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"The Position of Art in the Curriculum of the School"

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Introduction

There are many factors which have contributed to the current position of art, craft and design in our schools, and also in our society. While it is presently undergoing some changes which hopefully will promote a broader and richer education, art as an educational source has been a very peripheral subject in the Irish curriculum to date. The situation in Britain is similar. In his book, Dick Field remarks that

Art education in this country suffers from a chronic weakness in communication, partly because of the mystique with which the art teacher has so often surrounded his work, partly because of genuine differences from old disputes in the world of art.⁽¹⁾

Until the early 1970's there was little emphasis placed on aesthetic or creative subjects. The last ten years have seen greater awareness of the need to provide art education, including music, art, craft, design, drama and dance. However this as yet is far from fully realised in Ireland. The present position of art in schools is still hampered with issues such as failure to employ properly trained teachers, financial restraints on material and equipment, workspace and the school timetable. In many schools it is possible to find the art class pushed into the Friday afternoon slot simply as a pleasant means of humouring the students after the serious academic week they have just gone through.

A common perception is that as a subject art, craft and design subjects are more suited for the "less intelligent rather than the more intelligent pupils"⁽²⁾ who would have greater capabilities with, for example science and technological subjects. The C.E.B. report on the Arts in Education states that

Art education is enjoyable for most pupils: this is a key factor that is neither fully recognised nor utilised in educational planning and is particularly relevant to those groups of students who may be educationally at risk.⁽³⁾

The fact that an arts education is of immense benefit to everyone is not always foremost in the minds of our educators and planners. It is vital to impress upon these people and also on society that,

.....the processes involved in making and receiving art are such fundamental human processes involving reason, feeling and imagination, that an education system which does not have them at its centre is seriously impoverished.⁽⁴⁾

Despite the fact that reports such as the C.E.B. and numerous other reports have frequently highlighted these issues, the position of art in Irish society or in the community remains a rather bleak picture, and of course this will be directly influence the school.

Artists often tend to be viewed with a sceptical attitude within a society. They are seen as different from people whose work lies in other fields. They are looked upon not so much for what they are as for what they do. Their contribution to a society is

often misunderstood and this is where a lack of aesthetic and artistic education within that society is evident. Traditionally people involved in a craft area were looked upon more favourably within their community. This is because they were seen to be contributing physically, and the skill with which they do this is admired and applauded.

The parallels between art and everyday life are not easily understood. Aesthetic awareness should be an essential ingredient to anyone involved in decision making and should have a direct influence on the outcome of their choice. This is because, art is the language and motivating force of intuitive and imaginative thought. The fact that they are aesthetically aware will affect their intuition and therefore the nature of their conclusion. In other words, being visually or aesthetically aware will broaden their scope for rational decision making.

Of course many people who are involved in non-routine work of any kind are using their intuitive capabilities without even realising it. If these capabilities are matured and developed through a broad aesthetic education from childhood until school-leaving age, then the benefits should be very evident in the community. In today's world of mass-communication, it would seem that an arts education is almost essential in order to interpret and analyse the various visual stimuli that are constantly presented to us. As Malcolm Ross puts it,

...art education is about the 'opening up of new realms of feeling' - at the level of the individual pupil who through art, can achieve a sympathetic understanding of, and communion with his own subjective world; and then at the level of the community as a whole and in terms of the affective aspect of the times we live in. (6)

In this dissertation I will attempt to identify the importance of a good visual arts education in the curriculum in Ireland and examine the current developments in schools and in society which provide opportunities to link the arts with our environment and promote a higher role for artistic and aesthetic subjects within the school system.

CHAPTER I

Historical and Hierarchical Influences

on Art in the Curriculum

When we come to consider the great civilizations of the past or to consider contemporary civilizations, different to our own, we often look to the artefacts, images and architecture of those societies to tell us about the particular qualities of mind and of feeling which characterised the people involved. (1)

A country always reflects on its artistic, literary and musical reputation with a great sense of pride. After all, this is where we have developed from, and as Martin Drury recognises in the above quotation, this is what we reflect on when we observe previous civilizations. Our national heritage must be cherished and protected and also be passed on to future generations.

Ireland, in common with many countries, has a rich history in the arts from the early stone age period right through to the present day. Our museums are filled with decorative, imaginative and practical pieces from many different generations which are there to be admired and appreciated. As I have mentioned, when we look at the history of any great civilisation we always tend to focus on the artefacts, architecture, literature and so forth. It is as if we are looking towards the arts almost subconsciously to

give us an indication of that civilisations's human identity. Why then if we are prepared to acknowledge this view, do we run into such difficulties in the formal development of our own artistic or creative sensibilities or those of generations to follow?

We preserve traditions readily but are not so willing to develop or create new ones. This tends to get isolated to a few "different" people, while the majority get on with the routine of their own lives, the immediate problems of everyday life and the desire to achieve. The struggle to possess as much as possible has blinded many people in relation to the need for artistic development. A common belief instilled in children from their parents is that they must succeed in the world. They must be seen to beat their contemporaries and this in turn is reflected in educational policies. These competitive beliefs and aspirations of parents for their offspring are nurtured and encouraged within the school. As Kathleen Lynch points out, "not only are students primed to be competent in the scientific, technological and commercial spheres, they are also primed to compete with others in the process".⁽²⁾ As regards the examination structure she goes on to say, "the final rewards of schooling - high grade credentials - are contingent on outcompeting others. It is in the process of evaluation that the structural conditions for competitive individualism are laid."⁽³⁾

Due to this level of competitiveness with scientific and techno-

logical subjects in our schools it is difficult to introduce art subjects as they are seen by society as more recreational pursuits. While competition is undoubtedly important there must be a balance created between scientific, technological and artistic subjects.

In terms of most contemporary educational systems, many factors from the past have hindered the development of art or aesthetic subjects. In the latter half of the eighteenth century many countries experienced significant developments in their educational policies. The industrial revolution affected the urgency and the direction education was to take in Britain. However other countries responded with different attitudes. In France, for example, changing values as a result of the French revolution began to link education and art as part of the growing romantic movement at the time.

In Ireland the industrial revolution was not significant and therefore not a propelling force behind educational developments. Britain's attempts to bind the Irish and British cultural and educational policies with 'the Act of Union' in 1800 were to meet with considerable scepticism and rejection from Irish society. Coolahan states, "Ireland was a difficult case in that strong animosities and suspicions existed between the denominations".⁽⁴⁾ This constant struggle in Ireland between the religious denominations seriously retarded any cultural activity. The fact that one denomination received financial

support from the British government towards developing an education system, meant instant animosity from other religious groups. Coolahan again points out "that each of the denominations disputed it, seeing the whole schooling process as an extension of pastoral care with religion interpenetrating all facets of education".⁽⁵⁾ As a result, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, different schools systems sprang up, almost all of them from religious backgrounds, without any influence or direction from any official state body.

In 1830 the Irish Member of Parliament, Daniel O'Connell, pressured the British government into taking action, and funding non-denominational educational systems. This was met with rejection from the church bodies in Ireland who were anxious that other methods be adopted, each of them gearing their policies towards their own creed. This general atmosphere both political and cultural at this time was not in any way favourable towards an arts education, yet it is from this period that our present education policies have evolved.

I deal briefly with the historical aspects of art education in this dissertation, as it is an immense area and separate to an extent from the topic I have chosen. However, in order to gain some background on an art education or the development of such, it is necessary to consider briefly the political and religious conflicts that Irish society went through during the nineteenth century. Both of these conflicts have been major hindrances to

cultural development within this country. The absence of an adequate arts education as noted in a number of national reports, has left a major gap in our creative or aesthetic attitudes.

...the neglect of the arts in Irish education has meant that whole generations have lost opportunity both of learning about their own artistic history and of acquiring the skills necessary to build upon it.⁽⁶⁾

Many political changes such as the declaration of the Irish Free State in 1921 were to have dramatic consequences on the education system. Previous to this of course was the payment-by-results system and the critical importance placed on the drive towards the acquisition of knowledge which put the arts in a position of neglect and disregard.

Throughout the nineteenth century it was a predominantly academic form of education. In 1922 the Irish Free State, inspired by the new cultural nationalistic tendencies, introduced a programme of cultural revival within the schools. However, the 3 R's still remained an important aspect in education with the Irish language now given significant priority. Coolahan notes that "with Irish coming to the fore within the education system it brought with it a revival of literature, history, mythology, games and music",⁽⁷⁾ thereby helping to open up the scope for arts in schools. The increased awareness was also becoming evident in society at large with a greater focus on drama, art, craft, design and literature. Around this time there emerged many dramatists, poets, writers and artists who made very significant contributions to the arts

in society, amongst these in relation to the visual arts were, for example, artists such as Jack B. Yeats and Paul Henry who have since inspired younger generations.

