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BARBARA RAE





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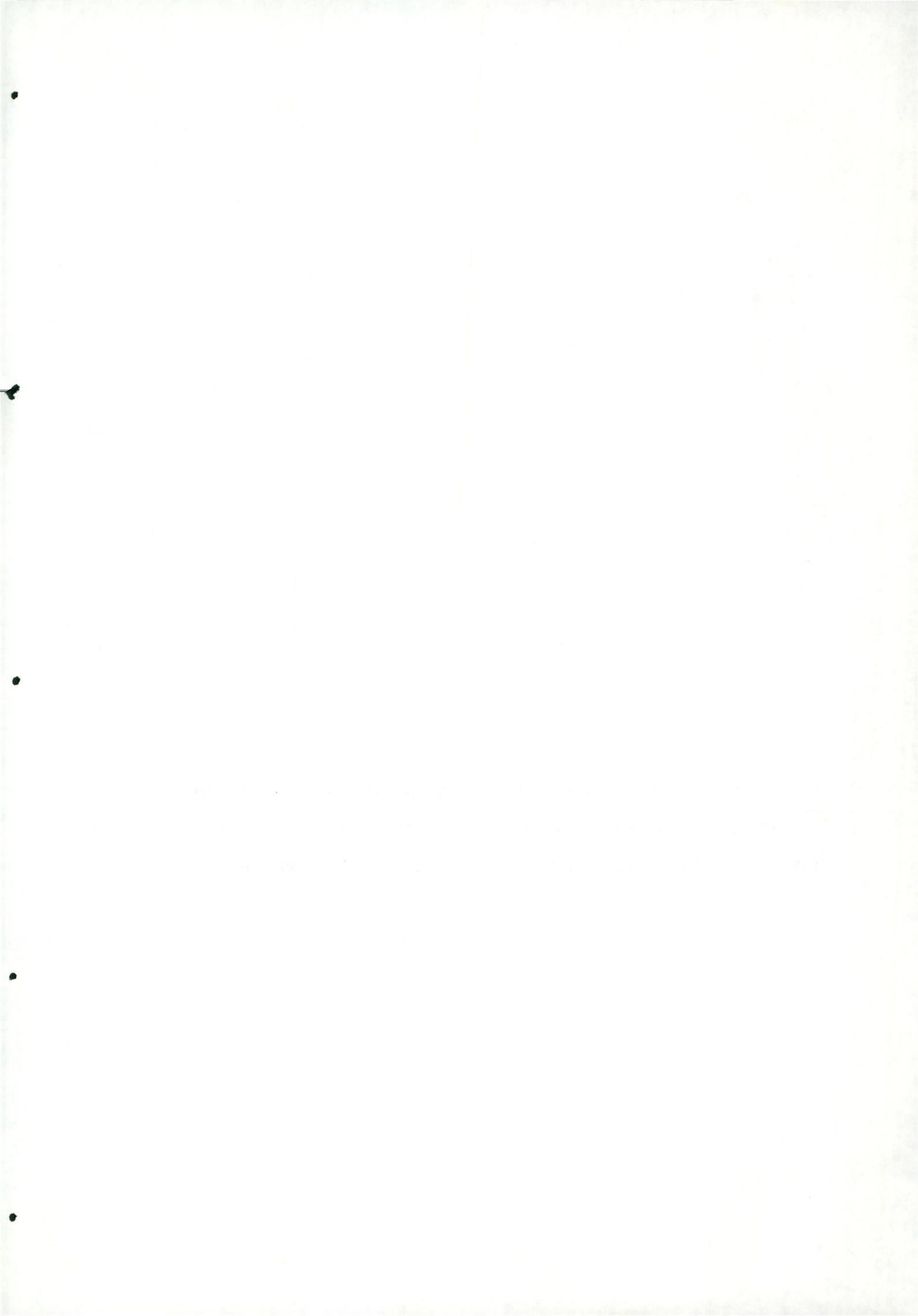
Barbara Rae:
Painter

by
Meriel Nicoll

Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Complementary Studies
in Candidacy for the Degree of Bachelor of Art, 1995

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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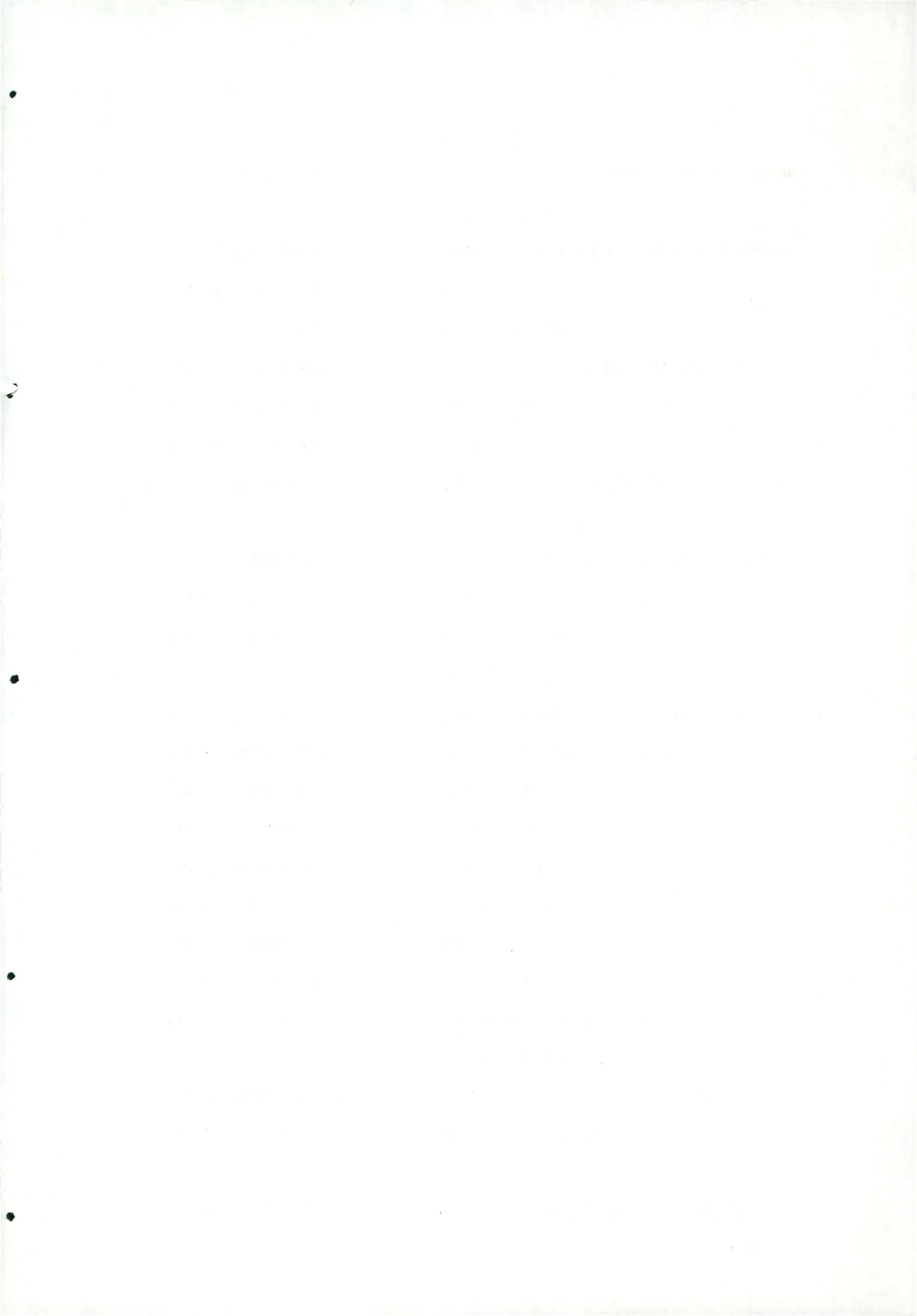
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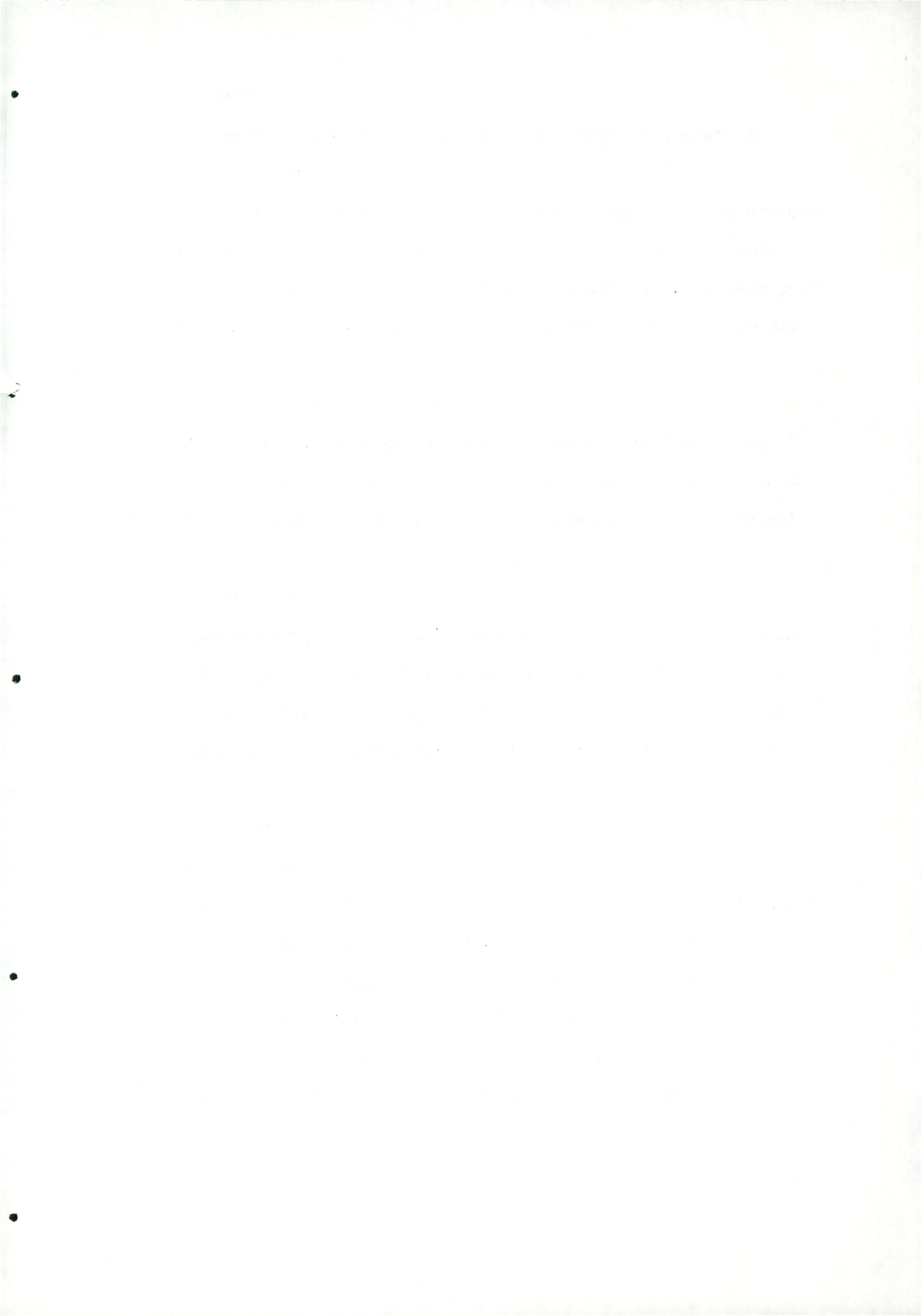
INTRODUCTION

Barbara Rae was born in 1943 and grew up in Crieff, Perthshire. She studied at Edinburgh College of Art (1961-65). Barbara Rae's training was within a realistic, figurative tradition and her work had remained faithful to the observation of the natural form. Under Sir William Gillies, she had a strong academic training. After finishing college, she went into Secondary School art education (1968-72). Since then, she has taught in the drawing and painting department at Glasgow School of Art. She has won many awards for her painting and was elected President of the Society of Scottish Artists in 1993.

Barbara Rae has an impressive exhibition record, having shown her work in prestigious galleries and art fairs throughout Britain and abroad. She has strong links with the Scottish Gallery and her work is represented in many private and public collections, both in Britain and abroad, including the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and the British Museum.

The aim, in this paper, is not to attempt to explain what message her paintings carry. There is no definite interpretation. Barbara Rae's work is multi-layered and there are many different levels of response, the most immediate being purely the personal enjoyment of colour and surface she creates.

I was initially drawn to Barbara Rae's work for two reasons. The first was her intense use of colour and texture. The second was a sense of being enveloped in the landscape. The first chapter explores who Barbara Rae has been influenced by from various periods, looking at Scottish painters and then seeing the English and European painters who have influenced her or have similar ways of working. Paintings that have a direct link with the work of Barbara Rae are compared.

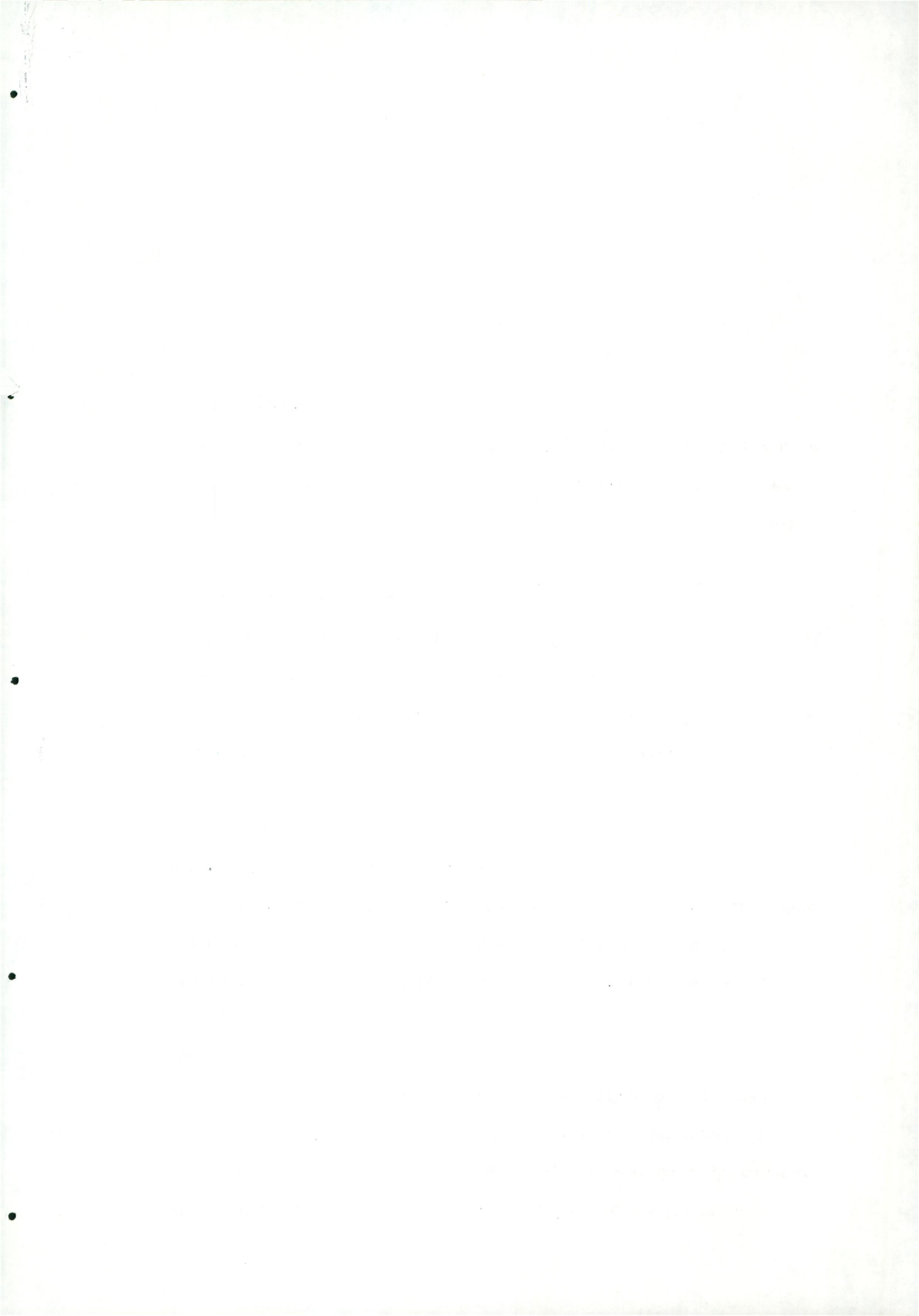


The following chapter looks at themes and sources that have been the inspiration of Barbara Rae's work. As a much travelled painter, Barbara Rae celebrates the character of many places - not only her home land of Scotland but also including Spain. Her work shows many different sources but the main theme running through all her work is concerned with 'Man's mark in the landscape'.

The final chapter looks at the process of work, starting with the monoprints - the working process that Barbara Rae uses and how that has evolved by introducing a vibrant palette since her visits to Spain. *Collage* and texture is such a dominant feature in Barbara Rae's work and this has expanded from her student days up to her most recent paintings

Most of the published information occurs in critical reviews, newspapers and art magazines. A further vital dimension was arrived at by attending the Éigse '94, Carlow Arts' Festival. where Barbara Rae gave a talk about her work. This was followed by a visit to Scotland, meeting the artist in her studio in Glasgow, recording an interview and travelling to Edinburgh to research further source material.

Finally, there is a summary of how, by researching and compiling this thesis, I found that the work of Barbara Rae's paintings go beyond the physical imagery; they leave marks of the survival of the human spirit so that, despite death, the spirit lives on in the land in an organic form.



CHAPTER I

Influences

There are a varied range of painters that influenced Barbara Rae. The common thread being that, mostly, they were from the tradition of landscape painting. If landscape painting occupies a special place in Scottish painting, it does so perhaps because it focuses the convergent forces of tradition and identity. On one level, landscape focuses identity: painters painting their own environment are not merely representing what is there, they are commenting on their own relationship with it and perhaps stating ownership or possession. Vivid bold colour and painterly manner are often evidence of expressing a national identity.

The new century was greeted with a sense of optimism and excitement. In Scottish painting, the influence of a group of artists from the west of the country (known collectively as the 'Glasgow Boys') was still much in evidence. Active from the 1880s, they had looked initially to figures such as the French artists Courbet, Corot and Bastien-Lepage for inspiration, as well as to Japan and the Far East. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that, by the turn of the century, much of their most innovative work had already been done. With a few exceptions, many turned to formula painting, or ended their careers as fashionable portraitists.

William MacTaggart was a dominant figure in landscape painting. His work of the late 1890s, characterised by a high-keyed palette and exuberant brushwork, assumed the Colourists mantle. The Scottish Colourists were a group of artists - S.J. Peploe, F.C.B. Cadell, Leslie Hunter and J.D. Fergusson. They were influenced by the impact of contemporary French painting. Many of them made regular visits to France and their exposure to Fauve and Cubist painting in particular led them to a style of painting based on intuitive use of colour and fluid, luxurious handling of paint. It was not until 1924 that the four first exhibited together (in France) and indeed the term 'Scottish Colourists' appears to have been first used in 1948, when only Fergusson was still alive.

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The following table shows the revenue generated from various sources during the quarter. The revenue is broken down by product line and region. The total revenue for the quarter is \$1,200,000. The revenue is primarily generated from the North and West regions, with the North region contributing the largest share. The revenue is also primarily generated from the Electronics and Software product lines. The revenue is expected to increase in the next quarter due to the launch of new products and the expansion of the sales team.

The following table shows the costs and expenses incurred during the quarter. The costs are broken down by department and category. The total costs for the quarter are \$800,000. The costs are primarily incurred by the Sales and Marketing departments, with the Sales department contributing the largest share. The costs are also primarily incurred for salaries and benefits, advertising, and travel. The costs are expected to decrease in the next quarter due to the implementation of cost-saving measures and the reduction of advertising spend.

However, in contrast to the later work of many of the 'Glasgow Boys', the Colourists maintained a degree of freshness and originality, and, by the 1920s, they had firmly established themselves at the forefront of the Scottish art world. Their taste for rich colour and their insistence on the qualities of the paint itself were their lasting legacies.

The aesthetic created by these artists was handed down to the succeeding generation: four painters in particular assumed the colour mantle - William MacTaggart, Anne Redpath, John Maxwell and Sir William Gillies.

Although the four were all friends and colleagues, their work developed in very different ways, drawing on the colourists' ethos, but mixing it with a wide range of other influences. William MacTaggart's early work (Fig. 1) certainly bears the traces of both Peplow and Hunter, but the Norwegian master, Edvard Munch (whose work was exhibited in Edinburgh in 1931) together with painters such as Nolde and Kirchner, served to reinforce the expressionist bias in MacTaggart's art. The 1952 Roualt exhibition in Paris was to profoundly influence him, and his later work reflected Roualt's glowing use of colour and freedom, which conveys a sense of celebration and delight in the world about him.

By contrast, the paintings of John Maxwell are not so much concerned with the real world as with the realm of the imagination. A lyrical artist, influenced by Chagall, Klee, and Redon among others, he transformed everyday subjects into magical, dreamlike pictures. A powerful colourist, his use of impasto latterly became more pronounced until, towards the end of his life, his works appear almost like reliefs.

Redpath resumed painting in 1934 (Fig. 2), following her return from France to her native Border Country. Her work at this time was muted in colour, but foreign travel and her own studies led her to adopt a palette of greater contrasts which was saturated with strong colour. Redpath and Gillies shared a love of landscape and it is for his

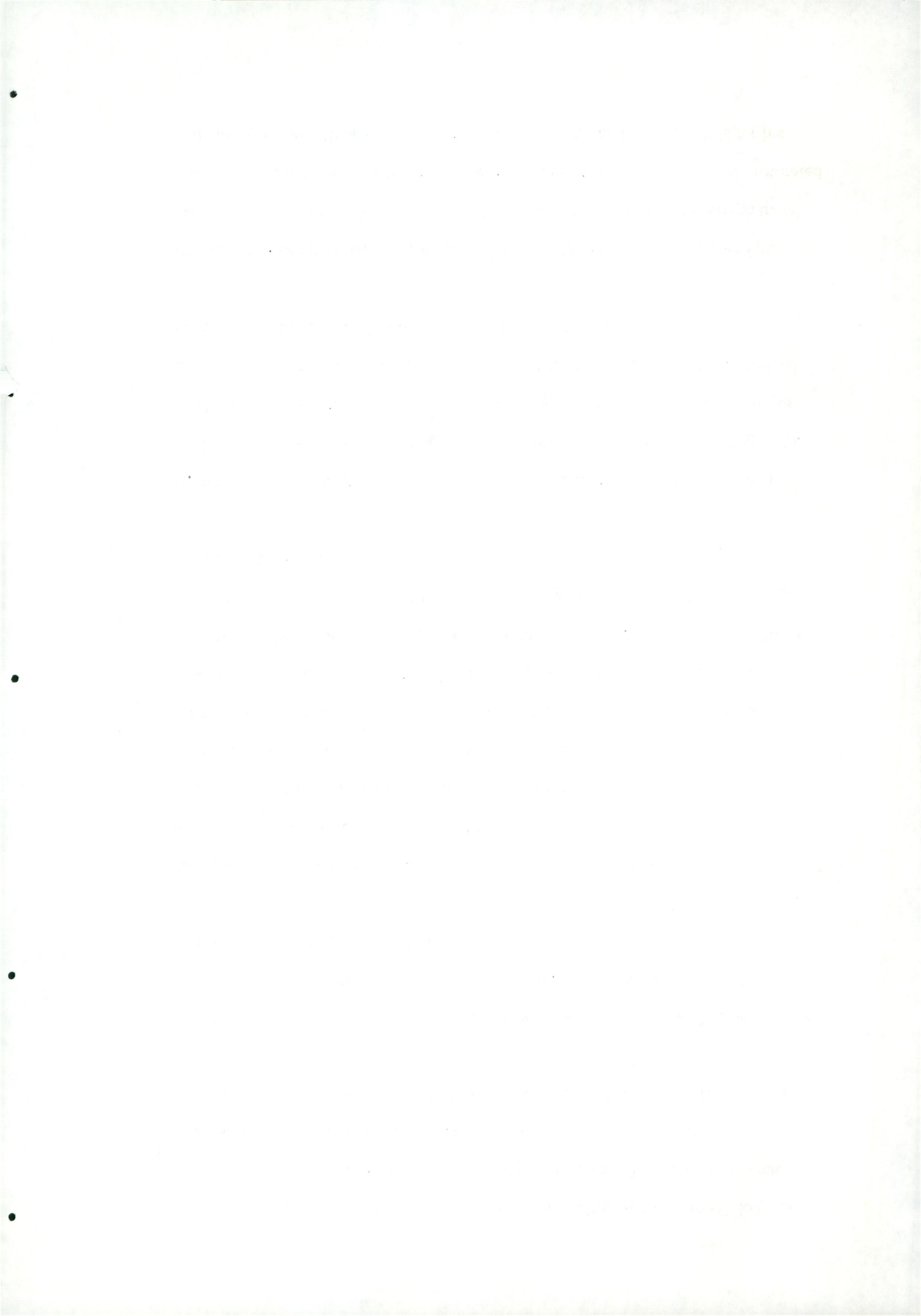




Fig. 1.

William MacTaggart

Still Life, Oil On Canvas





Fig. 2.

Anne Redpath

Black & White, oil on canvas.

myriad depictions of the Scottish lowlands in both water-colour and oil that Gillies is best remembered.

Sir William Gillies was the one who particularly influenced Barbara Rae. He studied in Paris for a year with the Cubist painter Andre Lhote. Although adopting a Cubist style after his time in France, on returning to Scotland Gillies soon turned instead to a more naturalistic treatment in his paintings of Still Lifes and Scottish landscapes. The Munch exhibition of 1930 was a revelation to him and he plunged into a series of works which are full of emotion translated through expressionist brushwork and brooding colour.

Still Lifes were the predominant theme throughout his long career. He makes a statement from a few simple elements arranged on a table top. In "SHADOWED INTERIOR" (Fig. 3), the overall warm tonality acts as a perfect foil to the vivid blues on the central objects, which seem to leap out of the picture. It is somewhat unusual for Gillies to use such a clearly-defined compositional structure in his Still Lifes, often preferring to create a flattened spatial perspective where the structure was less pronounced as in "THE GREEN DISH" (Fig. 4). Towards the end of the 1930s, the more controlled styles of Bonnard and Bracque surfaced in his painting, forms were simplified, and the perspective in his Still Lifes tipped up to give geometry to the composition.

Barbara Rae takes elements of landscape, interprets them and recombines them as a poet would do, often using *collage*, but the mood, tonality and essential structure of her images belong clearly to the same tradition, established in the work of Gillies. Gillies was still the head of painting in the early sixties when Barbara Rae was a student at the Edinburgh School of Art.

Gillies could never resist the pull of the natural world as in "LANDSCAPE 1932" (Fig. 5) where he remained realistic in his work but was ever striving to make his work simple and fresh. In "THE STREET" (Fig. 6), his simple depiction of the trees, by just the barest of line is very similar to Barbara Rae's Spanish work. Gillies was striving for simplicity

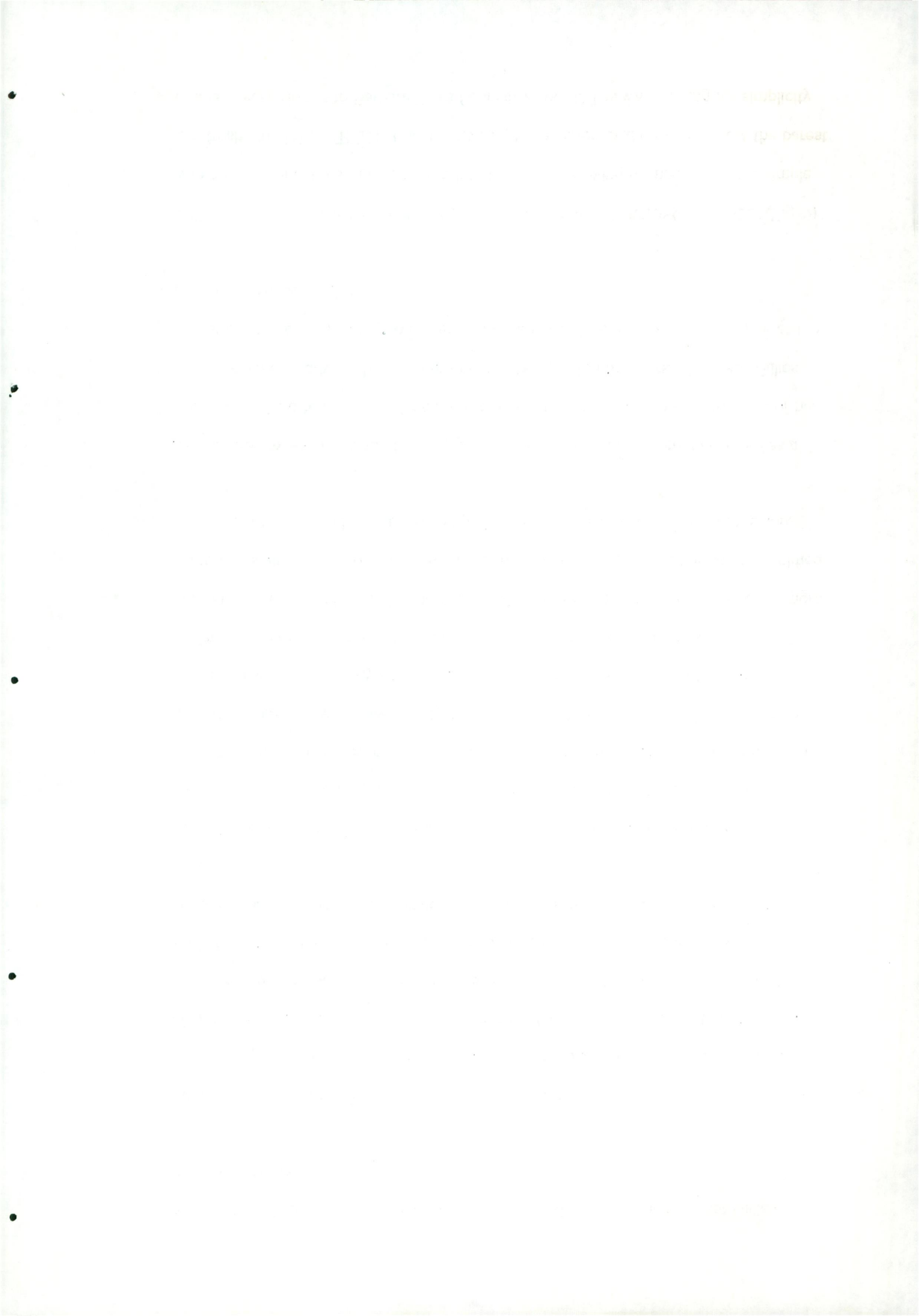




Fig. 3.
William Gillies
SHADOWED INTERIOR

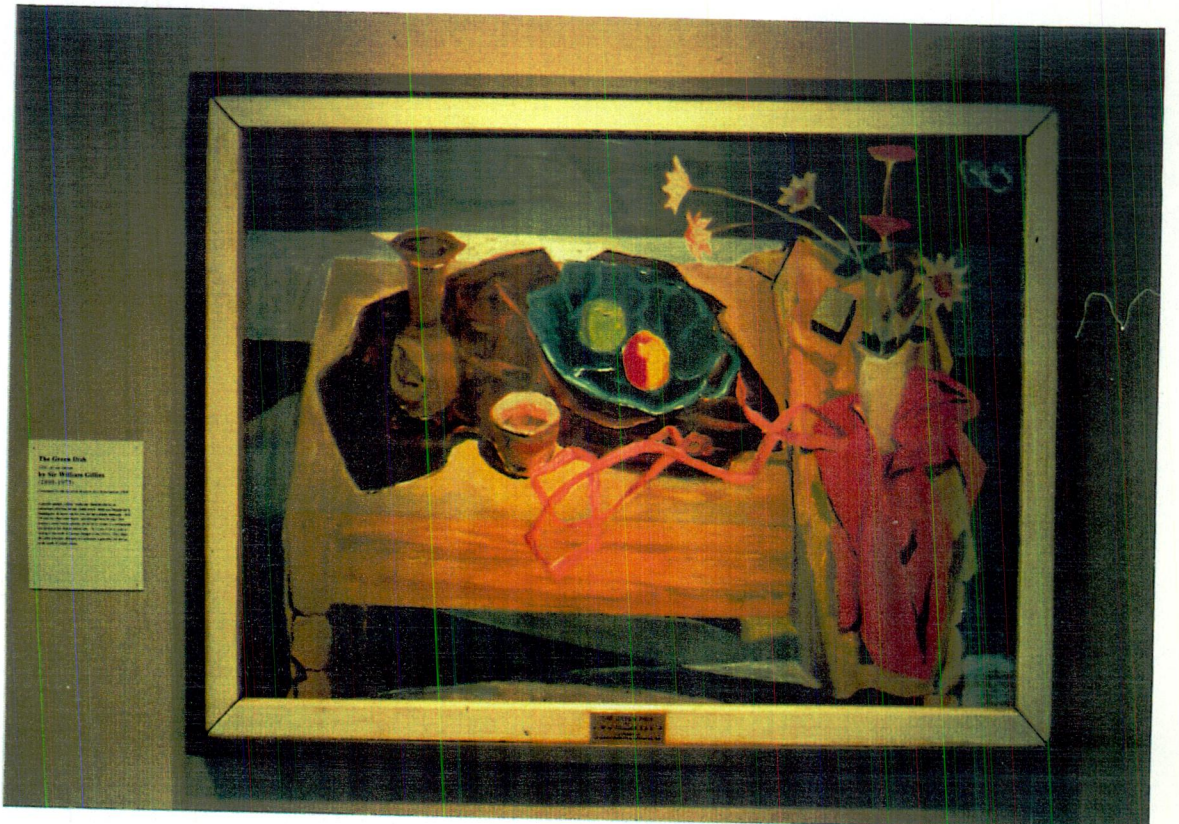


Fig. 4.
William Gillies
THE GREEN DISH

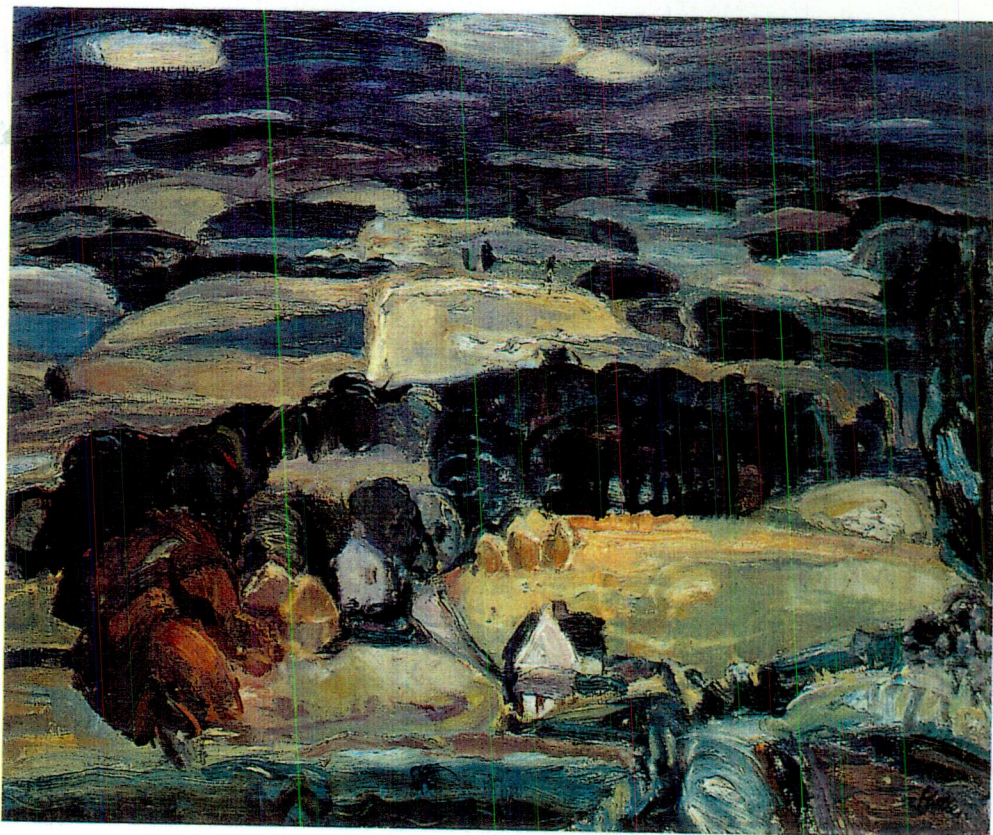


Fig. 5.
William Gillies
LANDSCAPE

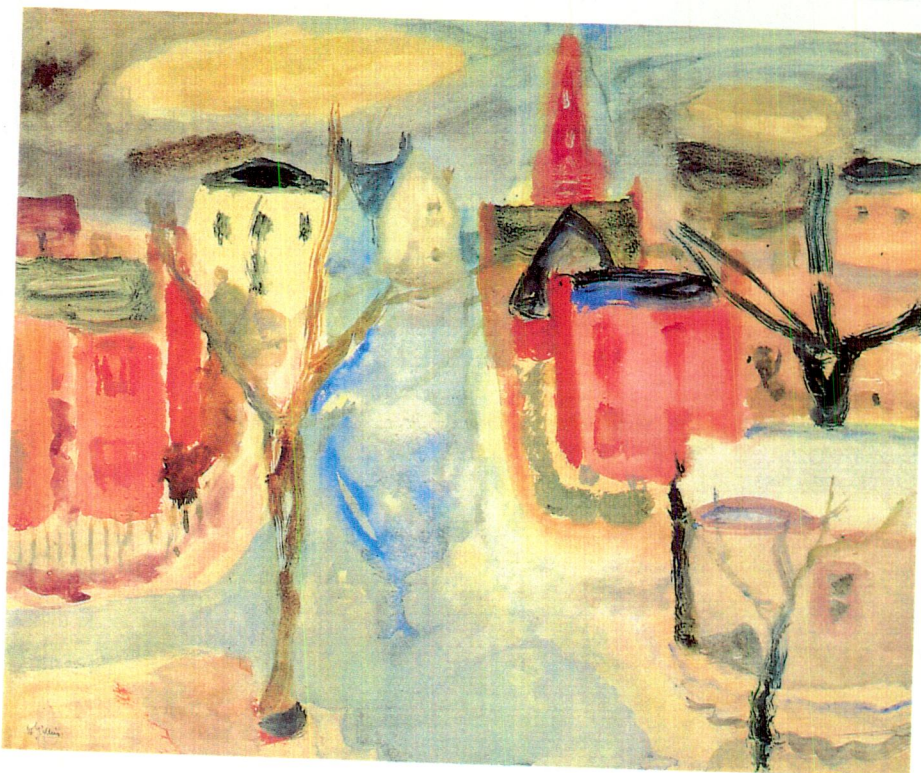


Fig. 6.
William Gillies
THE STREET



Fig. 7.
William Gillies
WIND ABOVE KIRRIEMUIR

and it is interesting that his later work "WIND ABOVE KIRRIEMUIR", 1946 (Fig. 7) is, in fact, more detailed, with areas defined by pen-and-ink. By contrast, William MacTaggart's "AUTUMN LEAVES" (Fig. 8) shows how *he* moved into a more abstract way of painting the landscape. MacTaggart's change to a more abstract style was caused by exposure to a group of contemporary French paintings brought over from Paris by the Arts' Council in 1945. It was the first introduction to the British and Scottish public of what had been happening in France during and immediately after the war. The exhibition included German Expressionism, De Stijl, Tachisme and, in addition, works by Matisse and Picasso which were shown at the Victoria and Albert Museum and brought up to Glasgow in 1946.

Another Scottish painter who influenced Barbara Rae was Joan Eardley. Her seascapes have the energy of Abstract Expressionism while remaining closely related to her original source of inspiration. (Fig. 9) She sought to adapt the possibilities opened up by American painting to the objectives of the landscape.

