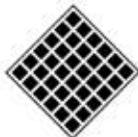




MARTIN KLINE

NATURE AND CULTURE

HAGGERTY MUSEUM OF ART
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY





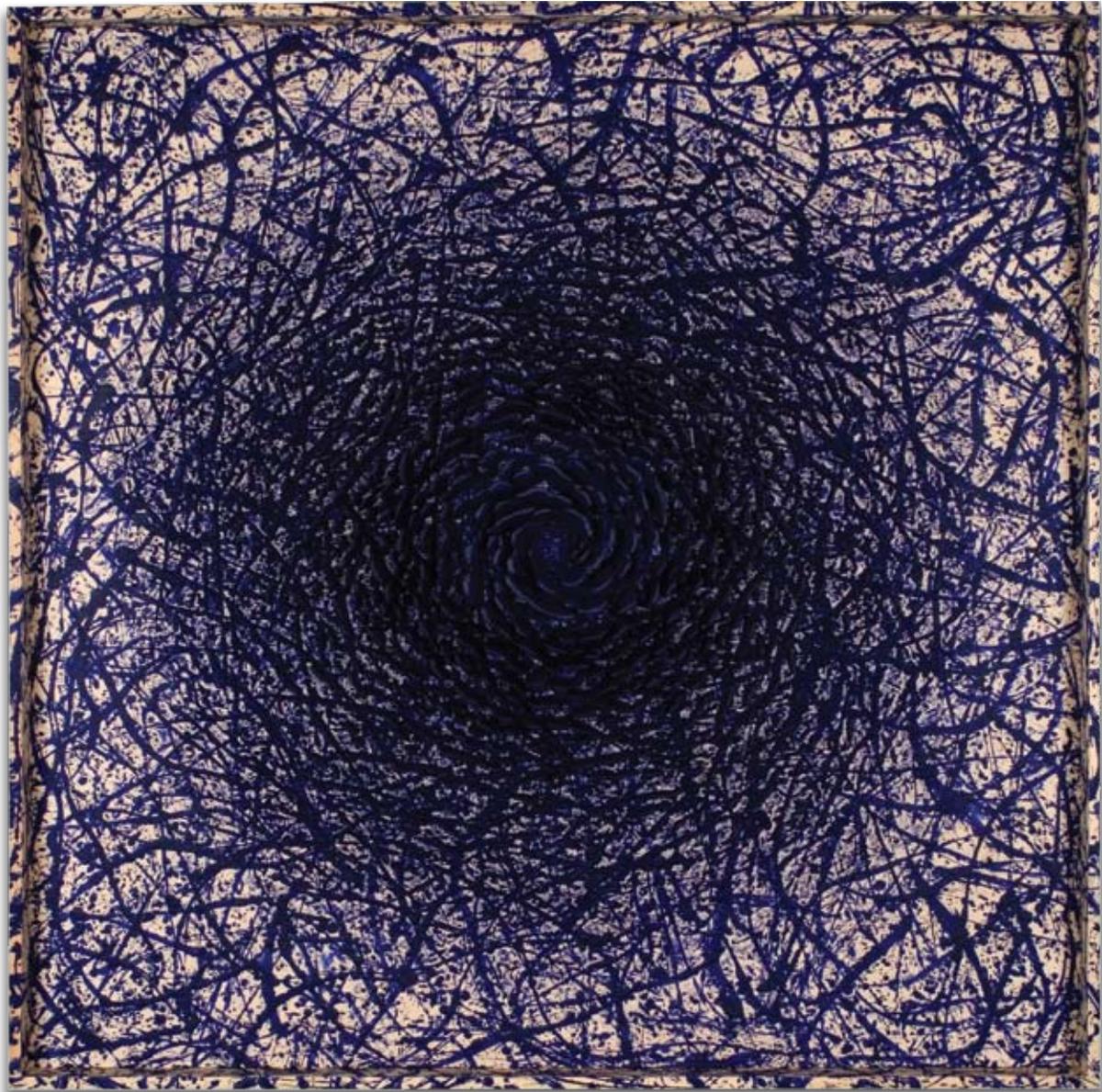
Front cover: *Ecstasy*, 2006, encaustic on panel, 61 x 61 x 4 ½ in.

Inside cover: *Transgenesis*, 2000, bronze (unique), 6 ½ x 17 x 6 ½ in.

Frontispiece: *Killer*, 2006, encaustic on panel, 61 x 61 x 4 ½ in.

MARTIN KLINE

NATURE AND CULTURE

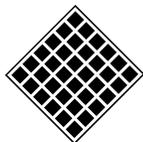


MARTIN KLINE

NATURE AND CULTURE

February 1 — April 10, 2007

HAGGERTY MUSEUM OF ART
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY





Empedocles, 2001, bronze (unique), 24 ½ x 8 ½ x 9 ½ in.

Martin Kline: Nature and Culture

Curtis L. Carter

The exhibition *Martin Kline: Nature and Culture* addresses a problem that artists and philosophers have pondered through the centuries. Martin Kline's issues center on the role nature plays in creating art in the twenty-first century. He has executed thirty encaustic paintings and thirteen bronzes, all unique casts, to explore this subject. It is his first solo museum exhibition and the exhibition takes place at the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, February 1 through April 10, 2007.

