



H. C. Dodd  
**Penumbra**  
Watercolor Paintings  
1990 - 2007

**COVER IMAGE**

*Penumbra* (detail), 1998

22" x 30"

H. C. Dodd  
***Penumbra***  
Watercolor Paintings  
1990 - 2007

April 25, 2019 - June 13, 2019  
Simon Zalkind, curator

Art Gallery at the Fulginiti Pavilion for Bioethics and Humanities  
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus  
13080 E. 19th Ave. • Aurora, CO 80045  
Gallery Hours: Monday-Friday from 9:00am-5:00pm  
Free and open to the public.



*Tied*, 1998  
30" x 22"

## Forward

I knew about Dr. Chip Dodd long before I actually met him. He served as Chair of the Department of Radiology at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio for many years before filling the same position here at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. I spent several years on the same south Texas campus, but if our paths crossed, I was unaware. However, I was aware of the esteem and affection of the faculty and the leadership at San Antonio for both Chip and his wife, Dr. Deborah Neigut, a pediatric gastroenterologist, who joined him here at AMC.

So, when Chip stopped by my office and introduced himself, I was more than a little confused. Was he in Colorado? Was I back in San Antonio? We sorted out my time warp, and he began to tell me about his mother: the woman and the artist. I was immediately captivated by the story of Glen Dodd who reared seven children, supported the groundbreaking work of her husband, and began to paint—seriously—in her sixties. But it was the breathtaking singularity of her

work—abstract watercolor!—that really stunned me, and I immediately invited Chip to consider an exhibit in our gallery.

The rest of that story now unfolds before you as a viewer of these paintings. What hangs here, as both Chip and Debbie note, is also a story of medicine and art—the product of the extraordinary love and amazing talent of a woman who devoted the first half of her life to one and the second to the other. With Simon Zalkind, I am deeply grateful that we have this opportunity to honor and admire HC Dodd.

Dr. Tess Jones, Director  
Arts and Humanities in Healthcare Program

H. C. Dodd  
***Penumbra***  
Watercolor Paintings  
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Watercolor, because of the easy accessibility of its two main components – water and pigment – has a long and venerable history both in the East as well as the West where it is believed to have originated in European caves of the Paleolithic period. Renaissance artists primarily employed watercolor to produce “cartoons” – sketches that would later be executed as major paintings in oils. The relatively modern development that made watercolors accessible to “amateurs” - hobbyists, watercolor societies, and aristocratic ladies - was an innovation by William Winsor and Henry Newton in 1846 of a softened pigment, creating the first watercolor paints available in tubes. That same period also saw a surge of the medium with works of canonical stature through the ravishing, broodingly luminous paintings of William Turner and the mystical, spiritually themed narrative works of the great poet William Blake among others. In America the ornithologist and painter John James Audubon made 435 preparatory watercolors for his book *The Birds of America* (1827 – 1838), a still highly valued masterpiece of visual acuity and precision. Thomas Moran's watercolors of Yellowstone (1871) were presented to the U.S. Congress in 1872 and were instrumental in the success of the movement to designate it as America's first National Park. Late 19th century America also produced a surge of

remarkably skilled painters who embraced watercolor as a primary medium such as Winslow Homer, Thomas Eakins and James A. M. Whistler. In the modern period watercolor was used to stunning effect by artists of the “American school” – a designation connoting “individualism” and personal expression as the defining factor of American art. Important watercolorists of this period include John Marin (1870 – 1953) and Maurice Prendergast (1859 – 1924). Georgia O’Keefe (1887 – 1986) began experimenting with watercolors in her late twenties as a way to play with color and composition. This was prior to her sensually ripe and much-loved paintings of flowers. Her abstracted watercolors played a significant role in her journey to working in a loosely representational style. More recently the works of the well-known realist Andrew Wyeth were produced primarily in watercolor. His *Helga Pictures* in particular have achieved an iconic stature in American painting of the 20th century.