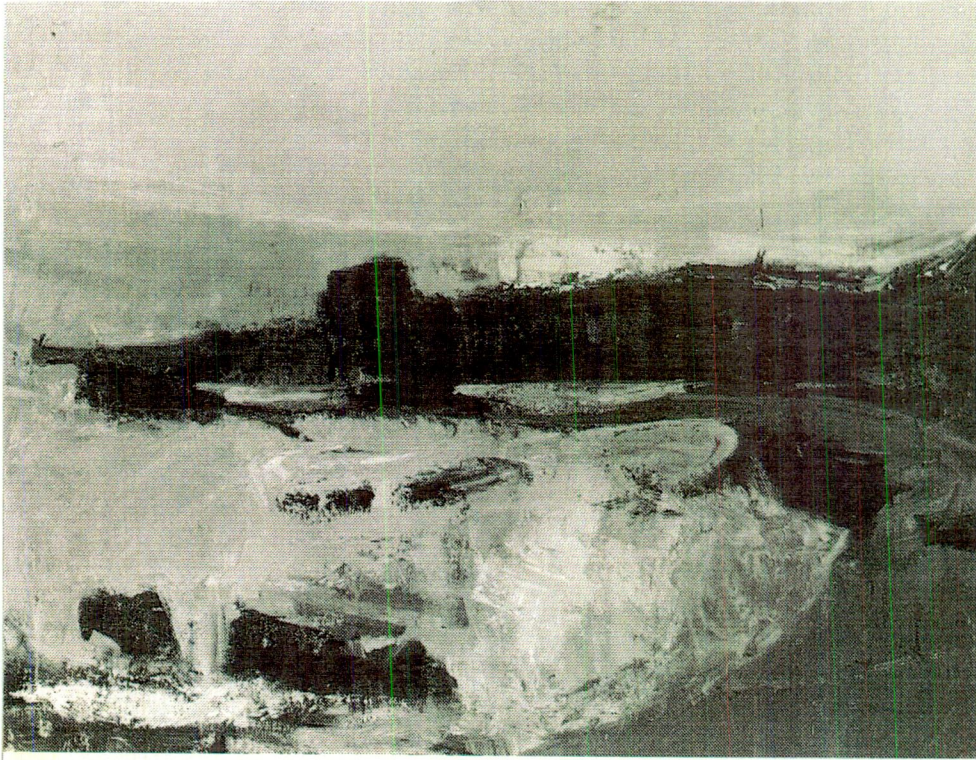
Barbara Rae's portrayals of the moody, rocky coastline and derelict villages of the West Coast of Scotland were influenced by the intense brooding landscapes of the neo-romantic artists Graham Sutherland and John Piper.

Like Barbara Rae, Piper had strong individualist tendencies, which led him to separate himself from the elite of the English Modern Movement. Among this elite were Ben Nicholson, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, and Ivon Hitchens. In the later thirties, Piper separated himself from the group and pursued his own line of development. The nineteenth-century poet and painter, William Blake, wrote "shall painting be confined to the sordid drudgery of facsimile representations of merely mortal and perishing substances and not be, as poetry and music are, elevated to its own proper sphere of invention and visionary conception?" (West, p26) Piper came across this statement just when he was ready to accept that painting, like music, could be a non-literary, non-descriptive art, concerned with making statements that were ends in themselves. He

Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is arranged in several paragraphs, but the characters are too light and blurry to be transcribed accurately.



Fig. 8.
William MacTaggart
AUTUMN LEAVES



Seascape: Joan Eardley

Fig. 9.
Joan Eardley
SEASCAPE

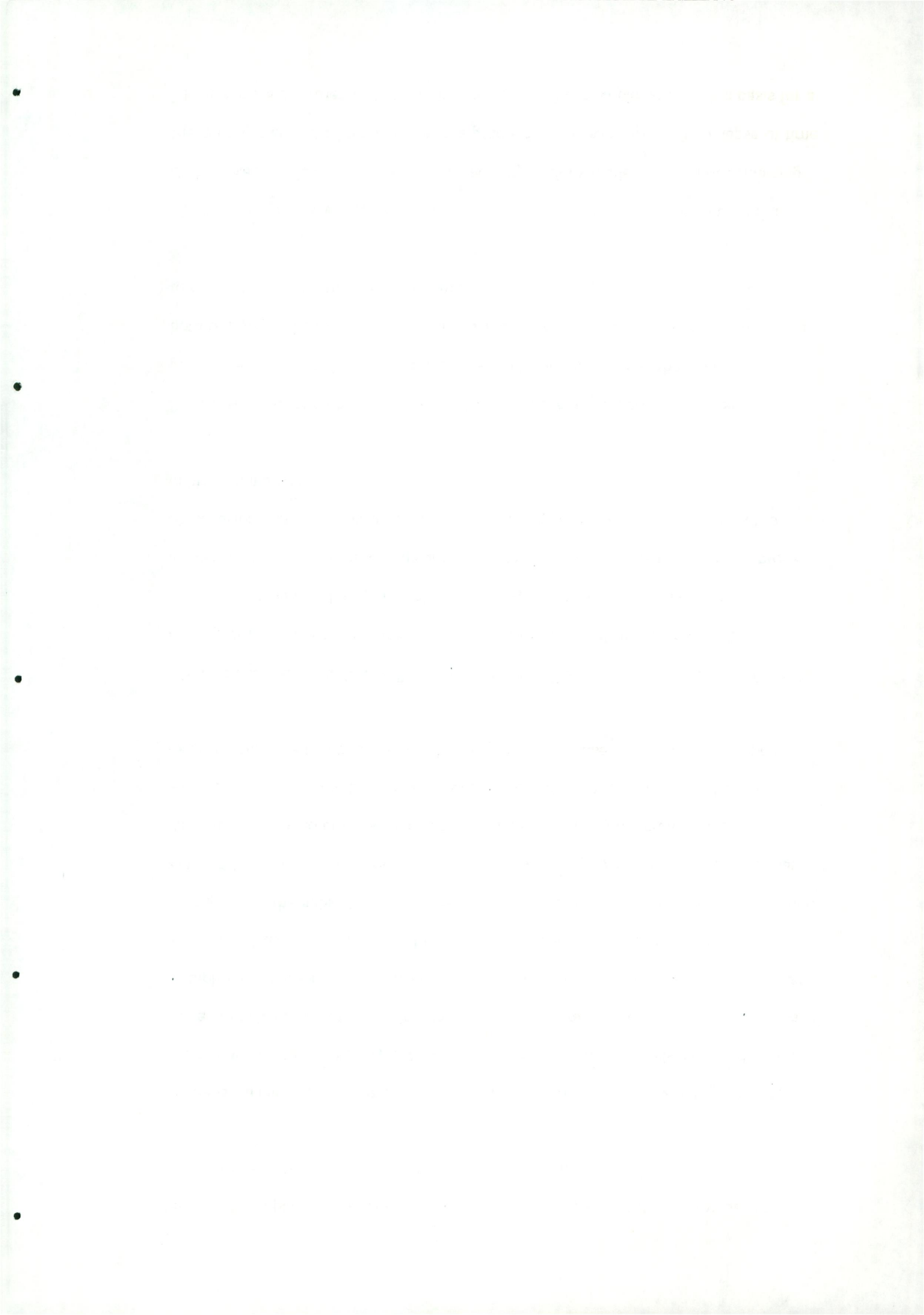
realised the importance of looking through a picture's stated content to the painter's performance, that is to say to the painting as an action.

Hitchens was an important friend and influence on Piper. Hitchens was beginning to produce work of great beauty consisting of abstractions from the visible world which made virtually no use of linear draughtsmanship or literary descriptions, and even less of metaphor or symbol. He was making his statement with freely-brushed-in colour areas placed in relationships (spatial and tonic) which achieved a complete non-literary description of the subject. Piper could at once recognise that this was not only painting elevated to its own proper sphere of invention and visionary conception, but also that Hitchens had arrived at his solutions to the stylistic problem by intuitive and reproductive processes diametrically opposed to those that he had himself been following since he had been put on the Classical (as opposed to the Romantic) path.

Hitchens had found the key to Piper's problem, the liberation of colour masses from the tyranny of linear boundaries, and the release from the literalism that goes with it. Hitchens had achieved his personal idiom not by widening his cultural horizons and increasing his range of knowledge and understanding but by an almost ruthless process of exclusion and reduction, in which everything that was not immediately useful to him in his painting was discarded.

Piper realised through his exposure to Hitchens' ideas that he could no longer deny the instinctive and non-rational side of his personality, and he realised the vital importance both of bringing its intuitive and intellectual sides into balance, of giving up attempting to make the one the master of the other.

Piper's method of working has been passed down and is similar to the method that Barbara Rae employs. His Sketchbooks are impressions made on the spot containing the germs of almost all the major works produced. The site would after a lapse of time be revisited and further analytic studies be made. These would become the basis for a



further development of the large-scale studio treatments of the motif. He returned to his favourite sites to make new discoveries in the light of the new directions revealed in studio work.

Piper also worked in the medium of stained glass which opened up a new way of seeing colour. This, in turn, flowed into his painting which was characterised by singing colour, boldly used and full of confidence.

Piper's final breakthrough was brought about by following up the suggestions inherent in Dufy's work (Figs. 12-13), with its characteristic use of calligraphy over colour masses - to draw a surface through which brilliant colour might be seen to pass, Piper did this by purifying and raising the level of the intensity of the colours in his palette and by a tremendous and startling increase in the certainty and dash of his attack. The groping brush strokes of 1967 suddenly gave way to a rapid and assured handling of paint, and the drawing, with both line and colour rose to a new level. "CONNEMARA LANDSCAPE" (Fig. 10) is a good example of his loose use of line. A comparison of Piper's and Rae's works (Fig. 11) reveals striking similarities. Barbara Rae's water-colour of "RATHOY" has the same kind of confidence of drawing, and we can see the influence that Piper has had on her work.

They both have a certain primitive direct feel about them. In both abstract shapes are abstracted to simple forms in the landscape and colour is laid down in colour masses. As Klee once said "I want to be as though new-born to know absolutely nothing about Europe to ignore poets and fashions to be almost primitive." (Werner, p.40)

Dufy's work has often been compared to Matisse. He had the same qualities. Matisse sought to re-capture the fresh vision characteristic of youth. Matisse, with whom Barbara Rae has often been compared, had a profound and abiding interest in decoration and decorative art. The notes by Matisse state his desire for "an art of balance, of purity and serenity devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter... a soothing calming

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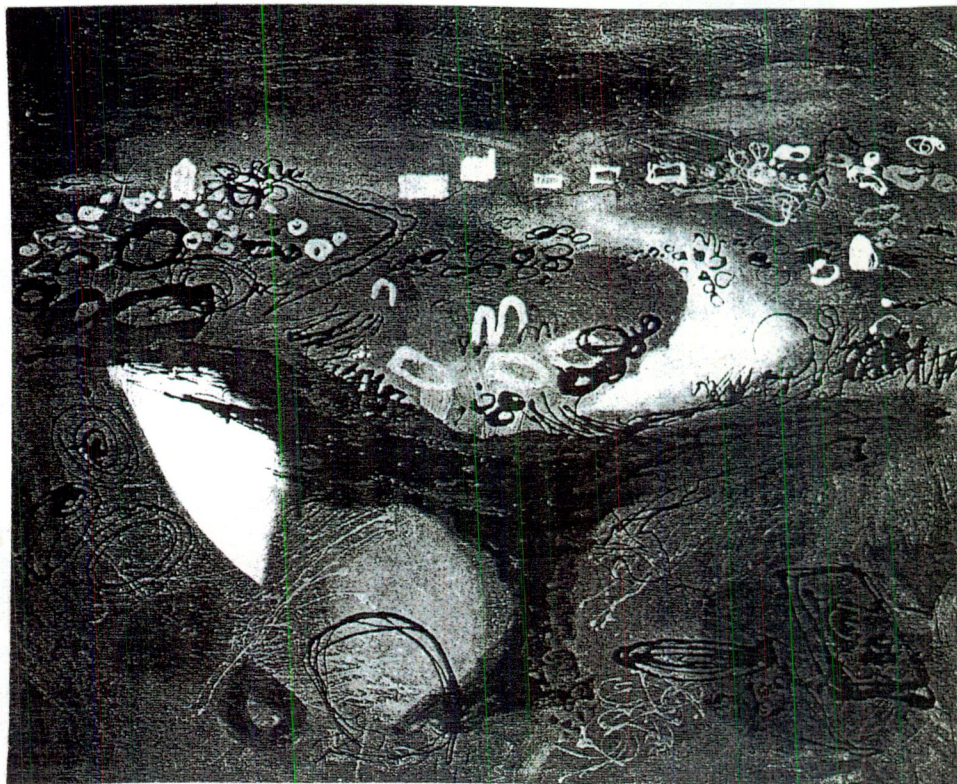


Fig. 10. John Piper, CONNEMARA LANDSCAPE



Fig. 11. Barbara Rae, RATHOY



LANDSCAPE. 1935. Watercolor and gouache, 19 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 26".
Private collection

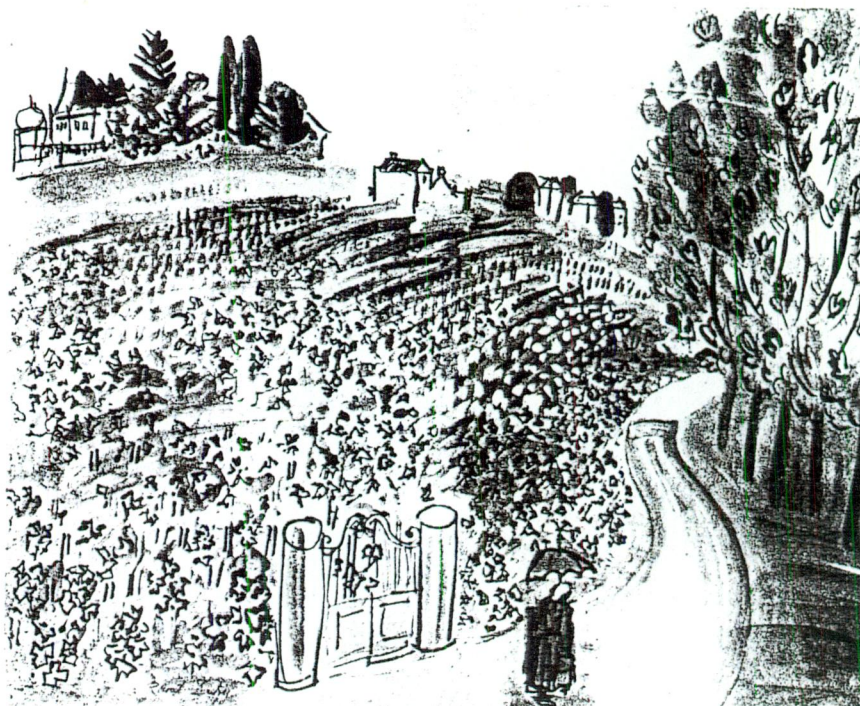


Fig. 12.

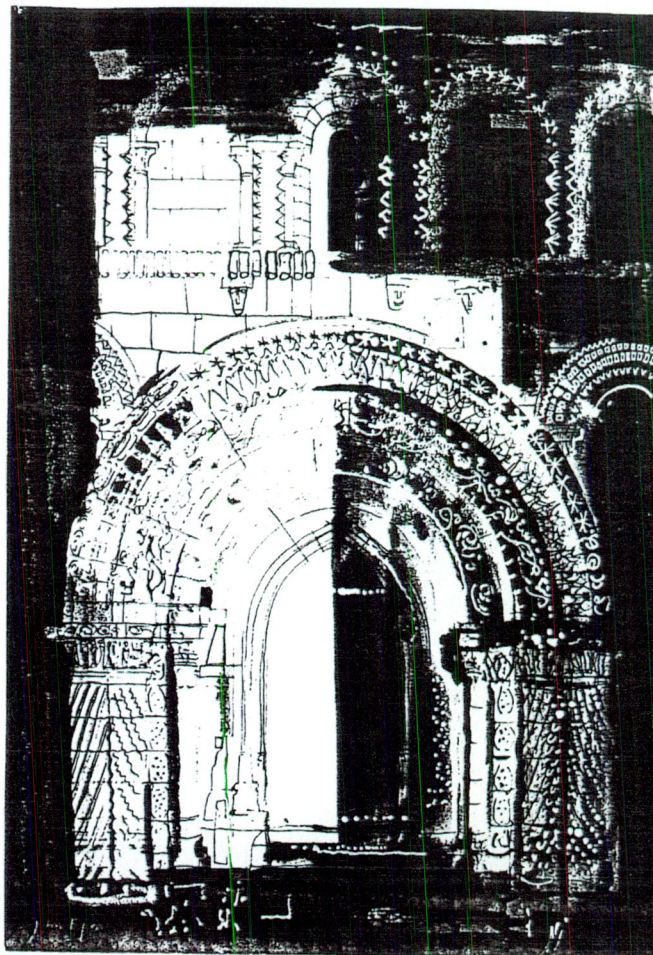


Fig. 13.
John Piper
AVY CHARENTE. 1970.

influence on the mind, a statement of his belief in painting as a decorative, purely visual as opposed to narrative art." (Flann, p.21)

Matisse loved pattern, pattern within pattern, not only the decorative forms of his own compositions but, like Barbara Rae, he loved tapestries, quilts and all forms of decorative fabrics. His free use of colour, as seen in "THE OPEN WINDOW, COLLIOURE", 1905 (Fig. 14) was the first of the views through a window that would recur as a favourite Matissean motif. All the colour has undergone an equal distortion and keying up. The terracotta of flowerpots and rusty red of masts and furled sails become a blazing Indian red. The reflections of boats turned at anchor through the razzle of light on the water, are pink; the green of the left was, reflected in the open glazed door on the right, is heightened beyond expectation and picked up in the sky's tints. The brushwork has a free take-it-or-leave-it quality. This same subject-matter was also recurring in the earlier works of Barbara Rae. She used a lot of windows (Fig. 15) "SPRINGBURN WINDOW", and door-ways as themes in "RUINED HOUSE NEAR TREVELEZ" (Fig. 16) and "DOORWAY TO A RUIN". (Fig. 17) The painting of "RUINED HOUSE" was done on site; she was looking through to the horizon with broken rafters and vegetation growing up over the entrance. The "DOORWAY TO A RUIN" was done in the studio, and she did a further painting which was much darker, which she wanted to keep but which was snapped up by a collector.

She has always been preoccupied with dereliction, whether it be piers, cuttings, quarries or crofts, and in her Spanish pieces, as in "SPANISH TERRACE" a figure is introduced. (Fig. 18) Another painter that Barbara Rae greatly admired was Bonnard. (Fig. 19) Matisse and Bonnard in some ways were opposites. Matisse's compositions even when they were slices of private life, carried an air of formal grandeur - declamation in the high tradition of French art. Bonnard, on the other hand, was an intimist; he was stirred by small natural scenes of domestic life. He took things as he found them. Both were drawn to the Mediterranean like the Fauves before them; it was the discovery of the light of the South that fully opened Bonnard's eyes to the importance of colour. He

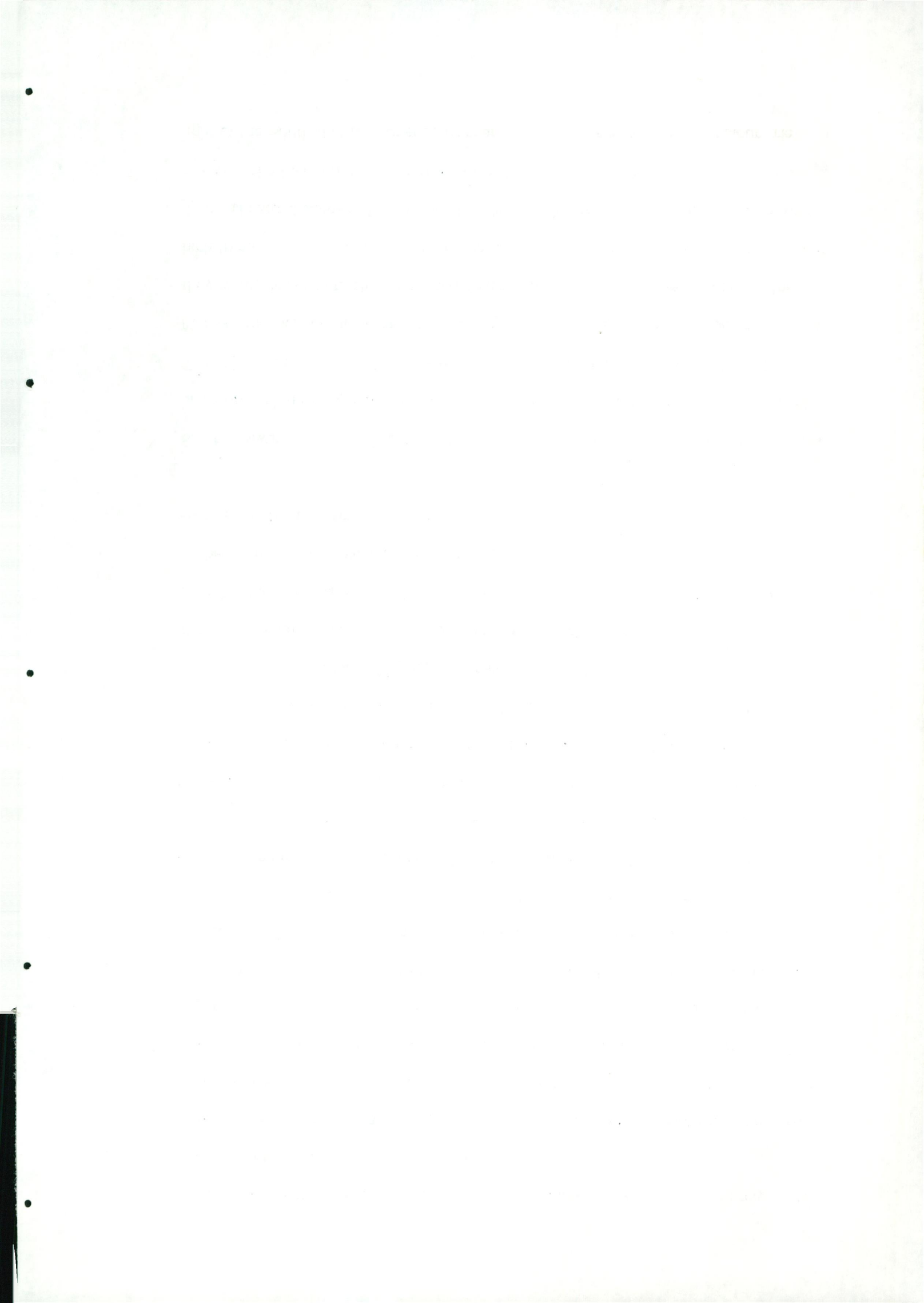




Fig. 14. Henry Matisse
THE OPEN WINDOW





Fig. 15.

SRINGBURN WINDOW

Acrylic and collage on card

30" x 40"

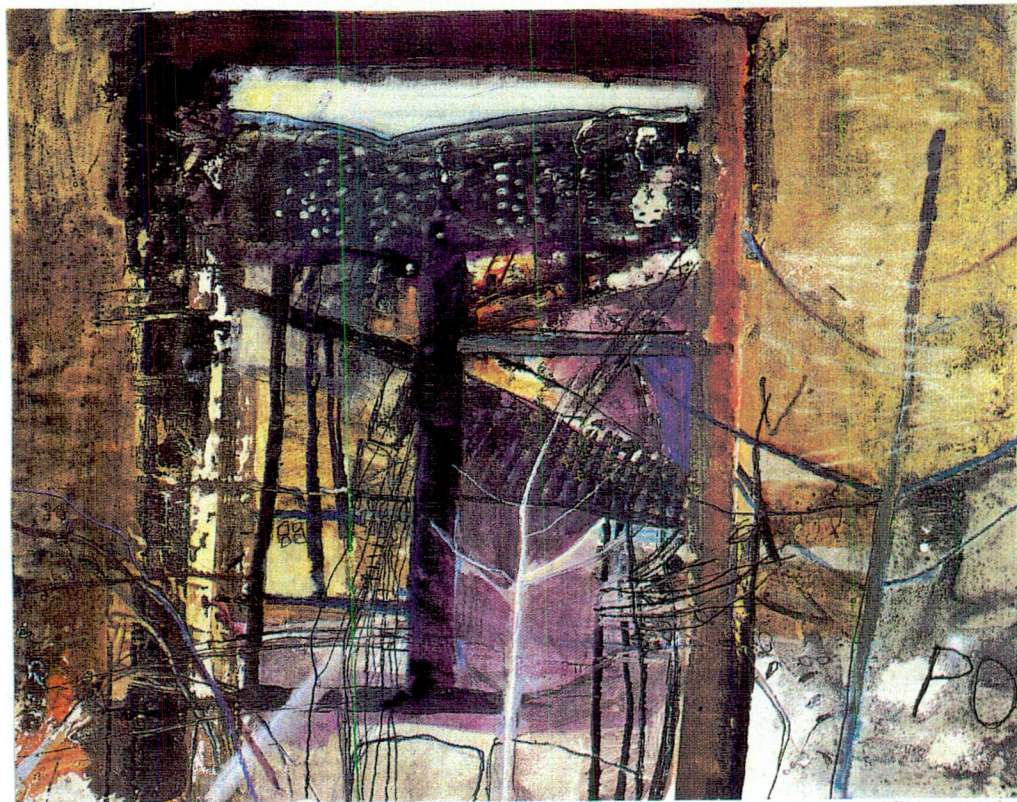


Fig. 16.

RUINED HOUSE NEAR TREVELEZ 1989

Chalk, ink, and watercolour,

24½" x 32½"

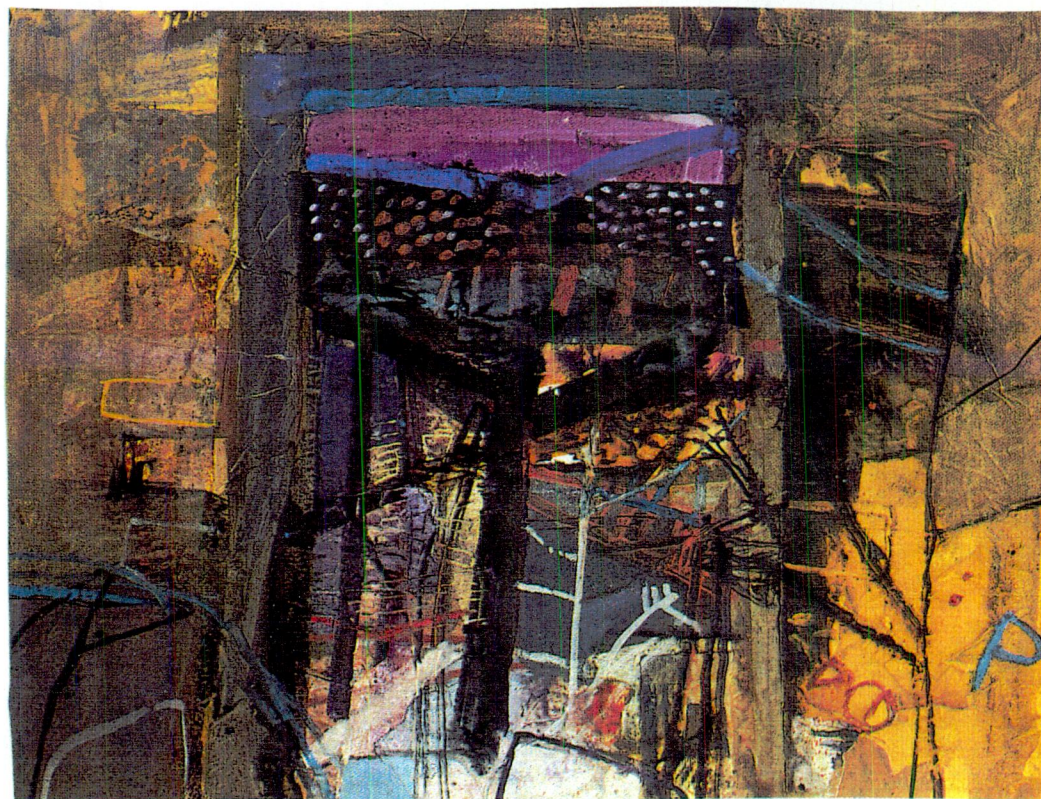


Fig. 17.

DOORWAY TO A RUIN.

Mixed media on board.

32" x 43"

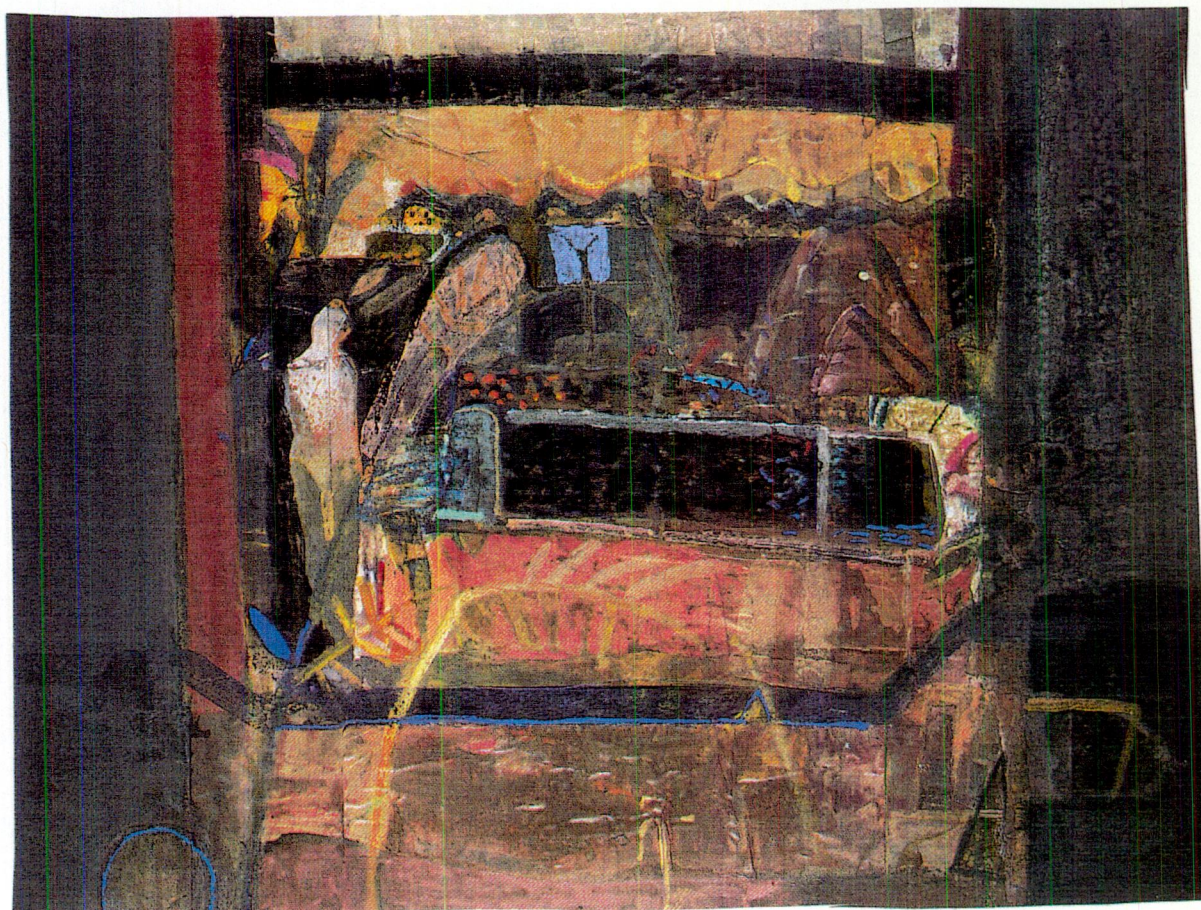


Fig. 18.

Barbara Rae

SPANISH TERRACE, 1988.

Fig. 19.

Pierre Bonnard
STANDING NUDE, 1928.

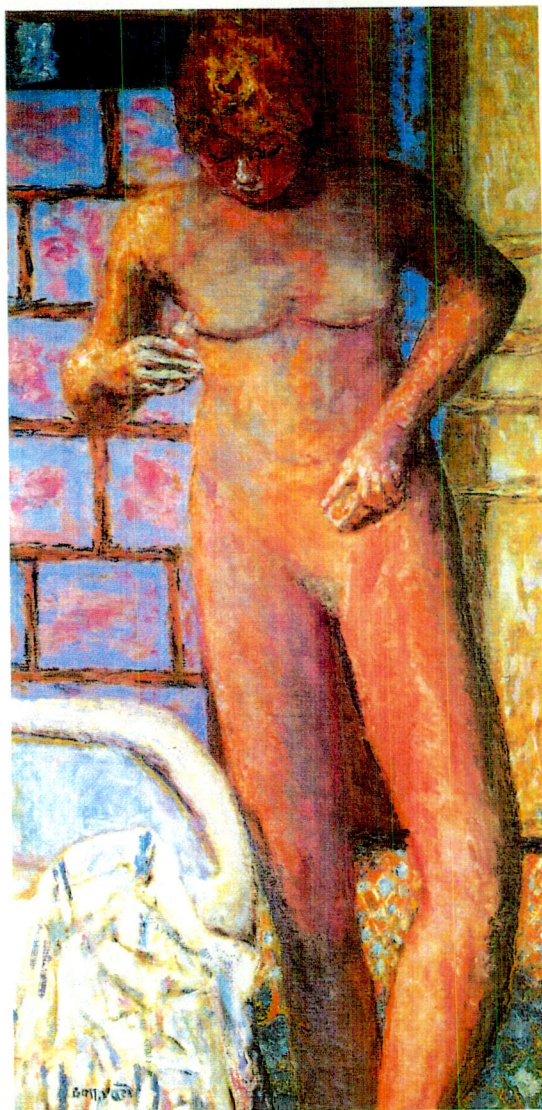
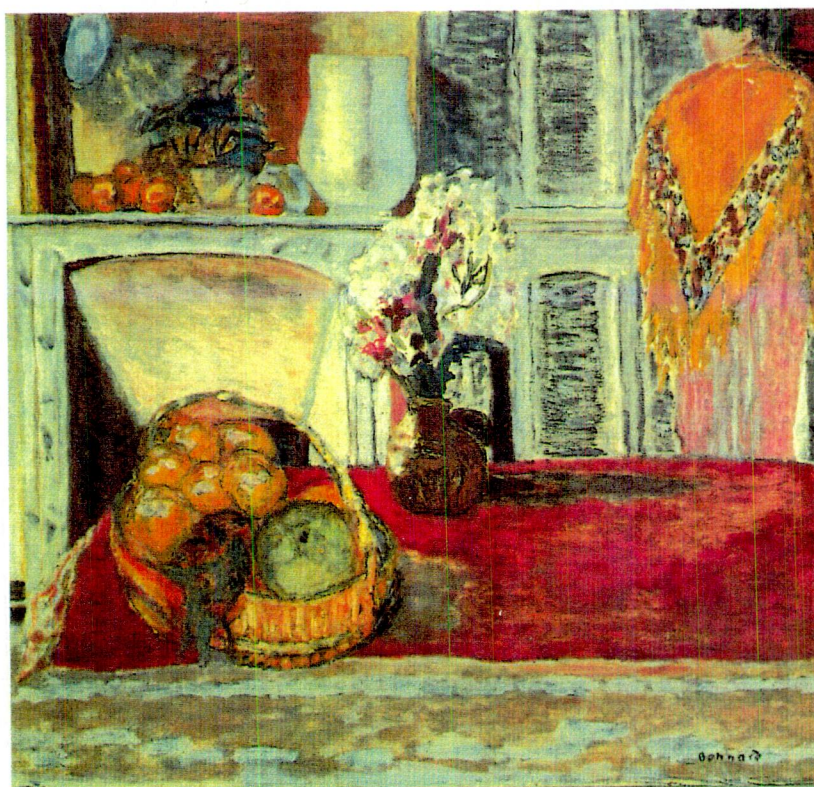
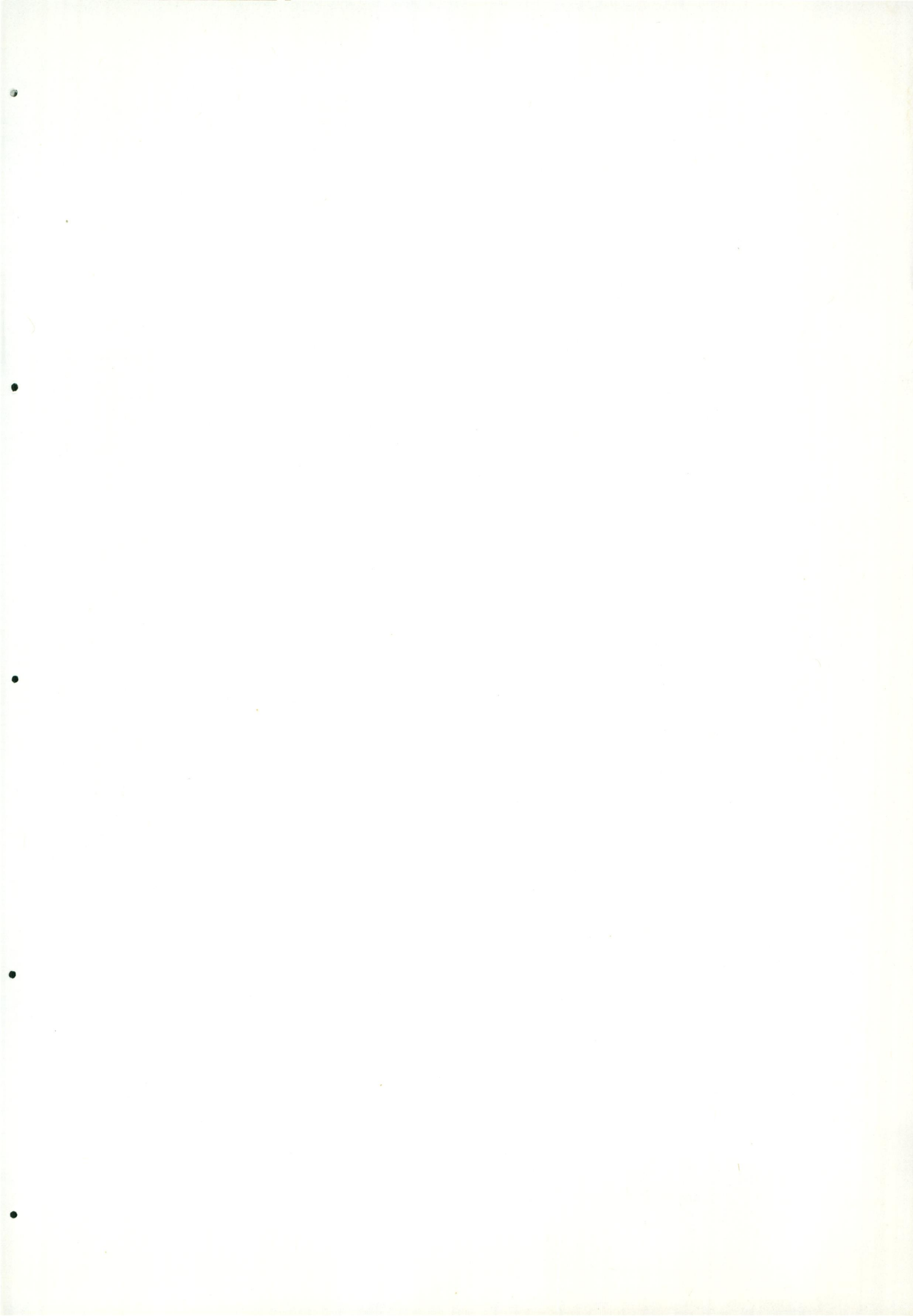


Fig. 20.

