

T1044

NC 0020312 2



n0056963 NC

COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINÉ IS DEARTHA
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

"DEVELOPING A RATIONALE FOR VISUAL EDUCATION"

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education

in

Candidacy for the

DIPLOMA FOR ART AND DESIGN TEACHERS

by

Therese Hackett

JUNE 1992

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	v
Chapter	
1. THE LANGUAGE OF ART.....	1
11. THE FUNCTION OF THE VISUAL ARTS IN SCHOOLS.....	6
Art as a form of Intelligence.	
111. ART AS A MEANS OF TRANSMITTING OUR HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY VISUAL CULTURE.....	29
1V. THE POSITION OF THE ARTS IN EDUCATION.....	45
CONCLUSION.....	51
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	53

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 2

1. Observational drawing showing texture of a section of a bone, size A2, pencil.
2. Observational drawing showing texture of a section of a shell.
3. Two examples of pupils sgraffito.
4. Peter cutting his design out of lino.
5. Sequential stages of lino print process, observational drawing, design section, sgraffito and lino cut.
6. Observational drawing of driftwood, sgraffito and lino cut.
7. Applying ink onto lino with roller.
8. Registering and printing.
9. A selection of the pupils' lino prints.
10. Eamonn mounting his print.
11. Two lino prints mounted.
12. An example of further application of lino printing.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 3

1. Painted animals on the roof of the cave of Lascaux (France).
2. As above.
3. The large circular mound, which covers the Megalithic tomb, Newgrange Co. Meath.
4. Entrance to passage grave, showing entrance stone.
5. The chamber roof inside the tomb, showing corbal vaulting.
6. Inside the tomb, showing decoration on one of the walls.
7. Tri-spiral. Close-up of decoration on wall of tomb.
8. Decorated stone at back of the mound.
9. Detail of back stone.
10. Detail of back stone showing spirals.

INTRODUCTION

The visual arts as taught in second level education in Ireland come under the name of Art, Craft, and Design at junior cycle level, and art, (including Crafts) at senior cycle. These interdependent disciplines, in my view are invaluable to the young person's education. Through the visual arts the young person learns to think and communicate ideas and feelings in a visual way using a variety of materials. A visual arts education caters for the development of the whole person. (1) It fosters intellectual development problem solving activities, analytical skills and perceptual skills. A visual arts education fosters the development of psycho-motor skills which includes hand-eye co-ordination. A visual arts education encourages the development of visual expression of the young person's attitudes, beliefs and values. In other words the development of head, hands and heart are catered for through a visual arts education.(2)

This dissertation aims to develop a rationale for the visual arts in education, by considering some of the arguments put forward in support of the unique role art, craft and design education plays in a balanced curriculum. The first three chapters will consider these arguments which have been put forward in favour of art, craft and design in post-primary education.. In my final chapter I examine the present position of the visual arts in the second level curriculum in

Ireland and other western countries.

I wish to note that the visual arts come under the broader heading of the arts. The arts include music, drama, literature, film, dance and the visual arts. Each have their own qualities and values. Although I believe they have shared values, it is for this reason that I sometimes refer to the arts in the following chapters. I should also like to note that the term visual arts can be used to include drama, dance and film but in this dissertation it refers only to art, craft, and design.

FOOTNOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

1. Curriculum and Examinations Board, Discussion Paper: The Arts in Education, (Dublin: CEB, 1985).
2. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, The Junior Certificate: Art, Craft, Design: (Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and The Department of Education, n.d).p.1.

CHAPTER 1

THE LANGUAGE OF ART

We have finally isolated art as the rarest flower of human expression, whereas it should be a language essential to each of us, the creation of the ordinary man in his contact with life, bringing clarity and recognition into the fog and chaos of existence and significance to what is drab and commonplace.(1)

These words written by Barclay-Russell in the nineteen-forties, are still relevant today: art should be a language essential to every person but unfortunately not every person is educated to use this language. In my view, one of the strongest arguments for the visual arts in education is that they are intrinsically important symbol systems or languages. Education needs the visual arts because they communicate a different and unique aspect of the person, which no other numerical or verbal language can achieve.(2). This view is lent further support by Benson who says that,

The visual artist or musician does not seek to communicate in the modes that are most familiar to children i.e., words or perhaps numbers. The child looking at, or even reading a work of art needs to develop the necessary sensitivities to derive the meaning and intentions of the artist. (3)

These "sensitivities" or languages can be developed through a visual arts education. At best these languages can enrich a person's life for the good of himself and that of society. Neglecting this side of education is depriving people from an enriching and unique "form of knowing". (4) The aim of education should be to give young people a broad educational foundation including an education in the arts. (5)

In 1985 the Curriculum and Examinations Board (CEB) published The Arts in Education, a discussion paper on the arts in Irish education at both, primary and post-primary levels. This paper proposes that "most human interaction takes place in and through symbol systems. Human meaning is created and embodied in symbols, and it is the agreed social use of symbol systems that leads to shared meaning." (6) It states that this key term symbol is required in the formulation, apprehension and communication of meaning. This invention and sharing of meaning are necessities for personal and social development. The two symbol systems which are most dominant in Irish education are verbal and numerical. Many other symbol systems exist, such as the arts. The CEB believe that if young Irish people are to become "fully productive and understanding" members of our culture, they need to understand, form and communicate in and through other symbol systems than words and numbers. (7)

Martin Drury, the former education officer of the Arts Council agrees with this when he said, "The language of our schooling is impoverished because of its virtual exclusion of the image in favour of the word and number". (8) Through a visual arts education the young person becomes familiar with another vital and unique language. This language enables the individual to become an active and meaningful member of society.

In relation to this Barclay-Russell states in the beliefs of the Society for Education Through Art that,

All works of art are translations of experience in a symbolic form. It is the symbolic quality and that act of summary in a work of art which is illuminating, inspiring and potent and which constitutes its message as an act of communication. (9)

It is through a work of art that the creator and the viewer are affected. The language of art differs from verbal and numerical languages, and therefore communicates a completely different aspect of the person. Failure of the educational institutions to recognise this leads to an individual's incompleteness. Eisner sums this up in Educating Artistic Vision when he argues that,

An educational program that neglects the qualitative aspects of intelligence, one that side-steps the metaphorical and affective side of life, is only half an education at best. At worst it leads to men callused to the insights of the visually poetic in life. (10)

If a young person is deprived of visual arts education they will not learn the language of art. This language is very important and necessary for the good of the individual and society. Such a language of expression, Barclay-Russell believes, can satisfy the needs of certain parts of the mind where no other language is valid or adequate for the expression of people's imagination and emotions. It is only through learning and using this language that the mind can be properly creative and instructive. After all, the basis of the life process is in the urge to create and in the knowledge of the means by which to achieve creation. (11)

Barclay-Russell goes on to say that,

Education must see above all else that it enables its pupils to make this discovery and that it sends them into the world with intergrated minds, conscious of a creative purpose. (12)

Through the language of art the pupils thoughts, ideas and emotions can be given visual form. Through this visual form the pupil is expressing himself and communicating with the viewer. Therefore, in making and receiving art, the individual uses a language which is not required in any other area in the school curriculum. I believe that art should be part of every person's education as another language through which expression, understanding and communication can be gained. This is an important reason for a visual arts education. Another important purpose of a visual arts education is to facilitate the creative development of the child which can form part of a personal fulfilment. This purpose will be discussed in my next chapter.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

1. David Thistlewood, "Imagination Need Not Die, Revolution in Child Art 1930-1960", (no access to publication details) p.6.
2. Curriculum and Examination Board, Discussion Paper: The Arts in Education, (Dublin: CEB, 1985), p.6.
3. Ciaran Benson, The Place of the Arts in Irish Education: Report of the Arts Council's Working Party on the Arts in Education, (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1979), p.22.
4. C.E.B., Arts in Education, p.6.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. The Arts Council, Promoting Art in Schools, (Dublin: The Arts Council, n.d.), p.1.
9. Alexander Barclay-Russell, "A Report on the beliefs of the Society for Education Through Art", (no access to publication details, n.d.), p.4.
10. Elliot Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1972) p.v.
11. A. Barclay-Russell, "The Significance of Children's Art for Society", a lecture by Alexander Barclay-Russell at Manchester Art Gallery, 16 November 1936, (no access to publication details) p.16.
12. Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE VISUAL ARTS IN SCHOOLS

When the visual arts are used as a means to expression and as a way of responding to life, the experience of this forms part of a young person's development. Drawing, designing, painting or construction are complex processes in which young people can bring together varied elements of their experiences, to create an entirety that is new and meaningful for them. This work conveys the child's response to his environment in a visual form. It expresses a facet of the child's personality that cannot be expressed in any other way or in any other area of the curriculum.(1)

Eisner points out that during a class in art there is a continuing process of assimilation and projection. Each pupil produces an individual piece of work, which suggests that the visual arts are student specific.(2) In the field of art a student specific outcome is favoured because the works of art produced, as Eisner puts it, "are not simply a function of what is taught but a function of the particular intellectual characteristics of the student."(3) Therefore a pupil's own background and abilities are instrumental in constructing meanings that are specific to such a background or set of abilities.(4)

This was illustrated in my own teaching experience in St. Aidan's C.B.S., Whitehall, Dublin, which is a boys school. The class involved is third year and the pupils are of mixed

ability. The aim of the art class, over a period of eight weeks, was to produce a lino print. The brief required that the lino print should be designed from observational drawings of still life. The still life was based on elements of the seashore, such as stones, driftwood, shells, seaweed, etc..

The following sequence of lessons took place:-

4 November 1991

This introductory lesson began with a discussion on the project theme, the reasons for its selection, its relevance to the students' lives and education. Visual aids were shown, which consisted of slides and colour reproductions of artists, such as Botticelli, Cristofano Allori, Joan Miro, and Frank Lloyd Wright, who have used the seashore as a theme. An explanation of aims of the project was given to the pupils. I then introduced the content of the first class which was an observational drawing of the still life, using pencils and cartridge paper.

The learning objectives were:-

1. To develop a personal response to the chosen objects.
2. To develop observational skills.
3. To encourage the students to draw for communication.

18 November 1991

The content of this lesson involved making a viewfinder; using the viewfinder to isolate a section of one of the objects of the still life, drawing this section on to A2 size paper with pencil, emphasising line and texture. See Figs. 1-2.

The learning objectives were:-

1. The pupils discover how to make a viewfinder.
2. To discover how and why we use a viewfinder.
3. To encourage pupils to be selective and critical when choosing an area to draw.
4. To develop observational skills.
5. To create an awareness of texture and line in natural forms.

