

Artspace Lima *Bill Sullivan January, 2014*

"Two years in the making, Philip Sugden's, *Pages from the Manual on Dismantling Godis* a tour-de-force of magnificent proportion, 21 pen and ink drawings in an installation that explores the transformation of the artist's connection with the universe."

The Columbus Dispatch

Jacqueline Hall, Art Critic

"Sugden's imagery addresses the mind. ...it is the superb result of an exquisite refinement of details. ... Sugden's drawings are breathtaking. They take the spectator to a timeless world of contemplation far removed from the Western scene."

The Williamsburg Daily Press

"Arts and Leisure"

August 1997

Mark St. John Erickson, Art Critic

"When you're trying to capture everything-- and nothing--in the same work of art, you probably deserve a little forbearance from your viewers. Philip Sugden, whose 30 works of ink on paper make up the core of an intriguing new exhibit at the Arts Center of the Portsmouth Museums, needs all that and more.

...you'll find several other images that come tantalizingly--and for some viewers--uncomfortably close to a genuinely revealing vision.

...a monumental seven-panel drawing called, "Gate: n. 1. an opening for passage." Made up of row after row of mysteriously shrouded, burial-like figures, this is an extraordinary image. Frightening and evocative all at once, it points in a riveting way exactly where the natural realm ends and the supernatural starts. Don't leave the exhibit without spending some time in front of this picture.

...Give them a good long look."

The Johnson Humerich Museum Quarterly

"Visions From The Fields Of Merit" currently showing in the Montgomery Gallery, at the Johnson Humerick Museum, is a smashing success! Guests at the opening night reception were literally awestruck at the exquisite detail and breathtaking beauty of Philip Sugden's drawings. His superb technique and remarkable skill reveal details that enable viewers to experience glimpses of this far away region."

THE IOWA LEDGER

Bobby Lowenberg, Art Critic

"Standing in Unity Gallery, surrounded by ink drawings by Philip Sugden, this viewer felt as if she had one foot on earth and one foot in the heavens. The drawings are intricate, filled with details, like all the little details of our daily lives that encumber us. Yet Sugden's lines release the viewer. (the work)...says something about the space we occupy. And touch a space within us. ...All exuding that stillness that seems to be part of his work.

(Regarding 'Inscriptions On Emptiness)...It is the total surrender of the figure that gives this piece its power. The show goes with the viewer, keeps working in the mind and in some space beyond the mind. It is a peaceful haunting."

The Virginian Pilot

Sept 14, 1997 Art Critic: Teresa Annas

"In the main gallery of the Arts Center of the Portsmouth Museums, an enormous ink drawing of fabric-draped corpses (Gate) dominates the wall...

...In the work (Gate), feather-light sheets of Himalayan paper, reminiscent of peeled skin layers, dangle from brackets extended from the wall. Sugden's wiggly sepia ink lines resemble hair on skin. As the sheets respond to the slightest air shift, the hanging paper panels are like spirits coming to life."

Virginia Port Folio Weekly *Sept 1, 1997 Art Critic: Catherine Dorsey*

"Become immersed in the mystery and grandeur of the Himalayas through Visions From the Fields of Merit...

The images produced by artist Philip Sugden achieve his goal of fusing objective reality with subjective vision."

COLUMBUS ART REVIEW

Leslie Hall, Art Critic

...Sugden combines a concern for landscape with images from his personal iconography in such a way that objects seem removed from the world of gravity. Sugden leaves a great deal to the imagination and thereby enhances the sense of mystery inherent in his work.

Because of the enigmatic nature of his subject, Sugden's work activates poetic thought. He has set out to create images that make reference to the special nature of existence and its energy, and this he has accomplished with great imagination, beauty, and sensitivity."

The Daily Press: Escanaba, MI: *July 20, 2006: Darrolyn Spannuth*

His sepia ink and gouache pieces are deft and articulate, despite their substantial subjects and dramatic size. In those works, the medium

is almost as significant as the image..

...Mr. Sugden's work explores archetypes, religious and cultural. His colorful painting of psychologist Carl Jung as an astronaut exemplifies that exploration. The form is a triptych that at first glance suggests Hieronymus Bosch's "Garden of Earthly Delights."

Several of Mr. Sugden's paintings emit a wail, a protracted cry of despair. His monochromatic, over-sized, apocalyptic landscape with its isolated, shrouded, almost leprous figures is painfully personal. It is harsh, both in its technique and in its lifeless browns, which he uses in several other smaller introspective works to similar or related effect. The painting is disquieting, unrelieved in its desolation.

Arts Insight Magazine

J.T. Barone, Art Critic (Reviewing The 52nd Annual Tri Kappa Regional Juried Exhibition at The Fort Wayne Museum Of Fine Arts.)

"Philip Sugden from Findlay, Ohio offered an exquisite, "The Final Frontier," an ink drawing of fine angles whose forms span four of the five segments of translucent handmade paper, floating within the frame."

