

Front and Back Cover:

KINDLE Detail
Full painting on page 23.

# RICHARD LOVING

PAINTINGS: 30-Year Review

MARCH 4, 2007-APRIL 8, 2007

Running concurrently in Highland Park and Evanston, Illinois

Paintings from 1977-1999

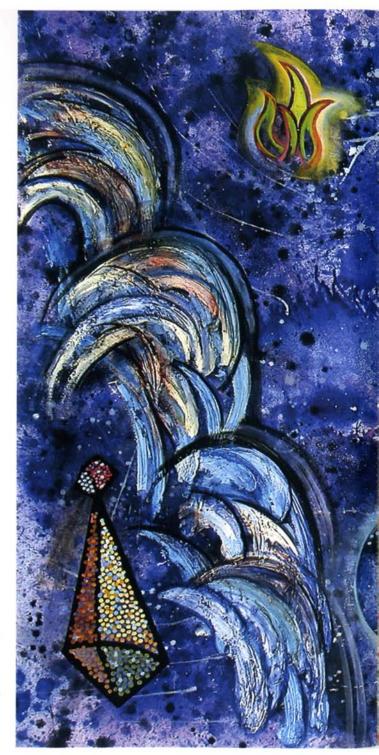
The Art Center 1957 Sheridan Road Highland Park, Illinois

Paintings from 2000-2006

Evanston Art Center 2603 Sheridan Road Evanston, Illinois

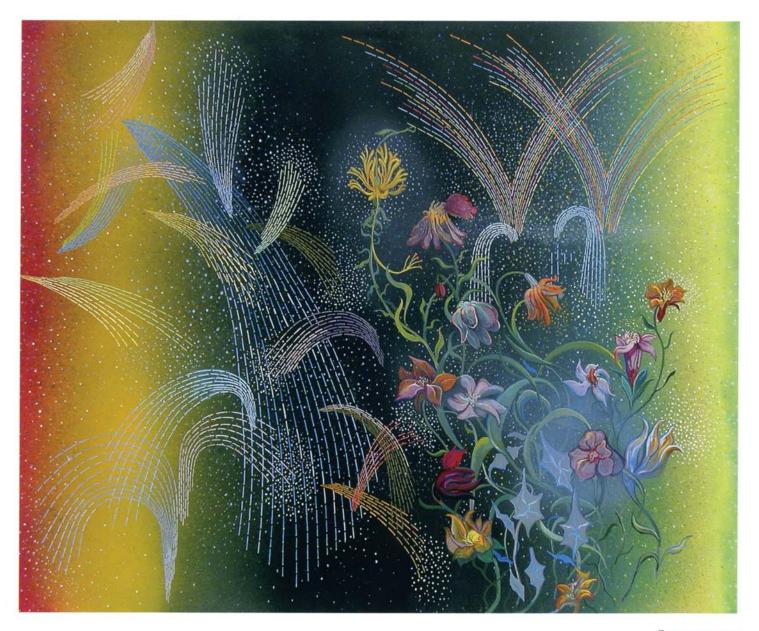
Essay by Sue Taylor pages 9-22

Essay by James Yood pages 29-38



ARCADIA UNDER SIEGE 1991–1995 54" x 86" Highland Park





EFFLORESENCE 2005

50" x 60"

Evanston

# RICHARD LOVING PAINTINGS: 30-Year Review

MARCH 4-APRIL 8, 2007

This exhibit will be the first substantial review of the paintings of Richard Loving, Professor Emeritus at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. During his more than three decades as one of Chicago's most prominent painters and teachers, Richard Loving has had a seminal influence on subsequent generations of painters and on the art of our time. This exhibition will run concurrently at the Evanston Art Center (EAC) and The Art Center of Highland Park. Recent work, 2000-2006 will be held at the EAC, while earlier work, 1977–1999 will be on exhibit at The Art Center of Highland Park.

The selection of work was initiated by John Brunetti and finalized by Alan Leder and Ann Rosen. We are extremely proud and fortunate to be able to host such a stunning collection of paintings, a continuous series of thirty years of clear

ideas and brilliant resolutions. This sparkling body of work is truly a tribute to the power of the human spirit which we are confident will elevate public discourse and support the missions of our respective community arts venues.

The Evanston Art Center founded in 1929 and the Highland Park Center founded in 1960 are dedicated to fostering the appreciation and expression of the visual arts among the diverse audiences of the North Shore/greater Chicago region. The art centers achieve their mission through studio art classes, exhibitions, outreach activities, educational programs and publications, all of which are designed to engage and enrich the individual and the community.

Alan Leder, Executive Director Evanston Art Center

Ann Rosen, Executive Director The Art Center Highland Park

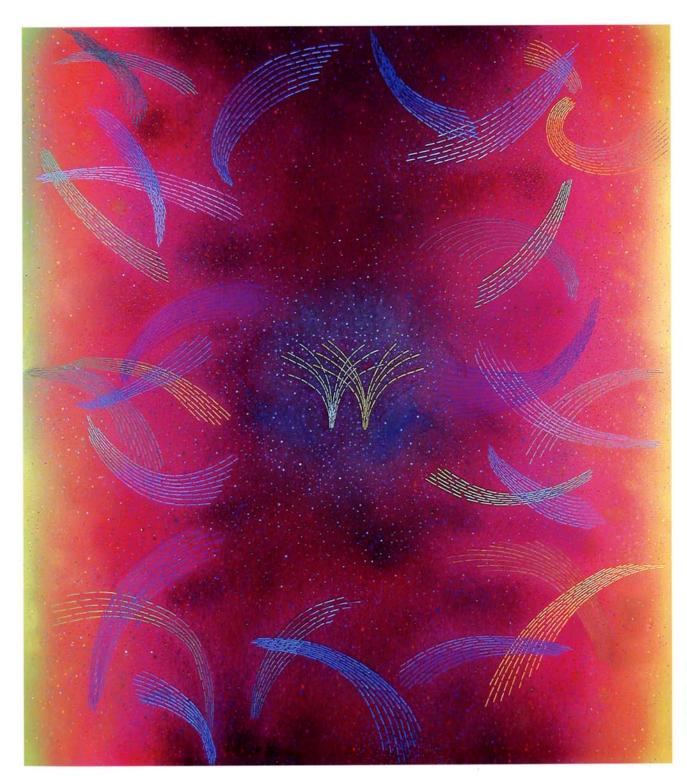
## AN INTRODUCTION TO RICHARD LOVING

PAINTINGS: 30-Year Review

In October 2004, the Evanston Art Center and The Art Center Highland Park inaugurated a series of retrospectives highlighting the art work of Chicago/Midwest artists over the age of 60 who have made significant contributions to their mediums and who continue to be active as vital members of the art community. Using the combined galleries of these two premier art centers on Chicago's North Shore, these exhibitions focus on artists whose challenging work, while critically respected by the art community throughout their careers, may not be known to larger audiences or visible to younger generations of artists through traditional venues. such as museum collections. It is with great pleasure that the next artist to be selected for this series is the painter Richard Loving. Mr. Loving occupies a unique place in Chicago painting. His luminous

