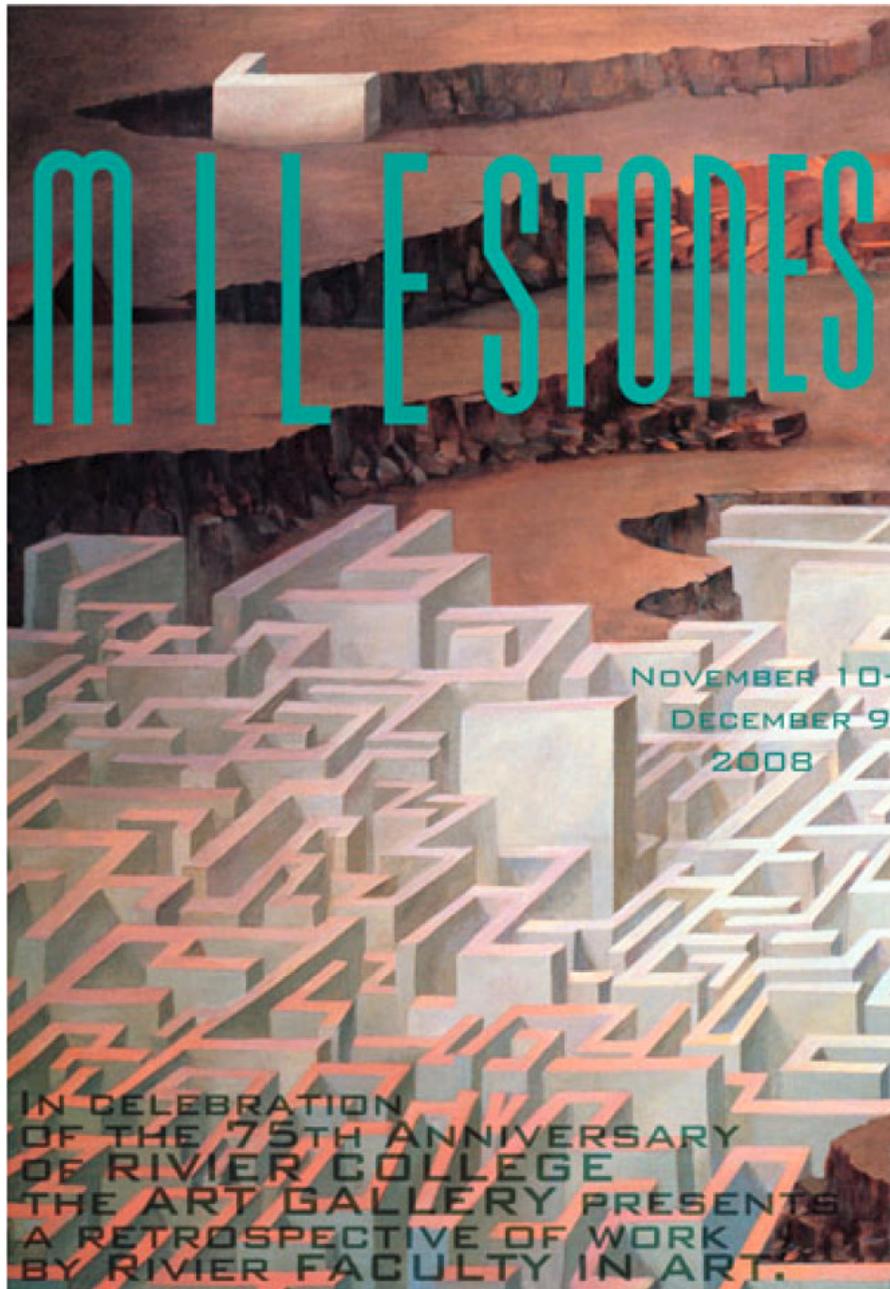


MILESTONES: ART FACULTY EXHIBITION SELECTED WORKS AND ARTISTS REFLECTIONS

(November 10 – December 9, 2008)

**Sr. Theresa Couture, pm, Clifford Davis, Willard L. Hall, Loretta CR Hubley,
Ronald McClure, Sheli Petersen, and Patricia Schappler
Department of Art, Rivier College**



INTRODUCTION

As the college celebrates its 75th anniversary and the Rivier College Art Gallery steps beyond its 25th year, it seems fitting that members of the art faculty mark this historic juncture by highlighting the span of their collective professional accomplishments. Hence, instructors in studio courses have been invited to present a micro-retrospective of their work, each interpreting the idea and establishing parameters for it in a personal fashion.