The 1940’s – 50’s saw the spectacular rise and critical embrace of Abstract Expressionism - a radical movement characterized by spontaneous, energetic “action,” emotional intensity, existential drama, and gestural surface. Paint was thrown, dripped, splashed, scumbled and stained on large canvasses in an “all-over” approach in which the whole canvas is treated with equal importance. Watercolors were intimate and small in scale - better suited to “plein air” landscapes, portraiture, or table-top still-lives. Watercolors could not compete with the scale, ambition, psychological intensity and heroic claims of Abstract Expressionism’s huge canvasses and the medium receded – temporarily – both in popularity as well as in critical and curatorial embrace. However, a second generation of Abstract Expressionists and “color field” painters began to produce transparent, atmospheric washes of color reminiscent of the watercolor tradition. By incorporating watercolor techniques and effects the medium was reintroduced within a context of aesthetic innovation and experimentation.

The preceding paragraphs provide a brief historical context with which to consider the work of H.C. Dodd. Some biographical information is also useful in this regard. Helen Carolyn Dodd (nee Glenzing), "Glen" was born in 1924 in Greenwich, Connecticut and died in Houston, Texas four days before her 90th birthday. She married Dr. Gerald D. Dodd in 1947. Their traditional Catholic marriage produced seven children. Whatever early aspirations she may have had towards pursuing a career in the arts were eclipsed by the lovingly undertaken responsibilities of caring for her growing family. In the early 1970's Dodd began taking watercolor classes. However, sensitive to her teacher's criticism of her work, she abandoned those efforts. It wasn't until 1990 (at age sixty seven) that she once again enrolled in watercolor classes at the Art League of Houston and the Glassell School of Art. Her early work, though it was still confined to the traditional landscapes and portraits that comprise much of the production of conventional watercolorists, is already characterized by a capacity for psychological depth and a growing technical bravura that would continue to ripen and increase as her confidence grew. Watercolor is an unforgiving medium – no mistaken mark can be hidden, no unsatisfying passage can be painted over. Her early mastery of this difficult medium is already evident in *Untitled Man*, 1990, the Wyeth-inspired *Winter Haven*, 1992, and *Scarf*, 1992. Dodd's formidable control of line and color are clear in these images already impressive for their precision, clarity, grace and charm. The portraits in particular are testaments to the power and importance of observation, revealing in their accuracy essential truths about the lives of the people portrayed. The intelligence and control that Dodd brought to the medium along with her attentive and steady capacity to "witness" life were amplified and refined as her confidence, mastery and willingness to experiment progressively revealed themselves.

By 1993 she was clearly veering towards abstraction although she did return for brief moments to the realism that initially compelled her allegiance. The pathos and poignancy of *Farewell*, 1994 depends in large part on Dodd's expert handling of chiaroscuro effects, endowing the subject with both tenderness and formidable presence. While she never sought gallery representation or courted the institutional or critical attention of the "mainstream" art-world, it was during this period – the early 1990's – that she began to submit her work to juried shows, primarily organized and hosted by watercolor societies and associations. Recognition, at first modest, soon grew to the point that she was almost assured of a 1st or 2nd place award. Major publications devoted to watercolor also began to take notice and she was consistently featured in articles that date from the mid 1990's through 2006.

The mid 1990's were transitional years for Dodd's work. She was beginning to move towards the abstraction that would define her mature work but the lure and the poetic/evocative possibilities of "real" subjects remained primary sources for her during this process of transformation. *Tourists*, *Non-conformist*, and *The Emissary* (1993) for example, are easily recognizable as bolts of cloth. However, what's apparent to me is that in these pictures Dodd's primary interest wasn't the verisimilitude of the painting to the source subject but the abstract qualities of their folds, contours and drapery – their rhythms and undulations, the horizontality of the lines they create. In the same year (1993) she pushed further towards the visual vocabulary she would ultimately adopt. In *V6B* (1993) Dodd has begun to layer materials and signs, each element of the painting still bearing traces of its origin but somehow unencumbered - more open-ended, more metaphorical. Forms, treated with utmost precision, disport themselves with ease and assurance on a neutral field. The painting also inclines – in its resemblance to collage - to the process that came to define Dodd's mature work.