works that incorporate brilliant color, elaborate patterning, and obsessive mark-making as well as spiritual symbolism have created a singular voice that has eluded easy classification, but which in hindsight suggests a special bridge between the two camps of painting, Abstraction and Imagism, to emerge in Chicago during the past forty years. The exhibition at The Art Center Highland Park, begins in 1977 with work created by the artist for a seminal show in his oeuvre held that year at the Chicago alternative space, N.A.M.E. Gallery, and presents a critical survey of his work in painting for the next twenty years. The Evanston Art Center continues the exhibition with a display of his most recent paintings that reveals the exceptional commitment Richard Loving continues to make to his work and his influence on future generations of artists.

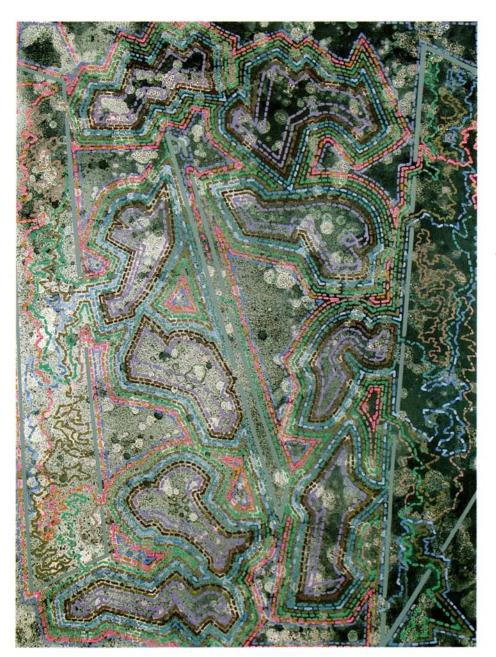
John Brunetti, Curator Emeritus Evanston Art Center August 2006



**SWEEP**2004
62" x 54" *Evanston* 



HATHOR'S GATE 1976, diptych 76" x 112" Highland Park



# RICHARD LOVING'S NARRATIVE ABSTRACTION

BY SUE TAYLOR

Richard Loving believes passionately in the power of abstract painting to convey meaning. He would surely agree with Gerhard Richter that "the first impulse towards painting, or towards art in general, stems from the need to communicate."1 And although Loving's project is in every way distinct from the German's, another truism from The Daily Practice of Painting seems pertinent: "Painting," Richter insists, "has nothing to do with thinking, because in painting

thinking is painting. Thinking is language... and has to take place before and after." Before and after his studio activity, Loving has thought out an apologia for contemporary painting; he points to its particular appeal to the viewer's bodily awareness in a world otherwise saturated with "media-generated simulacra."2 Arguing for painting as a kind of "thin sculpture," he compares the spectator's experience of deciphering the artist's process to geological or archaeological study, yielding new knowledge and pleasure.

In early works like Hathor's Gate, 1976 and Chatterly, 1978, the painting can be visually excavated, the broken lines and eccentric contours occupying a plane on top of the more amorphously painted area beneath. The effect is not unlike that of a Pollock poured painting, where tangled skeins seem to hover before an indeterminate space, but Loving would proceed systematically to exploit the duality inherent in this

Continued on page 12.

CHATTERLY 1978 56" x 76" Highland Park





arrangement. In Stretch, 1993, for example, the spontaneously spattered background and the methodically applied dots and dashes that cling to the surface represent freedom and discipline, respectively.3

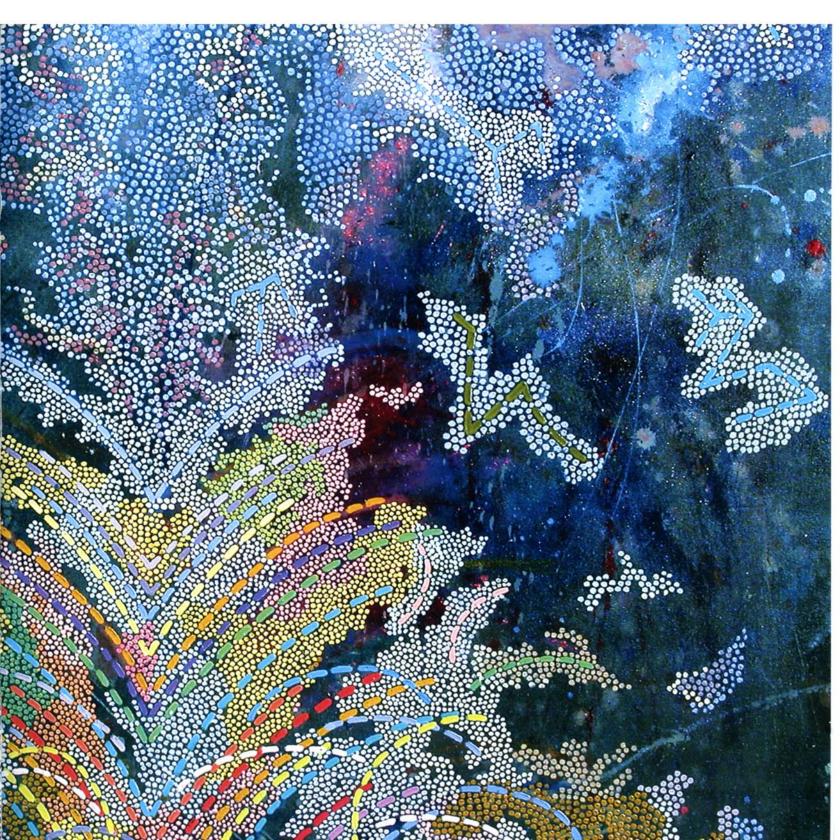
Continued on page 14.



