

CHILDHOOD TRANSFORMS

AND

ART EVENTUATES

A THESIS IN THE HISTORY OF ART, IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE N.C.E.A. DEGREE

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I N T R O D U C T I O N  
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Due to a process of self-analyses carried out by me in relation to my work, the outcome has been to deal with it in thesis form, also incorporating a questionnaire sent out to a number of practicing artists. This is but a point of departure, which should eventually lead to a more profound statement in time. Two years ago it was evident that I pondered on such topics as psychoanalyses, and the inevitable presence of childhood.

This self-analyses finally led me to draw connotations between the childhood 'place' and creativity. I am not going into the area of creativity itself in depth - the process which leads to the creation of the art work. What I will be dealing with instead, is the finished work in how it can contain references to the artists' childhood without being consciously considered. This inevitably evokes the work 'psychoanalyses' and hence Freudian and Jungian research into same. I intend to refrain as much as possible from any deviations into this 'field'. Instead I will be dealing with my own observations, ideations, borrowed knowledge and elements of basic awareness.



C H A P T E R 1

REMINISCENCES OF YOUTH

Here is the loft where we slept, and the partition separating it from the kitchen. This partition is made from boards and covered in wallpaper, a lot of which is peeled off and small holes scratched between them. At night when we were supposed to be asleep, we would be peeping out through these holes. The fire-place could be seen directly down, with it's powerful red and blue paint on either side. The light in the kitchen hangs down from the ceiling and remains suspended in mid-air right out opposite the holes between the boards.

The staircase down from this upstairs loft is green, same as the chairs, and up on the right hand side - beside the large wooden beam is a small red box which I could never reach, and never knew what was inside it. Coats were usually left on the bannister with it's smooth spherical head. Underneath the staircase is a small area where shoes and a number of other items were kept. The door to this little room was seldom opened, since the long stool behind the table was up against it. Still I have distinct memories of being in there amongst the shoes, and enjoying it when the door was closed behind me, then seeing small leakages of light coming in as I attempted to obtain for myself a more comfortable



sitting position. This area had a very familiar odour. Under the loft was the 'seomra beag' where my sister Mary slept. This room has no outstanding features, only that from the few occasions I slept there, I remember the bed having wire mesh under the striped fibre mattress and it sunk in the middle. The kitchen is huge because it reaches up to the roof - the light hanging in the same place forever. The long hard couch is left under the window facing south to the sea, but it seems to change when nighttime comes and the curtains are drawn. The floor is concrete, hard and sometimes cold.

Out the door towards the seaside and in view is Coelin Joe Bhairibe's house, Coelin Gharrachs, Maircin Mhorgan's, and away over on the island horizon -- the school. We are now standing on a flat rock outside the door with some jagged edges around about it, one of which, my younger brother fell on, cutting his head badly. I was witness to all the comotion. The mother took him inside and he roaring. Mary Mhaitiu the next door neighbour was back and they both nursed the wound. Down a slight slope beside the telegraph pole is a small white shed on top of which, fish were laid out in the sun. I remember when the big red pulp lorry used to arrive, and my uncle would give me money down beside that shed - he used to look out to sea. Between this shed and the house, up along the slope is the white-washed wall which turns at right angles about five yards away from the door. This wall incloses a space called 'garrai na slat' and the closest thing to a forest to be found there. In the far corner of this little grove



is a huge rock covered in ivy, and a space in underneath where the cats used to run. I never went in there. Behind the west gable of the house is the cow-shed and hen-house - both white washed. This cow-shed used to have a cow in it I'm sure, but before my time - and they must have been small cows. It was from the door of this cow-shed, down towards the gable of the house that I learned to ride a bicycle. To the left of the cow-shed is a huge rock as big as the shed and there is a beautiful space to climb up between them. On getting up there, nice seats like hens nests can be made in the thatch, to sit on and watch the boats out on the sea. These boats came from behind the island always. Bushes in between the two sheds and they were not prickly so I could go right inside the middle of them - completely hidden. Between the hen house and the gable end there is another huge rock - totally above ground. On the far side of this rock my father had his metal for the forge stored. Sometimes he lit the fire and made horse shoes for the 'yanks'. In the field to the north of the house were two more rocks with bush and soil on top of them, onto which I used to climb, it was lovely and enclosed. In another corner of this field I used to collect tins and beat them into shapes with lumps of metal. I remember seeing the tinker at work, making the tin-can at the house. This miniature forge area was mine alone. The house and this area mentioned is on a plateau, the surrounding area all at a lower level, soggy and damp to walk on. In the forge field side of the house is the garage, with a small door to the west (only



opened when my father was working in his forge). Then there is a door-come-window which faces the north field. Once again seldom opened - perhaps on fine days and paramount use made of it when it was opened.

Now to leave this domestic scene and depart towards the sea - the direction I take is back to the left of the mentioned cow-shed. Here is a path between two more large rocks, but it is much more exciting to run up the slope of the rock on the right, remain at that angle, pivot my right hand (on the wall that goes up along it but does not reach the apex) then run down the far side. Back here in this field is the modern cow-shed - made from concrete in La Cabouche style. The soil back here is messed up - and it smells of cow. Incorporated in the window opening is a piece of timber - rotting, serving no known purpose. This shed had a strange atmosphere to it. The surface inside the shed is roughly textured and is very shiny, with some hair lodged in grooves. The surface made shiny by the cow rubbing against it.

This cow-shed is on the edge of the plateau, and back to the west of it is sheer rock face. Once, my brother and I collected as many eggs as we could find and proceeded to break each and every one of these eggs up against the rock face - coinciding I would say with Pollacks' action painting in America. Searching for hens nests was another interesting activity. Once I heard the hen 'ag gragiel', the search would begin - it might turn out that the nest was one I had found earlier, but was always hoping to discover a new one. Strangely enough the hens never



ventured outside our land area - and I myself have not been far outside a particular area either. This rock face behind the cow-shed, has a river like ledge down the middle of it and this took some skill to manoeuvre, without falling into the well at the base of the rock.

In this field there used to be hay grown, and we used to get honey from the bees nests that were disturbed. Over the wall, and this field holds the ruins of the older generations' houses, as well as the big well. More huge rocks and crevices to climb into. <sup>(1)</sup> On very warm days in summer the washing was done back at this well. There are three stone steps going up from the outside, a tub on the left to water the cattle. On the inside about five steps when the water is low. Along the inside of this stone wall circle there is a growth of grass nettles and briars. The surrounding rocks are so high, monumental.

Leaving there I head for less familiar terrain which is heavily textured like the entire island. There are the big rocks sticking up out of the ground, walls seem to crawl like caterpillars over these <sup>(2)</sup> - to such extremes, you have walls going up vertically. The most amazing feature is where a large boulder is incorporated in the

(1) See Illustration I: consider freedom....away from.

(2) See Illustration II: further away from.



wall giving it movement, or direction - as though the wall came along and rather than by-pass, it engulfed it and continued on its way. The walls define the surface irregularities of the area. I run up and down these slopes on my way to the sea. Arriving from the fields I confront the brown almost black rough textured area between the land and sea <sup>(3)</sup> the tide is out. I have my little places to go to. Here is a small inlet, with some sand - wet seaweed further out. My older brother tried to drown me here once - or was it teach me how to swim? This side of the island is less explored by me, but I am heading for an area I know so well. As I head south, I search for timber or anything else that might have come in on the tide the previous night. It is here by the sea that my imagination runs wild - as I imagine timber boxes coming in on the tide, full with all that I wish to be inside them. This was a very real invention, because things did come in. Such items as boats, piles of rope, large buoys, the most oddly shaped plastic bottles and once a beautifully carved wooden heart which I found. This heart I held onto for a long time - it was a contact with somebody out there in the unknown. But then of course it was broken for me, by those to whom it could have meant nothing.

We used to get large parcels from out in the sea (America) and within these assortments of plastic soldiers, cowboys

(3) See Illustration III: no further - the boundry.



and indians, small engines, various coloured clothing, which caused tremendous excitement - both before and after the opening. My timber boxes which would one day arrive in on the tide, probably found their origin in those parcels. Boxes packed with little things including clothes, watches, cars, little boats, comics, touching only a portion of what must have been an endless list at the time. Very possible also, that I would have wished for a boy or girl to be in this box. A person to my detailed specifications, show it all the nooks and crannys, play in the sand - walk the rocks, share the toys with, break eggs, drown hens, knock walls, and it being magical so nobody else would know. This was the magic of the sea, because any day it could happen and I was always watching out.