To cite some noteworthy points in his career, Kline recently completed a residency in Miyakonojo City, Japan under sponsorship of the Atlantic Pacific Fellowship international artist exchange program. In addition to participation in group exhibitions at museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid, his work is included in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum, the Whitney, the Brooklyn Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, The High Museum, the Houston Museum of Fine Art and university collections among them, the Fogg Art Museum, the Yale Art Museum and The Art Museum at Princeton University. Martin Kline has had a string of major solo exhibitions at the Jason McCoy Gallery and the Marlborough Gallery in New York as well as others in America and Europe in his 25 years as an artist.

I first became acquainted with Kline's work

in 2005 through a visit to his studio in Rhinebeck, New York, where the artist lives and works in the bucolic countryside. It is there, Kline later told me, that he came into his own as an artist, surrounded by and immersed in nature, with all her cycles and forces a dominant feature of daily life. I was immediately struck by the freshness of the work and by the remarkable visual surfaces achieved through the manipulation of encaustic. The practice of using the ancient technique of wax-based painting in our current art setting where installation and video art play prominently gives Kline additional challenge. The medium of encaustic has been revived from time to time in the long history of its use, yet only a few artists of our generation, notably Jasper Johns and Brice Marden, have successfully used this medium repeatedly. Kline's encaustic paintings and sculptures find their own voice with complete assurance even in the context of such accomplished colleagues.

Titles Kline chooses for these works from 2005 and 2006 are intriguing in themselves. *Electric Dreams*, *No Return*, *Secret Garden*, *My India*, *Not about Albers*, *Killer* and *Big Sweet Tooth* suggest a broad range of interests and moods ranging from the reflective to the whimsical. These titles might signify fleeting moments of consciousness in the time required to name a particular work. Further, the titles reveal Kline's emotional and intellectual associations to each particular work.

In any event the titles intrigue and compel us to more serious looking and contemplation of the works themselves.

Paintings included in the exhibition range from 24 x 24 to 48 x 96 inches and offer a rich visual field of colors ranging from elegant monochromatic surfaces to vibrant multi-colored works. In works such as *Ecstasy* and *Galileo*, the color strokes and accretions form an optical radiance with energy and intensity that engages the viewer's eye in a compelling visual tango. Kline's encaustic surfaces are made of layers of pigmented wax, heated until liquid then applied in a variety of ways, always employing a paintbrush. The way a painting is started determines the painting's destiny – ultimately, how the painting will look. Sometimes the works are guided by gestural motions emanating from the movements of his body, akin to the gestural energy which drove Jackson Pollock's method. Flinging paint onto the panel in all directions, such as in the works *Doppelgänger*, *Secret Garden*, and *Not about Albers*, establishes the basic form which is then developed further by brush strokes accumulating on these lines of thrown paint. Other times, controlled strokes, stripes, dots or staccato lines form the structure, such as in *Little India*, *Under My Thumb* and *Big Sweet Tooth*. Some works have relatively shallow depth, as in the work *Newton's Veil*, creating a soft and sensual blur. Other works display an extreme amount of built up surface as in *Killer*, in which the hyper-masculine petals suggest a threatening bloom. In Kline's works, the strokes are applied in a systematic way, layer

upon layer, perhaps at right angles, perhaps in curves, to achieve a consistency in the structure of the painting. Other determining factors in his creative process are a function of where the treatment of the painted surface begins: for example, a painting may begin its build up at the center of the panel and move toward the periphery, or it may proceed from the bottom of the panel upward, or the reverse, according to the artist's intention. The result is paintings that are abstract but often with oblique reference to nature.

Kline's sculptures in this exhibition also carry intriguing titles embracing classical themes, such as *Argo* and *Daphne*, respectively suggestive of the ship that carried Jason and his men, and Daphne, the nymph who was turned into a laurel tree to escape the God Apollo. Other titles refer to films, *Breakfast on Pluto* and *La Notte*, and philosophy, as in *Empedocles* and *Nature and Culture*. The sculptures are smaller in scale than the paintings, the largest being 41 x 10 x 10 inches and are unique unpatinated bronze casts. The references to logs and branches are apparent, but we quickly see that these are merely the raw materials from which Kline's inventive fantasies take off. His sculptures are neither the sole product of nature, nor simply cast found objects. In Kline's hands, they are appropriated armatures, embellished, manipulated and ultimately transformed. Casting cups and venting systems are sometimes left attached to underscore the artist's hand.

In contrast to branches in unattended nature, which undergo changes in appearance



No Return, 2006, encaustic on panel, 61 x 61 x 4 ½ in.