Included in the exhibition:

- drawing and painting by *Clifford Davis* and *Patti Schappler*
- printmaking and mixed media by *Loretta CR Hubley*
- sculpture by *Willard Hall*
- photography, digital imagery, and mixed media by Ron (*Ronnie*) McClure
- illustration by *Sheli Petersen*
- letterform design and posters by *Sr. Theresa Couture*

What follows is a representative image from each of the exhibitors plus a personal reflection.

PATTI SCHAPPLER

I have been drawing since childhood as a way of defining meaning. It is easy to like both the sound of pencil and charcoal pushing at the surface and the strange beauty of a form that unfolds. While painting is relatively new for me (an endeavor mostly of the last seven years), both drawing and painting combine thought and instinct through the process of doing and making. I collage within these works partly, I think, in honor of my mother, who is always putting things together, and partly to honor and connect the histories and cultures of other artists who make images.

Coming from a big family, for me there is always the clang of daily living and, with it, the resulting questioning that comes from family and faith. I would like my surfaces to have a complexity of layers that parallels what I see and feel. Climbing up and around, I choose to keep forms close to the surface, intimate in their nearness to you, the viewer. As you walk closer to these large spaces, edges blur and form extends, allowing you to become part of the total. Contrasts of light to dark and movement to stillness attract me. Within the gardens, through the woods and paths, and among my children, family, and friends, I am able to view particular moments while still engaging in the passing of time. Life feels collective, an adding of experience and wonder; a dynamic force that swells and shrinks based on our attention to nuance. Marks and pattern order the total, and there grows this idea of home and belief, the perennial hope that whatever rises and dies will rise again.