In 1924 Examinations were introduced providing, it was claimed, for more flexibility in course. Yet an obvious imbalance between art and music and the "academic subjects" was all too evident as shown in Table 1 taken from a survey of vocational schools in 1924.

TABLE 1

Subject Group	No. of Students	Percentage
Introductory	1,757	8%
Commerce and Languages	8,811	40%
Science (pure & applied)	3,757	18%
Handicraft	1,009	5%
Domestic Economy	5,354	24%
Art	916	4%
Other Subjects	204	1%
Total	21,808	100%

Source: Report of Commission on Technical Instruction P.18, Par.38
Taken from John Coolahan, Irish Education: History & Structure P.95

Such a pattern of imbalance has continued for decades with many schools further limited by financial restraints, and of course

the ethos of individual religions. This background of a very limited arts policy in our education system has naturally affected our society in its attitudes and tolerance toward art.

A common view within our society is that art is only useful in the context of a leisure activity or as a way of occupying our young people's spare time. as Martin Drury states: "that the arts are not a cluster of activities which 'round out' a student's education providing social, recreational and effective education". (8)

In my own experience in education today I constantly hear comments such as: "they only do art to keep them quiet" or "he's doing art because he's not really up to the the more academic subjects". There are a whole range of misconceptions within society in relation to art education. Seldom do you find people relating art in the school to a beneficial learning process. This is probably a direct result of the way they themselves considered art while still at school.

The Catholic Church in Ireland has played a large role in prescribing our current educational system which society has come to accepting as normal. The prescribed and long held view has continually affected educational policymaking, resulting in a one-sided and often narrow-minded view of educational values.

In my experience of going through a religious education system, there was little scope for students or people to take responsi-

bility for themselves or reach conclusions different from the norm, the essential qualities that a creative arts education would be promoting. In my view the student who blindly arrives at the correct conclusions having followed along a certain path of predetermined values is regarded as the "star" pupil, while anyone who reflects or actively explores all the possibilities is shunned or isolated from these academic students. The narrow minded view adopted in education is evident in this statement by Drury:

Irish education is not comfortable with the notion of people taking responsibility for their own lives. The dominant philosophical tradition behind Irish education is evangelisation and inculcation, and not liberation.⁽⁹⁾

With an educational system such as this, the arts will be in constant conflict with the almost obsessive values determined by the school. Naturally it would be easier to introduce a constructive arts syllabus in a multi-denominational school where there would be a cross-section of social values, and as a result a greater creative input by students coming from different backgrounds and interests. Another factor in individual church schools is that they are quite often single sex institutions, for example, Christian Brothers and Sisters of Mercy. As a result of this sex division and hierarchical control over morals and beliefs, students are quite often hindered in their development toward social and individual expression. This is further compounded by society in its expectations of the type of student each school will produce. The amount of control over the stu-

dent's development and consequent deployment in society must first be addressed, before any artistic expression can be achieved or even explored.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER I

1. Martin Drury "The Arts and Education":
Compass 20 p.10.
2. Kathleen Lynch The Hidden Curriculum (London: Falmer Press, 1989), p. 68.
3. Ibid., 68
4. John Coolahan, Irish Education: History and Structure (Co. Kildare, 1981) p.58.
5. Ibid., P.5.
6. Ciaran Benson, The Place of the Arts in Irish Education: Report of the Arts Councils Working Party on the Arts in Education, (Dublin: The Arts Council), p.22.
7. Coolahan. Irish Education, p.58.
8. Drury, "Arts and Education", p.24
9. Ibid., p.12

CHAPTER II

Art Education: The Development of Intuition and Perception.

The arts are the most powerful means of strengthening the perceptual component without which productive thinking is impossible in any field of endeavour. The neglect of the arts is only the most tangible symptom of the widespread unemployment of the senses in every field of academic study'. (1)

The evolution of any artistic practice is always associated with the ability to perceive and see, as Arnheim identifies in the above statement. Our whole system, today both in education and in society, is built around the concepts of learning, thinking, and analysing. In this system our natural intuitive capabilities are often neglected or allowed limited scope. This may be due to the belief that artists, writers and poets can be potentially dangerous to our society. As Drury remarks with regard to creative writing,

Literary and philosophical writings are the realm wherein language is at its most dangerous in the eyes of the thought-controllers. This is because in literature words are being used to create new ideas or to subvert old understandings. (2)

In my opinion the same can be said of visual art, : paintings or drawings may display images contrary to popular beliefs within our society resulting in outrage or disapproval. This in turn leads to censorship to which many artists and writers have been victims of in the past. In planning our educational system, the

policymakers are very much aware of the amount of scope they can give students and maybe they themselves are limited because of the attitudes of society. Art has the capability to open up students intuition and expression and this may be one of the underlying reasons for the cautious approach by society.

However, the school environment should be the ideal place to develop all faculties of the student to the maximum, therefore visual art and design should be very prominent in broadening and strengthening the intuitive and perceptive scope of each individual. These qualities of intuition and perception are natural to our everyday mode of thinking. Take for example, if we look at the word 'Box' we can immediately conjure up many different visual images directly relating to this word. Most of these are spontaneous, but influenced by memory.

Each day, every object or image that we see is not just received by the eyes and analysed in a direct fashion. It goes far beyond this and is manipulated and changed through various channels in our memories. Stone and Nielsen believe, that a "very minute amount of stimuli will activate many higher centers in our brain and this is where all our direct images and associations are formed"⁽³⁾ They are influenced by experience already in there, with our natural ability to perceive, and it is here that perception and direct thought are entwined. We cannot separate or isolate this process and this is what should be impressed upon our educators and planners. Art, literacy and numeracy exist and

are equally dependent upon each other.

When we look closely at the visual arts we can easily see that it is a means of expressing and understanding essentially a symbolic mode of language not a less important mode, as often seen by society, but a natural human response. The greatest need of any society is to simplify and understand that which is confused or complicated. This is a continuous process for every person through their lifetime. We naturally use reason with imagination to some extent each day we live, regardless of our work or position in society.

Human beings are distinguished from all other creatures in their ability to visualize experiences. When we speak to each other we are continually visualizing situations, words and images. Our complete world is built around this ability to visualize and communicate. In the school environment the objective must be to nurture this ability to visualize, so therefore it is very important to pay great attention to language, to words and to numbers. But the human mind needs some stimulations in order to relate all these words and numbers. This is why we need poetry, stories, dramatisation and pictures so as we can form associations within ourselves. This view is observed by Stone and Nielsen who find that "auditory and visual discrimination must be combined, so as to insure the adequate perceptions needed to progress in any subject." (4)

Each subject within our school curriculum is dependent on our perception of detail, therefore our ability to absorb and analyse these details will result in us becoming more knowledgeable on this subject. As I have highlighted earlier, art is among the most important elements in strengthening our perceptive and productive thoughts. This means art will benefit us, not just in the art class but in all subject areas.

Benjamin Franklin who was one of the pioneers in introducing an art programme within schools, saw it as an aid to America's practical needs. Art was incorporated in the curriculum mainly because of his materialistic values for his society. It was to be used strictly as a means to develop skills which would benefit the practical needs of his young nation. His personal vision of the significance of art was that,

All things have their season, and with young countries as with young men, you must curb their fancy to strengthen their judgement... to America, one schoolmaster is worth a dozen poets, and the invention of a machine or the improvement of an implement is of more importance than a masterpiece of Raphael. (5)

With an educational pioneer such as this, there was certainly little scope for the development of any aesthetic sensibilities, but great scope to develop an economic, materialistic society impoverished of any artistic or cultural identity. This is precisely what Franklin succeeded in doing and his nation turned into a rat race for wealth and power.

One of the strongest traditions of cultural and creative knowledge we find is amongst the North American Indians who were literally a breed apart from the emerging nation. Their values and knowledge were passed on through generations for the establishment of younger cultures who respected and maintained a strong creative tradition. Jung remarks that, "we have learned and have much to learn from contemporary primitive societies which provide us with a keyhole view to a wealth of material about art, myths and rituals, long since extinguished from modern society"(6)

Every society naturally will have different attitudes to art and what its functions are in relation to that society. Yet we could not find a society where some artistic functioning does not exist. Even if it is severely repressed it will survive to some extent in all of us. Each of us has individual personalities but share a common instinct in the ability to express ourselves and think imaginatively. Depending on whether this is repressed or encouraged it will reflect our aesthetic outlook and attitude to the arts. In my opinion the phrase that "art is not only creation, but also communication"(7) has great significance as I believe everyone is born with an innate creative faculty which, if developed, can only lead to a higher communication between that individual and society as a whole.