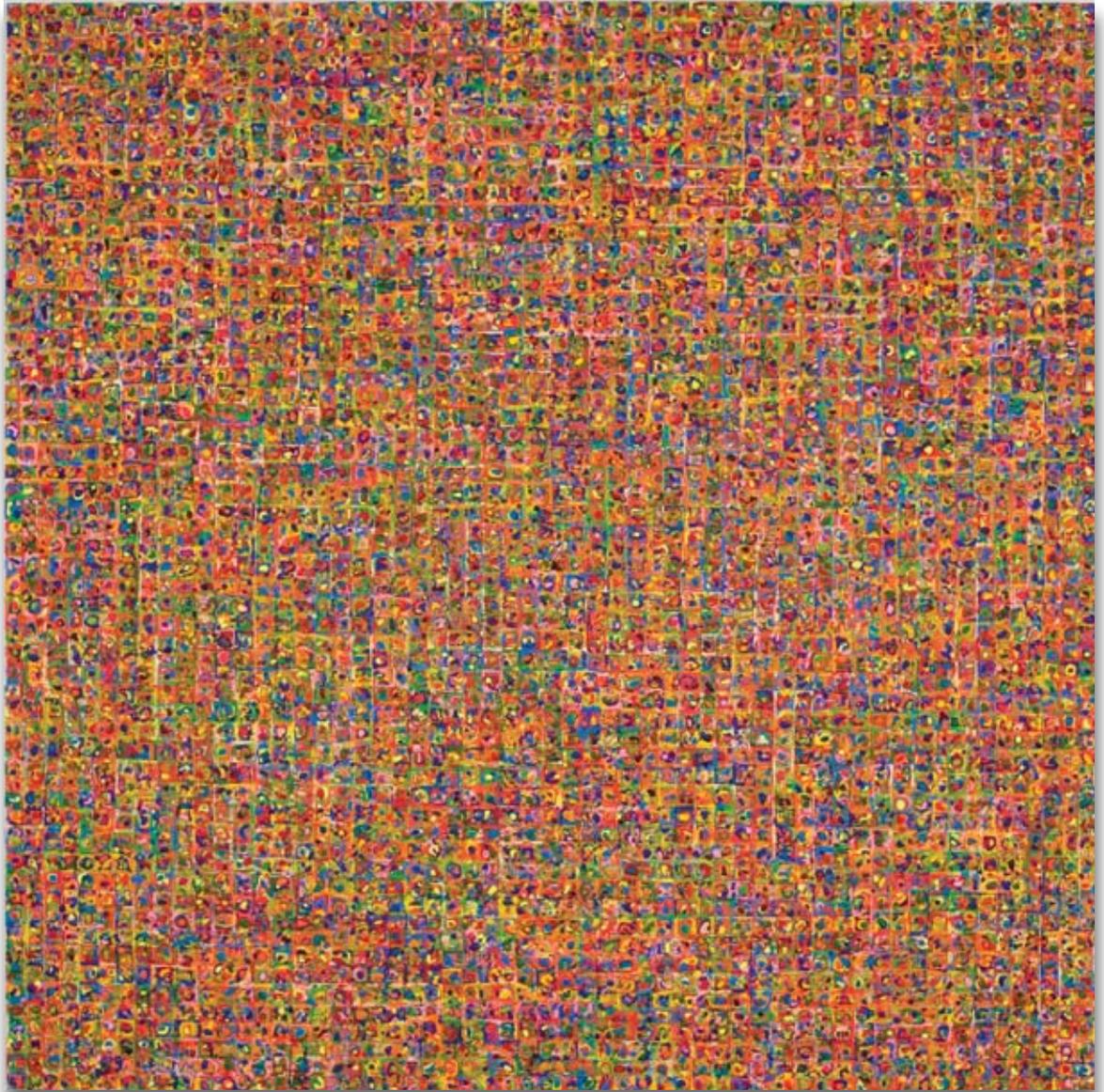
independent of human assist, a cast bronze branch is frozen in time as a static invented form. It serves conceptual and expressive purposes, and apart from intentional destruction or minor physical deterioration, it does not undergo significant material change. However, a work of art may undergo important cultural changes as a result of critical interpretation. Writers and viewers who elect to reflect on, write about, or engage in discussion of the paintings and sculptures may indeed add to the conceptual properties of an invented cultural object. And this is what every artist might wish to occur.

This discussion of Kline's art invites a return to philosophical aspects of nature and culture. From the early days of Western art in ancient Greece to the present, artists and philosophers have pondered the connections between art and nature. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the task of painting and sculpture was closely aligned with representations of nature. In this context, nature provided the content, and culture supplied the invented symbolic forms that define the history of art, as witness the long-standing traditions of still life and landscape painting. The connections between art and nature were effectively severed upon the advent of abstract art in the twentieth century. Nelson Goodman's influential analysis of art forms as types of invented symbol systems in *Languages of Art* pushed the question of nature's relation to art further off the agenda of contemporary aesthetics, leaving it to the artists to revisit this important question. Nature has been mainly excluded from