Pierre Bonnard
CORNER OF THE DINING
ROOM AT LE CANNET, 1932.





took an interest in Signac's practice of making freer water-colour sketches from nature, leaving painting to the studio. In an interview with Ingrid Rydbek in 1937, he told her

I make these drawings outside as soon as I find a light effect, a landscape or an atmosphere that moves me. It is a matter of remembering what has moved me and making notes of it as quickly as possible, if one just has a colour to start out from then one builds the whole painting around it. Colour has just as strong a logic as form. It is a matter of never giving up until one has managed to re-create the first impression." (Hughes, p.141)

Bonnard constantly surprised the familiar things in his field of view, cropping them in odd ways, taking them from unexpected angles. The brushwork is loose, knitted and impressionistic, so that the substance of these paintings appears half formed and ready to vanish back into the light of which it is made. Everything is seen with the private not the public eye: The food about the house; the flowers around the house; and the woman, Maria Boursin, known as Martha.

Another strong influence on Rae's paintings have been the intense, brooding landscapes of neo-romantic artist, Graham Sutherland. Barbara Rae found that Sutherland's concept, like her own, was dealing with man's mark in the landscape. Sutherland wrote to his friend and patron, Sir Colin Anderson - "It was in this area... that I learned that landscape was not necessarily scenic, but that its parts have individual figurative detachments, those parts took on meaning only in relation to man and his imprint on the country." (Thrillier) Like Piper, he returned again and again to pin down the essence of the locality. Pembrokeshire was a constant source of inspiration. In 1947, Sutherland visited France where he also met Picasso and Matisse. He returned each year and found that his use of colour became very bright and light.

His portraits were like his landscapes. He was only interested in painting people whom he felt were of an interesting personality - individuals whose complexity and depth of character and experience were a challenge to his powers of interpretation. He found

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2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the need for consistent and reliable data collection processes to support effective decision-making.

3. The third part of the document focuses on the role of technology in modern data management. It discusses how advanced software solutions can streamline data collection, storage, and analysis, thereby improving efficiency and accuracy.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the challenges associated with data security and privacy. It provides guidelines for implementing robust security measures to protect sensitive information from unauthorized access and breaches.

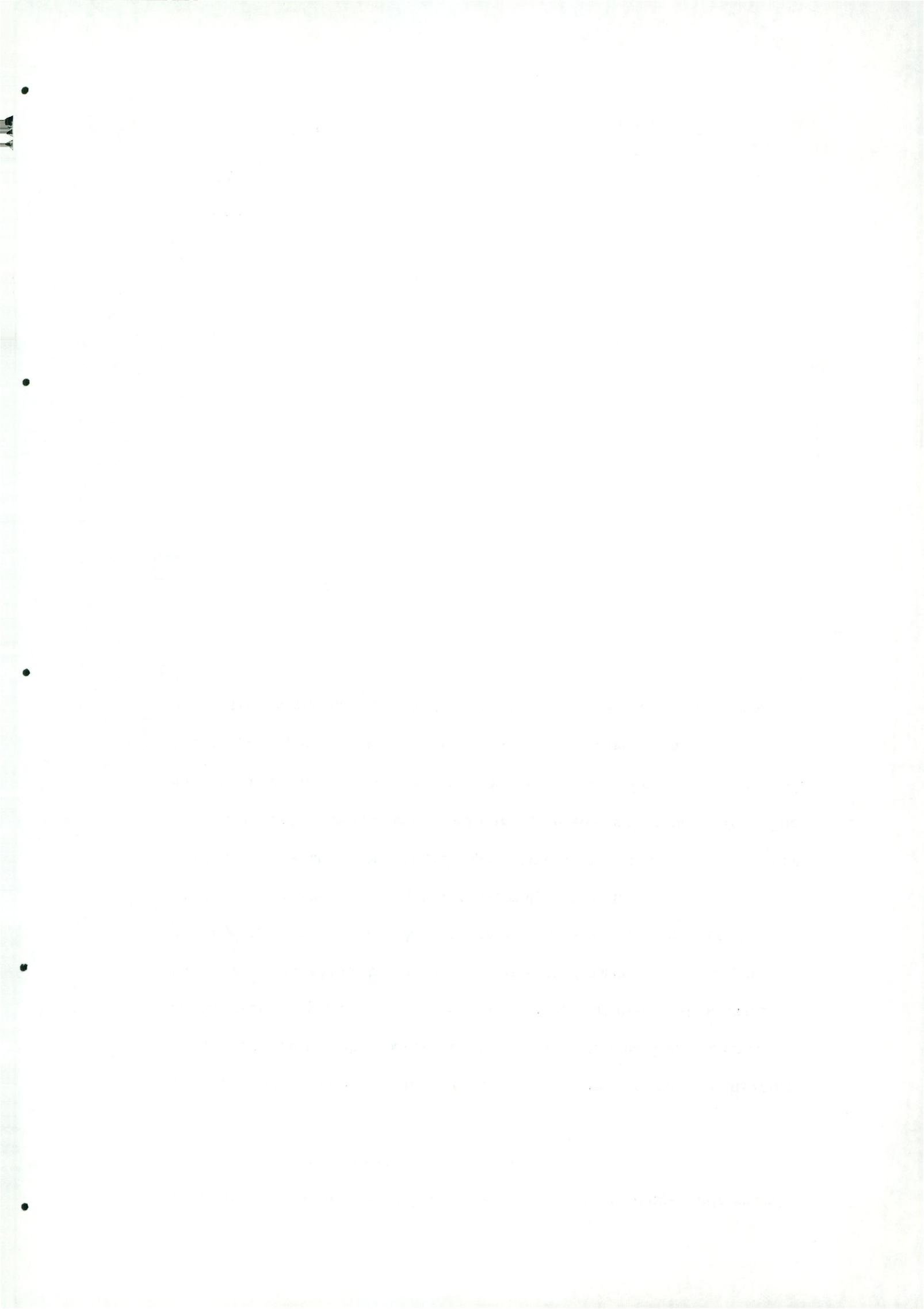
5. The fifth part of the document discusses the importance of data governance and compliance. It outlines the key principles and best practices for ensuring that data is managed in a way that is consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

6. The sixth part of the document explores the future of data management and analytics. It discusses emerging trends and technologies that are expected to shape the way organizations collect, analyze, and use data in the coming years.

7. The final part of the document provides a summary of the key findings and recommendations. It emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to data management that integrates all aspects of the organization's operations and strategy.

lines, forms and convolutions of a human face the same as the rugged surfaces and irregular contours of a boulder or a range of mountains.

Barbara Rae takes elements of the landscape and interprets them clearly in the same tradition, established in the work not only of a Scottish artist like Gillies, or English painters such as Piper, Eardley and Sutherland, but also European masters such as Matisse and Bonnard too. Barbara Rae establishes the balance in her painting between intimacy and scale. She has looked into the mysterious beauty of the Scottish landscape for an answer to the question of identity that seems to lie there yet is constantly elusive, linked through landscape and colour to her forerunners by the same route they took by their visiting the Mediterranean to explore the well of colour. The link is not a tenuous one and is just one example of the kind of continuity from which Scottish painting continues to draw sustenance and maintains its vitality, not as something eccentric and local but as part of the Mediterranean European tradition.



CHAPTER II

Themes and Sources in Barbara Rae's work.

The main theme in Barbara Rae's work is the mark of man on the landscape. Scotland, being the land of her childhood, is a source both in the urbanscape of Glasgow and the docklands of Edinburgh. The Scottish landscape of the rocky coast at Culzean, at Glen Uigh, in Skye and Eigg provide a constant source. The rugged landscape, craggy outcrops, mountains and sea lochs are rich source material. The effect of man on the landscape, the dry stone dykes, fields, quarries, piers, fishing boats and creels are further points of reference which have been explored, recorded and developed in the studio.

In her earlier work, windows as themes were important - "There are mysteries beyond things to be explored, seen, felt, experienced." (*Arts Review*, 1994, p.555) She describes windows as a means of breaking up forms into a patchwork effect. Windows, exits and entrances imply a going out and coming in, symbolise change, new worlds to be explored and the mystery of things not yet experienced.

Thus her work, though predominately representing nature, is really using nature as a vehicle to explore what it means to be human. During this period, 1965-73, Barbara Rae's work was figurative, she could control the collection of information but the painting itself was not within her control. She was aware of the figurative Expressionist movement in Scotland at that time, but it was not relevant to her work. She was more interested in sculptural shapes and her work began to move towards abstraction, but always keeping a close link with the landscape.

Her paintings were nostalgic, full of plaintive melancholy which is in no way uncomfortable, rather a gentle reminder of our ancient past. For example, Barbara Rae's interest in a postcard she received from the village of Valor in the ancient region of Las Alpujarras, situated in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, aroused her interest in the area.

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She discovered a landscape filled with immaculately-kept olive groves, vine terraces and abandoned gravel pits. All this provided her with a rich source in which to explore her favourite theme - man's reshaping of the countryside, whether through cultivating it, quarrying it or polluting it. The cluttered outlines of the mountain ranges appealed to her fascination for massive shapes. She used striking colour and texture with skill and sensitivity to describe a once flourishing countryside, first settled by Berbers in the 11th century. Ruined houses contrast with ordered olive groves.

Although she keeps well-informed on the latest preoccupations of the art world, what kind of landscape painter are we dealing with? Her own work does not follow any particular intellectual line of thought. Rather than reflect preconceived ideas about the environment, her paintings are a spontaneous response to natural surroundings and, as such, never appear contrived. Barbara Rae's work does not easily fit into either definitions of the picturesque or abstraction. She is not a picturesque landscape painter for two reasons: she does not honour the conventional beauty of the Scottish countryside, but seeks out intriguing shapes and forms rather than misty mountains or rusticated cottages; nor does she try to translate the landscape into reassuring images of acceptable pictorial beauty, but demands from the viewer a challenge in the individual personal choice and freely wrought treatment of the subject. There is always a connection with the real world in Barbara Rae's work. On first acquaintance with the work, one would be forgiven in thinking that they were purely abstract paintings, but, on closer inspection, elements of the language of the landscape begin to appear. A high horizon line, a foreground rock formation, all give clues to her involvement with the subject.

So, if Barbara Rae's work cannot be termed picturesque or abstract, where does her work stand? Her landscapes do tend towards abstraction but not to full non-representation, yet there is nothing uncertain or indecisive about her paintings. Her work has a strong feeling of independence. It is inclined to induce a romantic response, but if one takes the time and attention to look seriously at her work, there is definitely

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an intellectual and emotional engagement that leave the viewer with a feeling that her paintings have a powerful sense of conviction.

Rae's paintings, like the rugged landscapes she seeks out for her art, express a 'strong feeling of independence' and as such are to be admired more for their own intrinsic qualities rather than dependent ones. (Hare, *Contemporary Art*)

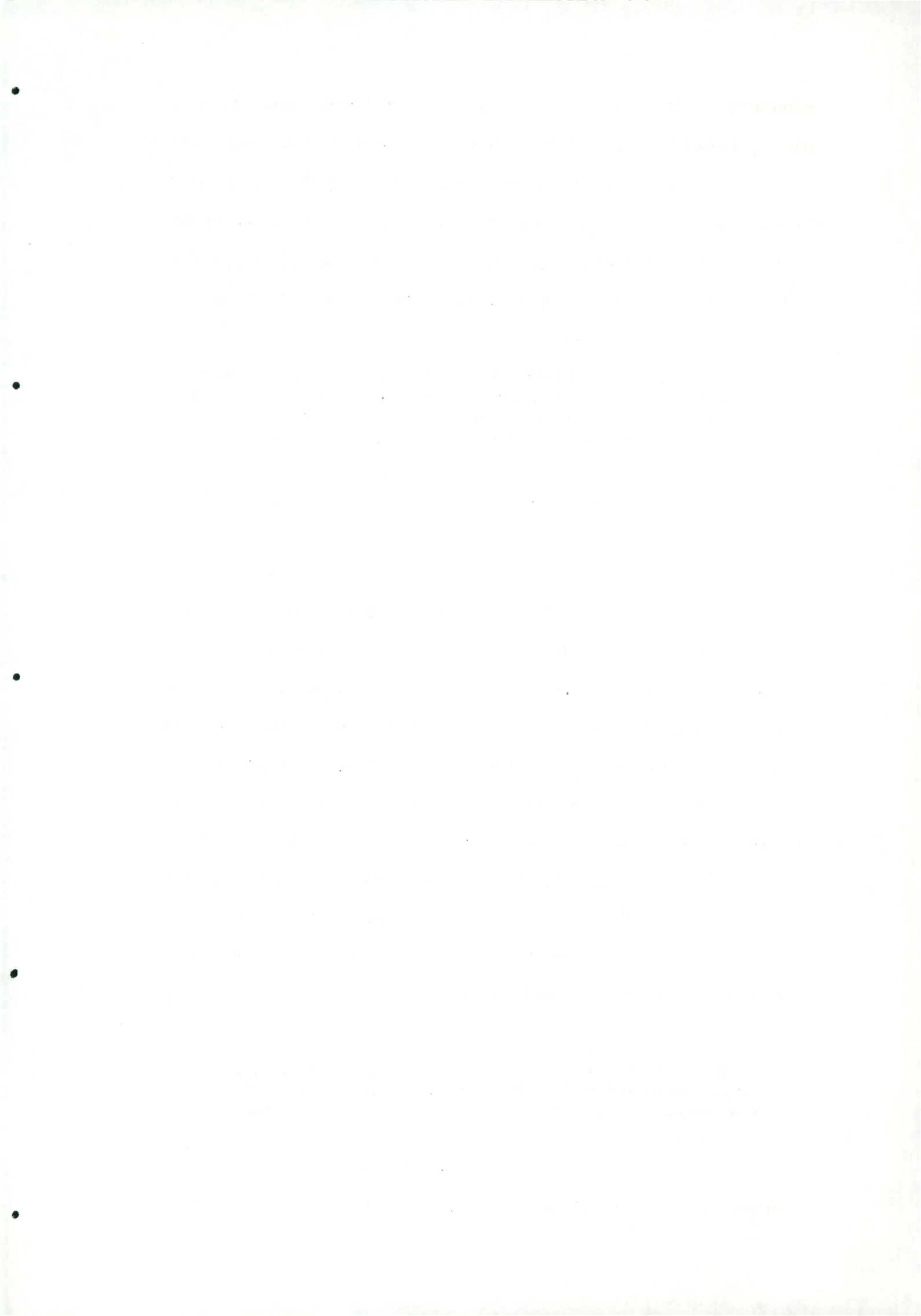
The paintings have a clarity of order both in compositional arrangements and colour relationships which endows them with their own autonomous authority. What gives these works such commanding presence is their own internal pictorial vitality engendered by the artist's highly developed sense of decorative expression.

Barbara Rae's concern is with interconnection between man and the natural world. She, herself, observes the earth patterns can be considered either as temporary marks or permanent scars in the landscape. The passing of time re-introduces new shapes as man rearranges his plots and manages his environment. This is the unbroken link which is always there between the paintings and their subjects. The patterns of lines and shapes echo the marks left by man on his environment, while the built-up textured surfaces evoke the layers of human history which lie beneath the appearance of immediate observation.

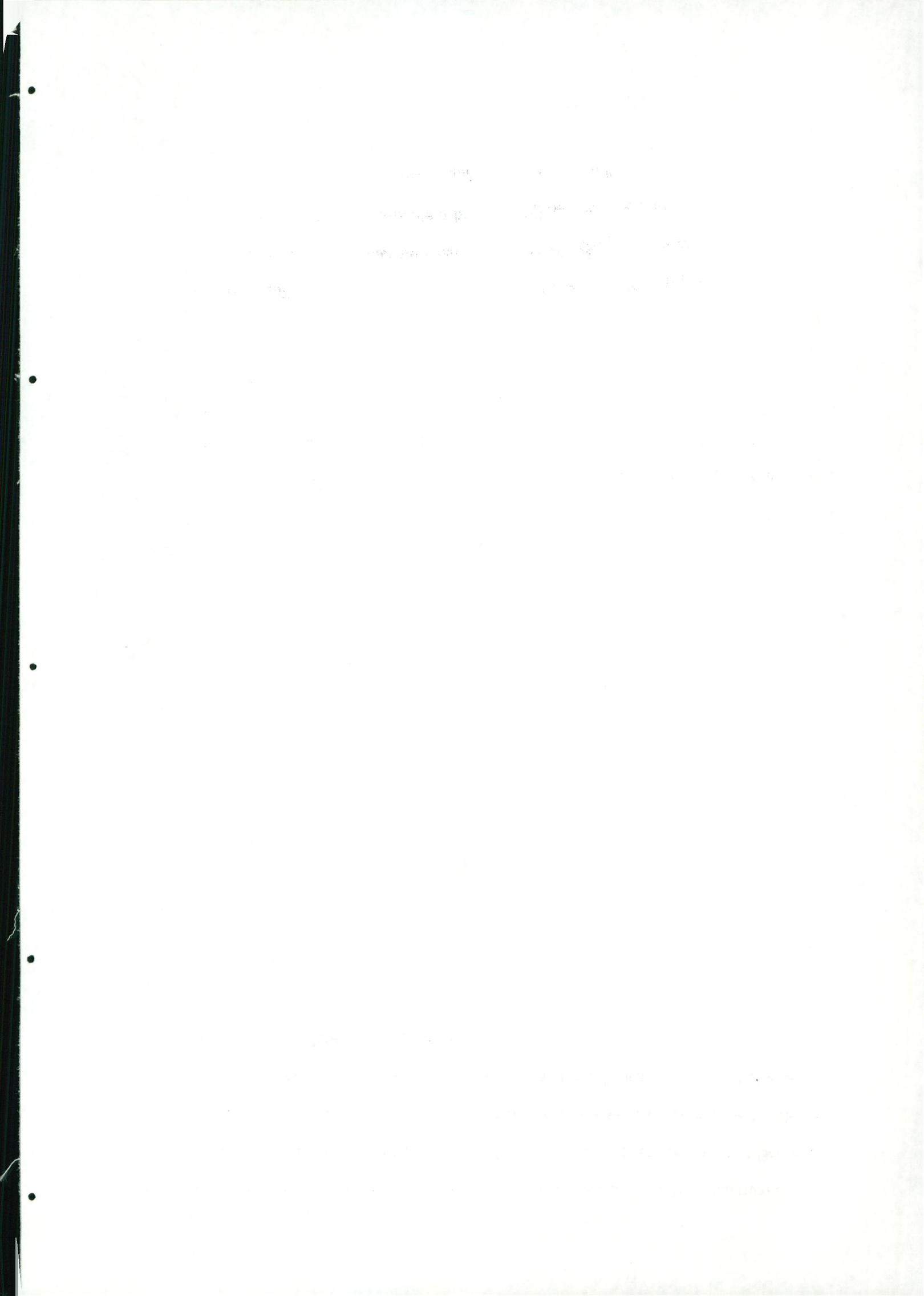
In Spain, as in Scotland, her very subject matter is under threat.

Spain and Scotland have very strong parallels. The whole way of life is changing, young people are not interested in the land, they're leaving for the towns. Farming is a dying industry. Farms are falling into disrepair, tourism is taking over, it is a free for all. (Rae, *The Scotsman*, 8/10/95)

Her paintings have a genuine expressive power which, given their titles, whether of a remote West-of-Scotland beach or a quarry in Spain, give each painting a claim to a specific experience involving the artist and her subject, which locates it both in time and place. In addition to the power of the artist's highly developed sense of decorative expression, there is also to be found an underlying constant thematic content. Not that there is any overtly ideological agenda to Barbara Rae's paintings, but they do, amongst



other things, express her sensitive awareness of the interconnection between man and the ever shrinking natural world. Yet for all the undeniable expressive power of Barbara Rae's paintings, she is still neither a romantic nor an expressionist. Rather, she treads her own path, if anything, in the great tradition of an individualist - her authenticity seen on the worked surfaces of her paintings.



CHAPTER III

Process of Working

Barbara Rae's exhibitions make an emotional impact, they leave the viewer with a lasting impression. What is it about these works that stand out from the ordinary?

Over the years, Barbara Rae's selection of colour, texture and form has changed and matured. Her process of working has continued to be experimental. First impressions on visiting the Glasgow School of Art, where Barbara Rae has a studio, were how on earth do such large pieces come out of this tiny studio? The room (Fig. 21), which is situated at the top of the college, has a large north-facing window which takes up most of the wall opposite the door. The window, which is subdivided into lots of smaller panes, is used as subject-matter for "THE WINDOW", 1979 (Fig. 22). The walls are stacked up with finished paintings and, in the middle of the floor is a plastic-lined frame. There is a large wicker chair (Fig. 23) and a very healthy house plant growing in the corner. She shares half the studio with a fellow artist who is situated up some stairs to a balcony where some patchwork throwovers are draped. (Fig. 24) Small working sketches are placed onto the wall and are used as source material for a series of works. (Fig. 25) The sketches are done in small notebooks. She continues this way of working to this day - collecting information in the landscape, bringing it back to the studio where she sets the image down in *collage*. The compositional structure of the image is of absolute importance.

Collage has always been an important part of her work. The practice of working in this manner enables her to put down shapes and forms as a starting-off point. It stops the work becoming too complicated early on. While at college, she always used *collage*, for a period she decided to eliminate it but the work became decorative and, as she says herself: "The work was absolutely appalling, it was a dreadful time."

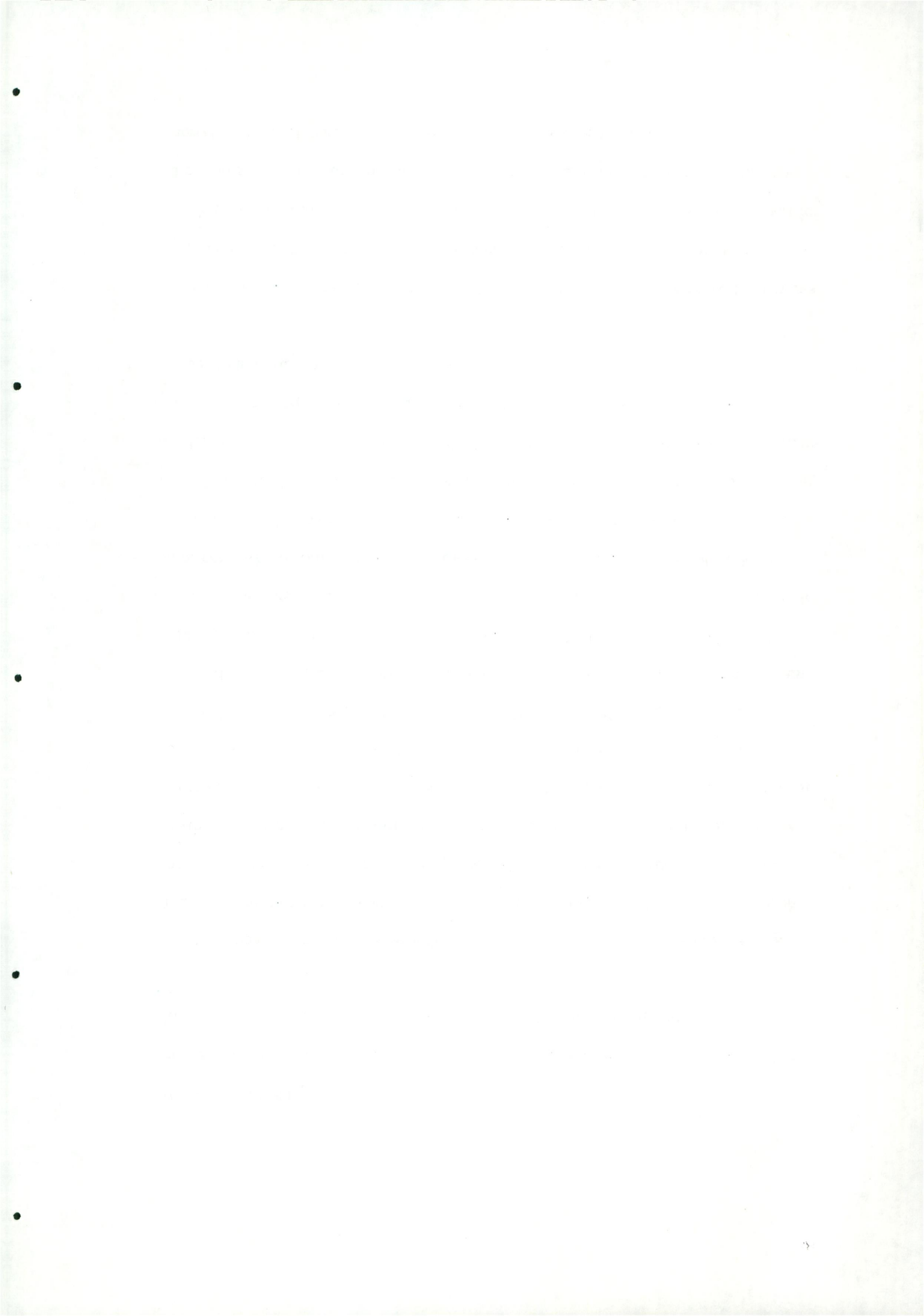


Fig. 21.

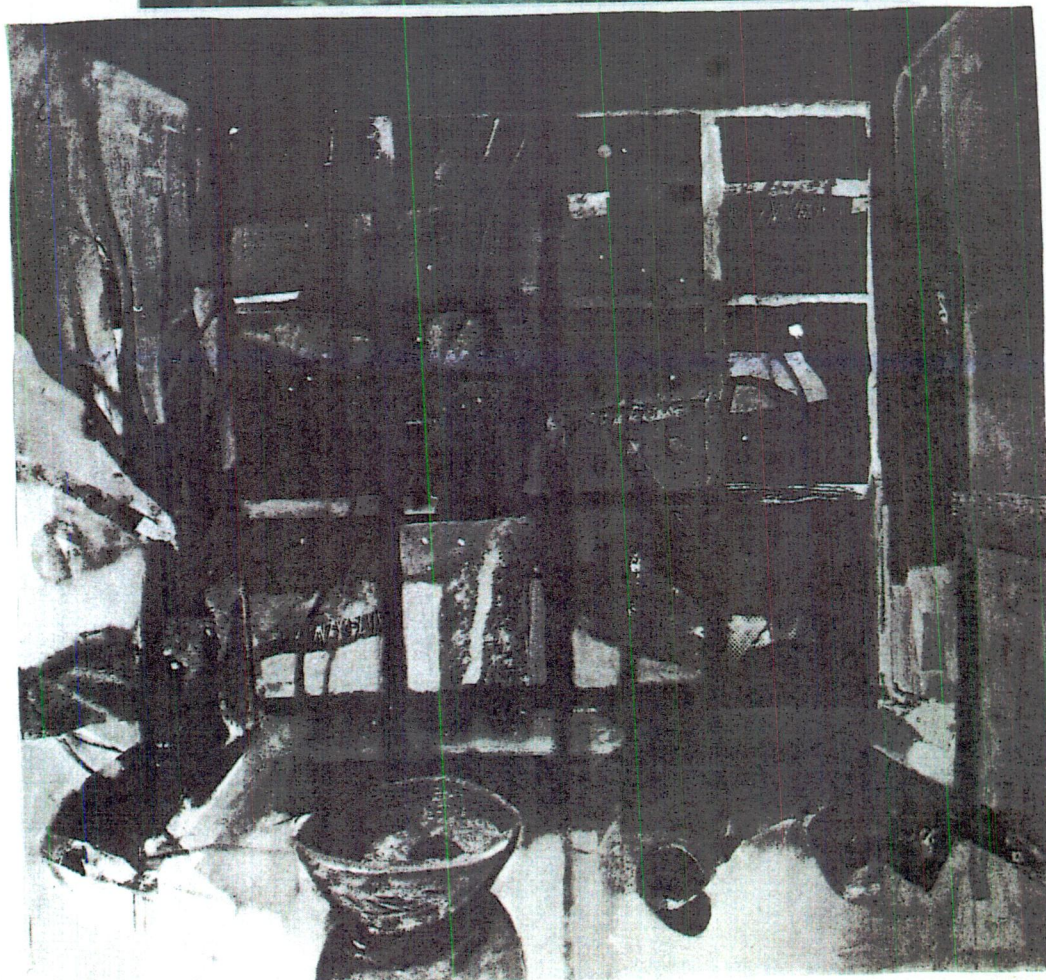
Barbara Rae in studio.
CHAIR & WINDOW, 1994.



STUDIO CHAIR, WINDOW.

Fig. 22.

Barbara Rae
THE WINDOW



THE WINDOW.

Fig. 23.
Barbara Rae
GARDEN CHAIR



GARDEN CHAIR.





Fig. 24. STUDIO SKETCHES



Fig. 25. PATCHWORKS IN STUDIO

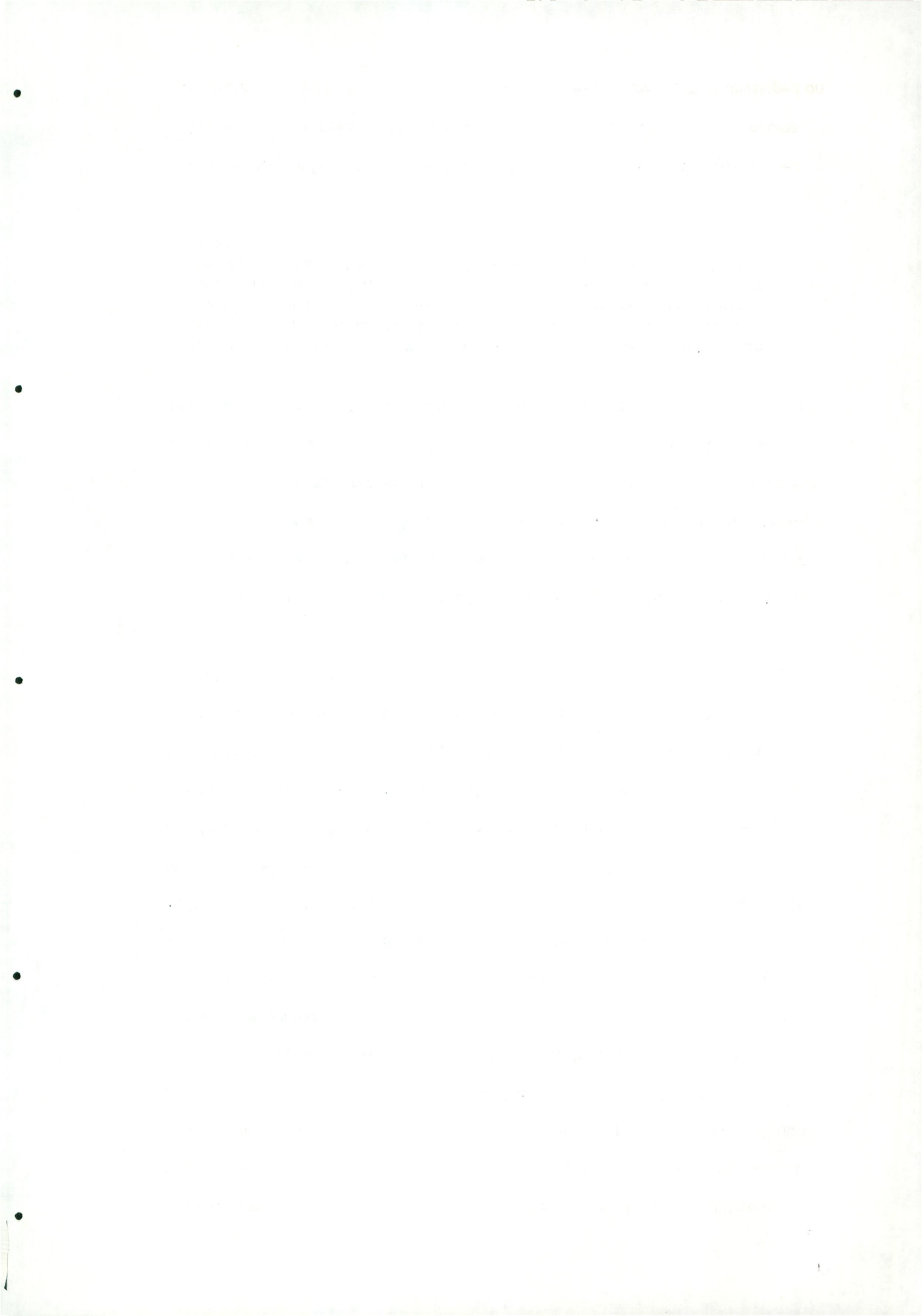


Re-introducing *collage* back into her work, she experimented with various different papers - torn up prints that had not worked, Japanese papers of distinct thickness and weight; materials from cloth to metal - began to appear on her canvases. The work done from her college days (Fig. 26) shows how *collage* is used to form the landscape. A cut-out figure is placed in the centre and to the left of the picture is a tree. In this painting, she has used torn-up paper which had previously been worked on. In the work below, more abstract forms are beginning to appear with only a hint of colour. Again, strips of paper are tucked onto the surface but in a more linear way. Her approach to *collage* as the work matures becomes almost sculptural: the image is carved and sliced; forms are piled in a web of interlocking shapes and forms. "WESTHIGHLAND LANDSCAPE" (Fig. 27), which hangs in the Arts Centre in Edinburgh, has some intriguing interplay of textures. In (Fig. 28), which is an area of detail from "WESTHIGHLAND", one can see: a squashed tin can; metal strips stapled onto the surface; and a mixture of various papers added in layers to give an exciting complexity of bold shapes and surfaces.

Her fascination with *collage* goes back a long way but, recently, she has reached a peak of confidence where she can apply a complex *collage* of scraps, cloth, tissue, wallpaper, wax or varnish, or a sheet of gold leaf. The touch is spontaneous but the placing always spot on. The process is realised and facilitated by a broad treatment and use of *collage* that allows her to generalise about the appearance of the subject while, at the same time, always keeping a close connection with the original sketch.

Barbara Rae's firm, intuitive draughtsmanship and her fascination with texture, paint with collage, mixed media (including, when painting out of doors, the occasional unfortunate midge that lands on the paper and achieves immortality by being incorporated into the work), found objects such as strips of decorated paper all are grist to the mill and the brush or knife. (Rae, *Arts Review*, 1984, p555)

The immediacy of Barbara Rae's work stems from the work she does in situ. Armed with pads of paper, paints and brushes wherever she goes, she gets down the outline and colour references. These tiny water-colour sketches (Fig. 29) are then developed on





COLLAGE WITH FIGURE.

Fig. 27. Barbara Rae, COLLAGE, 1964.



COLLAGE DONE AT COLLEGE.



Fig. 28.
Barbara Rae
WESTHIGHLAND LANDSCAPE, 1987.

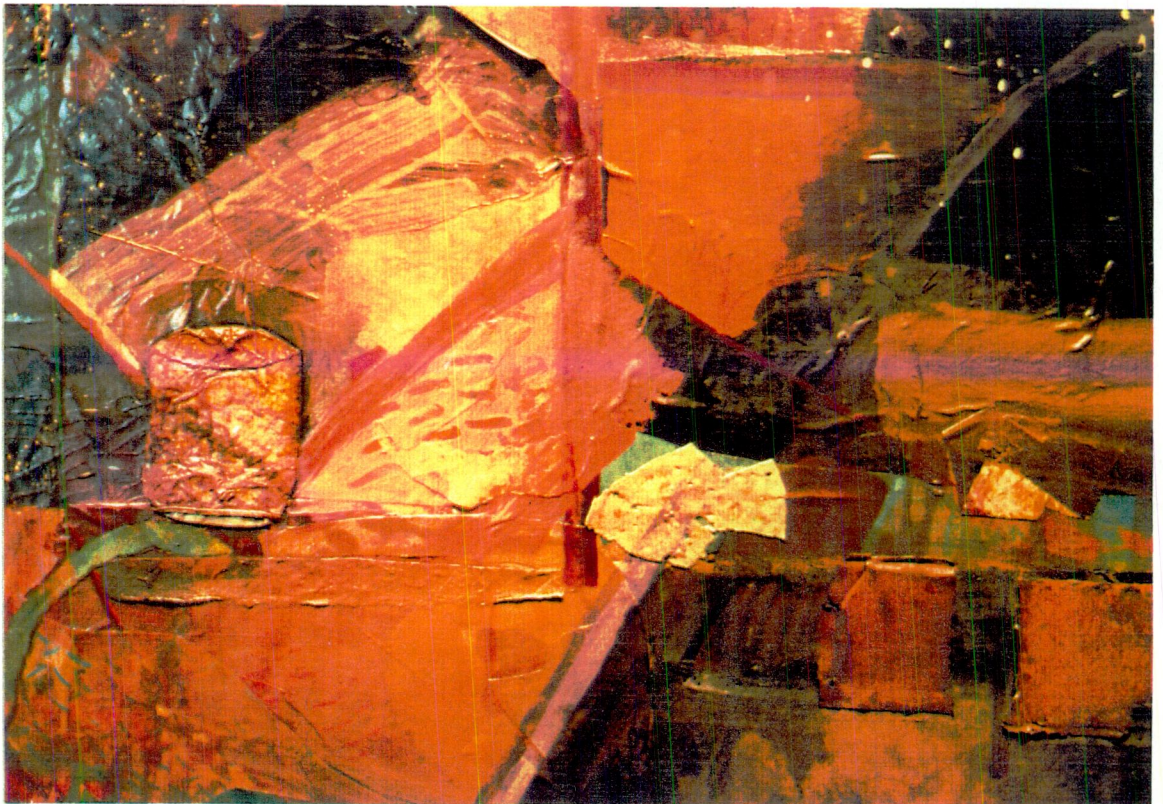


Fig. 29. DETAIL

large-scale boards and canvases back in the studio but, although the original designs may be disguised in the rich structure of the composition, the essential nature/character of the landscape shines clear. She likes to capture her immediate impressions in a small notebook. (Fig. 30) When returning to the studio, as she says, "I have to put the drawings behind and keep to a much more simple idea". This search for a "more simple idea" necessitates change and improvisation, allowing chance effects also to play as her pictorial aims are worked out in the studio. This involves experimenting with different-sized picture dimensions. When asked whether she liked working on canvas or board, she added that she uses canvas when she is working on a very large piece, but board for the smaller ones. When she paints, it is with use of a various collection of improvisations such as mops or household brushes; she says that J-cloth floor mops are particularly good! She paints on the floor as she finds that, if the canvas is on an easel, the paint drips off the work. The floor enables her to control the movement of the paint. She adds different mediums into her acrylics to get different thicknesses and transparency. The paint is applied directly onto the canvas, it is then mixed by the various brushes or implements and left to dry for a certain amount of time. When the right dryness is achieved, she then washes off the paint with water (hence the waterproof tray that is situated in the studio) and then continues to build up the layers, washing off and adding more paint. This is done on the already-textured surface which is applied with P.V.A. She uses acrylic paint as working in this way in oils proved to be far too toxic to use in such quantities. So, she works only in water-based paints. The end result is a highly tactile surface of textures which emphasise the contours of the land, as thick and ribbed as cardboard carton. She feels better if, when beginning to work, the image gets settled quickly. She tries to be as faithful to it as possible while executing it in a very direct way. An interesting example of this is of "STONE PIER", 1982. The drawing sketch of "STONE PIER" (Figs. 31-32) is a complex arrangement of angles with definite reference to the sea and the horizon. Even a small bird is shown perched on one of the pillars. The painting done from this original work is not that far removed from the first sketch, but has been worked into a far more

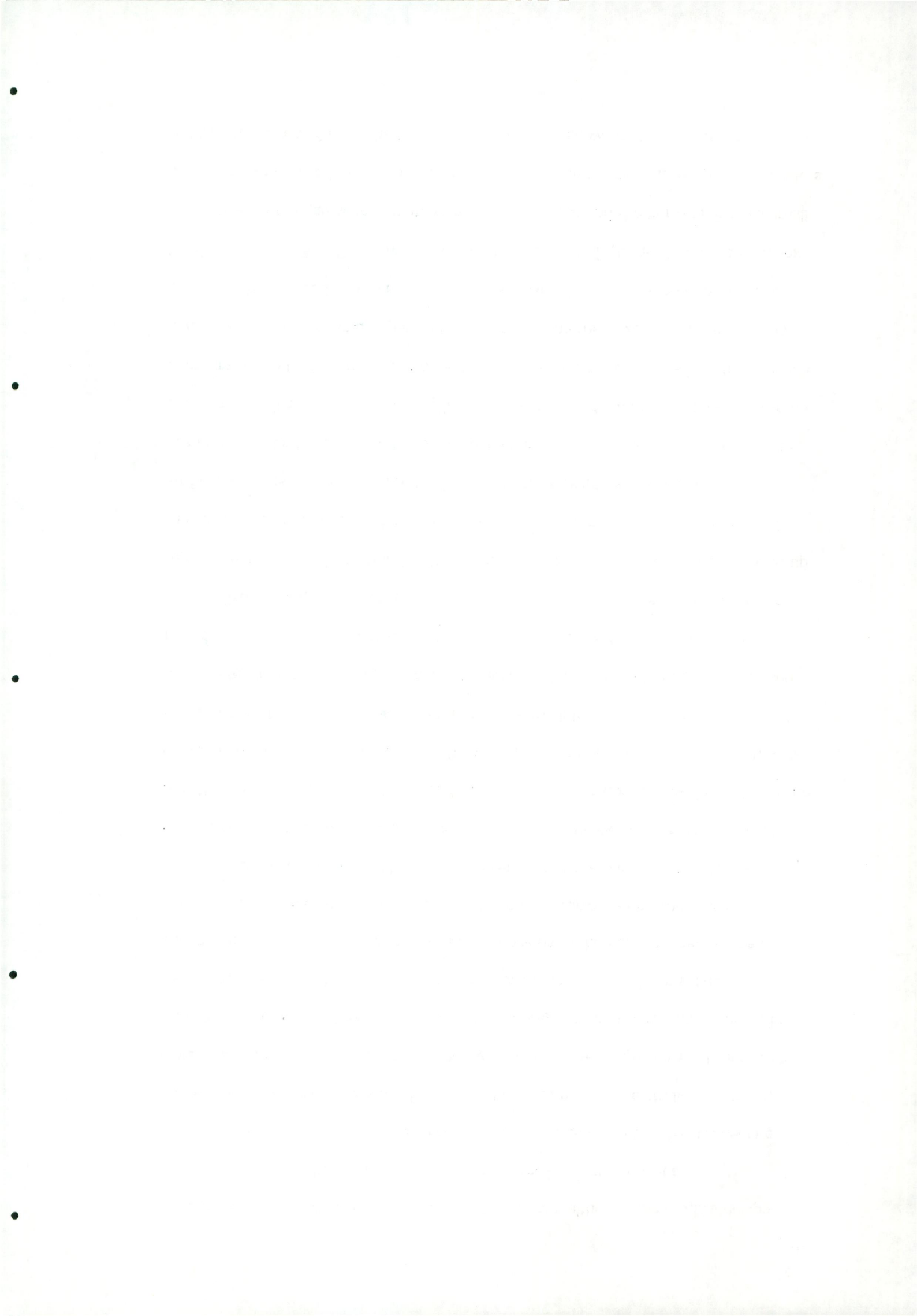




Fig.30. Barbara Rae, Notebook Sketches, 1993.