The intuitive and perceptive qualities which I have spoken of in this chapter should be the main channels for educational develop-

ment. It is only through these channels that we can give the most complete and fulfilling education to any student because the process is directed right at the centre of their imagination. The development and expansion of intuition and perception, in a creative way should be the focus of an arts education. From this hopefully will stem a society and social system that encourage the development of free creative human processes.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER II

1. Rudolf Arnheim, Visual Thinking (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p.3.
2. Martin Drury, "Arts and Education" p.14
3. David R. Stone, and Elwin C. Neilsen, Educational Psychology The Development of Teaching Skills, (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), p. 196.
4. Ibid. p. 159.
5. Elliot W. Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, (New York: MacMillan, 1972), p. 29.
6. Carl G. Jung, Man and His Symbols (London: Penguin, 1964), p. 129.
7. Herbert Read, The Philosophy of Modern Art (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 69.

CHAPTER III

Art Education In The Classroom

In his article "Arts and Education", Drury states that, "art, music, drama, dance and literature are not games, they are distinctive cultural languages developed from natural responses", (1) He goes on to say "the arts offer an extraordinary range of broadening and deepening the possibilities of human feeling, thinking and behaving" (2). In these statements we find the core of the arts as educational sources and how essential they must be in the development of human thought and reason. In this final chapter, I intend to discuss how far we have reached in accepting the above statement and how it is, or is not, in place in our current educational programme. I will also discuss my own approach in the classroom in the context of developing the students' creative responses.

Over the last fifty years there has been considerable increase and improvement in the quality of art education in all of our schools, both primary and post-primary. Very few schools remain where art of some form is not taught, but we find it has developed from technical and functional roots. In the early eighteenth century art emerged in schools in the form of drawing, and as Dick Field points out,

....when drawing first appeared in English schools in the eighteen-thirties and forties the intentions of the exercises set for students was at bottom to develop skill⁽³⁾

This was a very formal type of drawing involving judgement of line, distance, and direction. Students were encouraged to make freehand copies of very definite shapes. The main aim of the teaching of drawing was that this would lead to a definite goal and would be of practical benefit to the student.

The use of art in the practical sense or the use of art in expanding and developing a creative intuition has been an issue in schools since its introduction. Realistically, both are dependent on each other: in the course of making art we must be practical and while making this art, we must use our creative and aesthetic faculties.

This has led to confusion and argument within our schools. The art teacher is often in the position of trying to convince his fellow staff members involved in their own individual subjects, of the importance of art not merely in the practical sense but also as a form of intellectual development. Teachers in other individual subjects are taken as being essential by our educational system. We would never find a school without an English or Mathematics teacher, yet we find many schools without Art teachers. Likewise we rarely find English teachers teaching Mathematics, but we have come across on numerous occasions English or Religion teachers teaching art. This situation proves

art is still being taught as a practical or technical subject, otherwise teachers from other specialized subjects would simply not have the ability to teach art.

Any teacher can walk into a class and tell students to draw the objects he has set up on a table, and walk out when class is over. Is this what art education is about? If we were to put the same question to a science teacher regarding an experiment in a classroom situation, and ask if this was what science meant, the answer would surely be more complex. We can draw a parallel between art and science as subjects in schools. The science teacher has to teach a great deal more than just experiments in the laboratory. The experiments are just the practical elements of science in order to discover how exactly processes work. In art also, we create things in order to expand our understanding and creativity.

During this course, the Diploma for Art and Design Teachers, I have become acutely aware of methods of approach both to learning and teaching. The practical element of learning, how to draw, combined with the enhancement of the student's ability to see and be aware of what it is they are drawing or observing.

In the school where I teach, St. MacDara's in Templeogue, I use everyday items in an attempt to focus the student's observational skills. By teaching each of them to draw, paint or interpret the object in some fashion I am hoping to develop all their sensory

functions, thus helping them to explore and express personal qualities from their creative mind's. Seeing, Feeling and Expressing must be encouraged along with the actual act of making a picture or drawing. The channel of perception which I spoke of in Chapter Two, as being the main educational focus needs to be opened up in order for each individual student to discover him/herself. The art class should be one of the main venues for this type of development where continuous projects and experiments are necessary to get the student into a creative development mode.

With the senior classes, in the school, I introduced a class project covering a variety of approaches, using peppers as observational objects. It involved exploring the diverse qualities of line, shape and texture with tone, depth, and subtlety of tone within colour. It also investigated different types of media such as collage and other everyday materials in order to promote an awareness of the effects which can be achieved through different mediums. This project was undertaken over a period of six weeks. The peppers were cut in half so the students could explore and become aware of the internal structure. This gave them scope to see different shapes and segments which made up the pepper. It also gave them scope to express what they saw in a personal fashion, most of the drawings differed according to what each student focused on within the pepper. (Figures 1-12).

The main aim of this project was to get the students to closely

observe, in this case the pepper, and to draw what they saw rather than what they thought was there. The first exercise was to make a linear drawing (Figures 1,2,3) which would also develop eye and hand co-ordination, an essential ability for any student with which to express themselves. The linear drawings forced them to eliminate the pepper and to note the shapes they had created in breaking the pepper down to skeleton format. I suggested they utilise the full A2 size page so they could create composition and shape and avoid detail which would limit the purpose of the exercise. Some of the students had difficulty in adapting to this approach as they have grown used to their almost photographic image of how things looked. The enlargement of the pepper to A2 size meant almost losing the original identity. The end product of this lesson was that the pupils were surprised at how the object - i.e., the pepper, had changed from their idea of what a pepper looked like to a series of lines and shapes. It helped them view the pepper in a different way, and become more aware of the elements such as shape and line within everyday objects.

This project has combined the benefits of making or practising art with the promotion of a perceptive and expressive understanding among the students. In developing the project using the pepper, I introduced tone after the linear drawings. I suggested how they could use tone to create depth, light and shade. This exercise was to make them aware of form and how light is dispersed on an object (Figures 4,5,6). The earlier

linear drawings were beneficial for them, to now develop form and depth in their drawings.

In subsequent classes I introduced colour with regard to mixing different tones of colour using only the three primary colours, enhancing the students awareness of the different tonal values and hues of colour. (Figures 7,8,9) Again the paintings differed greatly as all the students used different approaches, and expressed themselves individually. In introducing collage (Fig. 10,11,12) the students were made aware of textures and surfaces they could create which were different from painting and drawing. They also became aware of the different colours that could be achieved by overlapping tissue paper.

By engaging the students in these practical exercises I am giving them the means which they can use to express themselves, while at the same time develop both their creative and technical capabilities. I have deliberately stuck to the same subject matter, i.e. the pepper, in order to make the students more aware of the different ways of seeing and also to confine their focus to one source so that their imaginative thinking power might become more developed.

As well as projects with painting and drawing, I am introducing students to printmaking in different forms and to areas such as puppetry, and mask-making. Many other areas can be incorporated within the art class such as pottery, photography, graphic de-

sign, and so on. In my opinion art is probably the foremost subject in school where any division with other areas can be overcome. In a wider sense art remains the truest form of expression as Dewey recognises when he states that...

....the expressions that constitute art are communicated in its pure and undefiled form. Art breaks through barriers that divide human beings, which are impermeable in ordinary association".⁽⁴⁾

In our society and in our schools it is often assumed that it is the responsibility of the teacher to provide the stimuli and inspiration for these students. There is considerable danger of falling into the trap of "assuming that the students do not possess their own ideas and imagination".⁽⁵⁾ The only thing they may not possess is the initial stimulation for their ideas and this is where the art teacher is necessary.

In the classroom situation, I use slides, visual aids, colour reproductions, overhead projector and so on as a means of sparking the students' ideas. Questions regarding colour, tone, shape or subject matter in these visual aids arouse imaginations and help students understand and appreciate art more creatively.

As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, there has been a significant increase and improvement in the quality of art education in recent years, also more emphasis is placed on relating art with other subjects within the current curriculum. The recently introduced Junior Certificate programme seems very aware

of this need and promotes a much broader and more unified curriculum. As stated in its aims and principles,

...the curriculum should provide a wide range of educational experiences within a supportive and formative environment. It should draw on the aesthetic and creative, the ethical, the linguistic, the mathematical, the physical, the scientific and the technological, the social, environmental and political and the spiritual domains".⁽⁶⁾

In my view the two most important words with regard to art in this quotation are 'the aesthetic' and 'creative'. Both of these words are relatively new to the curriculum and their mere recognition expands the whole possibilities of art in education. The combination of the mathematical, the aesthetic, the physical and the political suggests a committed and unified programme. This may be the start of an interesting and important development in our curriculum. However, it is still in the early stages and we will have to see how it will be implemented before we can either acknowledge or criticise its effectiveness. The implementation of skills such as "critical, evaluative and appreciative"⁽⁷⁾ can be difficult tasks for the teacher, but if the programme is in place and support given to it, then, we may see the emergence of a favourable environment which would finally place art in a central position within our educational environment.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER III

1. Martin Drury. " Arts and Education" p.18.
2. Ibid.
3. Field, Changes In Art Education, p.6
Routledge and Kagan 1970.
4. John Dewey Art As Experience, (New York: Capricorn Books,
1934). p. 244.
5. Dick Field, Changes In Art Education p.28
6. Department of Education, Junior Certificate: Art, Craft and
Design
Dublin: Department of Education N.D, p.18
7. Ibid., p. 5.