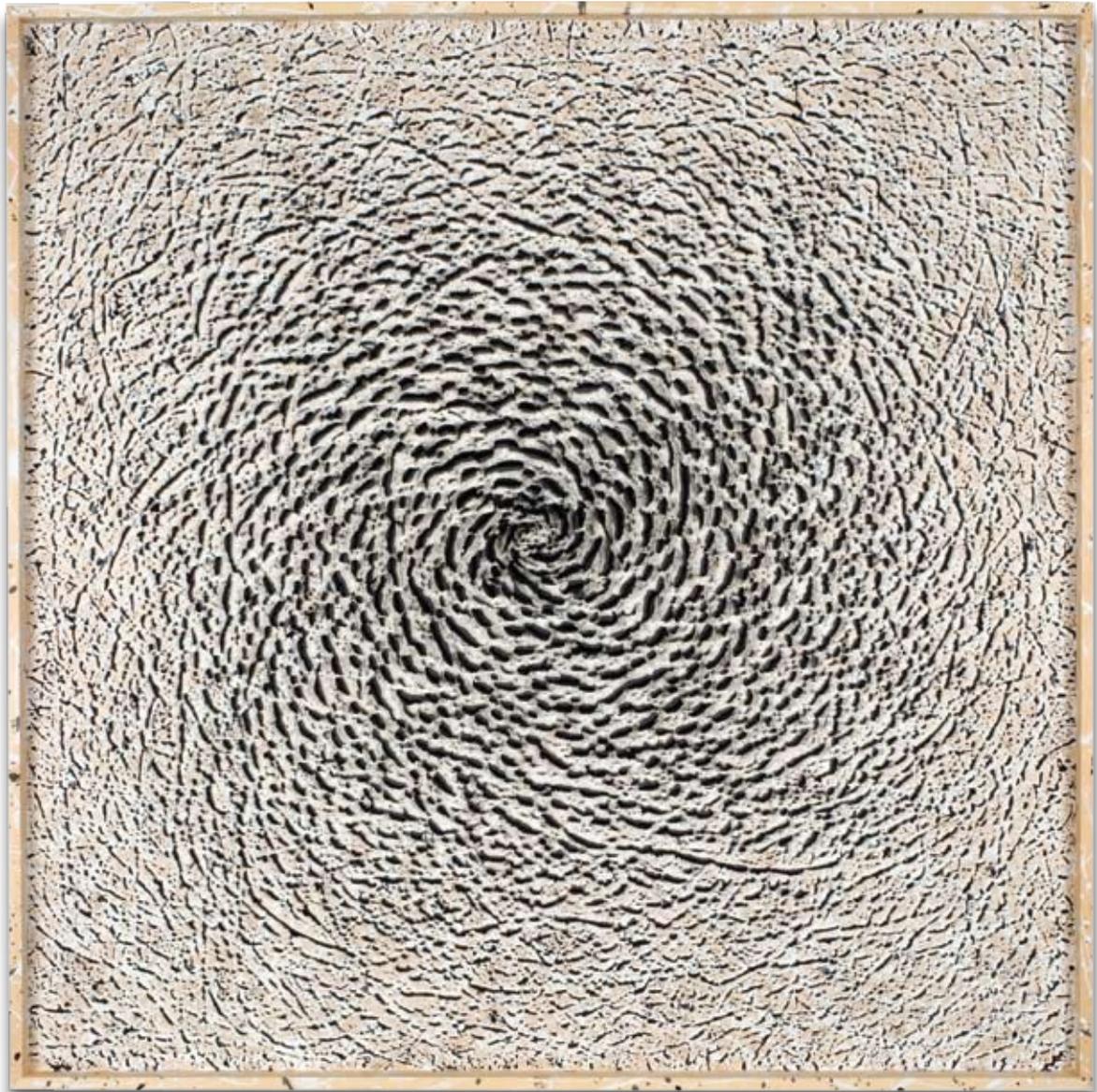
any serious consideration in contemporary art, but Martin Kline's paintings and sculptures invite us to ponder once again the relation and relevancy of the subject of art and nature. Kline describes his paintings and sculptures as "physical works of growth," perhaps analogous to the processes of growth in nature. But his aim is not to replicate nature.

Kline's concerns are to exemplify natural forces in his art and examine man's role in interacting with these forces. In his sculptures, especially, but also in his paintings, are intimations of the ways in which human beings may influence and control nature. His reflections on this theme in his art are especially poignant in a time of technological and biological manipulations and advances. His works make no value judgments on these new developments, but remind us that as responsible creators affecting living things, artists and scientists alike need to keep a wary eye upon their creations.

The result of Kline's work shown in the Haggerty exhibition is a mid-career body of rigorous and finely crafted paintings and sculptures that are beautiful to look at, often mysterious in their multifarious cultural references, and philosophically engaging. The references found in the works range widely from direct concrete experiences in nature, to ancient cultures, to his Catholic upbringing, and more broadly to the material and the spiritual in human experience.



Big Sweet Tooth, 2006, encaustic on panel, 48 x 48 x 2 ½ in.



Doppelgänger, 2006, encaustic on panel, 61 x 61 x 3 ¼ in.