Over along the rocks now, lovely and warm on bare feet since the sun is shining - smooth further out, and slippery where the tide has not long gone. There are coloured perriwinkles and shells up at the crust of grass land, me visualising a very high tide as the only means by which they could have come up so far. Here is the swimming pool - where sea water was held, the tide being out. A very tiny patch of sand. Surrounded by large rocks (but all dark down here) with crevices in underneath and between them. Beside this 'pool', in one of the large rocks there is a well, a holy well. At certain times of the year we used to come here, collect the coloured perriwinkles from nearby, parade around this hole in the rock saying prayers, everyone throwing a pebble or winkle in for every time they



passed around it.

Moving further now - heading east I arrive at the grassy patch where the 'carragin' is laid out in geometric patterns. When the large pile of rope was found it was in this same patch that it was sorted into clumps, conical shapes. Down from there and I have a vivid picture now of the arrangement of rocks I will soon be walking on. The rocks are large but with bits of wood jammed between them, betraying their size, claiming that they do move. The hollow gurgling sound of water underneath as the tide teases them. I pass this area and Cuinin inlet is here before me. The two currachs are tied up and tide coming in has just raised them. <sup>(4)</sup> This area is a large enclosure with me looking up at the surrounding land. One currach perched upside down up in a field - on supporting stones. I go up and get in underneath - this is a nice place to be when it rains - and the sound of the sea is now distinct. I remember, in this same field a cow 'An Bhrianach' had a calf, and her teats had to be pierced to let the milk come.

I leave this field. Over past the two currachs and here is my car. There is only one side door, only one seat, the front is beautifully shaped for travelling fast. It is facing out to sea, and the island is hooked up behind. When the tide comes in fully - it's as though I can just take off out over the water, pulling the island behind me.

(4) See Illustration IV



The tide coming in here in Cuinin is most amazing. The edge that is formed as it moves so mysteriously slow up along the dry brown rock, is so clinical. The transformation that occurs when the tide does come in so silently, is mysterious. It creates the feeling of timeless passing of time. I stop and stare - it does not seem to rise - just sway - yet the place is re-set. While the tide is out, I make road ways from some large rocks to others, so that while the tide is moving in I can still stay out on some rocks. Building up stones to try and stop the tide coming in never seemed to work. With full tide all the darkness would go, the currachs straighten up, ropes stiffen as though woken.

Over from Cuinin, passed Coelin Gharrach's house and I arrive at the sand cliffs, white soft sand and scraws. Up I go to the top and there would be a sliding path down between and around scraws. Remain at this endlessly. Further over towards the school, is the long beach, activities occurred here only on the way from school, never on the way over. As soon as school finished, Tom Choelin Gharrach and I would head back here on the way home. We used to throw black and green berets, like frisbees. We spent a lot of time back in this area, and the beach. A very barren area - inhabited only by rabbits. I used to reverse down into the burrows.

The school - dark inside - surrounded by a coarse concrete wall 'scunsa'. Strange how that wall made a boundry.<sup>(5)</sup>

(5) See Illustration V



During school hours I could not, freely, move outside it, and then other than on school days - there was the feeling that I should not move inside of this area. In the infants to 2nd class, room, the large red numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, hung there forever, never moved, never talked about, just more sinister staring objects - signposts to the abyss.

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C H A P T E R 11  
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EXPERIENCE OF PLACE/CREATIVITY

Perception is taken by experimental psychologists to mean the process of becoming aware of the stimuli in our surroundings. In the laboratory it is possible to study stimuli which have been removed from common experience: flashing lights, brightly coloured discs, pure tones and all the other stimuli which may be created readily, only in a psychological laboratory, may be seen and then thought about. They can be produced in the laboratory almost entirely removed from the process of which such stimuli are apart in the world outside: that is the process of catagorising them, distinguishing between perception and cognition. Although the distinction between perception and cognition may be philosophically maintained outside the laboratory, in technical terms this is not possible within. And so, for example, when finding one's way through a city or deciding on a restaurant in which to eat, both perceptual and cognitive processes come into play. They are not differentiated, as in the laboratory. The central concern for me here, in dealing with my own and other artists associations with a place or places in childhood, is the mental processes associated with cognition, rather than the direct responses to simple stimuli which fall readily under the heading of perception. By this emphasis on cognition I don't mean to be in any way



derrogatory of the significance of our physical environment. Instead it leads to an emphasis on the profound significance which even the smallest aspect of our surroundings may have. To illustrate this I will take an example from a novel by a major novelist -- that of Proust.

"One of my feet stepped on a flagstone lower than the ones next to it -- and then, all at once, I recognised that Venice which my descriptive efforts and pretended snapshots of memory had failed to recall. The sensation I had once felt on two uneven slates in the Baptistry of St. Mark had given back to me and linked with all the other sensations of that and their days which had lingered expectant in their place among the series of forgotten years, from which a sudden change had imperviously called them forth". (1)

The significance of such a small detail, as Proust's crack in the pavement, is important because places frequently provide the greatest range of long lasting associations. The crack in the pavement brought back to Proust a great variety of images (memories) which could not have been recalled to vividly any other way. In other works, even the seemingly minor aspects of our physical surroundings may be inbedded, like a child's blanket, with a variety of meanings, a mixture of memories, habits and expectations with which we link it. True as this is for something as seemingly trivial as a crack in the pavement, it is even more so the case for larger units of our surroundings, such as a house, a land mark such as

(1) Canter David Psychology of Place 1977



a single mountain, the sea, city or forest.

Those properties which we experience within our environments which lead us to an emphasis on the cognitive processes also lead to a clear distinction between places and objects. For the questionnaire I allowed those terms to be considered separately. To highlight the distinction between place and object Ittelson has given one of the most thorough and thoughtful estimations. He claims that one cannot be a subject of an environment, one can only be a participant. That the environment surrounds, enfolds, engulfs, where nothing and no-one can be isolated and identified as standing outside of, and apart from it. In addition the environments are always made up of a multitude of different elements. It might very well be possible to conceive of an environment which offers information through one element - conceiving the environment in the most minute form but still existing as an experienced environment, still, hardly likely to ever exist. A third necessary characteristic of environments is that surrounding, as well as central information is always present - surrounding in the mechanical since, one is no less part of the environment than that in front and surrounding in the sense of being outside the focus of attention. Furthermore he states that environments always provide more information than can possibly be processed. And this I agree with in one sense. The information he talks about as being processed - is that which can be remembered - at will. Being the more real structuring for nostalgia.



But he seems to suggest that a proportion is lost. This 'lost' information, I believe, is what comes to the surface in many forms, particularly available to the creative process, which includes mechanics, muscular activities and feeling by the continual feeding of visual information, untapped by normal consciousness, is continually being nourished and so being processed. Environments always represent at the one time instances of inadequate and ambiguous information, conflicting and contradictory information.

These characteristics of the environment tend to demonstrate a difference between environments and objects. However, an object may be treated as an environment, in the way which children play hide and seek in drainage pipes, or a place may be explored as an object. The area of land which I ventured over and lived within, from the house west to the sea, down south along by the coast to 'Cuinin' and then a line east over as far as the school...all within this area was basically more of an object for me than a place.

I find primitive art at this point, relevant to childhood activity within 'place' or 'object' in that either can be the magical source for the creative process. It is also conceivable that it can be the creative process itself. Picasso admits to being influenced by primitive art---but not perceptually.



"Les Demoiselles d'Avignon must have come that day I visited the Musee de l'Homme in Paris, not because of the forms, but because it was my first canvas of exorcism! That's why, later on, I painted more pictures like the earlier ones, the Portrait of Olga, the other portraits - no one is a sorcerer every hour of the day! How could you live?"

(2) (3)

This story, including it's humour, invites reflections.

If primitive art, in it's occurrence in an earlier time and new conveying mystical vibrations when perceived, is in a way similar to childhood experience of place, it is not because of it's freedom and it's form. It is because it belongs to a psychological area of human experience. What it tells us like the cave paintings - is no longer what it told us at the time of experience (perceptual) but something almost magical that does not come forward like simple relative images, instead, blasts out like the exorcisms that Picasso talked about.

The idea of our conceptual systems being available to conscious awareness raises issues which link our experiences of place to the products of creativity. Harding, discussing creativity in poetry, argues that organisation may be introduced at an early stage into processes that precede articulate thought, and that consequently thoughts may sometimes be very extensively altered before they are accessible to logical control. The contrasting and sometimes barely consistent ideas that stanzas seem to have reached expression partly through verbal associations that

(2) Newton, Douglas. Masterpieces of Primitive Art. 1980.

