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SYMBOLISM IN CHILDREN'S ART

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by

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INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I will discuss the different stages in the development of the child. Therefore I must examine the art products produced by children and the characteristics of each stage of development. Particular emphasis will be placed upon the schematic stage in which the child begins to use symbols to represent objects. This stage begins, on average, at about the age of seven to nine years, yet some of the individuals in my First Year class, continue to use schemata in their work. I wish to introduce a sequence of lessons to help the students begin to draw what they see rather than use schemata.

My dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter consists of an exploration of the different scribbling stages. In my second chapter, I will discuss in depth, the schematic stage of development, exploring its characteristics such as the base line, folding over, x-ray approach and space and time representations. I will also examine the stage in which the child begins to relate to children of his own age. He now expresses the need to be accepted into a group and because these changes have occurred, there should also be a gradual disappearance of

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symbols in his work.

Finally I will explore the work of children from nine to eleven years, whose art products are now increasingly influenced by the environment. This is the stage of realistic representation.

My third chapter is concerned with adolescents and their art products. This is a very difficult stage of development for the child. It is the transition from childhood to adulthood. This stage is of interest to me because the children I am teaching are at this stage of development.

In my conclusion I will discuss why the sequence of lessons discussed in chapter three was relatively successful.

Chapter 1

The Scribbling Stage

In this chapter I will discuss briefly the various stages in the development of the child, starting with scribbling and continuing through to the pre-schematic stage. I will look at the characteristics of each stage and discuss work produced by children.

"When a child is born, he comes to this world endowed with certain impulses." (1) The definition for impulse used here is a reaction to a stimulus, but this is a natural reaction. Suckling would be an example of an impulse. The baby will suckle on its mother's breast, therefore it is a reaction to a stimulus which is not taught. Another example is that of exploring and investigating. This is an impulse which all children have and it is one of the impulses which is greatly relied upon in creative activities.

According to Lowenfeld and Brittain - "All movements related to the body are called kinesthetic experiences."

(2) There are two kinds of kinesthetic experiences - one is active. These are the movements which we actively do with our body, for example, kicking. While passive experiences - "...are those movements which we passively

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experience", (3) that is when our body is moved without actively engaging in it, for example rocking.

The reason I have mentioned kinesthetic experience is because a baby is very much affected by it. Outside of crying, for some time, they are the only means of expression for a baby.

When a child is one year of age, he does not scribble yet he sits, walks all of which are kinaesthetic experiences. But at around the age of two, he will begin to scribble. The universal opinion regarding the development of the child, is that children all over the world will begin to express themselves by scribbling at this age.

On average between the ages of one and a half to two and a half, the child will develop an urge to express himself in active movements. What I mean by movements here is the action of scribbling on paper; there is usually no eye control involved. At this stage the child looks at his scribbles in the same way, for example, when one wakes up in the middle of the night and looks into the blackness, everything is blurred, then gradually the room comes into focus. Therefore the child has not got the urge to control his lines because they are all blurred expressions of his kinaesthetic activity. (Illustration No.1).

Illustration No. 1

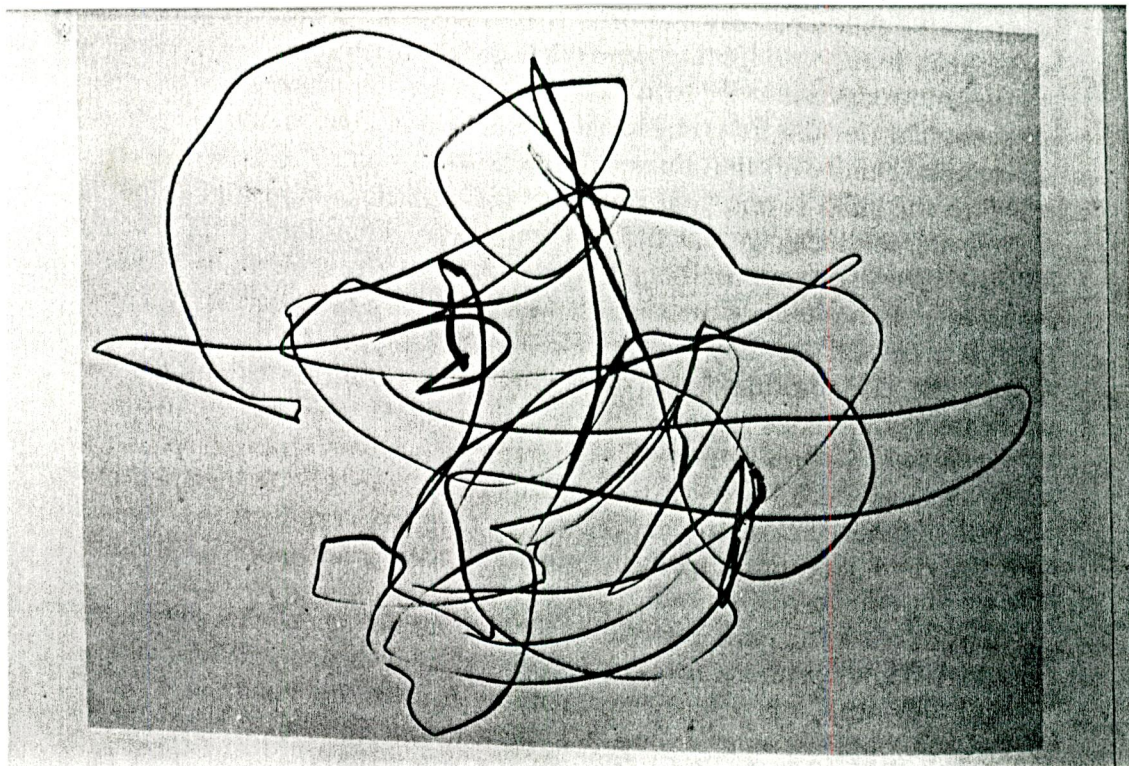
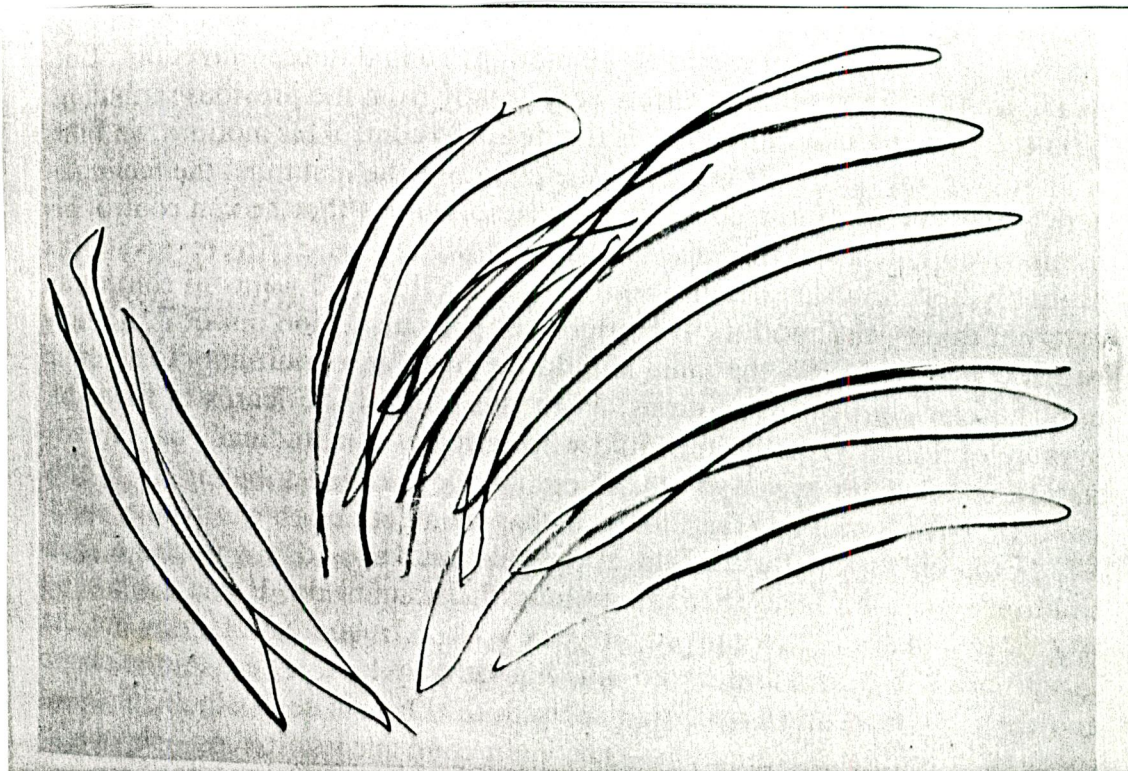


Illustration No. 2 - Longitudinal Scribbling





6.

At around two and a half years of age, the child discovers that there is a relationship between the lines on the paper and the movement of the arm. This is a big discovery. Not only can he control his movements, he also gains the desire to achieve this control. When the child reaches this stage of development, he usually starts longitudinal scribbling. (Illustration No. 2) He is ready to co-ordinate his motions with his visual activity. As the child develops in art, he will make new varieties of line formations, but the child will also keep many of the characteristics of his earlier drawings. (4)

At around four and a half, the child begins to make circular movements. This is a higher step again in the child's development. (Illustration No.3) These movements usually follow longitudinal scribbling and can eventually develop into the first image of the sun and maybe even into the first drawing of a human. The system of child art seems, in my opinion, to be visually logical, as one image leads to another, the child proceeds step by step. (5)

Now we have arrived at one of the most important stages in the development of the child. It occurs on average around the ages of three and a half to four years. It is important because it shows clearly a stage of thinking -

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from making movements to thinking in terms of images, mental pictures. This is the stage when the child first puts a name to his scribbles, for example, 'Mother goes shopping' (Illustration No. 4). Yet we probably see nothing in his work because the child is still concerned with movements. Up to this stage he just enjoyed the movement of scribbling, no mental pictures occurred. He did not associate his scribbling with anything. Then he gets a mental picture of his mother. The significance of this thinking is that he refers to the environment and also he thinks in terms of mental pictures rather than in terms of kinaesthetic experiences. (6)

A whole new field of activities is opened up because of this thinking, especially with regard to memory. The child now begins to remember particular events and he also begins to recall in terms of mental images. he has now discovered that there is a relationship between his drawing and the outside environment. This relationship is built upon a translation of which he actively knows and what he sees. This translation is called a concept. It is based upon the individual's knowledge of something. When a child draws a circle for a head and two longitudinal lines for legs, this is a concept. (7)

Illustration No. 3 - Circular Scribbles

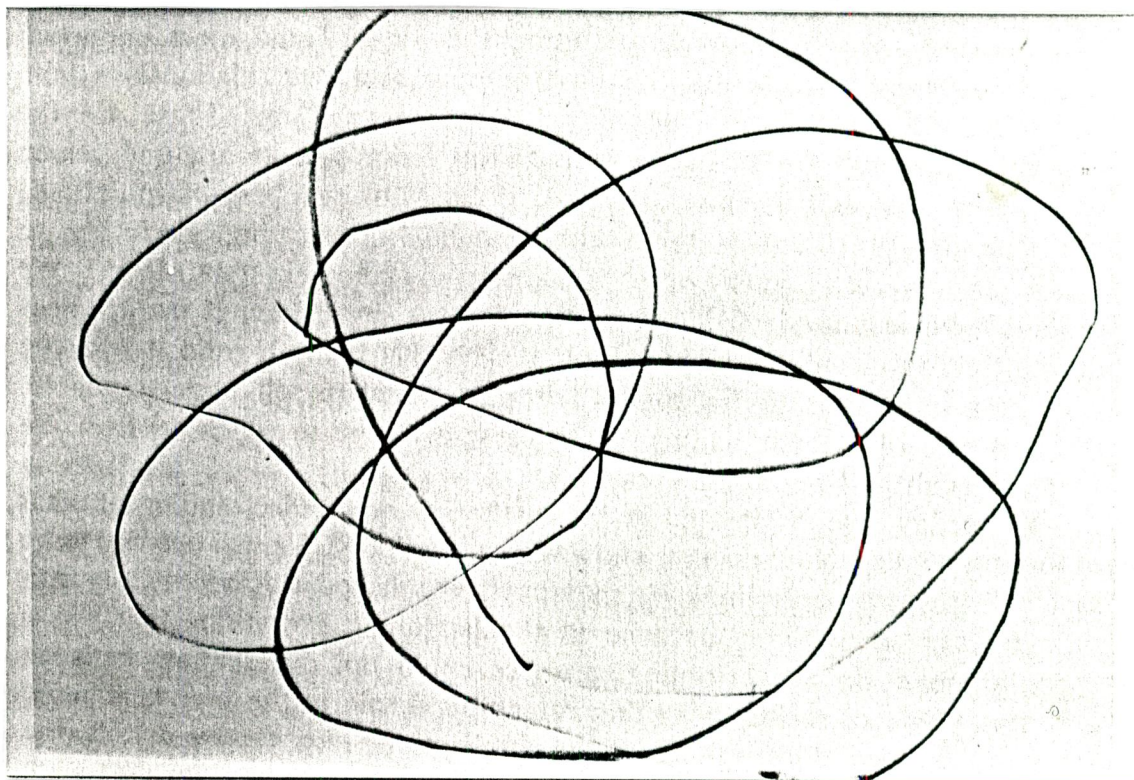
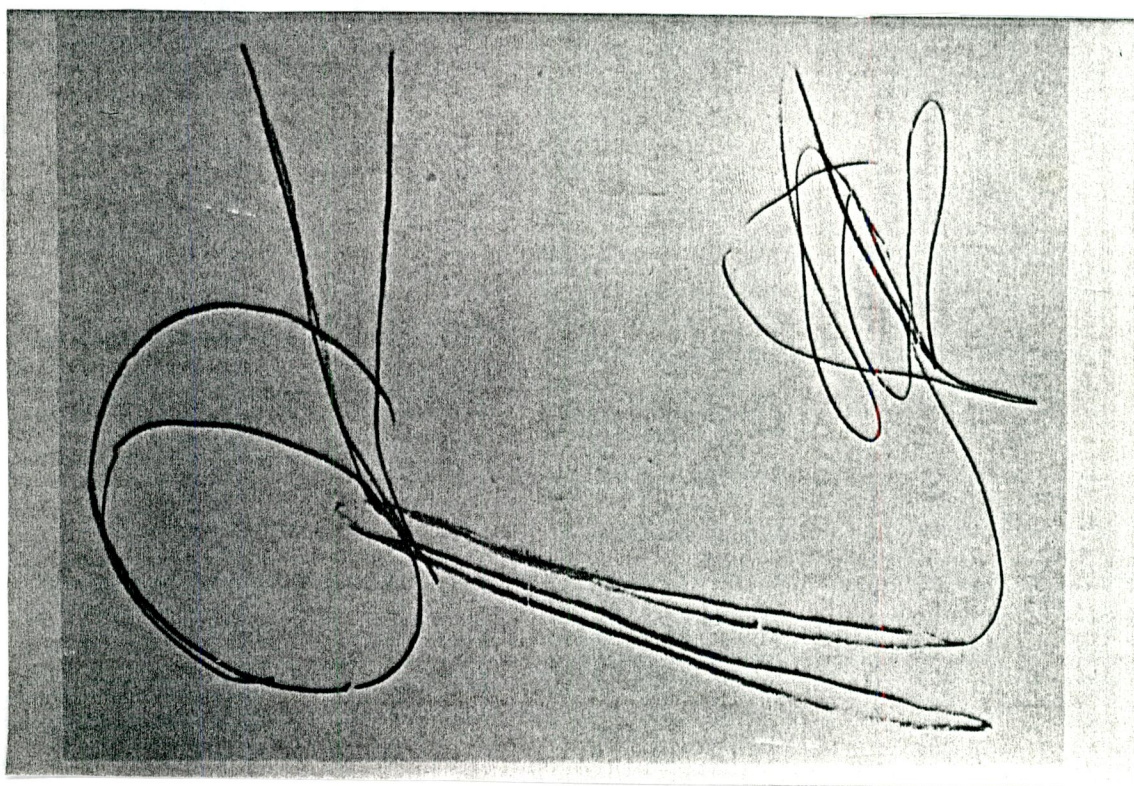
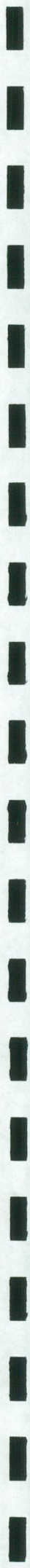


Illustration No. 4 - Mother Goes Shopping





The next stage occurs on average between the ages of five to seven. Now that the child has discovered there is a relationship between his work and the environment, he will constantly try to improve this relationship. He will change his concepts from one day to another or even in one drawing. This flexibility in the changing of concepts is very important for children at this stage of development. (8).

