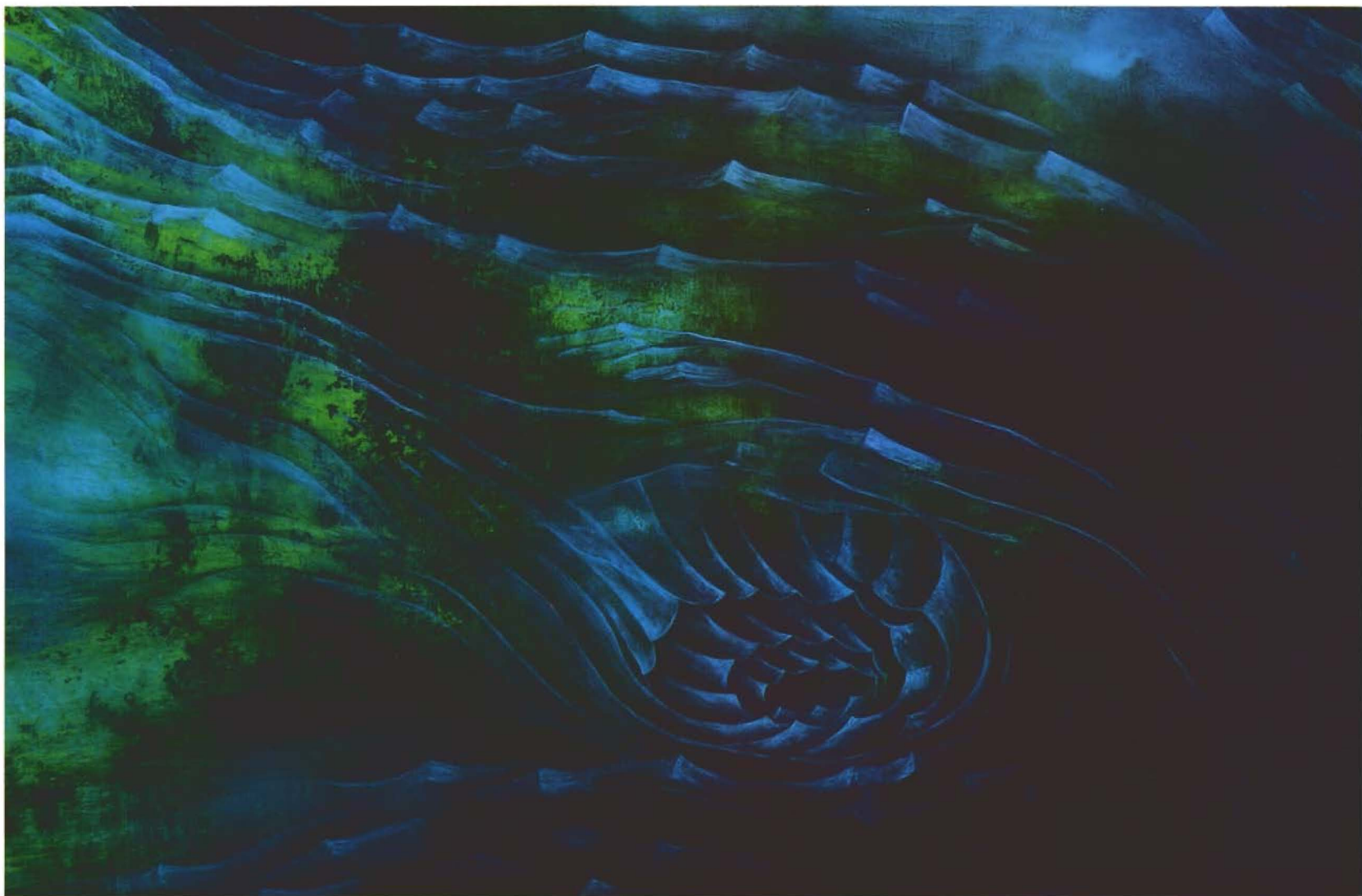


DAPHANE PARK

TIERRA TIerna



WOMEN & THEIR WORK

AUGUST 9 - SEPTEMBER 15, 2001

AUSTIN, TEXAS

DAPHANE PARK
TIERRA TIERNA

"My purpose is to tell of bodies which have been transformed into shapes of a different kind (Ovid, Metamorphoses, Book I, 1-2)."