(3) See Illustration VI



might be called accidental, were it not that they evidently gave openings for important variations of ideas and attitudes to emerge. Harding deals with stanzas from a poem by Shelley:

"Times decay, which the kings of thought defy,  
leads to a contemplation of material decay in  
the roman ruins, the monument to Caius Cestius,  
called a 'refuge' for his memory, later produces  
'the shelter of the tomb', the tears and 'gall'  
that await us in life suggest the world's 'bitter'  
winds that immediately follows. (4)

He points to the way Shelley partially surrenders to the accidents of language, and in this way allows it to become a means of discovering and releasing partly formed ideas and attitudes, not a tool for 'expressing' them after previous sifting.

In reference to the quotation from Proust concerning images awakened by displaced flagstones, Picasso and his first canvas of exorcism or Hardings highlighting of flippancy in poetry generating ideas and attitudes, it can be seen that our thoughts, or conceptions, of places may contain much of the hidden richness, the presence the magic which in turn transforms itself into creative energy.

In my own work 'place' is not purposely used as a feeding ground for images. The total experience of my childhood environment at the time, growing up there, is contained

(4) Canter, David. Psychology of Place. 1977.



in my mind, not so much readily available by will, as it is by certain stimuli and situations. In the questionnaire, this was a major intention - to obtain hints of a hidden subconsciously active well of childhood memories which, through the creative process can emerge in the artists' work. One important way in which an individual's perspective is revealed, is by the distinguishing of places which are associated with a person from those which are not. In other words the definition of a person's identity, which in turn relates to the control he may keep over what is available to others and what is separate to himself, is closely tied to those places which are in a sense 'private'. And so, even though there are large cultural differences in the meaning of privacy, the definition of some places as private and their protection as such, emerges throughout the world as a dominant concern for those people who wish to understand how people experience places, and in turn how their experiences manifest in later years.

For a person, the creation of a private attitude towards a place, grows out of a uniquely human ability: the sophisticated human's ability to form complex patterns of conceptualisations of the world around him and to relate them to his concept of himself. Privacy becomes more than just a state, it becomes a state of balance in the process whereby particular places are thought of as being closely related to activities - activities which we regard as so intertwined with our self concept that we wish to keep close control over their availability.

For example, bedrooms, because of their close associations with particular individuals, are typically places where



the person has total control. In an institutional setting the bed might well be the only private place, for the inmates. They are usually able to use one bed consistently and to identify it as their own. The bed is one object that remains quite consistent right through from childhood. The bed for adults can sometimes remain a kernel or cocoon within which he feels safe. In the same manner the personal area of childhood experience can be withheld militantly by some people - allowing no trace of it to emerge publicly.

When I talk of 'place' as being private, it is, in a sense that the artist has certain contact through the memory well, is mildly conscious of a greater control over what he does, but can not understand it. One is almost inhibited by this source, as one would be of the 'private' becoming public. It can be called the happy accident, views being read into it, once it has happened. I believe the more one considers a piece of work by means of a scheme or plan - the more this scheme dilutes away from the creative essence which can only be tapped from the subconscious well, by calming one's self in the spiritual sense - or in the opposite manner of sporadic, physical movement. By these means one can time tunnel within one's self to a state of childhood bliss. Becoming one with the work.

In considering an artists' childhood, and how this can have a bearing on the art he creates, abstract 'modern' art as it is generally seen becomes immediately tangible.



The common statement by the lay person 'sure a child could do that' becomes a very real factor. What I have dealt with up to now could be classified as 'instinctual' in that the source is not really controlled by the artist. In the same way - how children behave with their art is out of their control, also falling into a category of being borne by instinct. The inspired artist actually utilizes childhoods' self-taught esthetic forms and releases energy for art similar to that released in childhood. He does this with controls learned through great discipline, acquired with age and practice. The artists' self-regulated regression returns to scribblings but is not truly regressive if the purpose of the return is the utilization of scribblings esthetic essence in an adult manner. The scribbles of child art are the prime material of all art.

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C H A P T E R 111  
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ARTIST INSPIRED BY EXPERIENCE

Having discussed in a psychological vein, how 'place' is impregnated in the mind - and how it can come about to be transformed into creative work, I now wish to, as it were, zoom in on a man who lends himself elegantly in his work to my need to explore how place can emerge in an artist's work. This man for whom the countryside around Bitabsk where he was born on July 7th, 1887, was deposited into the memory banks of images, from which artists' make withdrawals all their life is, Marc Chagall. The extent to which withdrawals like this are made vary considerably, in that some can immediately be related to places and objects, whereas others appear more hidden and come across in an abstract manner, much more difficult to discern.

From his earliest years, imagery of town and countryside interflowed: lion-coloured fields of grain superimposing their golden strips between the little wooden houses, which were eventually used as firewood to stoke ovens in Trablinka. Fire appears in several of his paintings, notably in the "White Crucifixion" of 1939. This image of fire is evoked by the story his mother told him about his birth. A great fire broke out in the quarters of the poor Jews, behind the prison, so that bed and mattress,



mother and child had to be carried to a secure place across the city. <sup>(1)</sup> Animals were everywhere in Chagall's childhood, in the streets, in the fields, in the alleyways between the isbas: chickens, geese, ducks, cats, dogs, goats and cows. All of these creatures very soon inhabited his canvases.

The abundant fish in Chagall's canvases that swim or fly vertically and horizontally, surveying Russian towns or sun-lit Riveria beaches, keeping time with grandfather clocks, or sprouting unlikely gulls wings, are all herrings of Zachar, his father who worked all day, every day forever with herrings and cold pickle brine. <sup>(2)</sup> The basic atmosphere of the household was feminine since there were six sisters and an active mother overshadowing the father figure. It was a nest, a refuge. Again and again, both in his autobiography 'My Life' and in his paintings, the imagery is that of concealment, the child hiding in his mother's skirt, against an alien intrusion, an antagonistic outside world. There is the outside and there is the inside. Inside is all snug and warm, the safety of the maternal enclosure. Outside blow the cruel winds of criticism, competition, manipulation. One acts out there, as one must only to return as soon as possible to the warm shelter of the inside for nourishment and loving care. He writes "You can't imagine how happy I am, I don't know why, flattened out under the bed, or on a

(1) See Illustration VII

(2) See Illustration VIII



roof, in whatever hiding-place". Hiding seems to be one of the principal components of Chagall's joy. He wants to "creep into" his pictures (as he says). He wants to hide his "feelings in the opulent tail of a circus horse". He loved to look out onto a street from a hiding place at a window. His paintings are full of reticent images lurking out from obscure places, hidden in trees, lost in velvety deep blue night skies, swallowed in bouquets of flowers. Along the frame, in out-of-the-way places tiny figures or objects are magically filled with life - walking lampposts, flying ladders as though he were allowing his own spirit to dissolve into those shapes - giving them life.

"...and with the brush in this hand, his face close to the image growing before him, Marc Chagall felt the joy he had felt under the bed, that womb comfort, that pleasure of being hidden. He felt close to mother earth to whom he could whisper his hopes and his fears, his disappointments and his prayers". (3)

He also had the experience of witnessing his grandfather butchering cattle, and at that age he must certainly have been deeply struck by the sight of blood, rising steam from spilling innards, and distinct odours. He wrote "In the obscurity of the nights, it seemed to me that there were not only odours, but an entire herd of happiness, staving in the floorboards, flying in space".

(3) Alexander, Sidney, Marc Chagall. 1979.



An important point here is, how, while still in his vitabsk cocoon, Marc Chagall concocted such images as he did without influence from outside. It was all of his own doing. Eastern, European and Mid-East art were rich in animal motifs, sometimes folkish, sometimes mythological in treatment. It's hardly likely that he saw any of this before going to Paris, where the resources of the great museums were available to him. It all seemed to have come about by some kind of internal expressive force. His most amazing creations are in the zoomorphic sense: the continual transformations from animal to human and vice versa, the creation of a strikingly private mythological bestiary - winged fish, donkeys in trees, violin - playing roosters, green goats holding spectral brides - zooming off into the night. In some cases the symbolism is clear, in other, many interpretations may be read into them. (4) He hated literary interpretations, and objected violently to psychoanalytic readings of his work. On the conscious level his dreams were organised. He 'explains' as he says, in terms of 'optical engineering', this 'holds', he 'needed' that to fill space, 'notice' the texture here', the 'scumbling' there, the 'chemistry' of the painting skin, the 'composition'. But although I'm sure visual technology is certainly very much a major part of Chagall's thinking while he works, this does not penetrate to the well of dreams, or subconscious feeding ground that eventually illuminates through symbols his painted surface. In comparison Salvador Dali, literally

(4) See Illustration IX



painted his dreams, whereas Chagall painted day-dreams superimposed upon the reality he was confronted with. Chagall a man totally influenced by his childhood environment, of people, creatures and place. In some cases he could have been inspired by remembering certain aspects of this infantile environment, but it would seem that in most cases, that part of the environment which was most embedded in him appeared subconsciously outside of himself, only surfacing in the manipulation of the hands. As Picasso said 'no-one is a sourcerer, every hour of the day! how could you live?'