CONCLUSION

In the previous three chapters, I have discussed the position of art in our curriculum and the factors contributing to or influencing this position. I have briefly examined the historical aspects in order to gain some understanding of how we have arrived at the current situation. I have looked at education in general and how it has been structured with regard to the mode of examinations and grades. I have become aware of the damage and hindrance that early education policies caused to the development of our artistic sensibilities summarised by Coolahan "throughout the nineteenth century the education pursued was predominantly bookish".¹

The results of this can be seen in our recent artistic heritage and in our current society. Attitudes which looked on art as an unnecessary or 'a very peripheral' subject have stemmed from these early policies. As a result of these attitudes in our previous generations, many misconceptions have resulted as regards the value of art in schools. The treatment of art as a craft or technical subject is still very evident in many of our schools, when we speak of perception and creative ways, thinking or seeing, we are going way beyond the common understanding of our society. This is because of the technical mode in which art has been presented to people both during their school days and

afterwards.

I have examined the relevance of the art teacher and their often precarious position in relation to our educational system. Evidence of the lack of understanding and communication between the art teacher and even his contemporary staff members in schools is a symptom of the attitude toward art taken by society. Many art teachers are involved in a struggle against the confusion and division that exists both in education and in society with regard to art.

In researching this dissertation I have constantly observed the obvious neglect of art and artistic subjects within the curriculum. The current developments with the Junior Certificate faces many difficulties in educating and enhancing art awareness. However, in its promotion of creative, asethetic and social aspects of education it will undoubtedly encourage an appreciation of art. Perhaps by developing the psychological thinking behind art we can gradually alter the more common misconceptions in our society. It is therefore in the interests of not only the art teacher but all leaders within our community to convince people of the need for an art education within our curriculum, by removing art from its place of pride in our communities and displaying it as a fundamental means of each individual's self-discovery.

FOOTNOTES, CONCLUSION

1. Coolahan, Irish Education: Education History and Structure, p.12.



FIGURE 1, LINE DRAWING OF PEPPER.



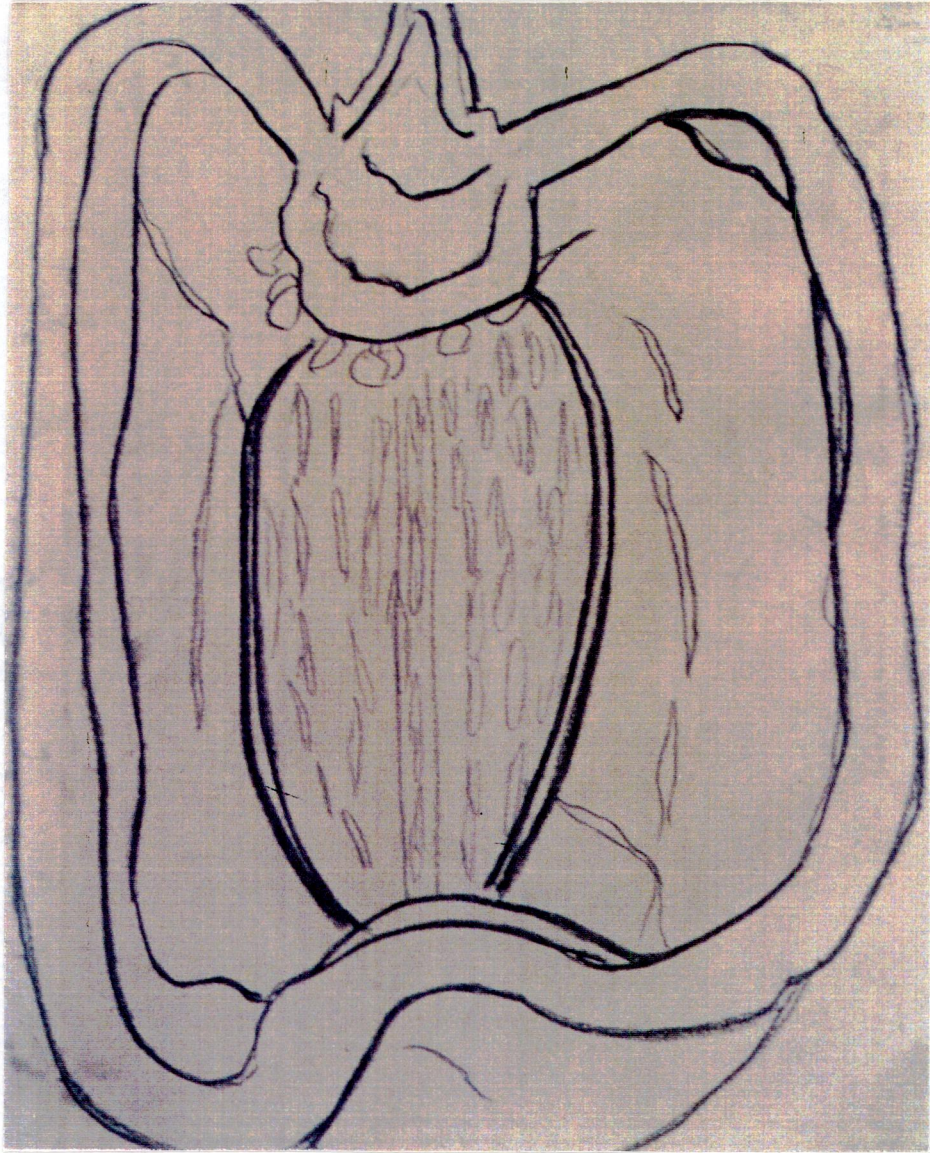


FIGURE 2, LINE DRAWING OF A PEPPER.





FIGURE 3. LINE DRAWING OF A PEPPER.



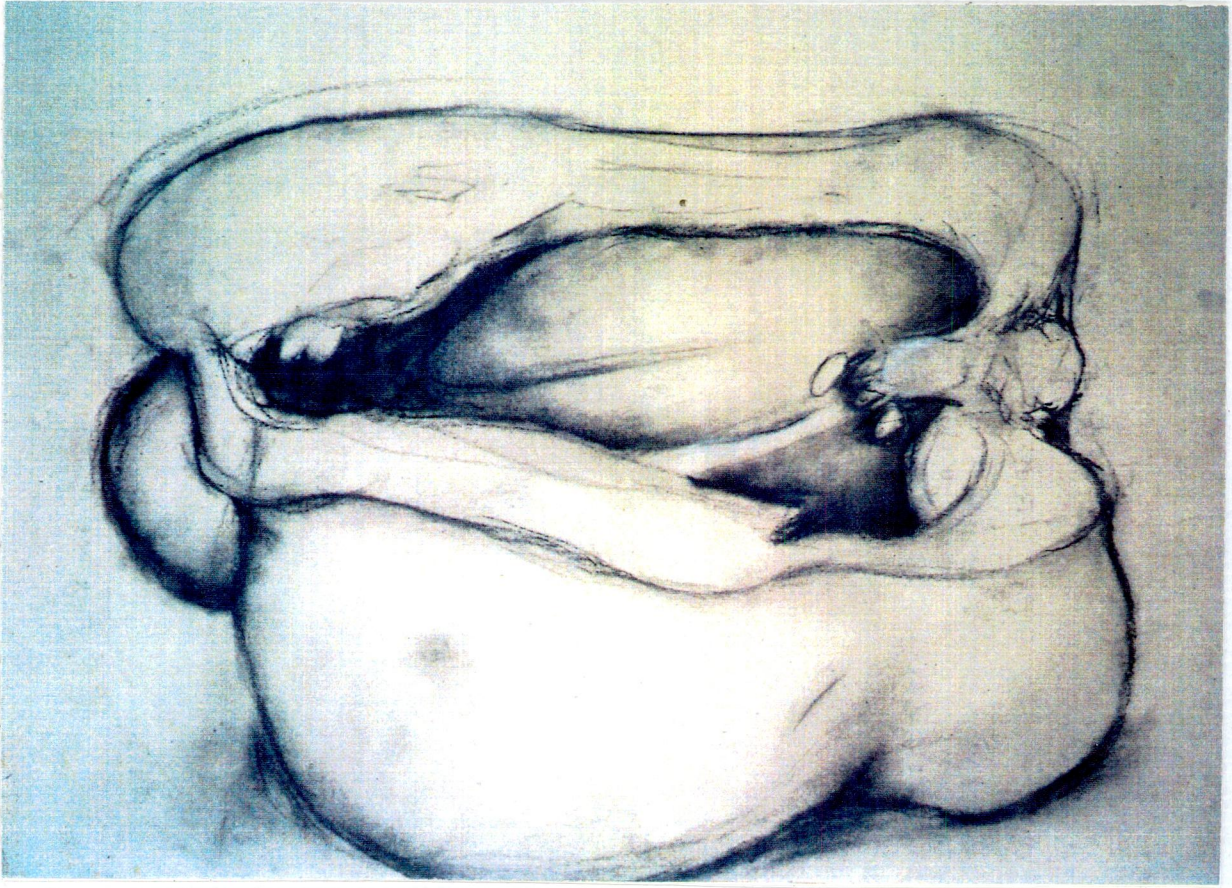


FIGURE 4, TONAL DRAWING OF A PEPPER.