Creation

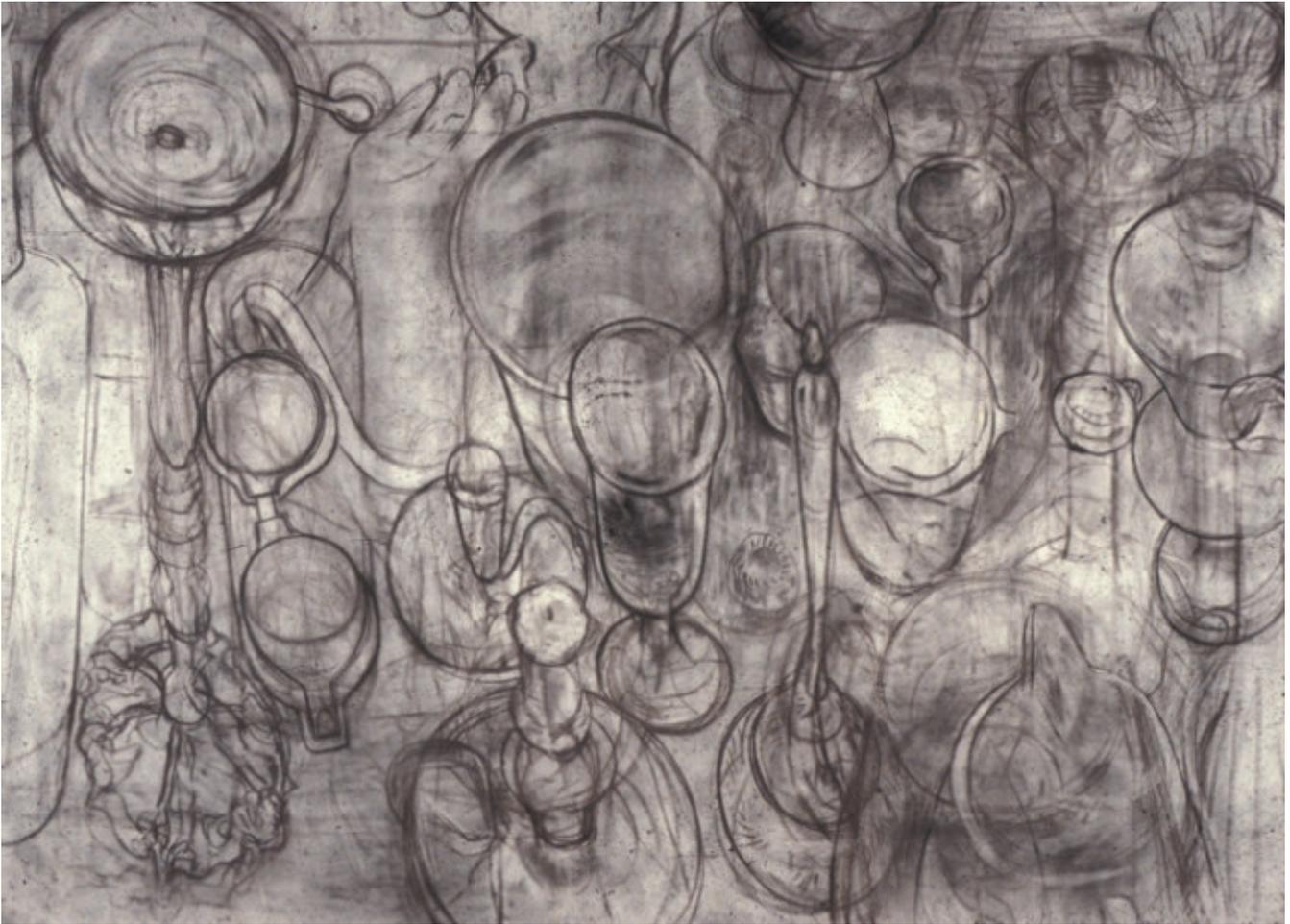
acrylic on canvas, 2007-08

I began this with nothing concrete in mind, just a vague image of cycles changing and the question of how to convey that this dying space was also crackingly, beautifully alive.

PATRICIA SCHAPPLER is Senior Lecturer in Art in the Department of Art at Rivier College. She holds B.F.A. from University of New Hampshire and M.F.A. from Brooklyn College. Patricia finds the extraordinary in the mundane through her willingness to search deeply within external appearances for "something closer to truth." She works in acrylic, pastel, and charcoal, trying to recognize and expand experience as it is reflected back through the subtracting and adding that is painting. Patricia teaches painting and drawing.

CLIFFORD DAVIS

This drawing represents a synthesis of two opposing directions my work had taken in the several years before its genesis. Growing increasingly frustrated with the apparent aimlessness of the stream-of-consciousness abstract work I was making in the early 1980s, I wiped the slate clean and began instead drawing and painting still-life set-ups of humble cast-offs I found at garage sales. It was not long before the impulse toward abstraction began creeping back, however, and I altered the traditional, mimetic, single-viewpoint approach in favor of a process that allowed layers of time to accumulate as I constantly rearranged the objects, removing some and inserting new ones. The still-life set-up was always on the floor to the right of the drawing; the scale of the drawing mandated that, as I moved around in it, my view of the objects changed constantly, dictating corresponding changes in the drawing. As in most traditional still-lives, some of the objects have symbolic value (for example, gloves, goggles, and headphones all relating to our sensory nature).



Already, Not Yet
charcoal, 1985-1991

CLIFFORD DAVIS is Associate Professor and Department Coordinator in the Department of Art at Rivier College. Using familiar cultural and archetypal references, Clifford Davis' painting explores the boundary between the seen and unseen. Fluidly moving between humor and horror, tradition and invention, his work taps into the deep-seated human need to understand the transcendent world through symbol. Clifford holds the MFA in Painting from Cranbrook Academy of Art and teaches painting and drawing at Rivier College.

SHELI PETERSEN

I was drawn from an early age to artwork with strong pattern and shape. As a young artist, I admired Japanese Ukiyo-e woodcut prints, African art, and German Expressionism. In my undergraduate career, my graphic design professors asked students to use colored paper with *Letramax* film and press-on type in our final compositions. From these inspirational and practical sources, cut-paper seemed like a natural for me, and my early illustration style began to emerge as exemplified in the Southwest Missouri State University calendar. I completed this project in my senior year, working as a designer/illustrator for the university's Public Relations Department. In my calendar illustrations I drew directly from my experiences of campus life, but I interpreted these using the stylizations and narrative sources of the art I loved. With the calendar project, my journey as a professional book illustrator began.