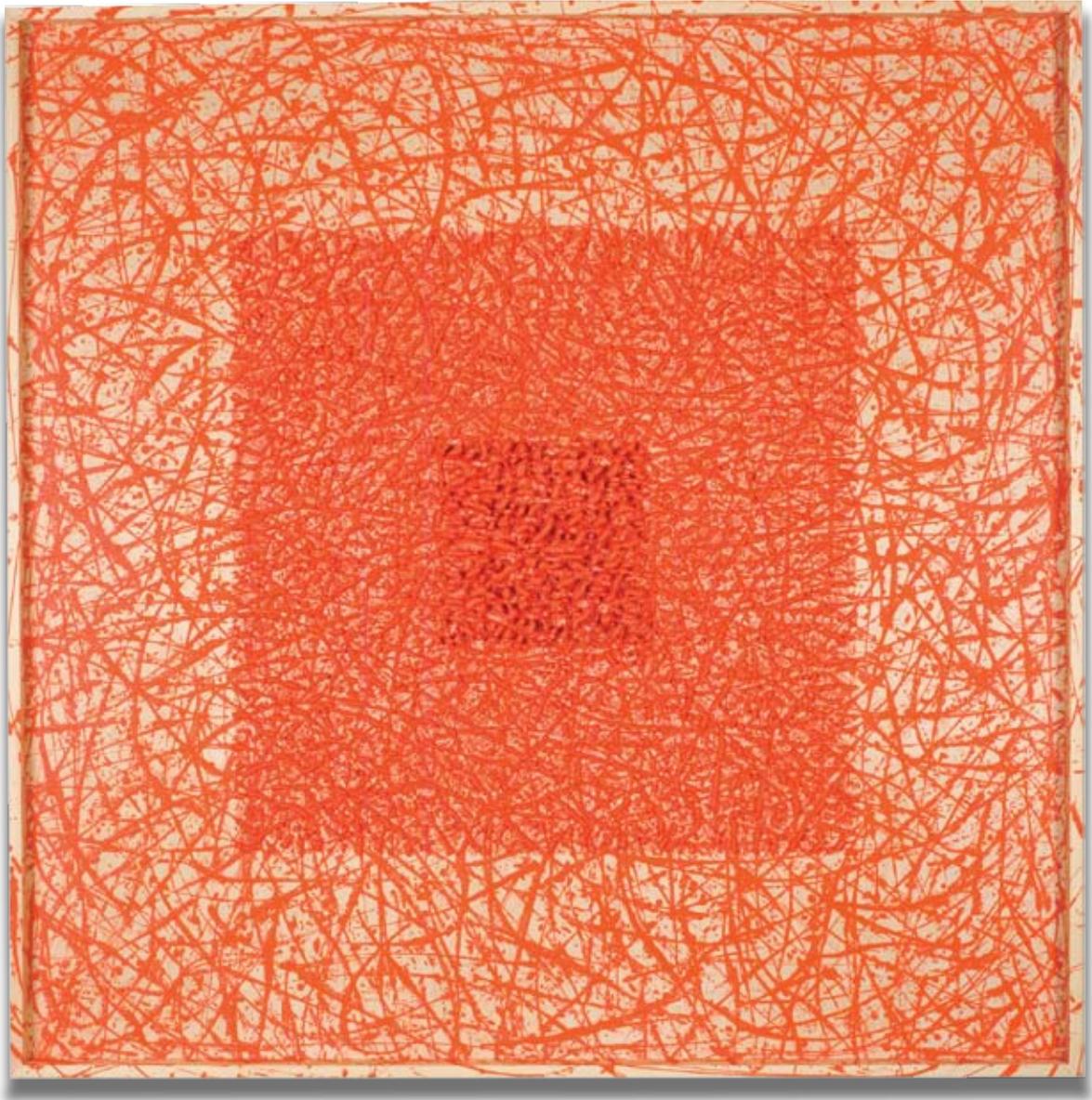
Raskolnikov, 2006, encaustic on panel, 61x 61 x 3 ¼ in.



Shock Corridor, 2006, encaustic on panel, 49 x 49 x 5 in.



Galileo, 2006, encaustic on panel, 61 x 61 x 4 ½ in.



Not About Albers, 2006, encaustic on panel, 61 x 61 x 3 ¼ in.



Secret Garden, 2006, encaustic on panel, 61x 61 x 3 ¼ in.



Gaming Stick, 1999, bronze (unique), 13 ½ x 34 ½ x 4 in.



Little India, 2006, encaustic on panel, 32 x 42 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.



La Notte, 2006, encaustic on panel, 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.



Ultima Thule, 2006, encaustic on panel, 66 ½ x 49 x 3 ¼ in.



Clockwise from top left:
Under My Thumb, 2005, encaustic on panel, 24 x 24 x 1 ½ in.
Paisley Park, 2005, encaustic on panel, 24 x 24 x 1 ½ in.
Medusa, 2005, encaustic on panel, 24 x 24 x 1 ½ in.
Candy Striper, 2005, encaustic on panel, 24 x 24 x 1 ½ in.



Clockwise from top:

Saint Barbara, 2004, bronze (unique), 19 x 4 x 5 in.

Wounded Healer, 2003, bronze (unique), 12 x 6 x 6 in.