In order to describe this stage fully, I must first give a definition for a schema. I have established what a concept was earlier, when a "child translates a concept into drawing it is called a schema." (9) The stage which I am referring to now is the pre-schematic stage. One of the characteristics of this stage is that the child frequently changes his concepts, one day he may draw a man, and the next day he will draw a man differently.

In the very beginning the children only vaguely express their drawing concepts, but as they gain more confidence they express them with greater vigour. (Illustration No.5) In this work by a five and a half year old, we see a more advanced concept which is clearly expressed. (10) The child is concerned with himself - "I am on the street." There is also an ambulance and aeroplanes in the picture but there is no spatial relationship between each

element in the painting. He did not think that the aeroplanes should be in the sky. I am on the street and the ambulance is also on the street because he cannot yet relate objects to one another. The child did include eyes but he did not include ears, nose or mouth because he was not thinking about them but he was aware of their existence. This painting is an example of work produced by children at the pre-schematic stage of development.

The importance of the first 'Human' is that the child has reached a stage of development in which he sees the figure as a unit.(11) The child incorporates the elements from each stage of development. It is almost as if the child has put all the pieces of a jig-saw together to create this image. All children reach this stage of development by themselves, that is to say, there are no external factors such as a teacher to help them, it comes naturally.

The average child in the pre-schematic will begin with the head - feet representations and will end up with the head, neck, body, arms and separate symbols for hands legs and feet. Also features, such as the eyes, nose and mouth and either the ears or hair, usually not both, are evident in the child's work. The different types of hair, hands and feet are pleasing to look at rather than realistic.

Instead of the body the child usually uses a symbol for clothes. (12) "The humans in children's work represent an advanced stage of the child's development evolving the mental capacity to create complex shape formations." (13) The child has put thought into these works and the different varieties of humans produced by children show an ability to rearrange shapes to create an image.

The child does not relate himself to colour at all. There is no colour-object relationship in the pre-schematic stage. (Illustration No. 6) Yet the child does perceive colour. If you ask a child what colour is the grass, the answer will be green, but he just has not developed his colour concept. (14) The child may paint his face green or the rain purple because he simply enjoys these colours and inevitably uses them. Past associations may have some significance also. If a child's grandmother mainly wore a pink dress, this will be fixed in the child's mind and pink may be a lovely colour. The child will gradually move onto a stage in which he relates colour to objects and I will discuss this in my next chapter.

Before I began to research into children's art, I never gave much thought to the work a child produces. This is probably because I dismissed their work as being insignificant and unimportant. Children's art is very

Illustration No. 5 - "I am on the Street".

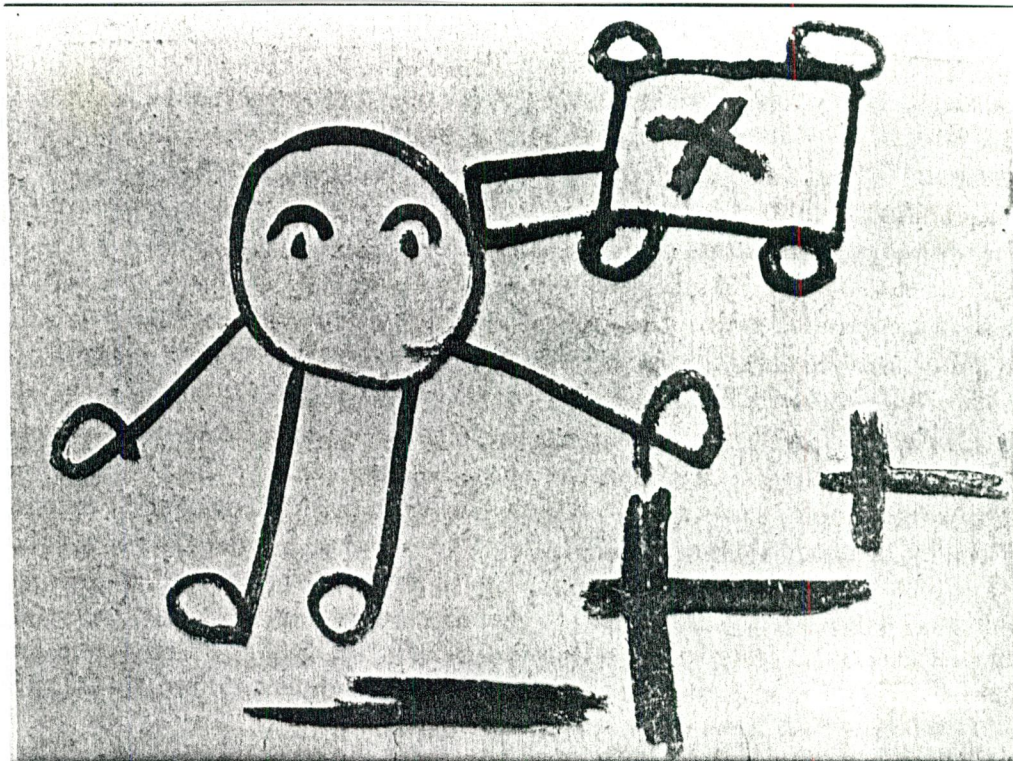
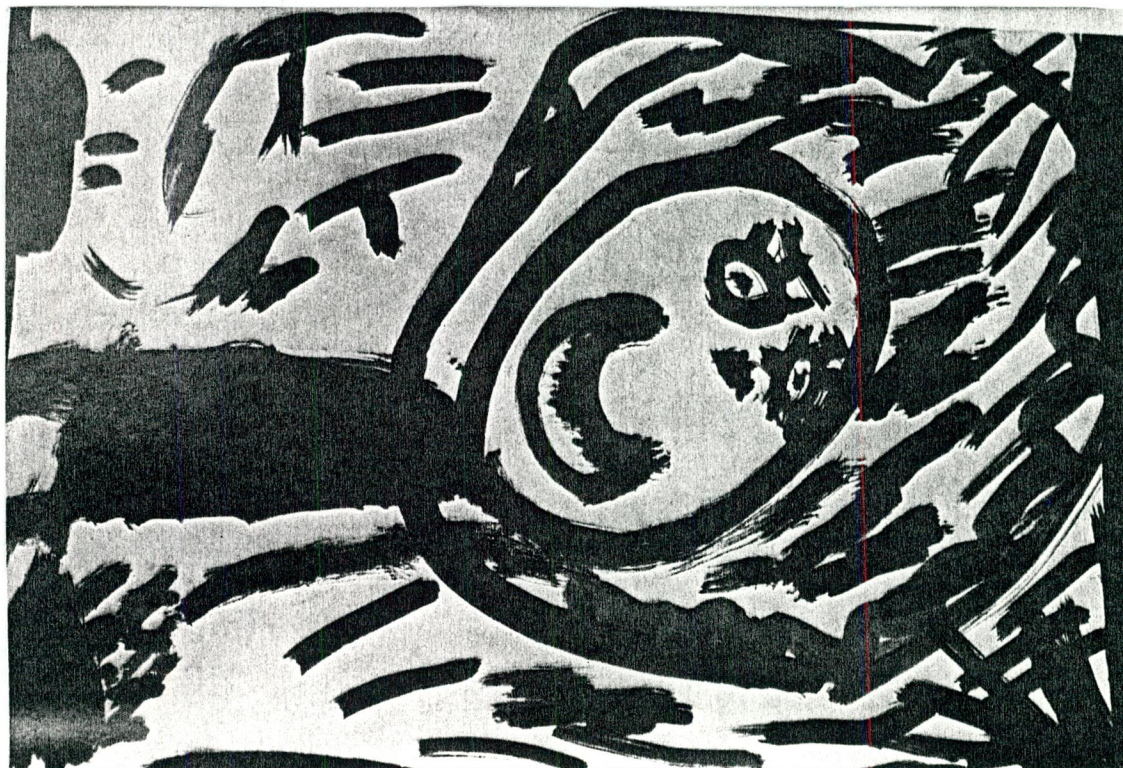
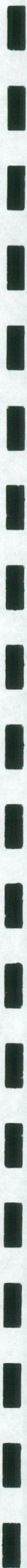


Illustration No. 6 - "I am in a Lightning Storm".





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important, not only because it shows the mental development of children, but also it demonstrates the perceptual awareness of children. It is important to me because I have gained an insight into why children may perform at different levels in the classroom and also a greater appreciation and understanding of children's art products.

My next chapter is concerned with the child's development after the pre-schematic stage, dealing with the use of symbols and the appearance of realism in their work.

Chapter 1

FOOTNOTES

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1. Viktor Lowenfeld. The Lowenfeld Lectures (Pennsylvania State Press. 1982.) p.95.
 2. Viktor Lowenfeld & W. Lambert Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth. 8th Edition. (New York : Macmillan 1987.) p.65.
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 5. Rhoda Kellogg. Analysing Children's Art. (California Mayfield 1969). p.27.
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 9. Charles D. Gaitskell and Al Hurwitz. Children and Their Art. 3rd Edition. (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1975) p.56.
 10. Lowenfeld. The Lowenfeld Lectures. p.22.
 11. Kellogg. Analysing Children's Art p.95.
 12. Ibid., p.104.
 13. Ibid., p.64.
 14. Lowenfeld and Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth. p.203.

Chapter Two
Schematic Stage

In this chapter I hope to explore schematic drawing, the age at which it becomes evident in children's work and also its disappearance. In order to discuss this, I must first describe the characteristics of schematic drawing, starting with the human and continuing onto the appearance of the base line, which is universal in all children's work. Other characteristics are folding over, x-ray approach and also space and time representations. (1)

I will also discuss the stage in which the child begins to relate to children of his own age. He now expresses the need to be accepted into a group, also begins to see the existence of the different sexes and this awareness can be seen in the work along with the gradual disappearance of symbols.

Finally I will examine the work of children from nine to eleven years of age, whose work is greatly influenced by the environment. This is the stage of realistic representations. I will look at the characteristics of this stage dealing in particular with space, colour and the disappearance of the use of schemata from their work.

There are many stages in the artistic development of the child, some of which I have discussed in the previous chapter. The first stage starts when the child begins to scribble, the stages which follow are the longitudinal and circular scribbling stages. These stages eventually lead to the pre-schematic stage in which the child formulates and repeats his concepts. Now I am going to discuss the most important stage in the development of the child. This is the schematic stage.

According to Lowenfeld and Brittain - "After much experimentation, the young child arrives at a definite concept of man and his environment." (2) Any representative drawing done by a child could be called a schema or symbol of a real object. The child has formulated a concept, which is knowledge of a mental picture. "When this concept is translated into a drawing this is called a schema." (3) This schema can be used repeatedly by the child whenever no intentional experience causes a change of this symbol.

Every child uses a different set of schemata and although there is no set time for the formation of a schema, most children arrive at this stage at about the age of seven.

The schema used by a child may be determined by how the child sees the object, the emotional significance attached to the object or his kinaesthetic experience with or touch impressions of the object.

Whenever a child's representation confines itself to the object, a pure schema occurs. For example - 'This is a man'. 'This is a tree'. "A pure scheme or schematic representation is a representation with no intentional experiences." (4) (Illustration No. 7) We know that the child is portraying something of importance to him when there are modifications of the schema. The child's intention could be understood better by studying the kinds of modifications to the schema.

The mental images a child has of an object in his environment are the results of his thinking process; the image that a child draws on a piece of paper is a symbol of that mental image, the symbol that stands for that particular object. The art product produced by a child is an indication of the way he interprets and understands information. A child's schema also includes space and figures as well as objects. For example, a child may be asked to draw a house and he may omit the chimney.

But if the same child is asked to draw a house again in December, his schema may change to include the chimney, because the child may associate December with the cold and also that Santa Claus comes down the chimney. Therefore the child altered his schema to show a particular experience, but this development of the schema takes time.

"At about the age of seven, the drawing of a human figure by a child should be a readily recognizable symbol". (5) (Illustration No. 8) If the child has knowledge of body parts, he will portray them in his work. Not only will there be a head, body, arms, legs but also some of the various features. The symbol for the eyes should be different from the symbol for the nose, the symbol for the nose should be different from the symbol for the mouth. The child should also include hair and a neck in his concept. Usually the child includes different symbols for hands, feet and even fingers. Often clothes are drawn instead of the body. These go to make up the average symbol for a human figure which the child uses and which the child should have accomplished by the time he is seven.