This fusion of real-life observation, imagination, and stylization continued in the next phase of my work, shown by the excerpt from the children's book *Magali: An Aztec Legend of Good Fortune*. In *Magali and Newborn*, the grandmother lovingly bathes the goldsmith's newborn son as part of a ritual that will ensure the baby a fruitful life. Magali's gesture is quite subtle and nurturing, while the bold line, strong pattern, and flat space that define the composition are directly influenced by Mexican art. As my illustration style progressed, I began to move away from completely hand-done artwork, instead combining pen-and-ink line art (similar to the black outline in my cut-paper style) with digital scans of found papers and materials assembled in Photoshop. The new digital collage technique offered a fluidity and transparency that cut-paper could not provide, as exemplified in *Play for the Wind*, an excerpt from *Voladores*. As I embraced the digital technique, my style became freer and less controlled. In *Gigi and the Birthday Ring*, I deliberately kept the expressive quality of my graphite line completely unmanipulated. Along with more fluid, less stylized line, an increased sense of space began to emerge in my work.

Striving for immediacy of line and a more descriptive quality of space and atmosphere, I then returned to completely analogue techniques, first with straight colored pencil on Bristol board, and then by using a casein underpainting with colored pencil on top to define details and modeling. I discovered a richness and luminosity I could not achieve with either the cut-paper or digital techniques. But the drawings still captured the dramatic composition, sweeping movement, and narrative flair of my earlier work. These qualities were needed for describing Martin's journey in *The Sweater Monster*. This light-hearted story, written in rhyme by Patricia Petersen, follows Martin the wool-eating monster on his journey to reinvent himself with his unusual talent.



Rancher McFred's Exit, excerpt from *The Sweater Monster*
colored pencil and casein on paper, 2008

SHELI PETERSEN's art career began at three with crayon drawings of the solar system. In high school, she earned money doing portraits of various friends and celebrities. After receiving a Bachelor's of Fine Art from Southwest Missouri State University (Springfield, MO, 1990), she worked as a graphic designer and illustrator for Kansas City's art and entertainment magazine, *Pitch*. For two years, she managed all the art direction for Smith Advertising (Kansas City, MO). She earned her Master's in Fine Art in Illustration from Savannah College of Art and Design (Savannah, GA, 1996). In graduate school, she concentrated on children's book illustration. Her thesis project, *Magali—An Aztec Legend about Good Fortune*, is published by Laredo Publishing (Beverly Hills, CA). Her other published work includes *Itza—The Boy Who Rode a Jaguar*, written by Leonard Bernard, *Voladores* written by Patricia Petersen, and *Gigi and the Birthday Ring*, written by Giselle Fernandez. Sheli is an Associate Professor of Art at Rivier College (Nashua, NH). She is the recipient of the Children's Choices Award, the Society of Children's Books Writers and Illustrators Most Professional Portfolio Presentation Award, and the Savannah College of Art and Design International Art Award.

LORETTA CR HUBLEY

The first art that I consider part of my mature work was stimulated by many hours of observation and reflection in the Asian collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art. I always loved the feel of india ink applied with a Sumi brush, with its capability of strong thick and thin contrast, but admiration of their creative observation of nature led to additional stylistic and thematic imitation.

In *The Cave*, one of the etchings in my *Creation Suite*, I developed from black and white printmaking to monochromatic, with a strong linear emphasis within a closed composition. *Meaning in a Falling Leaf*, an etching in the *New Hampshire Suite*, uses a variety of colors and begins to break the borders with embossment. The diptych of *Joyful and Weeping Mountains* was prepared with the anticipation of visiting China. Its use of rice paper represents, in this mini-retrospective, my many studies in watercolor on rice paper, but also my anticipatory concepts before the trip.

After experiencing the contemporary political and social turmoil of China, epitomized in the flooding of the famous landmark of The Three Gorges of the Yangtze, my mountains changed shape to imitate the most eroded ancient mountains. My brushstrokes recorded turmoil, especially in *Inundation*.

Both contemporary, historical, and personal turmoil in my subsequent visit to Viet Nam seems to have led to a disruption of the iconic, stylized, relatively calm images of the past to more fluid movement and open composition. The more I feel asymmetric on the inside, the more the inspiration expressed outside grows further afield from that which was derived from the calm contemplation of traditional Asian screen painting. Ironically, my trips to the real Asia created this change.