Below: STRETCH 1993 70" x 50" Highland Park

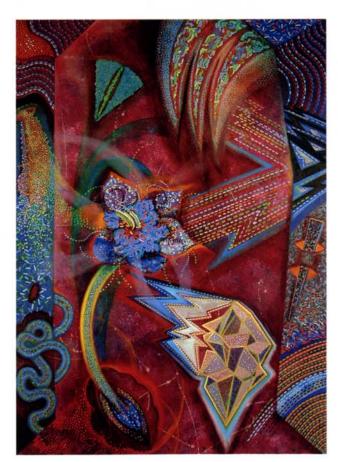
Right: STRETCH Detail





Along the way, Loving introduced evocative symbolscrystal, coil, flame, flower-and a more capacious fictive space in which to present them, devising proscenium arches to frame enigmatic dramas in Stress Satyriasis, 1981, Skysplit, 1983, (see pp. 16-17) and the beautiful Flora Annunciata, 1983–84.

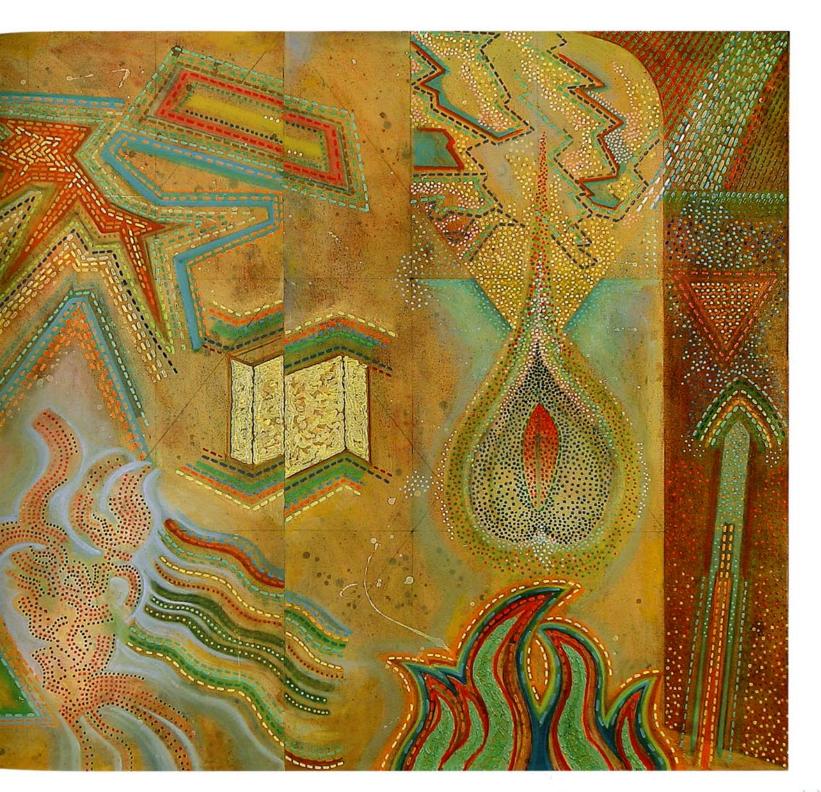
Continued on page 16.



FLORA ANNUNCIATA 1984 96" x 68" Highland Park

STRESS SATYRIASIS 1981 62" x 84" Highland Park





The "stage set" in this last painting recalls a portico in a Fra Angelico Annunciation, as Loving supplants the Virgin, angel, and Holy Ghost with an iris, crystal, and zigzagging bolt of colored light.

The proscenium all but disappears in recent pictures where Loving employs the airbrush to create rainbowcolored veils foregrounding fountains, celestial orbs, and cascading floral bouquets. But the luminous multi-hued curtains continue to provide bracketing elements for a central event: in Auspicious, 2004, Splash, 2004, and Efflorescence, 2005, vertical bands of yellow or pink become wings flanking a revelatory scene that unfolds before a deeper shade of heavenly blue, lavender, or green.

Continued on page 20.



