A Visual Interpretation of Events and Personalities from the Book of Mormon

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A VISUAL INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES
FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON

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by
Larry Berg Prestwich
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Moroni wandered for the safety of his life.
I would like to express sincere thanks to the Department of Art for permitting me to develop the subject of this thesis. I am especially grateful to Dr. Richard L. Gunn, committee chairman, for his assistance in the preparation of this project. I would like to acknowledge my appreciation to Dr. J. Roman Andrus for his assistance in providing me with ideas and resource material.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem.--The purpose of this thesis was to create two paintings and ten drawings pertaining to events and personalities from the Book of Mormon. The art works were done with the special intent of expressing the artist's personal and animated feelings about several men whose writings comprise the book, and certain events pertaining to their particular circumstances.

The Book of Mormon is not only a book of scriptural doctrine in the same sense as the Bible, but is also a record depicting how particular individuals attempted to reconcile themselves in their activities and beliefs to the will of Deity, while struggling to remain free from the wars that often threatened to destroy their existence. These paintings and drawings were visual statements that attempted to capture the atmospheric mood and emotional force of these men and their experiences. The works were designed to convey the action, drama, tension and spiritual impact of these emotional

1James E. Talmage stated that the Book of Mormon claimed to be "...a new scripture, presenting prophecies and revelations not heretofore recognized in modern theology..." James E. Talmage, Articles of Faith (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1962), p. 273.
forces. The beliefs these men embraced had a profound influence on their lives, resulting in exceptional experiences and contributions worthy of examination and investigation.

How the Problem Arose.--For several years the artist has been interested in the Book of Mormon as subject matter for drawings and paintings. Although many outstanding illustrations of the events of the book have been made, few have attempted to focus specifically on the emotional and spiritual force of its events and personalities.

Justification of the Problem.--During the course of history many creative artists have given man, through their work, a greater insight and a wider perspective as he sought to understand the spiritual nature of his existence. They have produced works of real merit and expressiveness, graphically bringing to the world of art a deeper religious and spiritual significance. Their superb skills and creative talents in all areas of art, including painting, print-making and sculpture, enabled them to penetrate the profound inner qualities of spiritual man, and to express themselves eloquently and forcefully in this realm of interpretation.

Even though the philosophy of art has undergone vast changes since some of these artists lived, many of man's basic needs have not greatly changed, not the least of which being his desire to understand the spiritual essence of life. Today there is growing controversy and skepticism about religious and spiritual matters. Many people, including Christian
clergymen, have come to question the reality of a Supreme Being, and are confused by the turbulent events of today's world. On the other hand, the book on which this thesis was based is intense and precise in seeking to clarify man's existence through an explanation of his earthly purpose and ultimate potential, as well as in attempting to explain his relationship with Deity. In the light of the great art works that have been scripturally inspired, and because of the religious philosophy of the Book of Mormon it was felt that an expressive thesis which captured the spirit and emotion of the men who wrote the Book of Mormon was appropriate and justifiable.

Creative Direction of the Problem.--The direction of the drawings and paintings composing this thesis was based on personal interpretations and deep feelings. The technical approach in expressing these feelings was also personal and interpretive. Liberties were taken to stress the action and emotion, which were the elements of greatest thematic significance. Many elements were exaggerated, altered or distorted for emotional expression and impact. The gestures, facial expressions and physical proportions were all conceived to help transmit this feeling.

2 Le Corbusier stated that "Conception is the choice, the decision of which emotion to transmit; composition is the choice of means capable of transmitting this emotion." *Modern Artists on Art*, Edited by Robert L. Herbert (Inglewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 67.
In this connection John Dewey wrote the following about distortion:

Distortion of lines and departure from actual color may not only add to the esthetic effect but result in increased expressiveness. For then material is not subordinated to some particular and antecedent meaning and material entertained about the person in question...but it is reconstructed and reorganized to express the artist's imaginative vision of the whole being of a person. 1

In a lecture on modern art which was later published, Paul Klee said:

The creation of a work of art...must of necessity...be accompanied by distortion of the natural form. For, therein is nature reborn. 2

Although these works did not go to the extremes of distortion characteristic of Paul Klee's works, there was an attempt to gain a greater emotional communication by the use of distortion and exaggeration. In the sense of 'increased expressiveness through reorganization' it was the goal to achieve a more accurate reality of the subject matter to reveal the true 'nature' of the situation. El Greco, for example, distorted and elongated the figure to express "the supernatural by means of the unnatural." 3 In summary, the figures and other compositional elements were distorted for expressive reasons to create the essence of the emotional situation and its action.

2 Modern Artists on Art, op.cit., p. 79.
Light and dark value contrasts were also exaggerated to give the figures a feeling of power, drama and a rough, surging energy, as well as to convey forces of their spiritual and physical strength. In his "Reminiscences" Kandinsky wrote of the effect Rembrandt's use of light and dark had upon him:

Rembrandt moved me deeply. The great division of Light and Dark...revealed to me completely new possibilities, superhuman powers of color in its own right and particularly the intensification of power through juxtaposition...that is, contrasts.\(^1\)

It was this 'intensification of power' that the value contrasts hoped to achieve. Henry Moore stated on this subject:

Between beauty of expression and power of expression there is a difference of function. The first aims at pleasing the senses, the second has a spiritual vitality which for me is more moving and goes deeper than the senses.\(^2\)

Through the use of strong light and dark contrasts within the figures and in relation to the background there was a conscious effort to gain an intensified, powerful expression containing what Moore termed "a spiritual vitality."\(^3\)

While some elements were distorted or exaggerated, others were simplified or eliminated. This was done to arrive at the heart of the profound, vital ideas. The works were not meant to be show-cases for the accumulation of details, but were intended to express something deeper than surface regalia. Clive Bell wrote the following about this concept:

\(^1\)Modern Artists on Art, op. cit., p. 28.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 140.
\(^3\)Ibid.
Detail is the heart of realism, and the fatty degeneration of art. The tendency of the (modern) movement is to simplify all this mess of details which painters have introduced into pictures in order to state facts.\(^1\)

It was John Dewey's opinion that:

Representation is not..."objects as such," that is of items in the natural scene as they literally occur or are recalled.\(^2\)

Henry Moore contributed this insight to the problem:

Because a work does not aim at reproducing natural appearances it is not, therefore, an escape from life...not a decoration of life, but an expression of the significance of life, a stimulation to greater effort in living.\(^3\)

The art works were shorn of all unnecessary elements to capture and create the essential ideas and forces to be communicated.

It has previously been stated that the paintings and drawings were statements of the artist's personal feelings concerning the subject matter. In regards to this there was a determined effort for an individual, personal expression of the spiritual and emotional qualities of the Book of Mormon. Other artists have striven to express their emotional reaction to various situations. Clive Bell spoke of Cézanne's emotionalism as follows:

Cézanne came to understand it, (landscape)...as an end in itself and an object of intense emotion...From that time forward Cézanne set himself to create forms that would

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\(^3\)Modern Artists on Art, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-41.
express the emotion that he felt for what he had learnt to see.\footnote{Clive Bell, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 140.}

In his introductory remarks regarding the life and work of van Gogh, W. Uhde wrote:

But these values of feeling and expression which are the first we must note in pictures, are not mere illustration or literature transferred to canvas, but...form a dominant note which is expressed with the pure means of painting.

His landscapes too are not reflections of an eye, but actual experiences of a human being.\footnote{Vincent van Gogh, Introduction by W. Uhde (Northampton: Clarke and Sherwell, 1941), p. 12.}

These works were expressions about how the artist reacted to the book, and his inner feelings concerning the thematic portrayals. True, the works were based on the experiences of certain men whose lives and deeds are recounted in the Book of Mormon, and these have been dealt with by graphic means of pictorial compositions; however, the events depicted were only instruments for the transferral of feeling and mood, not ends solely in and of themselves.

Backgrounds in the paintings and drawings were done for the purpose of augmenting the expressive nature of the composition, and of setting its atmospheric mood.\footnote{Robert Henri, \textit{The Art Spirit} (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1960), p. 41.} Here again, all unnecessary elements were eliminated to stress the importance of the figures engulfed in an emotional situation.
Even though color was not the most important element of expression in the drawings, it was employed purposefully in the two paintings. This means of expression was used symbolically and it also served to create emotion and atmosphere. Robert Henri wrote the following of his feeling for color:

I am not interested in color for color's sake and light for light's sake. I am interested in them as means of expression.¹

Wassily Kandinsky expressed his ideas about color in this way:

...the effect of colors is deeper and intensely moving. They produce a correspondent spiritual vibration, and it is only as a step towards this spiritual vibration that the physical impression is of importance.²

In one painting color was used to build a spiritual, pensive mood. Large areas of deep blue, both in the background and in the shadow areas of the figure, were employed to suggest the feeling of introspection—the reflective, pensive attitude of the figure.³ This color also symbolised the spiritual, eternal qualities of the painting.⁴ Green was also used, entwined in and against the blue, and emphasized alone in smaller areas to suggest the search for the immortal.⁵

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¹Robert Henri, op. cit., p. 130.
³Ibid., p. 60.
⁵Ibid., pp. 101-102.
trasting areas of red and orange gave the figure vitality and emotional intensity. In the other painting the red-orange background set the stage for its fiery, intense atmosphere. This color was charged in its pulsating depiction of a wicked individual. Contrasted by deep blues and purples, this painting became solemn, serious, mysterious and forceful in its expressiveness through the color relationships.