As for the 'inspired' work of art, Ernst Kris says of the idea that the artist is inspired by some source outside himself not only relieves the artist of the burden of responsibility for what he communicates, but also gives the contact of his work a truth which stems from an authority higher than the artist. To be inspired in art the artist must be able to have the experience of passive receptivness and self-regulated regression and the most daring intellectual activity is needed in the creative process. Kris also states that the graphic art of the child is to a great extent controlled by the primary process - which means, ready for immediate discharge. He believes that the adult artist, is capable, through projecting his experiences into art, of retrieving 'lost objects', a technical term which means the state of bliss of early childhood, which Freud had touched on earlier in his writings.



As I have mentioned - it is particular moments, situations, visual stimuli, odours that spark off the mind to bring memories to the fore. In my concept of moments such as these, it is difficult to imagine them lasting for long. From my own experience, such moments of fusion last only for seconds. I am not aware that such an event can last for a longer period of time, but if it were to happen, I believe it would be consciously prolonged by the individual. This prolonging of it - is more of a nostalgic pseudo - structuring about this moment. This moment is vital - but vital in that it is a means to an end. The end which I have portrayed in the work of Marc Chagall - the creative artistic result.

Both the result and the inspiration which is the benefactor to it are one. Considering this inspiration, when contact is made by the artist with something greater than himself. Some psychologists maintain that there are three stages experienced before the creative act takes place.

These are:- (a) Incubation  
(b) Intuition  
(c) Insight

Incubation is considered to be the mysterious period of time when the brain does not want to work. A period where one usually becomes active in some other totally irrelevant activity. Next there is intuition, a state of mind, where one gets the 'feeling' that whatever it is, will work itself out. Not many agree with this more idealized stage being present in the process of creativity.



Finally then, insight, upon which they focus most attention, is said to be dramatic. The jesterly example, is of a man jumping out of a bathtub, running down the street shouting "Uricka". Literally meaning 'seeing inside of yourself', it has been described by a woman as a 'feeling of discarding clothes'. Also know as the Aha! phenomenon, and that I have been focusing on in micro.

For this to actually take place it needs to be enhanced by sensitive perception; in the way that Marc Chagall was ultra sensitive to his experiences in the Vitebsk nest where he was born. Gertrude Stein in her writings on Picasso and in particular, dealing once again, on how he was influenced by primitive art sums up this 'way' of seeing things past:

"with the exception of some African sculpture, no one had ever tried to express things seen not as one knows them but as they are when one sees them without remembering having looked at them".

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C H A P T E R    I V  
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<u>CHILDHOOD</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8				
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		

IT'S CONCEPTION AND VALIDITY

The idea of assembling a questionnaire came about by my having asked myself some questions in relation to my art work and childhood. Certain incidents highlighted my need to do something about it, and hence the compiling of a questionnaire incorporated within my research on my own memory of place, place itself, and the artist influenced by place.

The first incident, is a piece of work I did for my Diploma in Galway, a piece of work which took me by surprise. It was out of place and strange in that there was no obvious 'sculptural' development leading to this stage, in the preceeding period. Now I feel that it was to have happened anyway. The piece of work was environmental, conceptual and almost ritualistic. I had lived back on an island called Muigh-Inis near Carna in Connamara, until I was the age of ten, and then the family moved some eighty miles east to Biggeramore the far side of Galway city. I had in no way forgotten those years I spent in Muigh-Inis - though I had become immersed in the process of life in east Galway, gone to school there and eventually ended up in Galway Regional Technical College. It was at this stage in the Diploma year - that I became somewhat militant in feeling towards that abortive move some ten years prior. It



resulted in much philosophical and intimate debate with myself on the issue - which eventually materialised as a piece of work in my Diploma. In hindsight, Diploma was not really a motive causing this piece of work to emerge. Deep personal feeling was the catalyst and sculpture was the means by which I released it. To satisfy curiosity as to the nature of this work I will describe it briefly.

Considering land, earth, mother nature, I felt lost and without root in Biggeramore. The land surface and 'house' in Muigh-Inis was of paramount importance to me in dealing with earth. This I had decided. But there were particular places in Biggeramore where I had played and made deep contact with after arriving there. I observed how those places related to places I had palyed in on Muigh-Inis island. It seemed I had found places with which I could link my experiences on the island. This in turn made it obvious that while I played in those places (far from the house, yet inside the farmland boundry). I was transcending myself back to the island. Utilizing what raw material the environment there allowed, to recreate my Muigh-Inis experiences.

My plan of work entailed: my taking soil from ten areas in Biggeramore - and replanting them in ten corresponding areas in Muigh-Inis. In this way - I was collectively assembling my childhood experiences within the one place. It succeeded - just barely, due to lack of finance. Transporting what would have been three tons of soil, plus five telegraph poles and equipment proved much too extensive and eventually I had to narrow this down to one ton of soil



transport by car and trailer in two stages. The telegraph poles I used, were symbolic of myself. In those early years, travelling by car away from Muigh-Inis to Galway and surrounding area - these poles with the wires going up and down through the window of the car, made an indelible print on my mind. They seem to have been the line, the rope, which held me anchored to Muigh-Inis no matter how far away from there I went.

Those telegraph poles and lines are still a very powerful experience for me today, very mysterious.

Having picked out the ten places I most recalled in memory on Muigh-Inis, I dug a hole in each, and placed the soil from the corresponding holes (corresponding in (1) distance from the house, (2) nature of play, both of which correlated) in Biggeramore. (1)

I then placed a half- telegraph pole in the holes, to the side of the hole nearest the house (where I was born) and this made the connection between the Muigh-Inis and the Biggeramore soil. (2)

This work has become for me a point of departure in my work, emphasizing to me what is and will be the greatest influence on what I do now and in the future. Hence my research in this thesis.

The next incident I wish to refer to is one that occurred in Cork, in early 1981. This involved the use of film

(1) See Illustration X XI XII XIII

(2) See Illustration XIV XV



making and I came up with the very basic shape, a cube, coloured red for whatever reason. This 'box' with the magical aid of animation.....moved. Basically the 20 mm film dealt with the fantasies which I composed while looking into the river in the city, each morning on my way to College. Those fantasies in turn become the source of a form (cube) which evolved from the same water - and made it's way to the College where it absorbed me. It then returned to the sea via the river -- on it's way back to Muigh-Inis to fulfill my hidden desire.

Once again, on hindsight this piece of work was out of place. Technically it fitted within course boundaries, but it's content lay with me and the fulfilling of some pattern only beginning to be realised by me. I became totally absorbed in it's content, and practically obsessed in it's execution. It happened! It now appears as though it was the following step to the Muigh-Inis/ Biggeramore piece of work, in that the island having now contained the total of my most memorable experiences - needed only my presence to make it complete.

The final incident, is more of an observation of fellow students (myself included) in their strange habit of building small habitats within which they work. The need to be within a cocoon, is an exclamation of regression, revealing a source further back than childhood, that of the womb!. This is too hasty, and too severe a speculation of what seems to be a very natural thing for an art student to do. Of course it's not just art students. The 'home'



'house' could be classified in the same manner - though much too general for to be catagorised. All the same though, an important point was made to me in a discussion on design, which pointed out how those who have cars before they have houses, tend to betray their need, and so reveal it by having their cars become a 'home'. Having music, fur covered seats, tinted glass or even curtains in them. It is with this sort of observation, combined with self-analyses on aspects of my own work that the questionnaire came about.