"It is generally assumed by educators and adults that detail in drawing reflects increased child intelligence and ability to communicate through art." (6)

Illustration No. 7 - "I am standing in my Back Yard"

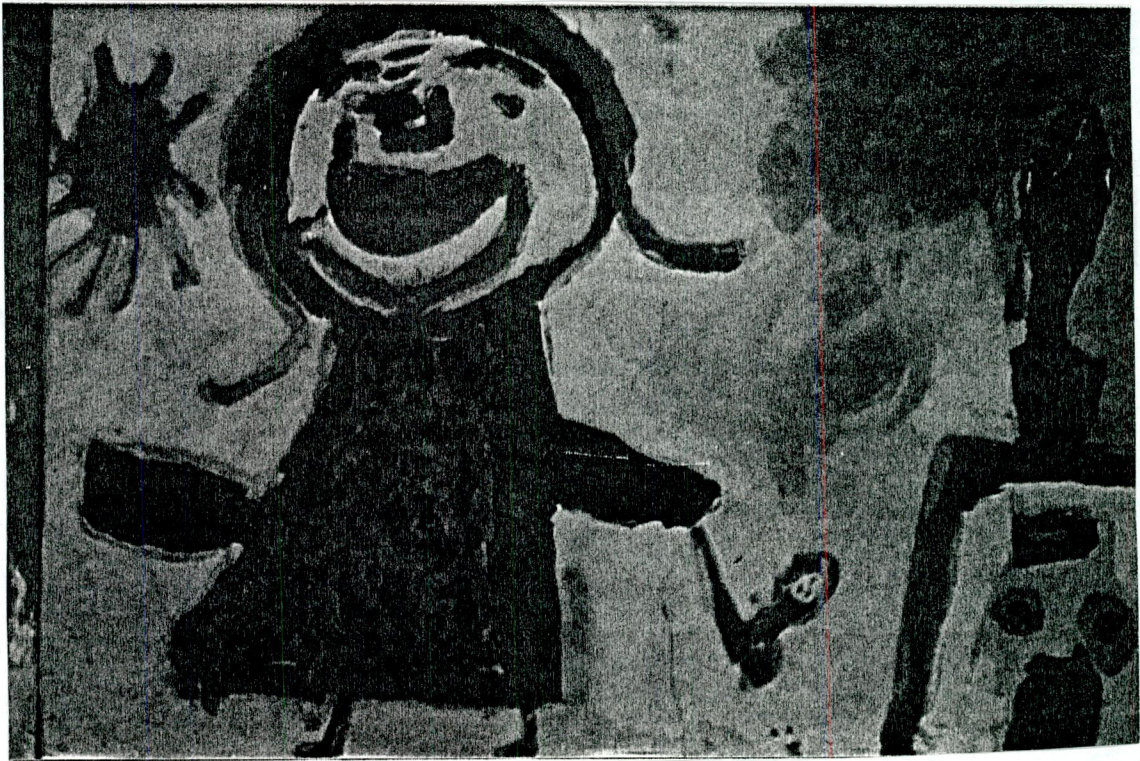
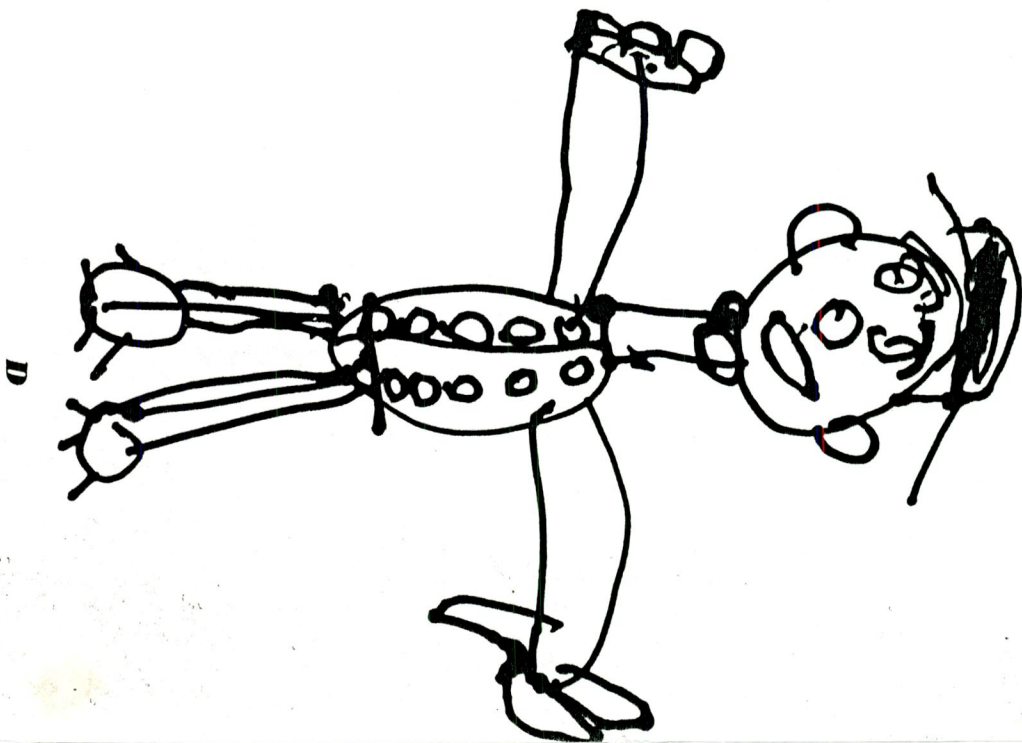


Illustration No. 8 - At the Fire House





I agree with this statement because a child that includes details, in my opinion, seems to have a greater understanding and interpretation of information. According to Lowenfeld and Brittain, eyebrows, eye pupils are viewed by adults as desirable added details in children's art.

The origin of these eye features goes back to age three or four when the child uses the 'sun' image to represent eyes. As the child matures he favours a simple circle for the eye and may draw it more carefully than the young child.

When the child is about eight years old, he again draws detail. The nose may be represented by a circle, a vertical line or a mere dot. In fact almost any marking seems to serve for a nose, and it can be identified only by its placement in the face. (Illustration No. 9)

The mouth may be drawn in the form of any scribble. An upcurving line makes a 'smile', while a down curving line gives the impression of a 'frown' and a straight line gives a 'serious' look. Face markings other than ones needed for eyes, ears, nose and mouth, are common place. What may be called cheeks appear as extra circles either side of the mouth.

Illustration No. 9 - Eating Ice Cream,

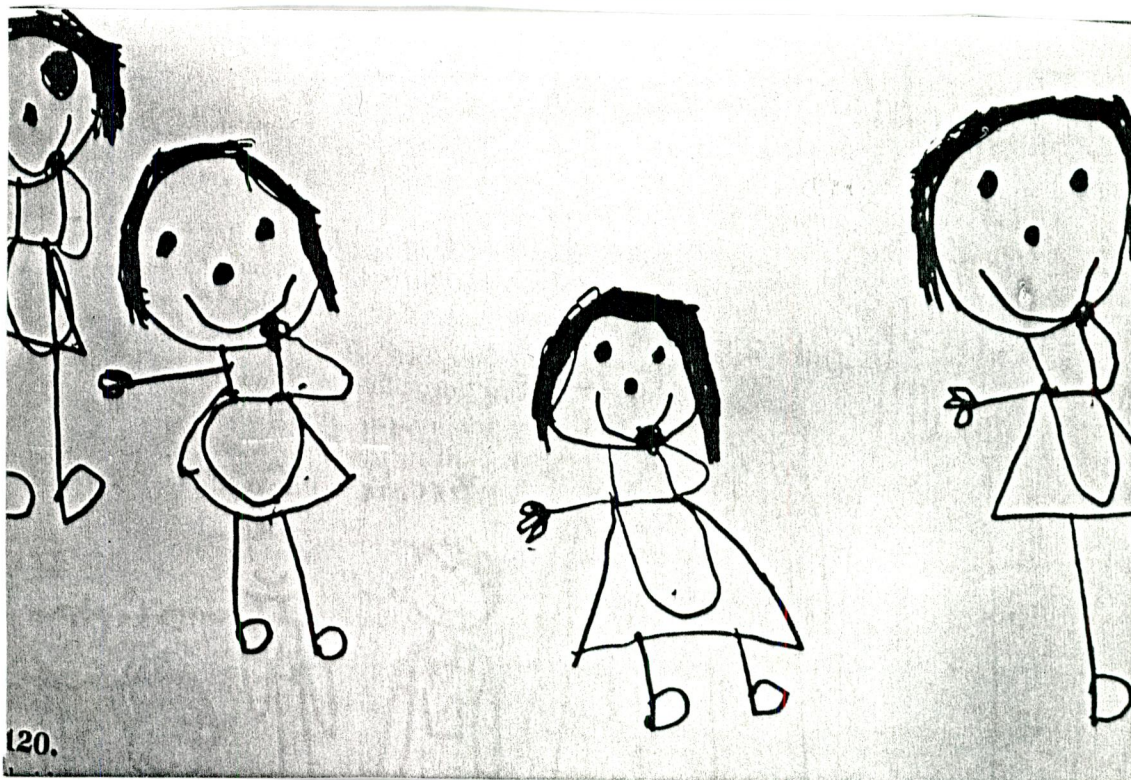
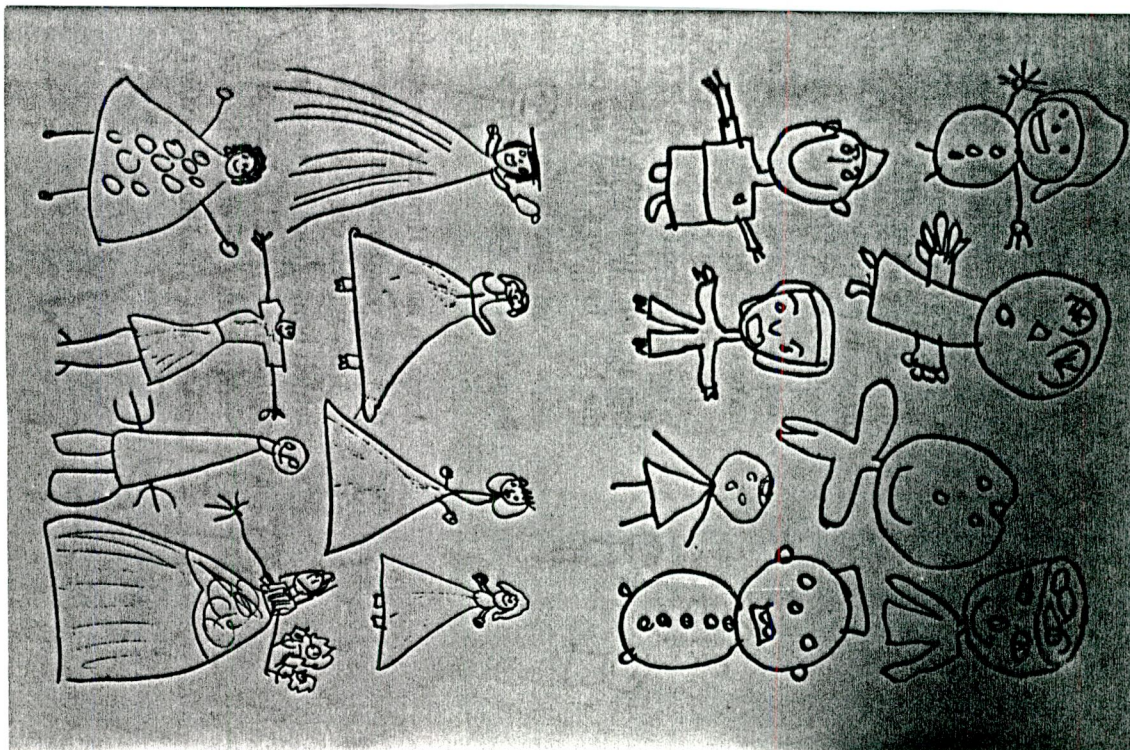
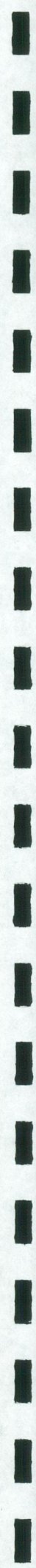


Illustration No. 10





"A common formula for the human is one with a double torso, that is, with both lower and upper sections. The realism of this division results from the implied waistline". (7) The two sections may have the same shape or different shapes. The proportions of the body can also be exaggerated and distorted in children's work. For example, the head may be bigger than the combined torso and legs. Component parts of humans are often drawn in sizes needed to complete some pattern of total balance or to create some overall aesthetic effect. For example, humans with big heads and humans with 'pinheads' are commonplace. (Illustration No. 10)

For some children the first symbol for the human is the frontal view. They are more interested in the symmetry of the body - arms, legs, ears, etc. while in other cases the profile is the first schema. Some children have a schemata including a mixed profile, a front view that includes a representation of two eyes and the nose in profile. (Illustration No. 11)

Whenever children produce, in the same composition, two or more symbols related in thought, they have demonstrated an advance in visual communication, for they have realised that a relationship of objects and events exist in the world. The problems that confront them at this point

revolve around a search for a personal means of expressing satisfactory relationships between symbols and the environment.

"In striving for such a means of expression normally at the age of seven, they are engaged in the main task of all artists." (8) There is now an awareness of an order in space relationships. The child no longer thinks - 'This is a house. This is a car. This is a man' without relating them to one another, as was typical during the pre-schematic stage.

"The symbol called the 'Base line' is used by the child to place objects at the same level in a drawing." (9) He now thinks 'The car is on the ground. I am on the ground' and the base line expresses this thinking. This consciousness which includes all objects in a common space relationship, is expressed by putting everything on the base line.

The base line may be placed away from a symbol or touch a symbol. It can also form a line from edge to edge on a piece of paper and sometimes children do not bother to draw a line, they just use the bottom of the page as the base line. This may be the very first beginning of a child using the base line. Sometimes children paint several base lines when they wish to depict two sides of a

street or different events in a story that are closely connected in thought but remote in space.

The base line is universal and can be considered as much a part of the natural development of children as learning to run or skip. "The child's realisation of a relationship between himself and the environment is indicated by the appearance of the base line". (10) This line can apparently represent not only the ground on which objects stand, but can represent a floor, field, mountain or any base on which the child is standing.

(Illustration No. 12)

In this example the base line is used to describe both the shape of the mountains and ground level. The child wishes to indicate that the second base line is elevated over the plain. The flowers stand perpendicular to the mountain and this demonstrates that the mountains are still meant as a base line. The figure is even bound to the base line. This was done by a seven year old. When children in this schematic stage are asked to draw a building, the chimney is typically drawn perpendicular to the line of the roof which serves as a base line, just as the line of the mountain became a base line.