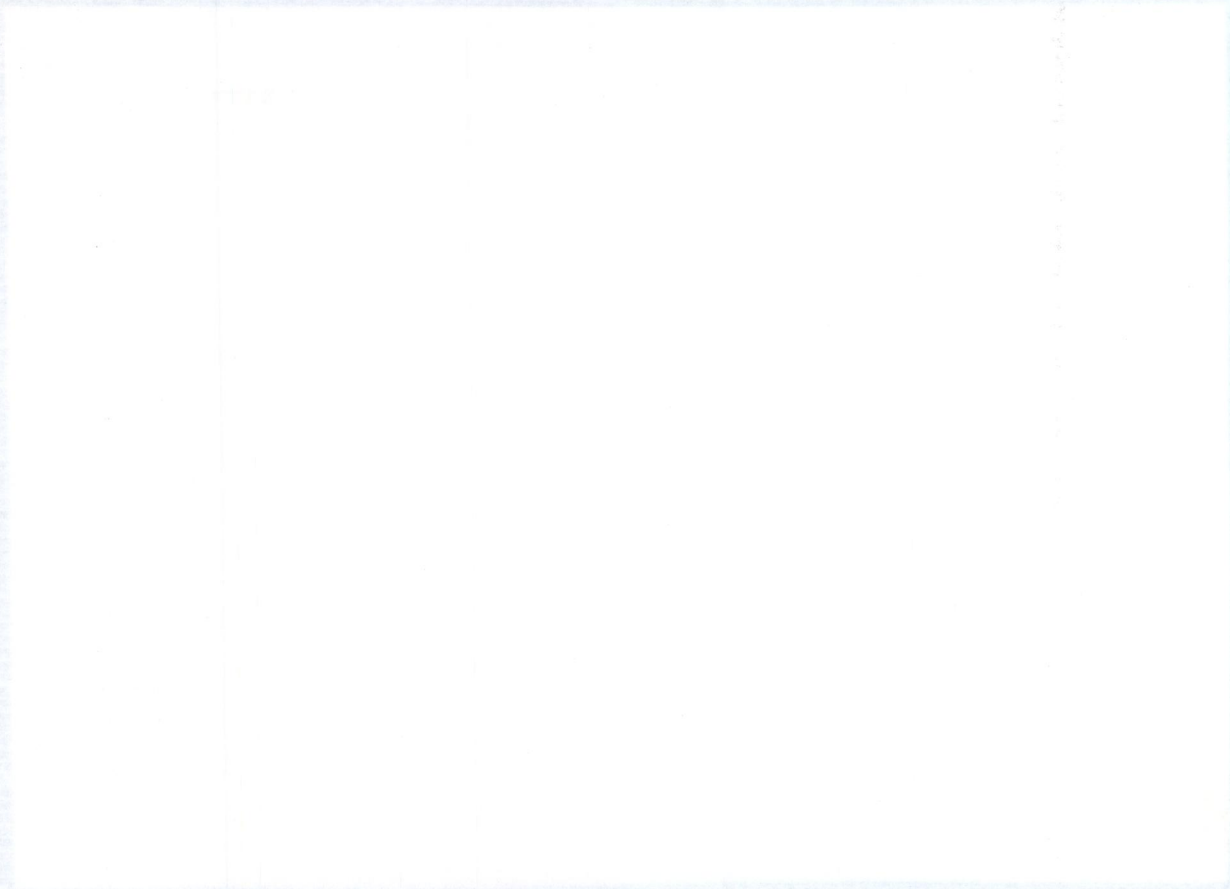




FIGURE 5. TONAL DRAWING OF A PEPPER



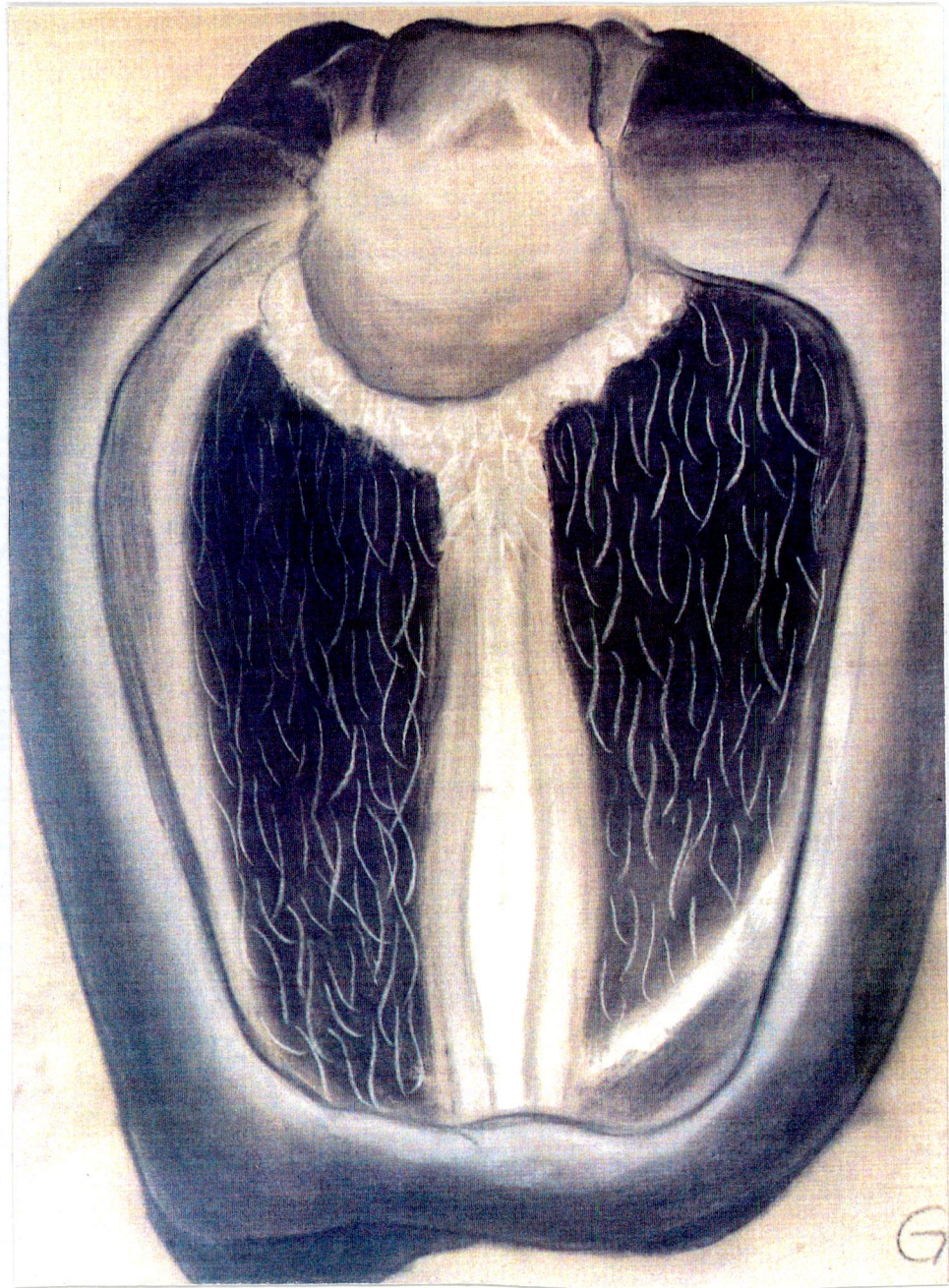


FIGURE 6, TONAL DRAWING OF A PEPPER.