Employment of other art elements also helped contribute to the conveyance of emotional feeling. Line was not only used to express contour and modeling, but its tension and release, its searching movement, possessed vibrant emotional qualities of its own. Francis J. Meyers in his book about charcoal drawing, described a drawing technique whereby a washlike effect could be achieved by moistening the charcoal with fixative and brushing it across the paper-producing areas of value. This technique was used in several of the drawings because it was then possible to attain an uneven, energetic textural value. These values were employed to create a variety of emotional effects ranging from quiet, smooth washes to surging, pulsating areas. In some drawings the charcoal was merely smeared in the traditional

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1Ibid., pp. 93-95.
2Ibid., p. 103.
manner with a finger or chamois to produce a tonal area. Even though this tone did not possess the vibration of a wash as described above, it was also used for emotional movement and expression.

To summarize, the following steps were taken to achieve the action and emotional feelings pertaining to each interpretation:

(1) Many elements were exaggerated, altered or distorted for emotional expression and impact. The gestures, facial expressions and physical proportions were conceived to help transmit this feeling.

(2) Light and dark value contrasts were also exaggerated to give the figures a feeling of power, drama, and a rough, surging energy, as well as to convey the force of their spiritual and physical strength.

(3) Many elements were simplified or eliminated to arrive at the heart of the profound, vital ideas.

(4) There was a determined effort for an individual, personal expression of the spiritual and emotional qualities of the Book of Mormon.

(5) Backgrounds in the paintings and drawings were done for the purpose of augmenting the expressive nature of the composition and to establish its atmospheric mood.

(6) Color was used symbolically in the paintings, and was also employed in both paintings and drawings to create emotion and atmosphere. It was an important element of expression.

(7) Employment of other art elements also helped contribute to the conveyance of emotional feeling.

After all attempts to explain and to justify the processes and procedures relative to the creation of these art works, it must be added that they were more than just the product of rational thought, more than mere decisions. They were the result of the artist's ability, personal style and constant searching for expressive means.
Review of Book of Mormon Illustrations.--In 1962 Ernel Leroy Anderson completed a thesis at the Brigham Young University containing illustrations of Book of Mormon events. In this thesis he reviewed the illustrations that had been done to that date. At the present time Stuart Heimdal of the same institution is also working on a thesis based on Book of Mormon illustrations. However, since illustration was not the purpose of this thesis, those interested in a review of Book of Mormon illustrations should refer to these other theses.

Chapter Organization.--The body of the thesis was divided into five chapters in explanation of the two paintings and ten drawings. In every case but one there were two or more works about a single individual and the organization of chapters containing related sections was made for easier comprehension of each work and its relationship to the other works.

Materials.--Eight of the ten drawings were done on white coverstock printing paper which worked well for drawing because of its subtle, yet distinct, surface texture. The paper selected was 26 by 40 inches and six of the drawings were rendered in that size. The large compositional area helped achieve the power and force necessary in conveying the desired emotional impact of the subject matter. Two

drawings were done on double sheets of paper totaling 40 by 50 inches in size. It was felt that the theme idea of these drawings could be presented more effectively through a larger composition. Both of these drawings had a horizontal design, and the 26 inch height was not enough to properly treat the subject matter. One drawing portrayed Mormon and Moroni, while the other depicted a remarkable experience of the brother of Jared. Two other drawings were done on smaller white paper, 23 by 35 inches, with a smoother texture. These drawings were more abstract in design with broader areas of flat value. This paper was used because its surface was more congruous to this type of strong, forceful lines—another essential element in these two works.

Nupastel was used as the drawing instrument. The artist in the past has used many different tools to draw with, from pencils to various types of charcoal, but preferred Nupastel for several reasons. It was hard enough to achieve a fine sensitive line, and yet soft enough to be rubbed and smeared, thus producing areas of value and texture. Nupastel was available in a wide range of colors, among which were some with excellent quality and chromatic strength. All the drawings were done in a basic color other than black, and seven were done in two or more colors. Even though color was not intended to be the most important element of the drawings, it contributed to the visual excitement and interest, and also aided in establishing the emotional atmosphere.

The paintings were done in oil on linen canvas of medium texture. The painting of Nephi was 42 by 46 inches,
while the painting of Omni was 32 by 36 inches.

**Definition of Art Terms:**

**Abstract.**—An art form in which there is little, if any, indication of the physical objects commonly perceived in nature. Simplification and rearrangement of objects or elements of form to express an artist's "feelings" of reality.\(^1\)

**Aesthetics.**—The theory of the artistic of the "beautiful": traditionally, a branch of philosophy, but now a compound of the philosophy, psychology, and sociology of art.\(^2\)

**Atmosphere.**—The aesthetic tone or mood of, or harmony of effects in, a work of art.\(^3\)

**Composition.**—The act of organizing all of the art elements of a work of art into a harmoniously unified whole.\(^4\)

**Content.**—The final statement, mood, or quality of experience with a work of art.\(^5\)

**Design.**—A framework or scheme of pictorial construction on which the artist bases the formal organization of his work.\(^6\)

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Distortion.—Any change made by an artist in the size, position or general character of forms based on visual perception, when those forms are organized into a pictorial image. 1

Elements of Art Structure.—The visual units which individually or collectively make up a work of art: line, shape, value, texture and color. 2

Emotion.—A departure from a normal calm state to include strong feeling, an impulse toward open action. 3

Expression.—When a work of art remains largely realistic in form but strongly emotional or intellectual in content, we call the work of art expressive. 4

Form.—The unification and expressive handling of primary devices into artistic combinations. 5

Gesture.—Gesture is the movement of the figure in space; the impulse that exists inside the figure. 6

Hue.—The color name. The property of color which merely shows its relationship to other colors in the spectrum. 7

Line.—A line is the track made by a moving point. It must necessarily be longer than it is wide. 8

1Ibid.

2Ibid.


4Bone, op. cit., p. 158.

5Ibid.


7Bone, op. cit., p. 159.

8Ibid.
Mood.--Temper of mind, state of mind.\textsuperscript{1}

Nupastel.--A color stick similar to other pastels, only harder. Nupastels are obtainable in a variety of colors, and are manufactured by the Eberhard Faber Company.

Shape.--An area having a specific character defined by an outline, or by a contrast of color, value, or texture with the surrounding area.\textsuperscript{2}

Style.--The expressive character that marks an individual artist's works.\textsuperscript{3}

Technique.--The method of executing the technical or manual details of art.\textsuperscript{4}

Tone.--The character of color or value of a surface determined by the amount or quality of light reflected from it.\textsuperscript{5}

Value.--The quality by which light and dark colors, or steps of gray, can be distinguished.\textsuperscript{6}

Wash.--A transparent layer or coating of color applied to a surface, allowing underlying lines, shapes or colors to show through.\textsuperscript{7}

Definition of Other Terms:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 547.
\item \textsuperscript{2}Bone, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 160.
\item \textsuperscript{3}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 161.
\item \textsuperscript{5}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{6}A. H. Munsell, A Color Notation (Boston: Munsell Color Company, 1919), p. 18.
\item \textsuperscript{7}Bone, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 161.
\end{itemize}
Engraving.—The manner in which those who kept the records wrote on the plates by engraving or scoring the surface.

Jaredites.—Descendents of Jared, his brother, their families and friends, who immigrated to the American Continent at the time of the tower of Babel.

Lamanites.—Descendents of Nephi’s brothers Laman and Lemuel.

Nephites.—Descendents of Nephi, his brother Sam and their families.

Plates.—Metal sheets used by the Nephites and Jaredites for inscribing the historical and religious record of their proceedings.

Scribe.—Term employed to refer to the men who kept the Nephite records.

The Small Plate of Nephi.—A set of plates, smaller in number but not necessarily in size, made by Nephi to keep a condensed account of his proceedings. They also contain the writings of several men who lived sometime after Nephi.\(^1\)

\(^1\)I Nephi 9:2-5, The Words of Mormon, vs. 3-7.
CHAPTER II

NEPHI

Nephi Ponders the Words of His Father

Event Depicted.--The first work of this thesis was a painting that depicted Nephi as he pondered in his heart the spiritual experiences of his father Lehi. Nephi not only believed in the religious teachings of his father, but also desired a personal knowledge of the experiences his father had related.

Significant Points.--The writings of Nephi comprised the first two chapters of the Book of Mormon. Nephi was historically important because it was through his efforts to write an account of his own experiences and those of his family, that the records of the book were begun.