Illustration No. 11

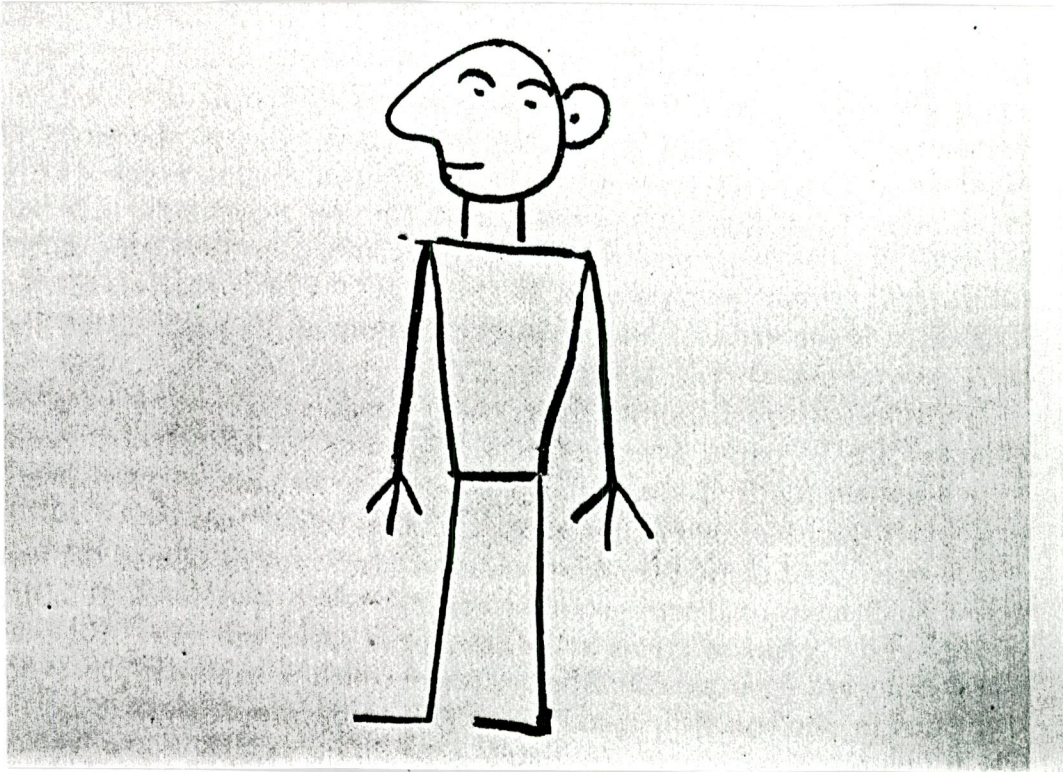
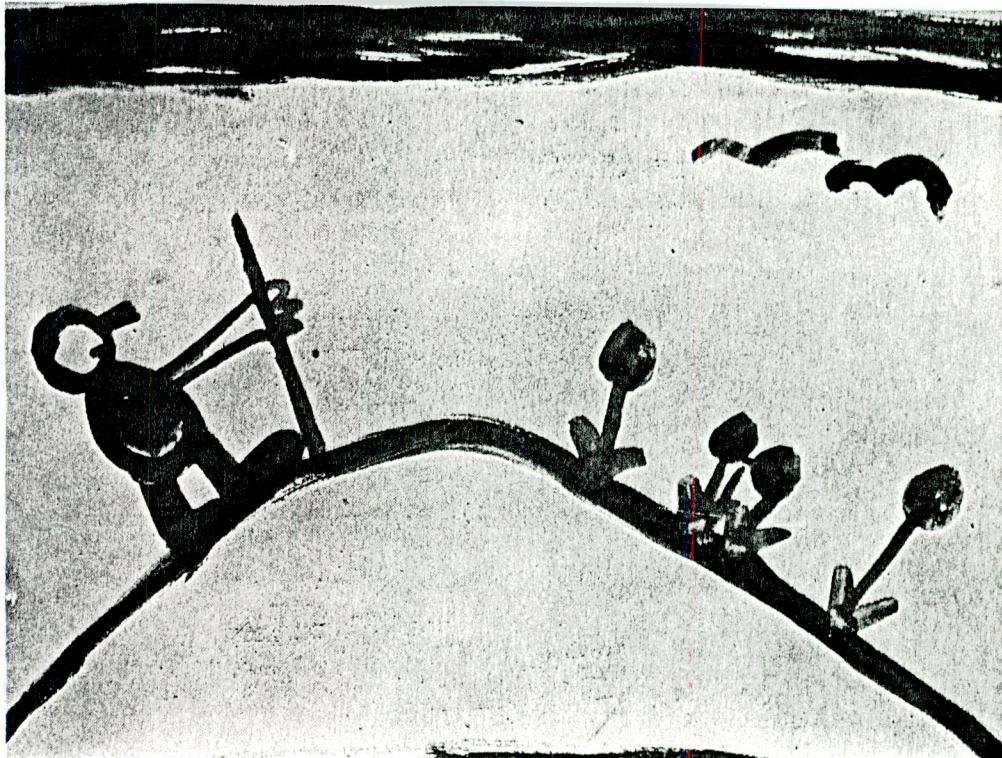
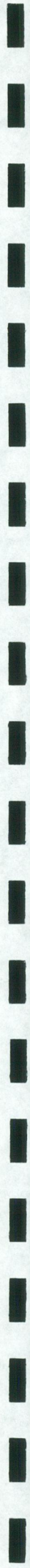


Illustration No. 12 - "I am climbing the hill"





"When questioned children invariably identify the base line as being the ground." (11) It is quite obvious in nature that neither objects or persons can stand upon a line. The skyline which appears in children's drawing is the counterpart of the baseline. The sky line is usually indicated by a line drawn across the top of the page with most symbols below it. Often accompanying this symbol is that of the sun, which is depicted as a circular shape with radiating lines. Starlike shapes are sometimes added as a further indication of sky. The space between the skyline and the base line is identified as being air. These symbols often persist for many years and the sky does not appear as a solid mass of colour touching the earth until the child has developed greater maturity of expression, probably between the ages of eight to ten years.

An adult's concept of the sky according to Lowenfeld and Brittain is that it comes down to ground level, the child's concept of the sky above ground below and air in between is just as valid. Both are illusions.

As the children's use of symbols broadens and their expression consequently grows in complexity, the task of finding adequate modes of expression to make their meanings clear becomes increasingly difficult. (12)

Their strong desire to express themselves with clarity leads them to adopt many curious artistic conventions. The ingenuity exhibited by children in overcoming a lack of knowledge of technical devices such as linear perspective and in substituting acceptable and expressive devices of their own is always interesting and indeed, is sometimes little short of miraculous. Now I will further discuss some of the devices used by children in their work.

One of the most obvious devices used by children is to vary the size of symbols in their work. A symbol having emotional or intellectual importance to the child may be larger than others related to it. 'Mother' for example, may be depicted as being larger than a house or perhaps more frequently some children will depict themselves towering over their associates. (Illustration No. 13) Children will employ this device in connection with all familiar art materials, but it is especially noticeable in their painting. When the child uses paint, he will not only give a greater size to the object that appeals to him, he may also paint it in his favourite colour. Colour is often chosen for its emotional appeal rather than for its resemblance to a natural object.

Even though young children lack the technical ability to express themselves through visual forms, they are extraordinarily inventive in devising relatively complicated modes of composition through which to present their emotional and intellectual reactions to life. (13)

Although the base line represents space in a drawing or painting, occasionally a meaningful experience forces a child to deviate from this type of schema. These are subjective space representations. 'Folding Over' belongs to this category, expressing a space concept by drawing objects that appear to be upside down. (Illustration No. 14). In this picture, by an eight year old boy, we see the process of folding over. The child is waving good-bye to the boat while standing on the side of the bay at the top of the picture. He firstly drew himself, then he decided to draw the boat on the other side of the base line. After drawing himself while leaning on a floor, he simply went around to the other side of the page and painted the boat, so it is not really upside down.

"This device is frequently adopted by children passing through the 'symbol - and - environment' stage of visual expression" (14). This interesting device arises from their inability to use linear perspective. Actually in my opinion, this seems to be a perfectly valid concept; the child feels that both sides of the bay are important

Illustration No. 13 - Mother

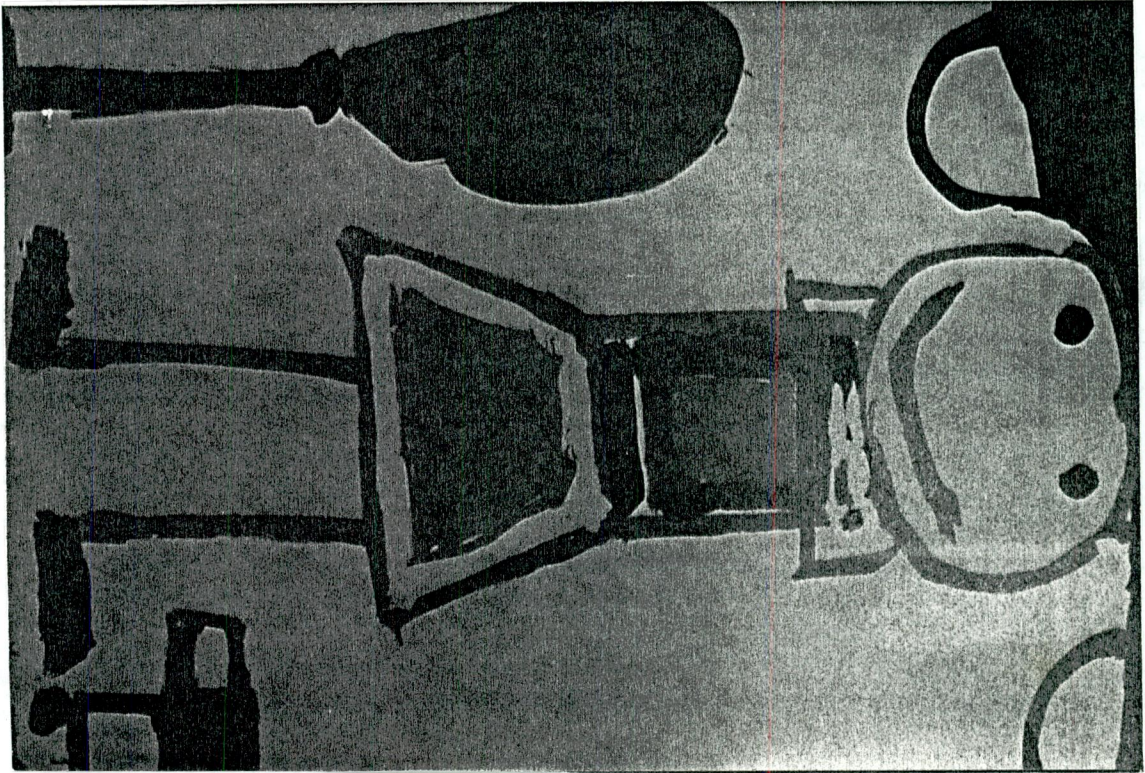
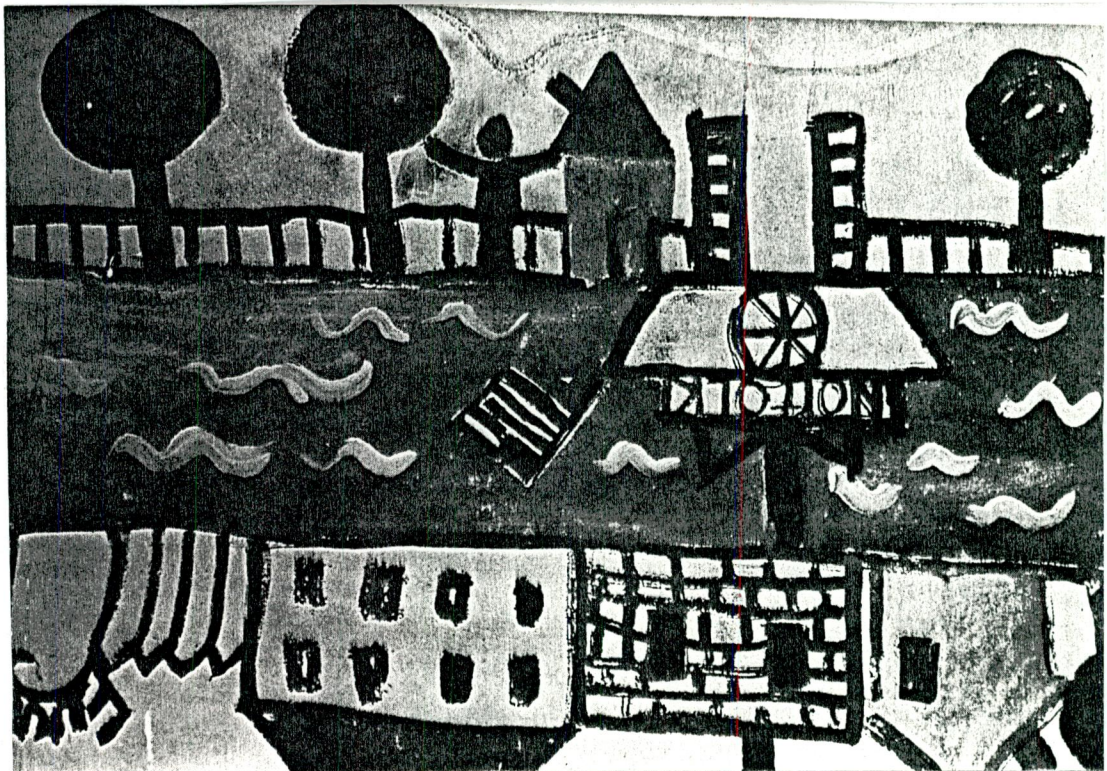


Illustration No. 14 - Norfolk Ferry





because his experience is that of being in the centre of the scene.

A child may also use another interesting, non visual, way of representation to show different views that cannot possibly be seen at the same time. In this example the child depicts both the inside and outside of a building or other enclosures simultaneously whenever the inside of the building is of great importance to him. Sometimes the child will be so interested in the inside of the building, that he will treat the outside as if it were transparent "apparently unaware of the impossibility of such a visual concept, mixed up the inside and outside, becoming so involved with the inside that the outside is treated as if it is transparent" (15) Most children do not hesitate to use this 'x-ray' approach in developing their images.