By the later 1990's and throughout the remaining years of her life as an active artist Dodd employed a uniquely idiosyncratic process to make her paintings. The compositions always originated from the construction of a collage which then served as a model for the painting to come. She says "The forms aren't anything in particular; they're simply shapes. The design is entirely intuitive. I rearrange bits of paper until I like the arrangement and then transfer the design to my watercolor sheet." In essence Dodd remained a "realist" of sorts – reproducing in watercolor, with painstaking veracity, an object she created which subsequently exists in the world. The intuition and spontaneity, the emotively charged gesture, the internal logic that links colors and shapes – the qualities that we've come to associate with abstraction are expressed by Dodd in the collage that precedes the painting. Watercolor however, is a notoriously unpredictable medium. Its fluidity makes it difficult to control and it is precisely the serendipitous "accidents," the unintended bleeding of one color into another, the passage that was intended to appear translucent but turns out opaque, that attracts many watercolorists to the medium. It's difficult to imagine that watercolor's unpredictability or alternately, shifts in Dodd's moods or emotions didn't alter, however subtly, the translation of her composition from collage to watercolor.

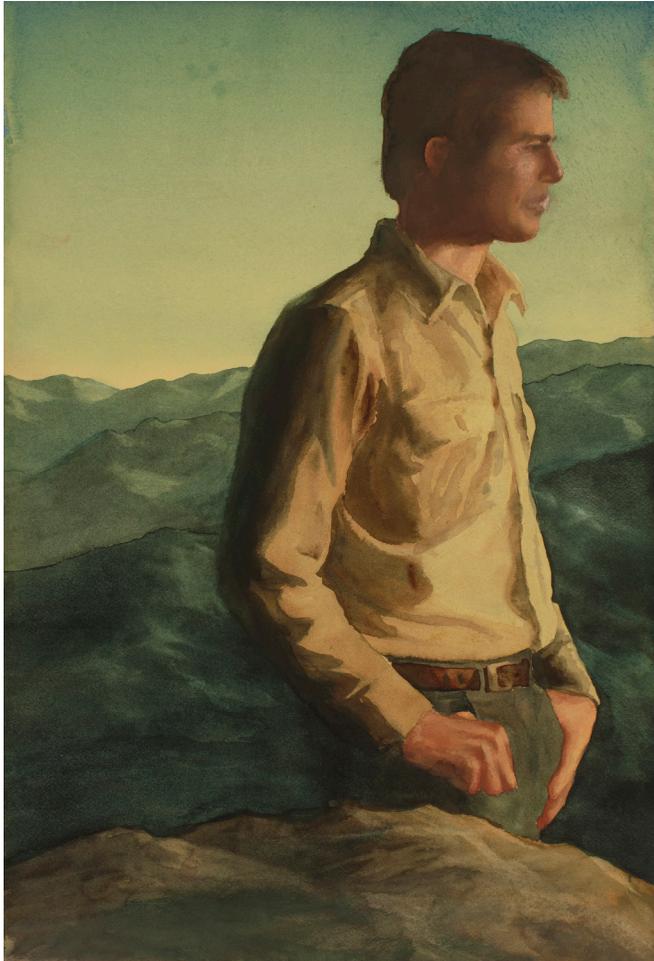
With measured refinement and utmost precision Dodd's paintings treat formalist concerns such as placement, edge, surface and structure with both fine-tuned ease and careful tautness. Works such as *Longitude* (1997), *Sound of Red* (1998), *Prelude* (2000), and the more recent *Out of the Ashes* (2006), are outstanding examples of Dodd's tightly balanced and classically wrought compositions which, in spite of their calculated handling, depend on quirky twists of construction. Geometries are skewered, circles are spliced, lines converge into stiletto points.

Despite the fine-tuned control that characterizes Dodd's paintings her aesthetic wit peeps through so many of them.