Nephi began his writing by making a statement about the great admiration he held for his parents, and continued by relating the experiences of his father while their family lived in Jerusalem during King Zedekiah's reign, about 600 B.C.\(^1\) Lehi was one of many prophets who went among the people urging them to repent lest they should be destroyed. However, his admonitions were harshly received, and the people sought his life. Thus Lehi was forced to leave Jerusalem, and to

\(^{1}\) I Ne. chap. 1.
flee with his family into the desert.¹ Both during the time he was preaching, and while he was in the desert, Lehi had several visions and revelations which enlightened him on a wide variety of spiritual and religious matters. Since Nephi was obedient and faithful to his father's teachings he desired to have the same kind of spiritual experiences.

Purpose of the Painting.—The purpose of this painting was to portray Nephi absorbed in deep thought and concentration, while creating an atmosphere expressive of Nephi's attitude. Nephi described his thoughts and experiences of that moment as follows:

For it came to pass after I had desired to know the things that my father had seen, and believing that the Lord was able to make them known unto me, as I sat pondering in mine heart I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord.²

Preliminary Sketches.—The preliminary sketches for this painting were originally made as studies for another painting. However, when that painting was in its beginning stages it did not portray the idea for which it was intended. The thought suddenly occurred that one figure from this composition had the emotional attitude and bearing needed for a painting of Nephi, as he pondered the visions of his father. Subsequently the first composition was painted out, and this painting was begun.

¹ I Ne., 2:2-4.
² I Ne., 11:1.
Final Painting.—The final painting was done in oil on canvas. It depicted Nephi as he sat gazing ahead with an intense, pensive expression, completely absorbed in his reflections.

The colors of the painting were low in value and intensity, serious and somber in their cool blue and green hues. This somberness set the mood for the serious, reflective attitude of Nephi. The cool, muted colors also symbolized the spiritual aspects of the composition, in addition to Nephi's introspection.¹ The merging of these dark background colors with the figure also helped transmit this feeling of introspection.² Thus Nephi appeared to emerge from the dark shadows of the background as if moving from the dark areas of mystery to the realms of light and understanding. This shadowy emerging also helped to convey the spiritual mood by eliminating unnecessary details, for true spirituality always transcends the trivia of materialism. The light areas of the figure contrasting with the dark background infused the work with sufficient dynamic power to illustrate the spiritual significance and dramatic intensity of Nephi's situation. The green hues entwined in the blues, especially in the intense area of the face, connoted Nephi's meditative quest for immortal knowledge.³ The red of the beard, echoed to the right of the figure and in other smaller areas of red

²Ibid., p. 60.
and orange, gave the figure a vitality and emotional intensity symbolizing his deep desire to understand the spiritual knowledge possessed by his father. This color also acted as counterbalance to the extreme muted, cool colors by contributing its warmth and energy.

The composition had a strong vertical movement beginning with the thrust of the lower left leg, and continued in the folds of the garment on the shoulder. This movement culminated in the facial features of Nephi, but also suggested in its direction an upward movement beyond the canvas toward the infinite. Nephi's crossed arms helped to stabilize this upward thrust and hold Nephi earth-bound while his mental concentration continued upward. Figure one contains a diagram of these directional movements.

The Angry Brothers

*Event Depicted.*—This work was a drawing of Nephi's brothers, Laman and Lemuel, as they angrily approached Nephi and their younger brother Sam, with the intention of beating them.

*Significant Points.*—After Lehi led his family into the desert, he sent his four sons back to Jerusalem. They were to obtain a set of brass plates containing Jewish history and doctrine, and also Lehi's genealogy. These records

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were in the hands of a wealthy, influential man named Laban, who sought to take the brothers' lives when approached about selling the plates. After a second unsuccessful attempt they had been forced to flee for their lives into the desert. Since it was due to Nephi's persuasion that the brothers had returned the second time, and had suffered rejection and humiliation at Laban's hands, Laman and Lemuel had become angry at Nephi and Sam.  

**Purpose of this Drawing.**—The purpose of this drawing was to portray the moment of tension when Laman and Lemuel became angry, and began to move threateningly toward Nephi and Sam. The two younger brothers hesitated in their retreating steps, realizing that an attempt to flee into the desert would be dangerous and futile.  

**Preliminary Sketches.**—Several preliminary sketches were made to depict the action and drama of this tense situation. Some sketches portrayed the brothers in the act of fighting, however, they lacked subtlety and depth. The sketches that expressed the tension and drama of the moment when Laman and Lemuel reached their explosive peak of anger were exciting and dramatic because of their implied action. Finally, the sketch was made which was used for the final drawing. It expressed the mood and tension necessary to portray the situation effectively.  

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\[1\] I Ne., vsa. 21-28.
Final Drawing.--The drawing was done with brown Nupastel on white paper. It depicted Nephi apprehensively turning to meet the rush of the two figures representing the angry brothers. Sam stood to Nephi's left, bracing himself against the anticipated struggle. The threatening stance and ireful appearance of Laman and Lemuel suggested their eagerness to vent their feelings of frustration through revengeful actions, as they began to move menacingly toward their younger brothers.

Lamen and Lemuel were drawn as dark silhouettes to contrast with the lighter figure of Nephi, which was also drawn in greater detail. This light and dark contrast was intended to portray not only the struggle between the contestants, but also that between good and evil. Form and detail were added to figures as if to suggest their emerging from the shadowy looseness of evil. The contrast in value gave a strong focal point of attention to the more important figure of Nephi. The light and dark elements also contrasted the virtuous nature of Nephi against the evil and degraded state of his two brothers. The face of Laman was left colorless to allow those details to be shown which would clearly emphasize his hostile attitude, while his colorless hands riveted attention to the menacing stick that he wielded. The crude, surging masses and the harsh, jagged lines were symbolic of the older brothers' lack of self-control as they gave vent to their wrath. Since there was purposely no background, the starkness of the figures accentuated the drama and tension, forcing all attention to the four central
figures. The composition was unified by strong horizontal lines that indicated the folds in Nephi's skirt. These linear elements helped carry the movement of the two angry brothers through the figure of Nephi to the figure of Sam.

The opposing forces of this drawing, the light and dark contrasts, the jagged line and shadowy masses, the gestures, movements and starkness of the figures, were all combined to depict the tension and drama of this situation. For a breakdown of the suggested movement and the light and dark areas see figure two.

The Sword of Laban

Event Depicted.--This event was portrayed in a drawing of Nephi holding Laban's sword, as the Spirit whispered to Nephi that he must take the life of Laban.

Significant Points.--After Nephi and his brothers were twice rejected by Laban in their efforts to obtain the plates and had fled into the desert, Nephi again persuaded his brothers to return to Jerusalem in an effort to gain possession of the plates of Laban. It was dark when they arrived, and Nephi decided to enter the city alone. As he approached Laban's house Nephi found Laban lying drunk in the street. Nephi noticed Laban's beautiful sword and drew it from the hilt. Suddenly the Spirit urged Nephi to kill Laban. Nephi at once shrank from this task unable, immediately to face the act of taking a man's life in cold blood.¹

Purpose of the Drawing.--The purpose of this drawing

¹ I Ne. 4:6-10.
was to capture the emotions of that moment when the Spirit urged Nephi to take Laban's life. This was a very dramatic time in Nephi's life as he struggled against his own moral attitudes to keep a commandment of the Lord. This drawing was to depict Nephi's inner turmoil as he wrestled with his decision while holding Laban's sword.

Preliminary Sketches.--Sketches and studies were made in an attempt to produce a composition that would convey the full emotional weight of this moment of indecision and confusion in Nephi's mind.

Final Drawing.--The drawing portrayed Nephi holding Laban's sword as he regarded its beautiful workmanship. Laban lay prostrate on the ground behind Nephi, drunk with wine. Nephi's indecisiveness and reluctance was suggested by his wide, distorted stance. The right leg trailed away as if he desired to escape from the situation. However, the left leg was firmly planted and arrested this feeling of retreat. Nephi held the sword reluctantly in his hands, unable to grasp it tightly or commit himself in any way to the undesirable but necessary task. Smeared masses of Nupastel created vibrating and pulsating activity in the background, suggestive of Nephi's shaken composure and inner turmoil. His youthful, sensitive face was clouded and disturbed, torn in indecision by light and shadow. As he attempted to move away from the scene, other forces restrained this action, and pulled the upper part of his body back toward Laban's prone figure.
The composition created an eye path from Nephi's right arm through the sword, around the head and down the upper part of his right arm, directing attention to the figure of Laban as it lay on the ground. Folds in Nephi's skirt led the viewer from Laban's body back to the hand and sword, thus forming a circular movement of the composition around these two elements, continually bringing the viewer back to Laban and the sword, and suggesting to him in a subtle way that Nephi's thoughts also were swirling around Laban and the sword he held in his hand. The sword was emphasized by its high value key in contrast to the surrounding areas, and was given this place in the drawing because of the emotional connotations it held of death. Figure three contains an analysis of the elements employed to achieve the emotional qualities of this drawing. The drawing was rendered in Prussian blue Nupastel, creating a feeling of darkness, in order to bring a cool, ominous and retreating mood to contrast with the other active and energetic forces of the composition.