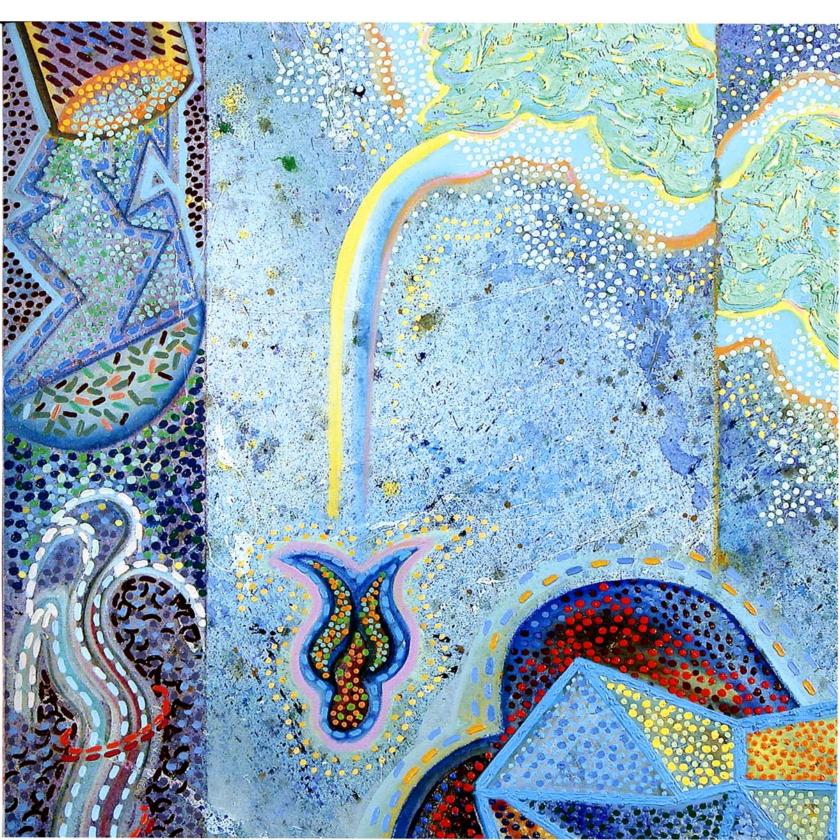
Above: SKYSPLIT

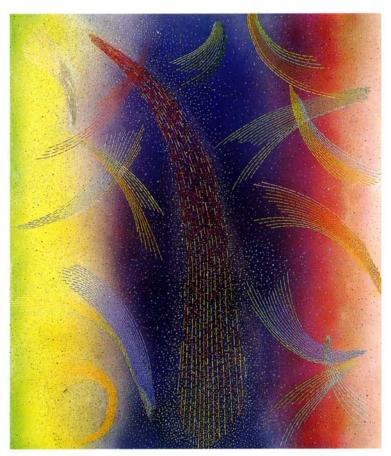
1983

60" x 50"

Highland Park

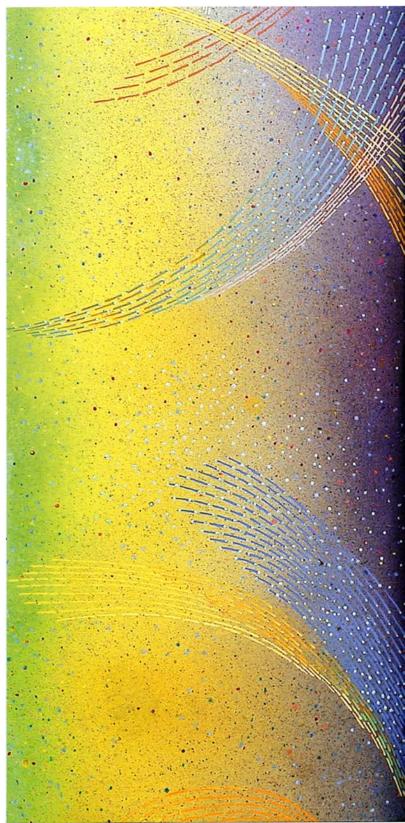
Right: SKYSPLIT Detail

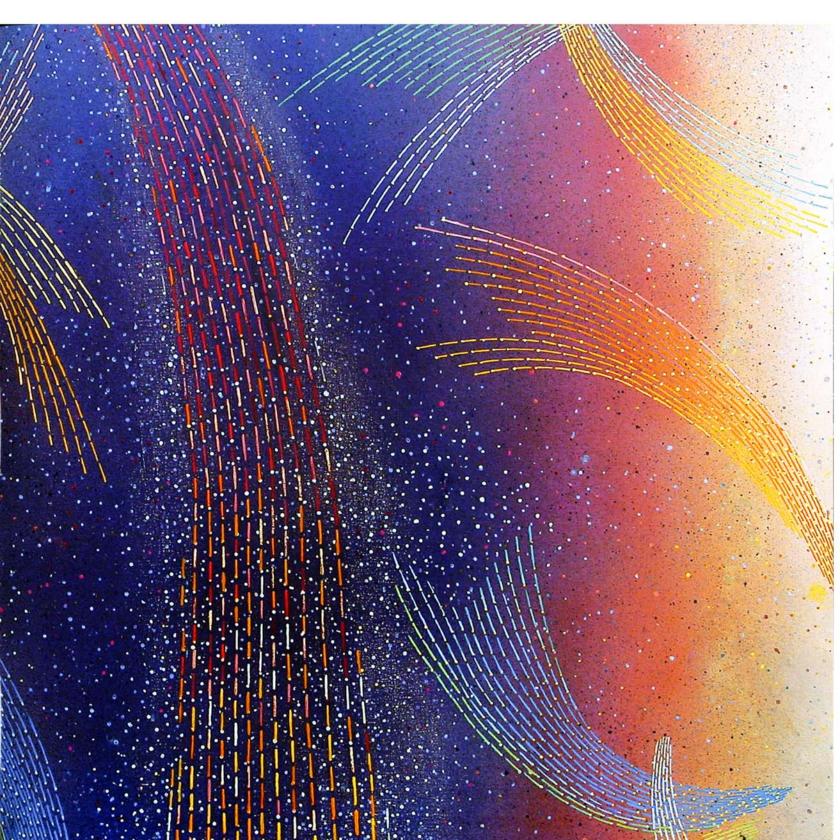




Left: SPLASH 2005 60" x 50" Evanston

Right: SPLASH Detail





It is fascinating to see such consistencies and subtle transformations throughout Loving's work, and to discover how critic Dennis Adrian's descriptor "narrative abstract form" still aptly applies.4 The themes, too, are overarching: conflict and destruction in Catalysis, 1991 and Arcadia Under Siege, 1991-95; erotic ardor and fertility (Ishtar, 1991, Flora Annunciata, Efflorescence); joyous generosity and grace (Sympathetic Outpouring, 2002, Something for All, 2003).

Continued on page 22.



CATALYSIS 1991 62" x 84" Highland Park



Kindle, 2006 seems a glorious summa of the artist's current concerns, in which a flaming tree delineated by his signature stitch-strokes sheds a magical phosphorescence, without disturbing a pair of avian visitors from the natural world. Like Anselm Kiefer's forest blazes, Loving's is a fire of cleansing and renewal; like the miraculous biblical bush, his spirit-infused tree burns without being consumed—illuminating for us, among other mysterious truths, this painter's enduring communicative power.

### Sue Taylor is Associate

Professor of Art History at Portland State University and a corresponding editor for Art in America. Her publications include Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety (MIT Press, 2000) and recent articles on lackson Pollock and Grant Wood in the Smithsonian journal American Art.

### NOTE 1.

Gerhard Richter, The Daily Practice of Painting: Writings and Interviews 1962-1993, ed. Hans-Ulrich Obrist, trans. David Britt (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), p. 11. The following quote in this paragraph is from ibid., p. 13, emphasis added.