It is my intention and hope that this exhibition adequately serves to introduce the vibrantly intelligent and affectively poetic work of H. C. Dodd to a fresh, wide audience.

I'm grateful to Dr. Gerald Dodd, H. C. Dodd's son, for making her work available to me and for his patient assistance in crafting every aspect of this exhibition. I'm also grateful to Tess Jones for prodding me to contact him. Her instincts were, as always, presciently accurate.

Simon Zalkind, Curator of Exhibitions



*Untitled Man*, 1990  
22" x 15"



*Winter Haven, 1992*  
22" x 30"



*Unnamed*, 1993  
22" x 30"



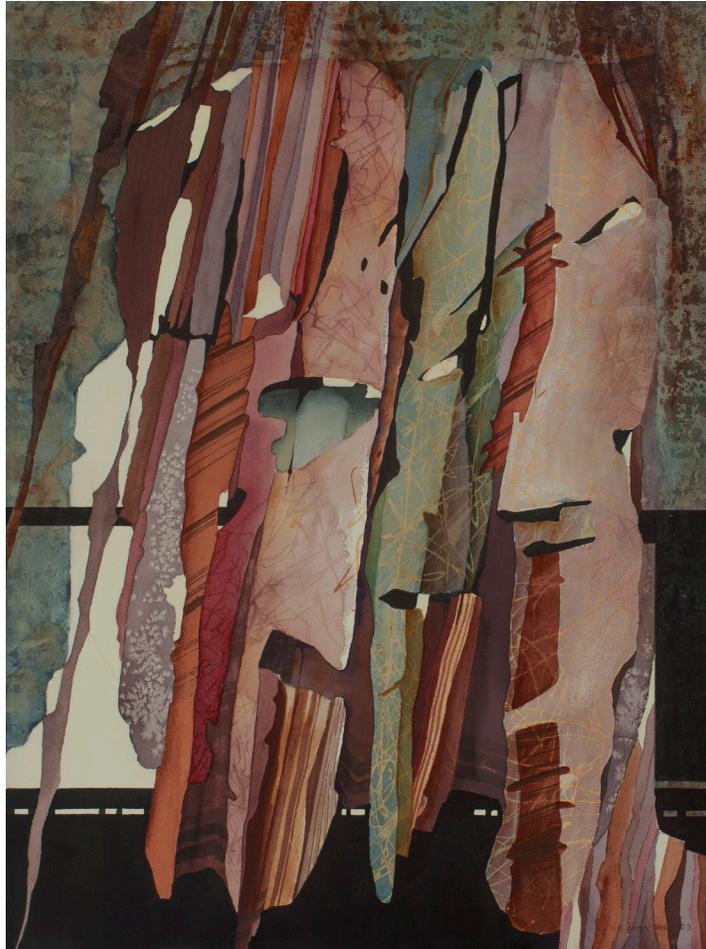
*Tourists*, 1993  
22" x 30"



*Non Conformist*, 1993  
22" x 30"



V6B, 1993  
30" x 22"



*Intermission*, 1993  
30" x 22"



*Farewell*, 1994  
22" x 15"



*Omega*, 1997  
30" x 22"



*Seventy Three*, 1997  
30" x 22"



*Sound of Red*, 1998  
30" x 22"



*Pax*, 1999  
22" x 30"