Thus the tension of this event was captured through the pulsating background, the indecisive movement of the figure, and the circular design moving around the head, arms, hands and sword as it continually reemphasized Laban's mute form and through the cool, ominous color.
Light--Dark Contrast
Figure 1:
Nephi Pondered the Words of His Father OIL

Figure 2:
The Angry Brothers Nupastel

Figure 3:
The Sword of Laban Nupastel
CHAPTER III

ENOS AND OMNI

The Prayer of Enos

Event Depicted.--This selection was to portray Enos as he knelt before his Maker in prayer and supplication for the salvation of his soul.

Significant Points.--Following Nephi's account in the Book of Mormon, his brother Jacob left his writings, and then a number of men contributed short accounts of themselves and their epochs. Among these men were two individuals, Enos and Omni, whose lives are interesting for several reasons, including their contrasting philosophies.

Enos was a grandson of Lehi and a son of Jacob. His writings comprised scarcely more than two pages of the book, but his experiences were worthy of examination. Enos recorded the following event:

And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I received a remission of my sins. Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart. And the soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yes, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens. And there came a voice unto me saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.1

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1Enos vss. 2-5.
Purpose of the Drawing.—The purpose of this drawing was to depict Enos' fervent, intense effort as he sought to gain forgiveness of his sins. There was an immediacy and urgency in his supplications, denoted by the length of his prayer. All one day and into the night he sought and struggled to commune with God.

Preliminary Sketches.—Several studies and sketches were made for the purpose of arriving at one pose and composition that would express the feeling of Enos intently engaged in prayer. Several sketches were made based on a pose portraying Enos kneeling, his arms raised, and his face lifted toward the sky. This composition seemed too dramatic and trite. It lacked the depth and humility the situation demanded for its successful treatment. Finally, several other sketches were made upon which the final drawing was based. These sketches reflected a feeling of humility, as well as the conviction and determination characteristic of Enos' prayer.

Final Drawing.—The drawing attempted to depict the two major aspects of Enos' prayer; the contrast between Enos' humble submissiveness and his active, intense, physical and mental struggle. His humility was represented by his bowed head, and the fact that he was kneeling on one knee. The clenched hands, twisted limbs and energetic background portrayed the emotional force of his struggle. The drawing began with Enos kneeling on the right knee, the left elbow resting on the left knee. His hands were linked together in
the attitude and similitude of prayer, but were reaching out imploringly and were tautly clenched with determination. His arms were tense with the strain of the clenched hands, emphasizing the physical effort of his prayer. The left leg was twisted to the inside of his body, creating a movement that accentuated the feeling of struggle and tension. The leg which rested on the ground was also twisted to further emphasize the physical and mental strain. Sharp contrasts between light and dark captured Enos' rugged, powerful personality, and his immense will-power. The light-dark contrasts also symbolized movement from darkness to spiritual enlightenment, indicative of the subsequent results of Enos' prayer. The endless, searching line symbolized the eternal nature of man's spiritual quest. The restless background, moving up and around the kneeling figure, gave impetus to the pulsating urgency of Enos' intense supplication.

Warm brown tones were employed in the figure to create a feeling of warmth and peace, indicative of Enos' eventual peace and calm. This warmth helped bring a spiritual dimension to the physical forces of line, value, and the taut figure, stabilizing and balancing out the spiritual and physical forces. The warm color also created an atmosphere of daylight, symbolic of the length of Enos' prayer. Blue and green hues in the background helped achieve an indication of foliage or trees, even though these objects were merely suggested. These blues and greens also augmented the emotional forces of the composition by their spiritual overtones and passages. Figure four contains a diagram of the directional
forces and light-dark contrasts.

Omni

Event Depicted.--This painting of Omni was rendered to capture the moment when he paused in reflection and contemplation, while engraving the account of his experiences on the plates of Nephi.

Significant Points.--Omni was another person who wrote a short account of himself on the Nephite records. He lived about two hundred and seventy years after the Nephites arrived on the American continent. Even though the majority of men who kept the Nephite records were men of deep religious convictions, Omni was an exception. By his own admission he ignored religious worship and classified himself as a wicked man. Indeed, after reading his account it is permissible to conclude that Omni was neither happy nor contented:

...I of myself am a wicked man, and I have not kept the statutes and the commandments of the Lord as I ought to have done.¹

Purpose of the Painting.--The purpose of this painting was to depict a moment charged with emotion as Omni silently recalled the events of his past; the wars, battles, heartaches, failures and achievements. The flooding memories were bitter, as Omni realized in this poignant moment that he had failed in great measure to preserve his personal character from the influences of a degenerate life.

¹Omni vs. 2.
Preliminary Sketches.--Even though many sketches for this painting were made, the basic concept was reached in the first sketch. Subsequent sketches were done to strengthen the composition by refining technicalities and details of the figure, face, hands, and plates.

Final Painting.--The painting was oil on canvas, 32 by 36 inches in size. In executing this painting many elements were distorted, exaggerated or eliminated to achieve the emotional effect desired in this portrayal. Color was used to create this emotionalism, and many details were omitted to force attention to the centers of interest. The background was painted to produce an atmosphere that would reflect Omni's intense feelings at this moment. Warm, red-orange color was employed in the background to symbolize this extreme emotion, and to represent the lurid sinfulness of Omni's past.\(^1\) The red-orange color was agitated in its ascent by moody transitions to darker purples and blues, as if to burden and weigh Omni down in its evil overtones. The purple became a symbol for the solemnity and melancholy of the situation.\(^2\) The background was free of all incidentals leaving it to play this impassioned role. The hue and value contrasts were strongest in the rendering of Omni's face, which was wrinkled and anguished, revealing his troubled conscience, and reflecting the burdens he had borne. The hot, pure, red-orange on his

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\(^1\)Welda Beate Lendt, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-98.

forehead intensified the feeling of his mental strain, and re-echoed the background color for added stress. The white hair and beard, symbolic of Omni's age, and the cool blue in their shadow areas, formed a color and value contrast to accent the hot color of the face. Omni's clothing was dark, and his form emerged from the moody background in certain areas as if to release him at times, and yet hold him a prisoner entwined in his own past. The unrest in the background, the spasmodic emerging of the figure, created a feeling of the tension and vibration of the moment. Omni held one of the plates in his hand, and his head was lowered to look at it, however his attention was focused on his thoughts. This effect was achieved by dropping a dark shadow over Omni's eyes, hiding them in mystery from the viewer. Omni's left hand, outstretched and resting on an undefinable object in the foreground, steadied him in this moment of emotional stress. A faintly suggested sword, indicative of the wars in which Omni took part, was placed in front of him, lying on the same surface as the left hand. Figure five contains a breakdown of the elements employed in this painting to capture its emotion.

The Warriors

Event Depicted.--This drawing was executed with the idea of portraying the fierceness of the battles in which Omni took part.

Significant Points.--Even though Omni was not enthusiastic about writing - he wrote only four paragraphs, and
indicated that the reason he wrote at all was due to his father's commandment - he was proud of his military achievements, and wanted it known that he had participated in many wars and battles. Omni wrote:

Behold it came to pass that I, Omni, being commanded by my father, Jarom, that I should write somewhat upon these plates, to preserve our genealogy - Wherefore in my days, I would that ye should know that I fought much with the sword to preserve my people, the Nephites, from falling into the hands of their enemies the Lamanites.¹

**Purpose of the Drawing.**—This drawing was done in an effort to convey the feeling of fierceness, fury, emotion and intensity of two warriors engaged in mortal combat. Struggles of this caliber were typical and frequent in the Book of Mormon. This scene may be taken to represent not only Omni and his adversary but could also symbolize the embattled soldiers of many periods. Throughout the course of Nephite history there were many severe and violent battles in which thousands died. During most of the epochs when the Nephite and Lamanite nations existed simultaneously, the Lamanites repeatedly sought to destroy the Nephites, which resulted in many prolonged and devastating wars.

**Preliminary Sketches.**—The concept of this drawing came quite by accident. While doing some idle sketching in search of an idea for another drawing, some random scribbling suddenly emerged as an excellent composition for this drawing. Opposing vertical and horizontal lines became the basic concept depicting the action of one warrior repelling another.

¹Omni vs. 1-2.
Only a few more studies and sketches were needed for further refinement of the details before the finished drawing was made.