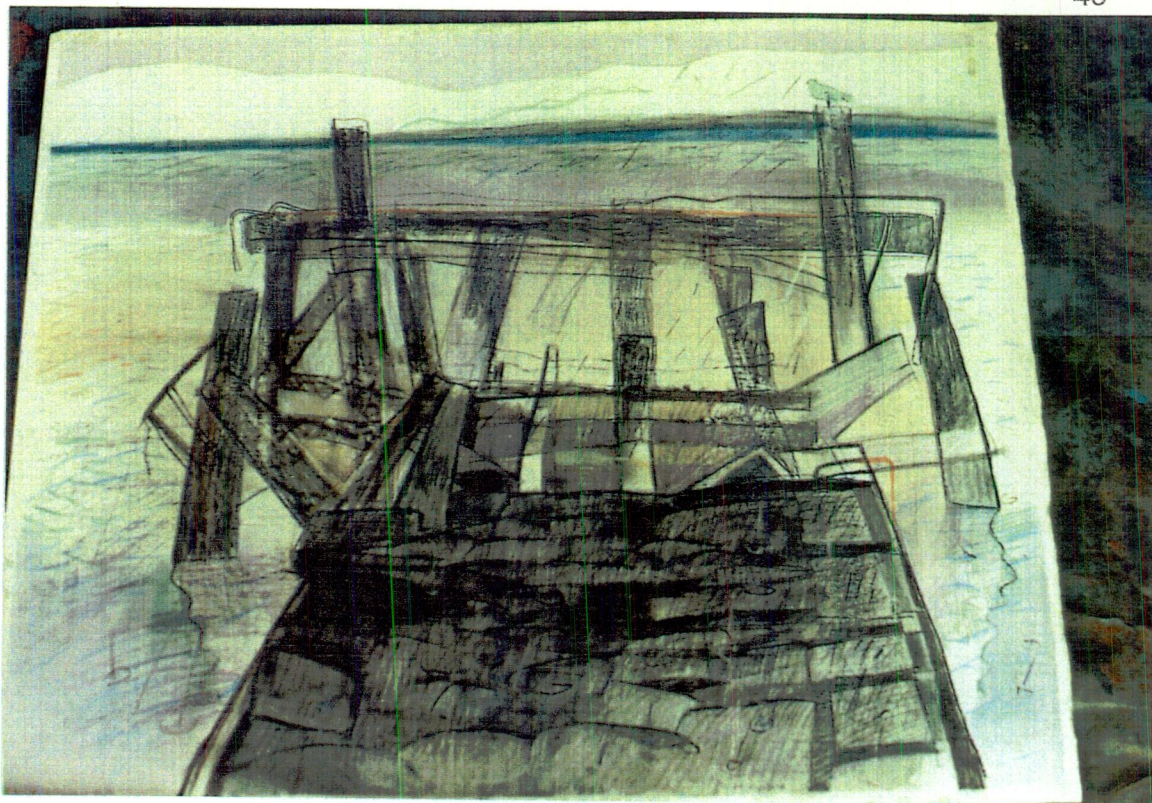


Fig. 31. WORKING DRAWING OF STONE PIER.

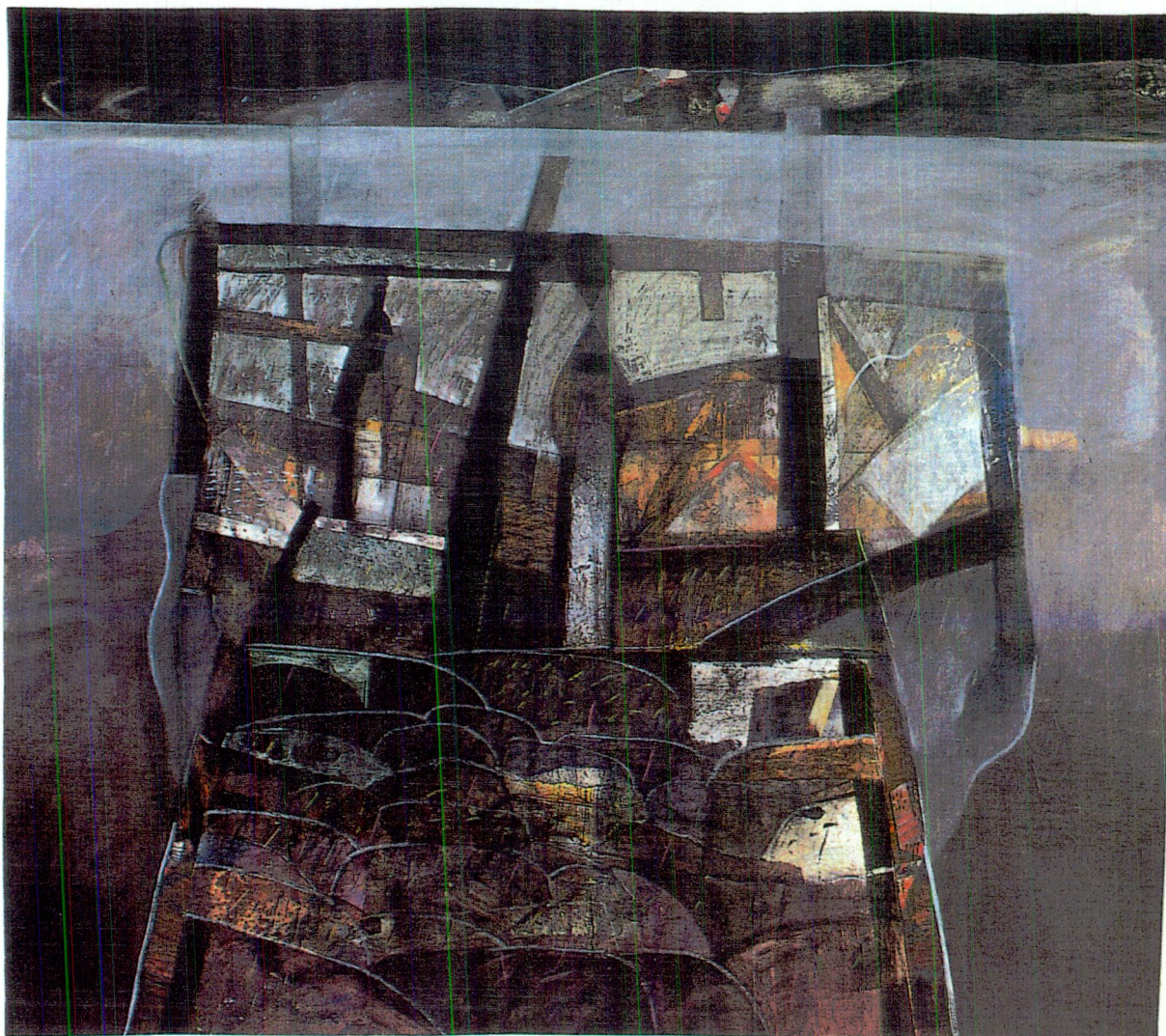
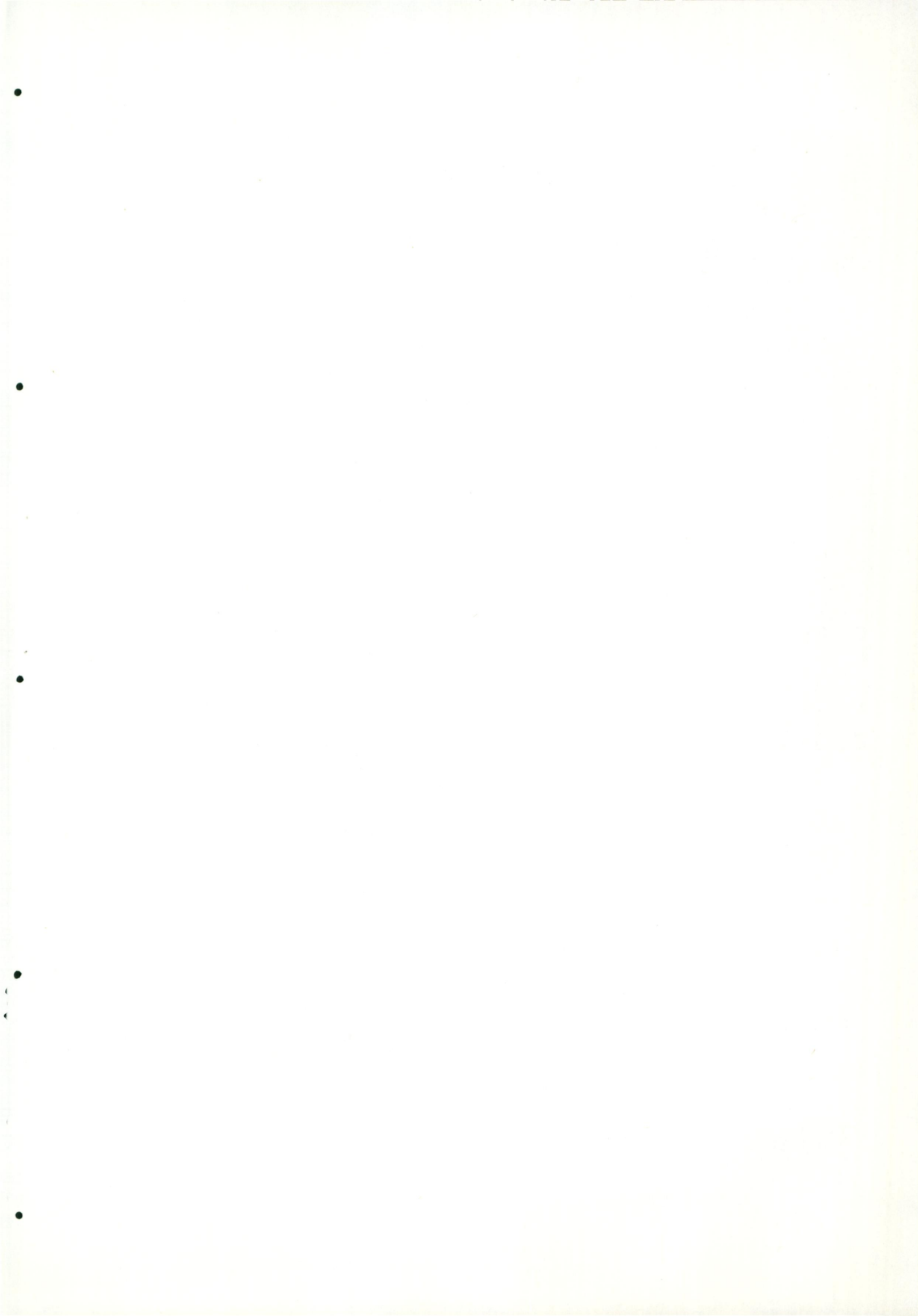


Fig. 32.

STONE PIER, 1982
Mixed Media and Collage on Canvas
60" x 78"

31

32



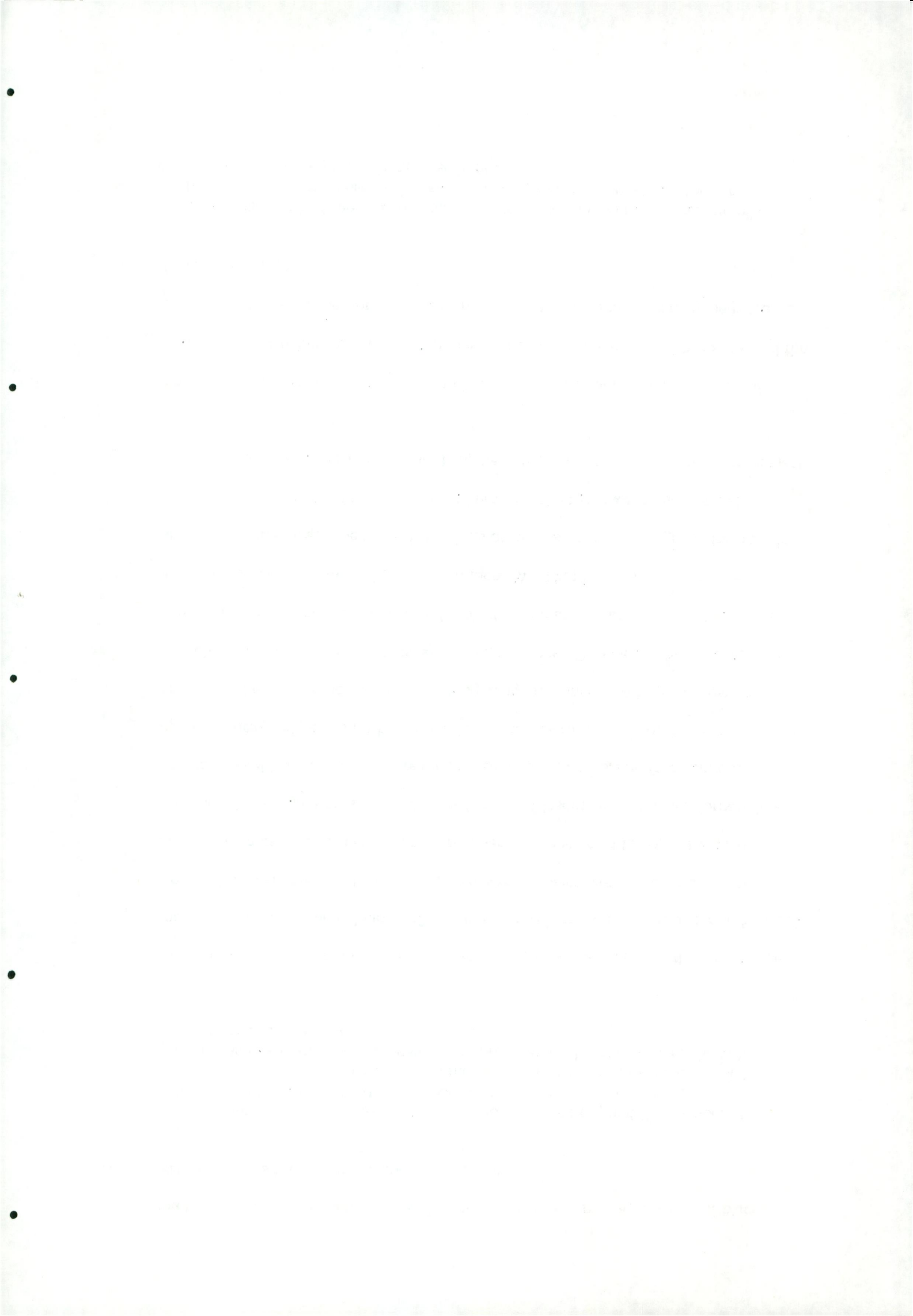
interesting, almost abstract *collage*. The horizon line becomes a thin strip of black which balances the line and shape of the painting.

If you are not concentrating and you are not prepared to paint then it doesn't work, so I think before I start I prepare as much as I can, but I am very impatient so I want to get started immediately, I just want to execute as quickly as possible so I think you do have to be prepared to do that, particularly with the large scale paintings.

Nowhere in Barbara's work is her extended palette better exemplified than in her use of monotype, a traditional technique of painting to which she was reintroduced in Santa Fe. This technique is one in which the artist applies the paint directly to a non-porous surface, such as glass or perspex, and the image is transferred to paper by hand pressure or through a press. In collaboration with Glasgow Print Studio, Barbara Rae has developed her own style of creating these unique images, and free painterly approach using oil paint with brushes, rollers and rags to manipulate the surface of the perspex to her heart's desire. The resulting image is transferred to paper (usually French, occasionally Japanese), using an etching press. Often after this first printing, she will decide to add more detail to the block and may overprint four to five times, achieving a rich multi-layered textured surface. Working in the studio from her sketchbook, the images become distillations of memories, newly-triggered, masterfully and confidently composed. Print is a medium that she has always used since her college days at Edinburgh. When studying painting, print was a complementary subject.

She uses a different process of working in the medium of print-making. This is the opposite to her paintings with the contrast between her fascination with texture and the complete flatness of the print. Some of her early reviews were extremely negative, as Clare Henry writes -

The Public will find these works easier, more readable than her impressive oils, but the disappointing slick lightweight monotypes are no substitute for her lovely chime colle prints. (Herald, 19/5/86)



Also Cordelia Oliver writes in a review:

The oil collages in the Scottish Gallery in Edinburgh and the large monotypes at the Glasgow Printer's Workshop gallery have much in common - sombre areas streaked and stabbed with ringing or lambent colours, composed with an elegance that, alone, might make an artist commercially successful, but would scarcely rate a serious review. (*Edinburgh Guardian*, 7/5/87)

The reasons for these reviews being so negative were that her monotypes had not got the vivid colour that appears in her later work after she visited Santa Fe e.g. a flash of orange or magenta amid the black, her work became far more ambitious, and the freedom of gesture all added to the work becoming more interesting.

One monotype that is especially successful is "OCTOBER GARDEN" (Fig. 33) where twisted branches and scattered leaves provide a useful counterpoint to her characteristic use of black. The stronger use of colour appeared after a visit to Spain which influenced her palette.

I am much more prepared to use colour than I was before. The way I apply paint has changed a lot. It's much bolder, much freer. Maybe that's a sign of becoming older. I'm not so worried any more. (*Scotsman*, 8/10/90)

"SEAGATE" (Fig. 34) is one of Barbara Rae's more recent monotypes done in 1993. This shows how her work has become very confident, both in the use of medium and of colour.

"HARBOUR BOX" AND "HIGHLAND FENCE" (Figs. 35-36) are both etchings.

"HARBOUR BOX" repeats an essentially square composition built from different, detailed elements - lobster creels, crates and the litter of fishing. Barbara found this image a very difficult picture to resolve. The eye is drawn into the centre of the box with a bright yellow circle in the bottom right hand corner. "HIGHLAND FENCE" is a dark rustic image with a peat-like colour surrounding the opening. The wire crossing the page is curling from one fence to the other. Sombre areas, streaked and stabbed with ringing incisions leave the viewer aware of the search for the more simple idea that

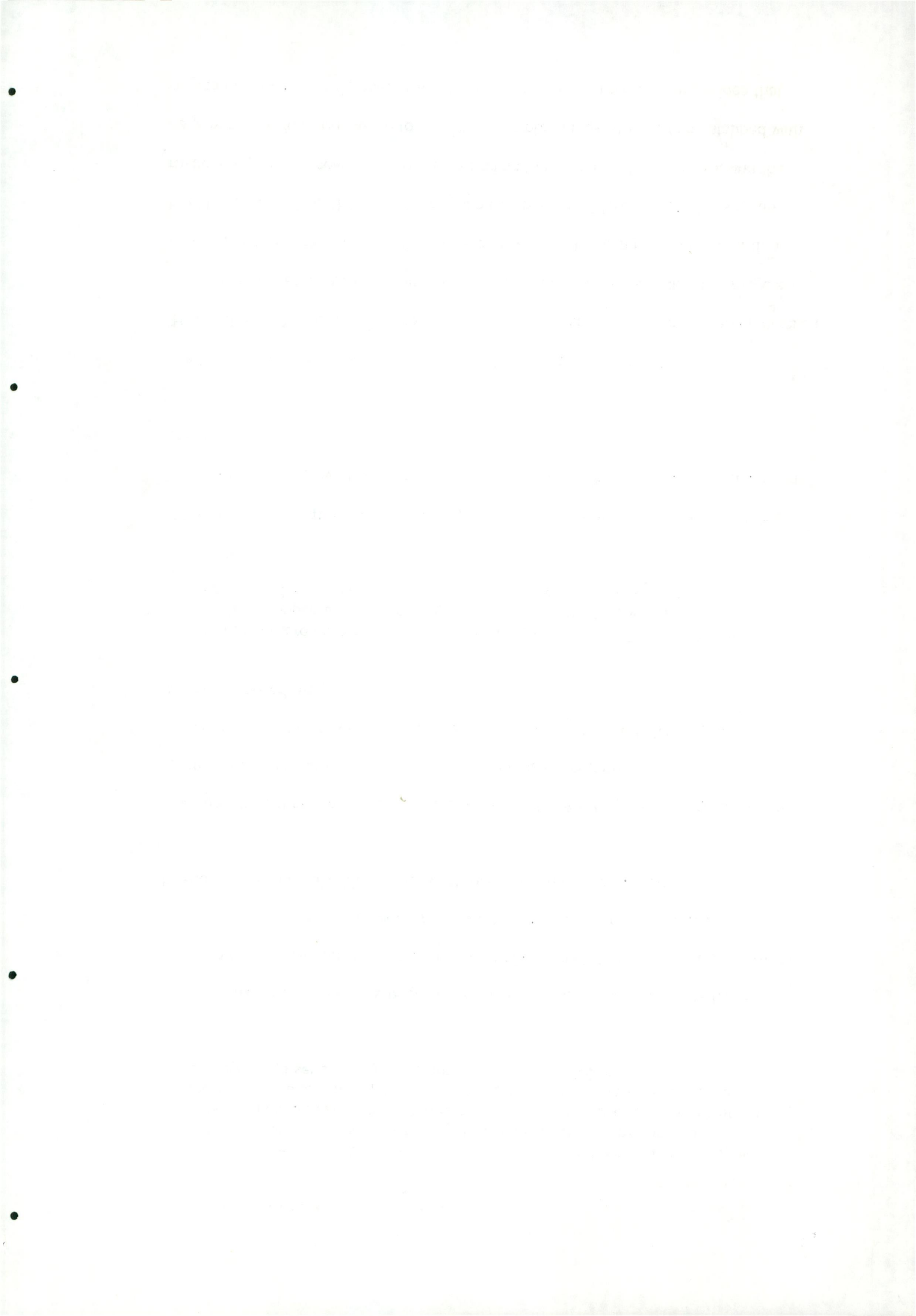




Fig. 33. OCTOBER GARDEN 1986.

Monotype.

30"x 40"



SEA GATE.

Fig. 34.
SEA GATE.
Monoprint, 1993.

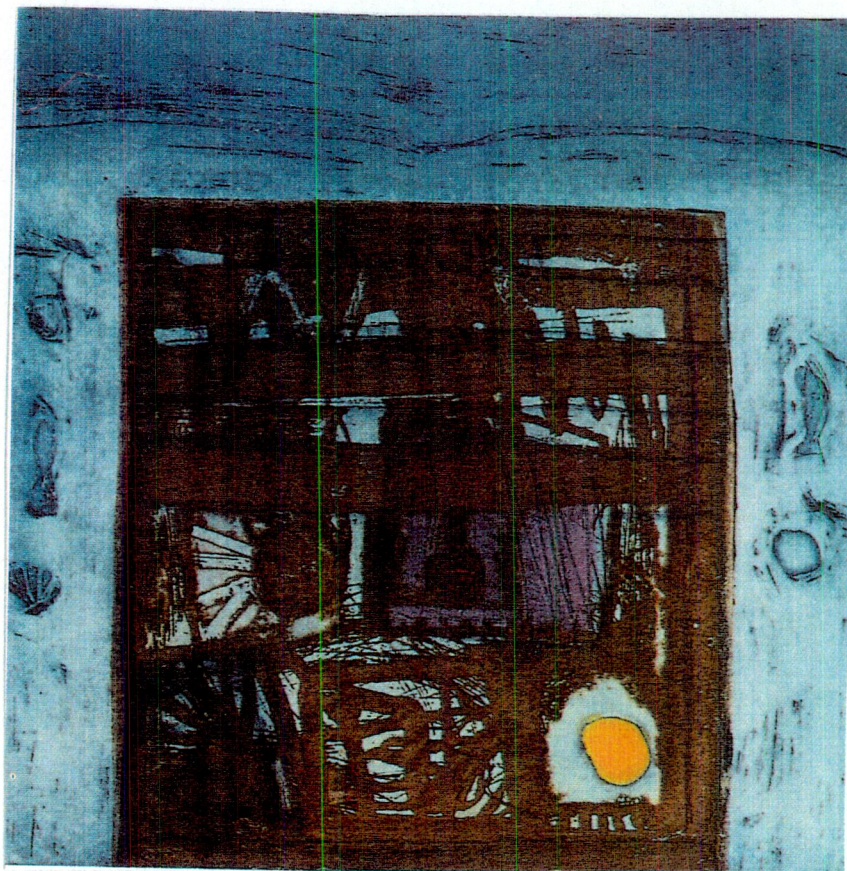


Fig. 35.

HARBOUR BOX 1993

Etching

10" x 10"

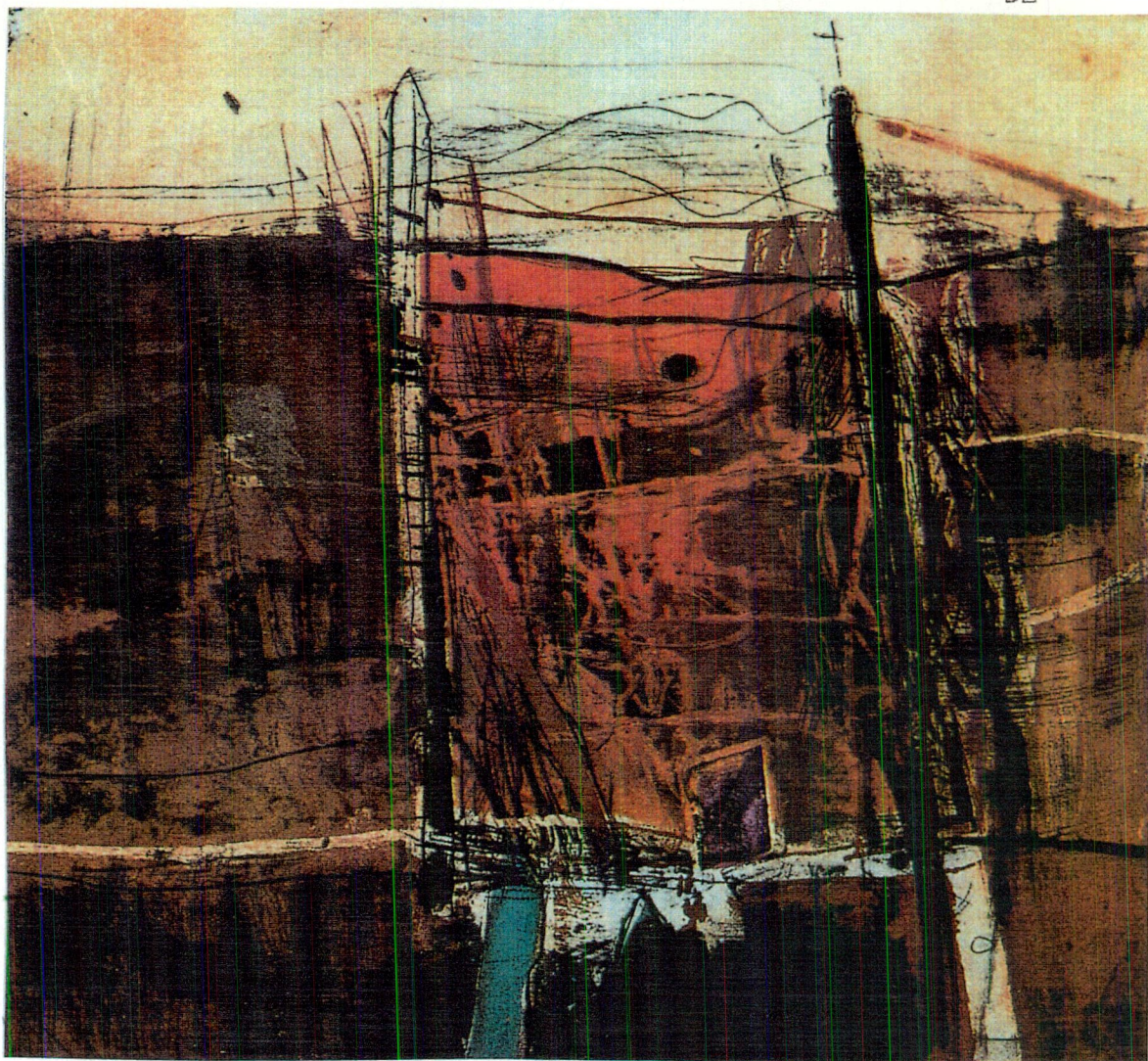


Fig. 36.

HIGHLAND FENCE 1993

Etching.

16" x 18"

Barbara Rae strives for in her work. In both these images, the medium of etching was used. She uses this type of printing in her work as well as monotype. Etching lends itself very well to both these images as the scraping and scoring into the plate leaves a multitude of lines which show her love of drawing.

Print-making for Barbara Rae is an essential part of her work, she alternates between painting and print. A day in the print workshop can change the image to another way of seeing it. Some of the paintings are done before making a print and some are done after; there is no set way of working.

As her work became stronger, her critics became more favourable.

As well as the large oil paintings there are water colours extended by an occasional collage effect. Lest one should dismiss Rae as pure 'belle peinture' a group of powerful monotypes attest to her ability as a draughtswoman and designer. (*The Scotsman*, 11/10/88)

Asked whether print-making was a way of relieving a situation if a painting was not going well, or if she was stuck with an image, she said no, that then it would just not be working, therefore it would be better to start again.

Colour

Barbara Rae is often described as a decorative painter. In the great tradition of Gauguin and Matisse, the painter must achieve the fine balance between subject and expression, content and form, through line and colour. This she has achieved. It has been a long and hard journey to arrive at this place and, when she left college, she found that she went back to working in black and white for a couple of years. This helped her to simplify the work, concentrating on shape, structure and tone. This can be seen in many of the earlier works and, as we looked through some of them in her studio in Glasgow, we came across a study of an interesting subject in "PEAT BOX". (Fig. 37) It is a picture of an invention that was used for a period of time in Scotland for drying the turf. The peat was cut in long strips by hand and then hung in this drying box. The turf

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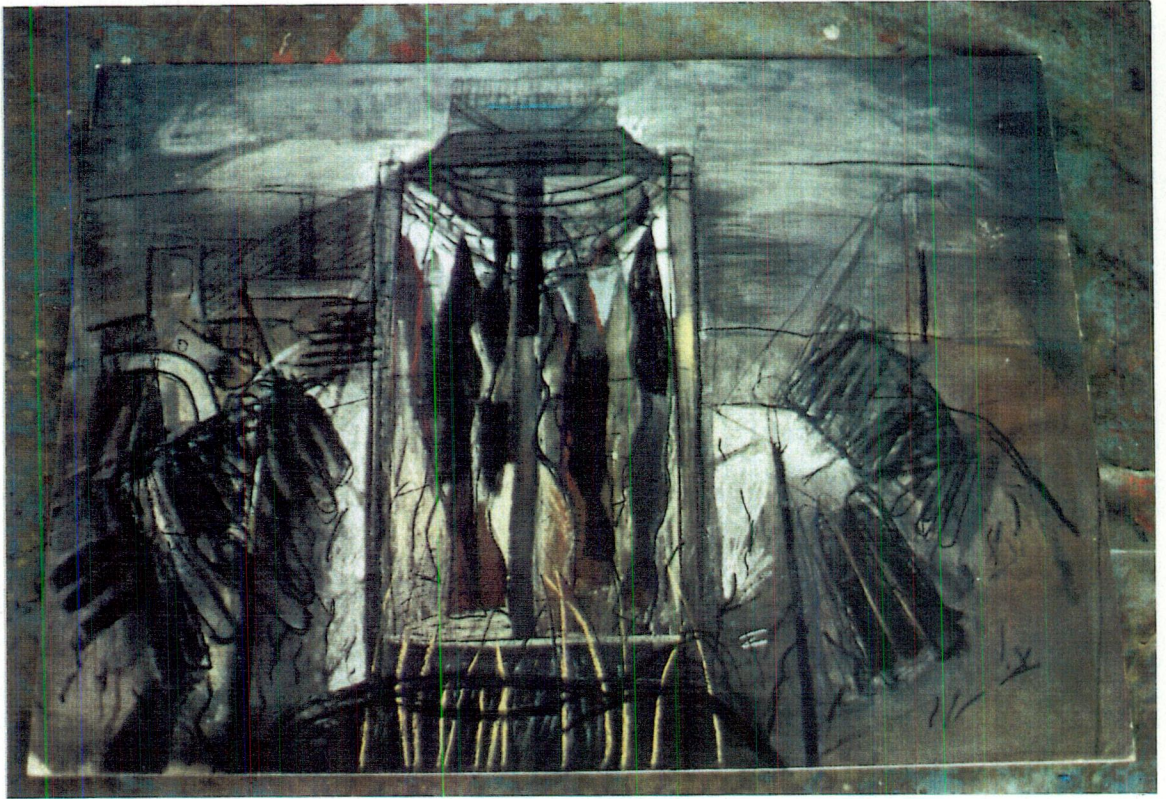


Fig. 37.

Barbara Rae

STUDY OF PEAT BOX.

was hung onto wire and turned, allowing the air to circulate around the turf.

Unfortunately, it proved to be unsuccessful and far too time-consuming, so it has long been discontinued as a form of labour. This work also shows a simplicity in the use of colour and is a good example of her earlier works dealing with the shape and structure.

There was a change as she moved on in the work even while she was still in the black-and-white period. The forms became simpler in shape, the surface flatter and the shapes were taken to and beyond the edge of the paper. (Fig. 38)

She said that, in her earlier phase, she had been at work on a canvas for an exhibition. "It was too busy, too much fogging detail, so I worked over it with black - much better, don't you think..." (Arts Review, 1984, p.554) This use of black remained in her work. The sombre tones are typical of her work from the time at Edinburgh School of Art in the early sixties. The dominant colour in her compositions were black, grey, and silvery blue. She explains that this has been partly due to her admiration for the portraits of Goya whose use of dark and light tones to create a powerful, yet restrained mood acted like a catalyst on her paintings as a student. She still, to this day, works with the same key in colour which she feels is a fault, and wishes that she was able to do a painting that was lighter in tone. But, the more she works the darker in tone it gets and, even if she has left a painting that is quite light, she will come in the following day and darken it. She insists that it is not so much the brightness or the intensity of the colour but the tone of it she prefers to be darker. Given her preference for melancholic areas of Scotland, it is hardly surprising that so little colour filtered into her work. In the paintings of the West Coast of Scotland, she used subdued colour to evoke the spirit of high mists and rolling mountainside, clothed with heather and peat bogs, riven by streams, punctuated by vestigial trees. This is well depicted in "PEAT BANK TRILOGY", 1988 (Fig. 39) Another in this series was seen at the Carlow Arts Festival, 1994 at which Barbara Rae was invited to show by fellow Scottish artist Bob Lynn who is now working and living in Ireland. The piece was large, four foot by six foot, placed

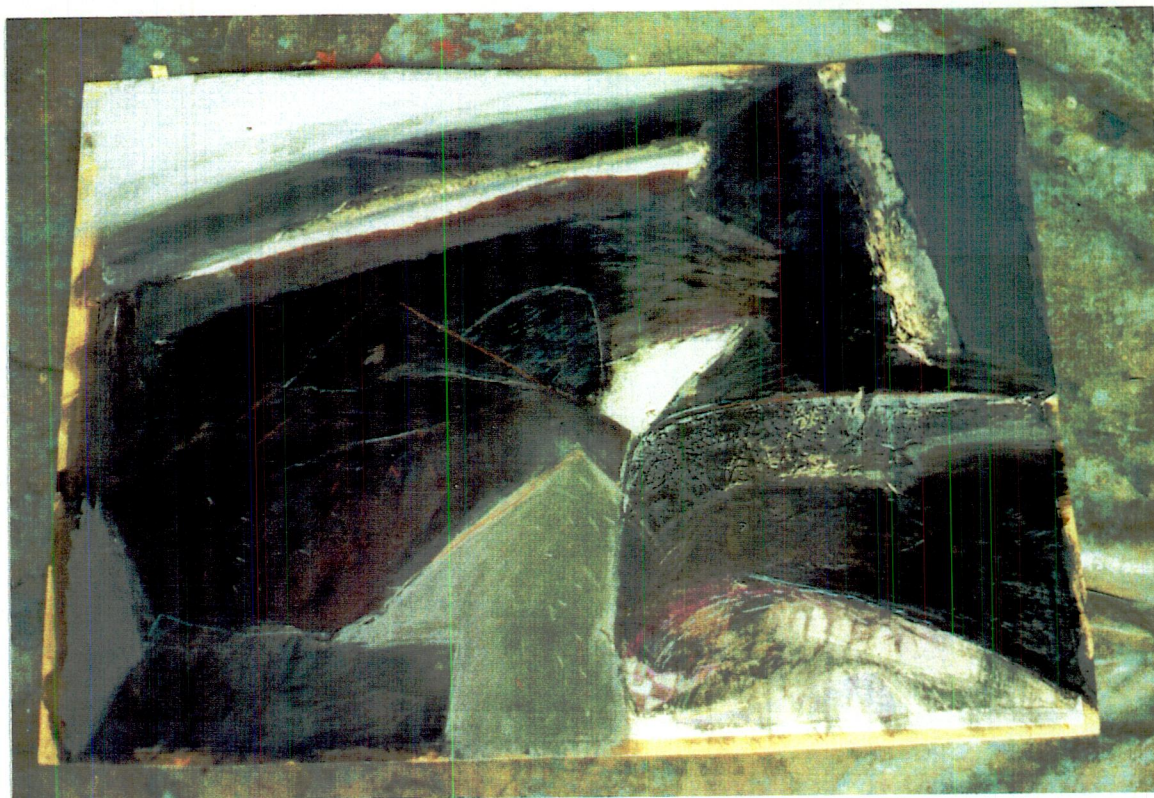


Fig. 38.
STUDIES.

