

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Theses, Dissertations, and Student Creative
Activity, School of Art, Art History and Design

Art, Art History and Design, School of

Spring 4-17-2013

When the World Went Quiet

Megan E. McLeay

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, mcleaym@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/artstudents>



Part of the [Fine Arts Commons](#)

McLeay, Megan E., "When the World Went Quiet" (2013). *Theses, Dissertations, and Student Creative Activity, School of Art, Art History and Design*. 34.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/artstudents/34>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Art, Art History and Design, School of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses, Dissertations, and Student Creative Activity, School of Art, Art History and Design by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

WHEN THE WORLD WENT QUIET

by

Megan E. McLeay

A THESIS

Presented by the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Arts

Under the Supervision of Professor Karen Kunc

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 2013

WHEN THE WORLD WENT QUIET

Megan McLeay, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2013

Advisory: Karen Kunc

The basis of my work is a consciousness of the presence of the soul and the choices that compose our reality. I use light to illuminate space and manipulate human emotion. The landscapes are mirror images of my mind, dreams both light and dark, of beauty and brutality, the expression of my invisible world. My practice uses destructive drawing actions to produce creation and suggest emotional trials. My images represent this deeper bond when all emotions are felt and experienced together. The figures are not saints, but are meant to generate the idea of divinity within the restraints of the body. My figures still belong to this earth and to each other representing a dualism of the body and soul, landscape and figure. Among them I create a sense of loss, but not in one another or the world but rather of connection, a lack of emotional intelligence or of recognizing the soul. My figures are not conflicted externally but internally, aware of the fragility of the human soul, not the body. Finally my drawings seek eternity where everything continues, moves through space not time, which is an idea we can only experience in fantasy, belief, and art. *When the World Went Quiet* is a story of the personal truths I carry with me, as fantastic landscapes of the lives carried in our souls.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Thesis.....	1
Appendix A.....	3
Appendix B.....	

When the World Went Quiet

In all aspects of life we cannot deny the existence of some internal organism that regulates and controls the body's desires and affections. While asleep or awake we are met with imagination and memory, taken away from our present, suggesting something besides our visible reality, internal to use, but to a large extent independent; a consciousness of the presence of the soul. I have spent the majority of my life believing this and have transferred this belief into my work as an artist.

There are many notions of the soul, including belief, humanity and time. I have grown up to believe that I have a soul and every decision I make affects that soul. As we live lives, made up of memory, imagination, belief, emotions, we are given choice, the defining factor of what makes us human. Choice composes our reality, makes our souls, and is the basis of my work.

Growing up I was taught a metaphor that souls were made of light, the good illuminated, the bad darkened. If you could see inside of a person this is what you would find. This comparison suggests both dark and light exist inside every being and the moral division of man lies in individual choice. In my work light is an allegory for the soul that exists in all things. Light is not limited to the human soul but is present on the earth. We can see and experience light. I come to my drawings with the knowledge that space needs light to illuminate, light needs space to receive it, and light within the space changes human emotion. I can manipulate human emotion through the use of light and bring life to any drawing. I seek light in landscapes, evoking a poetic mood of nature and a presence beyond what is visible. Landscapes set our moods before our reason is able to grasp what is represented and spark a viewer's imagination. I leave the vague impression of something beneath the landscape, the compounding of the world into an infinite whole, like my figures imbuing the world with a soul or spirit. The landscapes are mirror images of my mind, dreams both light and dark, of beauty and brutality, the expression of my invisible world.

When life is thought by ourselves or others to be vulnerable or at risk, then we seek to know our soul. We seek contemplation when our beliefs are challenged. The soul is believed to be imbued with favorable characteristics such as courage, love and joy, but it also remains in the context of intense negative emotion or thought, such as hate, anger, and grief. In creating imagery of strong

emotion, of good and bad, I use a drawing process of destruction and re-creation on a paper that can stand up to an enormous amount of pressure and weight. I physically work into the drawing to create an equivalent for the emotional burdens of a love and destruction in humanity. My destructive drawing actions produce creation and suggest emotional trials. I draw images of this deeper bond when all emotions are felt and experienced together.

Additionally, I believe that the soul does not live free, but with the body. Therefore I draw figures that are bound to the body but appear to have a divine nature. They are not saints, but are meant to generate the idea of divinity within the restraints of the body. My figures still belong to this earth and to each other representing a dualism of the body and soul, landscape and figure. I understand dualism in my own manifestation of being a twin. My identity has always rested on two being one. Dualism is represented in all of my drawings, the power of two over one and learning to control that division. I do not seek separation but harmony among divisions, such as black/white, good/bad, day/night.

I create a sense of loss in the characters I draw, but not in one another or the world but rather a loss of connection, a lack of emotional intelligence or of recognizing the soul. In philosophy there is a division between things that are perceptible, composed of parts and subject to dissolution and destruction, and things that are not perceptible but intelligible (grasped by thought), and so seemingly exempt from destruction. Since the soul is believed to be composed of ethereal stuff and more liable to destruction than the body, loss of the soul is a greater fear than loss of the body. My figures are not conflicted externally but internally, aware of the fragility of the human soul, not the body. These figures seek each other for comfort, mentally and physically, to reduce internal turmoil, to become deathless, immortal, while the drawings themselves become timeless.

As I live daily life I concentrate on my present reality, actions and choices, while believing in the immortality of the soul. My art bridges these realities, the present time verses the eternal. My drawings seek eternity where everything continues, moving through space not time, which is an idea we can only experience in fantasy, belief, and art. My drawings are the climax of the beginning and the end; they are the present moment felt in an eternal reality.

Finally, my content is born from the idea of choice, the weakness in our body, the strength of our mind, and knowledge through experience and practice. I find the soul to be the distinguishing mark of all living things. Memory, time, belief, emotions, imagination, intuition all share one thing, they live in our souls. Our souls are our truths. *When the World Went Quiet* is a story of the personal truths I carry with me, as fantastic landscapes of the lives carried in our souls.

APPENDIX A
LIST OF WORKS EXHIBITED

1. *Silence Where the World Used to Be*, 2012. Graphite on synthetic paper 24 in x 36 in.
2. *Katherine*, 2013. Graphite on Synthetic paper 4ft x 5ft.
3. *Lion heart*, 2012. Graphite on synthetic paper 5ft x 8ft.
4. *Homeland Plains*, 2013. Graphite on synthetic paper 5ft x 8ft.
5. *Cornerstone*, 2013. Graphite on Synthetic paper 4ft x 5ft.
6. *All that's Left to Want is Time*, 2013. Graphite on synthetic paper 4ft x 5ft.
7. *The Apple*, 2013. Graphite on synthetic paper 5ft x 8ft.
8. *The Mustard Seed*, 2013. Graphite on synthetic paper 5ft x 8ft.

APPENDIX B



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.