### NOTE 2.

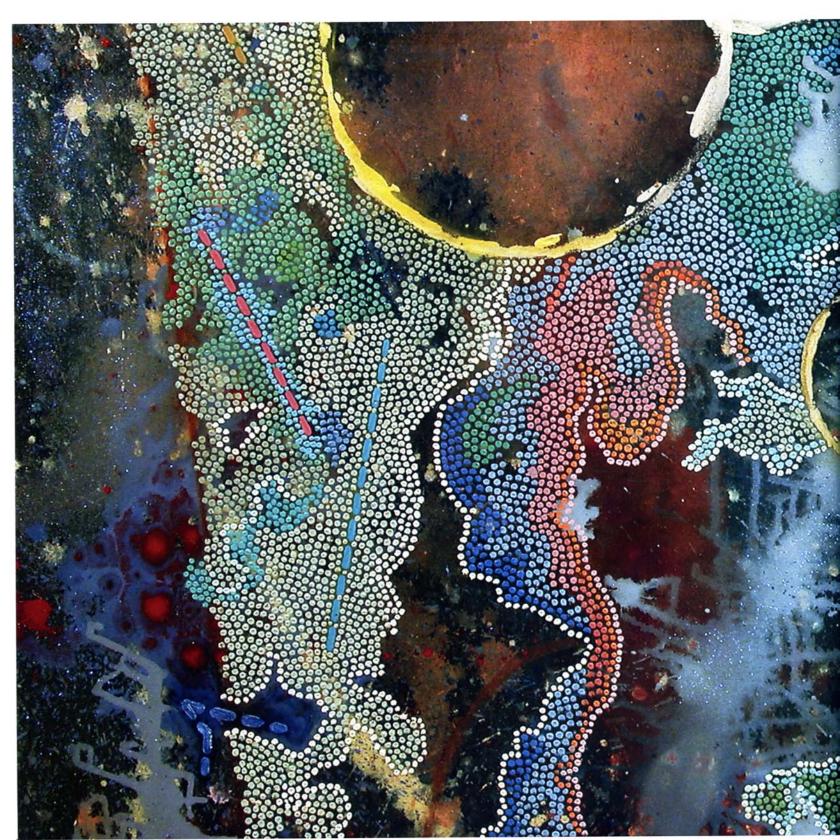
Richard Loving, "Material Evidence/ Meaning," typescript from the author's files, p. 2, and in the next sentence, pp. 3-4. A modified version of Loving's text is posted on line as "Paint Stuff': Material Evidence in Painting," http:// www.artic.edu/saic/art/projects/faculty/ rloving-p1.html, accessed 30 July 2006.

See Sue Taylor, "Richard Loving: Two Kinds of Order," exh. brochure (Chicago: Roy Boyd Gallery, 1993), for a fuller discussion of similar paintings of the early 1990s.

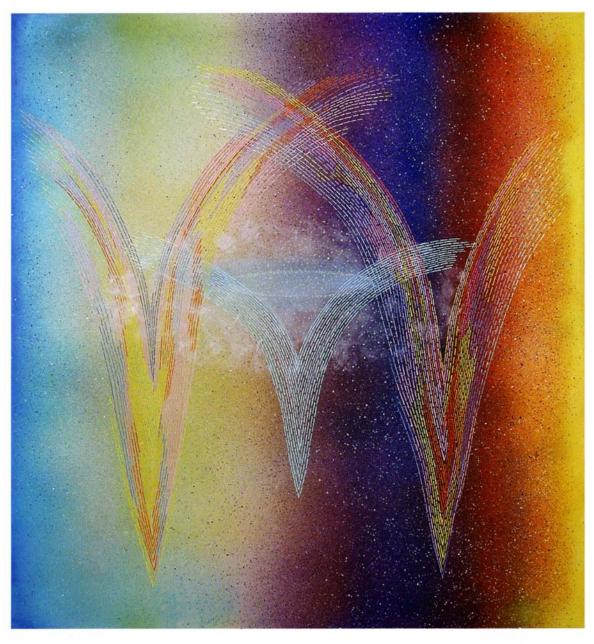
Dennis Adrian, Chicago: Some Other Traditions (Madison, Wisc.: Madison Art Center, 1983), 44.

Right: KINDLE 2006 54" x 50" Evanston





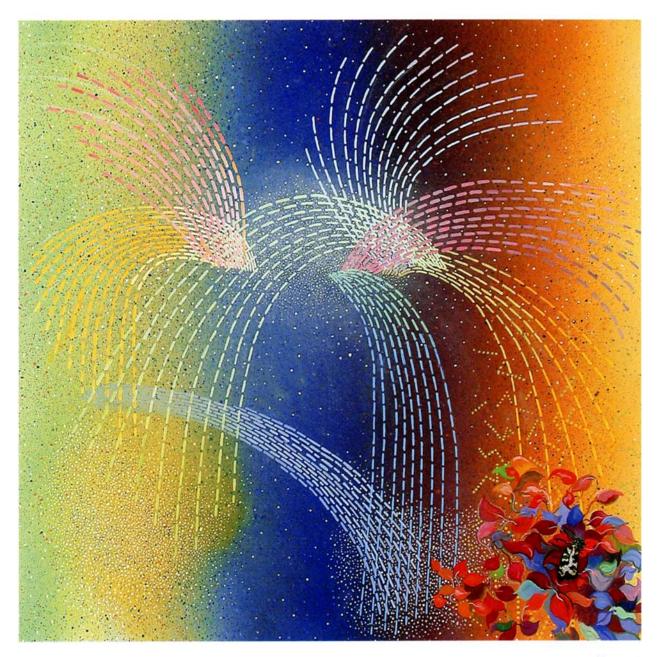




# SYMPATHETIC OUTPOURING

2002 54" x 50" Evanston

Previous Page:
TRAVERSE Detail
Full painting on page 42.