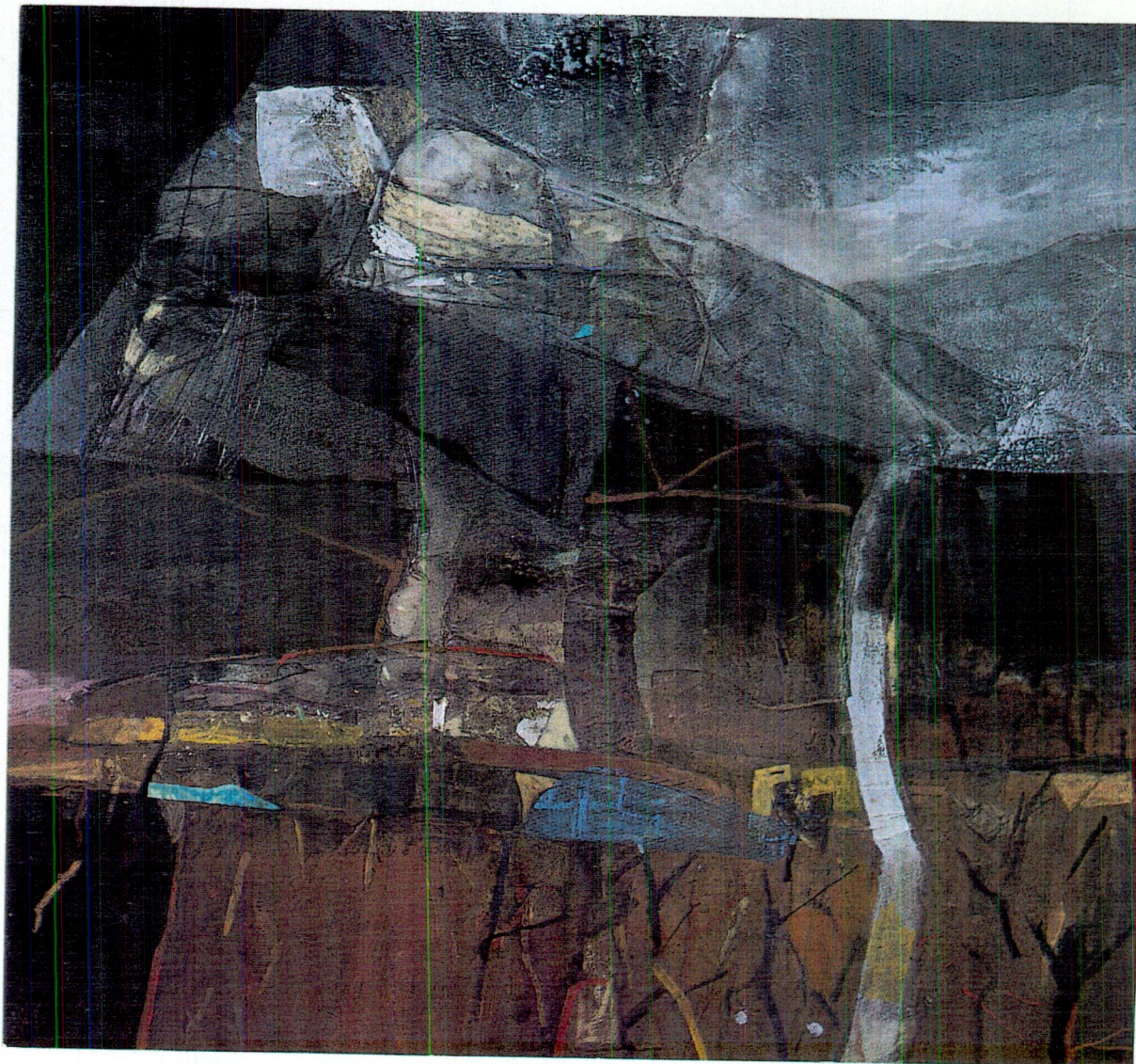


Fig. 39.

PEATBANK TRIGOLY 1988.

Mixed media on canvas

60" x 72"

amongst a wide range of her work, ranging from that executed in Spain to her most recent paintings. What struck me at first was the matt, almost dead tone that had been used. It was heavily *collaged*, which made me think about the millions of layers of history that lies within the peat. It showed rounded turf mounds and large areas cut like bands. (Fig. 40) It was the only painting done in this tonal range and it was exactly what one would expect in that desolate landscape; it felt like a sad place to be, lonely and isolated. This is an early work and small areas of colour start to appear. We can see yellow and rusty reds beginning to emerge, but it is only a glimpse of what is to come later in the work.

From the tiny work she does in situ, paintings are developed in many different ways, on large canvases and boards in the studio. But, although the original designs may be hidden in the rich structure of the composition, the essential nature/character of the landscape shines clear. Occasionally, too, she expands these into large-scale water-colours, which can be considered distinct from other work e.g. "ARTOE MORNING", 1984 (Fig. 41) In this series of works that she did at Leith docks in Edinburgh, she dealt with a completely different type of material, rusty cranes, paint-chipped hulls. But, there again, it is the use of colour, structure and form that comes across so strongly. The "RUSSIAN SHIP" (Fig. 42) serves well as an example. Looming out of a dark ground are shapes of prow or hull, mast or crane, porthole or cargo. Against their dark grounds, often in blocks or in irregular triangles, the colour is majestic. Anchored by black the surface is brightly streaked, sprayed and spattered with gold. Texture, too, plays its part - the thickest paint pitted or scratched, contrasting with an abutting area of thin glistening paint. In "THE NORWEGIAN SHIP" (Fig. 43), there is *collage* in the form of steel strips like rivets, metal grids, a foreign sailor's badge, lustrated paper or ribbed cloth. The result is potently atmospheric, conjuring a sense, not just of what you see, but of other places and times - a dark, rusting hull with an interior structure co-existing with the outward iridescence of the sea. You sense, rather than see, the actual workings of the port - machinery at work, a tension of crossing verticals and a recurring vocabulary of crosses, circles and triangles. As well as this powerful mixed-media work, there is a

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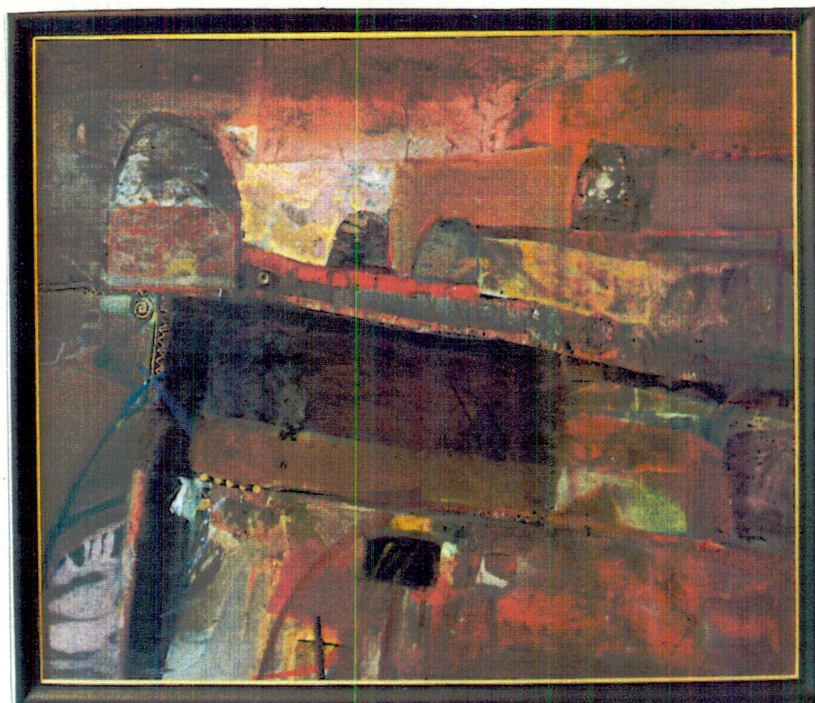


Fig. 40.

PEATBANK TRILOGY 1989

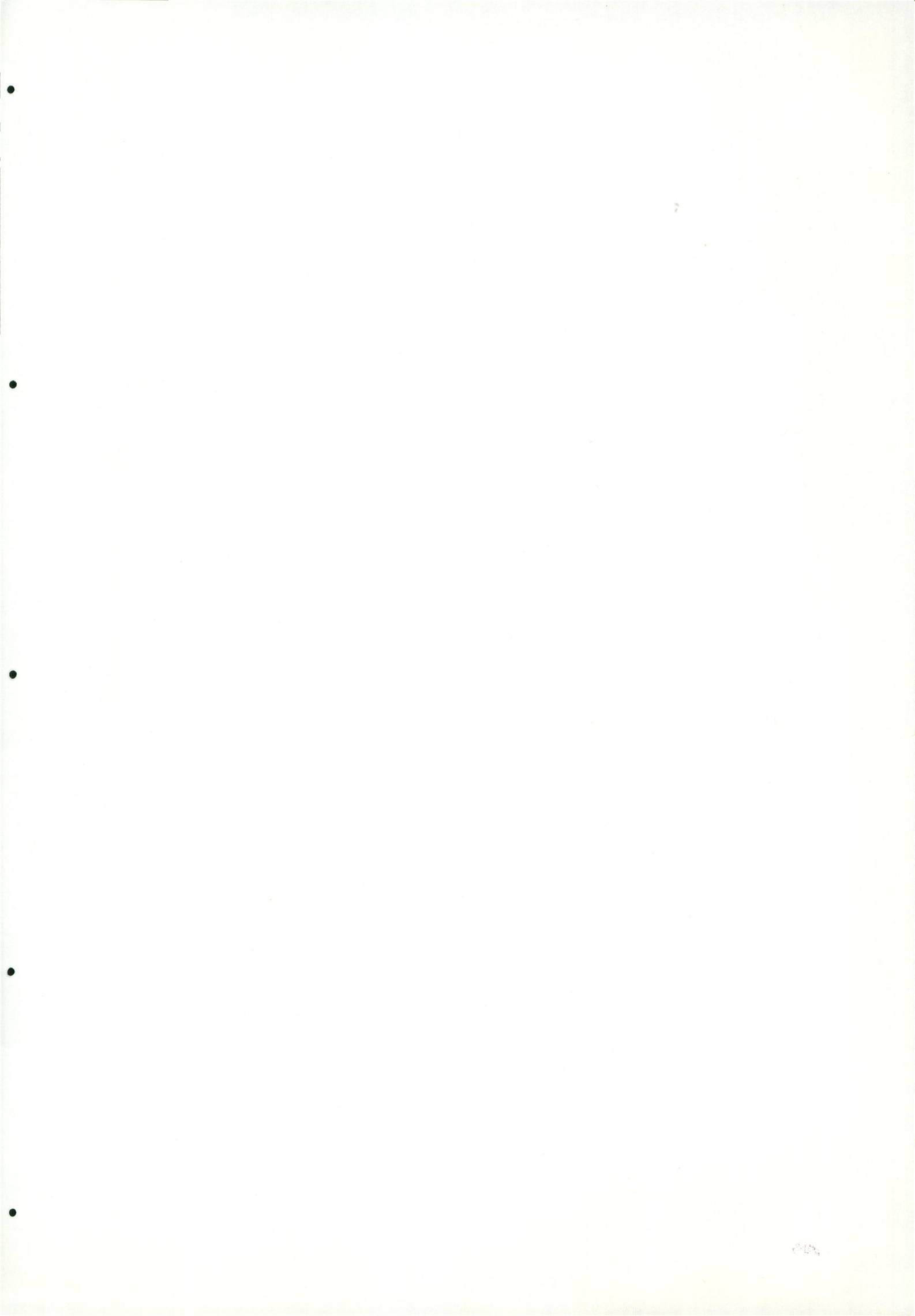
Mixed media on canvas

4' x 6'



Fig. 41.

ARTOE MORNING, 1984
Watercolour on Paper
30" x 40"



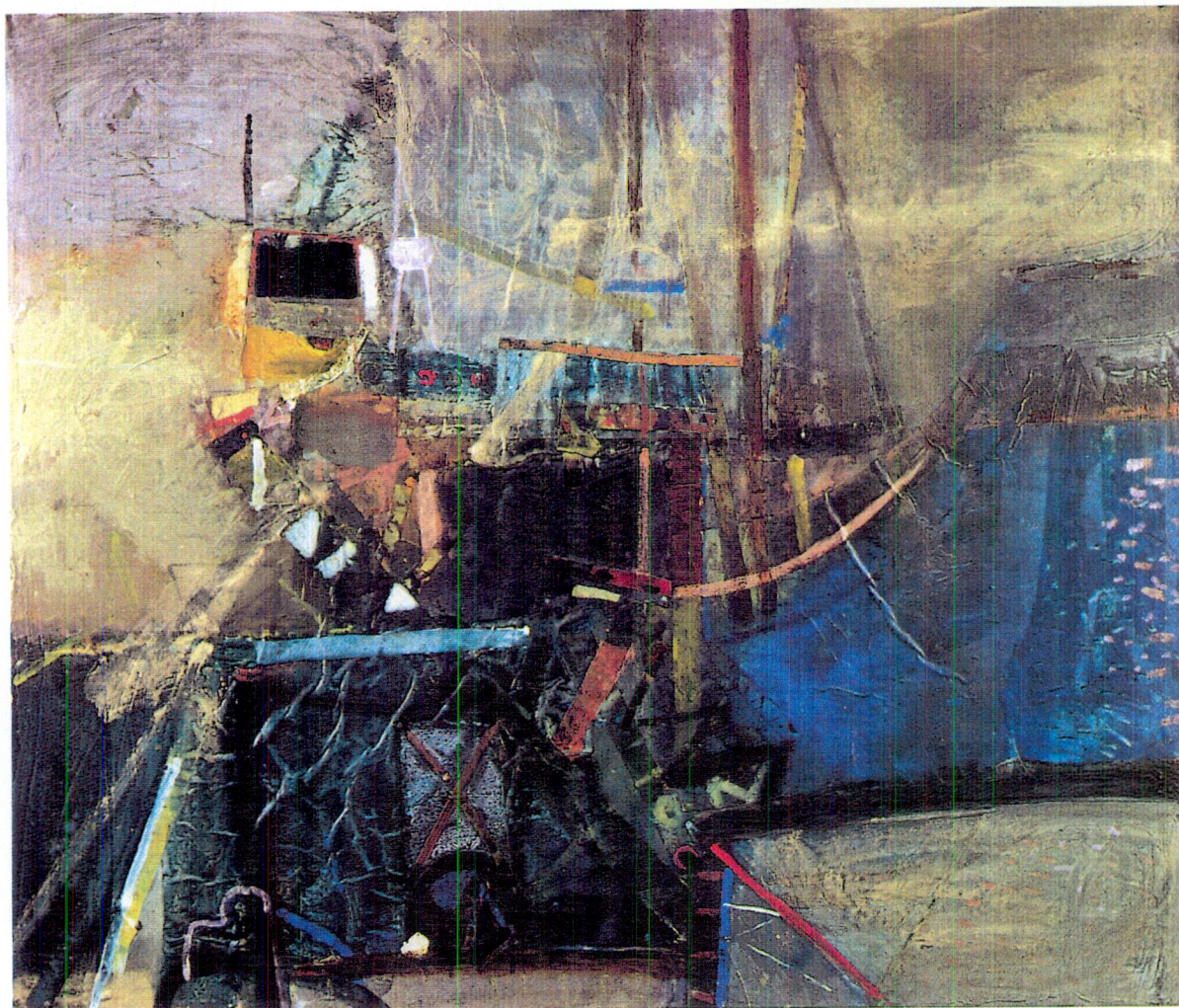


Fig. 42.
THE RUSSIAN SHIP

Mixed media

60" x 72"

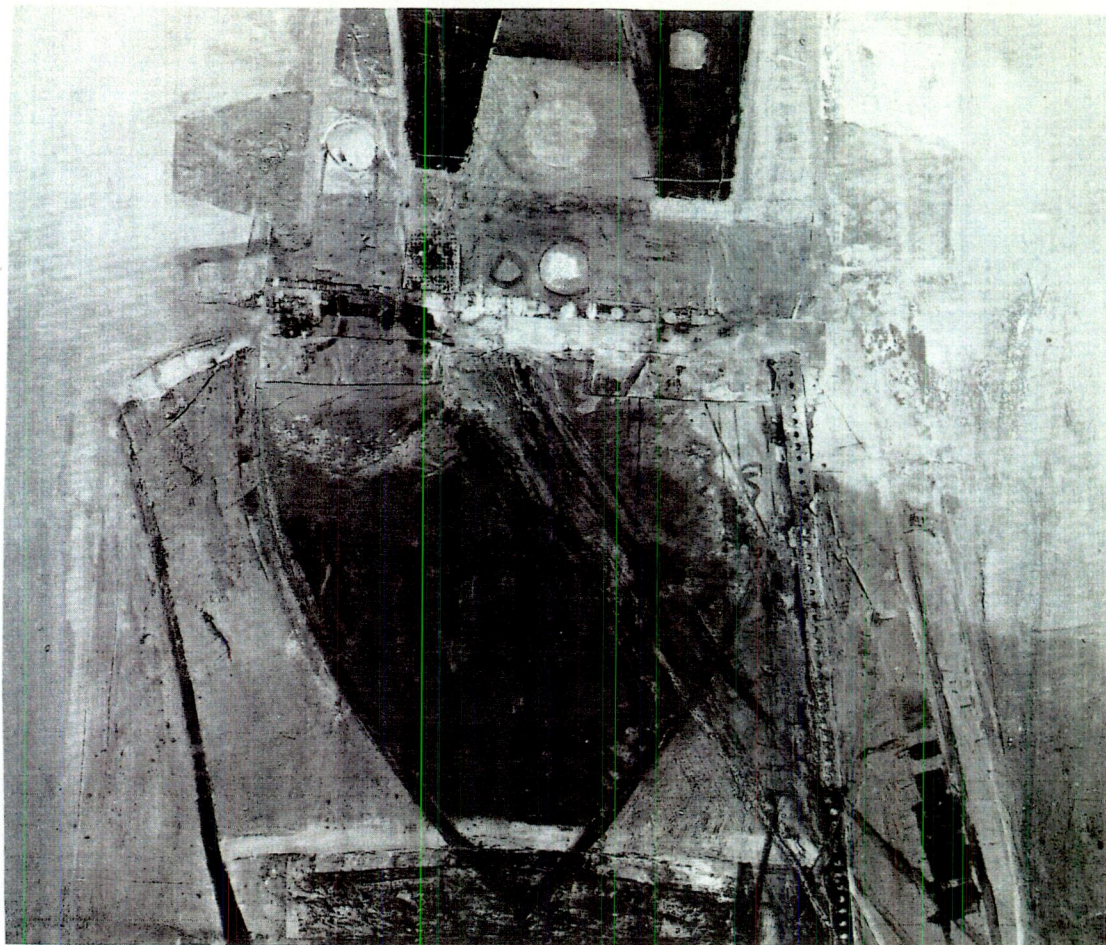
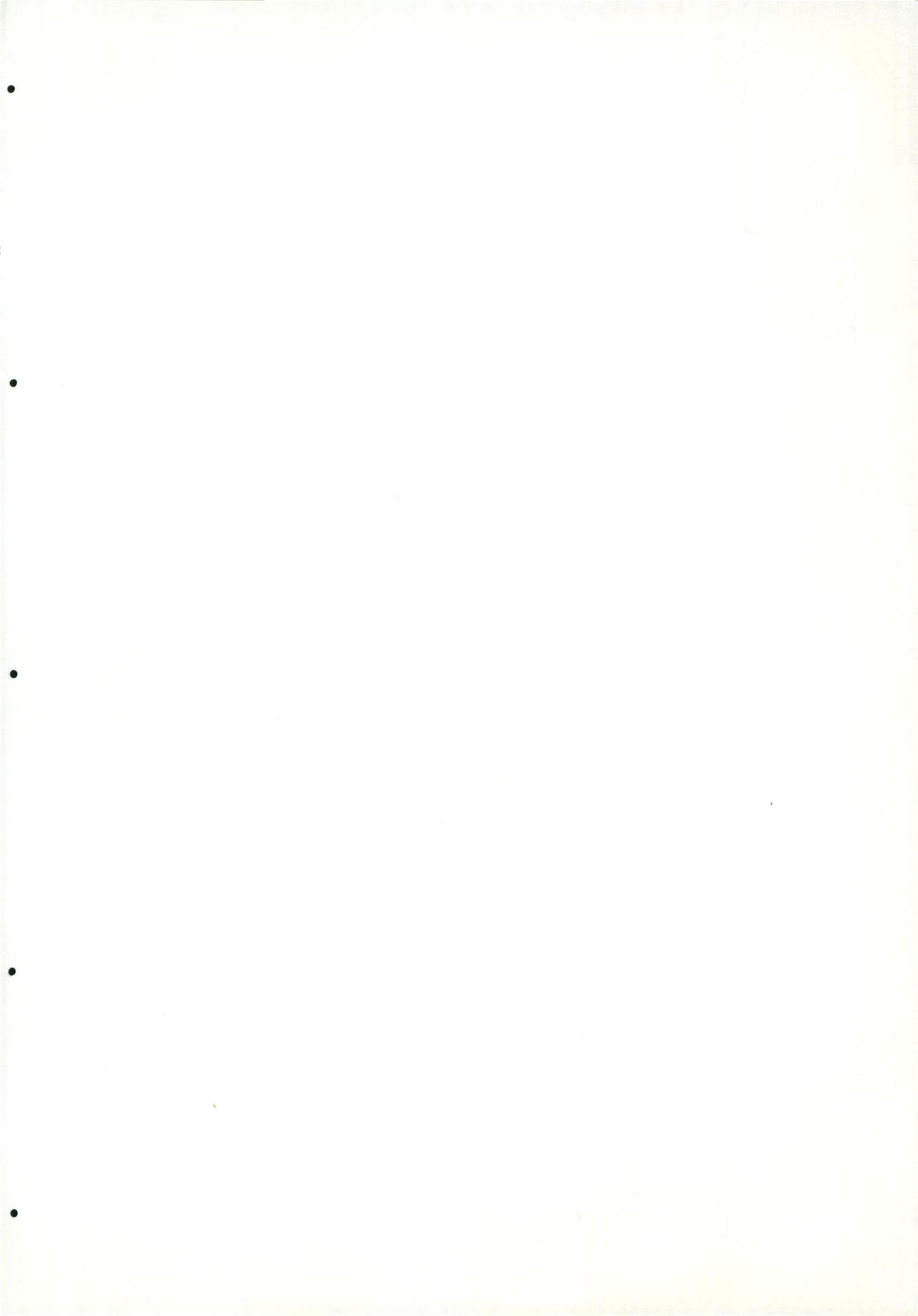


Fig. 43.

THE NORWEGIAN SHIP 1989

Mixed media on canvas

60" x 72"



water-colour of the ship named "PUFF" (ILL. 44) The black prow steals itself across the page with a strip of sepia melting into the water-line. Its colour leaves a sense of age - forgotten, abandoned, left to rust in the ever changing Leith Docks. It is interesting to look at the three different mediums used for the same subject: mixed media for the large colourful Russian ship; water-colour, used to great effect in "PUFF"; and monoprint in both "NORWEGIAN SHIP" (Fig. 45) and "VESSEL" (Fig. 46) Barbara Rae used the docks as a great source after she left college.

Apart from the fascination with the ships that were in the docks, what caught her eye were the boxes that were filled with many different shapes that became a series of works known as the "HARBOUR BOX". This image has been reoccurring and, up to this day, Barbara Rae is still producing paintings of this subject. (Fig. 47) The small sketchbook painting below the "HARBOUR BOX" shows how much she keeps to the original.

It was in the docks that she went back to doing a lot of drawing after she left college. She abandoned colour completely and did paintings entirely in blue. "They were dire, absolutely dire." It was her re-introduction of *collage* at this point that was the beginning of a way of working that would stay with her indefinitely. Her great love of fabrics and patchwork quilts is a clue to the connection of building together pieces of brightly-coloured shapes in a balanced pictorial form.

It was not really until she won the Scottish Arts Council Grant in 1985, that enabled her to study for three months in Spain and Santa Fe, New Mexico, U.S.A., that her work really started to take a big leap forward and began to get a majestic quality. It was the Spanish colours that were to change her work and move it into a higher dimension. Her use of *collage* increased, as did the textured surface. This latter stage of the creative process involved all sorts of experimenting, a different palette, gold leaf, and an introduction of additional *collage* elements.

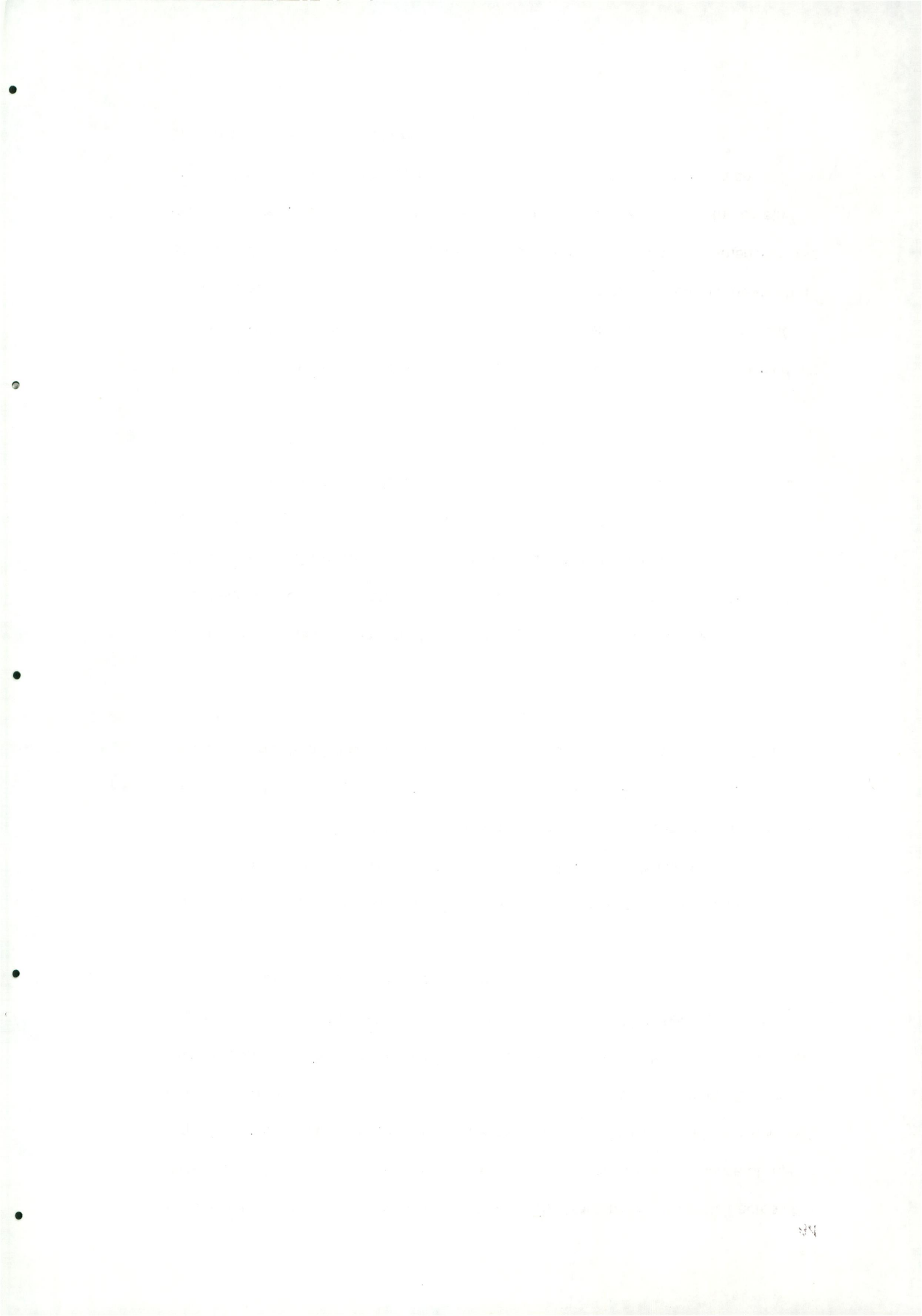




Fig. 44.

PUFF

Watercolour on paper

26" x 37"

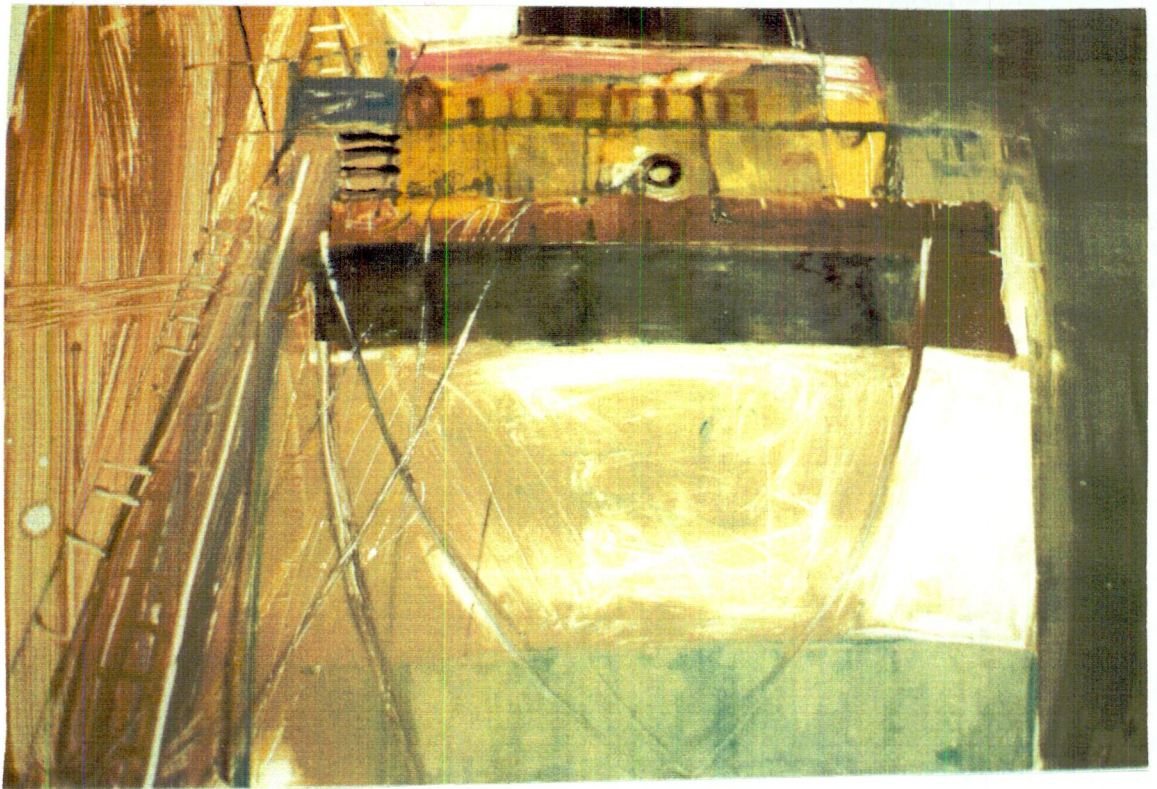


FIG. 45 NORWEGIAN SHIP 1990
Monoprint, 42" x 30"

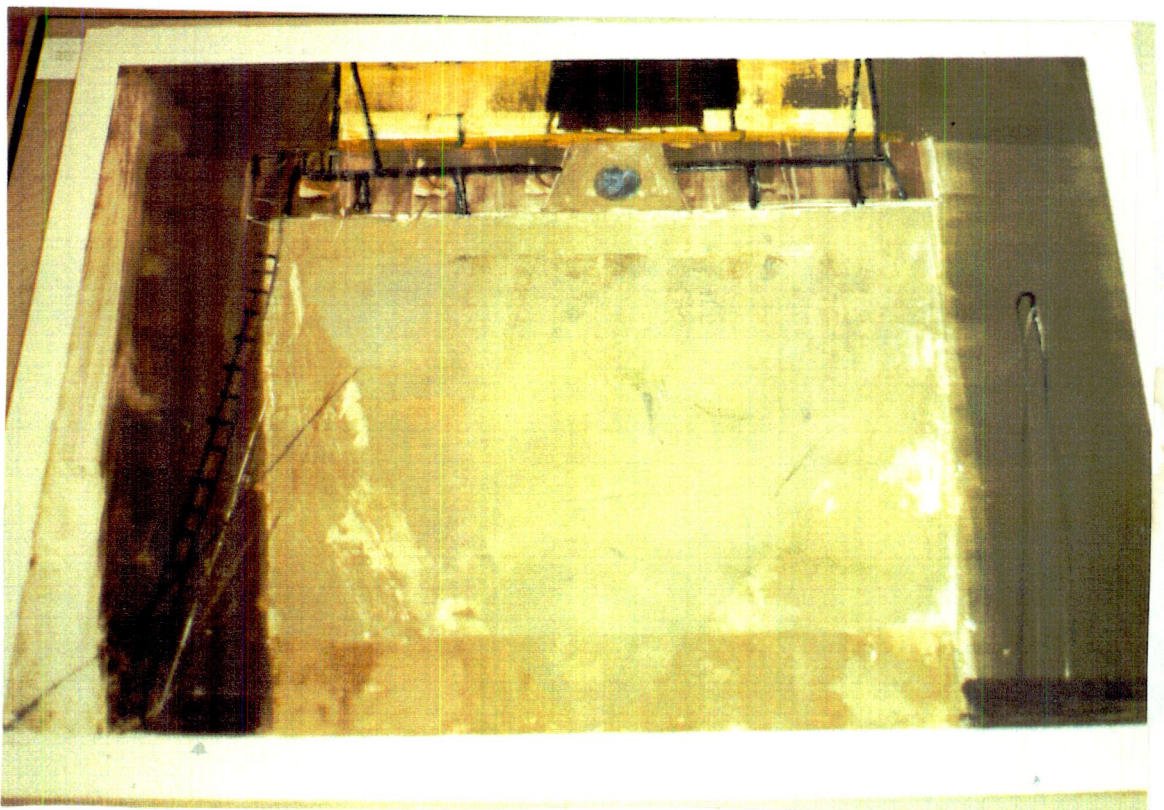


Fig. 46 VESSEL, Monoprint, 1990,

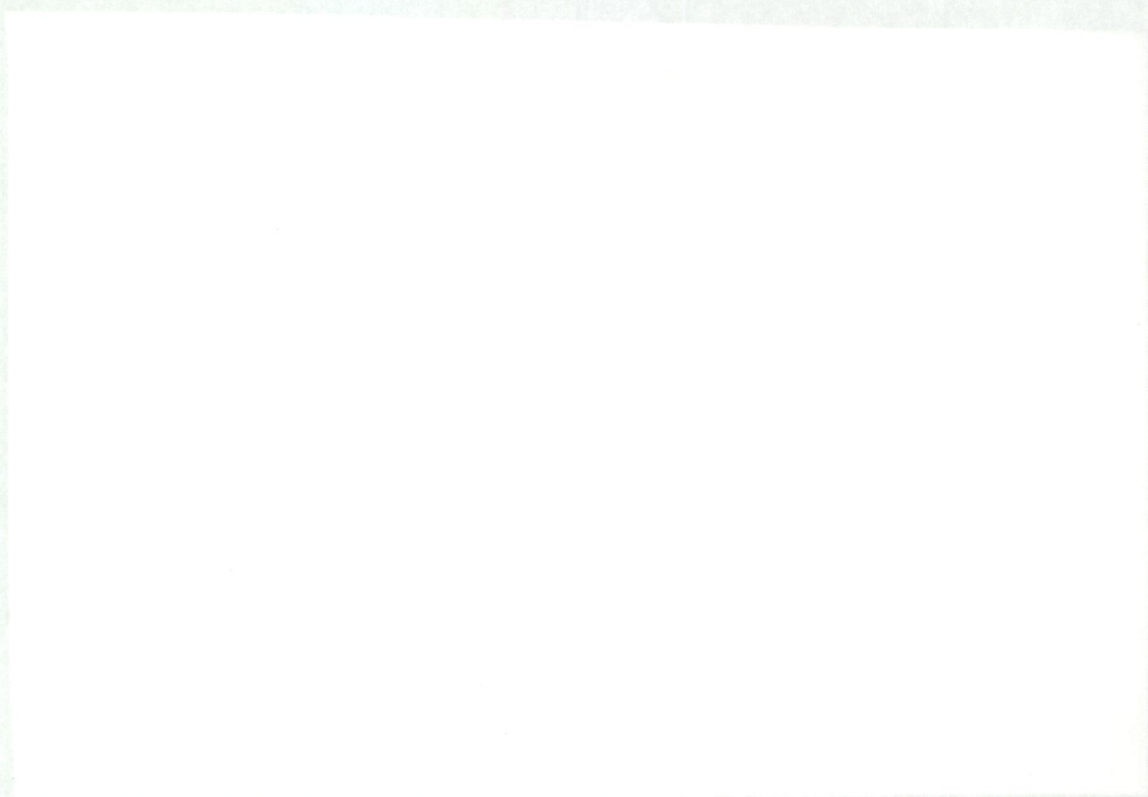
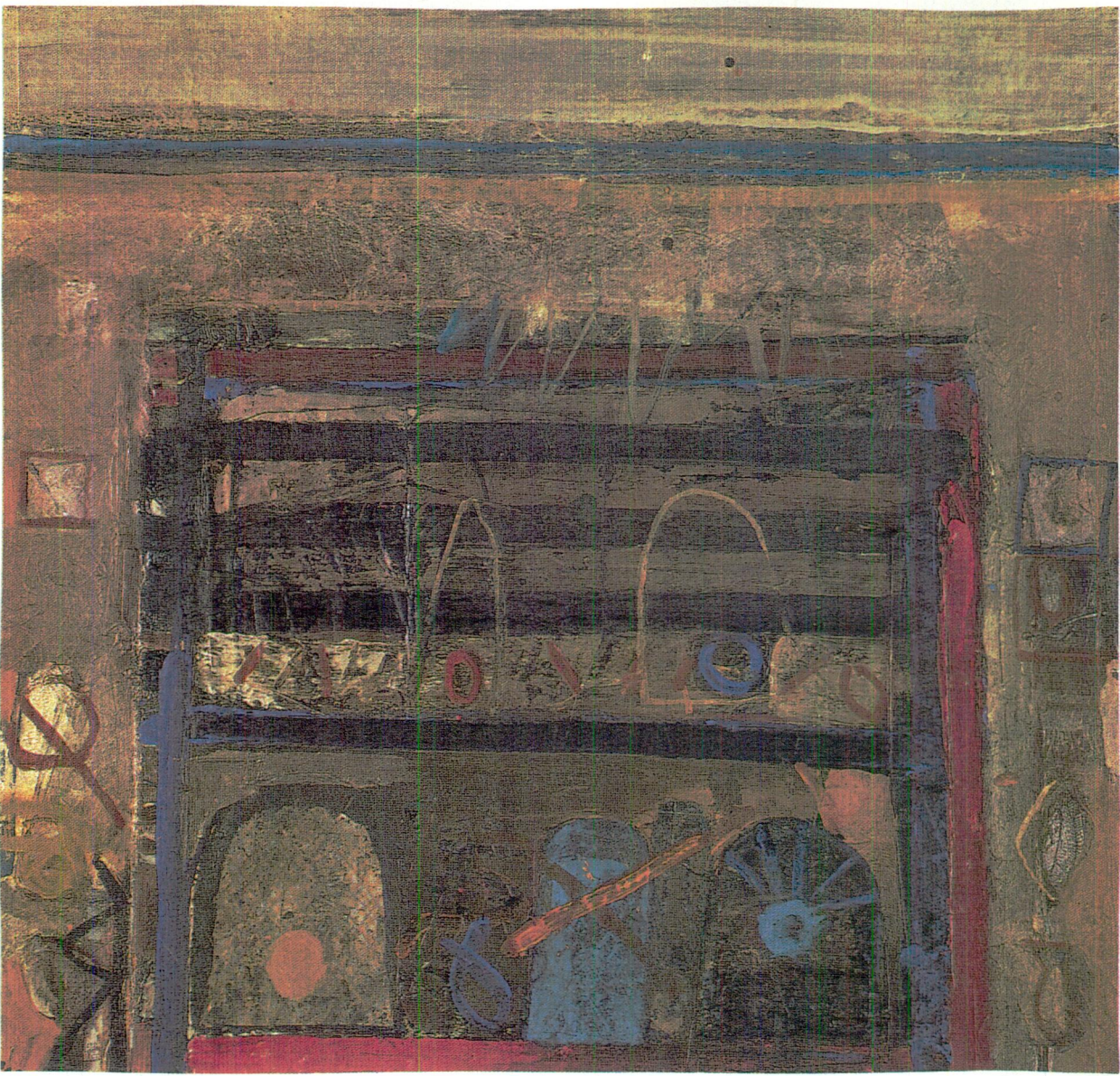


Fig. 47. Barbara Rae, HARBOUR BOX, 1994.