In the *Flags of Bureaucracy Multiply*, a pair of emblems gain body and take root upon a single land mass, which floats upon a circular panel, the whole becoming a miniature and essential world. In *Circle Defied by Revolution*, two circular panels and their gravitational interval evoke the four elements and enact a cosmic genesis. Topographies from stratospheric height, the two *Flechas (Arrows)* are condensed into magnified organic patterns and shaped into rhyming vectors. Toward the actual size and profile of lotus pods, *Vainas Respiran (Pods Breathe)* nestles pearlescent fruit, pulsates with incandescent light, and traces its own constellation. As currents flow through *Flood Plain*, its perimeter expands inexorably, its basins deepen mysteriously, and its surfaces transform into a delicately animated envelope.

The art of Daphane Park concerns nature, but the nature not normally seen. Its objects, its appearances, come from below, above, outside the usual range of perception. Its forces, its energies, are so rapid, slow, or pervasive that they are practically invisible. Its interrelations are so complex, inhere so deeply, that their objective description belongs to the sciences. Moreover, these are rendered with a completeness, a uniform resolution, an intermingling of scales, and a simultaneity of perspectives that belie optical experience and discount familiar measure. If this nature were somehow accessible to the senses, it would not be apprehended thus. Natural but unnaturalistic, subjective but universal, Park's art is essentially and doubly imaginary.

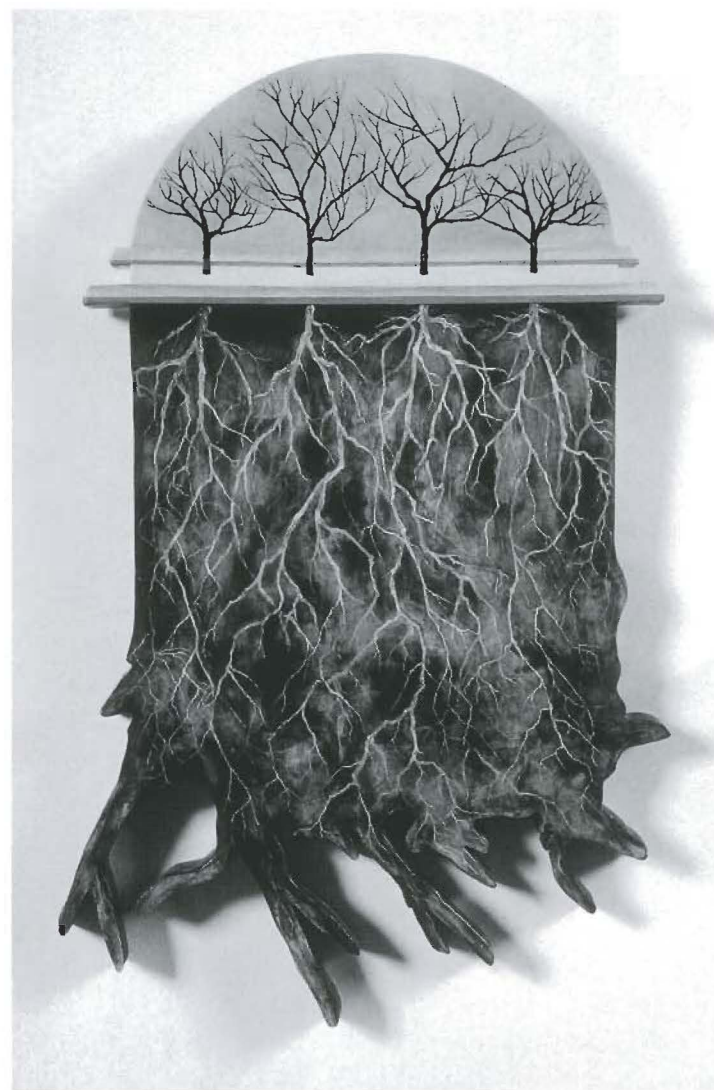
There is a further, human content in her art. It is intentionally problematic and provocative. In earlier works, it is manifest in objects whose scale is touchingly inappropriate or in structures whose very edges and uprightness seem laughably arrogant. In some instances, there are anthropological remains, vestiges of human forms and manufacture, that are being reabsorbed by their environment, dust-to-dust in an unmistakable *vanitas*. In others, the contemporary world is reduced to an ironically pretty detritus that is dwarfed, overgrown, swept away. Nowhere are there admitted animate beings as such. Park's objects bracket the realm of human presence and activity, and her forces overwhelm it. Thus, her art is also ecological in its explicit concern and constant implication.