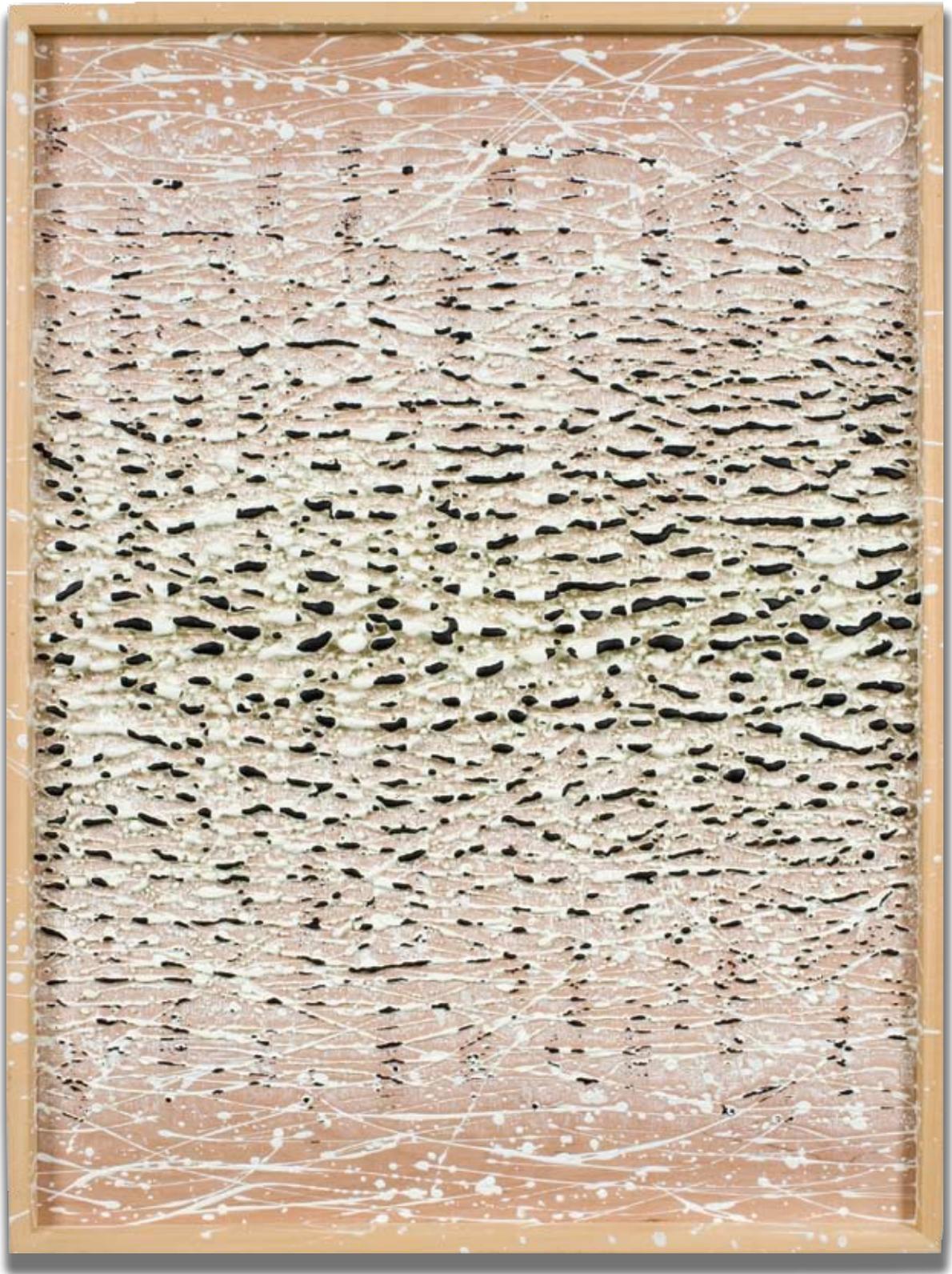
Nature and Culture, 2000, bronze (unique), 5 x 8 ½ x 6 ½ in.