Final Drawing.—Since the purpose of this drawing was to capture the fury and action of a battle scene, the depiction of the feeling, movement and emotion of the situation took precedence over the figurative elements. However, two figures with swords and shields could be recognized in the composition. There were, however, few realistic forms in the drawing, since even the figures were engulfed and became part of the design elements representing the action. The action was attained by drawing areas of forceful, surging masses that formed a directional flow of movement. This movement began in the lower left-hand corner of the composition and pulsed up counter-clock-wise past the repelled figure's back, over his head, arm and shield, to the up-raised sword of the conquering warrior. At this point the line of action curved more sharply and moved around and through the hand. Then the action moved sharply and swiftly past the arm and across the body of the striking warrior to crash into the other figure. The converging of the elements and action at this point was to emphasize the inevitable strike of the sword, and the implications of its terrible destructive possibilities. The directional flow of movement in the drawing was achieved by the use of vigorous, broad masses of Nupastel that were combined in a staggered, uneven pattern to gain an emotional, dramatic quality. These masses were
were done primarily in brown tones, and were contrasted by strong, jagged and energetic lines drawn in black. The line accented the flow of action, and also suggested a few details of the figures in addition to armament and clothing. This contrast of black against brown brought greater depth, force and power to the composition.

Even though a few details were suggested to indicate the clothing, armament and the figures themselves, many were eliminated in an effort to dramatize the movement, and capture a feeling of the fleeting, momentary state of action. An analysis of the line of action in this drawing is found in figure six.
Figure 4
The Prayer of Enos
Nupastel

Figure 5
Oil

Figure 6
The Warriors
Nupastel
CHAPTER IV

MORMON

Mormon: A Sober Child

Event Depicted.—A drawing of Mormon as a young boy receiving a visit from an individual named Ammon was also depicted.

Significant Points.—At the time of this visit and conversation between Mormon and Ammon, the latter had kept the Nephite records for some fifteen years. However, he had been forced to hide these records fearing they might be stolen and destroyed by people who were unsympathetic to their teachings. Even though Mormon was young—only ten years old, Ammon recognized that he was an exceptional child, and charged him with the eventual responsibility of the records. Mormon related the following about Ammon's explanation:

...I perceive that thou art a sober child, and art quick to observe: Therefore, when ye are about twenty and four years old I would that ye should remember the things that ye have observed concerning this people; and when ye are of that age go to the land Antum, unto a hill which shall be called Shim; and there have I deposited unto the Lord all sacred engravings concerning this people. And behold, ye shall take the plates of Nephi unto yourself, and the remainder shall ye leave in the place where they are; and ye shall engrave on the plates of Nephi all the things that ye have observed concerning this people.  

1Ne. vss. 48, 49.  
2Mormon 1:2-4.
Purpose of this Drawing.--Mormon has been generally regarded as the person who abridged the Nephite records, and compiled the Book of Mormon as we know it today; the book was thus named in his honor. However, the purpose of this drawing was to bring attention to the fact that Mormon was recognized even in his youth as being an exceptional individual. Not only was he called at an early age to keep the records, but he also became general of the Nephite armies when he was only sixteen.\(^1\)

Preliminary Sketches.--Several preliminary sketches were made in an effort to decide upon the most effective way of portraying Mormon and Ammaron. It was felt that to convey the emotional qualities of this situation adequately the viewer needed to see the faces of both individuals. Thus, sketches were made not merely to depict the figures and facial expressions of both men, but also to compose them in a simple, direct manner in order to present the figures as forcefully as possible. Once the basic composition was established, other studies were made to resolve and refine details of their physical traits, facial expressions and gestures. Even the final drawing was altered somewhat from the preliminary sketches in order to strengthen the composition and the emotional effect of the work.

Final Drawing.--The completed drawing portrayed Mormon standing in front of Ammaron, his face turned to the

\(^1\)Mormon 2:2-3.
viewer in a serious, reflective mood as he pondered Ammaron's words. Mormon was conceived physically older than a boy ten years old might normally be. This portrayal emphasized his maturity and soberness. The figure of Mormon was placed in the foreground of the picture, and, although only a boy, he was made to appear larger than Ammaron, in order to emphasize his relative importance. Since his figure was closer to the viewer it was drawn with greater detail, and with more value contrast. Ammaron, chronologically older in time, was placed behind Mormon to link the two figures and unify them in the composition. Ammaron's mouth was open as he spoke, and his left hand gestured toward Mormon, stressing the purpose of his visit. His face was very serious, reflecting the solemn intent of his visit. There was a certain calmness in the drawing, characterized by the big masses, the quiet shapes and the elimination of definite, strong lines, which had been employed in the other drawings. However, this calmness was infused with latent energy in the subtly textured clothing and physical features of Mormon. This rough, boyish energy, transmitted by the intense face and strong hands, was a portent of things to come; a promise of strength to face the coming storms. However, warm sepia Nupastel was employed to bring warmth to the drawing, and represent the congeniality of the meeting, together with its implied overtones. All background incidentals were eliminated to stress the quiet yet dramatic setting of this conversation. An attempt was made to achieve the emotional qualities of this drawing by
by the portrayal of the youthful, yet serious and reflective mood of the young Mormon, as opposed to the aging, tired, apprehensive figure of Ammaron. Figure seven contains a breakdown of the basic value patterns of this drawing.

The Abridgement

**Event Depicted.**—This depiction was a drawing of Mormon as he looked at his abridgement of the Nephite records.

**Significant Points.**—In the year 375 A.D., about fifty three years after Ammaron's visit, Mormon took from the hill Shim all the records Ammaron had deposited there. At this time Mormon realized that his armies and people would inevitably be destroyed by the stronger Lamanite nations. Ten years later Mormon abridged the Nephite records dating from the time of Nephi. Concerning this he wrote:

And it came to pass that when we had gathered in all our people in one to the land Cumorah, behold I, Mormon, began to be old; and knowing it to be the last struggle of my people, and having been commanded of the Lord that I should not suffer the records which had been handed down by our fathers, which were sacred, to fall into the hands of the Lamanites......therefore I made this record out of the plates of Nephi...

**Purpose of this Drawing.**—The purpose of this drawing was to depict Mormon as he gazed at his abridgement of the Nephite records, and grieved over the plight of his people, realizing that because of their wickedness they would suffer disaster and destruction. Later Mormon wrote:

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1 Mor. 4:23.

And my soul was rent with anguish, because of the slain of my people, and I cried: O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you?  

**Preliminary Sketches.**—The original sketches used for this drawing were intended for an oil painting with the same theme, which was in fact completed; however, for various reasons it did not satisfy the artist. The idea was used for this drawing, but the composition was altered in several ways. Aside from the color, which of course was modified in the transfer from oil to Nupastel, the composition changed to improve the emotional force of the depiction. The painting presented Mormon in a sitting position leaning to his left, the left arm across the body with the left hand holding some records. The drawing was altered to portray Mormon holding a set of plates on his thigh with both hands. The drawing of the hands in this portrayal added strength to the design, coupled with a strong counter-thrust of the right leg upon which one arm rests.

**Final Drawing.**—This drawing depicted Mormon sitting on a fallen tree trunk holding his abridgement of the Nephite records. Mormon was studying these records in a moment of serious reflection, with grief and resignation over the vulnerability of his once mighty people. The distorted light and dark values dramatized Mormon's physical strength and meditative mood through their powerful contrasts. The ragged, dishevelled line epitomized Mormon's disrupted, strife-filled life, and characterized the emotion of the moment. Just as

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1Mor. 6:16-17.
the degenerate behavior of Mormon's people saddened him, so the crude, unharmonious background elements were designed to underline Mormon's melancholy mood by their erratic, jagged and energetic movement.

The oval design that followed the arms through the plates and back to the face gave added impetus to Mormon's lamentation and resignation. This circular movement was braced by the thrust of the lower right leg upon which the right arm rested. This leg also seemed to sustain Mormon in his hour of emotional stress. Figure eight points out the elements that were used in this drawing to capture the movement and emotional qualities.

The tension of Mormon's lamentation and resignation was captured through the vigorous handling and application of the Nupastels together with the facial expression and physical gesture. Activity and movement both in the figure and in the background intensified the emotional quality of Mormon's attitude at this moment. After the Nupastel was applied to the paper, it was sprayed with charcoal fixative, and rubbed with an old brush to achieve the effect of an uneven wash, and thus created movement and force through the technique itself.

Mormon and Moroni

Event Depicted.--This was a drawing of Mormon and his son Moroni as they shared perhaps, their last moments together.

Significant Points.--After Mormon made an abridgement of the Nephite records he entrusted this abridgement and other
records to the hands of Moroni. Sometime thereafter Mormon was killed by the Lamanites, but Moroni managed to survive the terrible battles and eventually complete his father's record.¹

**Purpose of this Drawing.**—Even though Mormon and Moroni were not the only important personalities in the book, they were significant because in a sense they personified those who wrote it by abridging much of its contents and including writings of their own. They were the last men to keep its account and Moroni personally buried the plates for safekeeping until they could be made known to Joseph Smith centuries later for translation and publication.²

The purpose of this drawing was to create a work the magnitude of which would depict the significance of these two men.