Inundation

mixed media and torn rag paper, 2004

LORETTA CR HUBLEY creates prints and paintings since acquiring her masters from the University of Maryland in both fine art and in art education. Her travels in America, Europe, and the Near & Far East inspire art critic Ellen Grimm to call her “recomposing rather than recreating” imagery as her “search for hidden meanings.” Formerly an Associate Professor of Art at Madonna University, MI, she created a public studio for printmaking in Ann Arbor, MI, and helped found the Women’s Caucus for Art of New Hampshire. Her works are displayed, awarded and collected in the United States and Britain.

RONNIE McCLURE

On a slow sunny summer Saturday, sitting on my front stoop, I was suddenly inspired to do something about my peculiar vision and the repeated remarks, “You see things differently.” I went to the bank, took out my whole life savings of \$125.00, and bought my first camera, albeit used. I found an intensive course that promised to teach me in six weeks all that I would need to know about photography. I enrolled and then proceeded to ruin my first two rolls of film. Disappointed but undaunted, I nevertheless decided to stay the course. My passion had been kindled!

I next attended two highly reputable art schools where I received formal training. In this environment my ideas began to take shape. Now involved with the visual as art, my efforts became significantly and predictably channeled through the medium of photography. Why photography instead of, say, painting? The answer became clear through my undergraduate immersion in a variety of art courses, a typical requirement in art schools. It is within the introductory context of conventional media and techniques that I discovered the simple reality that things technical, such as photography, come most easily to me.

Academic life fueled an exciting and passionate time of creating art and ushered me into the exhibition circuit. Eventually my work was being shown at such galleries as Friends of Photography and the Denver Art Museum, both of which have international reputations. Additionally I had opportunities for one-person shows and I was invited by the Blue Too Gallery in Denver, Colorado to be among the artists that they represented.

After moving to New Hampshire with my wife who was originally from the east coast, my career path began to shift. I ran a commercial photography studio for three to four years doing primarily fashion and aerial photography. This experience helped to bring some clarity to my journey as an artist. I realized I was not interested in commercial photography as a means to express what was important to me. Moreover, I was frustrated with the fact that I had an increasing store of ideas but no way to execute them through traditional photographic means. It was 1991 and I was stuck. Synchronous with my growing dilemma, however, a new medium was emerging. Amazingly, it was a technically challenging medium that, once again, came easily to me. And I knew from the beginning that it could allow me to give expression to the ideas I now wanted to explore. Its name: Digital Imaging. I was among the first generation of artists to embrace digital technology. Initially, in spite of immersing myself, I felt as if I couldn't accumulate

enough experience with it, and certainly I couldn't accumulate it fast enough. The learning curve was somewhat steep, but I was like a rocket ship, and once again I was excited about creating art!

My early photographic work was devoted to the richness of a black and white aesthetic, something that readily lends itself to exploring the visual elements of line, shape, and space. Eventually I shifted to an exploration of color which added intensity to the work. To this day I love using bright, strong hues, but not through photography per se. It slowly dawned on me that using a traditional photographic approach was no longer right for me, it is because not even color photography could not do justice to a new desire for painterly expressions of my inner vision about line, shape, space, and, yes, color. I sold and /or gave away my studio lighting equipment and darkroom apparatus, replacing them with computer hardware and software. And I never looked back. The digital medium had broken things open for me. This was particularly true because of a software program called Fractal Painter which, cleverly packaged in a standard utilitarian paint can, enables the digital artist to "paint" in a virtual environment. In my current mixed media images I combine photographs of objects from reality with expressions of my inner vision through pixel paints and colored pencils.



Follow the Drinking Gourd
mixed media, 2007

RONALD McCLURE is Associate Professor in the Department of Art at Rivier College. He holds B.B.A. from University of Cincinnati, B.F.A. from San Francisco Art Institute, and M.F.A. from Rhode Island School of Design. Ron McClure's digital images combine photographs of objects from reality with expressions of his own inner vision. His work connects the visible and invisible worlds in landscapes whose objects and structures symbolize our relationship to nature, where he envisions the presence of God manifested. Ron teaches photography, digital imaging, animation, and web design.

WILLARD HALL

As was said at the time, the Visual Arts faculty of Boston University had left the Museum School when it went 'abstract', because they wanted to continue study of the figure. The BU School of Fine Arts of 1970 purported to teach in the Renaissance tradition, albeit a tradition with a strong expressionistic influence. Drawing is the basis of all.