An analyses of these five questionnaires which I have received in completed form, would not justify itself. It would be a laboured attempt to come up with particulars, and in the end, simply due to the limited number available, would only pertain to the general. Still, from viewing those few questionnaires, it is possible to foresee how facts, as opposed to stabismal observation, could be achieved from the same questionnaires if only they were refined in content and redistributed in quantity. Then, on retrieving these, a process of catagorising each, or aspects of each, for more convenient classification, applying numerical values as a means of coming up with computed patterns, could ensure a more outstanding product.

As indicated, I am not about to analyse the five questionnaires (see appendices). For you to observe these questionnaires, it is necessary to have a few points registered in your mind before it can be seen how they tend to tangent on the pure link which exists between childhood and art



(adult life) for the artist:

- (1) Comparison of quantity
- (2) Treatment of maps - the extent to which words are used with them
- (3) Gauge the depth with which the artist goes into discussing childhood - draw your own conclusions.

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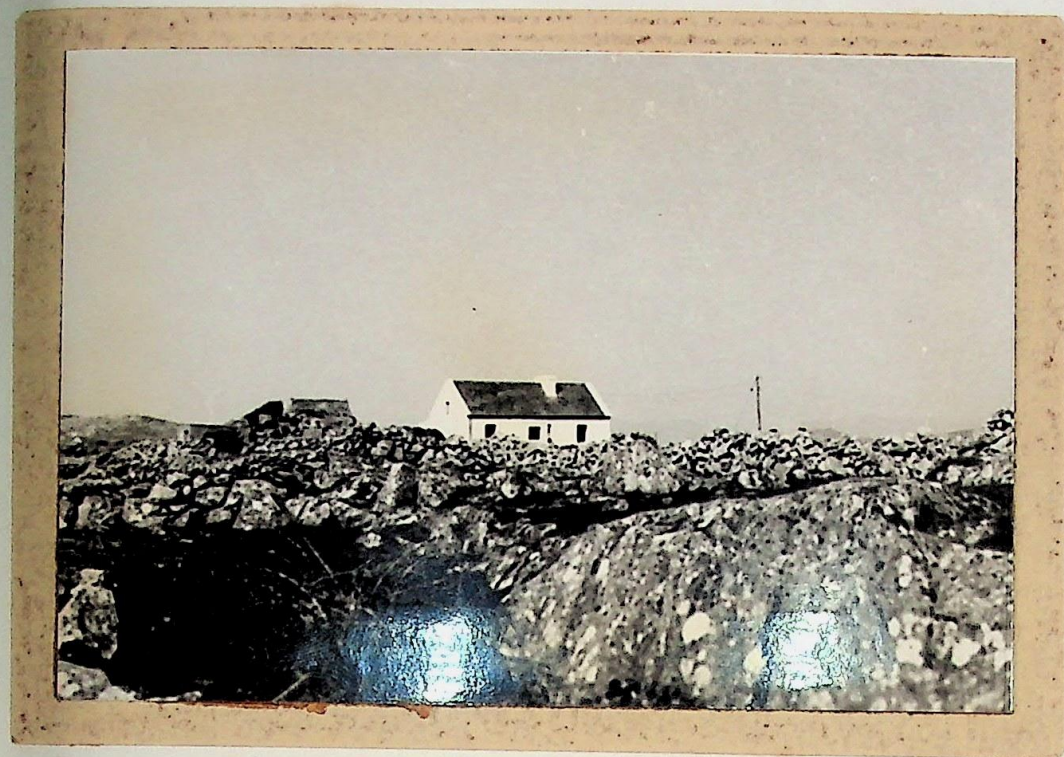


Illustration I



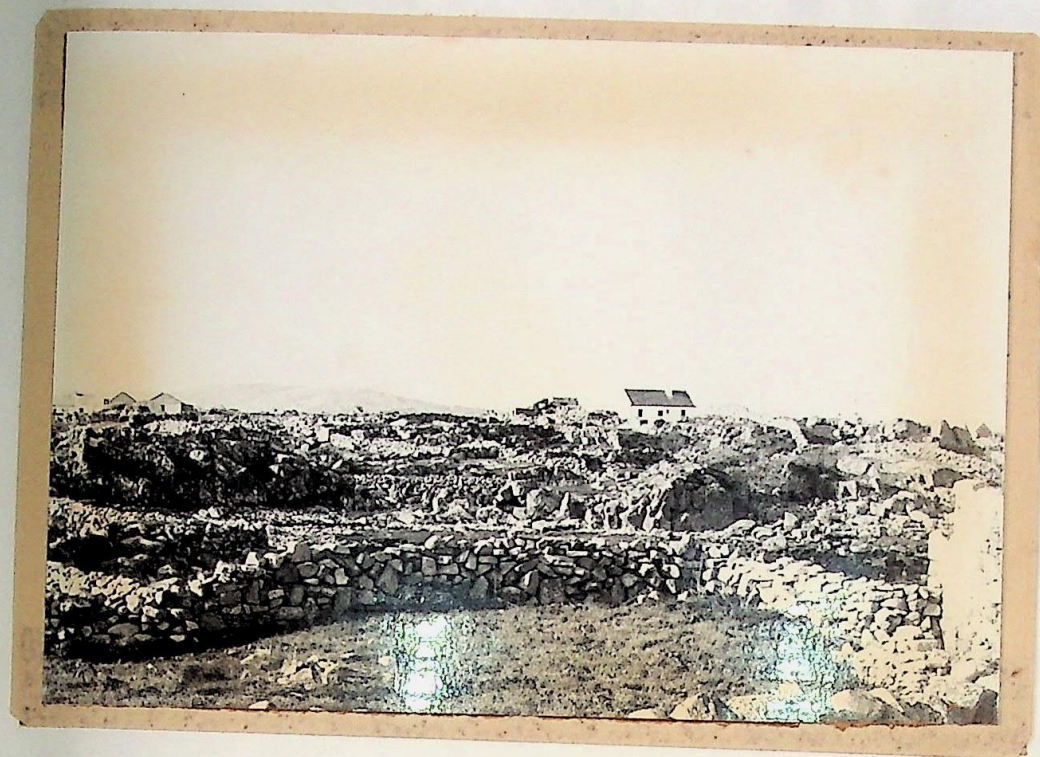
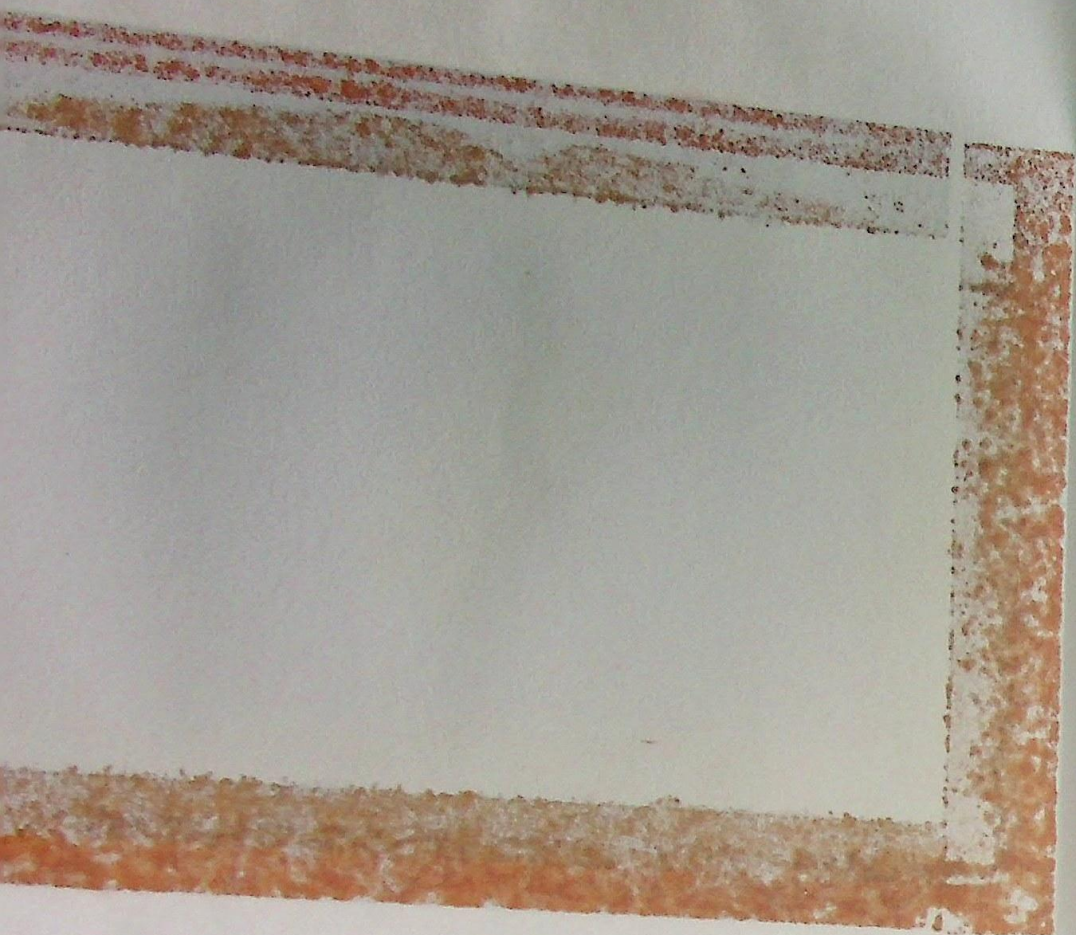