Sketchbook

A further award in 1989, "The Alexander Graham Munro Award", enabled her to extend her stay in Spain. This time allowed her to bring together a body of work which was a real turning point in her career; it also had a huge influence on her Scottish paintings which became much richer.

"CREEL BOX" (Fig. 48) and "SLIPWAY, RIEFF" (Fig. 49) creates quite a different impression from her earlier work. It is not always easy to pinpoint exactly what this difference is since many of the earlier works hardly lacked colour, but somehow the paintings are more vibrant. However, her palette is certainly more marked. Strong tonal essays have been superseded by colour contrasts

It is through the elaboration of compositional presentation, and choice and deployment of colour, that her painting achieves such poetic power. The colour is especially vital. It is selection of colour, sometimes dark and omniscient, and other times intense and inviolable, which reveals the artist's deepest feelings for her world and her art. While shape and line appeal more to the discerning and intellect, colour, when treated so sensitively and intently, directly excites the imagination and stirs the heart, 'feelings too deep for tears' (Hare, *Contemporary Art*, p56)

She, herself, admits that: "When working in Scotland, I restrict my palette. When I went to Spain I had to buy a completely different set of colours." (Cook)

The colour is often hotter and brighter and the handling often looser and more spontaneous. Using *chine colle* with mixed media, she manages to imbue her canvasses with tactile richness. You really have to see these works close to as it is very difficult to appreciate their surface opulence from a distance. I was fortunate enough to have seen a lot of her paintings which were exhibited in the Éigse '94 exhibition in Carlow. The richness of the surface and colour is truly amazing. Her introduction of strong vibrant colour started to feed into her Scottish landscapes. Her dark landscapes caught fire with strobes of orange, purple, pink, yellow, turquoise, and gold. "PEAT BANK, ERRIDALE" (Fig. 50) is entwined with these rich hues, making the heather seem to have been set on fire by the intensity of colour introduced to her palette.

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the author to the editor of the journal. The letter discusses the author's interest in the topic and the reasons for writing the paper.

2. The second part of the document is the abstract of the paper. It provides a brief summary of the main findings and conclusions of the study.

3. The third part of the document is the introduction. It sets the context for the study and outlines the objectives and scope of the research.

4. The fourth part of the document is the literature review. It discusses the existing research on the topic and identifies the gaps that the current study aims to address.

5. The fifth part of the document is the methodology. It describes the research design, data collection methods, and the statistical analysis used in the study.

6. The sixth part of the document is the results. It presents the findings of the study, including the main results and any significant differences or trends.

7. The seventh part of the document is the discussion. It interprets the results, discusses their implications, and compares them with the findings of other studies.

8. The eighth part of the document is the conclusion. It summarizes the main findings and provides recommendations for future research.

9. The ninth part of the document is the references. It lists the sources of information used in the study, including books, articles, and other publications.

10. The tenth part of the document is the appendix. It contains supplementary information that supports the main text, such as additional data, tables, or figures.

11. The eleventh part of the document is the acknowledgments. It expresses gratitude to the individuals or organizations that provided support or assistance during the research process.



Fig. 48.

Barbara Rae

CREEL BOX, Mixed Media, 1994.

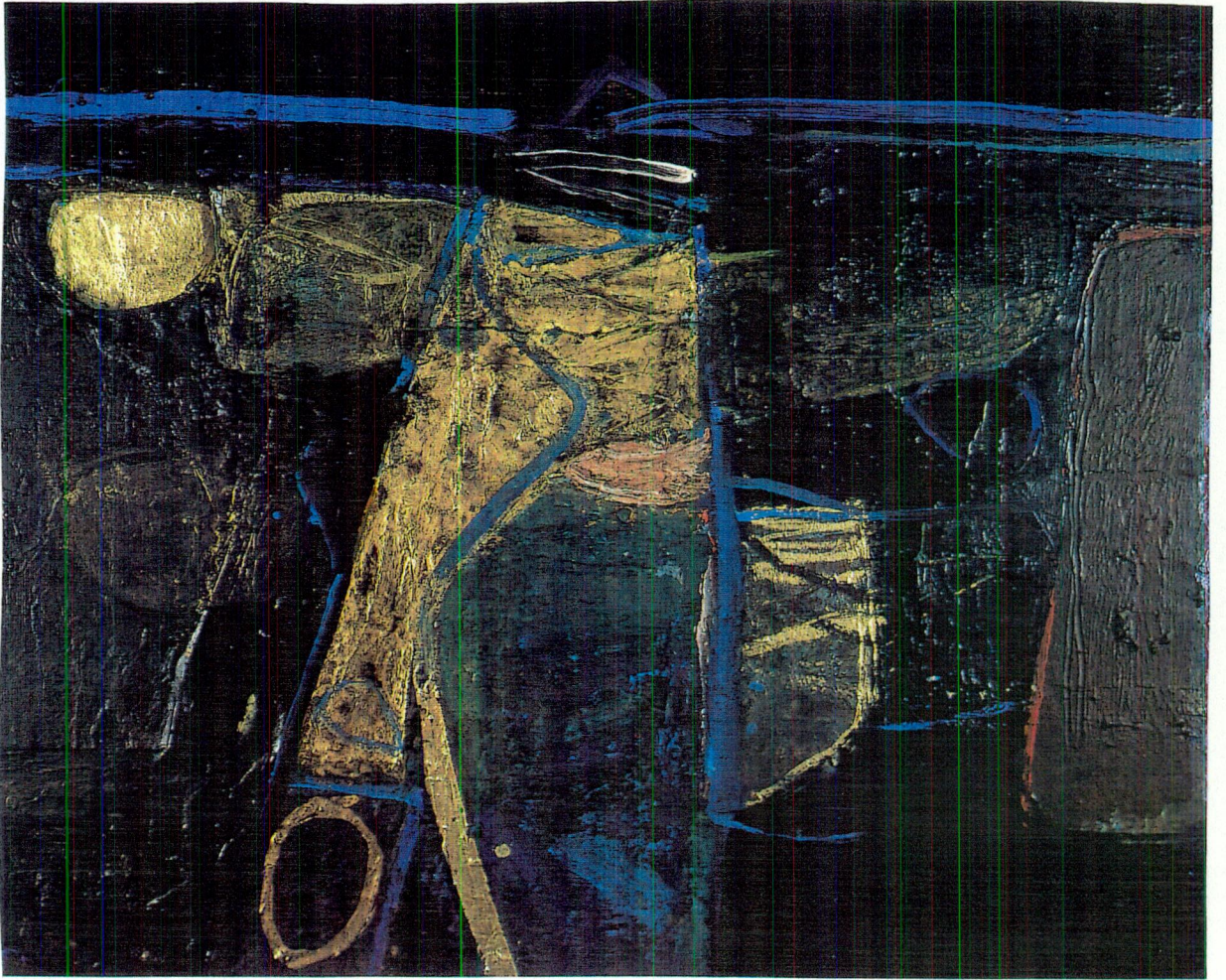


Fig. 49.

SLIPWAY, REIFF, 1992, Mixed Media on Canvas, 48" x 60"

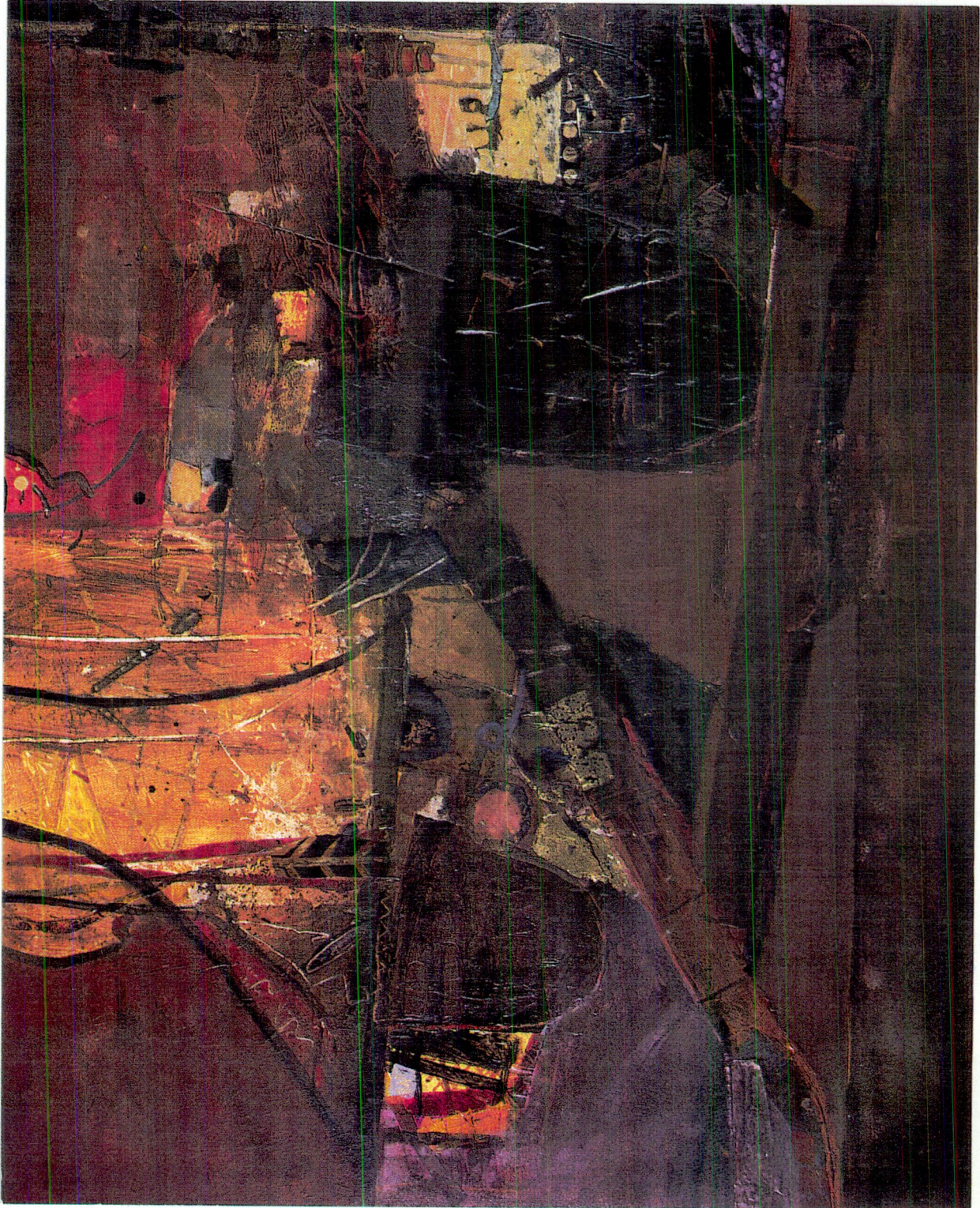


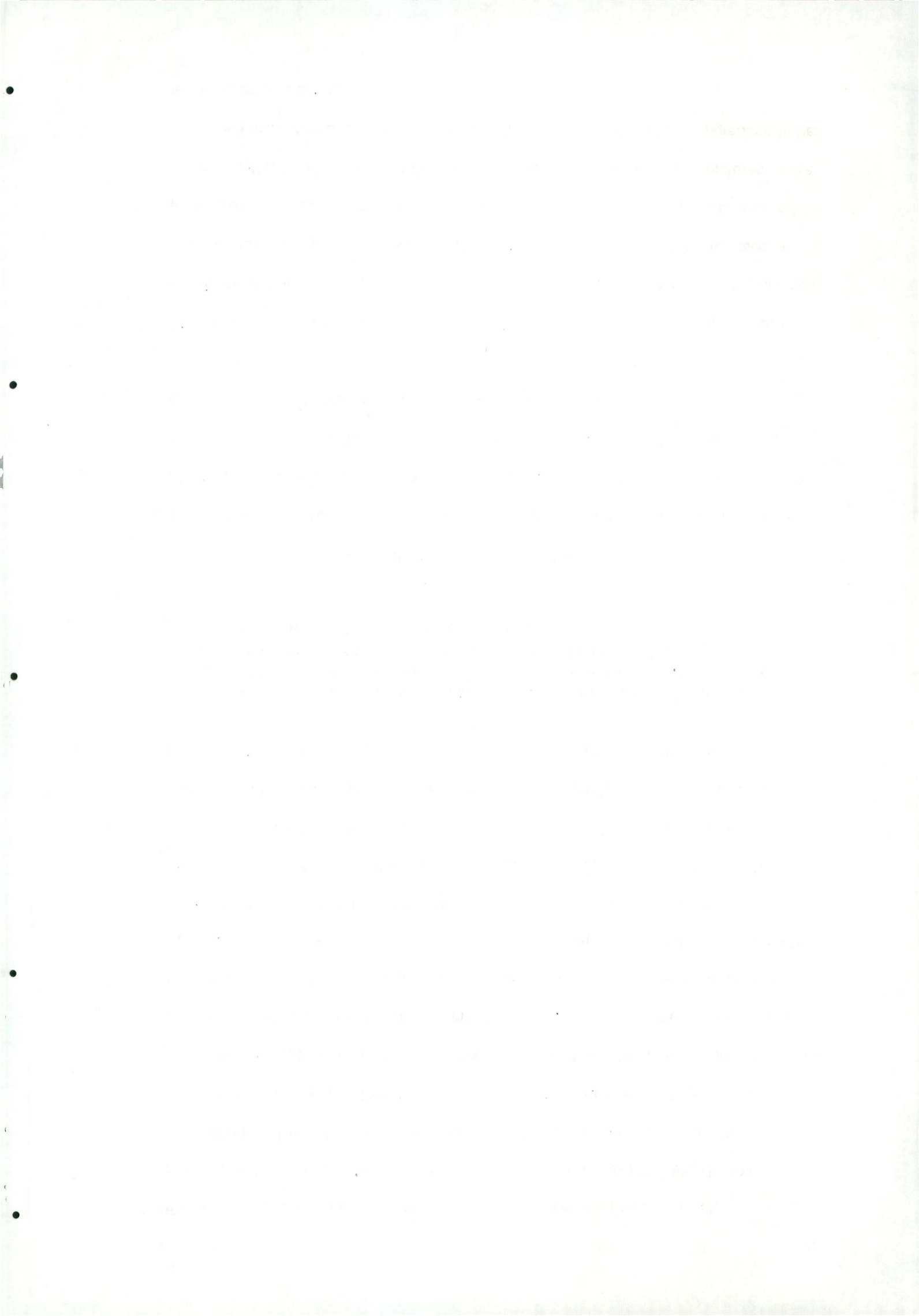
Fig. 50. Peatbank Erridale
Mixed Media 30"x 40"

From her preparatory drawings, textures and the swinging variations of light and shade are captured. These are then transferred onto the mega-canvas "OLIVE TREES, LANJARON". (1989) (Fig. 51) In this series, which one can see was derived from the small sketch, Barbara Rae found that, while she was working on the larger picture (which she did outside in the heat), she had hardly put the paint down before it began to peel off. In fact, this gives an almost pink hue compared with the much more colourful paintings in "LANJARON FIELD" (Fig. 54); it seems to add to the feeling of scorched fields, a happy accident! Spanish heat and dust present their own problems: "I use lots of water. In Scotland that's not a problem. In Spain, you have to carry big bottles of water around." In the original sketch of "LANJARON FIELD", one can discern the multitude of olive trees, hemmed in by the mountains which are traversed by horizontals of terraces which cross the page. A pylon on the right-hand side of the page is included and also becomes a recurring shape in further paintings of this series.

It is colour of the landscape which has been the most profound influence on her recent works. The introduction of bright yellows, oranges, reds, pinks, gold and lapis to her palette has certainly had a profound effect in the richly textured collage, LANJARON FIELD. (Mackenzie)

"OLIVE TREES, LANJARON" (Ill. 43) was completed in about an hour. When she has what she wants to communicate fixed in her mind, she goes to work with the greatest of speed. Barbara Rae is constantly pushing herself in the redefining and development of her visual language. The eye is teased with the textured and active surface. The close-up of "OLIVE TREES" shows the intensity of the colour.

The overall effect is almost abstract - "TERRACESAT PITRES" (1992) (Fig. 52) but to call them abstract paintings would be misleading. Although never literal in her paintings, she successfully captures the spirit of the landscape. She has the ability to place on paper, board or canvas her feelings in regard to sense of place. This goes far beyond surface matters and somehow strikes an inner chord in the viewer. The pictures evoke one's own memories and perceptions of places visited. It is this special ingredient in her work which sets her apart.



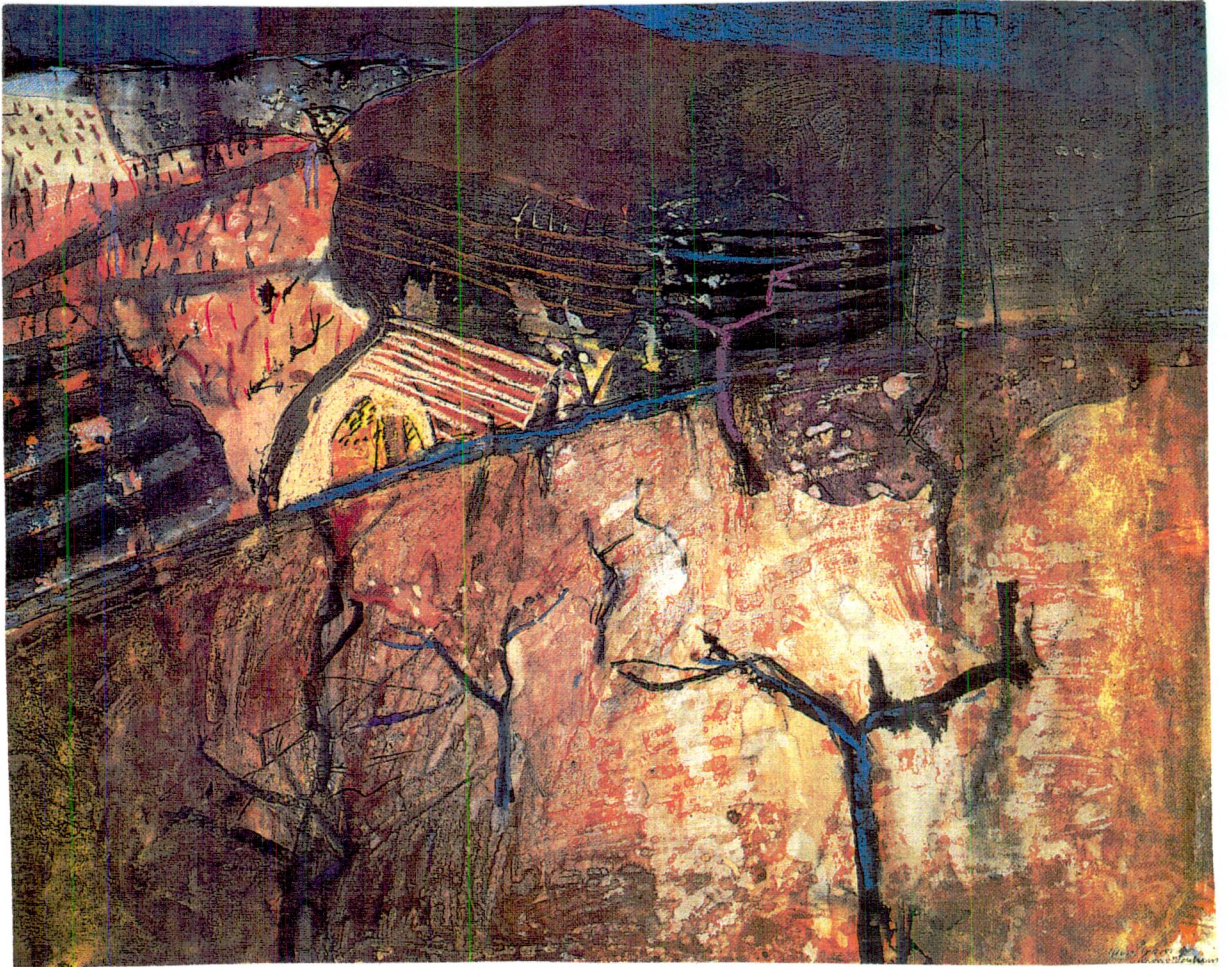
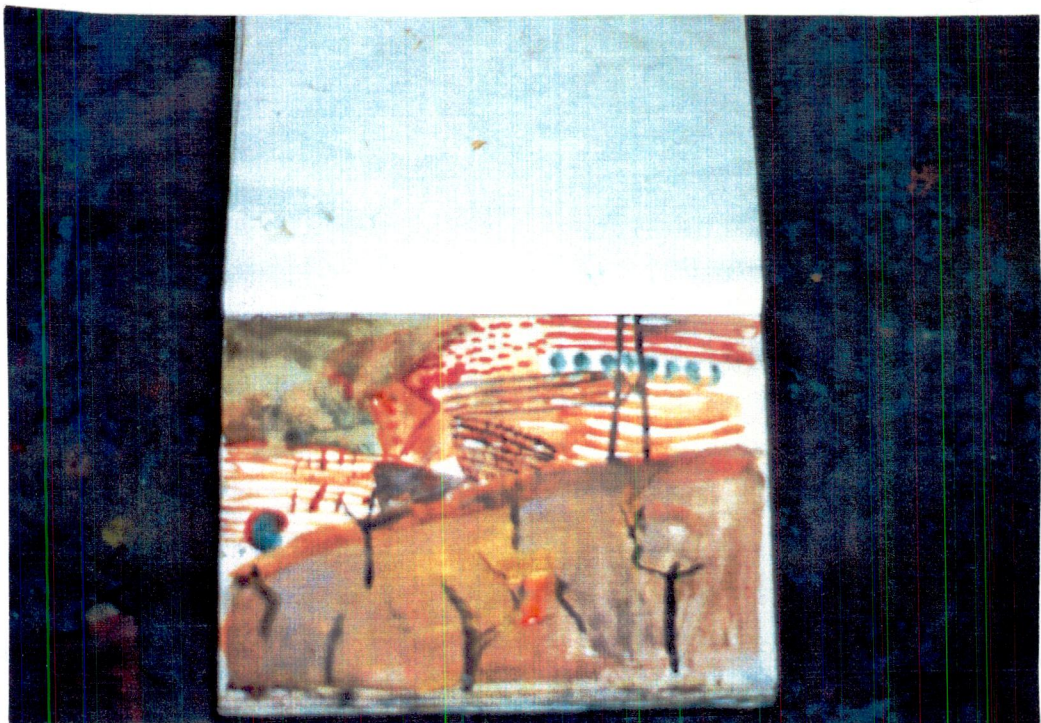


Fig. 51. OLIVE TREES LANJARON
Mixed Media.



NOTEBOOK STUDY LANJARON



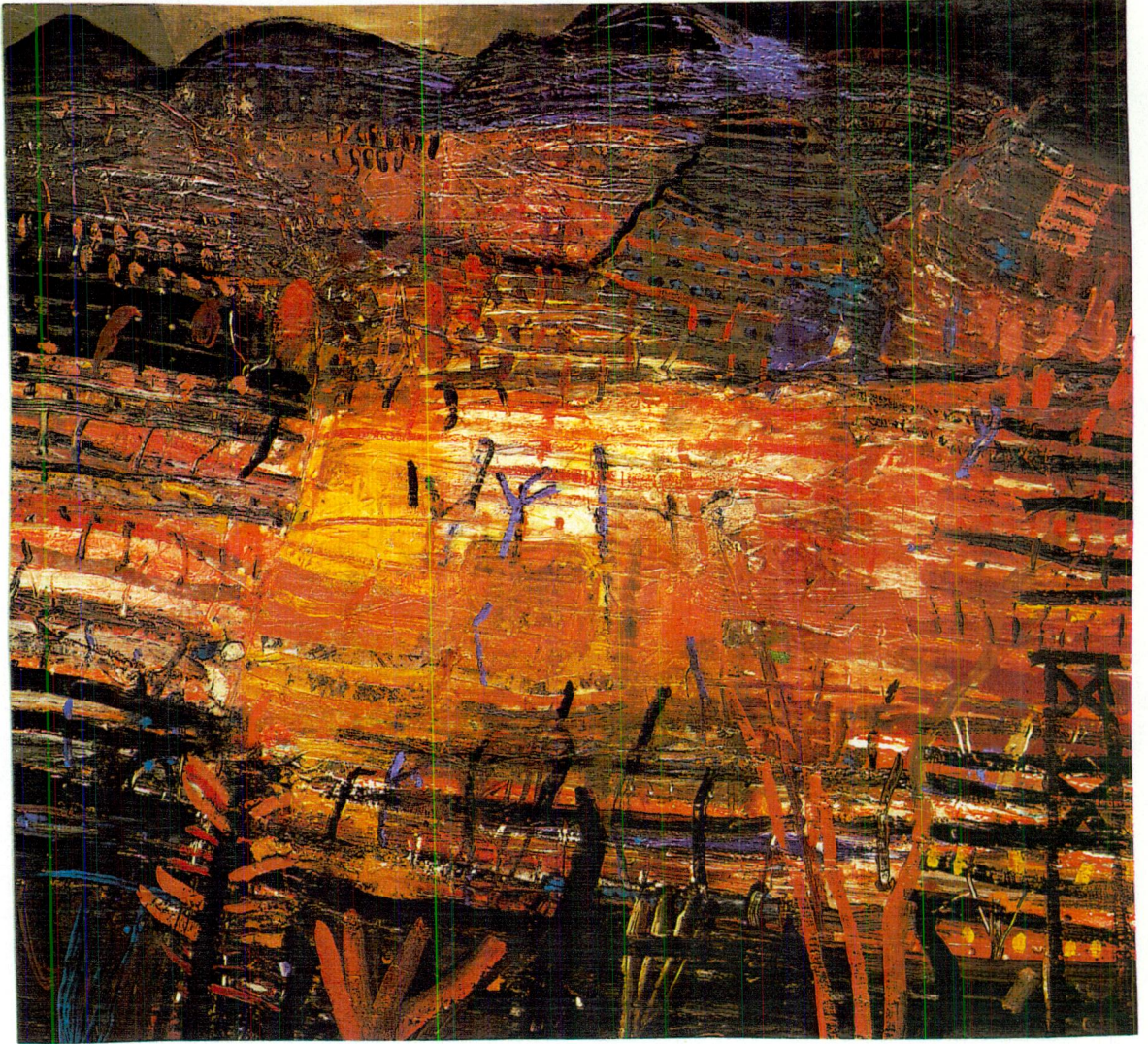
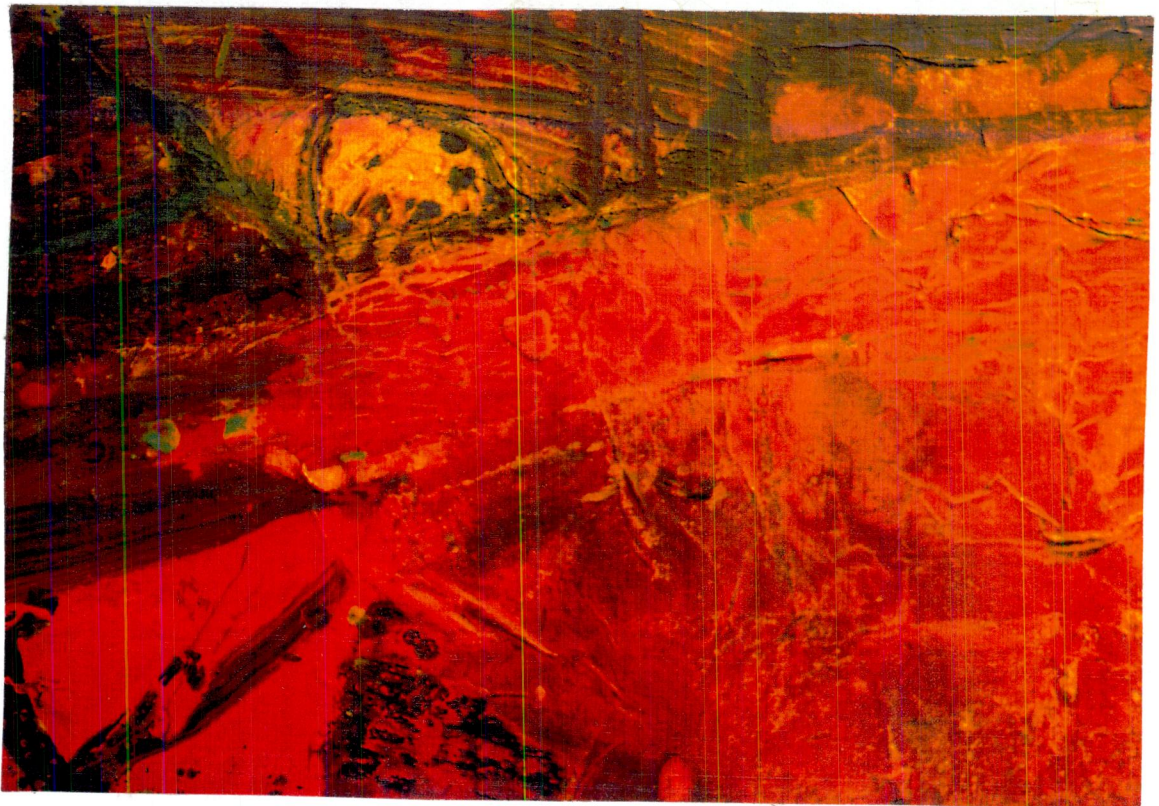


Fig. 52. Terraces at Pitres
Mixed Media, 1992.



Fig. 53. OLIVE TREES LANJARON



DETAIL

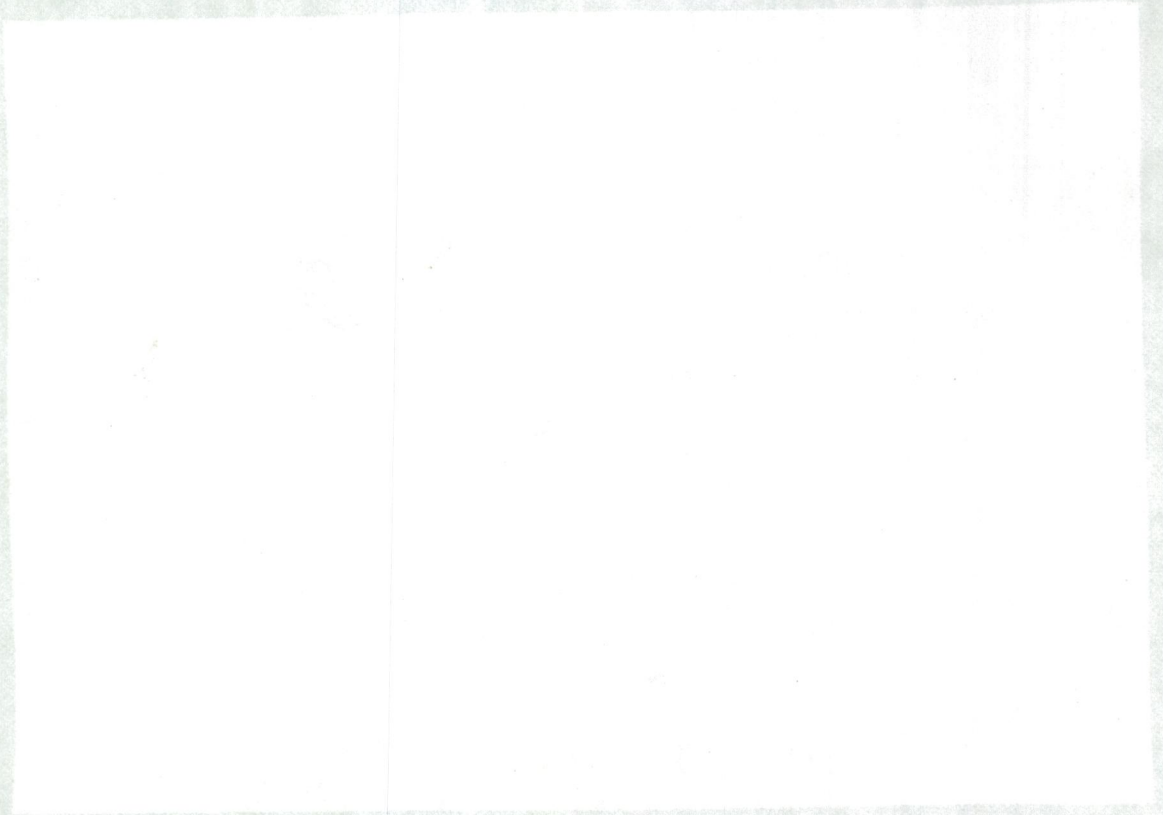




Fig. 54. LANJARON FIELD, 1989.



In the paintings from this series her wizardry in the use of colour is astonishing. The contrast of warm and boldly vivid colours bring a new intensity to her work, heightening its emotional content. The different surface textures, which give the work a physical semi-three dimensional appearance, are achieved through her skilful use of collage material. (Nicola Mitchell, Scottish Gallery, 1990)

In the ancient region of Las Aplujarras, situated in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, Barbara Rae discovered a landscape filled with immaculately-kept olive groves, as well as vine terraces. In "TERRACES AT PITRES" (1993) (Fig. 55), the black olive tree is placed directly in front of the viewer. Cut out pieces of thick paper covered with copper paint are stuck onto the canvas, as well as gold paint which is added to make the whole painting shimmer with energy and genuine expressive power. The terraces are cut into, scoured out of the canvas just like the terraces are dug out of the earth which, on looking at the small details of this painting, it is possible to see the depth of texture.

"HIGHLAND GATE" (FIG. 56), which was done in 1994, is yet another change, a moving on in the process. This painting is large (6' x6'). The use of colour in this work has become much more simple; broad areas of colour are evident placed down in a gestural stroke, lines are free and flowing. The colour is almost floating on the canvas. Barbara Rae, standing with fellow artist Peter Prendergast in front of the work (Fig. 57), felt that this was another shift in her work; she felt that it was moving in the direction of becoming even looser and more mature.

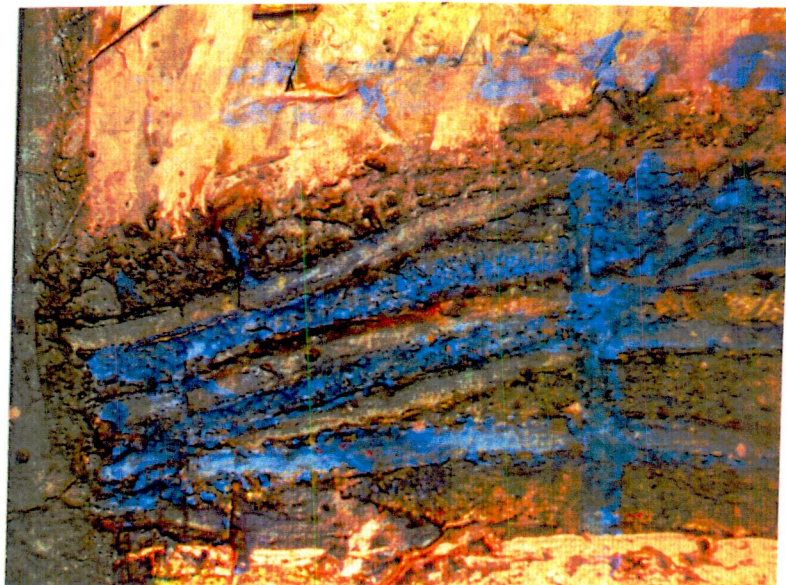
In the restoration of the Edinburgh Festival Theatre, Barbara Rae was commissioned to do a painting which would then be made up into a woven wall-hanging for the main foyer area in the theatre. She submitted two large paintings but it was a small painting that she had done on paper that was picked.