Imaginary, ideological, but emphatically material: Park's representation of nature is equally distinctive in its physical consistency and sheer beauty. Her surfaces are no more neutral fields across which representation unfolds than her subjects are a surrogate reality seen through a metaphoric window. Exaggeratedly dimensional, complexly articulated, and weighty, her paintings insist upon an identity and function as objects. The two-dimensional vision may be primary, but the panel introduces other representational elements that can prepare, echo, even contradict. Paint itself enters as another form of matter. Usually it yields a counterpoint of meticulous touch, exquisite variegation, and selective impasto. Occasionally, as in *Flood Plain*, paint is repeatedly applied, rubbed, sanded back, and glazed over in an actual layering, like that of the late Turner, that saturates color, splinters light, and plumbs depth. While Park's nature escapes easy recognition and

defies optical habit, it encourages tactile, possessive, even kinesthetic responses.

In each of these senses, Park's representation of nature lies outside the dominant Western tradition. That tradition arose with the Baroque, carried into photography and film, and operates in most lives "as common sense." Its subject is the appearance of things, those aspects of reality that unfold in a particular time and space, those that are apprehended by the senses and above all sight. It makes nature into aptly termed "landscape" and "still life," determines formal aspects

Invernadero Invernal, Wintery Greenhouse. 2001.
Oil on shaped wood panels. 7" x 14"



according to the intended viewer perceptual experience, and generates further meaning in relation to that viewer's associations. (Meanwhile, shorn of illusionism and metaphor, nature became the subject of steadily diverging researches in the sciences.) In this anthropocentric conception, the work of art becomes a surrogate, controlled, and therefore possessable reality. To the extent that this conception is prone to the distortions, conducive to the attitudes, that can simplify or impoverish man's relationship to nature, Park's representation is again a critique.

There are, however, numerous other traditions of representation from which Park has drawn inspiration. Before Baroque naturalism and the research of form and rhetoric that prepared it in the 16th century, the Western tradition itself described nature in terms that were still visually abstract and intellectually apprehended, so if less recognizable, more suggestive of a pervasive order and forces. The early Italian schools of painting were the first, most sustained and varied in this description, and the Sienese of the 15th century were the most lively and engaging. It is not surprising to learn that Park turned early to the backgrounds and natural incidents of Sassetta and Giovanni di Paolo, as well as Fra Angelico among the Florentines, absorbing all she could of their quietistic schemata and selfless craft like a latter-day pre-Raphaelite.

No less relevant are some long and complex traditions of representing nature outside the artistic sphere. Cartography, with its dense symbolism, systematic information, purported anonymity, but at the same time inherent and often striking visual aspect, has been a constant

source. Of particular interest seem the intuitive projections and oversized features of early charts, the almost tactile differentiation of surface in topographic studies, and the strangely mixed metaphor of ideological pattern in political maps. Pertinent too are scientific illustration and diagrams of the kind in museums of natural history, with verbal and visual information intertwined and given quasi-representational arrangement. These forms were continuous with artistic representation through the Renaissance and set upon their own courses only after the triumph of Baroque vision. By incorporating them Park extends the reach of her art while reasserting their artistic lineage and quotient.

Park derives further inspiration from the representation of nature in several non-Western traditions. Persian miniature painting is cognate in appearance and parallel in lessons to Quattrocento panel painting. More distinctive and important for her art are the hybrid forms of Latin America, where she has frequently traveled and lived for extended periods. Colonial painting has encouraged the indifference to rational order and the preference for ego-less description. The insistence upon pattern in many cultures, with its stylized fauna and metaphysical implication, has informed her repetition of motif. The general, ethnological appreciation of craft as sacramental helps explain the irreducible and reflexive materiality of her art. And beyond the strictly visual, the magical realism of Latin American literature is fundamental to her conception.

Park is certainly not alone in these concerns, their references, and the cultural critique they imply. The representation of nature is a vital interest in contemporary

painting. While some artists have continued in the line of romantic abstraction, others have resuscitated and subtly altered the tradition of metaphoric illusionism. While Vija Celmins has invoked the scientific tradition to a comprehensive and deistic effect, Joan Nelson has cultivated special materials and craft toward a more talismanic one. And there seems no shortage of artists in various media who offer quite explicit criticism of prevailing attitudes toward nature and the art that has consented to it. The telling differences are, I think, the comfortable repleteness, the palpable joy, the essential reverence of Park's work.