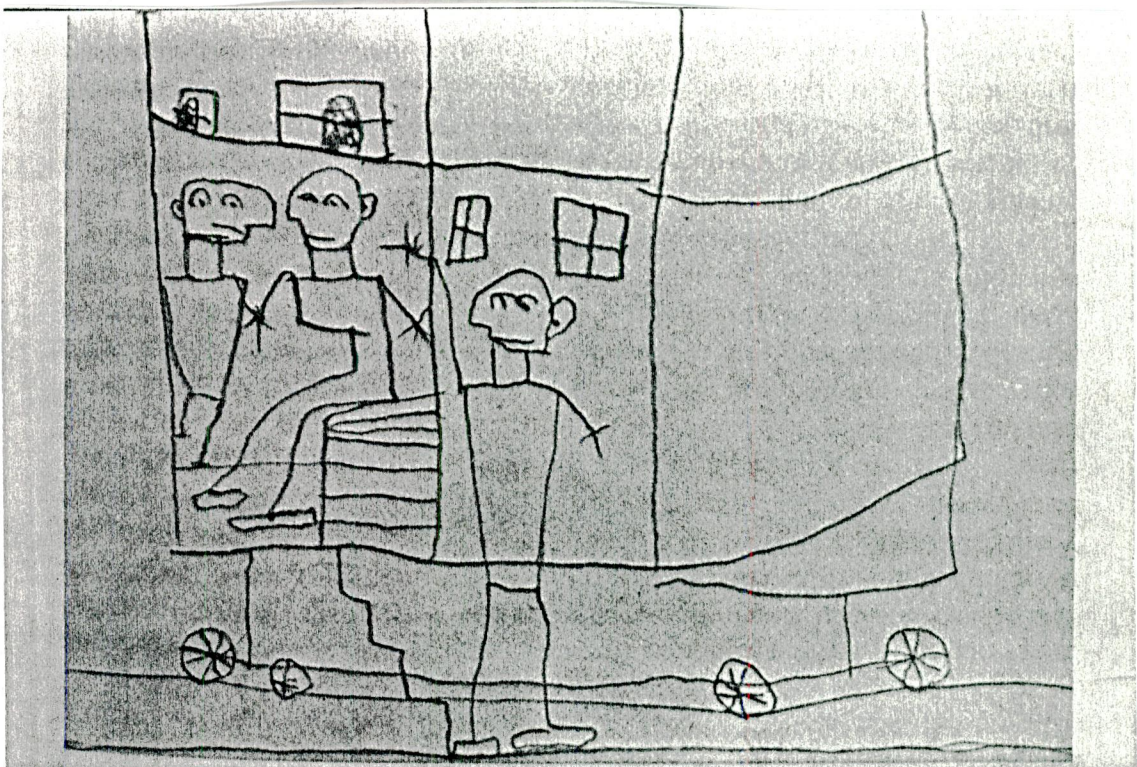
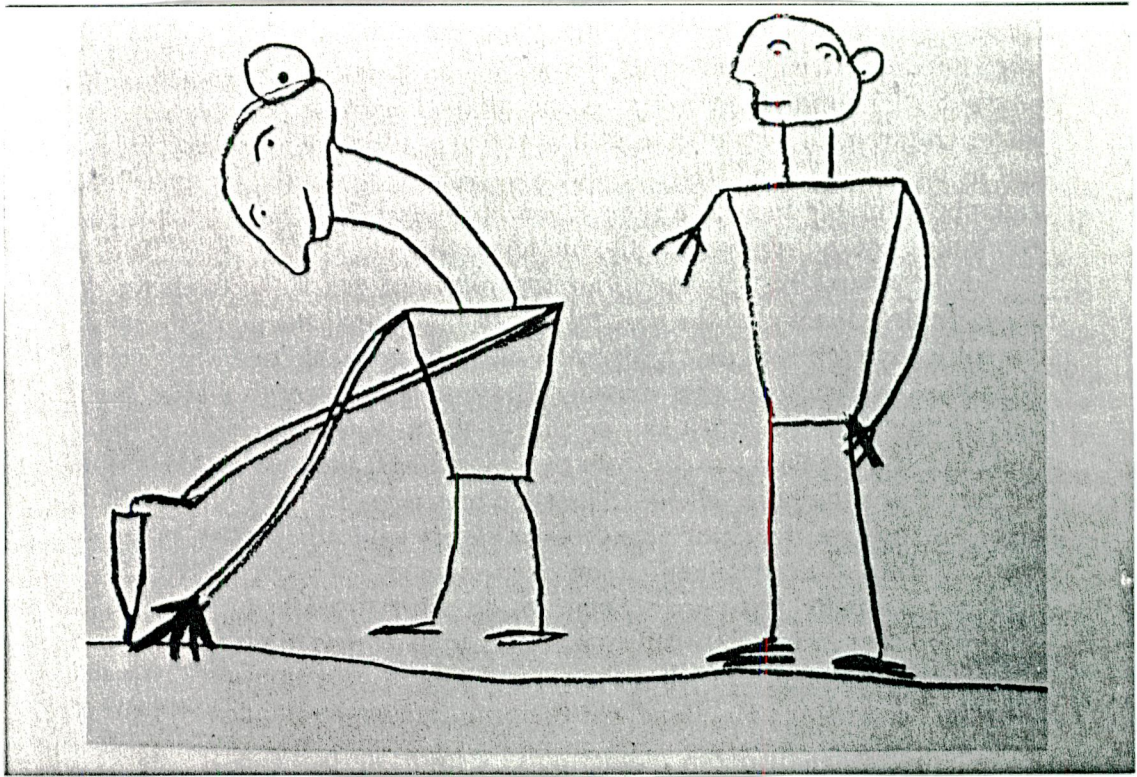
Space and time representations include in one drawing different time sequences or spatially distinct impressions. "Sometimes by using plan and elevation at the same time a child invents a way of showing events that occur in sequence" (16). In this example, the head, neck and hands are important to the child because he is searching for his pencil. He has elongated the neck and made the head and left hand bigger to emphasis the fact that he is searching. We can see from the figure on the

right that he has found the pencil. Whenever a child changes a symbol, whenever a child exaggerates a part, we can be sure that the child expresses an experience whether he is aware of it or not. Most often the child is not aware of such an expression, for instance the child in this example does not seem to be aware that he has elongated a part of the body. He was just concerned with finding his pencil. (Illustration No. 15)

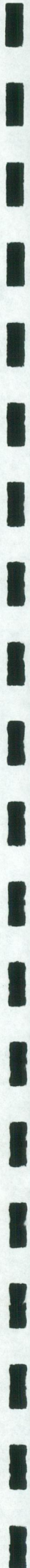
If the schema is the concept of man and his environment that the child has developed, then every deviation has special importance. Rarely does the basic schema itself change, but rather variations can often be noticed in sections or parts. According to Lowenfeld and Brittain, "three principal forms of deviations are (a) exaggeration of important parts, (b) neglect or omission of unimportant or suppressed and (c) change of symbols for significant parts". (17) All these characteristics refer to the way in which adults see them. Children create size relationships which are real to them, therefore there are really no 'inaccurate proportions'.

Drawing reflects the child's total being, naturalistic laws mean nothing to children. They follow laws of their own when dealing with pictorial representation such as folding over, the base line, all of which I have discussed

Illustration No. 15 - Searching for the Lost Pencil



REPRODUCED FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND



earlier. We are given a great insight into the inner thought processes of children just by having an awareness of the variety and an understanding of the meaning of these types of space schema.

Another purpose of the space and time representations is communication. Children like to tell and listen to stories. This is one reason why several episodes are represented in one sequence of drawing. The pictures may be separate but they may not be divided by a line. Journeys, travel episodes or other events that require a sequence of time, belong in this type of category. The same series of separate pictures show a complete event, so the topic is usually the same.

The relationship between colour and an object will be discovered naturally by the child. "The child draws his environment more objectively and has developed definite space relationships". (18) The child has discovered that in colour too, there are definite relationships. The child repeats the same colours for the same objects just as he used the same schema for man and space again and again. When the child moves onto the next stage, his colour concept changes as he develops, but in the beginning the child's colour concept is often very rigid. Even in winter, a child may paint the ground green, but

sometimes he may paint snow on top of it therefore deviating from his colour schema. The child is then showing an experience which is of importance to him.

The establishment of a definite colour for an object and its constant repetition is part of the continuing development of the child's thinking process. The child now has the capacity to categorise, to group things into classes and to make generalisations: "What colour is the sky?" "The sky is blue." An important accomplishment and satisfying experience to the child is when he realises that the colour in his painting is the same as the object which he painted. He has begun to find some logical order in the world and is establishing concrete relationships with things around him.

"Each child develops his own colour relationship even though there are common colours used by most children to describe certain objects" (19). The origin of the individual's colour schema is possibly to be found in a visual or emotional concept of colour. Apparently the child's colour schema can determine the first meaningful relationship that the child has with an object. If his impression of colour is a muddy backyard, this will make a firm impression on him and all ground will be brown whether there is grass on it or not. Unless the child is

involved in an experience in which a change of colour becomes important, this colour schema does not change.

"As with professional artists, the design output of children is inseparably linked to their general expressiveness." (20) Thus the physical, mental, emotional and social development of the learners, which of course influences the subject matter of their expression, governs also the designs they produce.

It was noted in my previous chapter that picture making in general comes naturally to children at a surprisingly early age. "Some children will grasp a crayon and make marks with it before they are fifteen months old". (21) From the scribbling stage the child will eventually progress into the stage of symbols. Adults can see many design qualities in what a child of seven years paints and draws, often taking a great deal of interest in this naive or innate design sense of the child.

Today it is obvious that freshness and directness in expression have become important in the adult art world, and this freshness and directness can be seen in children's drawings during this schematic stage. "If you think of the schema as a repetition of a concept, we have

at this stage very important natural characteristic of a design concept, namely rhythm" (22). In children's art this rhythm can often be seen in the repetition of form. Drawing or painting by children of this age shows that the way children deal with space contributes greatly to this design. This is a natural repetition and manipulates forms on a conscious level.

We have come to expect that the child who is more developed intellectually to be in general more developed physically and because art is a reflection of the child's total development, we can expect his artistic achievements to follow the same general pattern. One of the indications of the child's growing intellect is his understanding of the world which surrounds him. Depending upon the emotional relationship and the intellectual comprehension of the child, an object may be meaningful or meaningless to a child. Piaget and Inhelder believed - "The continual assimilation of external factors is necessary for the development and modification of concepts." (23).

The ability to take in new information into the system is important if a child is to learn and grow intellectually. This information can be integrated and combined with the concepts already held. This new information is generally

taken in and once assimilated, provides new concepts and an altered schema. Whether or not the world has become meaningful to the child partially depends upon the degree to which he has formulated his concepts. It is to be expected when that in the drawings the child will express a definite symbol for the things he repeatedly represents. "When a schema is used in a rigid fashion it may actually be an escape from facing one's own feelings and emotions. On the other hand the flexible use of the schema is an important requisite for true self expression." (24)

If a child is free to express his own reactions without fear of being censored, many different changes and deviations in the schema can be observed in his work. Variations in the size of represented objects indicate their significance. It is not normal for a child of this age to concentrate on one part of the figure to such a degree that the body appears as an appendage. Continued and extremely distorted exaggerations are quite rare. However, ego-involved reactions to the environment, as in the example of the girl painting herself bigger than the rest of her school companions, continue to be typical at this age - seven to nine years of age.

The social growth of children can also be seen in their creative productions the child becomes more aware of himself in an objective way and has become less ego-

involved; he is beginning to view himself in relation to others as indicated by the use of the base line. It is necessary to identify one's own actions and to feel responsible for and to have some control over these actions before one develops a greater group consciousness.

"The development of perception is of prime importance since perception includes many of the ways in which a child acquaints himself with the environment." (25) The awareness of texture, sounds, smells, tastes and visual shapes and forms can all be shown in a variety of ways in drawing. Developing a sensitive perceptual awareness becomes crucial when we realise that it is the interaction between a child and his environment that can establish the kind of learning that takes place.

Toward the end of the schematic stage the child will express the desire to share with others of his own age in his play, activities etc. He will also want to belong to a group. The child now begins to abandon the use of schema in his work. Children's drawings are now increasingly influenced by the environment. In figure drawing the child should move from geometric lines to lines that describe the different sexes. They usually draw pants for boys and skirts for girls. These drawings

should also include hands as an important element in figure drawing. Details such as lips and cheeks should also be included and they should be able to relate to colour. This is the stage when the child is moving away from the use of schema and his work moves more toward realism.

Now we inevitably arrive at the stage of realism. The child should now have totally abandoned the use of schematic representations in his work. This stage occurs on average between the ages of nine to eleven years.

"During the schematic stage, one of the most important discoveries was that of order - order in space by using the base line to place elements on the same level. Now the base line is no longer sufficient for characterising the ground therefore the child stops using it and becomes aware of meaningful space that means he discovers the plane" (26).

We become aware of perceptual space in the children's drawings at this stage of development, when the child introduces distance by using a horizontal line. Now he begins to think that the sky goes all the way down and draws it coming down to the horizontal line, whereas in the schematic stage, the sky was portrayed as a line at the top of the page. The child does not rely on his

knowledge but rather on his observation and this is an important development.

The child now changes from what he knows of an object (his concept) to drawing what he sees. "The eyes are now immediately responsible for the kind of expression which the child uses." (27) The child now begins to observe objects getting smaller as they move into the distance. He also observes the changing of the forms and shapes of the eyes which make one individual different from another. Light and dark, shadows in the face and the motion of the hair when a person is running may also be observed.

However what is of most importance, is the change in space representation. There is a departure from conceptual space which we have seen during the schematic stage to a perceptual representation of space which is the child's perception of space through seeing.

The child, at this stage of development, also makes discoveries in relation to colour. He is aware that there are different variations of the one colour - like yellow-green or red yellow, but he is not aware that colour changes from light to the shadow. Therefore children at this stage of development have moved from colour object relationships to the characterisation of colour. They

will discover that the sky is a different blue to that of a river or lake.

Now I will discuss a piece of work produced at this stage of development (Illustration No. 16). This painting is called 'Standing in the Rain' and it was done by an eleven year old. In this painting the child begins to use details to characterise the self and the environment. We see detail in the faces of the people, in the umbrellas and rain coats. The child is still using a symbol to describe the nose, but the nose of the figure on the left is different from the noses of the central figures. The child has now moved from the use of geometric lines to using lines which characterise. This can be seen in the puddles where you can see light and dark areas. We see the disappearance of the base line and the use of a plane which he has shaded. There is also an awareness of perpetual space as the child has painted the figures smaller than the building in the background. The child uses characterisation in his work. He identifies himself with his drawing and he identifies with a group situation because of the different sizes of the children in his picture. Details retain their meaning when separated from the picture. For example, a mouth which has been painted in this picture, when isolated, still looks like a mouth. Exaggerations are evident also, but gradually these

Illustration No. 16 - Standing in the Rain





43.

exaggerations will be taken over by detail to emphasise the areas of importance to the child.

In my next chapter, I will discuss not only my own work with adolescents, but their art products at this stage of development. I am interested to explore whether the use of schemata is still evident in their work and if so, I hope to help these individuals draw what they see rather than what they know of an object.

Chapter 2

FOOTNOTES

1. Viktor Lowenfeld and Lambert W. Brittain Creative and Mental Growth 7th Edition. (Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc. 1982.) p.242.
2. Ibid., p.237.
3. Viktor Lowenfeld. The Lowenfeld Lectures. (Pennsylvania State University Press 1982). p.165.
4. Rhonda Kellogg. Analysing Children's Art (California Mayfield Publishing Co. 1969) p.158.
5. Ibid., p. 142.
6. Lowenfeld and Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth. p. 208.
7. Kellogg. Analysing Children's Art. p.162.
8. Lowenfeld. The Lowenfeld Lectures. p.212.
9. Lowenfeld and Brittain Creative and Mental Growth p.240.
10. Ibid., p.244.
11. Lowenfeld and Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth. 8th Edition (New York : Macmillan 1987) cited by Charles D. Gaitskell. Children and Their Art 3rd Ed. (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc. 1975) p.264.
12. Ibid., p.269.
13. Lowenfeld and Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth 8th Ed. p.267.
14. Lowenfeld and Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth. 7th Ed. p.251.
15. Ibid., p.271.