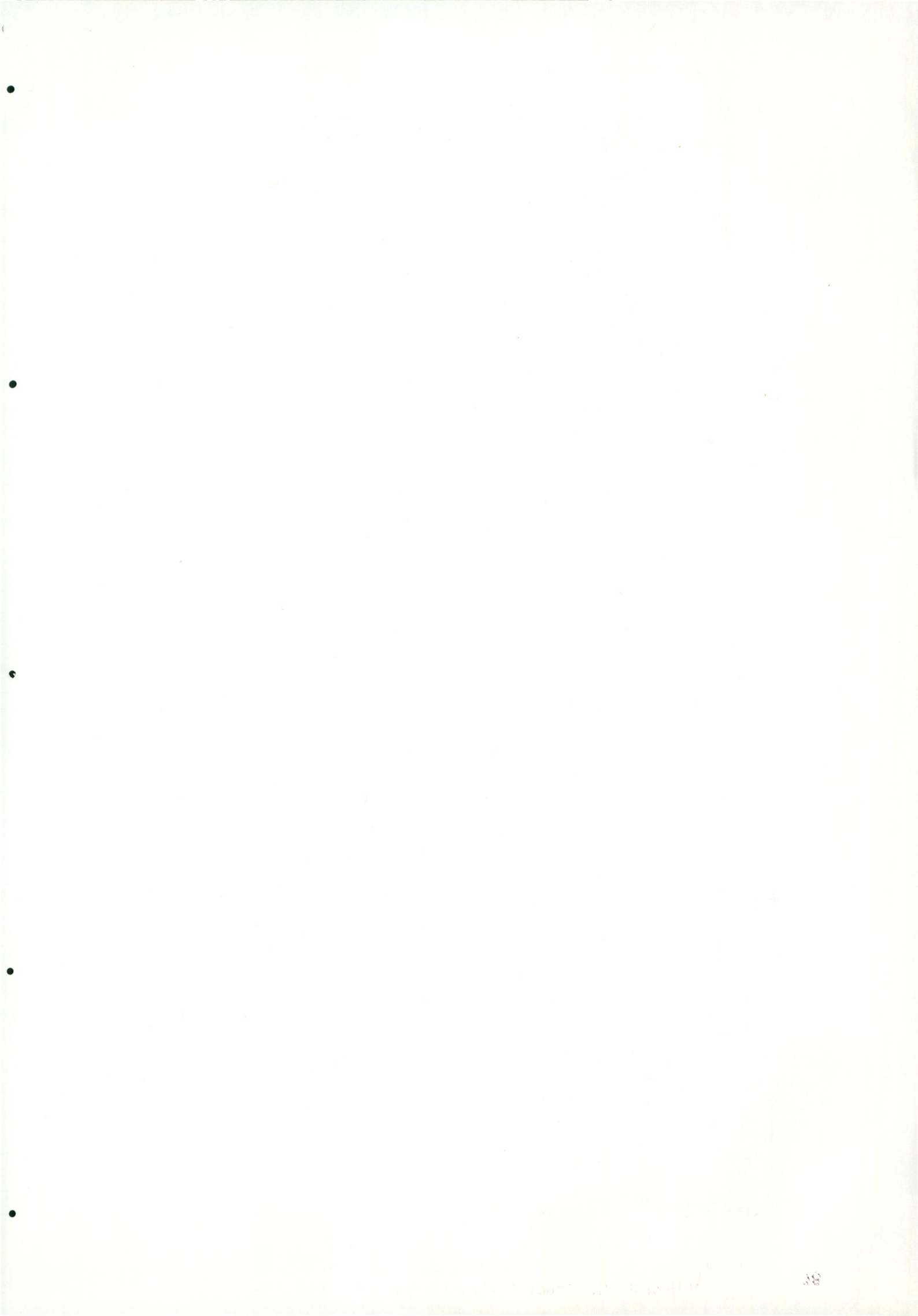
Barbara Rae found the project difficult to execute as, firstly, the painting had to be figurative, showing a connection with Edinburgh. "PRINCESS STREET" (Fig. 58), showing the main buildings, the gothic monument, and the clock tower, was the final

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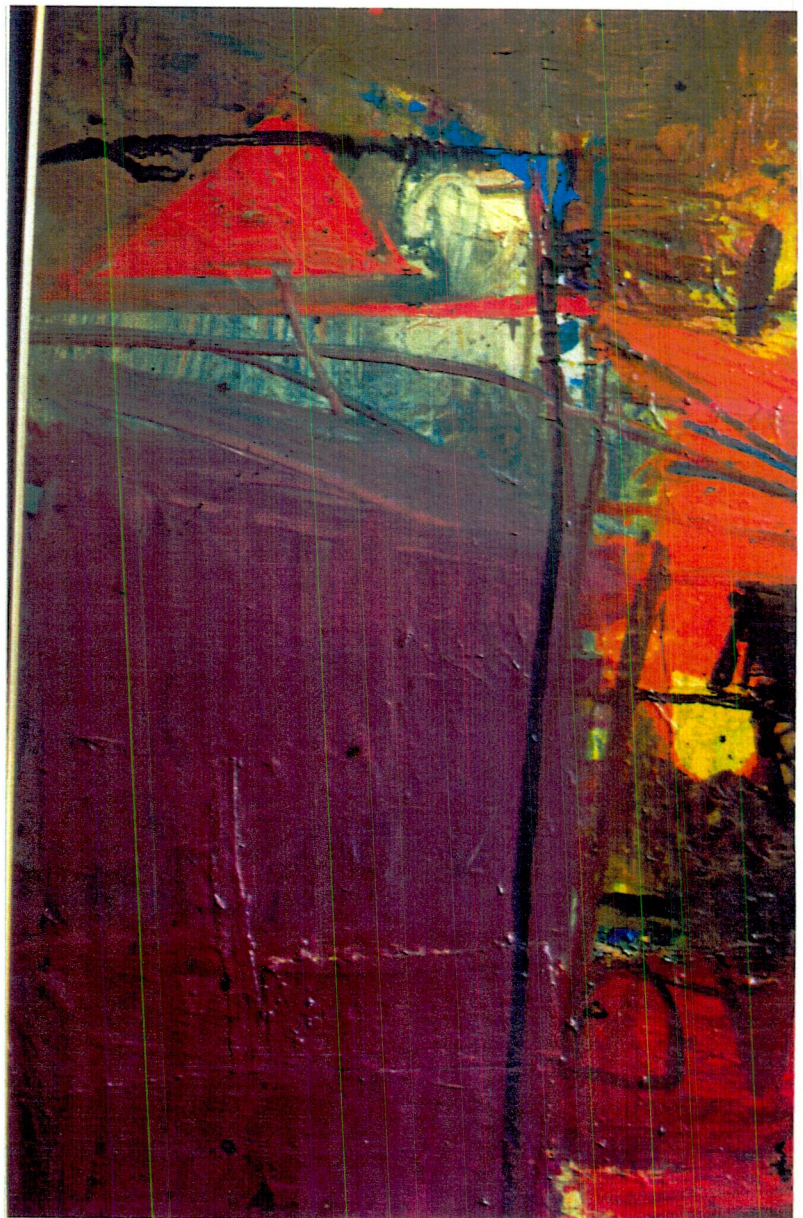
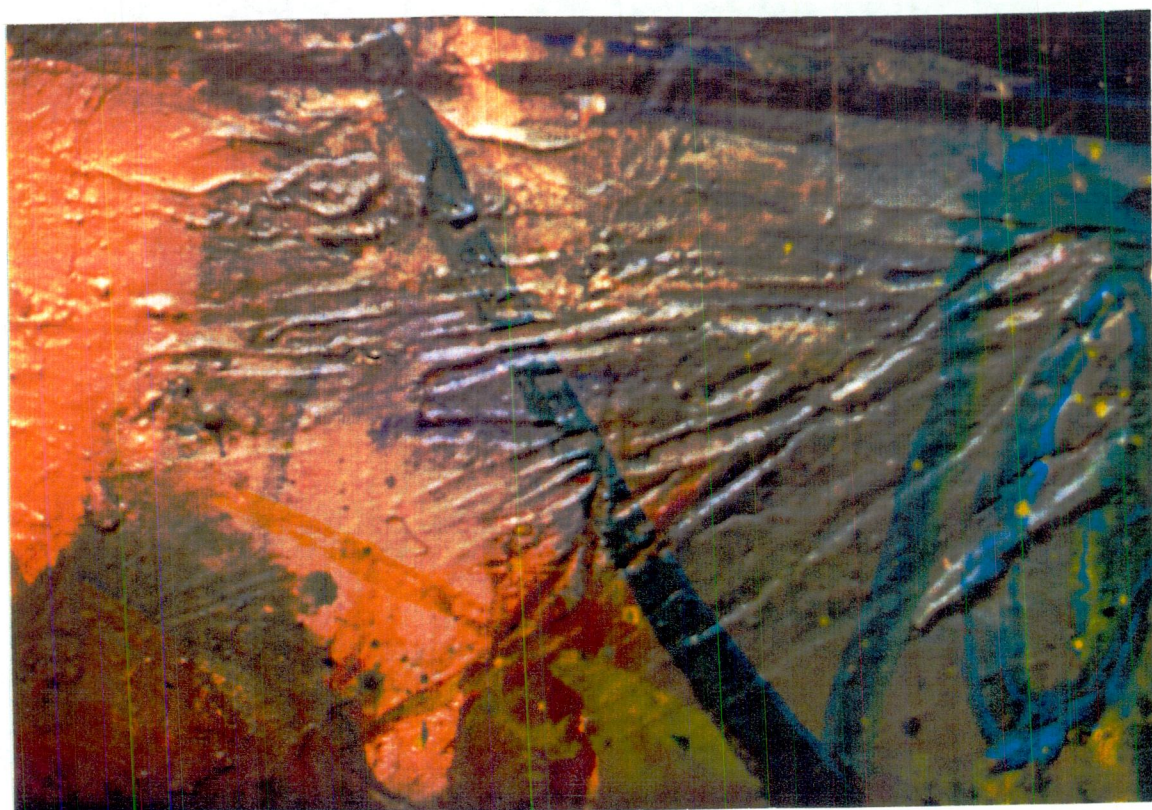
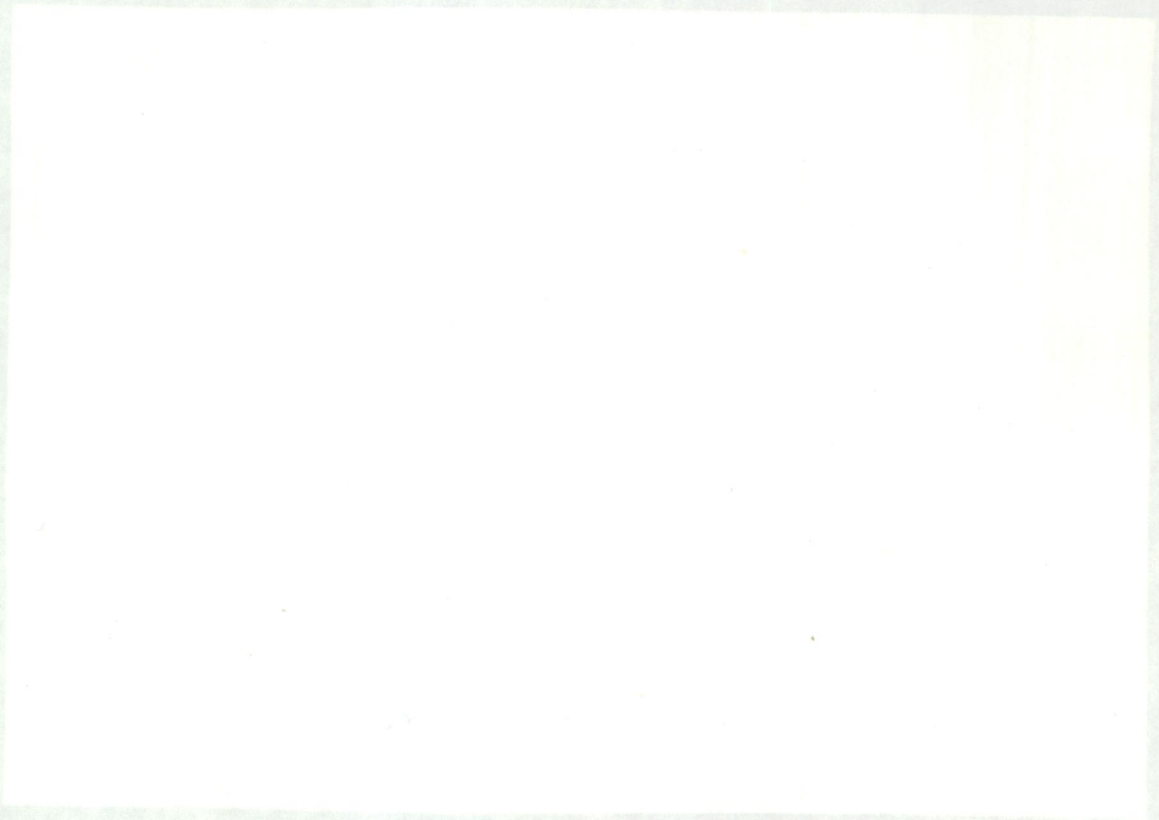




Fig. 57. Barabra Rae, Peter Prendergast at Éigse,
Carlow, 1994



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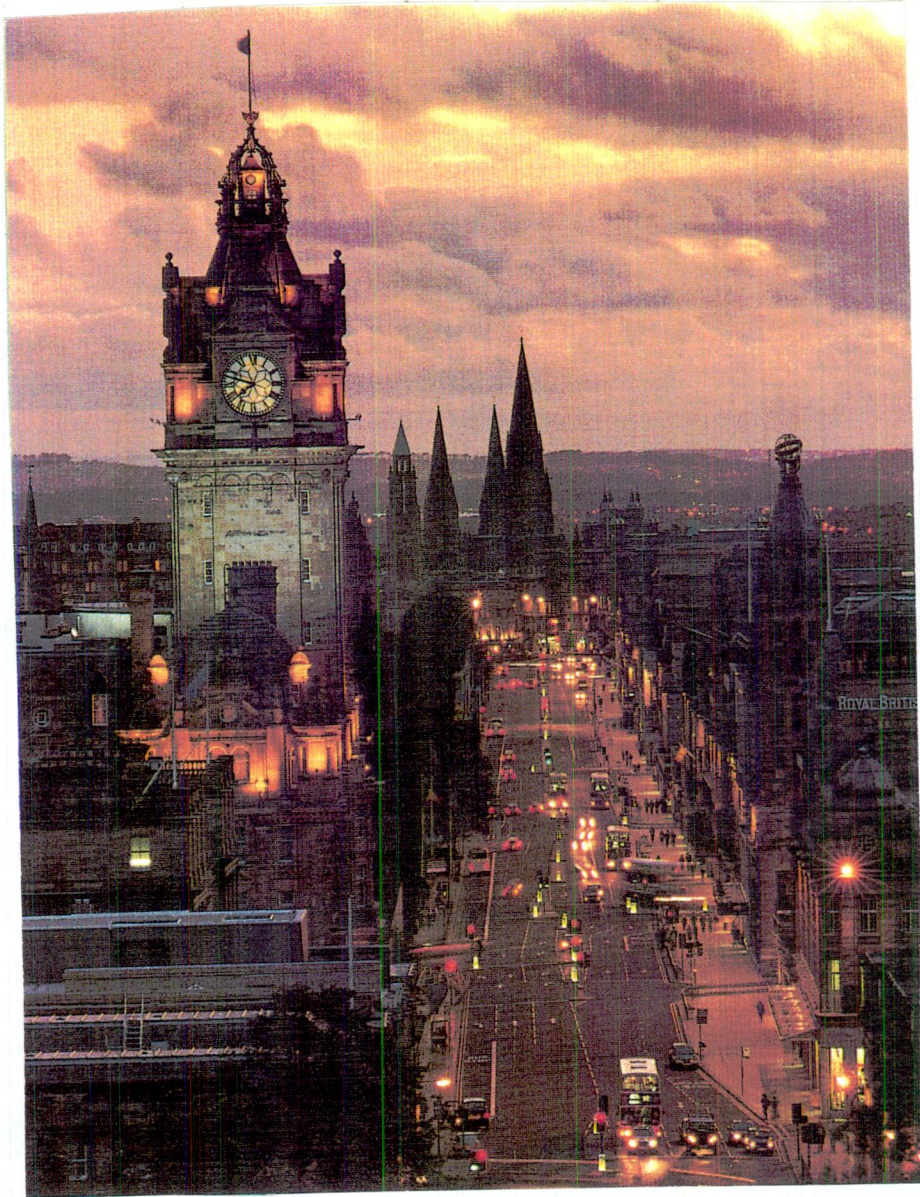
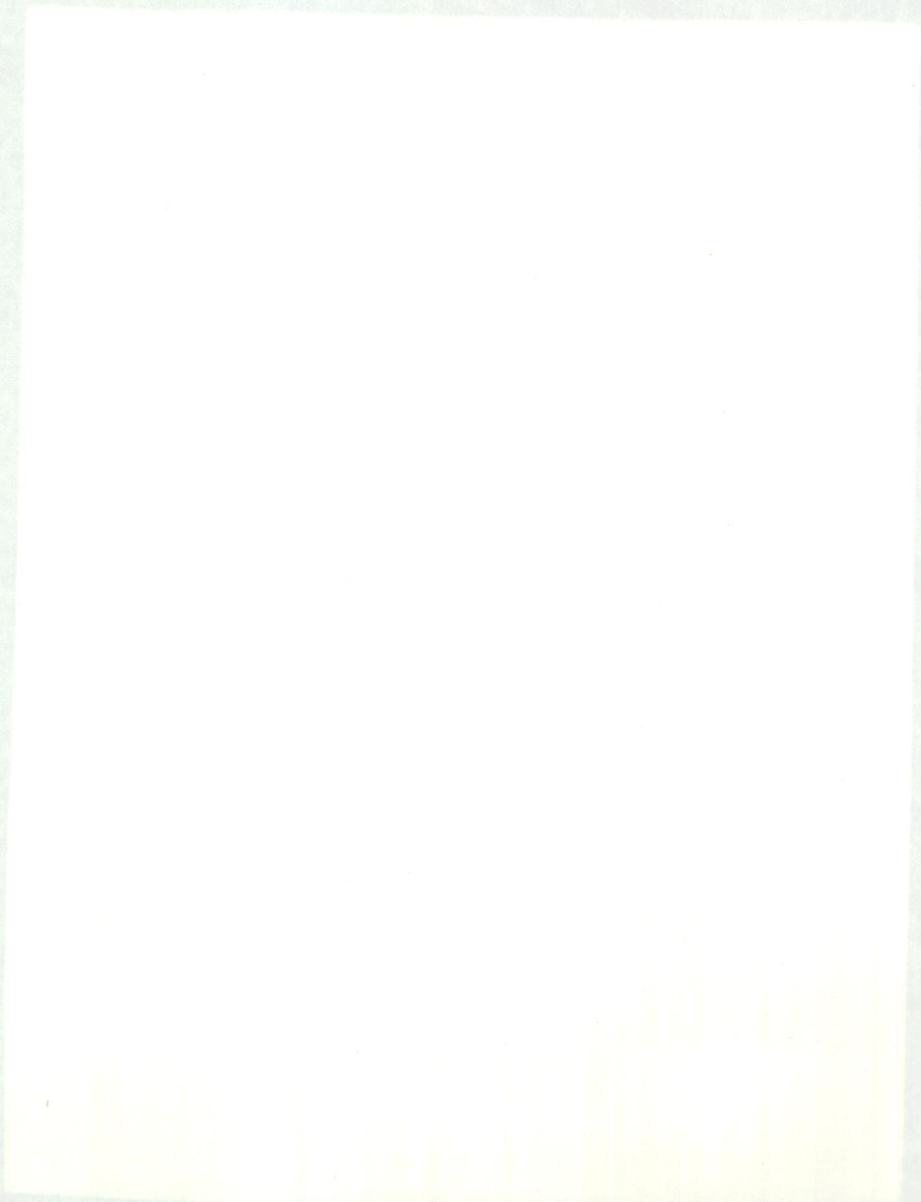
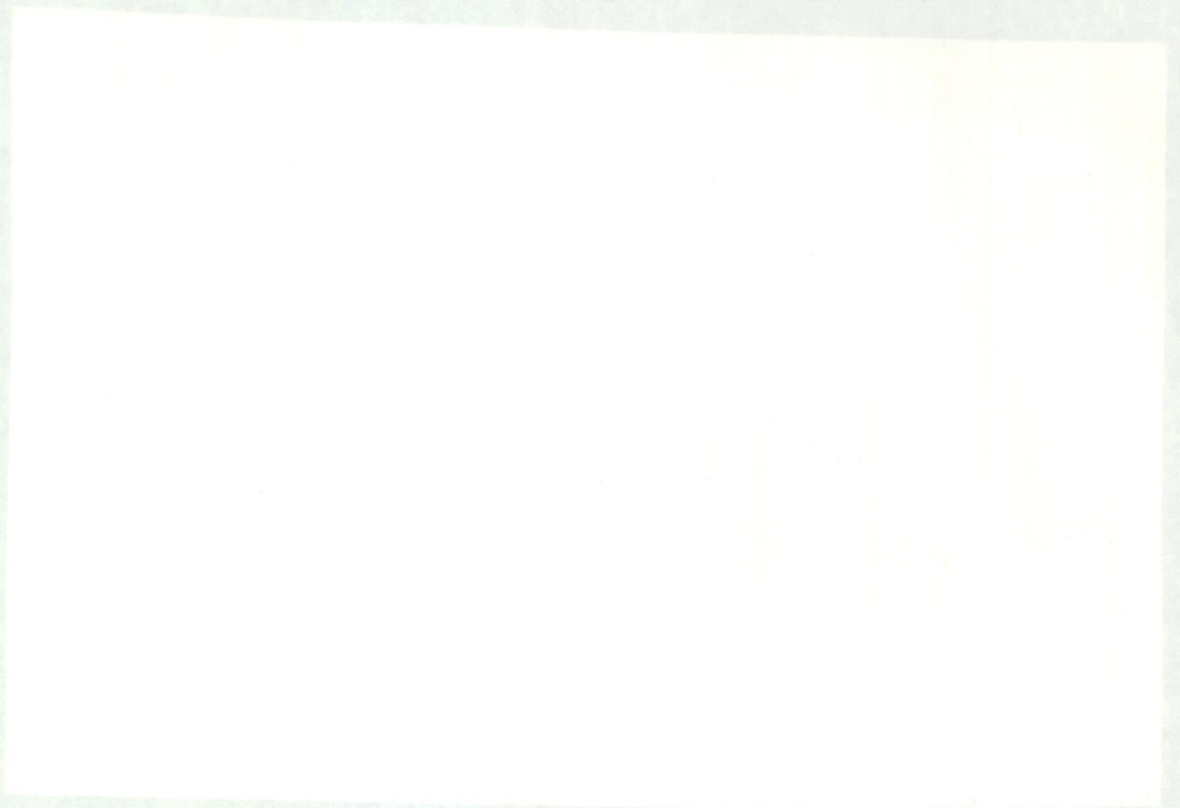


Fig. 58. Princess Street, Edinburgh



Fig. 59. Tapestry, 1994, Princess Street, Edinburgh



decision. In order to get a good view of the street, a room was acquired on the top floor of a building which overlooked Princess Street. Sketches were done during carnival time so that was added to the forefront of the painting. The finished piece was extremely successful. The tapestry was woven by The Edinburgh Tapestry Company commissioned, by Alaster Salvesen and donated by him to the Edinburgh Theatre on the 14th June, 1994. (Fig. 59) It is her use of colour in the tapestry that makes the street come alive, giving the picture a real sense of carnival time. The weavers used gold threads, inter-woven through the piece, which worked wonderfully giving a richness and still keeping very much to the original painting.

Ultimately, it is the artist's choice and use of colour which gives her paintings such poetic power. It is the colour, dark and evocative, intense and jewel-like, which reveals the artist's deepest feelings for her subject and her art. While lines and shapes appeal more to the discerning eye and intellect, colour, when used so sensitively, directly excites the imagination and moves the heart. In her best landscapes, Barbara Rae moves to this point where we no longer look at nature, but, to use Gauguin's words, we "dream in the presence of Nature".

CONCLUSION.

When nature begins to reveal her secrets to a man he feels an irresistible longing for her worthiest interpreter. Art. (Goethe quoted in *Contemporary Art*, Summer, 1994, p48)

Barbara Rae's work contains within it a deep sense of history, an awareness and appreciation of nature. It is not her aim to record topographical detail; these paintings come from a long process of looking, drawing and spending time in the landscape that she knows so well. Barbara Rae's theme is man's relationship with nature. The link between the paintings, brought about by a long, evolved process, is man's mark upon the landscape. She is able to accomplish this by her mastery of the medium of both painting and print, interacting directly and instinctively with the media.

The built-up, highly-coloured, textured layers of Barbara Rae's paintings suggest layers of human toil. They give the appearance of abstraction, but never stray far from the influence of the original drawings. It is the process by which Barbara Rae works the surface of her paintings to bring about their distinctive pictorial imagery that is the crucial component. It is through the skilful presentation, choice, and handling of colour that her paintings achieve such an impact. Barbara Rae's paintings appear to take on a sort of life of their own so that they seem almost to be organically produced. It was not difficult to see the connection between the shapes and colours of her paintings and the surrounding landscape. But the link is by no means as straightforward as might be expected from a casual reflection. Barbara Rae consciously sees the shapes 'out there' and then copies them into a small notebook. In the studio she places the shapes down in *collage* and detaches from the direct observation of nature, allowing the painting to 'happen' intuitively. She has continued to experiment: stretching the limits of technique, with new textures, *collage* and colour, she has established new standards of painterly handling and touch.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records.

2. It then goes on to describe the various methods used to collect and analyze data.

3. The next section details the results of the study and the conclusions drawn from them.

4. Finally, the document provides a list of references and a bibliography.

5. The overall goal of this document is to provide a comprehensive overview of the research.

6. It is hoped that this information will be helpful to those interested in the field.

7. The author would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance:

8. Dr. John Doe, Dr. Jane Smith, and Dr. Robert Brown.

9. The author also wishes to express appreciation to the funding agency.

10. This work was supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

11. The author is grateful to the reviewers for their constructive comments.

12. Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the author.

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Barbara Rae's concerns are to be found in the landscape of Scotland and Spain.

Whether it be man's mark historically or spiritually, her paintings, with their organic quality, vibrant colour and sculptural forms, bring one in touch with places felt and remembered. The work is intuitive, spontaneous and deeply felt, being in the tradition of artists who have placed as the highest goal of art the pursuit of a vision of happiness distilled from the sensations provoked by pure relationships between form and colour. Furthermore, it is a tradition which in its mainstream has never embraced pure abstraction (art which is entirely non-figurative). Like Constable, Barbara Rae's work draws the spectator away from the realm of associations into a more intense experience of the actual perception of the visual properties of the painting itself. The broken surface leads the viewer to investigate the relationships between shape and colour on the surface of the canvas, drawing attention to the essential components of visual perception - seeing being freed from thinking.

BARBARA RAE

1943	Born
1961-65	Studied Edinburgh College of Art
1965	Post Graduate study
1966	Travelling Scholarship to France and Spain
1966-67	Moray House College of Education
1968	Elected Professional Member, Society of Scottish Artists
1968-69	Ainslie Park Comprehensive School, Edinburgh, Art Teacher
1969-72	Portobello Secondary School, Edinburgh, Art Teacher
1972-74	Aberdeen College of Education, Lecturer: Drawing, Painting and Printmaking
1975	Elected Member of the Royal Scottish Society of Painters and Watercolours (RSW)
1979	May Marshall Brown Award, RSW Centenary Exhibition
1980	Elected Associate, Royal Scottish academy (ARSA)
1983	Elected President, Society of Scottish ARTists
1984	Exchange Teaching at University of Maryland Fine Art Department
1985	Scottish Arts Council Grant. Three Months working in Spain and Fe, New Mexico, U.S.A.
SAnta	
1989	Alexander Graham Munro Award, RSW Extended visit to Spain
1991	Vice President (East) RSA

Awards

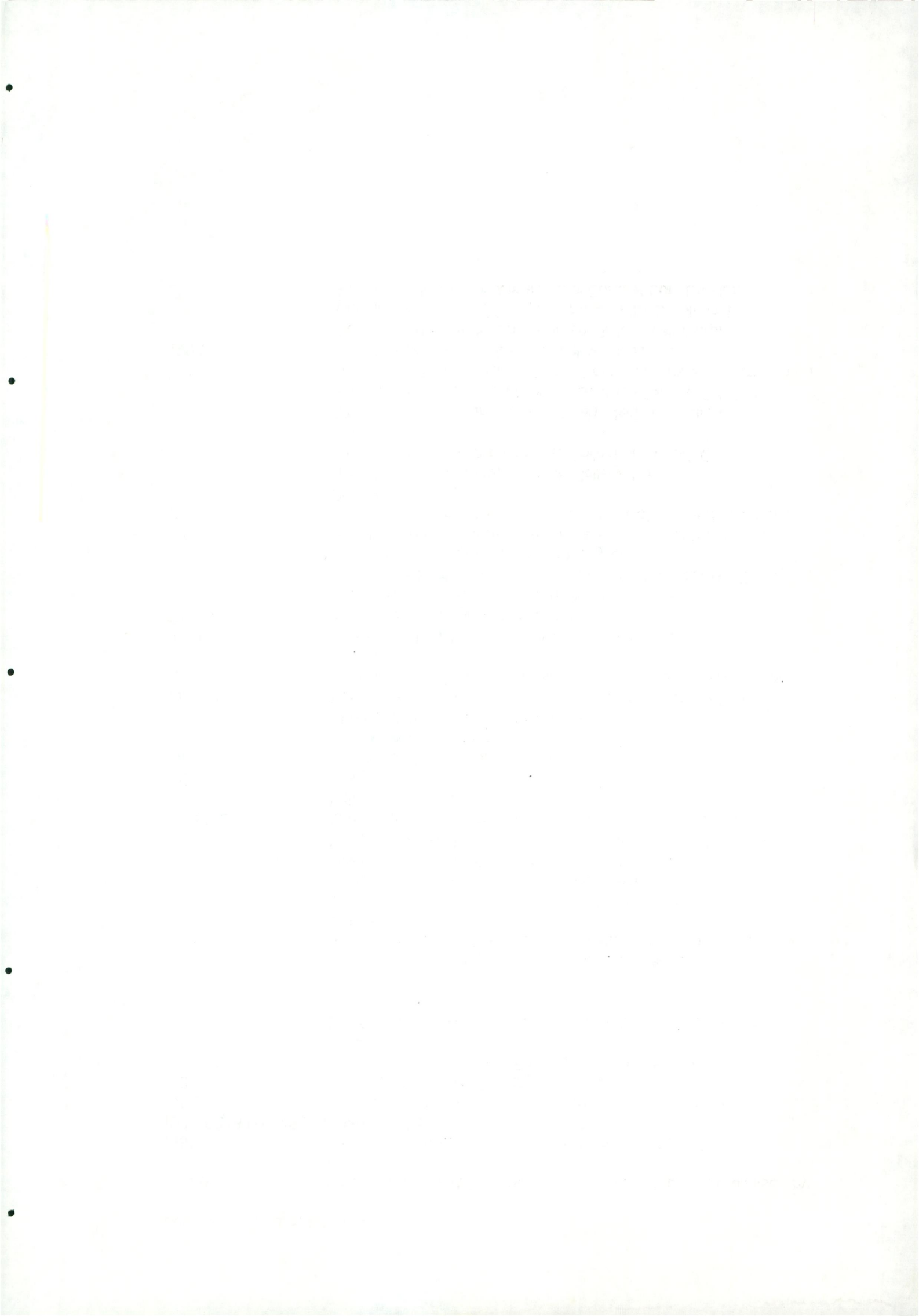
1968	Arts Council
1975-81	Major Arts Council
1977	Guthrie Medal, RSA
1979	May Marshall Brown Award, RSW Centenary Exhibition
1983	RSA, Sir William Gillies Travel Award
1989	Alexander Graham Munro, RSW
1990	Hunting Group Prizewinner Scottish Amicable Award, Royal Glasgow Inatitute of the Fine Arts Scottish Post Office Board Award, RSA W.J. Burgess Award, RSA

Solo Exhibitions

- 1967,71 New'57 Gallery, Edinburgh
1969 University of York
1974 University of Aberdeen
Aberdeen Art Gallery
1975 Peterloo Gallery, Manchester
1976 Stirling Gallery, STirling
Greenock Arts Guild
1977 Gilbert Parr Gallery, London
1978/79 University of Edinburgh
1979/83/87/88/90 The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
1985 Wright Gallery, Dallas, Texas, U.S.A.
1986 Leinster Fine Art, London
1987/88/90 The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
1987 Glasgow Print Studio
1989/90 The Scottish Gallery, London
1991 Perth Museum and Art Gallery
1992 'Earth Pattern', William Jackson Gallery, London
1992 'New Monotypes and Prints', Jennings/Hunt, London
1993 'The Reconstructed Landscape', Highland Regional Council, touring
the North of Scotland
1994 Theatre Andre Dumas, Germain-en-Laye
'The Reconstructed Landscape', Harewood House, Leeds
Art First, London

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 1981-82 Contemporary Art from Scotland, touring exhibition, organised by the Scottish Gallery
- 1981 Basle Art International Art Fair, with the Scottish Gallery
- 1981/82/83/87/88/89 Bath Art Fair with the Scottish Gallery
- 1982 'Pictures of Ourselves', Arts Council Touring Exhibition
- 1984 Drawings, Fine Arts Society, Glasgow
 Prints from the Peacock, Fine Arts Society, Edinburgh and Glasgow
 London International Art Fair, Barbican Centre, London with Leinster Fine Art
 Leinster Fine Art with Will Maclean
 V.N. Gallery, Washington, U.S.A. with Will Maclean
- 1985 'About Landscape', Edinburgh International Festival, Talbot Rice Gallery
 'Stone Work', Scottish Arts Council touring exhibition
 'Scottish Landscapes', Santiago, South America
 'Four Artists From Scotland', Freemantle, Australia
 International Art Exposition, Chicago with Leinster Fine Art
- 1985/86 International Contemporary Art Fair, Olympia, London with Leinster Fine Art
- 1986 'Unique and Original', Glasgow Print Studio
- 1987 Hambleton Gallery, Blandford Forum with James Robertson
 The Athena Competition Exhibition
 The Castlefield Gallery, Manchester
- 1987/88 Los Angeles International Art Fair with the Scottish Gallery
- 1988 'The Scottish Show', Welsh Arts Council/Oriel Gallery touring exhibition
- 1989 The Scottish Gallery, London, opening exhibition
- 1990 'Monotypes', Glasgow Print Studio
 ARCO Art Fair, Madrid with the Scottish Gallery
 International Art Exposition, Chicago with the Scottish Gallery
 Midlands Contemporary Art, Birmingham
- 1990/91 Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts Annual Exhibition
- 1991 'Scottish Contemporary Art', Royal West of England Academy, Bristol
 'The Director's Choice', Scottish Gallery, London
 'The New Patrons', National Art Collections Fund, Christies, London
 'The Big Little Picture Show, William Jackson Gallery
 'Still Life in the Scottish Gallery', Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
 '3 Scottish Painters', Clare Stracy Contemporary Art, Birmingham
- 1992 'The Winter Seen III', William Jackson Gallery
 'Scottish Artists in Spain', Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh
 'Unique and Original', Glasgow Print Studio, Barbican, London
 Singer & Friedlander Watercolour Competition, London



BARBARA RAE, (TAPED) INTERVIEW 1994. GLASGOW

M.

At what period in your work did you start to change from figurative to abstraction?

B.

I really don't know if I can answer that. I think when I was at college I was using figures as part of the process... figures appeared in landscape and industrial settings... but it's really the painting process... it really turns from reality and obvious figuration to what one might call abstraction. I don't think my work is abstract in the sense that it doesn't have any relationship to reality, it's abstract in that it's abstracted or simplified from something that has been seen and observed; it's been taken out, shaped, simplified, and then put back together in the way I want to see it. In a lot of earlier work there are figures, shadowy figures perhaps, but if the figures are not there I don't think that it's any less figurative... if you know what I mean.

M.

In your work there are a lot of shapes. Have you ever worked in the medium of sculpture?

B.

Well, I did when I was in college and I was considering, in a rather dilettante kind of way, of going into sculpture, but I'm glad I didn't. There wasn't any possibility that I would have at that time but, if sculpture had been as exciting as it is now, I may well have done that... but all I saw was pieces of stone and plaster and no colour. Although I enjoyed it, I think it was obvious that the use of colour and paint would be predominant. I've often considered doing sculptural pieces but I have to say that I am not very three-dimensionally oriented... although I like surfaces. Surfaces are more important to me than three dimensions.

M.

When did you first go to Spain and why did you pick that place?

B.

When did I first go?... I went first when I was doing my post-graduate travelling scholarship, and I went to the North of Spain - near San Sebastian and, at that time, it was still very rural. There was such a difference from leaving the cultural centres of France.... I had just been to Paris for three weeks... then I arrived in the North of Spain. The next time I went was in 1980 and I kept going back and forward after that. The first time I was there in 1980 I really didn't do that much work, I think it took a long time for the place to be assimilated in my mind... but subsequently I did a lot of work there. I just find the light fascinating, the landscape fascinating... a wonderful place to work.

M.

Do you feel that your colour has changed since going there?

B.

I think it has. When I work in Spain, I think that I am working in fairly dull colours because of the light. When I bring them back here they look so much brighter than I thought. If I am working in the studio here in Glasgow and working with Spanish subject matter, I can only work with it for a certain amount of time and keep the colour. Because of the quality of the light here, the paintings become darker and darker, so I have to go back to Spain to get a top-up of light and colour. The same is true... I was looking at some paintings on a wall of a friend of mine in Spain and they were Scottish paintings... and Scottish paintings look a little dull in Spain. It's funny, but the series of drawings I did in Spain... there were about fourteen big water-colours and the first of these were quite grey and Scottish and then they ended up very bright towards the end, using almost pure reds and yellows... they just changed dramatically.



M.

As your theme is "man's mark on the landscape", have you noticed a change in the landscape due to man's influence over the years?

B.

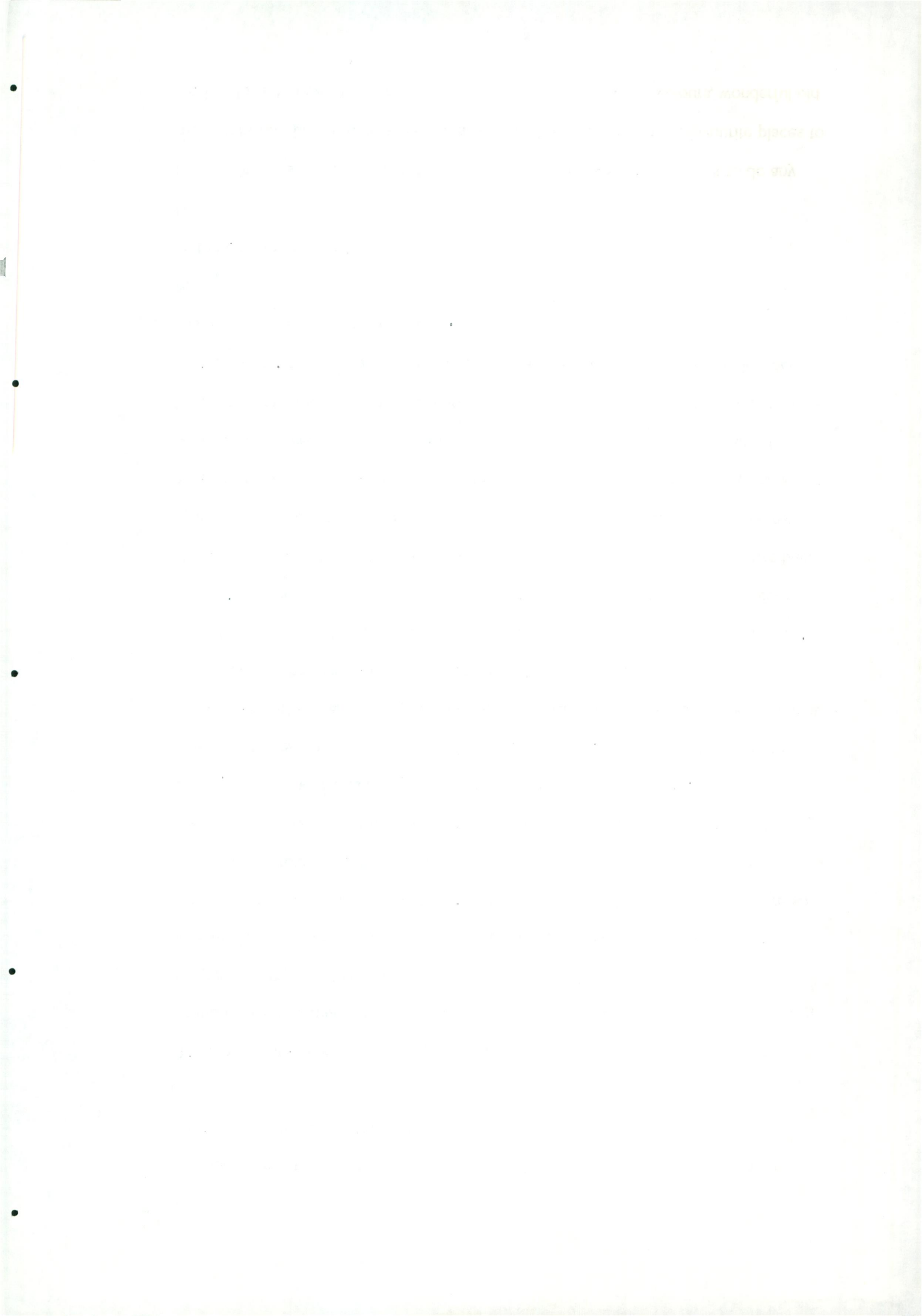
O yes, every time I go out it changes because I have tended to work in the same locations over a number of years. For example, the series of the LEITH DOCK paintings is a good example as I did a lot of paintings there and drawings there when I was a student. Leith docks then was a hive of activity. It was wonderful. In every corner there was something happening. In fact, it was quite difficult to draw as there were so many people around. Then, in 1986-1987 I think, I started doing a series on the docks as I had a studio down in Leith. For a period of about a year I was going in and out doing drawings there and it was a huge contrast between what I had remembered. There were a lot of desolate areas in the Docks... just abandoned workings... lots of pigeons everywhere nesting... and empty warehouses and docks... and there was a great contrast between areas that were working and active and the areas that were completely desolate. Now when I go back to the Docks what do I find?... it's yuppiefied... they are smashing down all the old buildings. They have painted all the cranes in a tasteful sort of slate blue and put a Port Authority logo on them. The new Scottish Office has been built there. A crummy old marina hotel has been taken over by one of the smartest hotel-owners in Scotland and smartened up... so, I don't think that there is any chance of going back and seeing what I saw four years ago... so, it is changing constantly. The North is exactly the same - you can go back after a year's absence and find things have been abandoned. New boats have come in... new working methods... the whole place has been cleaned up and people are working.

M.

Is it still a working port?

B.

Leith? Yes... it's a superficial view at the moment as I have not been back to do any more drawings, but I probably will... definitely as it is one of my most favourite places to work. I love it. One of the fascinating things was all these crazy colours, wonderful old



cranes and beautiful old doors. They have taken away a wonderful old cooperage that had been there for ever and shifted it to a new unit... you know all this... horrible. I'll have to go back and see what they are doing. They have closed all the gates and have become very security conscious. Even when I was working I had to have a letter to give me permission to draw in the docks.

M.

So, it's all changed?

B.

It's all changed

M.

I was reading Bill Hare's article and he describes your work in the great tradition of Gauguin and Matisse. Would you agree with this?

B.