Illustration II



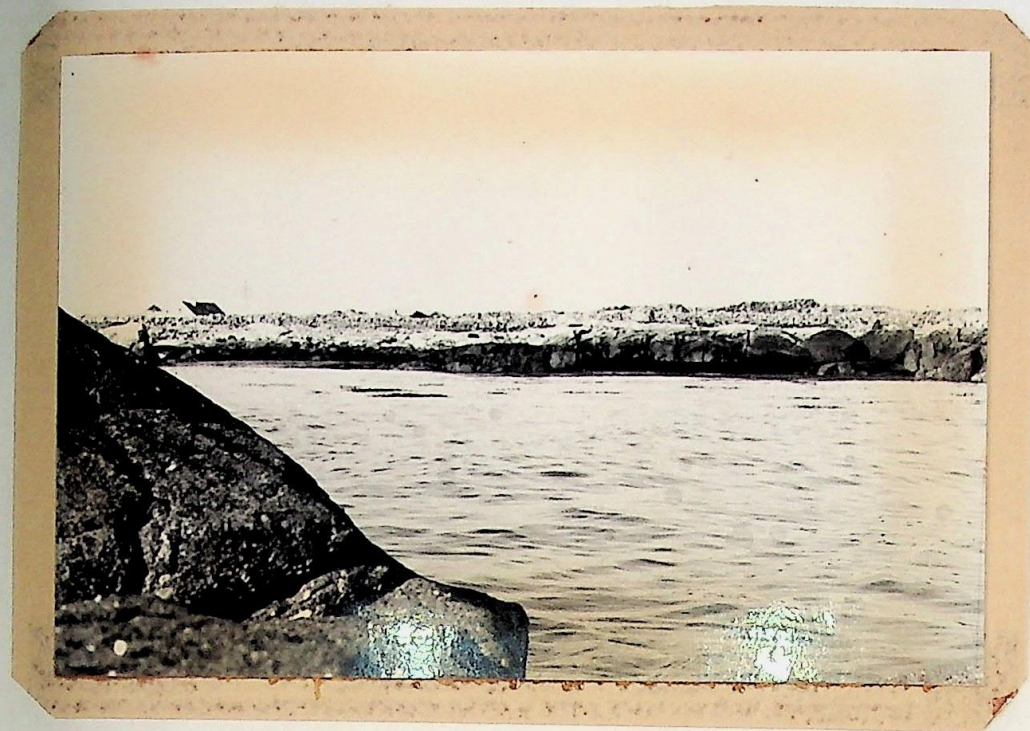


Illustration III





Illustration IV





Illustration VI





Illustration VII





Illustration VIII





Illustration IX





Illustration X



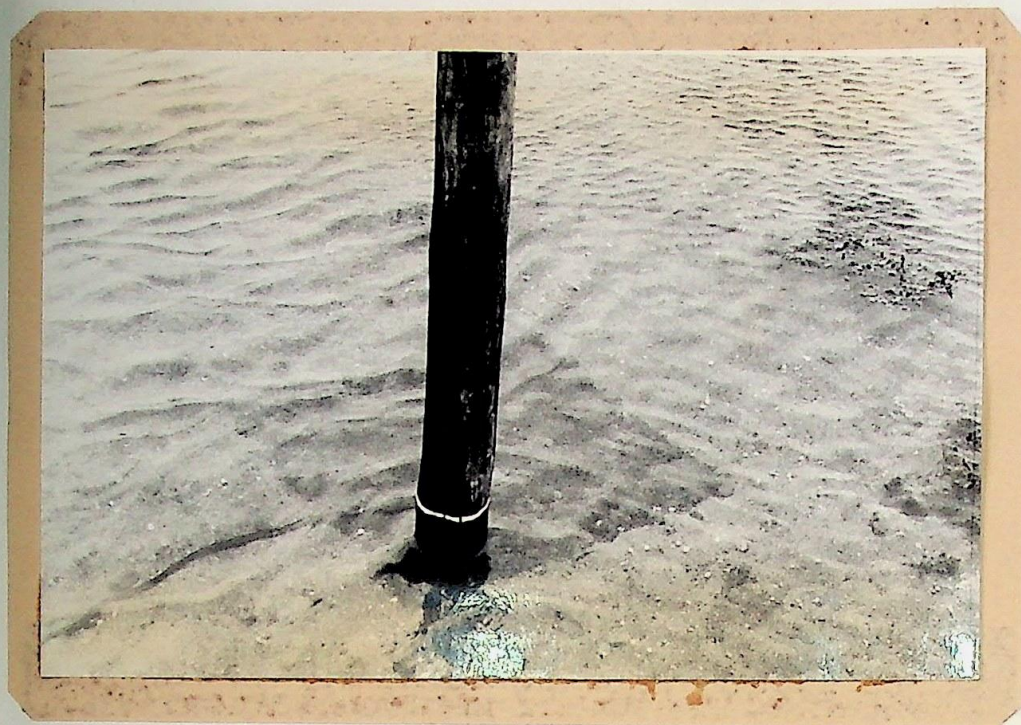


Illustration XI





Illustration XII





Illustration XIII



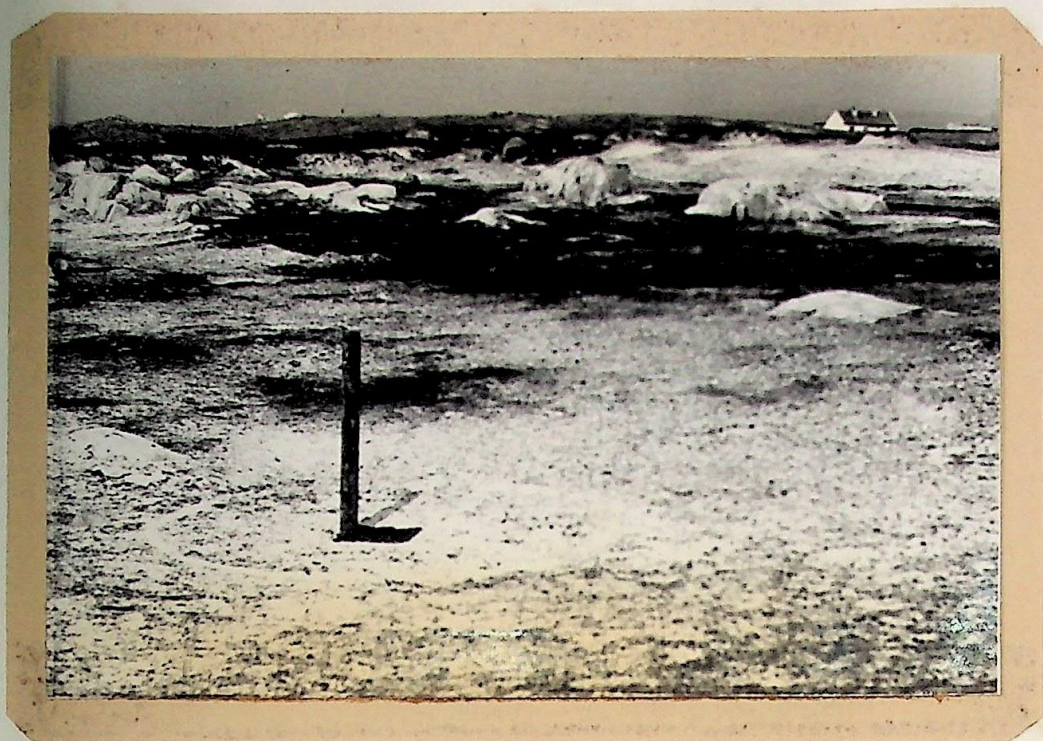


Illustration XIV





Illustration XV



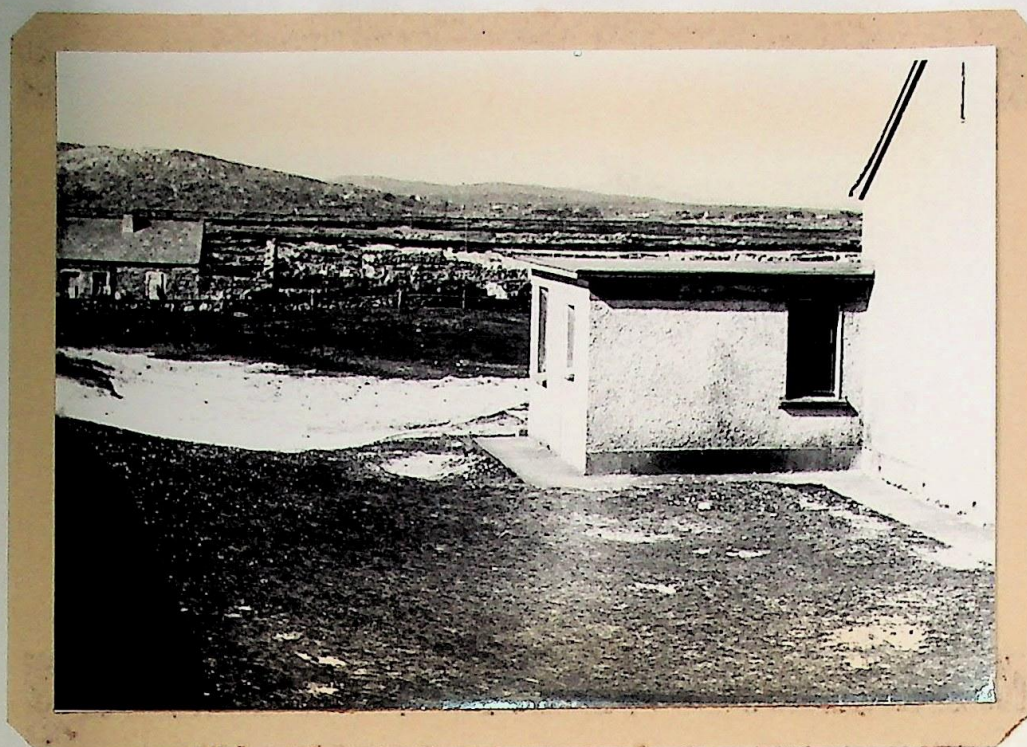


Illustration V



APPENDIX I



I was born in Carna, Connamara. At the age of ten years the family moved to East Galway. The change in place environment for me was drastic, language also changed and to a lesser degree, people.

Since then my thinking has been diluted to a ratio much in favour of my earlier years and I believe since it has tended to govern so much, that most of what I do in art can be traced in origin back to place, object or people in those years.

I tend to see things and keep them, not knowing why. Just now it has struck me - and I working on the relationship between my work and childhood for my thesis - why I held on to two old boxes (large boxes at that) which I came across last year. Asked at the time why I needed them - I could not say. I could have said "I like them", and this would have sealed that enquiry, just as the artists' answer "why not" to, "but why".

In my childhood days beside the sea one of the most exciting sources for my imagination to feast on was the sea itself. I used to imagine the sea bringing in what I wanted, or would like by means of a wooden box. And it is now I recall so vividly my opening the box that just came in of the sea, and seeing clothes, toys, speedboats and anything conceivable in it. This I have concluded is the reason for the two boxes, and this is what I am using them for...the containers of w h a t e v e r.