The Ming Pao Monthly

(Hong Kong Arts Magazine)

Betty Au-yeung, Arts Writer

"...The first time you look at Sugden's paintings, you would have a hard time deciding if they were Western or Chinese in style. The delicate sepia ink line work is very similar to the elaborate Chinese style. These remarkable works also show a unique Chinese style of using overlapping papers which are treated as part of the subject and function as the message transmitter--their existence and function cannot be ignored by the viewer."

COLUMBUS ART REVIEW

Leslie Hall, Art Critic

"Sugden's drawings coupled with poetry, entitled Fragments From Another World, capture the sense of myth and mystery associated with the Himalayas and evoke the contemplative spirit of the romantic artist who journeys to other lands in search of inspiration. Judging from the imagery of both drawings and poetry, Sugden's Himalayan experiences were ones of contemplation and meditation. So personal and spiritual is his work that direct interpretation proves difficult. The artist's images allude to another realm.

It is Bindu, Bookworks, however, that expresses the very essence of Sugden's mystical journeys. The piece is like a small, precious book which unfolds to resemble an Oriental screen. The exquisite drawings, accompanied by poetry, flow gracefully from frame to frame depicting faceless, hooded figures, exploding spheres, the banyan tree, and beautiful angels.

The Lima News

Bart Mills, Art Critic

"To see Sugden's work is to look at the former nation of Tibet through the eyes of a man obsessed with the finest detail while burrowing for the greater meaning of this deeply spiritual land. ...drawn in exact, almost obsessive blemish of every brick and the last leaves of stray grass. To most artists, that realism would be a paradox to the "image" they are trying to convey. But with mystical Tibet as a subject--assisted by the use of archaic papers and ink--the message of peace, serenity and an ancient land that has and will out-last any political battles is communicated as clearly as if it were shouted."

The Columbus Dispatch

Lesley Constable, Art Critic

"Sugden's work is difficult to categorize because the story line cryptically references spiritual journeys. Exile and Other States of Nirvana #2 is a finely rendered sepia-toned drawing of a figure clothed in monk's garb. This large drawing, centered within a long vertical piece of paper, seems reminiscent of gravestone rubbings of medieval knight, and is quite apropos to Sugden's interests. Folds of the monk's robes pour over his imagined form and his finely rendered hands hold vaguely religious objects. His face, eerily, is missing. In its place is the darkness of space punctuated by points of light meant to be stars. This "space face" is worked in black gouache and effectively counters the figure's sepia-toned costume."

The Columbus Dispatch

Jacqueline Hall, Art Critic

"...both artists found inspiration in observing the world around them, each managed to interpret it in a fantasied manner which goes far beyond surface appearances.

In the Himalayas, Sugden observed his surroundings and discovered a world which transcended the limits of his visual experience. In exquisitely meticulous drawings, he concretized that world, taking viewers along on a voyage where the symbolic and visionary play as much, if not more, a part as reality.

Buddhas, temples, humble Sherpa women, rocks, trees and mountains are only the visual keys to a means of expression dominated by the metaphysical and the intuitive. But those visual keys are so delicately rendered with pen and ink that they can be enjoyed on a strictly aesthetic plane.

Intellectualization of their content, however, brings out the richness of thoughts and emotions that presided over their conception.

...His technique is superb. But what raises his art out of the ordinary is its animating spirit. Trips to the Himalayas brought him close to his Shangri-La and developed in him a mystical sensibility, which imparts fantasy to his Sketches From The High Country and a visionary quality to his Fragments From Another World."

The Rising Nepal

February 17, 1983 By Birendra Shrestha

Two-person exhibition at the USIA, American Culture Center in Kathmandu, Nepal.

"Philip Sugden has a keen sense of perception portrayed in the principle of "Li", a Chinese form of art, uses the flow of organic patterns in nature. It has no force to it but the will of the artist. This is evident in Philip's sketches. He and Carole Elchert met and teamed-up a few years ago. She sketches words and he, pictures; expressing their romantic manifesto of the ideal and the serene in perfect complement to each other."

Judge's Published Comments

Wassenburg Art Center 45th Annual Juried Exhibition June, 2001

"As I sat isolated from the other juror, and, in fact, from everything but the work of art being held in front of me, I was forced to concentrate on it and it alone, with no direct comparison to other pieces or to the exhibition as a whole. It is for this reason, I think, that I found myself responding most positively to the kind of technical excellence embodied in Philip Sugden's pen and sepia ink Tibetan, Inscriptions on Emptiness..." (winner of the Wassenburg Art Award)

The Courier-Journal, Louisville

Review by Kiane Heilenman, Art Critic

"Art as a personal, spiritual journey is the stuff of which this gallery is made. The latest show underscores that experience, creating a sometimes intriguing and sometimes wearying vision that is a trip. Fortunately, it is brief if intense.

"Visions From the Fields of Merit"...is a work that makes Sugden's play with inner and outer spaces come alive. "Fragments from Another World" is a beguiling image.

His works engage attention with tiny lines, details and an almost obsessive quality that echoes some of the works of engravers in northern Europe during the Renaissance.

The show continues as a meditation of sorts."