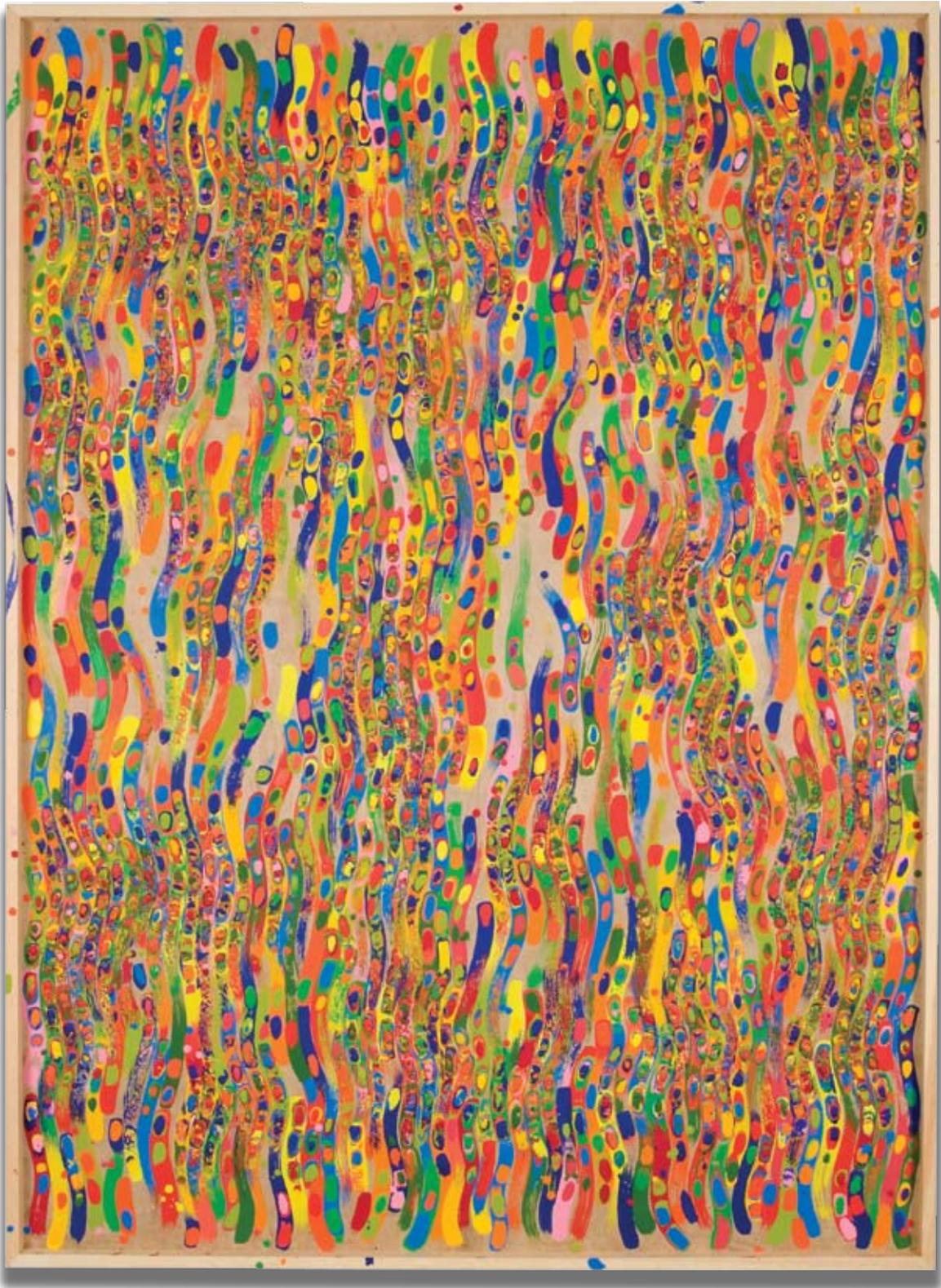
Newton's Veil, 2005, encaustic on panel, 49 x 62 x 3 in.



New York, 2006, encaustic on panel, 66 ½ x 49 x 3 ½ in.



Karl Springer, 2006, encaustic on panel, 42 x 32 x 2 3/4 in.



Fuga, 2005, encaustic on panel, 66 ½ x 49 x 2 ¾ in.



Daphne, 1999 and 2004-6, bronze (unique), 41 ½ x 10 x 10 in.

MARTIN KLINE

Born 1961, Norwalk, Ohio.
Lives and works in Rhinebeck, New York.

EDUCATION

1983 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio

ONE MAN EXHIBITIONS

- 2007 Milwaukee, Haggerty Museum of Art, *Martin Kline, Nature and Culture*
- 2006 New York, Jason McCoy Inc., *Made in Japan*
- 2005 New York, Jason McCoy Inc., *Truth Awakens as Fiction: The Art of Martin Kline*
Copenhagen, Jason McCoy Inc., *Copenhagen Suite, New Oilstick Paintings*
- 2004 New York, Jason McCoy Inc., *Stainless Steel Painting*
- 2002 New York, Marlborough Chelsea, *Painting Sculpture*
- 2000 New York, Marlborough Gallery, *New Works*
- 1996 New York, 65 Thompson Street, Grids
Columbus, Ohio, Allez les Filles Gallery, *Martin Kline*
- 1995 Zurich, ACP Gallerie, *Large Watercolors*
- 1994 New York, Stephen Mazoh, *Yuccas*
- 1993 Zurich, ACP Gallerie, *17 Drawings*
- 1992 New York, Stephen Mazoh, *Recent Drawings*
- 1985 Portland, Oregon Information Technology Institute, *Drawings*
- 1984 Portland, Sumus Gallery, *Egyptian Themes*
- 1983 Athens, Ohio, Small Space Gallery, *Line Drawings*

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2006 New York, Denise Bibro Fine Art, *Head Over Hand*
- 2005 New Paltz, State University
New York, Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, *Encaustic Work 2005*
New York, Jason McCoy Inc., *Summer Exhibition: Gallery Artists*
- 2004 Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, *Los Monocromos*