16. Lowenfeld and Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth p.250.
17. Ibid., p.274.
18. Lowenfeld. Lowenfeld Lectures p.26.
19. Lowenfeld and Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth 8th Ed. p.279.
20. Ibid., p.279.
21. Kellogg. Analysing Children's Art p.11.
22. Lowenfeld and Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth 8th Ed. p.230.
23. J. Piaget and Binhelder. Mental Imagery and the Child (New York : Basic Books 1971) cited by Lowenfeld and Brittain Creative and Mental Growth 7th Ed. (New York : Macmillan 1982) p.261.
24. Lowenfeld and Brittain. Creative and Mental Growth 8th Ed. p.276.
25. Lowenfeld. Lowenfeld Lectures p.269.
26. Ibid., p.274.
27. Ibid., p.276.

Chapter 3.
The Adolescent Stage

This chapter is concerned with adolescents and their art products. In the last two chapters I have discussed the different stages of a child's development with particular emphasis on the schematic stage. Some of the individuals in my first year class have not broken away from the use of symbols in their art work. I hope to discover why this has happened, as the use of schemata should have ended between the ages of nine to eleven years. I also wish to introduce a sequence of lessons that will help these children shift from the use of symbols and begin to draw what they see.

According to Lowenfeld, there are two stages which influence most of our growth -

The changes that occur during the scribbling stage when the child starts to name his scribbling, when his image relates to outside experience and no longer kinesthesia and during adolescence, when the imagery changes from unconscious to the conscious and adult awareness begins. (1)

The child has now arrived at a very difficult stage in his development. Many changes will come about and they may occur with great difficulty. This is the transition from childhood to adulthood. The child is beginning to recognise his own actions and is learning how to control them, but this awareness takes time. The child is not

only going through physical change, his perception of his environment also changes. It can be considered a time when an individual finds himself.

"The search for self-identity in adolescents is often accompanied by a great deal of experimentation." (2) The adolescent will try out a number of different forms of behaviour in order to discover what type of person he really is. To help this process, the adolescent will often adopt role models, for example, pop stars, teachers, friends, sportsmen. These children want to be accepted both by their fellow students and by their peers and therefore may change their behaviour, clothes etc. in order to be accepted. While these individuals are searching for identity, they are never sure what type of person they will become, or whether they will be successful and accepted into the adult world. They have learned to cope with being children. Now they have to find out whether they can cope with being adults.

In my classroom, there is a great divide between the sexes. Girls sit on one side of the room, boys on the other, yet each sex wants to be accepted by the other. There is one individual who is not accepted by either sex. He is totally alienated, therefore he wants acceptance from the teacher. Although children at this stage of

development may be disillusioned with their parents and teachers, they still need support and approval from both. This stage is of interest to me, because the children I am teaching, are at this stage of development. I hope to gain a greater understanding of teenagers and of the art products they produce.

Adolescence is often easily identified by the physical changes that occur in children. These changes begin, on average, between the ages of thirteen and seventeen. Physical changes bring about a greater awareness and most children are physically and mentally unprepared for them. Children at this stage tend to be hostile toward their parents, disillusioned with school and at times discouraged with themselves. Therefore, I feel that it is important to identify with teenagers and discuss not only the art products of other individuals in the class, but also the problems a teenager has in completing his art work.

The first year individual is quiet, reluctant to show his work or have any sort of outside evaluation made of his product. I have even caught children throwing their work in the bin, rather than have it evaluated. In contrast, the young child is eager to show his art product to those who will take the time to look at it. In my opinion, it

seems to be a very difficult stage where creativity is concerned. This may be because teenagers tend to push for perfection - their own standard of perfection in their work, therefore any end product that falls short of this perfection is dismissed by the teenager as being rubbish. For example, I did a sequence on shape with my first year class and because the end product was a selection of shapes, seen through a viewfinder and repeated across a page, they dismissed the end product. Acceptance of the end product only occurred when the class began to add colour to their pattern and when their work was displayed.

There is also the attitude which I have often come across - 'I cannot draw', 'I cannot paint'. This attitude could be because not only are they aware of the final product, they may lack confidence in their own creative ability.

During the schematic stage, the child develops his own colour relationships. He discovers this relationship between colour and an object through repetition of his colour schema. Now the child at this stage of development uses colour for its expressive qualities, to portray atmosphere, depth and different tones. The adolescent should be aware of different varieties of colour and colour families; he should use colour to express his relationship to the environment. He should now be

thinking that the green of the grass is different from that of the leaves on the trees and also that there are a large variety of different greens in the environment.

I have found from experience that students at this stage enjoy colour mixing, yet may encounter problems. During a lesson with a First Year group based on the colour wheel, I observed that not one student was capable of mixing tertiary colours without my help. Another class of First Year students encountered different problems in colour mixing. When identifying and recording colours from a piece of fruit using a viewfinder, the overall result showed that the class had difficulty in mixing accurate colours and did not really identify the different varieties of one colour. Illustration No. 17 shows that the student who was working from an apple, only recorded two types of green with a little yellow and brown added, although there was a variety of greens present.

Illustration No. 18 shows that the second student, who was working from a banana, has successfully identified and recorded a wider range of yellows and browns.

In the treatment of space, changes occur as the adolescent should now begin to understand perspective and diminish the size of objects in the background of a composition. He/she may also change the intensity of colour, line and

Illustration No. 17

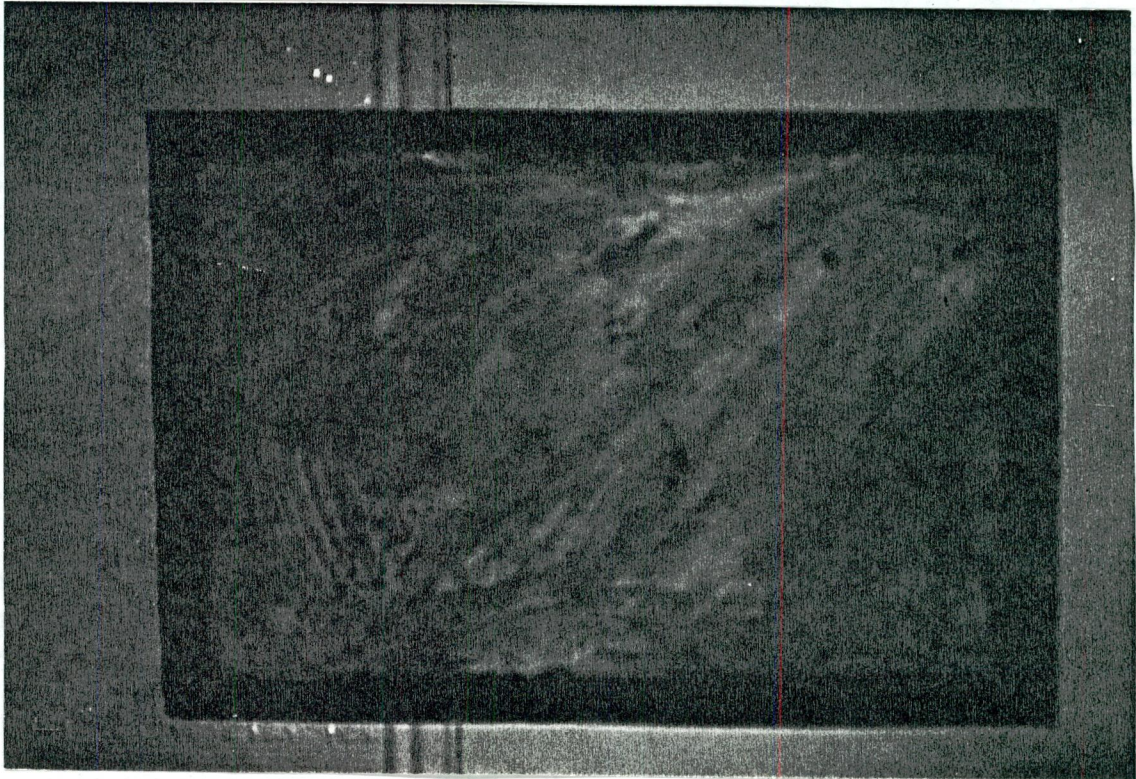
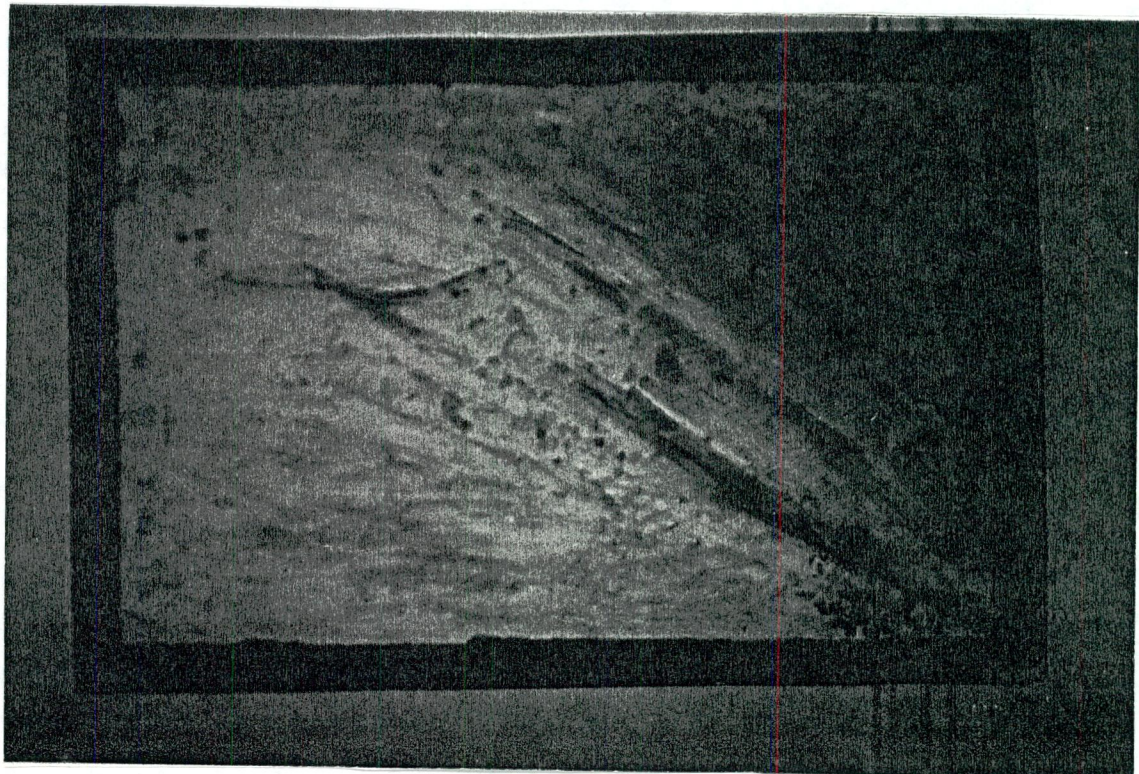


Illustration No. 18.





tone when describing distant objects; therefore the horizontal line should be present and the base line, which is a characteristic of the schematic stage, should no longer be evident in their work.

When life drawing, children, at this stage of development, now begin to identify and draw the various joints of the body. They may also portray the tonal qualities of both the figure and folds of the clothing. Characteristics, such as height, age and sex, will generally be present in their work. The head and neck should be in proportion to the body with no exaggeration of body parts. The adolescent usually shows a sensitivity when working from the figure; for example there may no longer be a stiffness in their drawing. There should also be an awareness of where each feature is placed on the head and details such as cheeks and eyelashes may also be evident in their work.

I have now been teaching for five months in a co-educational school in Baldoyle. During this time, I have discovered that some of the students in my class have been using symbols in their work. This first came to my attention during a lesson with a First Year group. The class had to make two drawings of a shoe from different angles. They had to identify and record the different shapes within the shoe, using line. For the first drawing

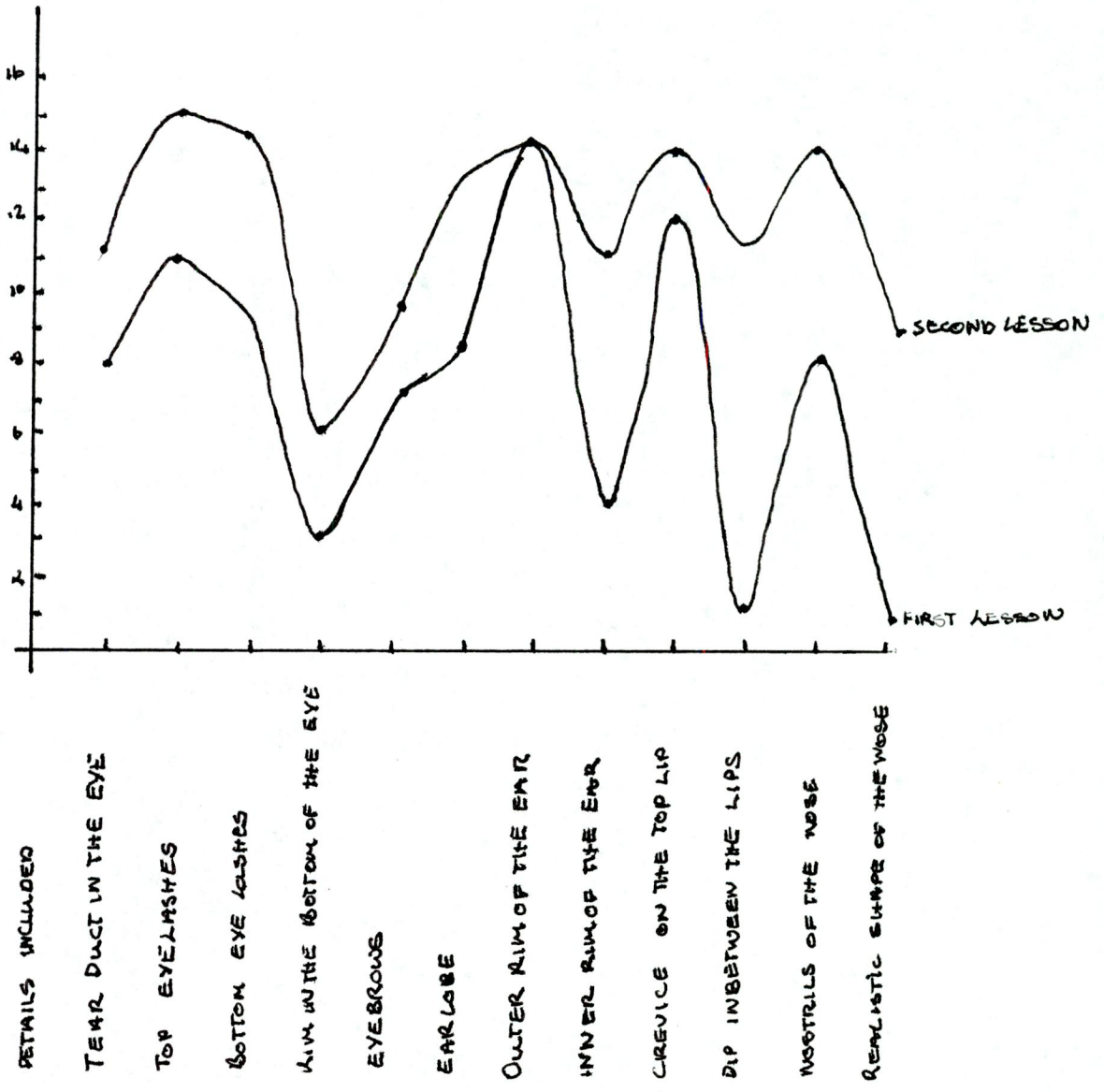
the shoe was placed in a horizontal position on the table. It was then turned at an angle for the second drawing.