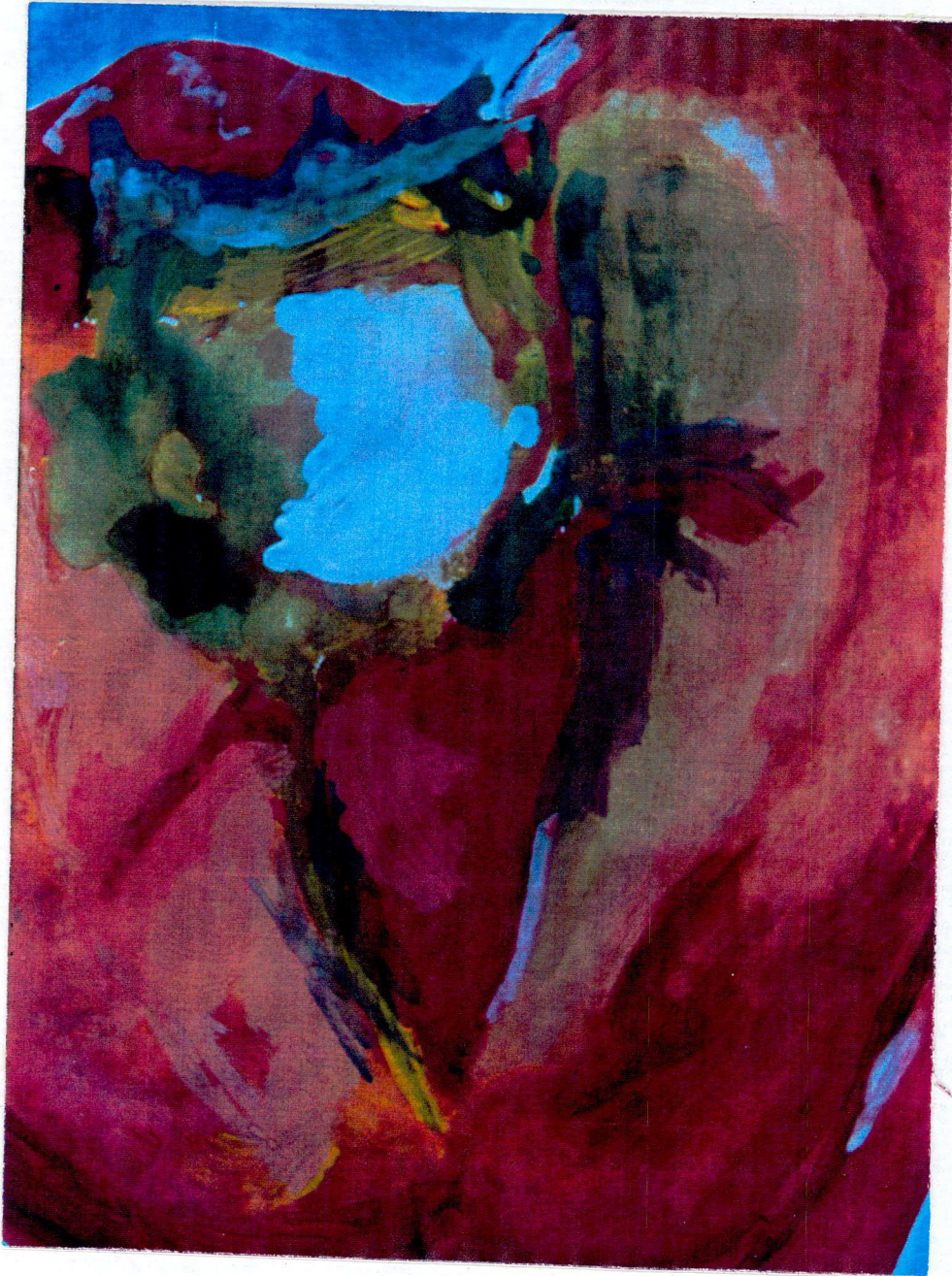
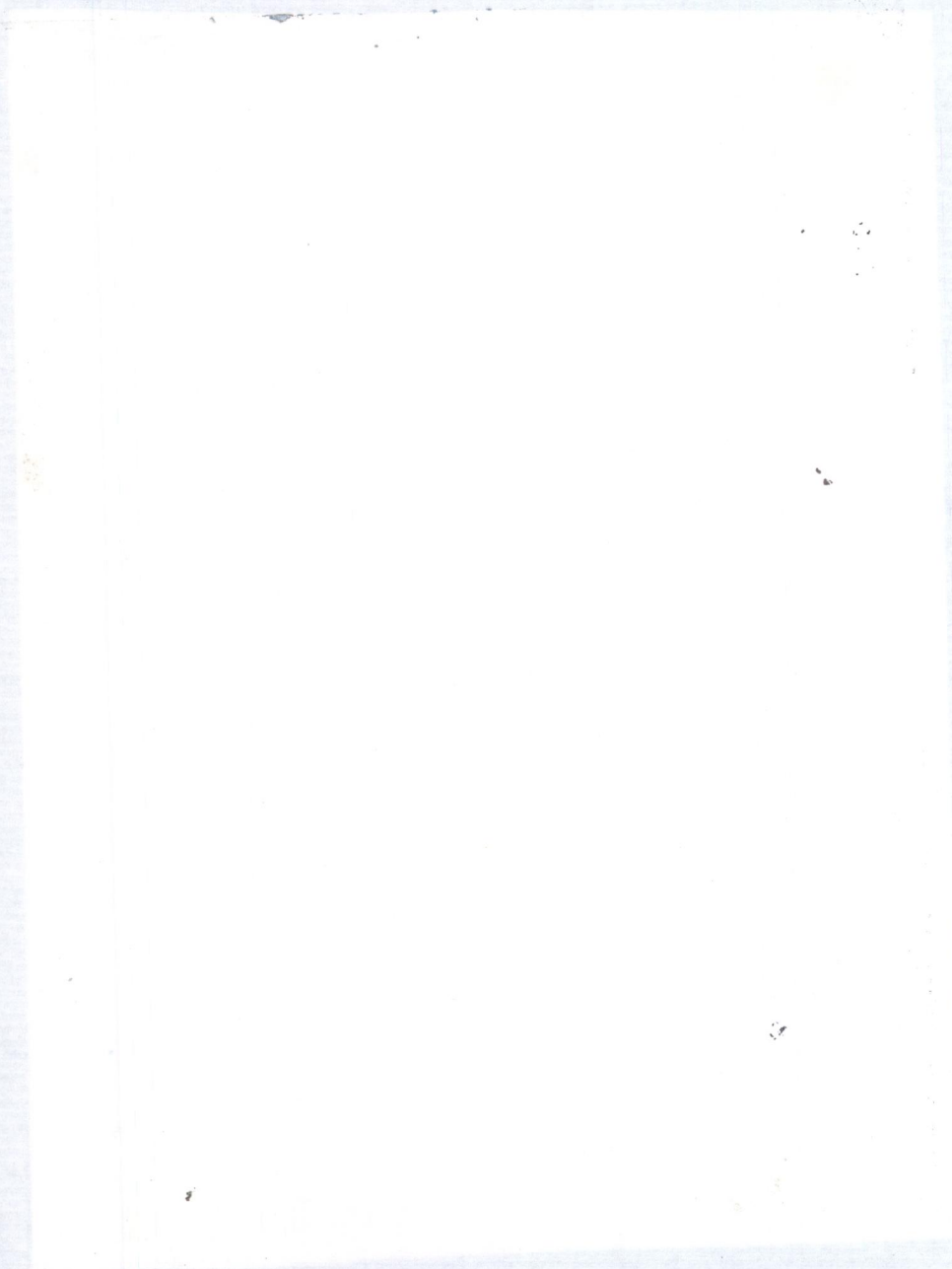


FIGURE 7. COLOUR STUDY OF A PEPPER.





FIGURE 8, STUDY OF A PEPPER.



