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Artist's Statement

Margaretha Maria Tettero

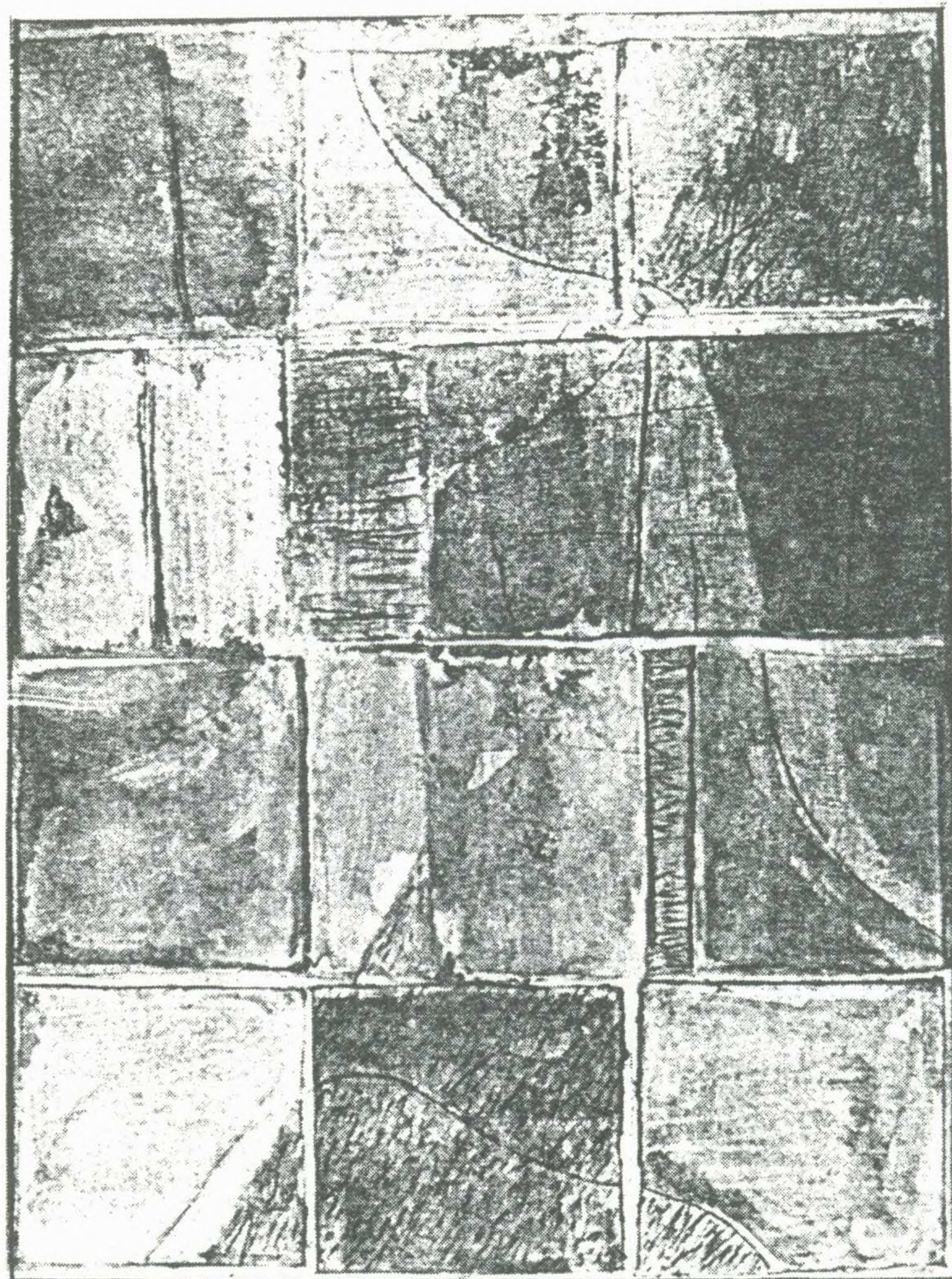
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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

by

Margaretha Maria Tettero

*Bachelor of Fine Arts Honours
University of Manitoba, 1973*

Artist's Statement

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

Grand Forks, North Dakota

May, 1978

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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Margaretha Maria Tettero

The University of North Dakota, 1978

Faculty Advisor: Professor Brian O. Paulsen

This statement submitted by Margaretha Maria Tettero in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done.