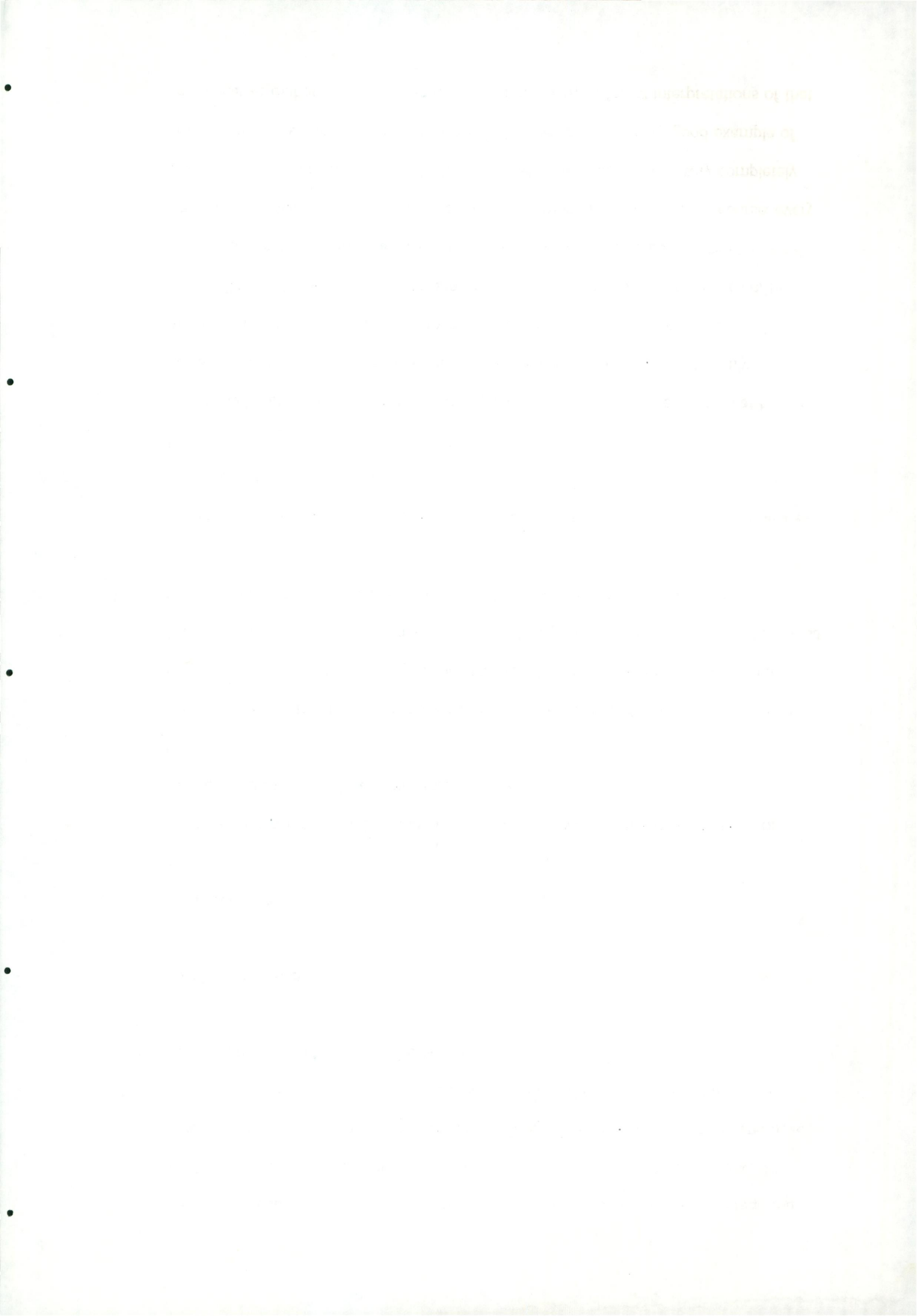
Umm... I would certainly agree with him... be absolutely flattered to be compared with either of them, but Matisse is my great hero, yes definitely, absolutely. I went to a Gauguin exhibition when I was a student and, although it impressed me, it didn't impress me as much as the big Bonnard exhibition. But Matisse, certainly... my hero!

M.

When you come back into paint in the studio, are you trying to hold onto the essence of the landscape rather than the objects?

B.

I suppose I think of the structure, the compositional structure of the image that I have got and that is absolutely important in the translation to other works. It is only the starting-off point... something which was of the place. Although I would want to keep that feeling of the place, it's not uppermost in my mind when I'm working. It's difficult enough to get just the paint to work, so I think, while I'm conscious of it, the technical problems of realising the image on the canvas are more important, but, of course, every now and then you must stop and look and sometimes it has moved away completely from what it was originally. The HARBOUR BOX series was a very good example of that because that is not a landscape... I have done many different interpretations of that



and it's changing, evolving as I use the image. It's a bit like William Scott. If you think of William Scott's paintings and the number of paintings he did of the kitchen table and the way they evolved... he never tired of the subject, he experimented with it in so many formats. When I was a student, I thought you had to have a new idea for every single painting. I didn't realise you could take an image and play around with it, develop it and see how much you can get out of it. It was good to find that out actually!

M.

Do you start with the idea or the experience?

B.

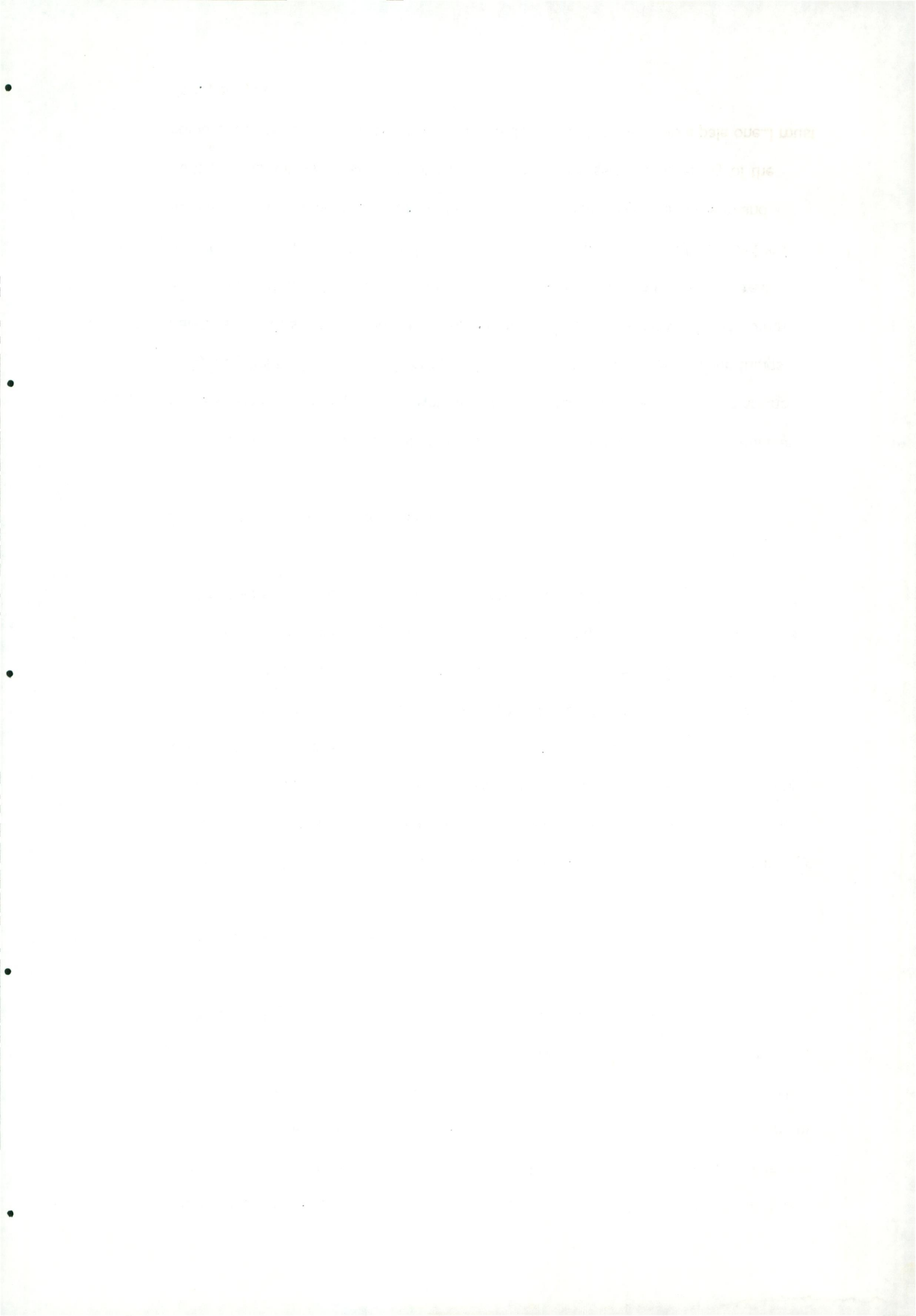
No, I just go and accept what is there. Usually, I choose to go to a certain location. I go to the North Coast or to a certain area of Spain and then just see what happens from there and, sometimes, I just sit down and start and if I feel I have been walking around too long, I say -- O.K! Right! That's it! Sit down! And then it's in the seeing and abstraction and choices that you make in front of the subject that's what makes it. If you have a whole group of students drawing a table with apples on it, you get thirty different results because they will all have seen it in a slightly different way... so that's what happens when you sit in front of a landscape or an object.

M.

Do you find you use the same key of colours?

B.

I do actually... I think that's a fault. I find it very difficult to work with pale colours, and to do a pale successful painting. Any paintings that have been lighter in tone are not really very light - they may be light to mid tone. I like the challenge of doing things. Landscape with snow I'm constantly hoping for that but I find it very difficult. Jimmy Robinson, a fellow artist, can vary the tone of his painting tremendously and I really do wish I could do it. I start out to do it but, sometimes, the longer I work, the darker in tone it gets and, sometimes, if I have left a painting which is light, I'll come in and darken it the following day. It's not so much the brightness or the intensity of the colour... it's the tone of it which I prefer to be darker, so I strive to do a pale one...I must do a paler one.



M.

In your earlier work, did you paint with more perspective?

B.

No, I was never trying to paint out perspective, because when we were doing life paintings and the model was placed in the room setting, I was trying to use the model against the room setting. But I wanted it to be flat and my paintings always turned out without perspective, so I don't even think about it now. I don't try to do perspective... I just assume I can't do it. Some degree of perspective comes out in the work, but it's not conscious... I really want a flat surface.

M.

Do shape and pattern take a secondary place to colour as they lose their strong definition under multiple layers of paint?

B.

I think shape... shape and structure, and surface pattern rather than colour. But tone is much more important than colour because, if you don't get the tone right, the painting won't work, so colour is a secondary thing.

M.

Having been in Ireland, did you find any similarities in the landscape?

B.

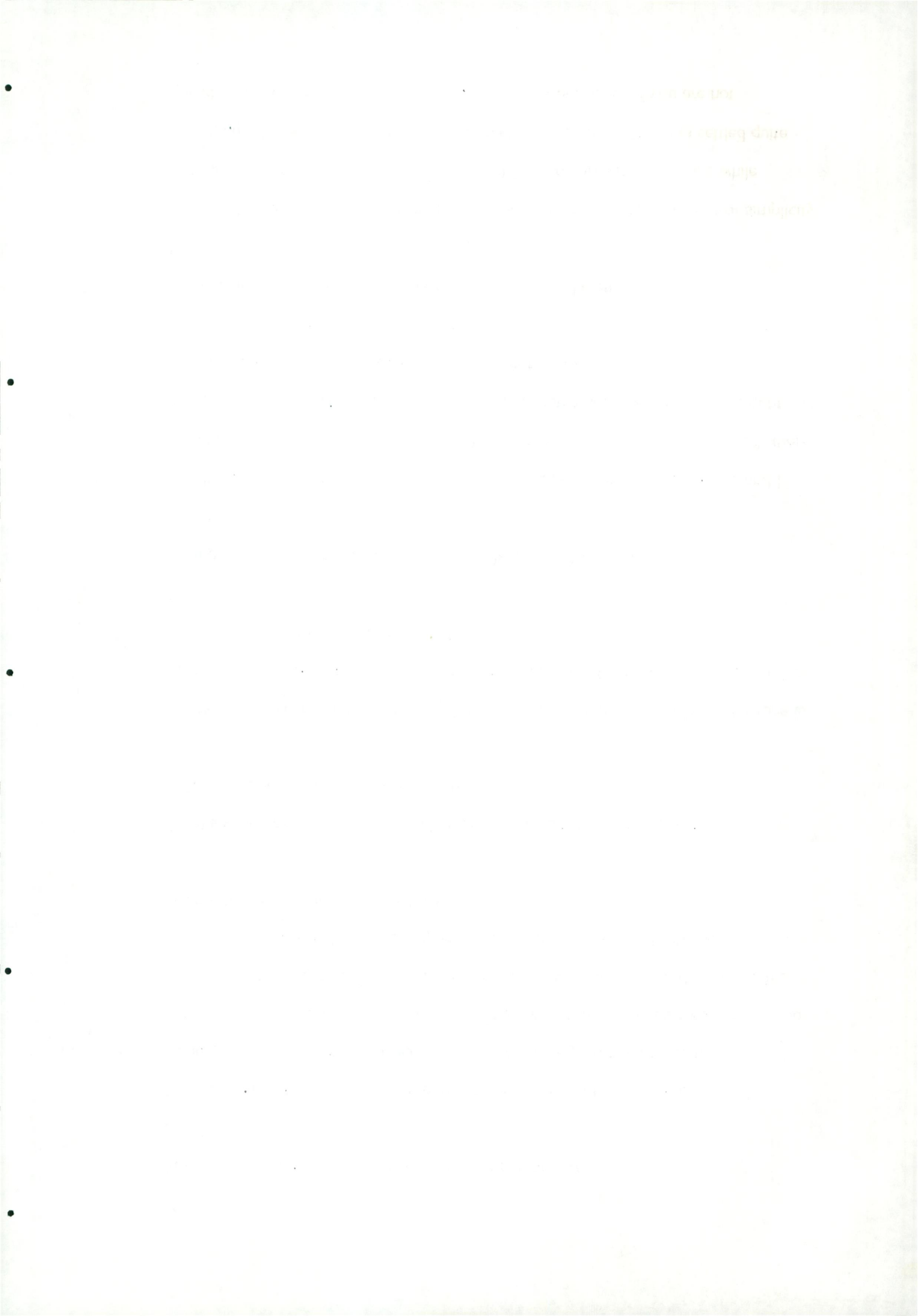
Yes, it's a long time since I have been in the West... I worked in the Sligo area and I found it almost identical as being in the West coast of Scotland and I could work there easily. So I will definitely be going back there. I should have been back there right now but there are just too many things that I have got to do.

M.

Do you aim for simplicity when starting your work in the studio?

B.

... Yes, I like the image to be direct and dynamic, perhaps contrasting areas of simplicity with areas of complication. I try to be as faithful to the image as possible while executing it in a very direct way. I always feel it works better if it gets settled quite quickly and that usually happens when you are concentrating. If you are not



concentrating and you are not prepared to paint, then it doesn't work. So I think before I start, I prepare as much as I can, but I'm very impatient so I want to get started immediately. I just want to execute it as quickly as possible. So, I think you do have to be prepared to do that, particularly with the large-scale paintings.

M.

How do you overcome the fear of starting? Is there a procedure that you go through to tackle the blank canvas?

B.

Yes, what I do is I try to prepare the materials first of all and then I always start by using *collage* anyway, perhaps drawing on the canvas... I never start a canvas by painting on it... but then again I may do that the next time I do something I may change it completely... it just depends... but normally that's the way I start. Then I would layer areas of texture and pigment on and then, when it's at a certain stage, I would start to paint, apply more *collage*, so that it's all layering and then, at a certain stage, I'll use a lot of water on it... it all becomes quite fluid. It dries all together... if it hasn't worked at this stage, then you have to start a new painting the next day... the same painting but a new version because, as soon as you apply one area of paint, I get carried away and change everything else.

M.

What about your choice of images and subject matter between Spain and Scotland, would they be similar?

B.

Some of them are. If I am doing things that are very close up, then I would probably be choosing the same type of things such as doorways, windows, enclosed spaces such as gardens. These are quite often the same. I don't often do straight landscapes in Scotland as I would do in Spain because the structure of the landscape is, I think, much more simple in certain areas of Scotland. There is one I did that was of a hillside and it was very flat and you could not tell it was a hillside and it had areas of burnt heather and peat banks so it was really just a pattern on the hillside... so I suppose that was

1870

1871

1872

similar to Spain. It's not consciously the same but I do look for objects quite often when I am in either place.

M.

What place has provided the most amount of work from the same source?

B.

Well, some of the subject-matter has produced long series of paintings. Is that what you mean?

M.

Yes.

B.

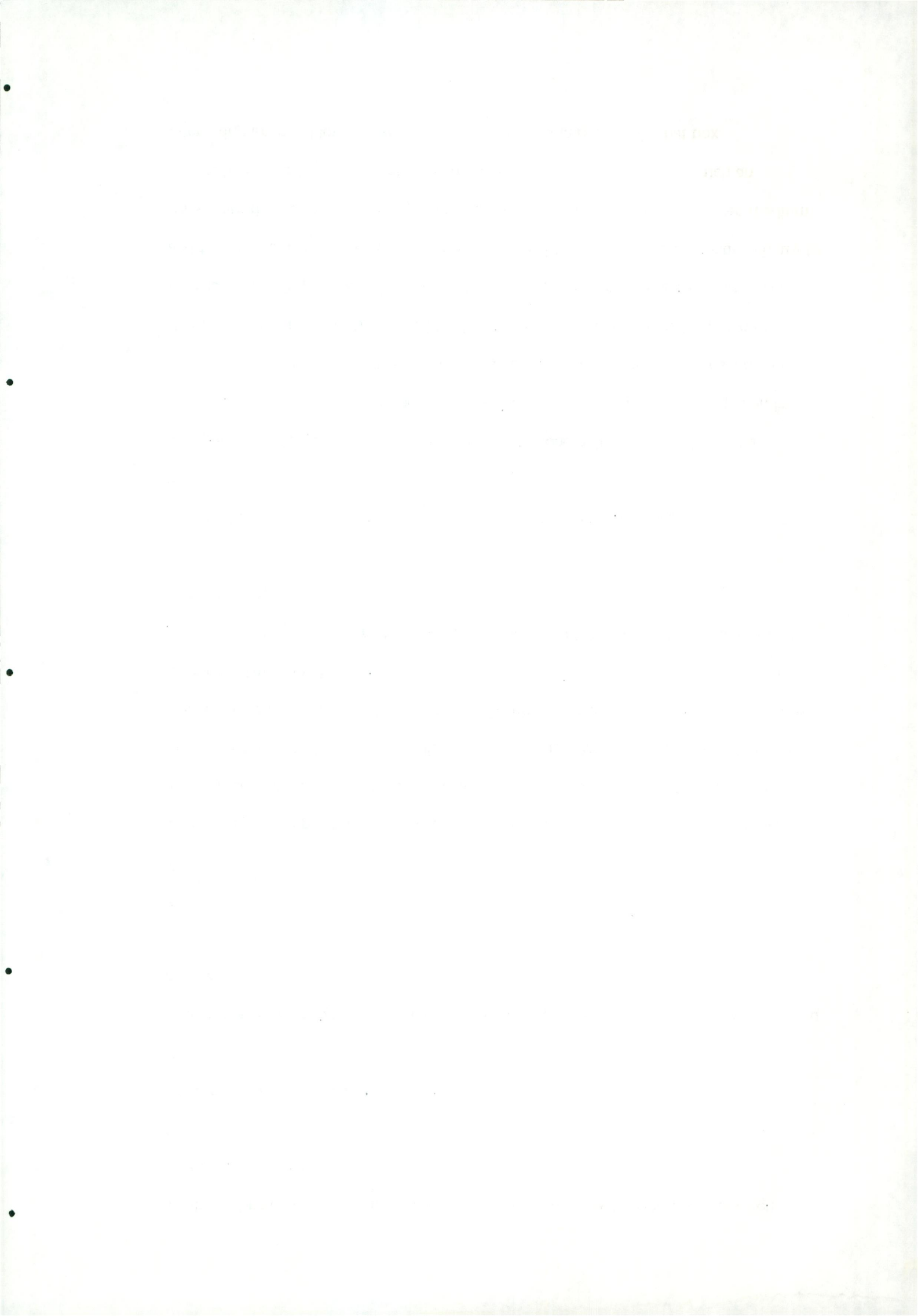
Well, some of the paintings of Spain, the LANJARON series which is of olive groves and terraced hillsides... I've done a long series of that and I've done a long series based on one of the Leith Docks... one called "THE NORWEGIAN BOAT" I did about ten or twelve based on that. And then I think the HARBOUR BOX one is a memorable series of things. I'm trying to think what else... the HIGHLAND FENCE series... that's been going on for two years... when I think about when I did the original drawings it's quite some time ago.

M.

You might leave it for awhile and then find you come back to it again?

B.

Yes, particularly if you have switched media. I've done quite a few of these, the HIGHLAND GATE series in monotype, as well as small paintings, works on paper, large paintings... so with my favourite, if you could call them my favourite images, I do a lot of them... play around with the whole idea to see where it eventually leads. It is quite fascinating looking at the slides and photographs of the earlier versions of the image and then looking at the subsequent ones. The HARBOUR BOX ones I continually try to do a a painting for myself based on the harbour box... so far I have done three medium size *collages* and I don't have any so I am going to do another one. It's such an interesting image... I love it, probably because it's contained within that box.



M.

Is that the earlier version of the one in the Ib Jorgensen Exhibition?

B.

No, that's the earlier version that Carlow has bought, that's the one before that, and there is another one as well... I'm sure there is another one. It is a very difficult image to resolve... I took ages and ages to get it right because of it being quite a central image so I will probably do a lot more with that. Some of the paintings came before the etching and some of the paintings came after... so an introduction of a spell in the print workshop can change the image in some sort of way... I have always worked with prints as an intermediate stage or as a means of progressing the image as another way of seeing it possibly.

M.

If you are getting stuck in a painting, would you try and change your medium into print?

B.

I think if I am stuck with an image then it's just not working. It's just that I'm not interested in it. It's not a question of being stuck, it is just using the image you're enjoying, but using it in a different medium and that changes it in some way. Changes the way you look at it... either in terms of surface, composition, or colour... and then you can switch back into painting on a small scale or painting on a large scale because that changes it as well. Sometimes I may start off doing small-scale things and then large-scale and sometimes the reverse. With the NORWEGIAN SHIP series, I kept shifting scale and shifting from doing water-colour, *collages*, prints... yes, I did prints of that.

M.

Have you always incorporated *collage* in your paintings?

B.

More or less... more or less always. For a spell I didn't, but the work was absolutely appalling. It became decorative and it was a dreadful time... I think it was when I was out of college three or four years and I shifted to Aberdeen and I found it very difficult in Aberdeen to find something that I really wanted to work with. Eventually, before I left Aberdeen I was beginning to work in the harbour and did lots of things based on

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that, but I had forgotten that you had to draw... I was actually making things up... this happens to a lot of student's when they leave college... you have to put in the hours doing the research. So, once I started going back to drawing it was alright. I abandoned colour completely because I was using colour that was of no consequence whatever... I was doing paintings entirely in blue... they were dire, absolutely dire. I started using *collage* when I was at college and I was just using my prints, tearing up my good prints. I loved print-making but I could never do a good print... they were all covered in hand prints and badly done so I just tore them up and stuck them back together again... I had so many of them as well... I used to do silk screens that had fifteen or sixteen colours and were like linoleum when I had finished them... of course, I didn't have a plan. I was making them up as I was going along... just building up the colour.

M.

Do you consciously put in key points to lead the viewer across the surface?

B.

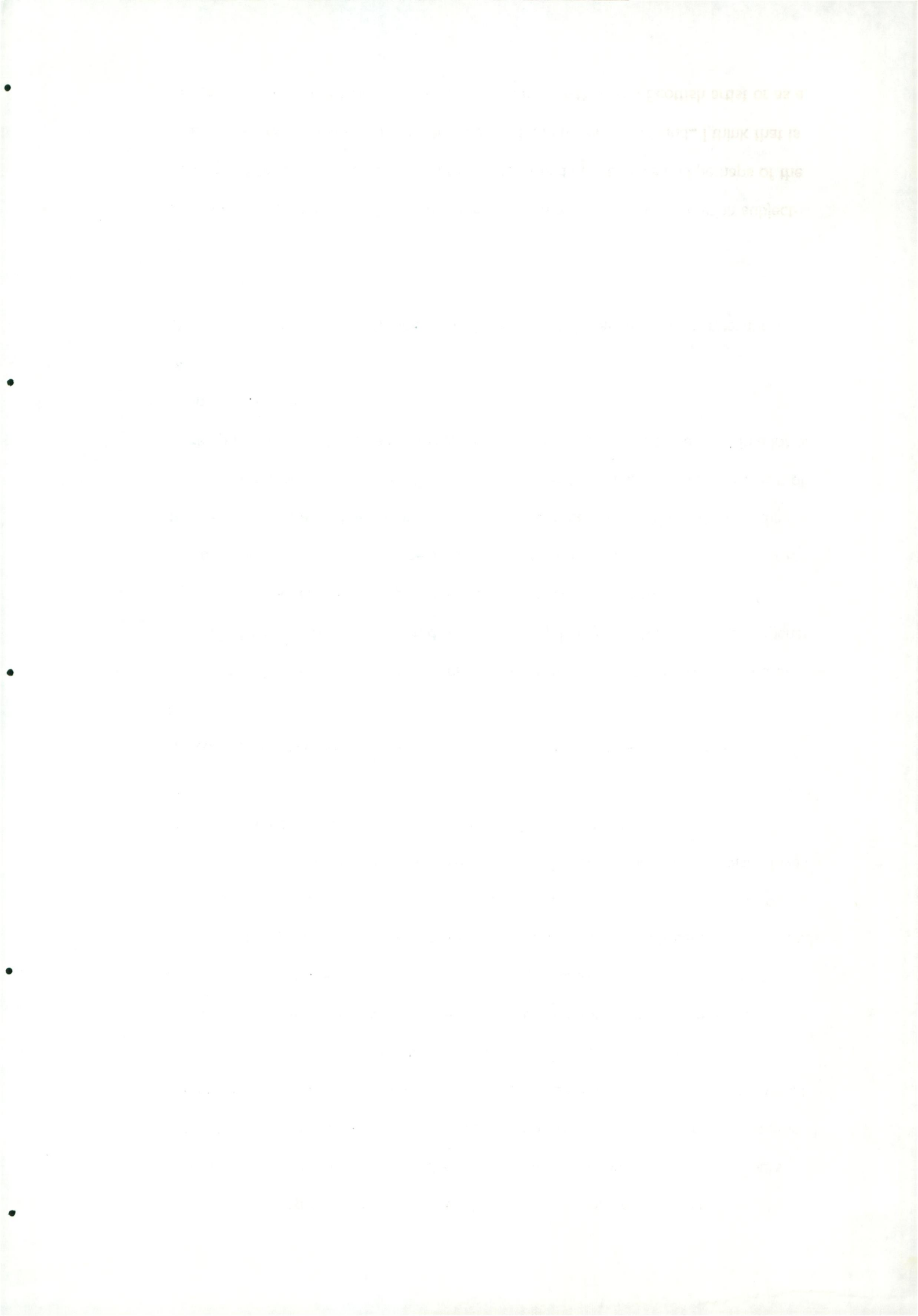
No, I don't think I consciously do anything really! I think most people have a kind of method of composing. You referred to that painting being like the one in the Jorgensen exhibition... although it's a completely different subject, it's the same structure of composition I enjoy using... but the subject matter is different. There's a drawing over there - a mixed media drawing in the frame - and you can see that it's actually... the composition is quite similar and it's of oil tanks at Leith Docks. so, it's just my way of working I think... and I like using certain shapes which reoccur. You see that in a lot of people's work, I think.

M.

Do you feel strongly in identifying yourself as a Scottish painter? Is this relevant to your work?

B.

I think it's relevant in that I like working in Scotland and I work with Scottish subject-matter and I'm very conscious of Scottish history and of the place and perhaps of the lack of presence of people... I think that has had an impact on the land... I think that is important to me... but I wouldn't like to be identified either as a Scottish artist or as a



woman artist. I think I would like to be an International artist, with that dimension. So, I think that it is important that my base is here in Scotland, but I don't want to be regarded as just parochial.

M.

Do you encounter any difficulties being a woman Artist?

B.

If I have encountered them I have probably ignored them. I think, in certain circumstances, it is an advantage now to be a woman artist because there's always tokenism and sometimes I get invited to do things because I am a woman. I don't like it but it's much better for women that I am doing it... but it is still difficult. I think, for example, a lot of male students graduating from the Glasgow School of Art do have an advantage because they are probably more readily asked to exhibit in certain exhibitions than the female artists.. and by far the best coming out of the Glasgow School of Art have been the female artists. Whether they don't push hard enough I'm not sure. I think they are definitely not as pushy as men, and they assume that they're not going to be successful. I think that a lot of male artists coming out of Glasgow assume that everything is going to be alright for them.

M.

To what extent do you have control over how your work is seen and exhibited?

B.

Usually most of the time I am exhibiting in places I know. I think, in the past, most artists trusted too much the way their work was going to be exhibited, and, now, I would tend to exercise more control. Do you mean in the choice of gallery or in the way in which it is displayed?

M.

The way it is displayed.

B.

Well, I always choose the frames. The gallery that I am with in London hangs beautifully anyway. For the exhibition that I am having in Edinburgh next year - the festival exhibition - I have told them now that there are not going to be a lot of

paintings. It is going to be hung quite thinly so that it doesn't look like a jumble sale of the year's work. I've got very strong views about that so I will have to have a hand in the hanging of that. Sometimes artists are not very good at hanging pictures themselves. It is better if someone objective comes in but I definitely wish to prevent them putting too much in and that is a great temptation: "Oh no! I can't leave that out." or "I've got to have that in." So, quite often, it is the artist that is filling the walls up because they can't bear to have their favourite works left out.

M.

Do you think having a family has helped or not helped your career as an artist?

B

I think, if anything, it has not helped my career as an artist because, if I hadn't had my family, I would have gone to the Royal College. I would have taken up scholarships which I haven't been able to do. I wouldn't have the sense of having to support a family. There are lots of things I wouldn't have done - I wouldn't have gone into school-teaching which is what I started out doing. Definitely, yes definitely, the restraints of family life have prevented certain decisions being made. It doesn't prevent me now as I go away for the lengths of time that I want to go away for.

M.

How well do you think your work is generally reviewed and understood by the critics?

B.

Well, some of the critics are very superficial if it is a review of a group exhibition. There was one review... I can't remember his name... who came to review an exhibition I had at Glasgow print studio a number of years ago and it was obvious that he had not seen the exhibition but he wrote about the work... he wasn't very complimentary about it. He hadn't seen the work at all... I thought that quite extraordinary. Mostly I read them and think: "Oh well! That doesn't really say anything to me about my work." and, basically, I'm not bothered about it. I think it is very nice when someone says something complimentary but I find it difficult to relate it to what I'm doing in the studio... sometimes it surprises me what someone has said. I think it is interesting to consider what someone has said... why do they think that it's interesting? Yes, and it

does give you more insight into what you are doing but it doesn't really effect or change the direction of my life in any way.

M.

Do you think that Art is about questioning yourself or your position in the landscape... the way you scratch back into the surface... do you feel that plays a part in your work?

B.

I don't know. Obviously I am there as the viewer and the spectator of this event and that is important to me to try to understand that. If, for example, on the West coast of Scotland... in a location... I am an interpreter of what's happened there - both then at that moment and in the past... I feel that very much in the paintings. If I am in Spain and I am looking at a landscape which has obviously been shaped and formed, I am looking at what somebody has done and what somebody has placed there and the relationship of that to the rest of the landscape... so that's what I'm looking at most of the time. I think a lot of the things that I do have been shaped, shifted, and placed there usually by human presence. Sometimes it's the relationship of a small image... perhaps a rock... to the greater landscape... but how on earth did the rock get there? Why is it placed right there.? These are the things that I find interesting about the landscape... or perhaps the way a stream of water cuts through the sand... these are interesting things for me.

M.

Do you find you work intuitively?

B.

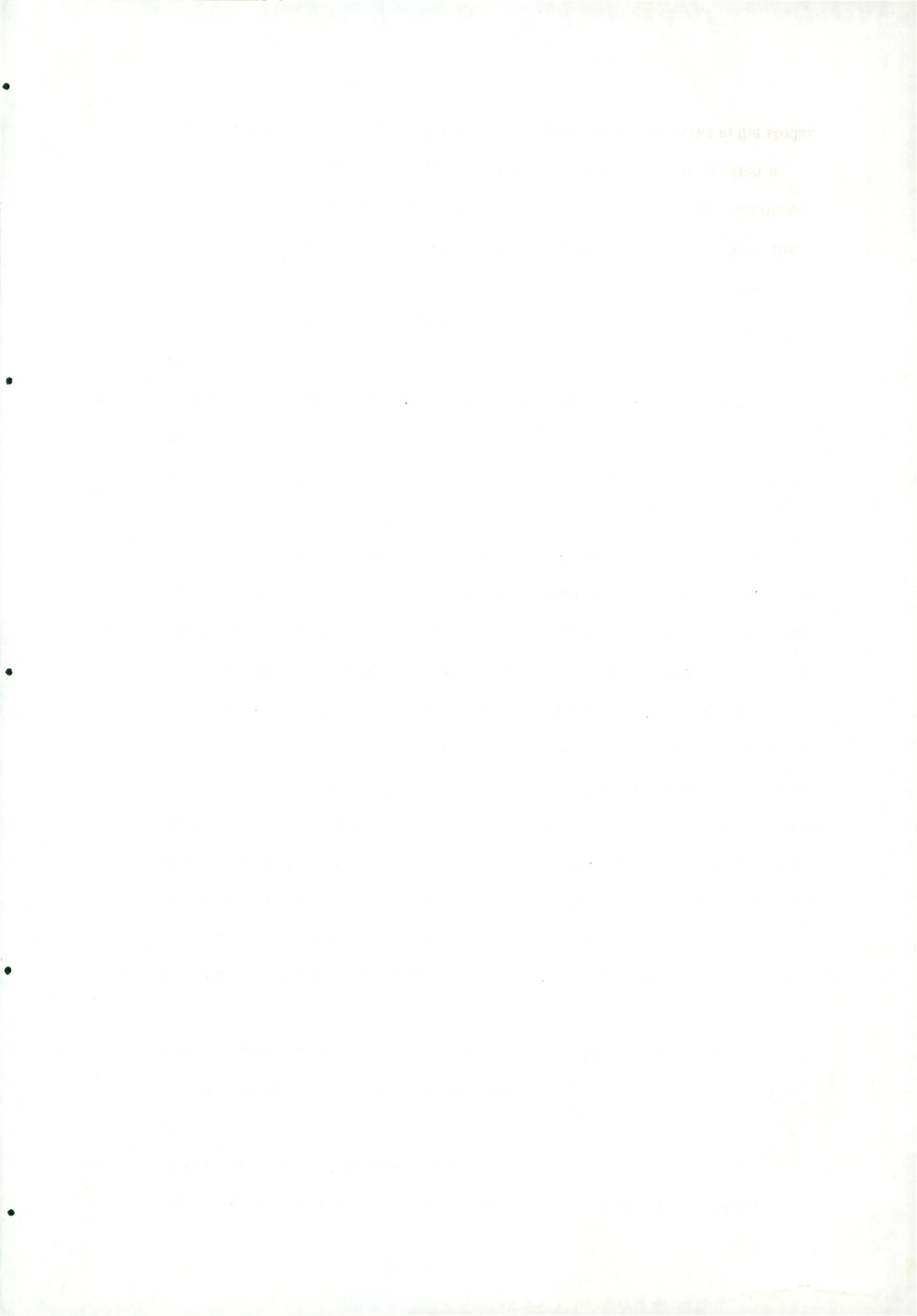
I think so... Certainly in the studio... I have to think a bit more when I am outside.

M.

Do you think it is a more female thing?

B.

No, I don't think so. But it is quite interesting to contrast the work of my fellow artist, Jimmy Robinson, to my work, as I work almost exclusively from things that are drawn from things that are outside. He does work from landscape, but it is, quite often, a remembered image in his mind and he brings it into the studio and works in the studio.



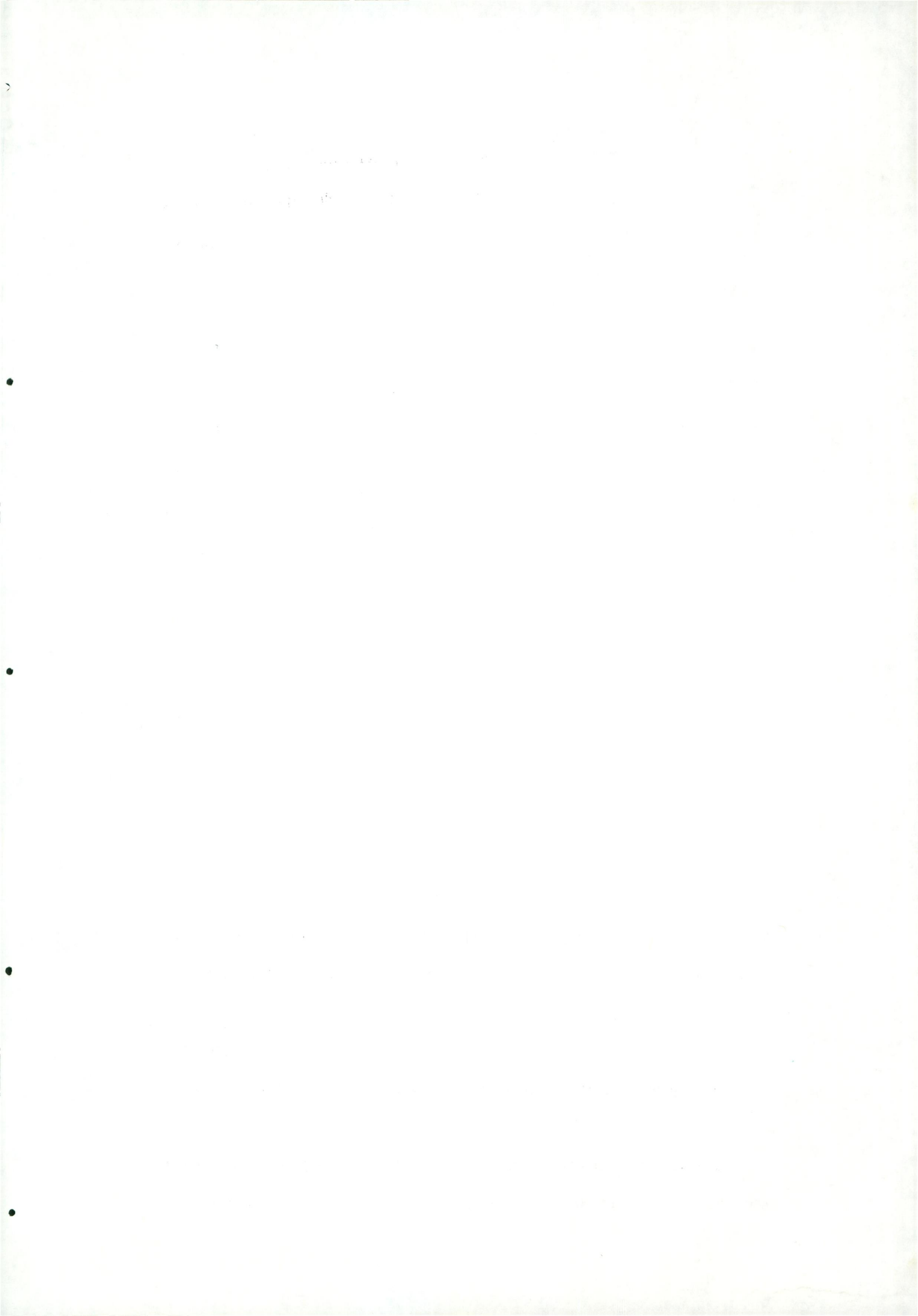
He does draw from sketch books, but he doesn't have the direct relationship I have between that and that. Maybe I don't have a visual memory... could be that!

M.

Your paintings are very textured and tactile, has this evolved or has it always been present?

B.

I think it has always been present... definitely... you see one of my great loves is of fabrics - patchwork quilts and carpets - these sort of things.



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