25 November 1991.

The pupils had never used lino for printing with, so I felt at this stage it was important for them to discover the qualities that can be achieved using lino. This class began with reproductions of relief prints from the German Expressionists such as Emil Nolde, Karl Schmidt Rottluff and Kathe Kollwitz. I then proceeded with a demonstration of lino cutting showing how the different gouges give different marks. A visual aid was put on the wall in the room to show this. The pupils were then given a small piece of lino to discover the properties of the medium. The pupils did so with great enthusiasm, as it was a new medium to them. They seemed to enjoy the cutting and printing.

The learning objectives were:-

1. To develop pupils manipulation and control of a new medium.
2. To show how the introduction of another medium can help pupils to express line and texture.

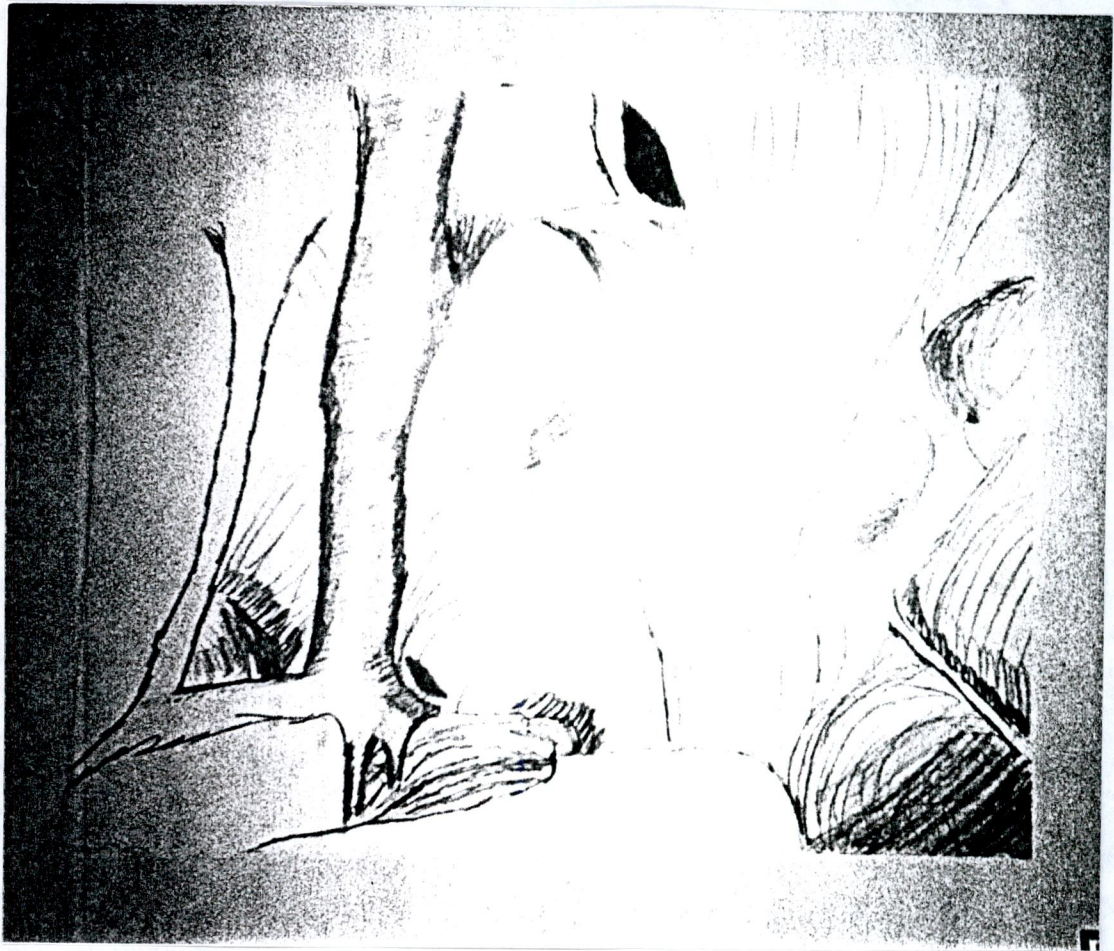
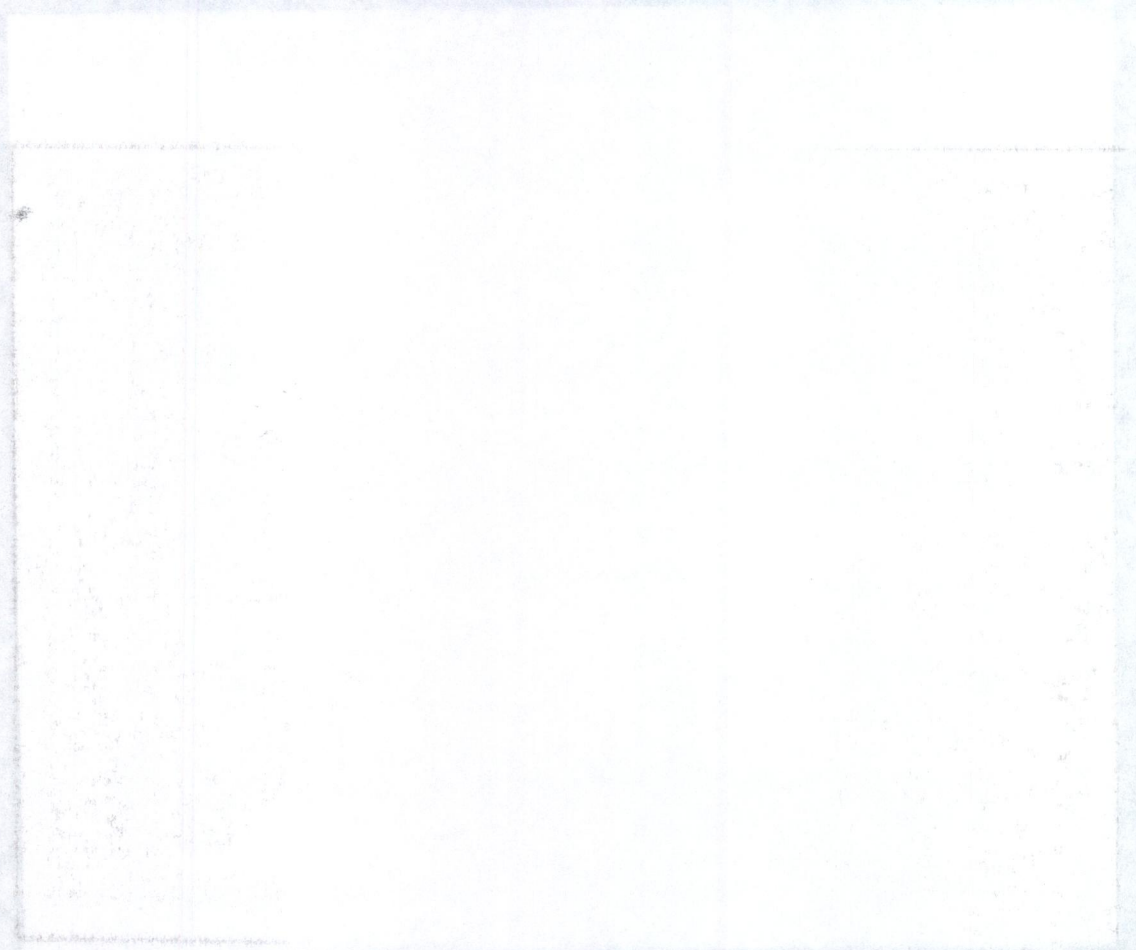


Fig. 1. Observational drawing showing texture of a section of a bone, size A2, Pencil.



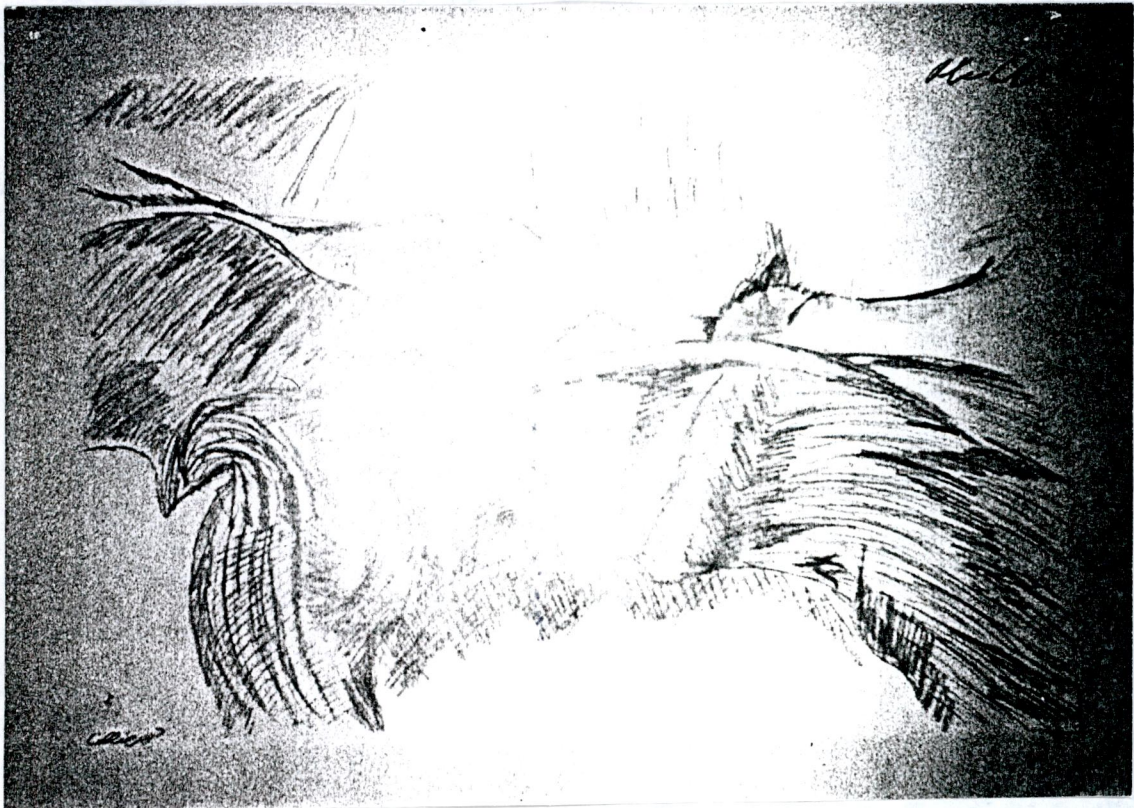


Fig. 2. Observational drawing showing texture of a section of a shell.



2 December 1991

This class was the beginning of the design stage for the pupils' lino prints. They began by taking a section of drawings from the class of 18 November 1991. They used a viewfinder the same shape and size as the piece of lino. They began designing by deciding which area of the drawing they wanted to print. They did so by shading in those areas. The end design had positive and negative shapes.