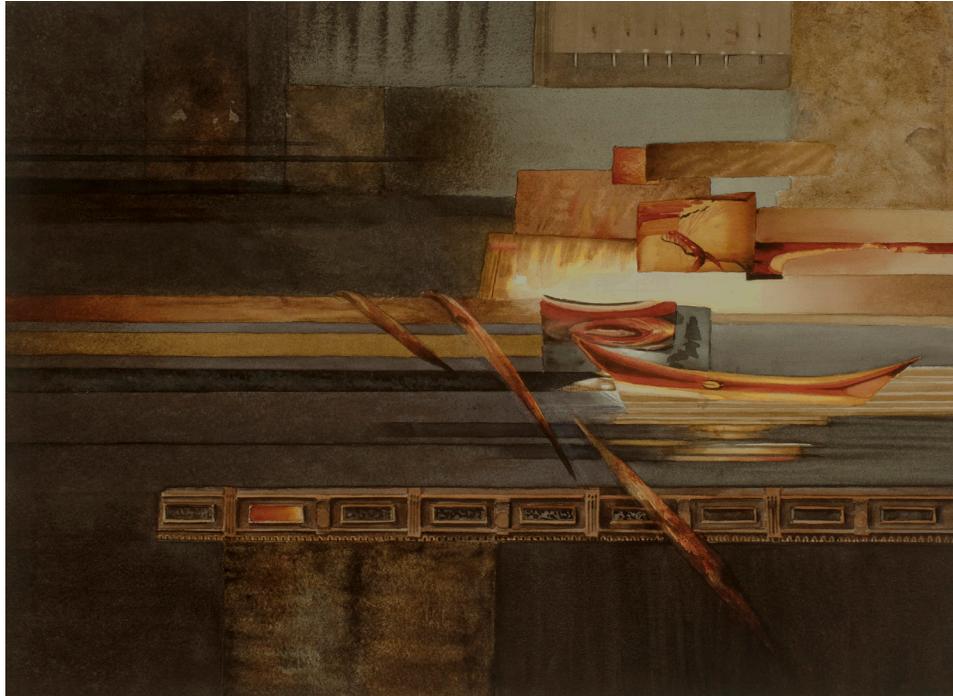
*Longitude*, 2001  
30" x 22"



*Untitled Self Portrait, ~2004*  
15" x 22"



*Prelude*, 2005  
30" x 22"



*Out of the Ashes*, 2006  
22" x 30"



*Divorce Proceedings, 2007*  
30" x 22"

## Catalogue of the Exhibition

*all works in this exhibition are  
watercolor on paper*

1. Untitled Red Tree, 1990  
11" x 15"
2. Untitled Man, 1990  
22" x 15"
3. Shattered World, 1991  
30" x 22"
4. Winter Haven, 1992  
22" x 30"
5. Outgrown Shell II, 1992  
18.5" x 24.5"
6. Scarf, 1992  
30" x 22"
7. V6B, 1993  
30" x 22"
8. Tourists, 1993  
22" x 30"
9. Non Conformist, 1993  
22" x 30"
10. The Emissary, 1993  
22" x 30"
11. Intermission, 1993  
30" x 22"
12. Story of My Life, 1993  
30" x 22"
13. Farewell, 1994  
22" x 15"
14. Trilogy, 1995  
15" x 22"

15. Seventy Three, 1997  
30" x 22"

16. Omega, 1997  
30" x 22"

17. Mirror Image, 1998  
30" x 22"

18. Penumbra, 1998  
22" x 30"

19. Hinged, 1998  
22" x 30"

20. Tied, 1998  
30" x 22"

21. Sound of Red, 1998  
30" x 22"

22. Night Flight, 1999  
30" x 22"

23. Pax, 1999  
22" x 30"

24. Granada, 2000  
30" x 22"

25. 6:00 AM, 2000  
22" x 30"

26. Last Chance, 2000  
22" x 30"

27. Fire Bird, 2000  
30" x 22"

28. Mark Five, 2001  
22" x 30"

29. Longitude, 2001  
30" x 22"

30. Hallmark, 2002  
22" x 30"

31. Patriot, 2002  
30" x 22"

32. 11/1, 2002  
22" x 30"