Brian O. Fankner
(Chairman)

ROMANESCHAUER

Sacquelyn M. Ely

William Johnson
Dean of Graduate School

Permission

Title ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Department Visual Arts

Degree Master of Fine Arts

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Signature Margaretha M. Tettero

Date April 25, 1978

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
Many thanks to Patty Rolland, secretary of the Visual Arts Department, for her willingness to be of assistance.

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ABSTRACT

My statement is primarily concerned with the thought that there is an active interaction between what I perceive as speculations and conclusions regarding existential philosophies and the visualization of these perceptions in works of art. Emphasis is placed upon the idea that life and art as processes of thought and action enhance, strengthen and clarify one another in an on-going development.

Yes, always there is a strong urge to make something; to bring into being images, art objects that might reflect realities which, without the art process, would remain in a netherworld where they may lie dormant until some chance recognition or remembering allows them to surface momentarily. For me, the image-making activity is a clarifying process where every mark is like a word in a dialogue between what is and what is perceived; it is like a continuous debate concerning a desired wholeness of things. As such, the process facilitates the emergence of little moments of insight upon which, in a very practical physical sense, I can ruminate, with the options to affirm or deny and with the end product important only insofar as it is a manifestation of this process.

In the making of art the images are brought into being through the simultaneous coming together of the spiritual and the physical being of the person/artist. Because of this lively interaction art, as process and end product, can never be static. As one prompts the other and vice versa, new discoveries are made both in the actual image-making activity and in the area of growing self-realization. The whole process in general involves the making of one's self or, as an Indian saying goes: "to become what you are."

"what such self-making most resembles is a series of efforts to reach and, as it were, to conquer one's own reality while stumbling all along the way." ¹

1. Jose Ferrater Mora, Being and Death.
University of California Press
Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1965, Page 159.

Consequently, to view the art process as a tool towards self-actualization seems to me a very legitimate and even desirable thing. It allows me the freedom to never have to arrive, never have to acquire an ultimate "style" or end product, a final statement. This thought holds for me a liberating openness. No need for perfecting of style, to the contrary, as Chagall once pointedly observed; "Perfection is close to death."² Indeed, after perfection, what is there? With this in mind I realize that for me art could not just be a rendering of an obvious idea. Whereas several years ago I was very much involved in making works that dealt solely with how I felt in a given situation, with images that had their origin in my very personal life, this laying bare of my soul eventually became quite a bore and the awareness that I was engaged in a most self-centered activity grew steadily. Yes, those images were important and even necessary to me at that time, however they so abounded in messages that the story told took precedence over the more formal pictorial aspects. So, out with the obvious message, in with the what?

After my entrance into Graduate School at the University of North Dakota there ensued a period of re-examination which, to my advantage, was helped along by the physical and mental breathing space that is allowed to exist here. I found that imagery could be connected with life in a more meaningful sense for me. Instead of seeing the flat of the picture plane as a "magic window" possibility in which an illusion of the familiar could be created, I began to view the two-dimensional format as a starting point for a whole new way of approaching art.

2. Pierre Schneider, Louvre Dialogues.
Marc Chagall
Atheneum, New York, 1971, Page 143.

Feeling quite liberated from the demands of having to deal with line, value, texture, etc. as descriptive entities duplicating an already existing "reality", I was overjoyed at being able to use these elements as entities in their own right. Obvious story or plot became so unnecessary as to appear absurd. In themselves pictorial elements have a language power that can speak in most imaginative terms to our senses.