Also relevant to this is the parcels we used to get from America, and the excitement about what might be in them. More than likely the parcels were the reason for my imagining boxes coming in on the tide.

I would consider, -- an artists earlier work, lets say, in metal, and then a change to softer more earthly organic work as a very noticable link with youth.

As the child tends to be grown up before its time by acting like grown ups - and then finds the need to recall childhood more and more when grown up - sometimes even acting like a child. Working in metal relating to the breakaway - the obvious declaration that one has grown up - pulled away from mammy and the home, and that to change to a more organic style is a reflection of the artists need for reliving the past.

/...



Much of this is mere speculation but I am using my own experience as the foundation to any questions I may ask in this questionnaire.

I would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire as soon as possible and returned before the end of the month to:-

National College of Art & Design,  
100 Thomas Street,  
Dublin 8.  
Ireland.



Having stuck your photo on  
 the front - I ~~wasn't~~ now have found  
 your name ~~Sean~~ Good Luck  
 Slanti!

CHILDHOOD

/

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

10 11 12

## Questionnaire

FORM B

NAME... ADRIAN HALL .....

AGE... 38 .....

OCCUPATION... ARTIST .....

SEX... M .....

.....

DATE... 2.3.82 .....

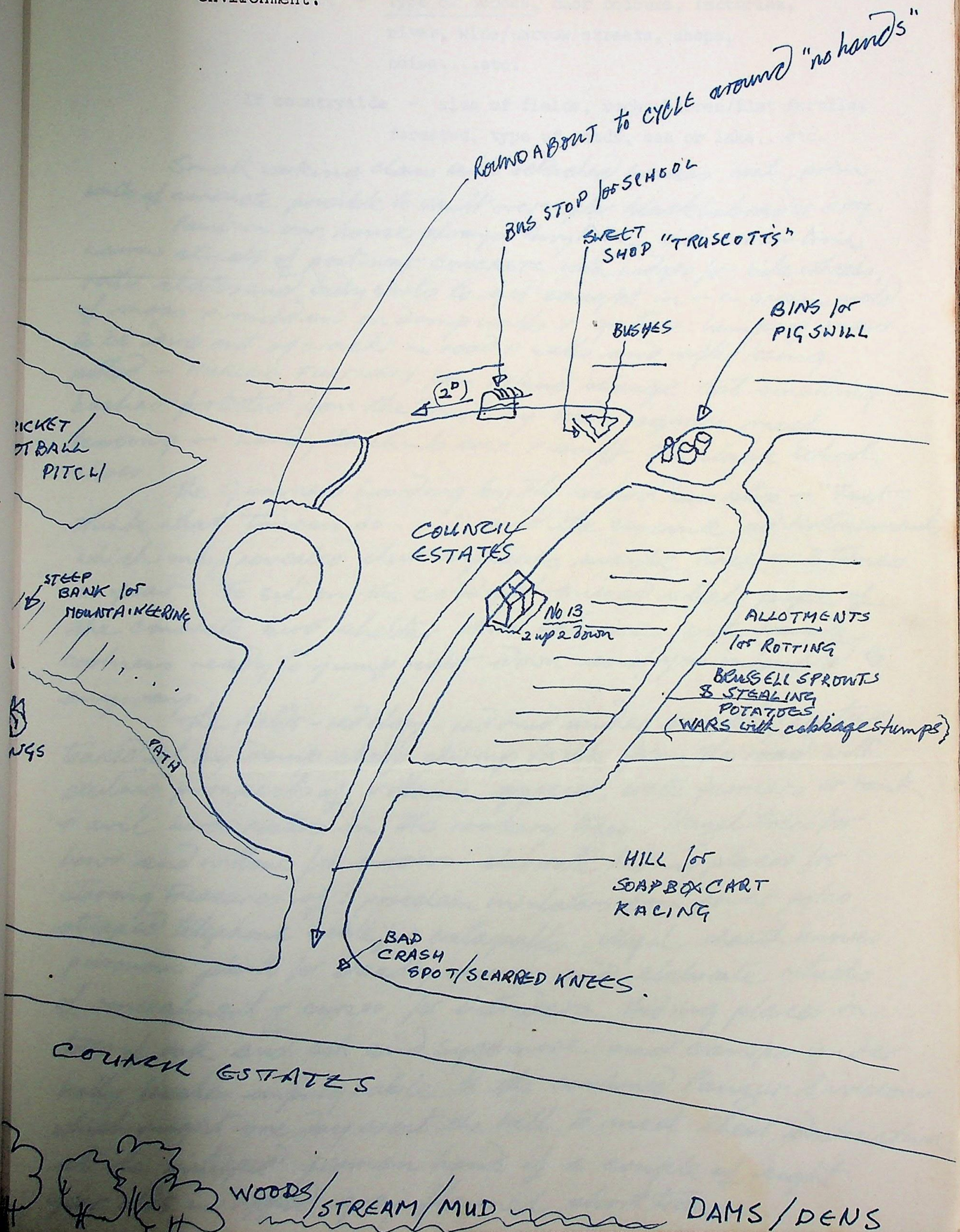
### NOTE:

For this questionnaire I would ask you to be as self-analytical as possible. There may be points I have not covered, that you may consider relevant, and your elaboration of these would be appreciated.