**VAPORS** 

2005

40" x 40"

Evanston





AMOROSA TROPICALIS
1983
68" x 96"
Collection of
The Art Institute of Chicago

Left:

## CONSIDERING RICHARD LOVING

...and while emphasizing the

BY JAMES YOOD

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This is to be read as a fragment from a larger publication, though it is not.

overt influence of Seurat's great masterpiece at the Art Institute on Loving's work may seem a fool's game, it might also be shortsighted not to observe intriguing connections between these artists. Loving will always eschew the essential stability of Seurat's universe, its roots in the observed and rational world and its predilection toward a kind of classicized grazia. But he surely responded to implications within Seurat's focused consideration of the brushstroke

as a potentially autonomous

gesture, as a painterly element

that both could and could not be rooted in some description of form or matter, fluctuating in some interzone between pattern and substance. Seurat's commitment to a kind of intensified pictorial optics, to offering the surface of a canvas as a matrix or mosaic of bits and bursts of color provided Loving a model of the inbetweenness he sought, of the uneasy reckoning of means (the brushstroke) and ends (form, subject matter) that he would unite in a pursuit of energy that in physics (and metaphysics) unites both states anyway.

Continued on the next page.

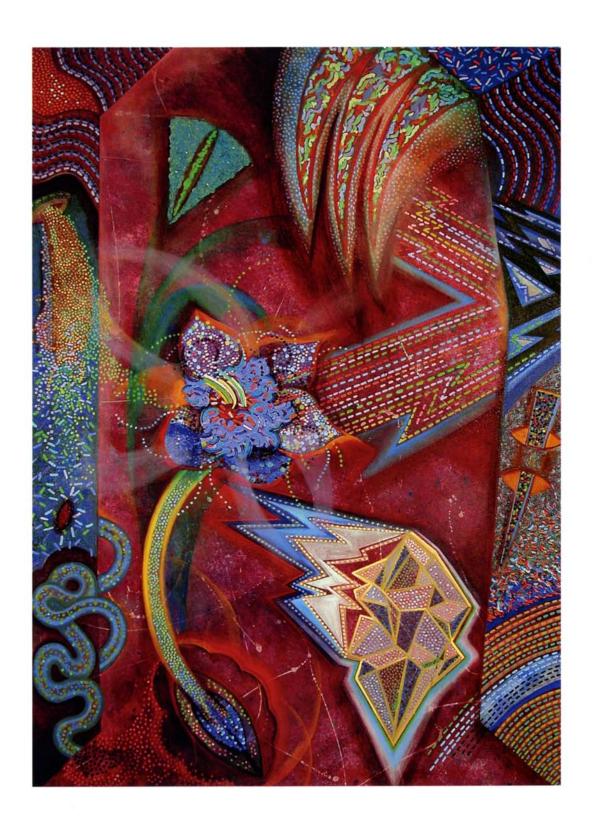
Left: AUSPICIOUS
2004
56" X 54"
Evanston



Right: FLORA ANNUNCIATA 1984 96" x 68" Highland Park

Above: FLORA ANNUNCIATA Detail

Flora Annunciata, 1983-84, was completed precisely one hundred years after Seurat began his Island of La Grande latte. Part of a series of works that include the monumental Amorosa Tropicalis, 1983 (that later painting in the permanent collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, perhaps some day they can hang near the Seurat) Flora Annunciata is Loving at full steam, a maelstrom of elements piling up with such verve and dynamism as to appear almost giddy, some hothouse of explosive intensification and disorientation that risks becoming a cacophonous stew of disparate and chaotic elements. That it is absolutely none of that, that it-and all of Loving's work, for that matter-is extremely logical







Left: FLOREALITY 2006 72" x 60" Evanston

Above: FLOREALITY Detail

and readable, internally consistent both stylistically and iconographically, is the first of its many surprises. Flora Annunciata is a tautly composed ballet of seething energies, a pretty in pink accelerant, a coursing artery into which we willingly dive. It has at its center two actors reciprocally posed on a proscenium stage (note Loving's indication of curtains, a device linking him

to other Chicago artists such as Roger Brown, Jim Nutt, and Hollis Sigler). One is a flower form, growing out of an ovoid seedpod, beautifully curving both toward and away from a sharper crystalline form that moves steadily toward it. Some form of milky illumination seems to pour from a painted orifice set in the upper left, swirling around both forms, but particularly around the flower.



**AQUARIAN ORDER** 1989 50" x 68" Highland Park

Another more staccato like bolt of illumination exudes from or intersects with the flower form, penetrating the curtain and ricocheting into space. Other frond, tubular and rhythmic patterns dance about as well. In a literal sense, of course, Loving is providing an annunciation for our time. Mary (the flower, the lily) modestly receives illumination and incarnation from above, doing her dance of destiny with God and her nearby angel Gabriel, becoming the

vessel of generation from which all will flow. But this work should only vestigially be seen as literal, this painting isn't religious as much as it is spiritual, presenting the annunciation as a vortex of energies, be they sexual, metaphysical, invisible, cosmic, psychological or optic. Loving makes paint pulsate, intensified into some zone of pictorial velocity that approaches the energies he senses swirling forever around us. It's all a kind of animism, a suggestion of the



PARABOLA 1992 70" x 50" Highland Park



Above: KINDLE Detail Full painting on page 23.

Right: SOMETHING FOR ALL 1984 62" x 52"

Evanston

bristling forces that keep the planet and those who pass upon it always in flux-it's always annunciation time for somebody, perhaps everybody.

Let's fast forward some twenty years. In the early years of the 21st century Loving had moved toward a form of distillation of these rampant energies, concentrating on abstraction to reach an essence of dynamism, more iconic and singular. It is as

if Loving turned from the turbulent vortices of his earlier work to something more particularized, reckoning these impulses one by one, isolating them into stunning astral suites, to reach an essence of dynamism, more iconic and singular as in Something for All. Today, though, in a work such as Kindle, 2006, it is as if Loving has been liberated into some state of transcendence,

Continued on the next page.



some place of cosmic peace and understanding. Kindle shows us a tree much like the one that Moses encountered on Mount Horeb, one that burns but is not consumed, both of and not of this world. Loving's tree is flat, made up of hundreds of shortish brushstrokes, none of which overlap, akin to the enameling strategies he learned all those decades ago, and set against a background of soft and bright vertical color bands. The tree stands assertively, showing no leaves or fruit, splayed out against its background, afire in dozens of places, yet somehow eternal and august. Bits of matter seem to exude from the burning tree, little droplets of color that both rise up to some place beyond the edge of the canvas and fall down to the ground below. Two impossibly brightly colored dove-like birds appear near the bottom of the painting.