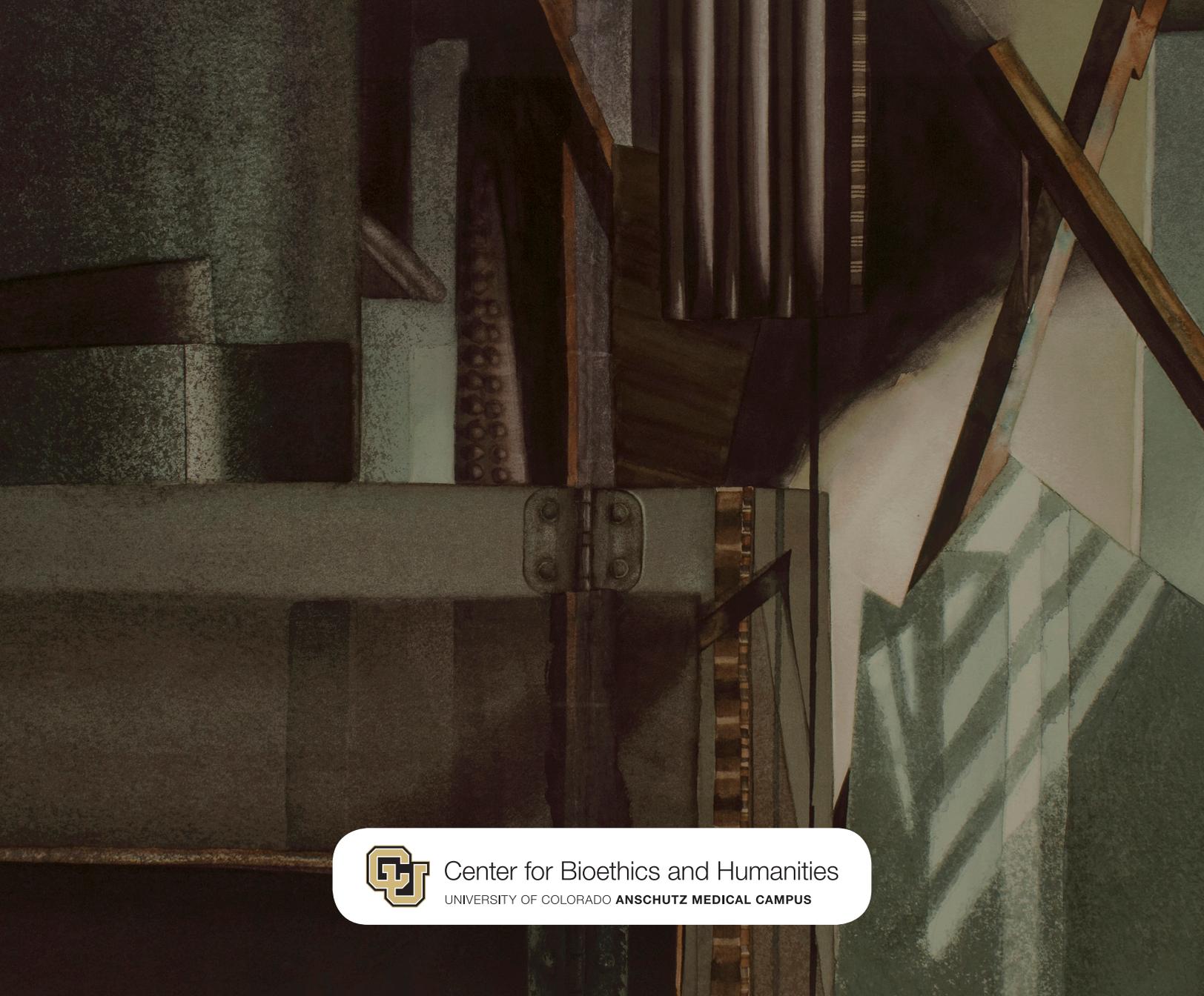
33. Wind Child #1, 2003  
11" x 8"

34. Yesterday's Threads II, 2003  
11.5" x 8"

35. Blues II, 2003  
30" x 22"
36. Self Portrait, 2004  
15" x 22"
37. Genesis, 2005  
30" x 22"
38. Prelude, 2005  
30" x 22"
39. Out of the Ashes, 2006  
22" x 30"
40. Painted Poem, 2007  
22" x 30"
41. Divorce Proceedings, 2007  
30" x 22"

**BACK COVER IMAGE**

*Hinged* (detail), 1998  
22" x 30"



Center for Bioethics and Humanities  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**