The learning objectives were:-

1. To develop problem-solving skills with pupils making decisions as to which areas they wanted to print.
2. To clarify ideas through the use of working drawings.
3. To encourage pupils to be selective and critical when designing.

9 December 1991

For this lesson I introduced the pupils to the technique of sgraffito as a support study for their designs. The aim of this lesson was to familiarise the pupil with the concept of the elimination process of printing. See Fig. 3.

The Learning Objectives were:-

1. To introduce pupils to the technique of sgraffito.
2. To use sgraffito as a way of planning designs.
3. To develop an awareness of positive and negative shapes.

16 December 1991.

This was the last class before the Christmas holidays. Most students were ready to cut out their designs from the lino. See Fig. 4.

The learning objectives were:-

1. To develop control of lino-cutting tools.
2. To develop an awareness of positive and negative shapes.
3. To become familiar with the delimitation process of lino printing.

Figs. 5 and 6 show the sequential stages leading up to lino printing.

13 January 1992.

This lesson consisted of finishing off the lino cutting and printing. I gave a demonstration of how to achieve a good print and how to register prints. Figs. 7 and 8 show the pupils rolling the ink onto the lino and registering print. Fig. 9 shows a selection of four lino prints.

The learning objectives were:-

1. To discover how to use lino for printing.
2. To create an awareness of relief printing process.
3. To develop an awareness of positive and negative shapes.
4. To develop the control of printing the process.
5. To develop an awareness of what constitutes a good or poor print.
6. To bring the process of designing from observational drawing into its final phase.

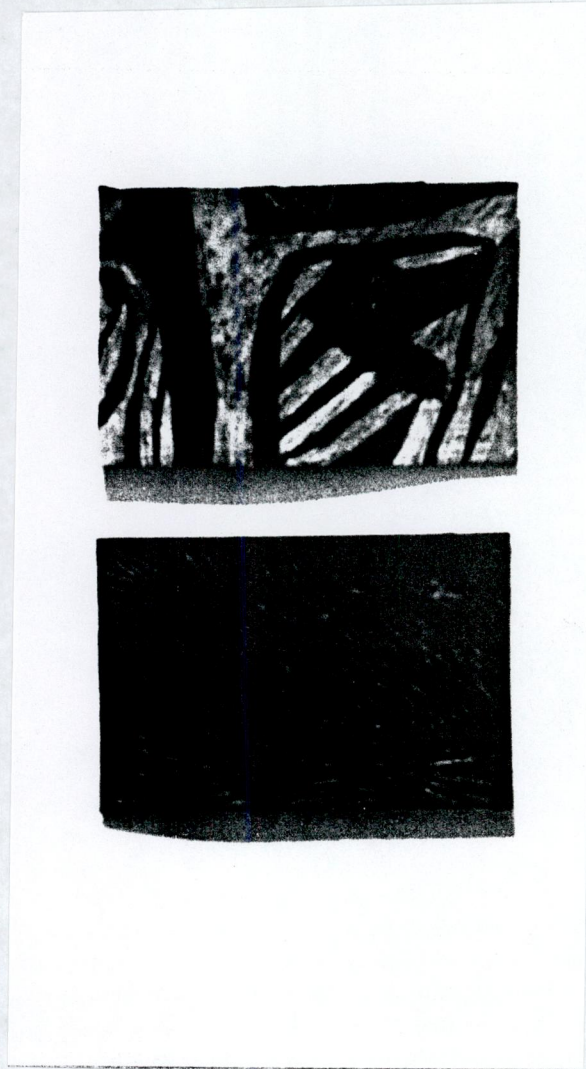
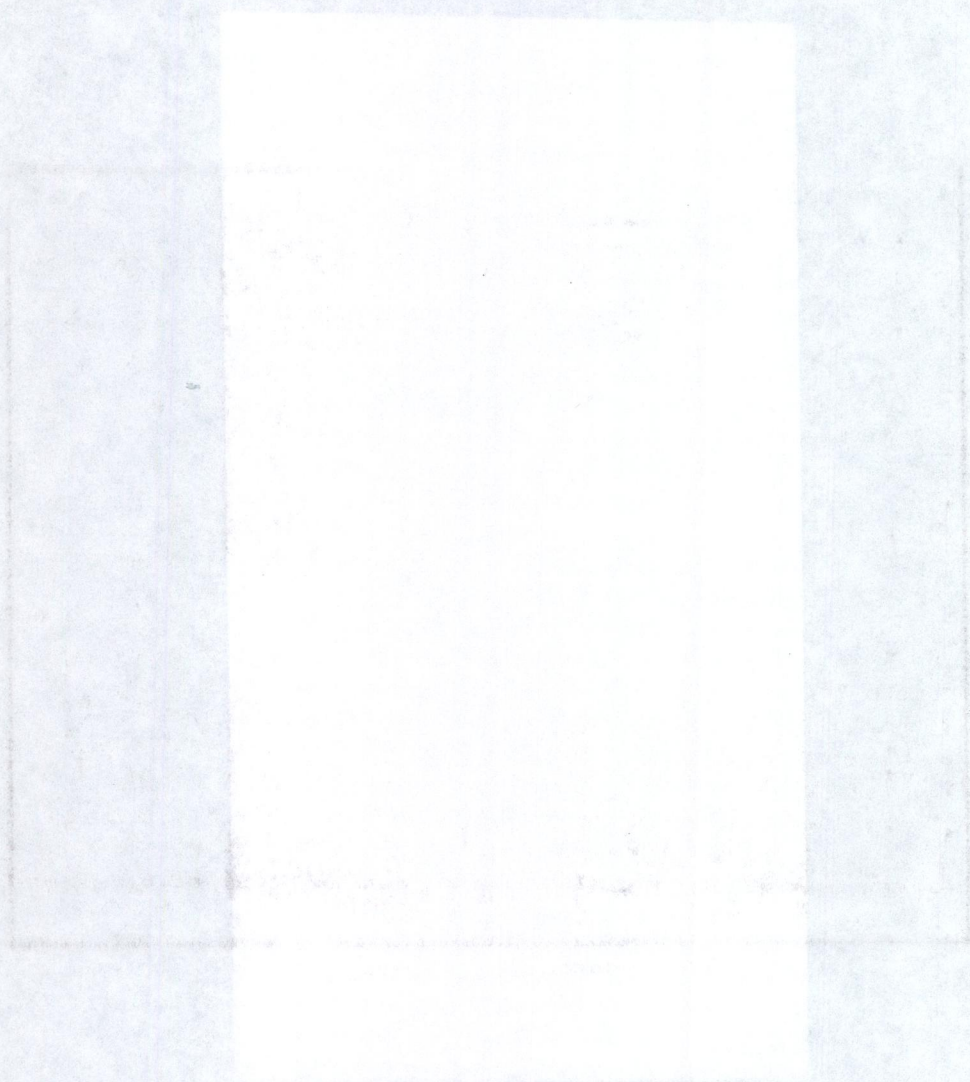


Fig. 3. Two examples of pupils' sgraffito.



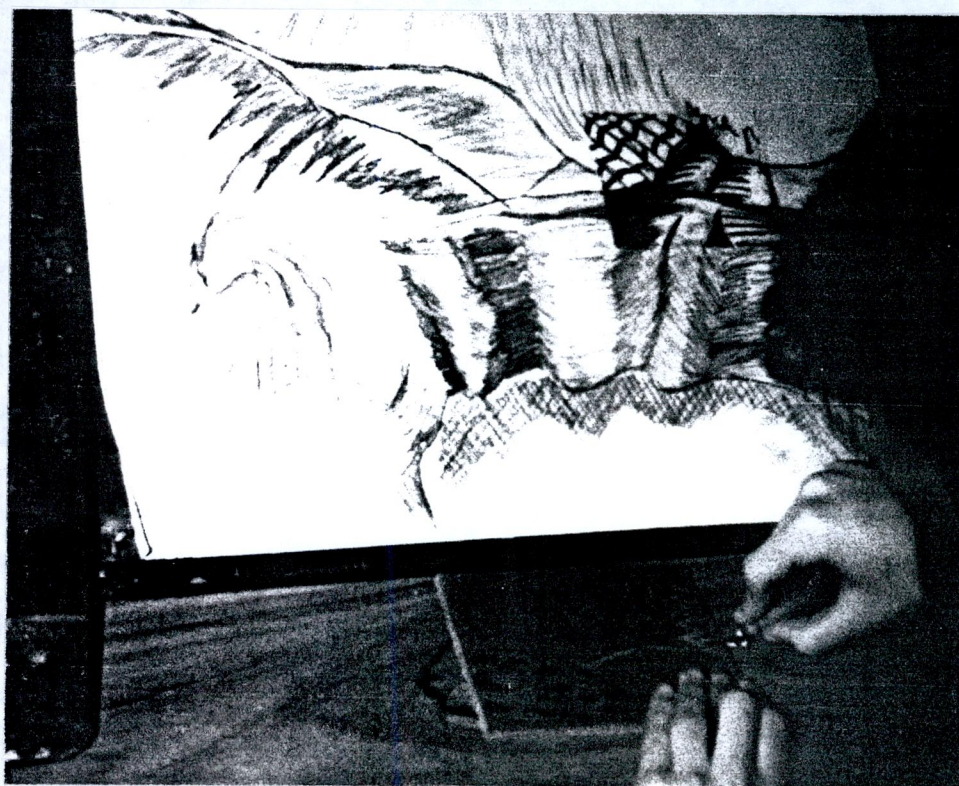


Fig. 4. Peter cutting his design out of lino.



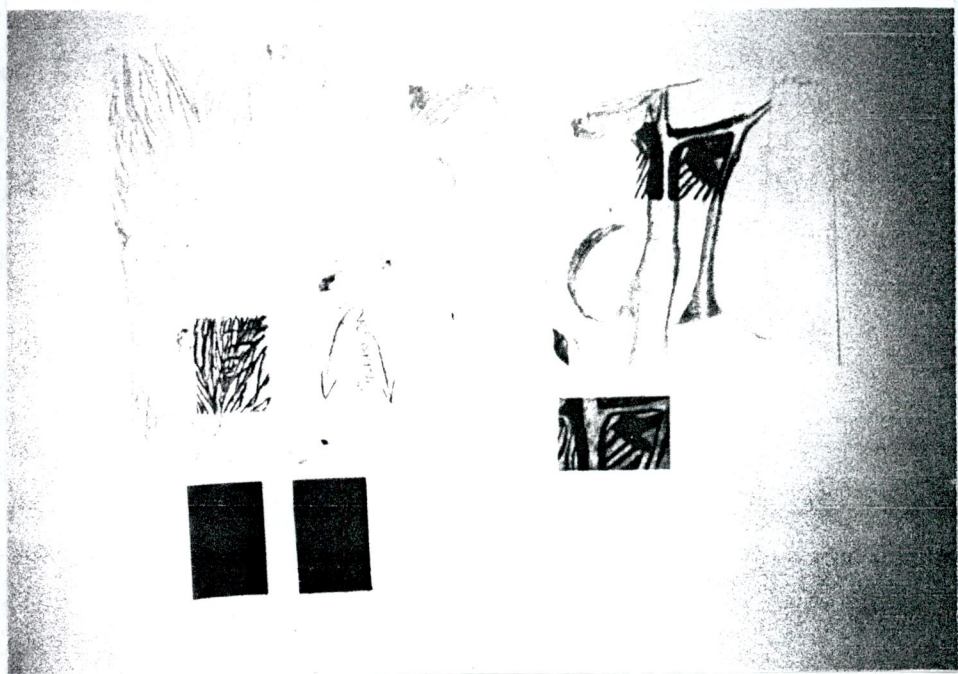


Fig. 5. Sequential stages of lino print process, observational drawing, design section, sgraffito and lino cut.



