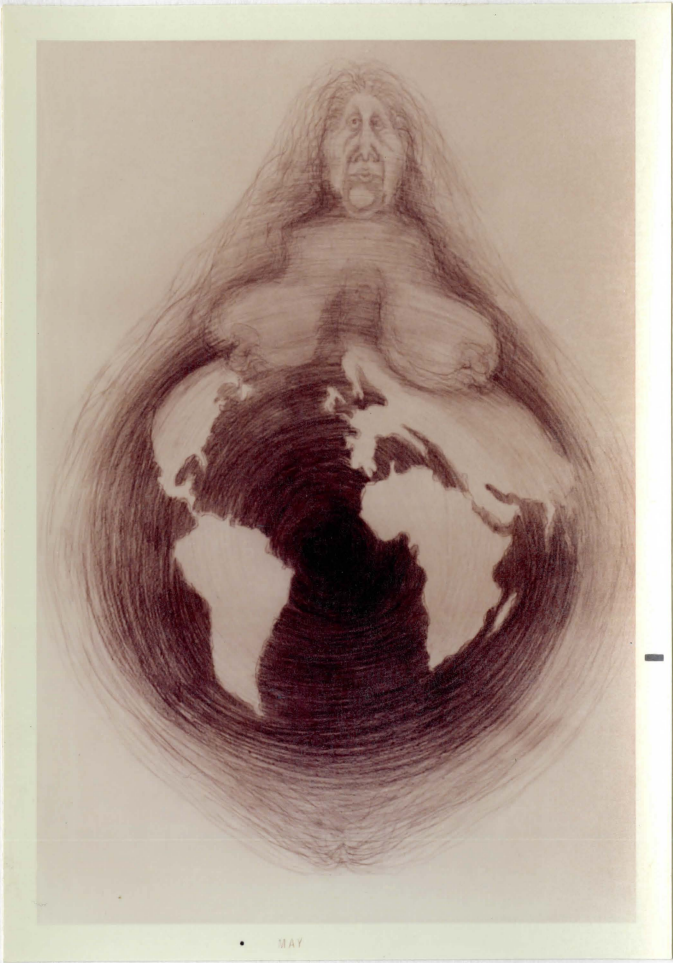
MATERNITY



GREAT MATRON



EARTHMOTHER



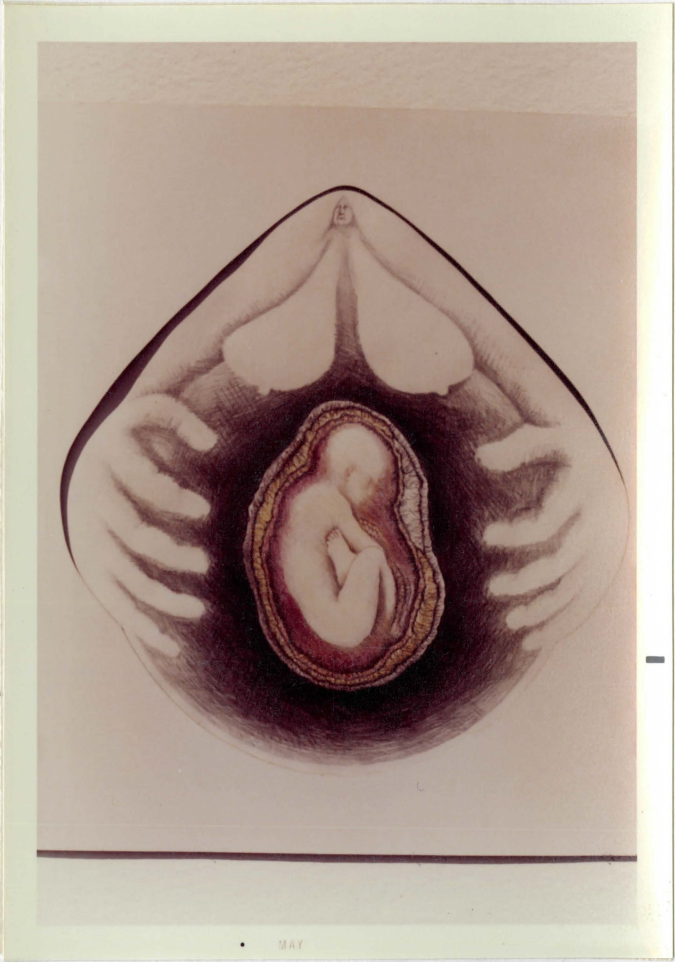
NIGHT GUARD



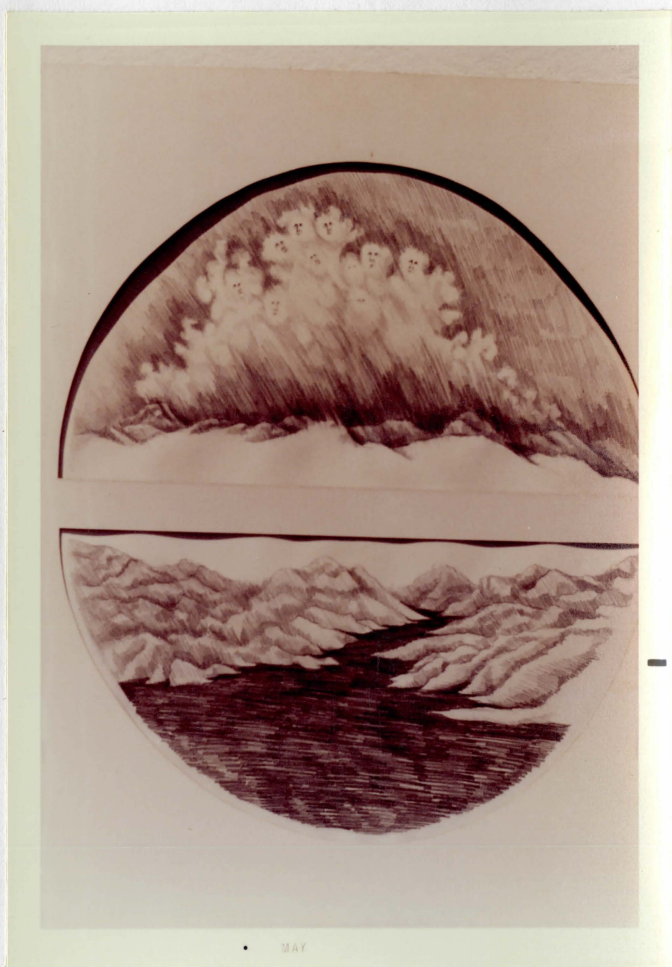
RUSHMORE



REGENERATION



TWO WORLDS



SPIRITUAL FAMILY