**Preliminary Sketches.**—There were more sketches made for this drawing than for any of the other works. Even though the composition was not complex it was very important because of its significant implications. The idea of drawing Mormon sitting down was decided from the beginning, but the difficult task was to arrange the two figures in a logical, yet powerful and dramatic way. It was felt that while Mormon needed to be symbolized in a sitting position in order to emphasize his old age at the time of this depiction, Mormon should be portrayed standing by his father, in an attitude of

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¹Mor. 8:1-4, Moroni 1:1-4.

harmony and support. Sketches denoting a variety of poses were made of Moroni standing by Mormon, and eventually this particular one was decided upon because of its clarity and simplicity in expressing the feeling for which the drawing was intended. Many other studies were done in reference to details of facial expressions and characteristics, as well as other anatomical and physical characteristics of the hands, arms, and legs.

**Final Drawing.**--This drawing was done on two sheets of paper and totaled in size, 40 by 48 inches. It presented the dramatic figures of Mormon seated on a fallen tree trunk, and his son Moroni standing at his side. Although Mormon's face reflected the wisdom of his advanced age, it was still vibrant and alert. The father held the plates affectionately, and yet the manner of the powerful, protective grip of his long, bony fingers gave an indication of their immense historical and doctrinal importance. Moroni leaned close to Mormon with one hand on his father's shoulder in an attitude of affection and admiration. His face was still rugged and his body powerful and strong. This was a moment charged with emotion for the two men, as they both realized that this could be one of their last moments together. The intensity of their facial expressions mirrored the seriousness of this situation, as each man was aware of the relentless forces that mortally threatened the Nephite nation.

The drawing was rendered in burnt sienna and Prussian blue Nupastel. The reverse contrast of cool color in the light areas and warm color in the shadow areas created a feel-
ing of twilight symbolism through its startling juxtaposition. The symbolism of this reversal implied the final whisperings of the Book of Mormon as well as the final scenes in the lives of the men who abridged and compiled its records. The cool twilight blue echoed the piercing, haunted look in the two prophets' eyes, while the warmth in the shadow areas infused the figures with a vibrant energy and inner strength symbolic of the immortality they were to achieve through the pages of the Book of Mormon. The use of strong line not only served to delineate the details of the drawing, but also brought to a sharp focus the physical and spiritual strength of Mormon and Moroni. By means of its searching energy this line represented the Prophets' unceasing and indefatigable efforts to carry out the will of God.

The powerful figures were cushioned by a background of soft, rhythmic forms and a faint indication of foliage or landscape. Elements of the drawing were designed to unify the composition and stress the mutual affection Mormon and Moroni shared. This unity was created by a movement which began at Moroni's face as he leaned toward his father, continued down his right arm to Mormon's head, and then followed the right arm of Mormon, which rested on his knee, across to his hand which held the plates, and over to Moroni's left hand and up his arm, thus completing the circular pattern.

An exaggerated light and dark value contrast on the exposed physical areas, unified with articulated bone and muscle, brought to the drawing a special urgency of expression, a manifestation of the key role played by these two men
in Book of Mormon annals. This, in combination with the afore-mentioned elements and principles, structured the work into its present form in an attempt to convey its emotional aura. See figure nine for a diagram of the elements employed in this drawing in an effort to achieve a feeling of significance and strength.
CHAPTER V

THE BROTHER OF JARED

A Large and Mighty Man

Event Depicted.--This was a drawing depicting the brother of Jared.

Significant Points.--After his people were destroyed in the final battles, Moroni abridged a set of twenty-four gold plates and added this abridgement to the other plates that he buried in the hill Cumorah. These twenty-four gold plates contained the history of a civilization that existed on the American continent prior to the Nephite and Lamanite periods. 1 The people of this epoch originated in the area of the tower of Babel, and left that vicinity at the time of its infamous construction and the resulting confusion of tongues. 2 The first group that came to this continent were led by a man named Jared and his brother, whom Moroni called 'the brother of Jared.' The brother of Jared was a prophet, a large and mighty man who was highly favored of the Lord. 3 Many miraculous events took place in the brother of Jared's life between the time he left Babel with his

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1 The Book of Ether, Omni 20-22, Mosiah 8:7-11.
3 Ether 1:34.
people and arrived on American shores. Moroni also described the brother of Jared as a powerful writer:

...Behold, thou hast not made us mighty in writing like unto the brother of Jared, for thou madest him that the things which he wrote were mighty even as thou art, unto the overpowering of man to read them.

**Purpose of the Drawing.**—The purpose of this drawing was to depict, or make a statement about, the physical and spiritual strength of the brother of Jared.

**Preliminary Sketches.**—There were no preliminary sketches made for this particular drawing. The idea and theme had long been thought about, and this particular visual interpretation was mentally conceived while doing sketches for another work. The drawing was thereafter immediately and spontaneously created.

**Final Drawing.**—The brother of Jared was portrayed gazing past a set of records he held, contemplating perhaps the extraordinary events of his life, including the spiritual experience he had witnessed. He was drawn as if the viewer were looking at the scene from a vantage point somewhere below the figure. This was symbolic of his ascension above the common realms of mundane life to a more exalted and spiritual plane. This perspective helped accentuate the depiction of this prophet's large and powerful stature. As he stood with one foot on a raised area, he held a set of plates in his

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hand, which also rested on his thigh. These plates were symbolic of his profound knowledge and considerable writing ability. Strong light and dark contrasts bore out the physical strength of the figure, especially in sharp delineations of the anatomy in the legs, right arm and hand. The subtle value contrasts in the face, together with the calm facial expression, helped evoke the brother of Jared's inner peace and spiritual strength. Line was used to accentuate both the physical strength of the figure and the peaceful face, and this was done by a bold use of the linear element in all sections of the body except the face, where it was employed sensitively merely to suggest the facial features. The background was a mass of quiet movement that circled up and around the shoulders and head of the figure. It varied from warmer, earthly tones in the lower areas, to atmospheric cool grays in the upper part of the drawing, creating the illusion of an enveloping that was spiritually sympathetic to the figure. In figure ten there is a diagram of the movement and the light-dark contrasts of the drawing.

The pensive face and the strong, almost heroic qualities of the figure; the unusual perspective, the expressive value and linear qualities and the quiet peaceful movement in the background, combined to portray the dual aspects of the brother of Jared's spiritual force and physical strength.

The Finger of the Lord

Event Depicted.--This event was in the form of a drawing that depicted the brother of Jared falling to the ground through fear as he sees the finger of the Lord.
Significant Points.--When Jared and his brother, together with their families, were in the process of journeying from the land of Babel to the American continent they built eight barges in which to cross the ocean. These barges were constructed and engineered to travel beneath, as well as on, the water. The brother of Jared realized that when the barges would be under water there would be no light source and the passengers would be in complete darkness. Subsequently he climbed a mountain and smote from it sixteen small transparent stones. These he carried to the top of the mountain and exercising great faith in the Lord, asked Him in prayer to touch the stones and cause them to give forth light. As the brother of Jared finished his supplication, the Lord touched the stones one by one, giving them illumination. The brother of Jared, seeing the Lord's finger, fell to the earth through fear, not realizing that the Lord's spiritual body resembled a body of flesh and bone.

...When the brother of Jared had said these words, behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger. And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear.

Purpose of this Drawing.--The purpose of this drawing was to represent the brother of Jared and the emotional feel-

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1 Ether 2:22-25.
2 Ibid., 3:1-5.
3 Ibid., 3:6-16.
ing of the moment he saw the Lord's finger and fell to the
earth struck with fear not knowing that the Lord had a spirit-
ual body, whose appearance was that of a physical man.

**Preliminary Sketches.**—Several preliminary sketches
were made in order to determine the best possible way of ex-
pressing this dramatic scene. After several sketches were
done depicting different aspects of this series of events, it
was decided that the moment of greatest impact was the moment
the brother of Jared saw the Lord's finger and fell to the
earth. Once this decision was reached sketches were made to
determine the brother of Jared's position as he fell, to
determine the portrayal of the finger of the Lord, and to es-

tablish background effects that would aid the emotional quali-
ties of the work, together with other compositional details
and elements.

**Final Drawing.**—The final drawing was done on two
sheets of paper totaling 40 by 52 inches. It was rendered
in brown and black Nupastel and depicted the brother of Jared
falling to the ground, as he was struck with fear upon seeing
the finger of the Lord. His fallen body recoiled away from
the unexpected appearance, his face bore a look of surprise,
fear and shock as the right arm was raised to shield and
protect it. One foot braced the figure while the other leg
had not yet come to rest on the ground. The finger of the
Lord was recognizable as it touched the stones while the
rest of the hand could be faintly seen and disappeared at
the wrist. There were no definite objects in the back-
ground but it consisted of circular masses that surrounded the fallen form and moved in pulsating waves away from the figure and past the finger and stones. This movement captured the intense drama of this event as its vibration was an echo of the brother of Jared's pounding fright. The rough heaviness of composition, caused by the rendition of the background elements, underscored the weight of the brother of Jared's fear. Surging, erratic lines were also employed to express the action, vibration, emotion and movement of the scene, as well as defining contours, forms and objects. The background activity was darker in value, contrasting with the light finger, and other areas within the figure. This contrast created a dramatic effect of light and dark at the same time emphasizing the mysterious, almost glowing appearance of the Lord's finger. Suggested foliage at the left of the composition helped arrest the action, and contain it within the drawing. The pulsating action, the recoiling, fallen figure of the brother of Jared with his look of surprise and fear, the light and dark areas, the erratic line, in addition to the mysterious finger combined to bring the unusual qualities of this situation forcefully and dramatically into visual terms. Figure eleven contains a diagram of these elements.
Light--Dark Contrast
Figure 10
A Large and Mighty Man
NuPastel

Figure 11
The Finger of the Lord
NuPastel
CHAPTER VI

MORONI

Moroni Wandered for the Safety of His Life

Event Depicted.—This depicted Moroni wandering from place to place for the safety and preservation of his life.