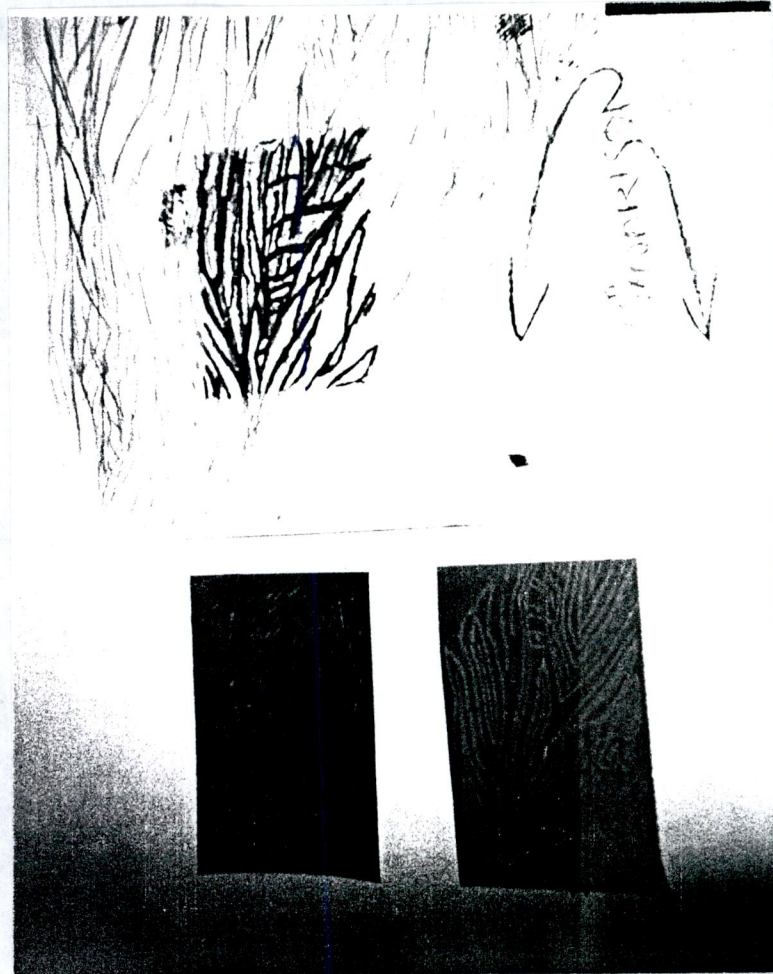
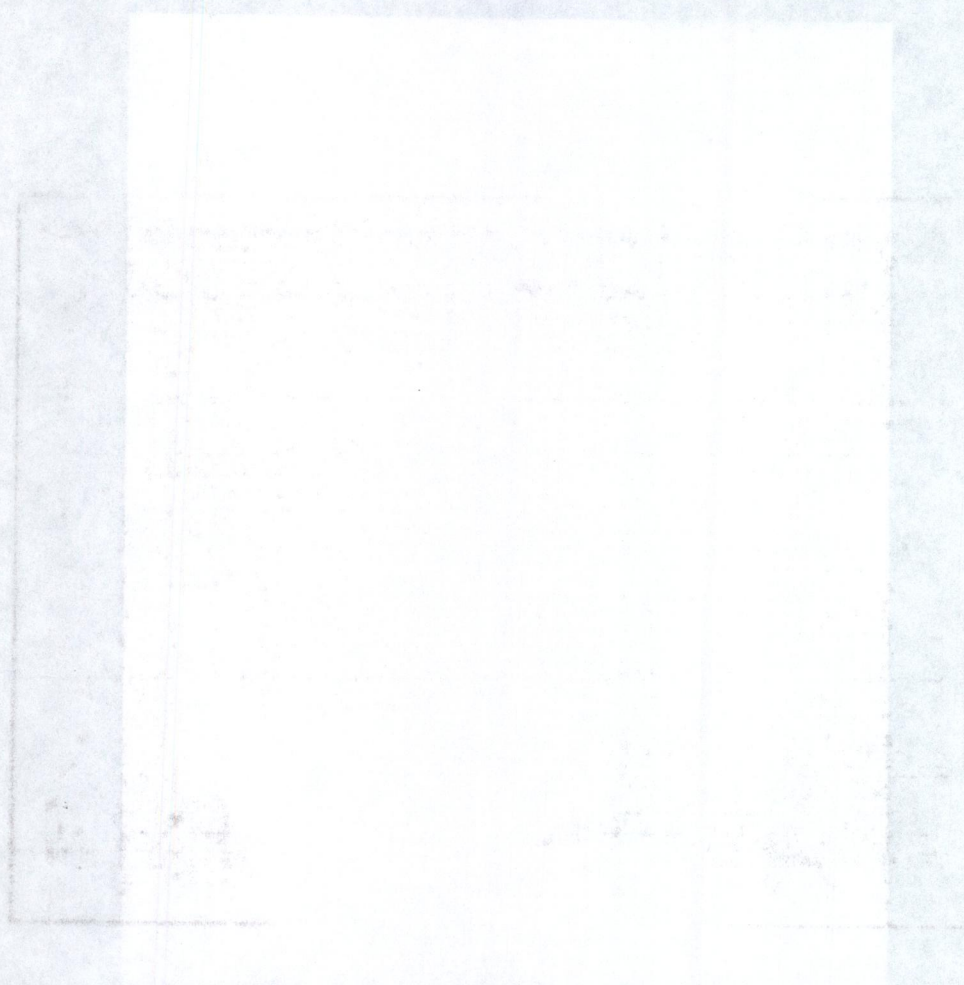


Fig. 6. Observational drawing of driftwood.
Sgraffito and lino cut.



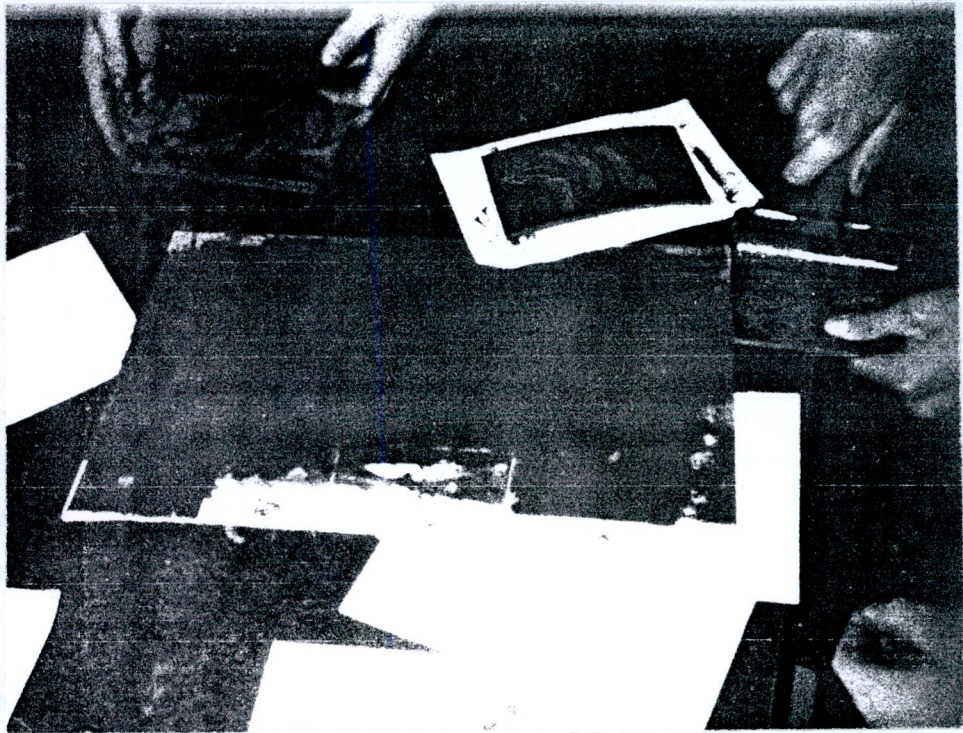
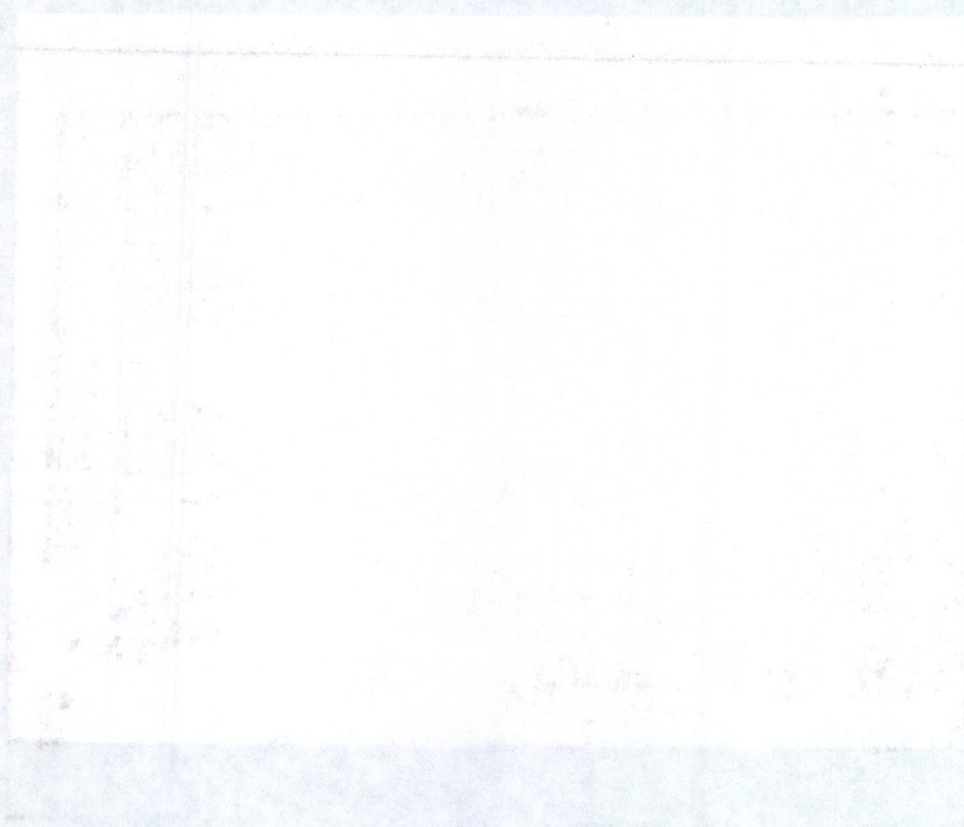


Fig. 7. Applying ink onto lino with bayer/roller.