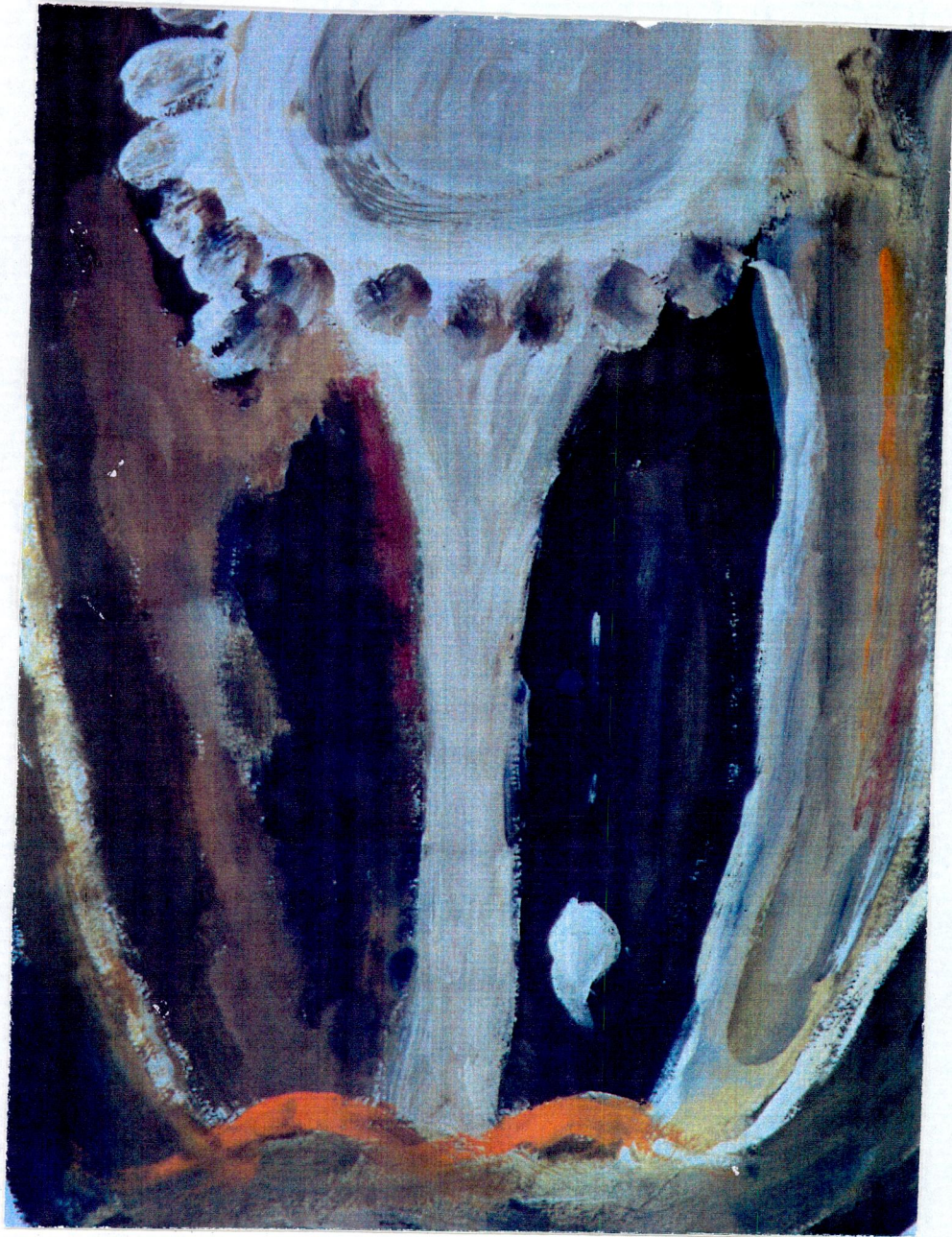
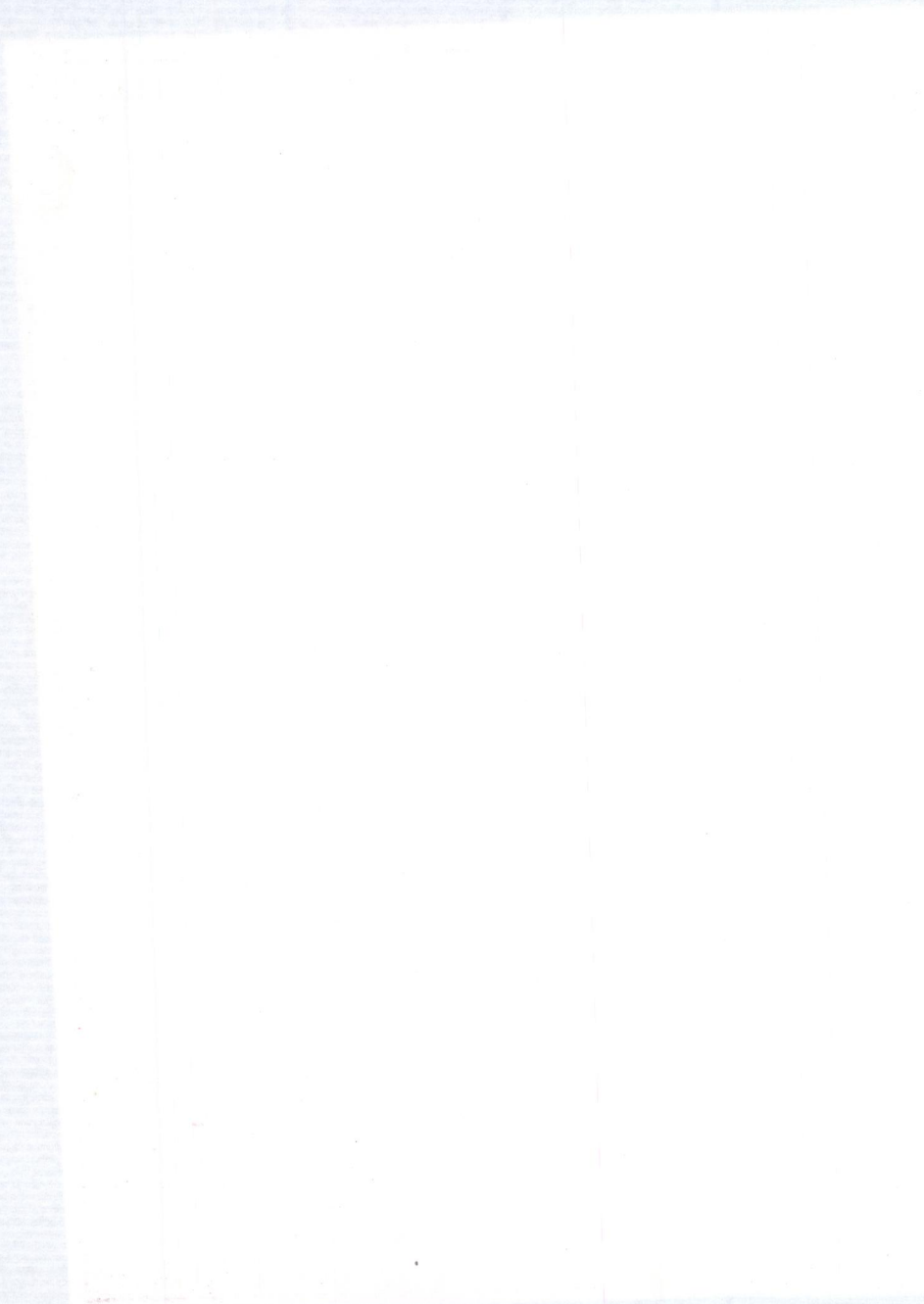


FIGURE 9, COLOUR STUDY OF A PEPPER.





FIGURE 10, COLLAGE OF A PEPPER.



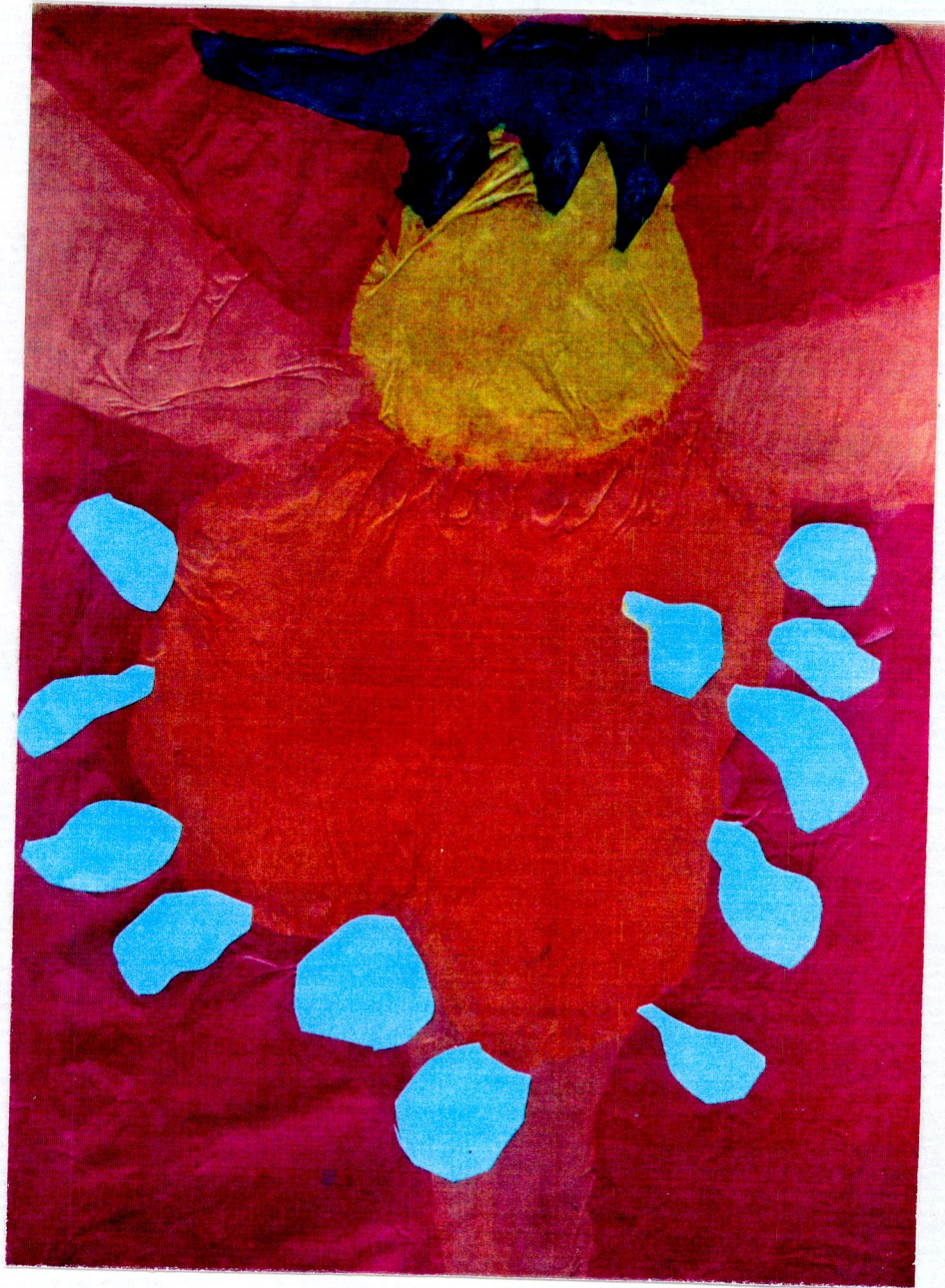


FIGURE 11, COLLAGE OF A PEPPER.