Significant Points.—The Lamanites, due to the size and strength of their armies overpowered the Nephites, and spared no one in their effort to destroy the Nephite civilization. Moroni managed to survive these terrible battles, and was able to complete his father's record, abridge the twenty-four Jaredite plates, and also write an account of his own life. He explained that he was forced to seek the safety and protection of his own life by moving from place to place:

And my father also was killed by them, and I even remain alone to write the sad tale of the destruction of my people...1 And I make not myself known to the Lamanites lest they should destroy me...and because of their hatred they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ. And I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ; wherefore, I wander whithersoever I can for the safety of mine own life.2

Purpose of this Drawing.—The purpose of this drawing

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1Mormon 8:3.
2Moroni 1:1-3.
was to depict Moroni's dangerous situation, as he cautiously and carefully wandered in the wilderness, seeking protection and safety. Moroni was gravely determined to remain hidden from the Lamanites as long as possible.

Preliminary Sketches.--Many preliminary sketches and drawings were made in an effort to arrive at a composition that expressed the feeling of a man engaged in seeking protection for his own life. Several studies seemed to approach this emotional effect and were further refined. One of these studies was developed into a drawing; however, when the drawing was finished, the figure representing Moroni gave the impression of a convict escaping from prison rather than that of a prophet. A second drawing similar to the first was made, and the figure possessed a more positive gesture and appeared more like the artist's envisionment of Moroni. However, the face and hand in this drawing were delineated quite poorly. A third drawing was made, and the hand and face were altered. These alterations improved the drawing, but the face looked as if it belonged to an apathetic rather than a determined man. With the knowledge gained from the strong and weak qualities of these drawings, a fourth drawing was made which achieved the desired effect, portraying a Moroni who was both determined and cautious.

Final Drawing.--The drawing depicted Moroni as he paused in the midst of a long, hesitating stride. Moroni's expression was grim and serious, a factor intensified by his penetrating gaze and firmly-set mouth. Moroni's left hand
was raised in a gesture of anticipation and self-defense. His head was turned to the left as he cautiously surveyed his surroundings for possible danger. A fallen tree trunk lying in front of Moroni's skirt was suggestive of his wanderings in wilderness regions, as he sought to take refuge in the shelter afforded by Nature. Moroni's half-shadowed face and grim expression evoked the haunted restlessness and intense awareness of the man through its portrayal. The long, boney hands and legs, stark in their whiteness against harsh, unfriendly, cool shadow areas, intensified the haunted image and dramatized the suggestions of impending violence or death. They also drew attention to the loneliness of Moroni's situation and his entire self-dependences. Only the warm shadow areas of the face and sleeve gave warmth and hope to the otherwise cool and uncertain forms. Even the fallen dead tree and its spindly, naked branches were useless and indifferent in offering Moroni comfort or protection in his lonely wanderings. The cool, blue shadows of Moroni's garments resembled the coolness of evening shadows and symbolized his twilight situation, being the last custodian of the Book of Mormon records. The background consisted of long, almost linear masses that swirled up and around Moroni, engulfing him in an aura of mystery and intrigue. The background itself was unfriendly and threatening, as if to bind and restrict his movements in the same manner as those lurking and searching enemies who sought his life. Moroni's taut skirt also performed the same function of a physical restriction to the prophet's survival efforts. The
style of the drawing was tight, crisp and cautious in its rendering, as if to guard against a false step, a slight sound or an irregular movement that might betray Moroni's escape.

The drawing was done in Prussian blue and burnt sienna Nupastel. The use of contrasting warm-cool colors, and light-dark areas of the swirling background, of the intense facial expression and of the halting, uncertain gesture of the figure, were each fundamental in achieving the feeling of anxiety, mystery and danger relative to Moroni's situation. A diagram of the elements employed in this drawing is contained in figure twelve.
Light--Dark Contrast
Figure 12
Moroni Wandered for the Safety of His Life

Nupastel
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

**Purpose.**—This thesis is comprised of two paintings and ten drawings pertaining to events and personalities from the Book of Mormon. It includes the experiences of six ancient men who were instrumental in keeping the records from which the book was translated. The purpose of creating these paintings and drawings was to make a significant statement about the emotional force and spiritual intensity of their lives and experiences. The communication of the feeling and emotion of these events was the most important thematic consideration in executing the art works, and the artist strove to express personal feelings and ideas forcefully and effectively concerning the drama, action, mood and atmosphere of these subjects. The events portrayed were chosen because they represented specific emotional and spiritual qualities found in the book. The drawings and paintings also attempted to depict the character and personality of these men, and to capture, or at least indicate, the consequential nature of their lives and deeds.

**Creative Directions.**—Because the thematic considerations of this thesis were interpretive and expressive of the emotional aspects of the Book of Mormon, many liberties were
taken in the technical directions to convey the artist's feelings as forcibly as possible. The problematic approach was not entirely a literal or realistic interpretation, but each event was depicted in a manner felt to be the most effective in portraying its emotional or spiritual feelings. Thus several of the works were executed in divergent and contrasting ways, creating a variety of stylistic approaches ranging from works that approximated realism to a drawing that was quite abstract in its conception. However the works were not entirely without form or content as we generally regard and understand natural objects, but were represented according to the artist's personal feelings and individual style.

Several technical methods were used in creating the paintings and drawings to express the feeling for which each theme was intended:

(1) The movements, gestures, and actions of the figures were exaggerated and distorted in many cases to give greater emotional intensity to the circumstance or situation.

(2) Strong light and dark value contrasts were employed to establish a dramatic and forceful mood.

(3) Many details such as clothing and background material were altered or eliminated from these works to stress the emotional and expressive force of the events, rather than their illustrative aspects.

(4) The backgrounds were generally rendered to augment and intensify the atmosphere, spirit and purpose of the composition, rather than to exist as a compilation of different materials or objects.

(5) Color, which was not as important an element in the drawings as were other factors, was used critically in the paintings to express and symbolize certain emotional and spiritual qualities.
(6) The design elements of line, value, shape and direction were used to establish the form and content in the works, and to give variety, texture and unity.

(7) Different techniques were used to achieve the movement, action, feeling or emotional qualities desired of each work.

In most instances many sketches were made in preparation to the final works. These were done with the purpose of creating effective compositions, including the clarifications of various objects, value patterns, movement or direction of the action and the portrayal of emotional feeling, mood or spiritual qualities.

The artist had previously become proficient in the use of the oils, canvas, paper, Nupastel and other materials employed in the creation of these paintings and drawings. Through experience they had been found to be effective in responding to the artistic demands placed upon them and also congenial to his particular style.

Summary of Events Depicted.--The individual events chosen for this thesis personified many of the emotional and spiritual aspects of the Book of Mormon. In producing these two paintings and ten drawings an attempt was made to communicate the following feelings and ideas:

(1) A painting and two drawings were made of events from the life of Nephi, first record keeper of the Book of Mormon. The painting depicted Nephi's intense spiritual attitude while engrossed in a moment of meditation. Cool, dark colors were employed to reflect Nephi's serious and spiritual mood. The figure appeared to emerge from the dark shadows of the painting conveying a feeling of movement from mystery to realms of understanding. Small areas of red and orange gave the figure an emotional intensity, while the vertical composition suggested the ascension of Nephi's thoughts. One drawing portrayed a moment of tension and strain between Nephi and his two brothers as they became
angry with Nephi and moved menacingly toward Nephi and their other brother with the intent of beating them with sticks. The opposing forces of this drawing, the light and dark contrasts, the jagged line and shadowy masses, the gesture movement and starkness of the figures were all combined to depict the tension and drama of this situation. The purpose of the other drawing was to capture Nephi in a moment of great inner turmoil as he struggled to respond to a divine decree that commanded him to perform a deed contrary to his personal feelings and wishes. Thus, the tension of this event was captured through the pulsating background, the indecisive movement of the figure, the circular design moving around the head, arms, hands and sword as it continually re-emphasized Laban's mute form and through the cool ominous color.