This is the Bodhi tree under which Buddha sat, it is the Tree of Knowledge from the Garden of Eden, it's Moses' burning bush,

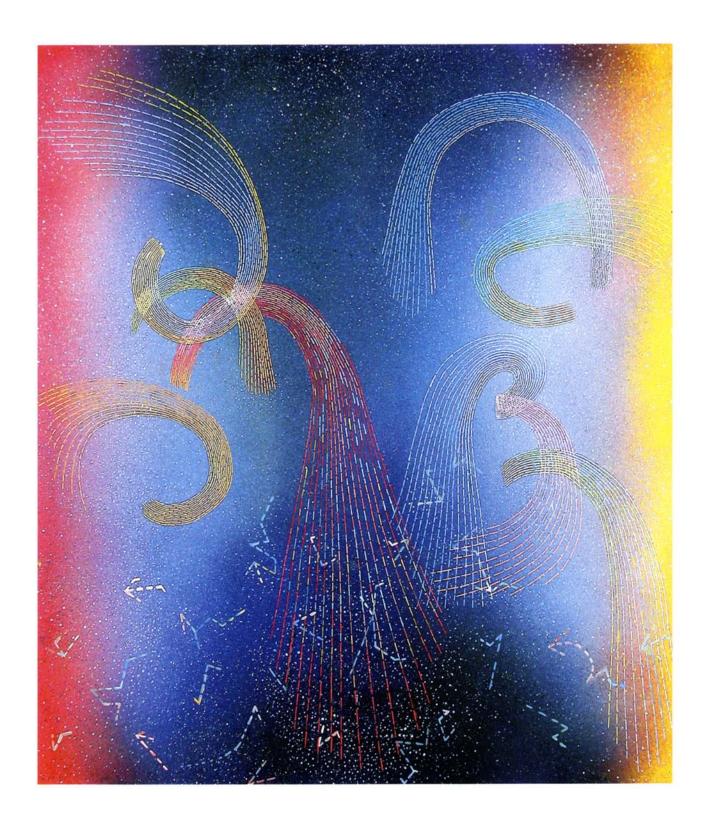
it's a glimpse into the dark wood where Dante begins the Divine Comedy, and it's the tree right down the street-mostly it's the tree right down the street. Transcendence and apocalypse, some glimpse into the forces that inexorably move the world and the soul, are not restricted to religious or literary figures, they are there for all of us to experience. Loving shows us a tree of sustenance and mystery, a metaphor for the transmission of matter into energy, a bridge between worlds real and imagined, between the specifics of nature and the cosmological forces they enact. These forces, these energies, are overflowing, Loving suggests, providing manna for birds to feed upon and dust that will float away into the universe, corporeality and eternity, side by side. These two paintings, decades apart, are united by those themes so central to Loving's aesthetic, making visible the invisible, pursuing that which has no form but is overwhelming with presence. As Einstein indicated,

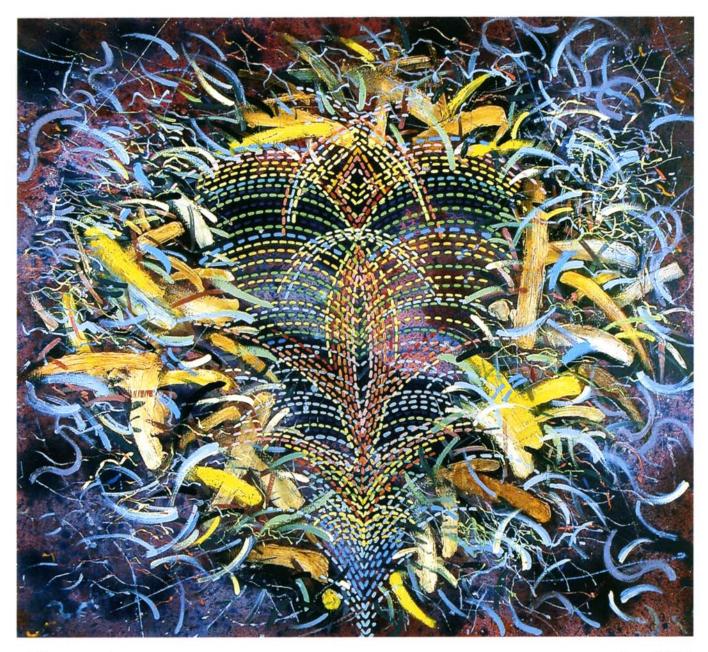
matter and energy are linked phenomenon, a concept Loving makes pictorial, embracing a duality only enhanced by the actual activity of painting...

James Yood teaches art history at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and writes regularly for Artforum magazine. Among his books, both of which include the work of Richard Loving, are Spirited Visions: Portraits of Chicago Artists and Second Sight: Printmaking in Chicago 1935-1995.

> Right: ARBOREALITY 2004 72" x 60" Evanston







Left: HISTORICAL ADVANTAGE

2003

61" x 52"

Evanston

Above: ISHTAR

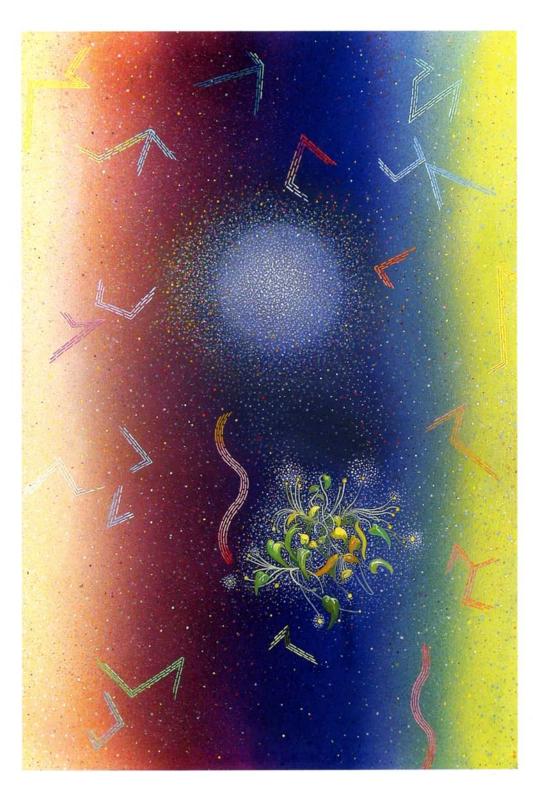
1991

52" x 56"