Jonathan Bober
Curator of Prints, Drawings and
European Paintings
Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art
The University of Texas at Austin
May 22, 2001

Cover Panel: *Flood Plain, (detail)*, 2001.
Oil on shaped wood panels. 12' x 18'

Center Panel: *Vainas Respiran, Pods Breath*.
2001. Oil on shaped wood panels. 4' x 6'

Back Panel: *Circle Defied by Revolution*, 2000.
Oil on shaped wood panels. 5' x 3-1/2'



Flood Plain, 2001.
Oil on shaped wood panels. 12' x 18'

DAPHANE PARK
Resides in Austin, TX

EDUCATION

- 1997 Master of Fine Arts, University of Texas,
Austin, TX
- 1994 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Honors
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2001 **Tierra Tierna**, Women & Their Work,
Austin, TX.
- 1999 **Cartografias, Cuerpos, y Deseos**,
Traveling Solo Exhibition,
Supported by Cultural Affairs/U.S.
Embassy, Ecuador
- ART FORUM, Quito, Ecuador.
Museo del Banco Central, Cuenca,
Ecuador. El Museo del CEN,
Guyaquil, Ecuador
- 1997 **MFA AT UT**, Collective Exhibition
Gallery Lombardi, Austin, TX.
- 6: Masters of Fine Arts Exhibition**
The Huntington Gallery, University
of Texas, Austin, TX.
- Annual Small Works**, Collective
Exhibition Gaddis Gleeson Gallery,
Sam Houston State University,
Huntsville, TX.

- 1993 **Images of Central America**, Solo
Exhibition Indiana University Honors
House Gallery, Bloomington, IN.

**Annual Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual
Exhibition**, Collective Exhibition
SOFA Gallery, Indiana University,
Bloomington, IN.

SELECTED GRANTS AND AWARDS

- 1999 Special Projects Grant, U.S.
Cultural Affairs. Quito, Ecuador
- 1997-98 Fulbright Research Grant.
Quito, Ecuador
- 1996-97 David Price Endowed Presidential
Scholarship
- 1996 University of Texas Continuing
Fellowship
- University of Texas
Travel Grant. France
- University of Texas Department of
Art and Art History Research Award
- 1995 University of Texas Liberal Arts
Scholarship for Study Abroad
University of Texas Travel Grant.
Italy
- 1994-95 David Price Endowed Presidential
Scholarship

- 1993 Indiana University Honors
Division Creative Activities
Grant. Central America

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT

- University of Texas, Austin, TX**
Lecturer – Drawing, 2D Design
August 2000-present
- Austin Museum of Art**, Laguna
Gloria Art School, Austin, TX
Instructor – Independent Study,
Drawing, 2D Design, Watercolor
September 1999-Present
- South West Texas State University**,
San Marcos, TX
Lecturer – Painting, 2-D Design, Color Theory
August 1999-May 2000
- Universidad Central**, Quito, Ecuador
Professor – Painting
September 1997-May 1998
- University of Texas, Austin, TX**
Teaching Assistant – Drawing, Watercolor,
2-D Design, Photography
August 1994-May 1997
- University of Texas European Study
Program**, Italy
Teaching Assistant – Advanced Drawing
Summer 1995





W O M E N & T H E I R W O R K

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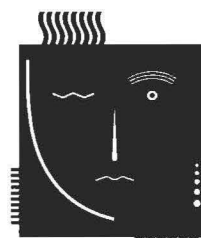
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Now celebrating its 23rd anniversary, Women & Their Work presents over 50 events a year in visual art, dance, theater, music, literature, and film. The gallery features on-going exhibitions of Texas women artists and brings artists of national stature to Texas audiences. Since its founding, Women & Their Work has presented 1,635 artists in 203 visual art exhibitions, 100 music, dance, and theater events, 12 film festivals, 19 literary readings, and 214 workshops in programming that reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of this region. Nationally recognized, Women & Their Work has been featured in *Art in America*, *ArtForum* and National Public Radio and

was the first organization in Texas to receive a grant in visual art from the National Endowment for the Arts. Women & Their Work reaches over 5,000 school children and teachers each year through gallery tours, gallery talks with exhibiting artists, participatory workshops, in-school performances, dance master classes, and teacher workshops.



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