(2) A painting and two drawings were completed depicting events from the lives of two scribes, Enos and Omni, who kept the Nephite records sometime after Nephi. One of the drawings pertained to Enos' intense prayer as he struggled to communicate with his Maker and receive forgiveness of his sins. The clenched hands, twisted limbs and energetic background portrayed the emotional force of his struggle. The endless, searching line symbolized the eternal nature of man's spiritual quest and the warm brown tones were employed in the figure to create a feeling of warmth and peace indicative of Enos' eventual peace and calm. The painting captured the emotion of a moment charged with memories as Omni recalled experiences of his life and realized that his past actions were wicked and contrary to that which he knew was right and just. Color was used to create this emotionalism, while the unrest in the background, the spasmodic emerging of the figure, created a feeling of the tension and vibration of the moment. Omni recounted that he had taken part in many battles and one drawing was done to capture the fury of action between two warriors engaged in mortal combat. Battles of this nature were frequent in the Book of Mormon and this drawing could not only represent Omni but also many other Nephite warriors. This movement was achieved by the use of vigorous, broad masses of Nupastel that were combined in a staggered, uneven pattern to gain an emotional, dramatic quality.

(3) Three drawings were done which pertained to Mormon, the person who abridged many of the Nephite records and for whom the book was named. A drawing portrayed young Mormon at the age of ten, a serious, mature child, being called by Ammaron who was the present Nephite record keeper, to accept the responsi-
bility of Nephite historian. There was a certain calmness in the drawing, characterized by the big masses, the quiet shapes and the elimination of definite, strong lines, which had been employed in the other drawings. However, this calmness was infused with latent energy in the subtly textured clothing and physical features of Mormon. This rough, boyish energy, transmitted by the intense face and strong hands, was a portent of things to come; a promise of strength to face the coming storms. The second drawing of this group depicted Mormon years later as he looked at his abridgment of the Nephite records and lamented over the wickedness of his people as he foresaw their imminent destruction. The tension of Mormon's lamentation and resignation was captured through the vigorous handling and application of the Nupastels together with the facial expression and physical gesture. Activity and movement both in figure and in the background intensified the emotional quality of Mormon's attitude at this moment. The third work showed Mormon and his son Moroni in a serious mood as they spent what was perhaps one of their last meetings together. Mormon and Moroni personified the book because they contributed personal writings and added abridgments of other records. This work attempted to capture the significance of their lives and contributions to the book. Exaggerated light and dark value contrasts, unified with articulated bone and muscle, brought to the drawing a special urgency of expression, a manifestation of the key role played by these two men in Book of Mormon annals.

(4) Two drawings were made that depicted events from the life of the brother of Jared, a prophet of the Jaredite civilization which existed prior to the Nephites. The brother of Jared was a great spiritual leader and had many extraordinary religious experiences. He was described as "being a large and mighty man....mighty in writing," and this drawing strove to capture the feeling of his physical and spiritual strength by portraying him at a perspective point above the viewer's eye level. He held a set of records which were symbolic of his great writing ability. The pensive face and the strong, almost heroic qualities of the figure; the unusual perspective, the expressive value and linear qualities, and the quiet peaceful movement in the background, combined to portray the dual aspects of the brother of Jared's spiritual force and physical strength. The other drawing was an experience of the brother of Jared, which was one of the most unusual and inspiring events recorded in the book. The brother of Jared took sixteen stones to the top of a mountain and prayed to the Lord asking Him to make the stones shine. Suddenly the Lord touched
the stones one by one with his finger, and the brother of Jared fell to the earth with fear upon seeing the finger of the Lord. This drawing captured the emotion and action of this moment, plus the brother of Jared's fearful countenance as he fell to the earth through fear. The Book of Mormon attests to a belief in the divine nature of Jesus Christ coinciding with Biblical teachings. Another purpose of this drawing was to represent this particular precept. The rough heaviness of composition, caused by the rendition of the background elements, underscored the weight of the brother of Jared's fear. Surging, erratic lines were also employed to express the action, vibration, emotion and movement of the scene, as well as defining contours, forms and objects.

(5) The final work of the thesis was a drawing of Moroni as he sought refuge and safety for his life. Moroni completed his father's record, comprising the Book of Mormon, and was the last remaining Nephite prophet after the majority of the Nephite nation was destroyed. He was forced to seek the preservation of his own life from the Nephite enemies by wandering wherever he could in safety. The use of contrasting warm-cool colors, and light-dark areas, of the swirling background, of the intense facial expression, and of the halting, uncertain gesture of the figure, were each fundamental in achieving the feeling of anxiety, mystery and danger relative to Moroni's situation.

Thus the paintings and drawings of this thesis attempted, through the portrayal of certain events and individual experiences, to express some of the action, feeling, mood and spiritual aspects of the Book of Mormon.

Photographic Record. --A photographic record was kept of the final drawings and paintings of this thesis, and also of the preliminary sketches that were made prior to the finished works. Photographic prints of these sketches and art works have been made and were included in the body of the thesis.
Conclusion

Through the knowledge and experience acquired in the completion of these works, new insight has been gained regarding problems of communicating personal feelings and ideas. This experience has developed new motivation for improved works pertaining to the subjects portrayed in these pages in addition to many others that were envisioned to be developed at a later date. Higher goals and aspirations are being formulated with the hope of improved performance both technically and expressively. The artist feels he must continue the search for greater technical proficiency and ability, deeper insight concerning the mental images created by the book, better understanding of the men who wrote it, and a keener awareness of the relationship between artist and viewer.

In completing these paintings and drawings, new techniques have been used and found effective in achieving different and exciting artistic results. The combination of new techniques, improved skills, greater understanding and deeper feelings of the above mentioned areas, could be employed to render expressive communication more efficacious and forcible.

Recommendations

It has been mentioned that the Bible was a rich source of inspiration to many artists of various art periods. The Book of Mormon combines the qualities of Old Testament vibrancy and energy with the characteristics of New Testament spirituality and humility. It also contains similar resource
possibilities for emotional and spiritual creative expression. The well of this inspirational resource has scarcely been tapped, and is deserving of the same caliber of creative talent possessed by the many artists who have expressed themselves so significantly through scriptural themes.
Illustration 1. Sketches for Nephi's Wanderings

Illustration 2. Sketches for The Angry Brothers
Illustration 1. Sketches for The Sword of Laban

Illustration 2. Sketches for Omni...
Illustration 1. Sketches for The Prayer of Enos

Illustration 2. Sketches for The Warriors
Sketches for Mormon: A Sober Child
Sketches for the Abridgement
Sketches for Mormon and Moroni
Sketches for Mormon and Moroni
Sketches for Mormon and Moroni
Sketches for Mormon and Moroni
Sketches for The Finger of the Lord
Sketches for Moroni's Wanderings
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Books


Articles


Unpublished Material


A VISUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES
FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON

A Thesis Abstract
Presented to the
Department of Art
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Larry Berg Prestwich
August 1966
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis was to create two paintings and ten drawings pertaining to events and personalities from the Book of Mormon. The art works were done with the special intent of expressing the artist's personal and animated feelings about several men whose writings comprise the book, and about certain events pertaining to their particular circumstances. The communication of the feeling and emotion of these events was the most important thematic consideration in executing the art works, and the artist strove to express personal feelings and ideas forcefully and effectively concerning the drama, action, mood and atmosphere of these subjects. The events portrayed were chosen because they represented specific emotional and spiritual qualities found in the book. The drawings and paintings also attempted to depict the character and personality of these men, and to capture, or at least indicate, the consequential nature of their lives and deeds.

Because the thematic considerations of this thesis were interpretive and expressive of the emotional aspects of the Book of Mormon, many liberties were taken in the technical directions to convey the artist's feelings as forcibly as possible. The problematic approach was not entirely a literal or realistic interpretation, but each event was depicted in a manner felt to be the most effective in portraying its emo-
tional or spiritual feelings. Several of the works were executed in divergent and contrasting ways, creating a variety of stylistic approaches ranging from works that approximated realism to a drawing that was quite abstract in its conception.

The following steps were taken to achieve the action and emotional feelings pertaining to each interpretation:

(1) Many elements were exaggerated, altered or distorted for emotional expression and impact.

(2) Light and dark value contrasts were also exaggerated to give the figures a feeling of power, drama and a rough, surging energy, as well as to convey the force of their spiritual and physical strength.

(3) Many elements were simplified or eliminated to arrive at the heart of the profound, vital ideas.

(4) There was a determined effort for an individual, personal expression of the spiritual and emotional qualities of the Book of Mormon.

(5) Backgrounds in the paintings and drawings were done for the purpose of augmenting the expressive nature of the composition, and establish its atmospheric mood.

(6) Color was used in symbolic ways, and was also employed to create emotion and atmosphere. It was an important element of expression especially in the paintings.

(7) Employment of other art elements also helped contribute to the conveyance of emotional feeling.

After all attempts to explain and to justify the processes and procedures relative to the creation of these art works, it must be added that they were more than just the product of rational thought, more than mere decision. They were the result of the artist's ability, personal style and constant searching for expressive means.
This thesis abstract by Larry Berg Prestwich is accepted in its present form by the Department of Art of the Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis abstract requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

August 4, 1966
Date

Chairman of Committee

Member of Committee

Chairman, Major Department