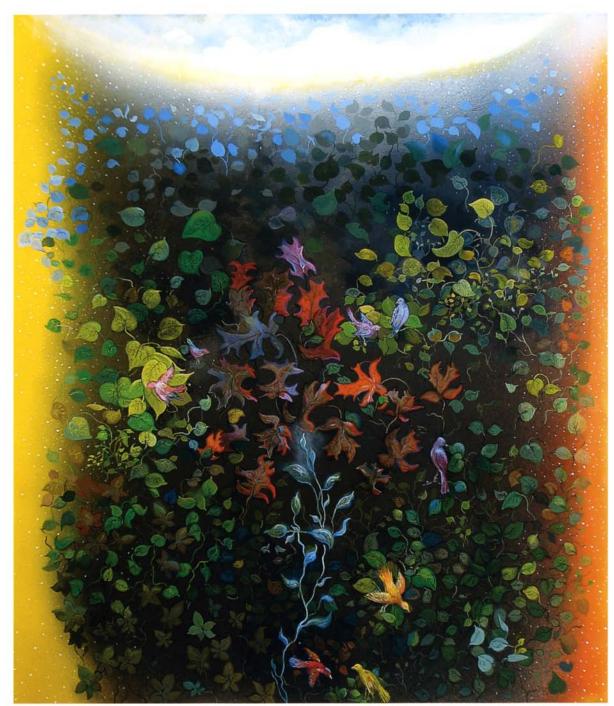
Highland Park



TRAVERSE 1978 78" x 56" Highland Park



HONEYSUCKLE MOON 2005 54" × 56" Evanston



2006 70" x 60" Evanston



IN THE WORLD II 2006 67" x 56" Evanston

#### EXHIBITIONS AND COLLECTIONS

## SELECTED SOLO **EXHIBITIONS**

- **2007** Richard Loving Paintings: 30-Year Review Evanston Art Center and The Art Center, Highland Park, IL (Catalog Available)
- 2003 Printworks Gallery, Chicago, IL Drawing and Print Installation
- 2000 Jan Cicero, Chicago, IL
- 1998 Printworks Gallery, Chicago, IL Collage/ Vesalius
- 1997 Bottler Dane, Santa Fe, NM
- 1996 "Undercurrents," Roy Boyd Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 1993 Roy Boyd Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 1991 The Jung Center, Evanston, IL
- 1991 "Seed Goddesses and Water Themes," Anderson University, Anderson, IA
- 1990 "Markings: Paintings, Prints and Constructions," State of Illinois Art Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 1989 Roy Boyd Gallery, Chicago, IL

- 1987 Roy Boyd Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 1987 Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI
- 1984 Roy Boyd Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1983 Roy Boyd Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 1982 Lerner Heller Gallery, New York, NY
- 1981 Jan Cicero Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 1978 Barat College, Lake Forest, IL
- 1973 Gallery Bernard, Chicago, IL
- 1963 Lawrence College, Appleton, WI
- 1957 Bloomington Art Association, Bloomington IL

# SELECTED SOLO **EXHIBITIONS**

- 2006 181st Annual Invitational Exhibition of Contemporary Art, National Academy of Design, New York, NY
- 1998 "Second Sight," curated by James Yood, Mary and Leigh Block Museum, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

- 1991 "Spirited Visions, Portraits of Artists," State of Illinois Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 1988 Drawings, Galleria Anton Meier, Geneva, Switzerland
- 1986-88 "Contemporary Screens: Function, Decoration, Sculpture, Metaphor," (traveling exhibit), Art Museum Association of America
- 1986 "Elegant Abstraction," Paine Art Center, Oskosh, WI
- 1985 "Eighty First Exhibition Artists of Chicago and Vicinity," Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- 1985 "American Abstraction/Four Currents," Louis K. Meisel Gallery, New York, NY
- 1984 "Abstract, Symbol, Image," Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL (traveling exhibit)
- 1984 "Chicago: Some other Traditions," Madison Art Center, Madison, WI (traveling exhibit curated by Dennis Adrian)

1984 "Chicago Abstract Painting," Chesney Cowles Memorial Museum, Spokane, WA

1980 "32 Illinois Invitational," Illinois State Museum, Springfield, IL

1979 "Chicago //Karlsruhe," Karlsruhe, Germany (curated by Franz Schulze)

1968 "Chicago and Vicinity Art Exhibit," The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL

1968 "Drawings USA," St. Paul Art Center, St. Paul, MN

## PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

The Art Institute of Chicago Chicago, IL

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, IL

Illinois State Museum Springfield, IL

Jocelyn Art Museum Omaha, NE

#### **Block Gallery**

Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

## Elmhurst College

Elmhurst, IL

State of Illinois Building Collection Chicago, IL

#### Smart Museum

University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Moraine Community College

Sangamon State University

Sangamon IL

Palos Hills, IL

## SELECTED PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

AT&T Corporate Headquarters

Bedminster, NJ

First National Bank of Chicago

Chicago, IL

Kemper Grove

Long Grove, IL

Moraine Community College,

Palos Hills, IL

#### Prudential Insurance Company

Newark, NJ

Needham, Harper and Steers

Chicago, IL

Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Chicago, IL

**Industrial Trust and Savings** 

Muncie, IN

Katten, Muchin, Pearl and Gallter Ltd.

Chicago, IL

**Baker Furniture Company** 

Chicago, IL

**Ruth Horwich** 

Chicago, IL

Larry and Evelyn Aronson

Chicago, IL

**Toni Gutfreund** 

Chicago, IL

Herbert and Virginia Lust

Greenwich, CT

### **CREDITS**



Photo: Lindsey Powell

This catalog was funded in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Catalog design by Christine Ronan and Jenna Del Vigna at Ronan Design, Chicago.

Photography by William H. Bengston (unless otherwise noted).

All paintings from the collection of Richard Loving (unless otherwise noted).

Much appreciation to Katherine Bateman, Julia Loving and Alan Leder for various aspects in the completion of this project.

Printed in Hong Kong by Permanent Printing Limited.