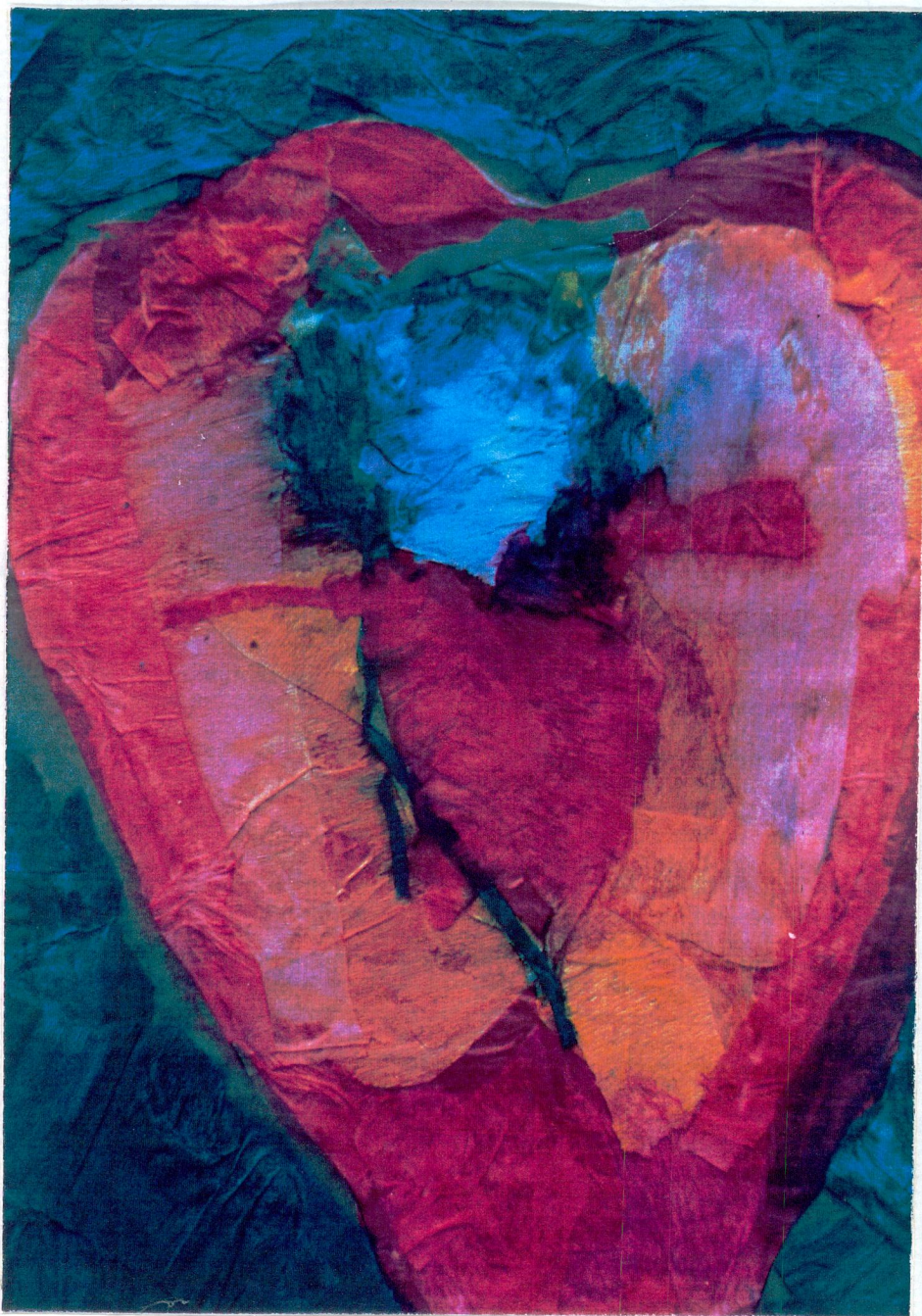
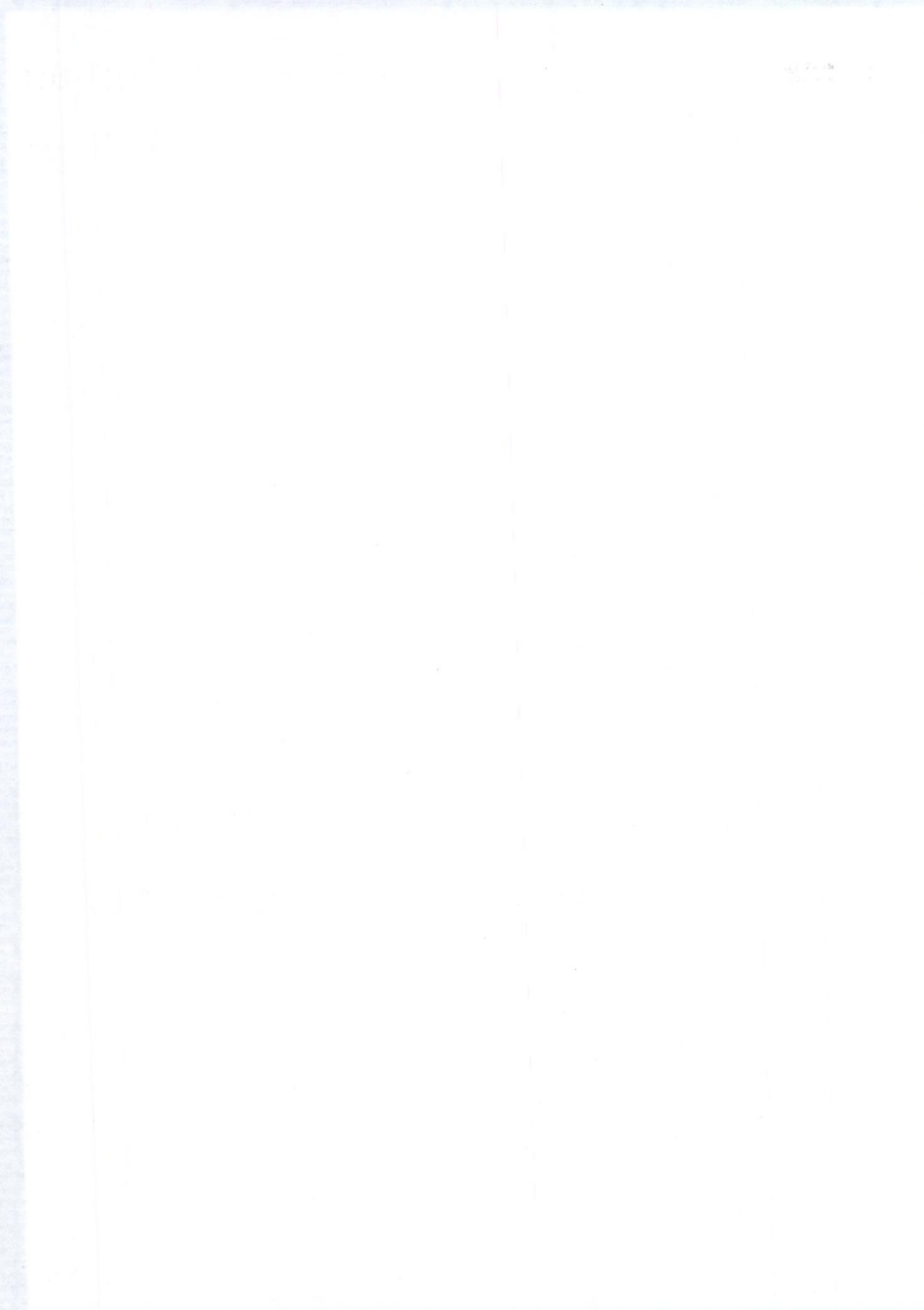


FIGURE 12, COLLAGE OF A PEPPER.



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