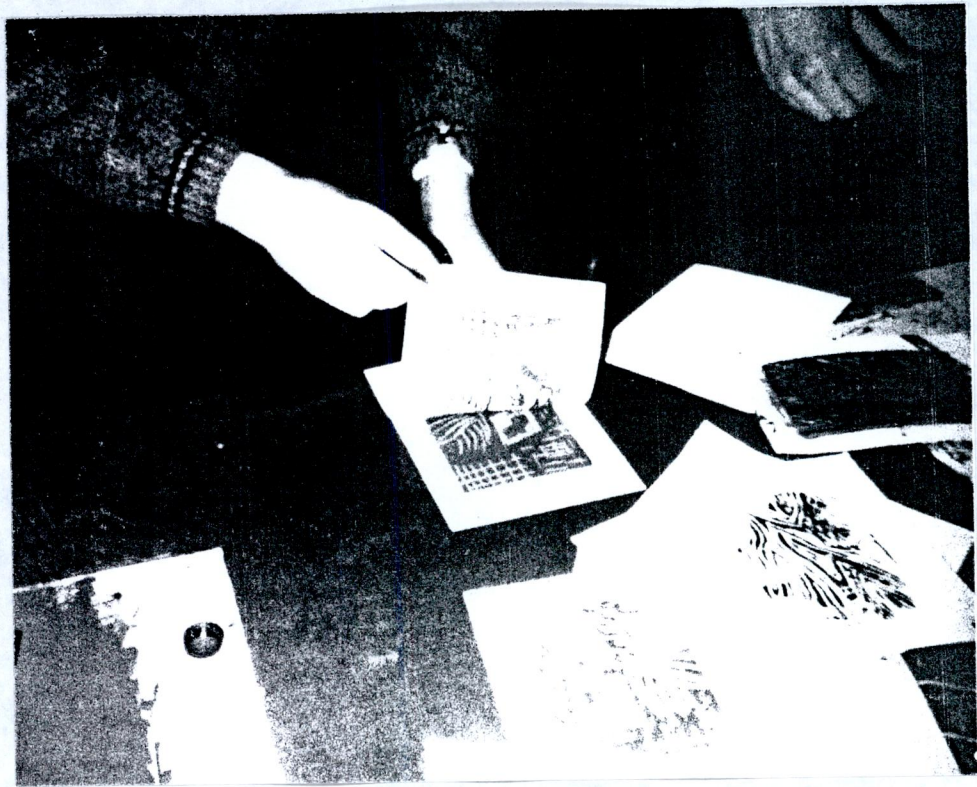


Fig. 8. Registering and printing.



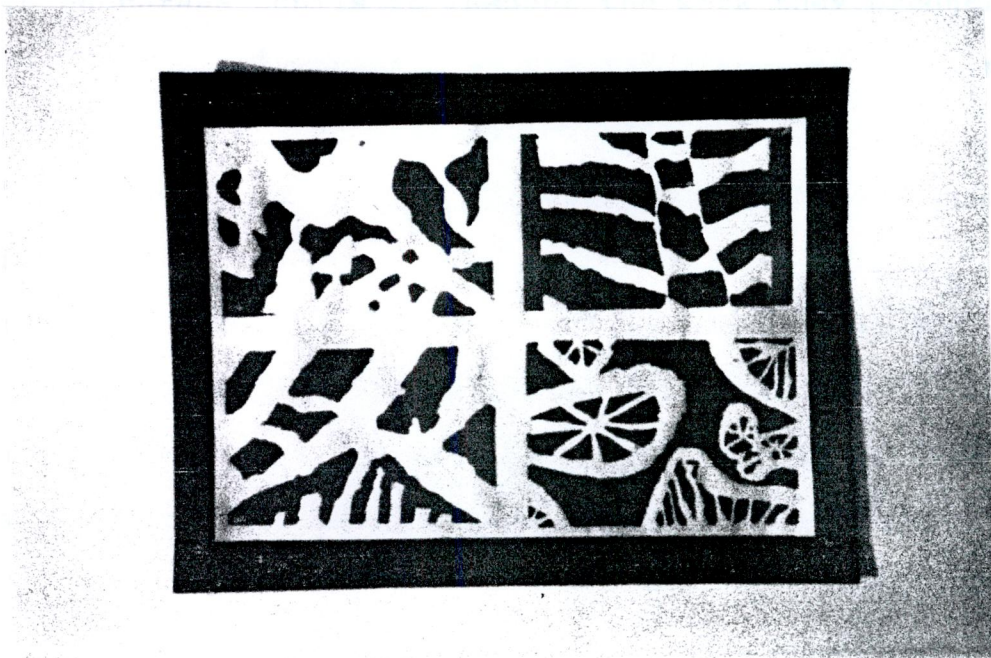


Fig. 9. A selection of the pupils' lino prints.

January 1981.

One of the facts that this was a Junior Certificate class. It was important for the pupils to learn how to learn. So for this lesson I requested that the pupils should mount their work. For financial reasons black paper was used, the prints were placed on it. See figs. 11 and 12. I gave a demonstration of this at the beginning of the lesson.

The learning objectives were:

1. To encourage pupils to respect the work they produce.
2. To develop an awareness of the importance of presentation.
3. To develop an awareness of the importance of presentation.
4. To discover how a piece of work can be enhanced when it is mounted.

Some pupils used the line to print patterns. See figs. 13 and 14. The lessons outlined above lasted for eight weeks, which is approximately nine hours long. They are illustrated here very briefly. The lessons were sequential, each class linked with the previous class. This is important if the class is not to become actively based. I believe that most pupils worked to the best of their ability, expressing themselves through the various media. The pupils were actively involved in observing, perceiving and expressing themselves through drawing, designing and writing. They were also mastering the different media which they encountered throughout the lessons. This is an example of how the development of the individual is catered for during a class in art, craft and design. Each pupil through his creativity was expressing



Fig. 10. Eamonn mounting his print.



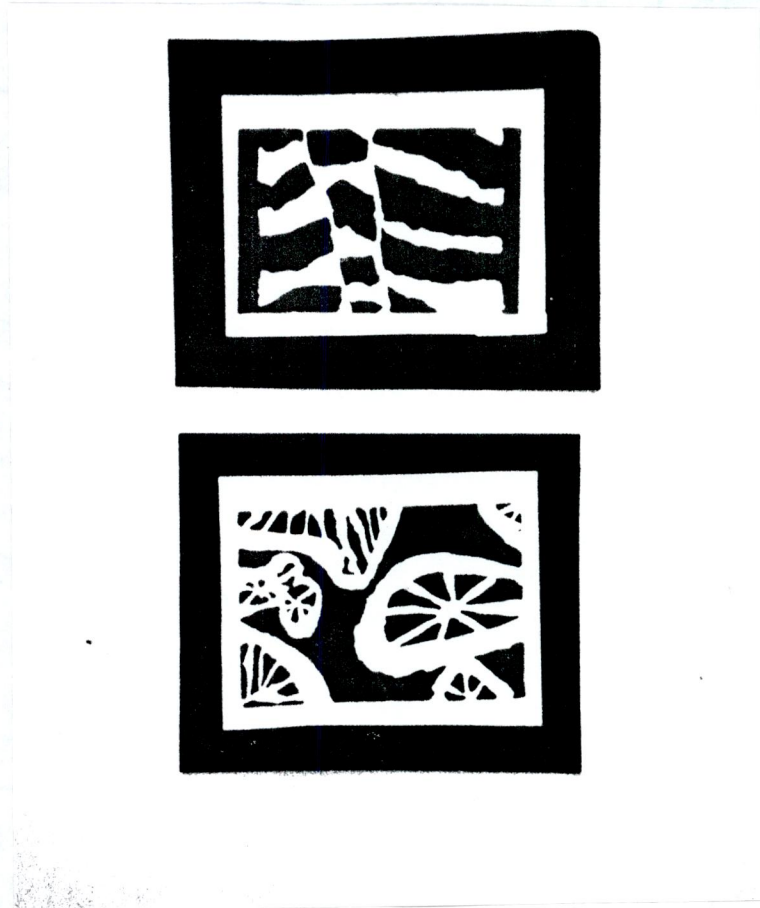


Fig. 11. Two lino prints mounted.



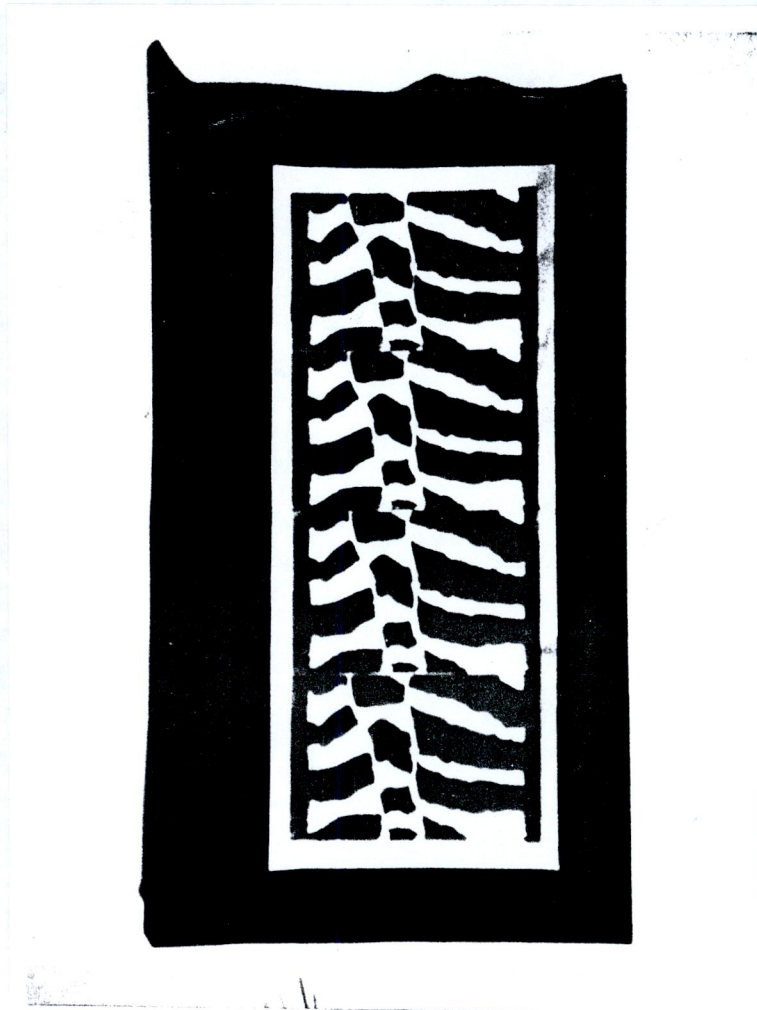


Fig. 12. An example of further application of lino printing.



himself through a visual image. This creates part of a personal fulfilment. Art can also foster intellectual behaviour in the young person at second level school as will be illustrated in the following pages.