I noted that the students encountered a variety of problems. For example, the class exaggerated certain parts of the shoe and also included details that were not present. The class also found it difficult to draw the shoe at an angle. This led to images that were distorted and which did not resemble the object. The overall results showed that these students had not shifted from drawing what they already know about an object (their concept of the shoe), to drawing what they could actually see and identify new information.

Therefore I decided to introduce a sequence of lessons dealing with proportion, form and tone to help the First Year class draw what they saw rather than use schemata in their work. In the first lesson, the class were asked to complete four ten minute line drawings of the eye, ear, nose and mouth, from memory. During the introduction, we discussed shape and form, although I did not relate these elements to the face, as I wanted to observe the variety of detail each individual included in his/her drawing; for example, the accuracy of the features which they included. This would enable me to gain a greater insight into the perceptual awareness of each student.

In the second lesson, the students worked from their own face, using a mirror, so that they could actually see each feature in detail. The class had to identify and record each form, incorporating different tones into each feature. During the introduction, the class identified the tonal qualities of an object as well as the different tones present in the face. From analysing the results, I discovered that each student omitted two or more details. The results from both classes, shown in the table below and the overall results, show that more details were included in the second lesson.

From looking at the table, the most marked improvement is evident in the drawing of the mouth, as only one student included the slight dip in between the lips in the first lesson and the majority identified this subtle detail in the second lesson. The number of students that (1) drew the crevice between the top lip and the base of the nose (2), included the eyebrows, only increased by two. The class had problems drawing the nose and the number of students that improved their description of the nose, increased from one to nine. However, some of the students used the same schemata for the features in both lessons. (Illustration No. 19). In this illustration the symbol for the nose is the same in both finished pieces. It is a very simplified symbol, consisting of two long diagonals



FIFTEEN STUDENTS FIRST YEAR

Illustration No. 19a : From Memory

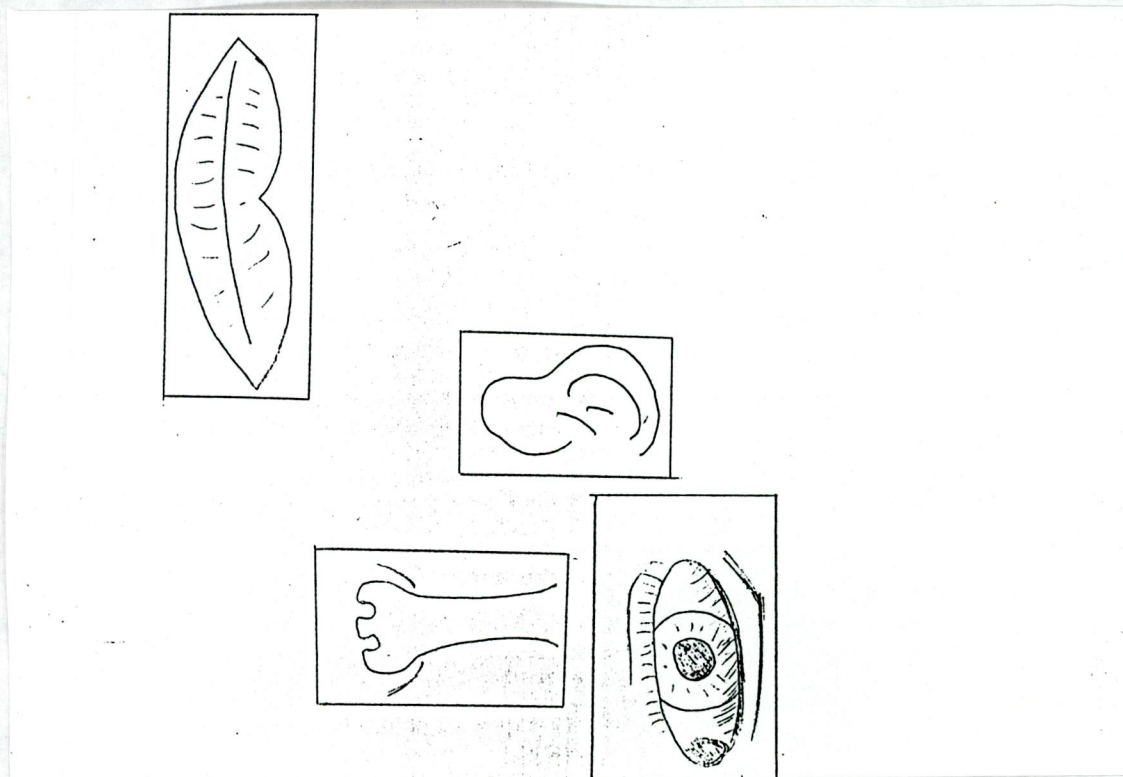
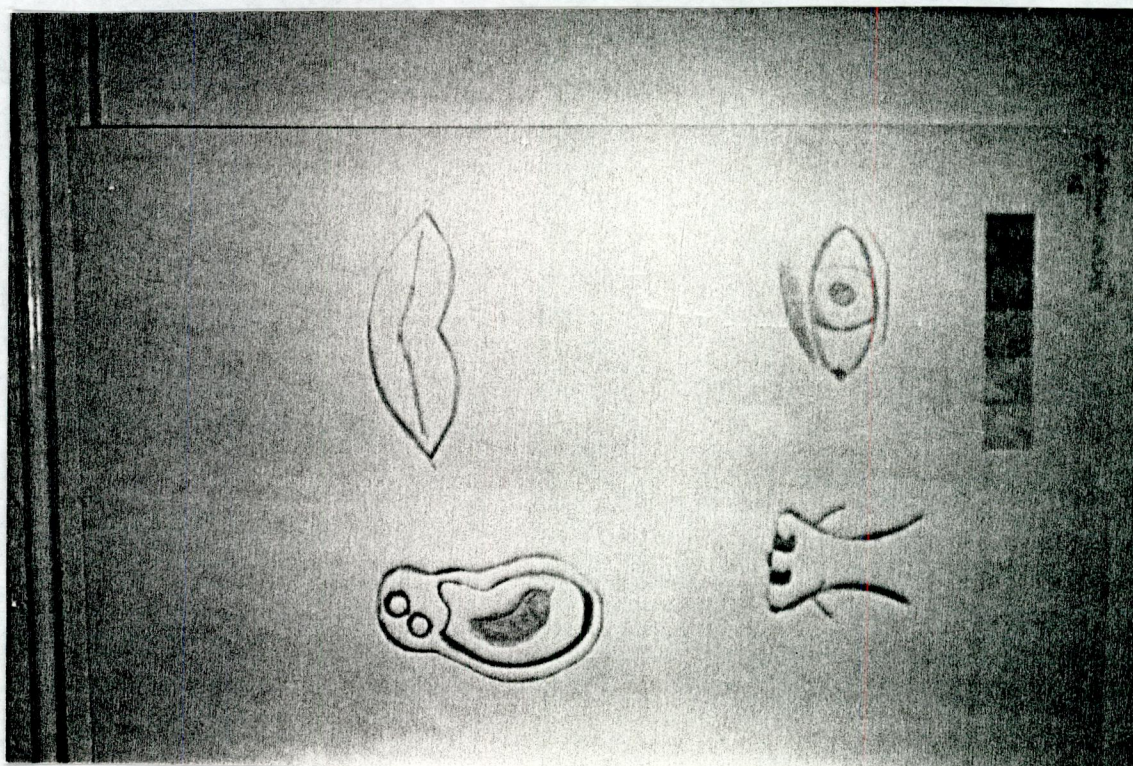
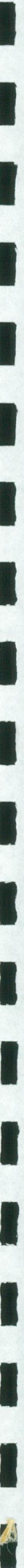


Illustration No. 19b : Using A Mirror





with a circular shape at the base. There is very little deviation in the symbols used for the eye and mouth in both finished drawings. The eye in the first study has a larger eye duct and also contains eyelashes, while the eye in the second drawing is devoid of eyelashes, but contains a smaller tear duct. In both end products, the overall shape of the eye and eyebrows is the same. Both symbols for the mouth are identical except for the slight dip in between the lips which is evident in the second drawing. The only form which has been totally changed is that of the ear. The student encountered many problems drawing the ear in the first lesson, therefore she spent more time recording this form correctly in the second lesson.

During the latter half of the first lesson, the students had to complete a self-portrait from memory. The class had no previous knowledge of proportions, structure or where each feature should be placed on the face. Only one individual in the class was successful in completing this exercise. In this example (Illustration 20), the student has not only identified and recorded the different features but also included details such as freckles, eye lashes and tear ducts. The finished drawing actually resembles the individual and contains correct proportions (with the exception of the ears). He also attempted to

achieve depth in his portrait by using a variety of lines and tone in certain areas. Therefore this individual is perceptually aware of himself and there is no evidence of schemata in his work.

In contrast, Illustration 21 shows lack of proportion and structure. Exaggeration is evident in both the eyes and mouth. Although the ears are included, these forms seem very small and insignificant in comparison to the rest of the features. This self portrait contains simplified features with very little detail included.

In the third lesson, the class were working from the face using a mirror. At the beginning of the lesson, each student received a piece of string which was used to calculate where the various features were placed on the face. The only advice I gave to the students during this exercise was to demonstrate how to use the string as a measuring device.

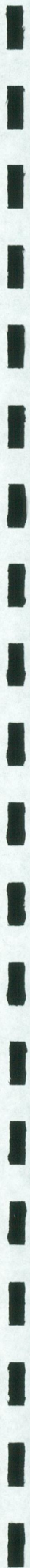
The student who had used schemata in Illustration No. 19 has now begun to include correct proportions in her self portrait, as well as realistic features. In Illustration No. 22, the student has captured the proportional relationships between the facial features with relative accuracy. The overall shape of the eyes has changed and

Illustration No. 20



Illustration No. 21





she has included rims at the bottom of both eyes, tear ducts and top and bottom eyelashes. The symbol for the eyebrows used in the previous drawings has also changed from a single line to describe the eyebrows, to small individual lines. Her symbol for the nose has moved from that of a simplified structure to a more complex realistic form. She has attempted to show structure in the nose by using lines to emphasise its roundness. The mouth and ears are still simplified yet they are different from the symbols used in the first drawings. The student still encountered problems with the general shape of the head and neck.

The student in the previous class, who completed this exercise successfully, (Illustration No. 20) encountered no major problems in this lesson. His self portrait contains both correct proportions and structure (Illustration No. 22). This student has previously had difficulty drawing the ears, but now they are placed correctly on the face. His ears are actually that size and he has obviously found using a string as a measuring device, a great help. Even though the student had made overall progress, I was surprised that the original self portrait resembled him more.

There was an improvement in the work of the student who

Illustration No.22

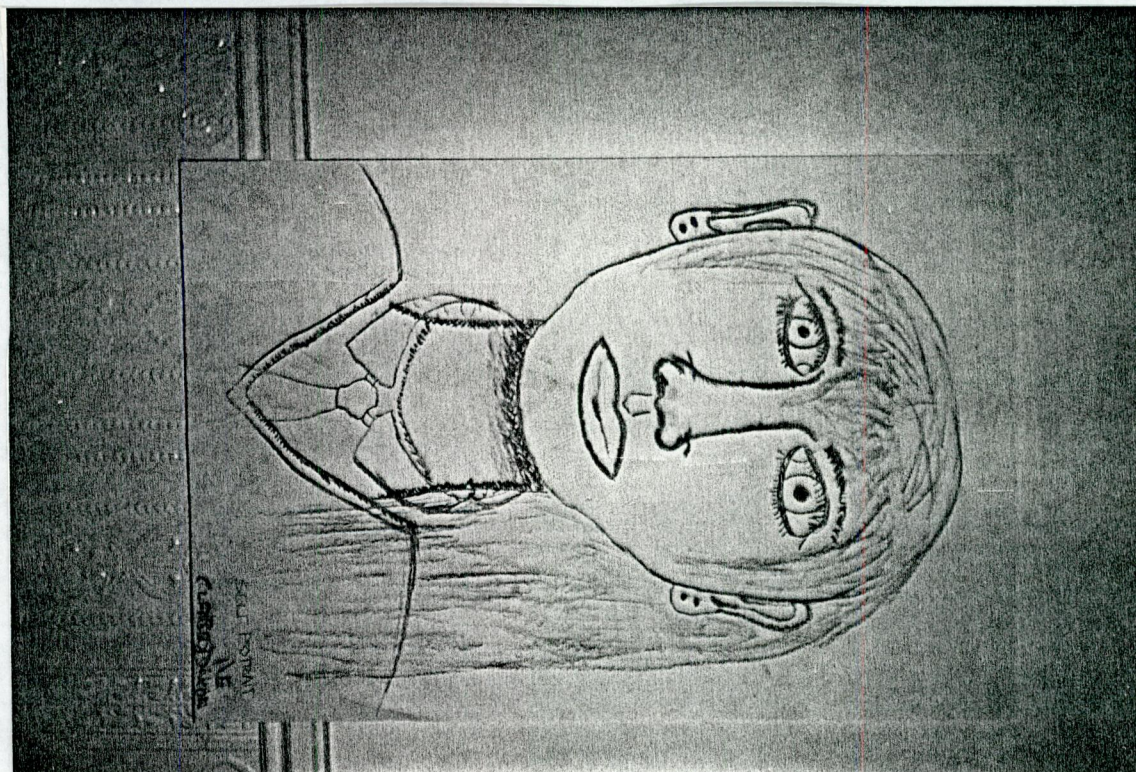
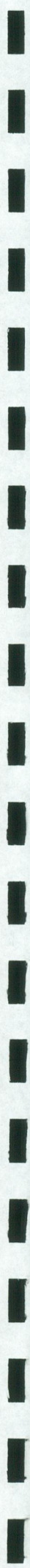


Illustration No. 23





did the self portrait in Illustration No. 21. He has now gained a greater understanding of proportion and this awareness is evident in his second drawing, (Illustration No. 23). The head is now in proportion to the neck and each feature is placed correctly on the face.