Having established for myself that, yes, every work conceived and executed in that manner could be seen as a "Ding and Sich", having a reality of existence no less than any other thing that exists, either seen or, as yet, unseen; the whole array of pictorial elements began to take on a different meaning. Surface structure became important as the most forward plane behind which other planes or shapes could take place in a vertical receding fashion. This parallel space-plane layering, though shallow and supportive of the two-dimensional format, could work to indicate some definite activity in either an obvious or very gently, speculative manner. Dynamic figure-ground relationships in which small shapes might appear to be floating between many close-knit layers of transparent color presented further inspirational possibilities. Lines, too, became vital in their own right as marks activating the surface. I also became excited about the potentials in working with a grid system, often laid down as the initial gesture, for example, in the canvas patches of the "mur" series. In order that the uniformity of the grid would not interfere with the surface rhythm I was interested in achieving, the system's regularity had to be partially destroyed or at least frustrated by a linear, color and textural activity taking place on the surface and within the rectilinear shapes. In addition, these shapes are of various sizes mainly to help impart the feeling of surface rhythm and, as in the case of the

narrow horizontal bands in some of the pieces, to alleviate the effects of gravitational pull. The rectilinear shapes are chosen because of their gregarious nature. They will easily accept nearness of shapes of their own kind and thus, in themselves, are mildly assertive, while as a group they tend to conform to a uniform structuring of the planar surface. It gives me great satisfaction to accept the limitations the grid system has to offer, when all the while I can act within and upon its boundaries so that ultimately those very limitations become part of, and congruent with, the actions that sought to transcend the boundaries in the first place.

Without much effort I can sense a definite correlation between the art process and my life as process in general. In both there is an emphasis on acknowledgment of universal order as a ground pattern, one steady kind of rhythm; while a more personal order, the individual uniqueness of being may, through certain actions and possibly non-actions, become one with or even transcend that universal order in an accepting, sensuously affirmative fashion. Without wanting to overemphasize the idea, sensuous affirmation as a way of saying YES seems very important to me. I think that that also shows itself in the colors I employed in many of my works. The dark color range speaks to me of warm earth feelings and I very much enjoy the thought of being of the earth. Then, too, as a person twice removed from my country of birth, it seemed necessary or even inevitable that this dark color range should be used. I suspect this is so because of a rather nostalgic harkening back to a Holland atmosphere of centuries old mysterious dark places, walls, doorways, cobbled roads, and moody skies, together perhaps with the more recent experience of the

dark richness of North-American open fields. I feel that there is a coming together of both influences which in future works, when the comfort of remembering and relating may no longer be needed, will show itself in a more light-handed approach.

The foregoing statement, though it exhibits an air of sureness, can really only be seen as gentle musings. It is an expression of the way I feel and think in my most centered, lucid moments, when clarity of purpose and action seems to present itself as a logical consequence of previous periods of doubt and discontent, which in themselves demand a further investigation of image-making possibilities. As such, the whole creative process as a way of life is rather cyclic. I am aware that little moments of insight can only be caught in an unawares fashion, with the imposition of will acting as a hindrance. At the same time there must be a will to action for anything to come into being. The image-making activity lies between these two poles as a bridge over a gap. It is a question of moving skillfully, recognizing and working within this area of delicate balance.

The works in my Graduate Show are representative of a body of work executed during my two-year stay in Grand Forks. Some are directly related to the ideas expressed in the above statement, others can be seen as side-steps of an exploratory nature. All are, as part of a process, of equal value to me. While in a general sense there was no attempt made to communicate definite ideas, I do hope that the show as a whole will find rapport in the hearts of those receptive to this kind of non-verbal language.

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New York: Atheneum, 1971.



MARGARETHA TETTERO
"MUUR SERIES #2"
CANVAS 22 1/2" x 16 1/2"
RICE PAPER, ACRYLIC

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MARGARETHA TETTERO
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MARGARETHA TETTERO
"MUUR SERIES #6"
CANVAS, ACRYLIC 4' x 5'

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MARGARETHA TETTERO
"MUUR SERIES #7"
CANVAS, ACRYLIC 4' x 5'

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MARGARETHA TETTERO
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MARGARETHA TETTERO
"OBLIQUE SQUARE"
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MARGARETHA TETTERO
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