- 2003 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Recent Acquisitions: Works on Paper*
Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art, *Drawing Modern, Works from the Agnes Gund Collection*
New York, Marlborough Chelsea, *Group Exhibition*
Atlanta, Marcia Wood Gallery, *Encaustic Now/ Series 2*
Chicago, Flatfile Contemporary, *Inaugural Exhibition*
Chautauqua, NY, Chautauqua Center for Visual Art, *Al Held, Martin Kline, Kim Anno: Watercolors*
- 2002 Connecticut College, New London, Cummings Art Center, *Encaustic Painting*
New York, Marlborough Chelsea, *Sculpture, Gallery Artists*
New York, Paul Rodgers 9W Gallery, *Mono-Chrome*
New York, Chambers Fine Art, *Rocks and Art, Nature Found and Made*
- 2001 New York, Marlborough Gallery, *Summer Exhibition: Gallery Artists*
Glens Falls, NY, The Hyde Collection Art Museum, SUNY College at Fredonia, NY, Michael C. Rockefeller Arts Center Gallery, Youngstown, OH, Butler Institute of American Art, Wayne, NJ, William Patterson University, Ben Shahn Gallery, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Sarah Moody Gallery of Art, *Watercolor: In The Abstract*
- 2000 New York, Marlborough Gallery, *Summer Exhibition: Gallery Artists*
New York, Gagosian Gallery (Chelsea), *Art 2000*
New York, Matthew Marks Gallery, *Drawings and Photographs*
- 1999 Montclair, The Montclair Art Museum, and Knoxville Museum of Art, *Waxing Poetic: Encaustic Art in America*
- 1998 Annandale-on-Hudson, Bard College, *Trace*
New York, Jason McCoy Inc., *Summer Group Show*
- 1997 New York, Robert Steele Gallery, Union, New Jersey, James Howe Fine Arts Gallery of Kean University, *Intimate Universe (Revisited)*
New York, Elizabeth Harris Gallery, *Purely Painting*
- 1996 Bad Ragaz, Grand Hotels Resort, *Ornamente und Strukturen*
- 1995 Kornwestheim, Germany, Galerie der Stadt Kornwestheim, *Ornamentale Tendenzen: Martin Kline, Claude Sandos, Susanna Taras*
- 1994 Portland, Butters Gallery, *October Group Show*
- 1993 New York, Leo Castelli Gallery, *Drawings, 30th Anniversary Exhibition*
Venice, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, and New York, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, *Drawing the Line Against AIDS*
Paramus, Bergen Museum of Art and Science, *A Moment Becomes Eternity: Flowers as Image*
- 1992 New York, Metro Pictures Gallery, *Freedom of Expression '92*
- 1991 New York, Lorence Monk Gallery, *Drawings*
New York, Michael Walls Gallery, *Entr'Acte*
- 1990 New York, Michael Walls Gallery, *The Summer Exhibition 1990: Thirty Artists*
- 1987-89 Sarasota, Jack Voorhies Gallery, *Group Exhibitions*
- 1986 Pocatello, Idaho State University, *Big Sky Biennial IV*
Portland, *Art in the Mayor's Office*
Coos Bay, Oregon, Coos Art Museum, *Gary Forner, Martin Kline, Nan Yragui*
- 1985 Stockton, California, *Stockton National Print and Drawing Exhibition*
Salem, Oregon State Fair, *All Oregon Art Annual*
Portland, Portland Art Museum and Coos Bay Art Museum, *Oregon Biennial*
Condon, Oregon, *Summit Spring's Art Slate '85*
- 1984 Portland Art Association, *Gallery Artists*
Salem, Oregon State Fair, *All Oregon Art Annual*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The exhibition *Martin Kline: Nature and Culture* at the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University brings the work of this important contemporary artist to the greater Milwaukee community.

Martin Kline: Nature and Culture is the first solo museum exhibition of Martin Kline's work and the most recent in a series of contemporary art exhibitions at the Haggerty Museum of Art. Previous exhibitions include *Eve Sussman: 89 Seconds at Alcazar*; *Kendall Buster: highrisevessels* and *Elger Esser: Landscapes and Postcards*.

I would like to thank the artist Martin Kline who was fully engaged in the planning and organization of this exhibition. I want to thank him and Jason McCoy of Jason McCoy Inc., New York for generously making the paintings and sculptures available for this exhibition.

Funding for *Martin Kline: Nature and Culture* was provided by the Marquette University Women's Council Endowment Fund and the Wisconsin Arts Board.

Curtis L. Carter, Director

Martin Kline: Nature and Culture *February 1 — April 10, 2007*

Patrick and Beatrice Haggerty Museum of Art
Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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Haggerty Museum of Art
Marquette University
P. O. Box 1881
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881
email: haggertym@marquette.edu
(414)288-1669
www.marquette.edu/haggerty



Back cover: *Personnage*, 2001, bronze (unique), 40 ½ x 16 x 14 in.

Inside back cover: *Grendel*, 2003, bronze (unique), 15 x 18 x 20 in.