Exaggeration of forms is not evident in his work and he is now beginning to draw more realistic features. In his first portrait, this student had problems drawing the ears and even though he identified and recorded more details, the ears are still not in proportion to the other features of the face.

Over all there was an improvement in the self portraits done by the class, although there is one student who still continues to use schemata in her work, (Illustration No. 24). In her self portrait completed from memory, she has used symbols to describe the eyes, nose and mouth. Even the general shapes of the face and hair are similar. The eyes are slanted, showing half a pupil, although they do contain rims on the bottom of the eyes, tear ducts and upper eyelashes. The eyebrows are thick and long and almost meet at a point at the top of the nose. The nose is thin at the top and ends with a wide base containing two nostrils. The mouth is a simplified shape containing a crevice on the upper lip and the ears contain no detail. The self portrait completed in the second lesson,

contains exactly the same symbols for the eyes, but now has included top and bottom eyelashes. (Illustration No. 25). The eyebrows are also identical to the previous self portrait but in the second drawing, they are placed further away from the eyes. The top of the nose meets the eyebrows in the second drawing and is more structured, but the basic symbol is still the same. The symbols for the mouth are identical in both drawings but there are differences in the ears. In the first drawing the ears are covered by the hair and contain no detail, whereas in the second portrait they are clearly seen and details have been identified and recorded.

Towards the end of this lesson, I got this student to draw a portrait of a student sitting beside her. Before she began drawing, I pointed out in detail, the features of the model's face. We examined the structure of the student's nose, eyes, ears and mouth and the over all shape of the face. I pointed out details such as freckles, cheek bones etc. and the student was aware of all these characteristics.

This drawing shows that the student worked with the same schemata used in her previous drawings (Illustrations No. 26). The proportions are similar with the exception of

Illustration No. 24

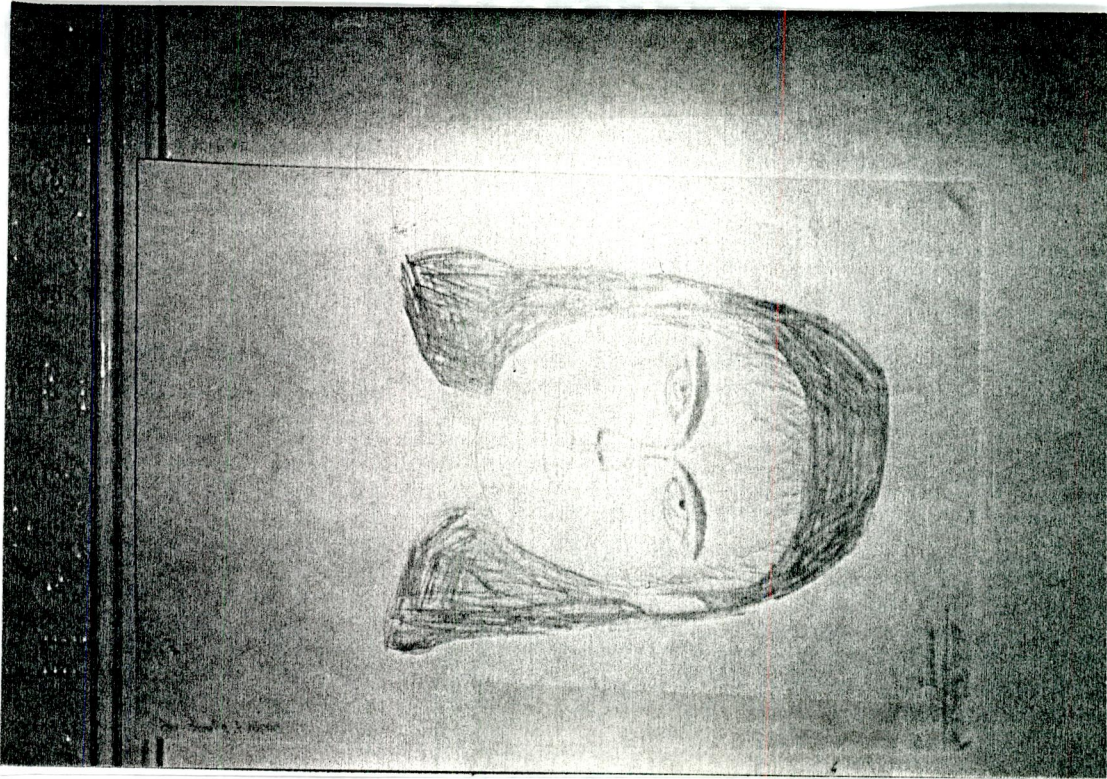


Illustration No. 25

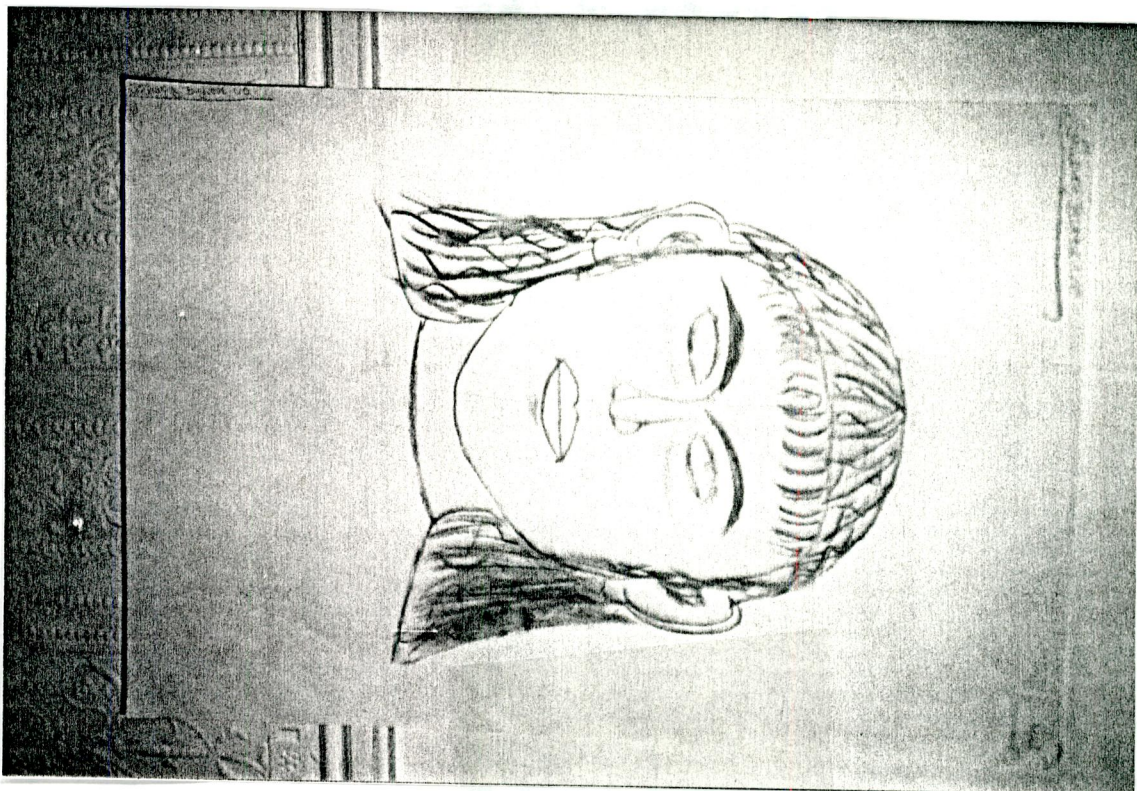




Illustration No. 26





the neck, which is drawn differently in the second self portrait. In her third drawing, the face has also changed from a round to an oval shape that points at the chin. The symbols for the nose and ears are similar in the second and third self portraits, but the eyes are identical in all three drawings. The only change that the student has made is in her last drawing where the shape of the mouth is smaller and the eyebrows now meet at the top of the nose.

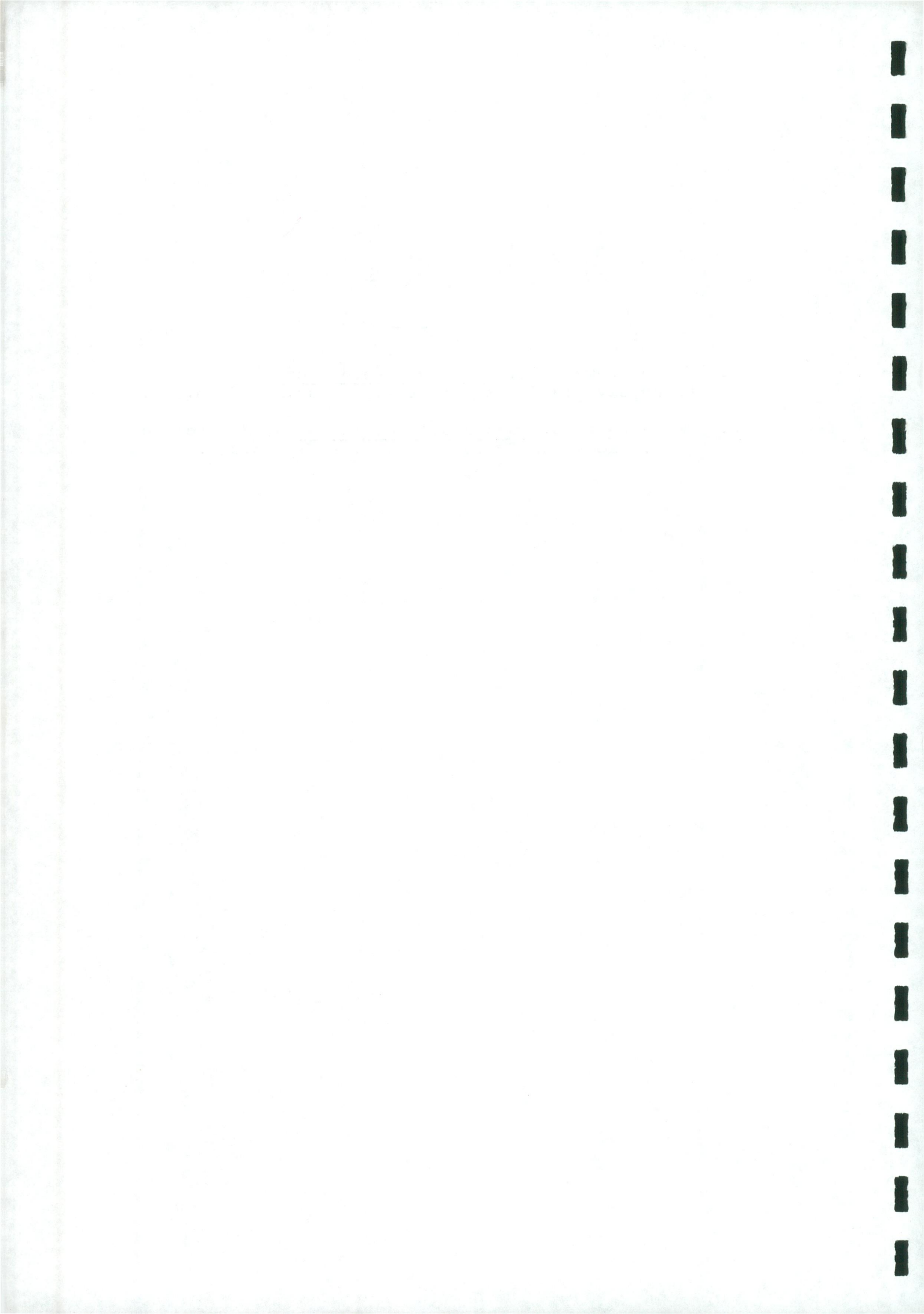
I do not know why this student continues to use schemata in her work. She is a very quiet child who does not intermingle socially with her fellow students. She comes from a middle class family and both of her parents are gentle people. This student performs well in all her other subjects and is very co-operative in class.

In my opinion, as there seem to be no problems in her family life, the problem may be a social one. It may be her withdrawn timid nature coming through in her work. From examining the portrait, I have come to the conclusion that this student may not like herself very much. This may be because she is not very popular, only having one or two friends.

Chapter 3

FOOTNOTES

1. Viktor Lowenfeld. The Lowenfeld Lectures.
(Pennsylvania State University Press. 1982) p.304.
2. David Fontana. Psychology for Teachers 2nd Edition
(U.K. Macmillan Publishers Ltd. 1981) p.249.



CONCLUSION

It is easy to see that the work of young children is closely related to their development. By this I mean that their feelings, emotions and understanding of the world around them, are clearly reflected in their art products. In the same way, the products of young adolescents reflect their reaction to their environment. Just as there are great differences in intellectual ability and physical development, there are also differences, just as great, in the art products of adolescents.

During adolescence, we find many new problems arising and many changes occurring both in themselves and in the relationship to their peers and adults. Boys and girls alike are beginning to break numerous childhood ties to the family and are questioning adult authority. One of the reasons I introduced a sequence of lessons whereby my First Year class were making a series of self portraits, is because at this stage of development the students are striving for self identity and independence. In addition to their concern about personal appearance and their idealism and romantic feelings about becoming adult members of society, there is also fear and insecurity about the beginning stages of leaving childhood. The

adolescent needs to come to terms with himself and be able to express intense feelings that need a constructive outlet. During this sequence, the class had the freedom to introduce their own thoughts, feelings and emotions about themselves in their work.

During the first lesson, the class had to draw a self-portrait from memory. The students found this task difficult to complete and some of the work contained very simplified forms, while others were crude caricatures emphasising particular features and totally devoid of correct proportions. However, there was a marked improvement in the work done from the first to the third lesson. This may be because during the second lesson, the class were using a mirror while doing their self portraits. The class had to identify and record each form incorporating different tones into each feature. At the beginning of the lesson, the students identified different tones on the face. However, we did not discuss where each form should be placed on the head.

In the third lesson, the class were again using a mirror. During the introduction, each student received a piece of string which was used to calculate where each feature was to be placed on the face. I demonstrated how the string

was to be used as a measuring device. Therefore the class had to discover for themselves the correct proportions of the head and because this information was obtained by the students, it would be readily assimilated and used in their self portraits.

As children change, so does their art. They draw in predictable ways going through fairly definite stages, starting with their first marks on paper and progressing through adolescence. It is sometimes difficult to tell where one stage of development stops and another begins, that is that growth in art is continuous and the stages are typical mid points in the course of development. However, not all children move from one stage to another at exactly the same time, yet a description of each stage will give us a better understanding of the general characteristics of the child and his art at any particular time.

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