Art as a Form of Intelligence

The ability to create, understand, and appreciate the visual form is an aspect in humans that may be considered as a form of intelligence. This belief is advocated by many art educationalists such as John Dewey, Francis Villemain, Nathaniel Champlin and David Ecter.(5)

Intelligent activity has been defined in many ways. For Dewey, intelligence is the way in which someone coped with a situation that was problematic.(6) While Alice Heim defines intelligent activity as "grasping the essentials in a given situation and responding appropriately."(7) Therefore intelligent activity varies in different situations and with different individuals. The above definitions of intelligent activity are similar. If we take these definitions of intelligent behaviour we find that a visual arts education can foster such intelligent activity.

During a class in art, craft and design, the student is faced with the problem of finding a way to transform an idea, image or feeling into a visual form.(8) For example, he faces a white sheet of paper and on this he must articulate a vision that he intends to convey. He must be responsive to consequences of his actions with material. He must be able

to manage the material so that it acts as a medium. As well as this he must face the problem of developing a sense of unity in the work.(9)

Denis Child believes, Heim's definition of intelligent activity i.e. the grasping of the essentials in a given situation and responding appropriately to it, covers only some aspects in the understanding of creative human behaviour. Denis Child believes that there are a further two elements involved, such as the "important preliminary step of exploring the situation and deciding on those essentials." (10) Therefore art can be seen as a form of intelligence.

When intelligence is considered in this way it becomes not only a capacity which is genetically determined, it becomes a mode of human action that can grow through experience. Therefore it is capable of expanding and altering through learning experience. Such experiences can be obtained through visual arts education. Through such experiences in creative and aesthetic education, the young person's consciousness of the world and the meanings that the world can provide them, "expand and alter." (11)

A visual arts education encourages divergent thinking as opposed to convergent thinking. These cognitive operations described by Guilford are as follows; "The convergent thinker is distinguished by an ability to deal with problems requiring one conventional correct solution clearly

obtainable from the information available."(12) From this definition of the convergent thinker, we can see that a class in art fosters divergent rather than convergent thinking.

During an art class there is an opportunity for productive thinking beyond the information supplied by the teacher. Guilford describes the divergent thinker to be "adept in problems requiring the generation of several equally acceptable solutions, where the emphasis is on the quantity, variety, and originality of responses."(13) Therefore, during a class in art, craft and design the young person when dealing with problem-solving activities is encouraged to use divergent thinking as described above. This leads to a development of the pupil's creativity and allows the pupil to be flexible in thought and actions. Pupils create and produce new forms of visual images which come from their own beliefs, ideas and aspirations of the world. Pupils work at their own level in relation to their own ability.

In my view this is a very important aspect of education and should be viewed with the highest regard. In other areas of the school curriculum, the young person may not be given the chance to develop his/her creativity. A visual arts education creates the opportunity for young people to develop this facet of their personality. The experience of this forms part of a personal fulfilment. Thus, the pupils are developing their own creativity and expressing their own ideas, beliefs and aspirations. In the art class, it is also vital that young people are being educated through our

heritage and contemporary visual culture. In the following chapter I will discuss the importance of this in the development of young people in relation to their visual education.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2

1. Viktor Lowenfeld and W.Lambert Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth, (New York: Macmillan, 1982), p.3.
2. Elliot Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1972), p.104
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p.113.
6. Ibid.
7. Denis Child, Psychology and the Teacher, fourth edition, (London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1986), p.193.
8. Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, p. 113.
9. Ibid.
10. Child, Psychology and the Teacher, p.223.
11. Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, p.114.
12. Child, Psychology and the Teacher, p.226.
13. Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

ART EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF TRANSMITTING OUR HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY VISUAL CULTURE

When a young person makes frequent encounters with artistic heritage and contemporary visual culture, the validity of the pupils own creative efforts are confirmed and this identification renders the experience a personal one. One of the purposes of a visual arts education is to expose and help young people to become aware, through the visual image, of the many ways in which the visual image can shape and express the feelings of people from the past and of the present. Through educating the young person in this way we can create a closer unity with many different cultures.

It is Eisner's belief that the value of visual arts education lies "in the unique contribution it makes to the individual's experience with an understanding of the world." (1) He also believes that through the ages, artists have created images with which man's most cherished values can be embodied. (2) If one takes these views of Eisner one can see that art can serve a real purpose in terms of transmitting our heritage and contemporary visual culture.

From early history art has served as a way of making man's beliefs, values and aspirations visual through the image. In my view art is a good indicator of the values and attitudes of the society in which it was made. Relics of the art forms of past societies are cherished today. From these we draw

conclusions about the particular society in which these forms were made.

One of the oldest visual art forms in western countries are the paintings in the cave of Lascaux in France. See Figs. 1 and 2. These are approximately 15,000 years old, and reveal early man's innate ability to draw. These powerful images of bison, mammoth or reindeer, capture the strength and vitality of the animals. They are painted in natural earth pigments, probably by the men who hunted this game and knew it well.(3) These primitive hunters painted these images and most probably did so as a personal response to something which was of vital importance to them at the time. E.H. Gombrich explains,

The most likely explanation of these finds is still that they are the oldest relics of that universal belief in the power of picture-making; in other words, that these primitive hunters thought that if they only made a picture of these prey - and perhaps belaboured it with their spears or stone axes - the real animals would also succumb to their power.(4)

Through the years the visual arts have often depicted man's attitudes and beliefs about religion or politics or his environment even before the written word was invented. The people who lived in this cave obviously felt the need to express themselves through a visual image. Gombrich's explanation, although interesting, is mere speculation. Each of us can draw our own conclusion or explanation as to the real meaning of these paintings. Such images are amongst the few contacts we have with the past of 15,000 years ago. Through such visual images we are offered a glimpse of the

past which helps us to develop an understanding of it. In terms of Irelands artistic heritage we can go back as far as 3,000 B.C., to the megalithic tomb at Newgrange. See Figs. 3-10. This tomb belongs to an era when stone was the every-day material for things such as tools and weapons. We cannot give a name to the builders of this tomb. The architectural and engineering skills displayed by them and the artistic sensibility demonstrated in the carved stones, bears testimony to the high degree of culture attained by this community.(5)

The decorations on the kerbstones, and the walls and the ceilings in the tomb, Figs. 6-10, arouse a curiosity in the viewer as to the meaning of them. One can surmise that these people felt the need to externalise internal images that expressed some important and cherished beliefs and values of their time. Like the people from the cave at Lascaux, the creators of this tomb with its decorations have transmitted information and communicated through the visual image, from the past. This helps to give further insight into our heritage. In my view, we can learn a great deal from the ideas, values and beliefs from our artistic heritage. A contemporary society needs to know about the past so it can build upon this knowledge and pass it on to further generations. Therefore, there is a need for young people to be educated through their artistic heritage.



Fig.1. Animals on the roof of the cave of the cave of Lascaux (France). Detail of one of the paintings, which represents a cow jumping over a group of young horses.





Fig. 2. Also from the cave of Lascaux, the bichrom figure of a horse. Note the rectangular marks, which are thought to be snares, and the feathered arrows pointing at the figure of the horses.



Benson believes that,

There is now a responsibility to plan seriously for a greater understanding and development of Ireland's artistic heritage. The Irish people have much to be proud of in their past. But the neglect of the arts in Irish education has meant that whole generations have lost the opportunity both of learning about their own artistic history and of acquiring the skills necessary to build upon it.(6)

I believe education needs the visual arts so that young people can realise and appreciate their artistic heritage. Through a visual arts education young people can encounter those monuments, paintings, architecture and other visual forms of past civilisations. This leads to a better understanding of the life of such people and of the spirit of their civilisation than from the reading of hundreds of books about them.

There is also a need for young people to become aware of their contemporary visual culture. Through an education in the visual arts the young person can become familiar with the art of other cultures, this enables the young person to become familiar with and to have a better understanding of, the world and its people. Studying the variety of contemporary art from today's cultures can reveal the attitudes and feelings of these people.(7) Benson believes that "Art re-presents and interprets a society to itself - its values, beliefs and aspirations." If one takes this view, art of other cultures should be brought to the attention of young people in our society through their visual arts education.

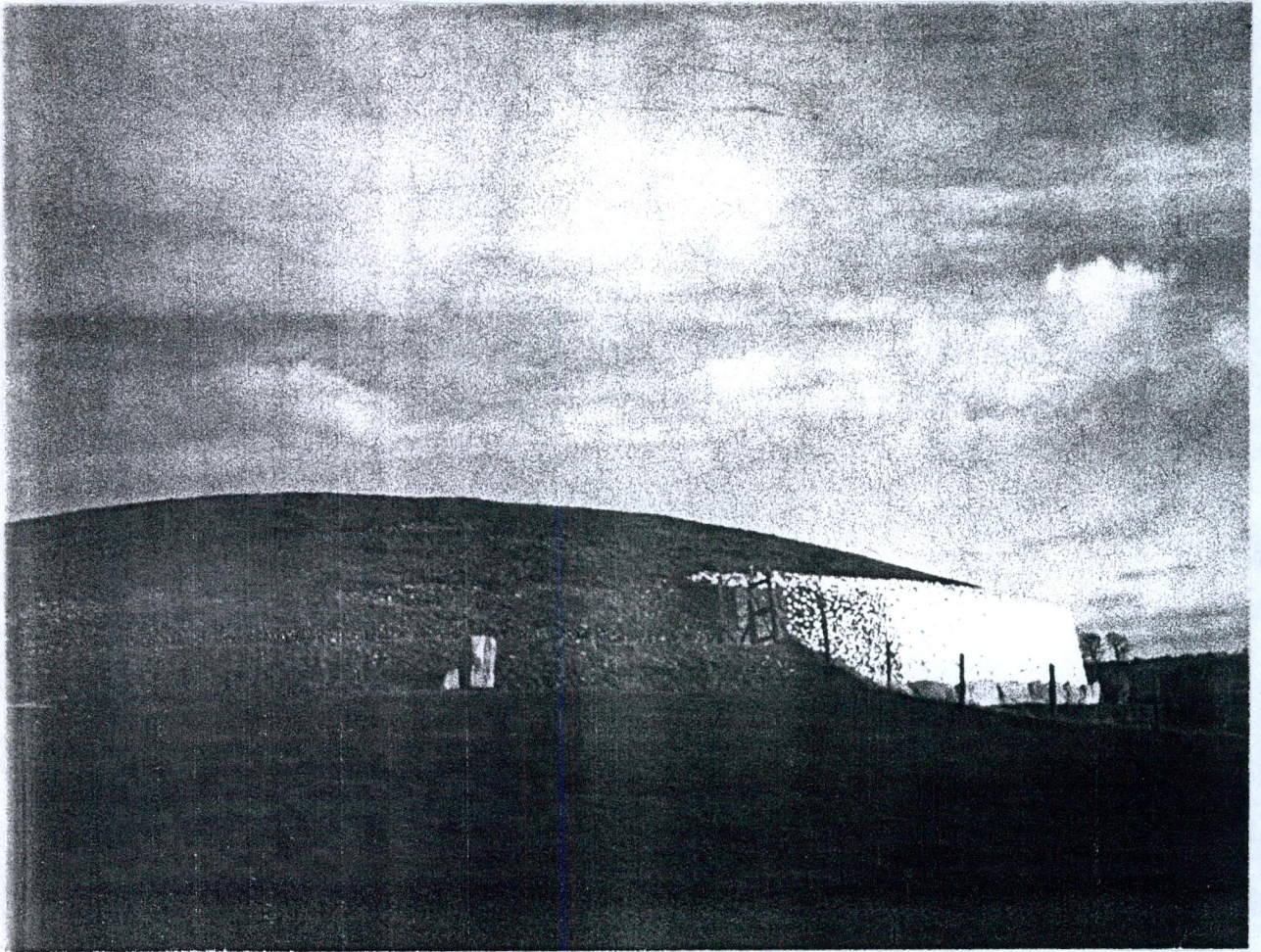


Fig. 3. The large circular mound, which covers the megalithic tomb, Newgrange, Co. Meath.





Fig. 4. Entrance to passage grave, showing entrance stone.





Fig. 5. The Chamber roof inside the tomb, showing corbal vaulting, (postcard from The Office of Public Works).



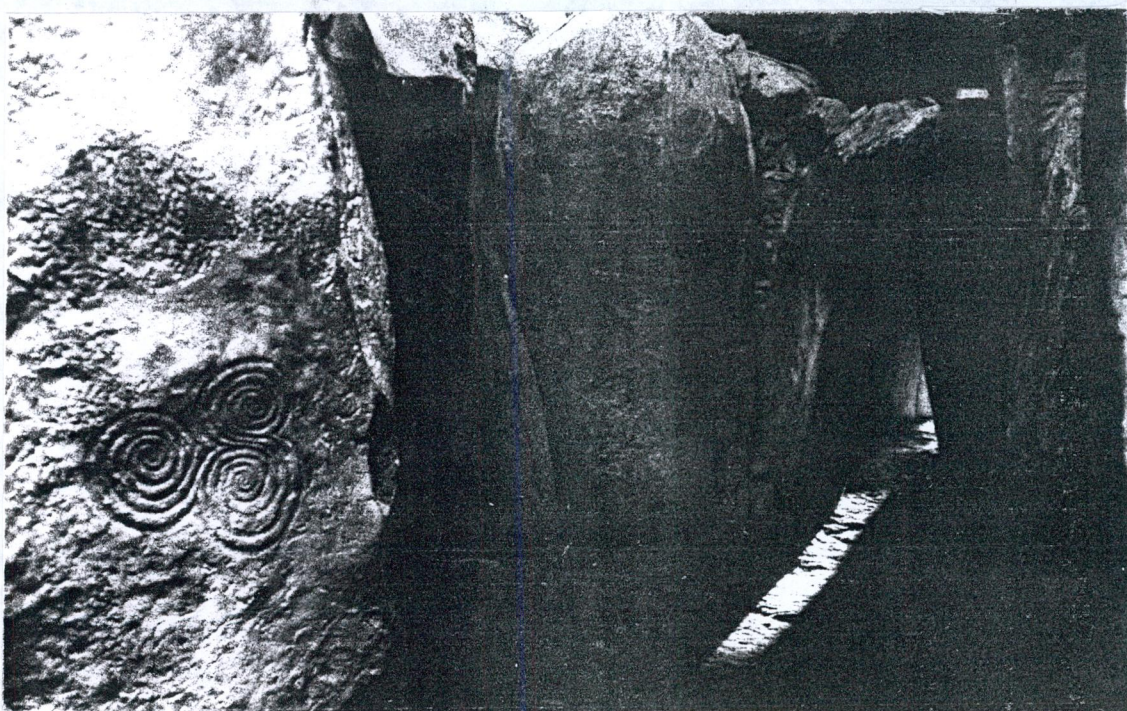


Fig. 6. Inside the tomb, showing decorations on one of the walls, (postcard from The Office of Public Works).





Fig. 7. Tri-spiral. Close-up of decoration on wall of tomb, (postcard from The Office of Public Works).





Fig. 8. Decorated Stone at back of the mound.

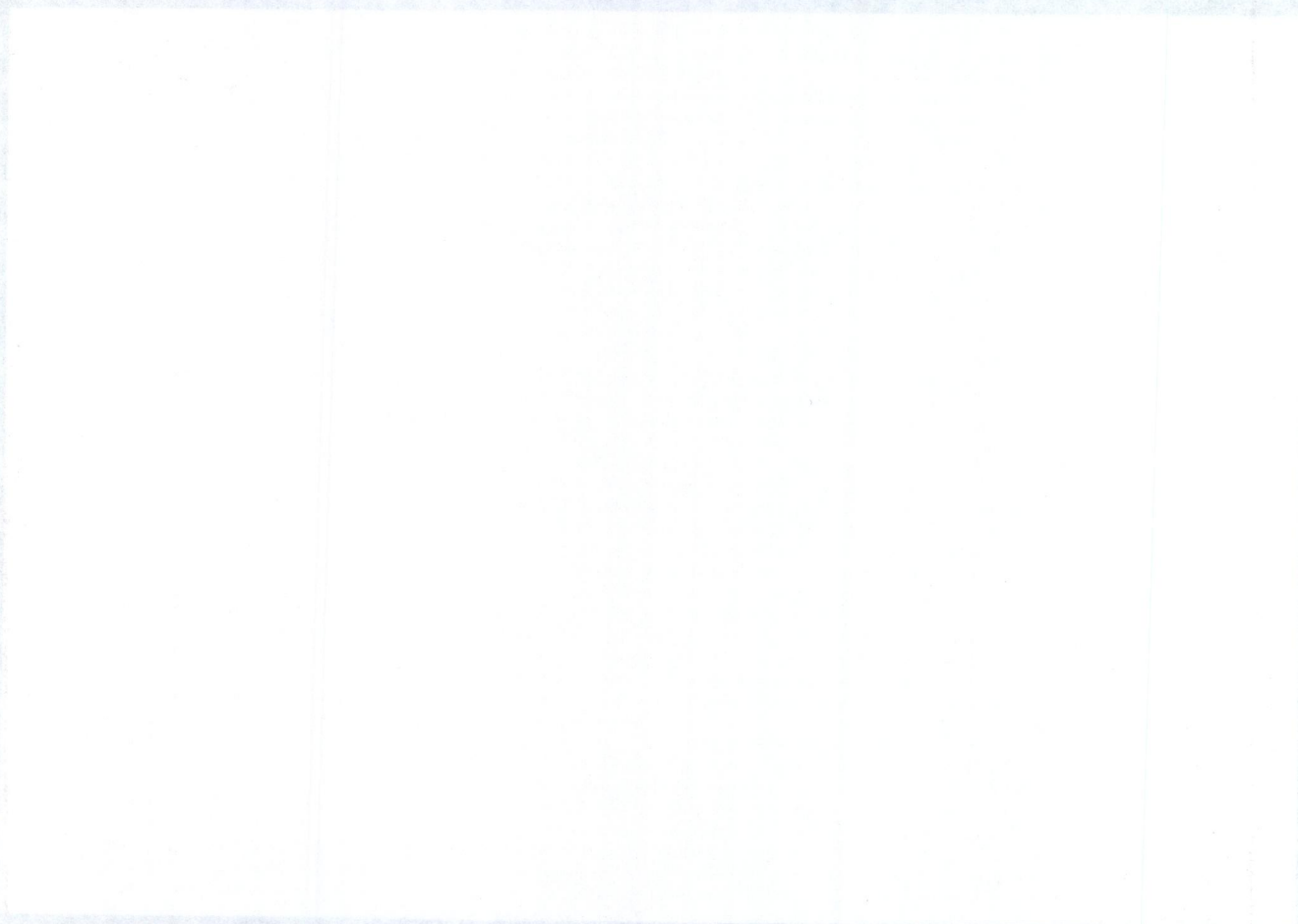




Fig. 9. Detail of back stone.