As a high school student, I attended art classes at Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. Wanting to encourage my interests, my mother took a subscription of color print folios from the Metropolitan Museum in New York City that arrived monthly in the mail; and my father gave me two beautiful volumes of drawings by Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. As a student at BU I did not fully comprehend why Rembrandt, a painterly painter, was suitable to emulate, while Poussin, an academic painter was not. Why should a college disdain the academic?

I do not think of the piece shown here as a portrait or even a self-portrait, which is an intimate portrayal of character or personality, but as a study of type. I did not wish to look directly into a mirror since this reverses the image of what others normally see. I therefore had to synthesize the front view from $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and profile views. The forms have a heightened dynamic intended to project from a distance out of doors as appropriate to monumental sculpture. The exercise proved to me the efficacy of Academy schooling, for while I had spent hundreds of hours on the Burl Springer portrait, also in this exhibition, I had brought this study to its present state of development in thirty hours.



Head Study in Two Mirror
cast plaster with patina, 1993

WILLIAM LEONARD HALL was born and raised in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. As a high school student, he attended art classes at Carnegie Institute, Carnegie Mellon University and the Governor's School for the Arts where he studied both visual and performing arts. He earned a BFA from Boston University and an MFA, cum laude, from the New York Academy of Art in New York City. In Barre, Vermont, he worked as an apprentice stone cutter for Rock of Ages Corporation and as a carver in the studios of George Kurjanowicz and F.C. Gaylord. Currently, Willard is employed as an assistant to Robert Shure of Skylight Studios in Woburn, Massachusetts. During his tenure, he has been affiliated with numerous monumental and memorial sculptures of regional, national and international significance. His work is in private and university collections and has been shown in college and independent galleries including Jackson Community College, Jackson, Michigan; Aldrich Public Library, Barre, Vermont; The Barre Sculpture Guild, Barre, Vermont; The Wood Art Gallery, Barre, Vermont; and The Franklin Street Gallery, New York City, New York.

SR. THERESA COUTURE, pm

My life in art has taken two directions: fine art and visual communication design. My original plan for this exhibition was to present a mini-retrospective of my work in the fine arts since for gallery that is a more natural fit. However, as my colleagues became increasingly involved in their own plans for a faculty retrospective, I knew there would not be enough space in our small gallery for what I had in mind. This came as no surprise because it is a tall order to expect such an expansive theme to be shared by seven exhibitors. As Director of the Gallery I decided, consequently, that my involvement need not include showing my own work. Then I had a second thought, though not a new one: there can be a fine line between fine art and design, and at times no line at all. History demonstrates this and it is certainly a fact for me, especially because I like to work on ideas for their own sake. With that in mind I chose my *Times Ten* and the *Alleluia* piece. There was wall space for these and, actually, they had both been done out of personal fascination with letterform, and never in response to a client's need for specific communication design. The *Peace* design was also originally done as a framed piece, part of a series of single words with letterforms created to express the meaning of each word. Here it appears as a Christmas card for a corporate client. Letterform is generally the focus of my design practice.

Because this exhibition celebrates the 75th anniversary of Rivier College, I have included the poster I designed for the 50th anniversary. One might suspect that this is a digital piece, but twenty five years ago I was computer illiterate. Prestype and transparent photostats were my supplies for creating a repeat design inspired by the year 1983. My purpose was to explore the formal relationship of the 8 and the 3 in order to suggest an accumulation of years that were dynamic and progressive.

Cover design:

Exhibition Poster for MILESTONES
digital design and production, 2008

Sr. THERESA COUTURE is an artist in digital and combined media. She received her M.F.A. from Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island; D.Min. in Theology and the Arts from Graduate Theological Foundation, South Bend, Indiana (partially coordinated with studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California and the Andover Newton Theological School, Newton, MA); and M.A. and B.A. in English from Rivier College. Theresa Couture combines an active studio life with a full professorship in art at Rivier College, a Catholic liberal arts institution sponsored by the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary of which she is a member. She has served as Co-chair of the Department of Art and Music and Director of the Design Program. She is currently Director of the Rivier College Art Gallery. Her work on paper has been exhibited throughout the United States. Many of her pieces are in private and university collections as well as in the collections of the Armand Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, California, and the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. Her work has appeared in *Art New England*, *Christianity and the Arts*, *Insight*, *Face of the Deep*, and publications of Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA).