

## REINCARNATIONS (1987–88) – Willoughby, Sharp.

During the summer of 1987, Gretta moved her studio from Battery Park City to New York's Upper East Side. This change resulted not only in a different lifestyle, but a new period of paintings which evince a growing holistic belief that the universe and everything in it (including us) operates in accord with a hidden, dynamic order. Long attracted to the spiritual world (Mãe Menininha do Gantois, the most venerable Candomblé priestess and Chico Xavier, a spiritual leader and follower of Allan Kardec are 1/25 of *SELF-PORTRAIT OF BRASIL*), Gretta became deeply immersed in the New Age. The Hebrew Kabala, parapsychology, the Tarot, ESP, crystals, biorhythms and pyramids all became a subject of study and a resource for her work.

She joined the Brotherhood of Light and became interested in consciousness, *Chaos*, and the "Holographic Universe". As a result of her new friends' belief that she had been a High Priestess endowed with extraordinary (even healing) powers, she began to entertain unusual ambitions in her art. She wanted it to have imminent powers expressive of both material and non material worlds. In REINCARNATIONS the figure/ground relationship is unclear. They both seem interchangeable or equal, indicating that humans are part of a whole, connected, one with everything else. Energy and matter come together in the meeting of surface and spirit giving these powerful, universal icons meaning and value.

This new work is in its early, generative stage. It is the first work that the artist has created in both North and South America. It is work that will test the artist's dedication, seriousness, vision and courage. We shall have to wait to see what will happen. But, Brazilians say that Brazil is a country of miracles... and it is.

*March–April, 1988 – Willoughby Sharp – essay published on the occasion of Gretta's fifteen years retrospective "Europe, France & Bahia" at the Museu da Imagem do Som e Paco das Artes, Sao Paulo*