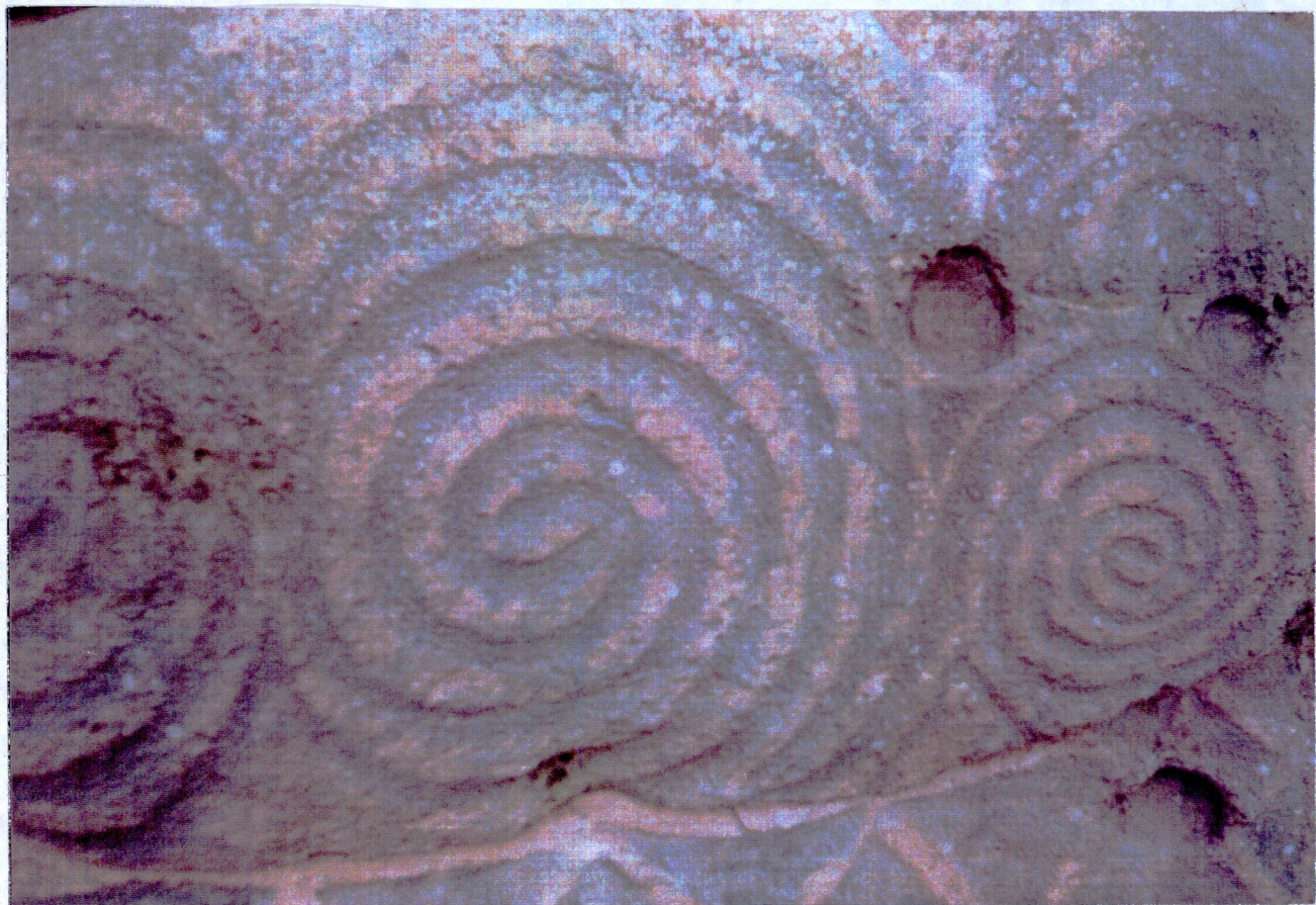


Fig. 10. Detail of back stone showing spirals.



Barclay-Russell talks about the power of the visual arts, he says that,

It is their influence, their expression which has been the most potent force in producing great epochs of culture, for they have entered into every facet of human activity, every triumph of constructive effort, every act of common life both intimately and subtly as well as in symbolising man's aspirations on the grand scale.(8)

If this is true, young people will learn a great deal by encountering both the art from the past and the art of today during their visual education. This means that an important aspect of a visual arts education is about receiving art. This can be implemented by bringing the pupils to museums, art galleries, exhibitions and by showing them slides of different art works. This is part of the language of art, therefore the visual arts are about communicating thoughts, ideas and values to and from a person. I believe people should be educated in this form of communication.

In my view the visual arts are not given high enough regard in the education of the young person. We can see this by its position in the school curriculum. In my next chapter, I will look at the position of the visual arts and the arts in the school curriculum.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 3

1. Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, pp.10-11.
2. Ibid.
3. E.H Gombrich, The Story of Art, (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1991), p.22.
4. Ibid.
5. Claire O'Kelly, Newgrange. Co. Meath, (Cork; Houston, 1991), p.4.
6. Benson, Place of the Arts, p.16.
7. Lowenfeld and Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth, p.61.
8. Barclay Russell, "The Significance of Children's Art for Society", p.19.

CHAPTER 4

THE POSITION OF THE ARTS IN EDUCATION

In a report on promoting art in schools, The Arts Council write about the present position of the arts in Irish education. It says ".....for too long the Arts have been very much a poor relation in the Irish Education System. Resting uneasily in a grey area between curriculum and extra curricular activities.....".(1) In relation to this quotation I believe that the arts is not regarded as an equal to other subjects in the curriculum. I believe education should help a person grow. To help all aspects of the personality grow, including the creative side of the personality. Barclay-Russell believes that, "If education fulfils its purpose, then each person will be able to make use of his creative faculty in some dynamic way, and so enrich his whole being for the good of society as a whole."(2)

I believe that there is a general lack of awareness of the values of an arts education. This is reflected in the poor position which the arts hold in the post-primary curriculum. In school young people learn what is valued there. They also learn which subjects are emphasised in school, by noting the amount of time which is allocated to each subject. With reference to this point it is interesting to note the new proposed allocation of hours for the Junior Certificate course. In an article in The Irish Times dated 4 October 1991, education correspondent John Walshe provides the

outline of the proposed hourly allocation. This curricular allocation is taken from The National Council for Curriculum and Assessments discussion document on the Junior Certificate course. It is as follows,

CURRICULUM AREA	SUGGESTED MINIMUM TIME		
	ALLOCATION (approx.)		
	HRS (per wk.)	HRS (per 3 yrs.)	%
Language and Literature			
a.Vernacular			
(Eng. & Irish).....	5.6	565	20
b.other.....	2.8	280	10
Mathematical Education.....	2.8	280	10
Science and Technology.....	2.8	280	10
Social, Political, Environmental Education.....	2.8	280	10
Arts Education.....	2.1	215	7.5
Physical Education.....	1.4	140	5
Religious Education.....	1.4	140	5
Pastoral care, Guidance, Counselling.....	0.7		70
2.5			
Discretionary Allocation.....	5.6	565	20
Totals	28	2815	100

Source: John Walshe, "The Junior Certificate," The Irish Times, 4 October 1991.

The different curriculum areas are calculated on the basis of 28 class contact hours per week in school year of 168 days. The visual arts is included in Arts education, which will be allocated 2.1 hours per week, which is .7 hours less than the other curriculum areas.

Another interesting proposal which The N.C.C.A. put forward is on mandatory subjects in the Junior Certificate course. The article explains,

Students must take examination courses in the following subjects: Irish, English, Mathematics, History, and Geography or Environmental and Social Studies (a new subject), Science or a Technological subject, and not less than one other subject from the approved list of examination subjects.(3)

Therefore, the visual arts are not compulsory, so it seems that they have a relatively peripheral position in the Irish Education System. In America and the United Kingdom this is also the case, Lowenfeld and Brittain write,

In schools of general education art would appear to have established a place - yet in secondary schools that place is relatively unimportant it is claimed not to be an intellectual subject: anyone can do it. In most schools art has still to win full acceptance.(4)

I believe that the above quotation is equally appropriate in terms of Irish schools. I believe art will only win full acceptance in the school curriculum when educationalists, policy makers, teachers, parents and pupils, become aware of the unique value and potentials of a visual arts education. Benson believes that sound arguments must be put forward before the money and resources are allocated.(5) He suggests that, "educationalists and policy-makers must be urgently

persuaded that the arts have a serious contribution to make to education."(6) The visual arts are one facet of the arts, in education. As I have discussed in my previous chapters, I believe these are very important aspects in the education of the young person. Unfortunately the true and unique benefits of a visual arts education are not always fully realised in schools. Dick Field believes they are often thought as being therapeutic or recreational,

.....one proposing that art helps children to be saner, more balanced - that they paint out their fears and troubles; the other suggesting that after their serious work in other subjects children need relaxation.....(7)

It is no wonder that a subject regarded as unimportant should hold a peripheral position in the curriculum. These views outlined above, trivialize the unique qualities of a visual arts education. The view of art as recreational diminishes the role of visual arts education in intellectual development. This is not to say that the arts cannot be therapeutic or recreational, but these are not the central aims of visual arts education.

I believe a visual arts education is a vital facet of education if a person is to grow fully. A visual arts education needs to be seen for its unique value. It needs higher regard and stronger support by placing it in a more central position in the school curriculum. It is my belief that a visual arts education has great potential in the development of the person as a whole and therefore, society.

People need to realise these potentials by being educated in
and through the visual arts.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 4

1. The Arts Council, "Promoting Art in Schools".
2. Barclay-Russell, "A Report of the Society for Education Through Art," p.1.
3. John Walshe, "A More Enriching Experience for Young People." The Irish Times, 4 October 1991.
4. Lowenfeld and Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth, p.3.
5. Benson, Place of the Arts, p.21.
6. Ibid.
7. Dick Field, Changes in Art Education, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p.9.

CONCLUSION

The rationale which I have put forward in my previous chapters discuss the potentials of a visual arts education. Until these potentials are realised, young people in post-primary education will lack the education which I believe is vital for themselves and that of society. The majority of pupils do not opt for a visual arts education. I believe young people should be made aware of the value and benefits of a visual arts education.

It is my belief that art, craft and design is potentially one of the most creative courses in the school curriculum. Through a visual arts education the young person is learning by thinking, doing and feeling. Unfortunately art as a subject is not seen as an essential part of the young person's education. In the past, some people did not really understand what the function of art was. I believe some people thought of it as recreational and therapeutic or as a way to unwind from the more academic subjects.

I believe attitudes are changing. Presently, within the development of the new Junior Certificate course, the visual arts should begin to play a stronger and more stable part in the school curriculum. Hopefully there will also be a change at senior level. In the future, if the potential of a visual arts education is realised and accepted by educationalists and policy-makers, there will be a very beneficial change in curriculum development at all levels. This in turn will

place art, craft and design education at the centre of the school system.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

Child, Denis, Psychology and the Teacher, London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Ltd., 1986.

Eisner, Elliot, Educating Artistic Vision, New York: Collier Macmillan, 1972.

Field, Dick, Changes in Art Education, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.

Field, Dick, and Newick John, The study of Education and Art, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.

Gombrich, E.H., The Story of Art, Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1991.

Lowenfeld, Viktor and Brittain, W. Lambert, Creative and Mental Growth, New York: Macmillan, 1982.

OTHER SOURCES

The Arts Council, "Promoting Art in Schools", Dublin: The Arts Council, (n.d.).

- * Barclay- Russell, Alexander, "A Report on the Beliefs of the Society for Education Through Art".

Benson, Ciaran, The Place of the Arts in Irish Education: Report of the Arts Councils Working Party on the Arts in Education, Dublin: The Arts Council, 1980.

Curriculum and Examinations Board, The Arts in Education, Dublin: Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1985.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, The Junior Certificate, Art, Craft, Design, Guidelines for Teachers, Dublin National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, and the Department of Education.

O'Kelly, Claire, "Newgrange, Co. Meath", Cork: Houston, 1991.

- * Thistlewood, David, "Imagination Need Not Die, Revolution in Child Art 1930-1960".

Walshe, John, "A More Enriching Experience for Young People", The Irish Times, 4 october 1991.

- * I regret that I was unable to obtain the publication details of these articles.