Thank you.



1. Allowing 10 minutes only, draw a map of your childhood environment.





2. Describe this environment (place) in geographical terms.

E.g. If street - type of houses, door colours, factories,  
river, wide/narrow streets, shops,  
noise....etc.

If countryside - size of fields, rocky barren/flat fertile,  
forested, type of roads, sea or lake...etc.

Small working class semi-detached houses, neat, prim,  
walls of concrete possible to vault over after black Labrador dog.

Paint on our house always Navy Blue with cream trim  
narrow streets of post-war concrete with ridges for bike wheels,  
roller skates and kiddy carts to get caught in - a green mold  
of moss & mildew on damp walls & gutters. lumps of moss  
to be dug out of cracks in road & walls and after being  
petted - HURLED FURTIVELY from behind strange cat smelling  
bushes protected from the timid, by wide square mesh  
fencing - handy to climb over & scuff the black school  
shoes.

The Guinness hoarding by the school bus stop - "Just  
think what You can do..." and the cinema advertisements  
which only revealed their mysteries maybe twice or 3 times  
a year. To sit on the cold galvanised steel pipe of  
the concrete bus shelter and balance with fragile  
coolness ready to jump right down as if you intended to  
anyway.

The fields - red clay - red mud under scrubby pasture  
teased at by damp sheep always visible from the road with  
exciting prospects of villains, gypsies, irate farmers or rank  
& evil birds rosters in the rookery trees. Hazel trees for  
bows and willows for arrows elaborate hiding places for  
storing treasures of: porcelain insulators from power poles,  
stripped telephone cable for catapults, illegal sheath knives,  
poisonous plants for deadly arrows and elaborate rituals  
of concealment & curses for intruders. Hiding places in  
trees of oak and ash and sycamore and camps under  
holly bushes impregnable to the combined Panzer Divisions  
which might one day crest the hill to meet their destruction  
at the intrepid yeoman hands of a couple of eight  
year olds in ripped grey flannel short trousers.



3. As you recall this (place) environment, do you have any particular visual images of

- a. Place/s ☐
- b. Object/s ☒
- c. Both ☒

If 'place/s', please describe at length, as though you are experiencing it once again.

If 'object/s', please illustrate and describe your dealings in play or otherwise with it, emphasising scale in relation to you at the time.

If 'both', differentiate and describe each as outlined above.

A cardboard fancy soap box <sup>(Pluto)</sup> converted by knotty once white string to a shoulder box <sup>comes</sup> or round the neck. Still soapstinking & layered with cotton wool for safe transport of precious finds: Dead sparrows. Valuable pebbles, Uranium samples. Important evidence discovered by eagle eyes to lead to convictions for cattle rustling - a fragment of boot, a square faceted horse shoe nail. Or old marbles from ginger beer bottles.

A galvanised steel coal bunker, rotting and sagging spilling black puddles of coal dust over the yard - the top dented by adventure and also now puddled with the latest bloody rain stopping play. A pathetic heap of wet logs alongside to be dried out by the side of the grate & hunching worried spiders to erupt and maybe wrongly opt for the flames. Though in truth rarely flames. A soft time fierce glow good for toast <sup>or</sup> Sunday crumpets on special occasions.

A small collection of smooth chewed greasy dog leads & collars hanging behind the door under navy blue nackintoshes from laid to rest pooch pets. The brown border terrier who heroically contracted meningitis after frightening of a burglar - to steal what? A kettle & 2 saucepans from the kitchen or the wooden tea-caddy with the wood itself in bent metal script <sup>"held by"</sup> 13 small round headed nails - one protruding more & teased by curious fingers.



4. Was there a freedom allowed by this (place) environment?

Yes!



No!



If 'yes', please describe the nature of your freedom, and has it been regained?

If 'no', describe your inward reaction to this. Also, describe your concept at the time of the freedom you were not allowed.

Have you now gained freedom as a sort of back-lash? If so describe it.

Freedom was not allowed it had to be won with stealth & cunning from between the complex web of rules of propriety — (manners, silence, politeness) safety (no football in the street) and temporality (back before dark).

Imagination became the key. Inventing light year jumps of circumstance & responsibility to escape the confines of a kitchen table and home-work books or inventing WITHOUT ACTUALLY LYING excuses for lateness, or tears or mud or blood.

"Freedom" is a myth — a cosmic carrot without substance which is always there in exactly the same way although in adulthood the increase in choice (and pocket money) allows greater choices — the responsibilities ~~recognised~~ <sup>are</sup> often more in keeping than the facetious & spurious rules governing childhood living.

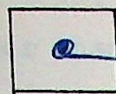
Considering Ultimate freedoms — to live / to die / to kill — the governing constraints of self-responsibility are quite obvious, and in considering lesser freedoms, to speed, to abstract property, to gourmandize, mutual responsibilities are also clear as these categories illustrate lesser taboos ~~at~~ <sup>on</sup> an individual level but include interdependant societal constraints.

I accept <sup>total</sup> my responsibility as an artist — that is the greatest freedom as there IS NO NET D <sup>except</sup> from my own recognition of this category. It remains utterly human, and utterly self governing, can remain independant & without compromise.

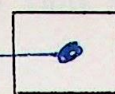


5. Was there a freedom allowed by your environment (people)?

Yes!



No!



If 'yes', please describe the nature of this freedom distinguishing between, Family: <sup>①</sup> Neighbours: <sup>②</sup> Teachers: <sup>③</sup> ...etc.

If 'no', describe your inward reaction, to this, considering emotional reaction, Resentment: Withdrawal: Childish hate: ...etc.

Governing rules were imposed from all levels of society starting with the family <sup>①</sup> ("time to go to bed") to the park-keeper — "no playing on the infant's swings" to the policeman — "no foot ball in the streets".

There were mainly meaningless prohibitions why take off your clothes at night only to put them on in the morning — surely more sense to put pyjamas on over clothes? Warmer too.

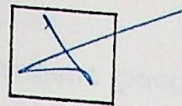
So in their separate ways all these prohibitions were tested for reasonableness and those <sup>perhaps</sup> restrictive societal rules pertaining to 'adulthood' — NO MARIJUANA — are still being tested for reasonableness — in proportion to i) the chances of "getting away with it" and ii) the severity of the punishment "no dinner" or "no freedom of movement".

② Neighbours were an extension, <sup>though</sup> less prone to manipulation than of the family. Remote & even at their most benign still are inspiring for their tale bearing included by double embarrassment more severe penalty. Teachers <sup>③</sup> were the personification of the greater society in its most immediate so their power was seen as "police" rather than mother — and the penalty there was always worse as it was "public humiliation" exposed to a macro society — the class.



6. As you recall this people environment, are there any person/s (that you might have known by sight) that stand out in your mind (other than family)?

Yes!



No!



If 'yes', picture this image in your mind and try to ascertain what you think that person might have been like if you had gotten to know him/her.

An early primary school teacher - possibly a maiden ~~set~~ at 70 odd it seemed. Miss Cann severe Victorian "Hands on Head" "Hands on Desk" and each Friday a sweet and a 3<sup>d</sup> bit for the top boy & girl over the week. Usually won by a smartly dressed small boy who was nevertheless confidently pugnacious called John Lemmon. I never got a sweet nor a 3<sup>d</sup>. And I envied his rather expensive new clothes & shiny shoes. I often wondered at his acid name. Discipline was strict & punishment swift - by a ruler or sharp rebuke - as I try to conjure her to the front of my mind I see the archetypal school marm. Grey severe hair tight rolled or in a bun - gold rimmed glasses. Fierce dry complexion and a tight mouth sewn fast with criss crossed lines of disapproval.

A tight waisted costume of sensible wool tweed, and I do remember a sage green jumper. The great distance from grubby child ~~too~~ to this unimpeachable figure of establishment power/respectability - all seeing all knowing - psychic image of retribution and <sup>combined</sup> image of regal dignity and restrained emotion - never never allowed speculation on what she ate? What she wore underneath? When she went to the toilet? Did she ever kiss a boyfriend? She was fixed always in this image was born that way and at night - when the old bell rang she clinked back into a dusty wooden cupboard next to the stationery cupboard to wait for the morning.



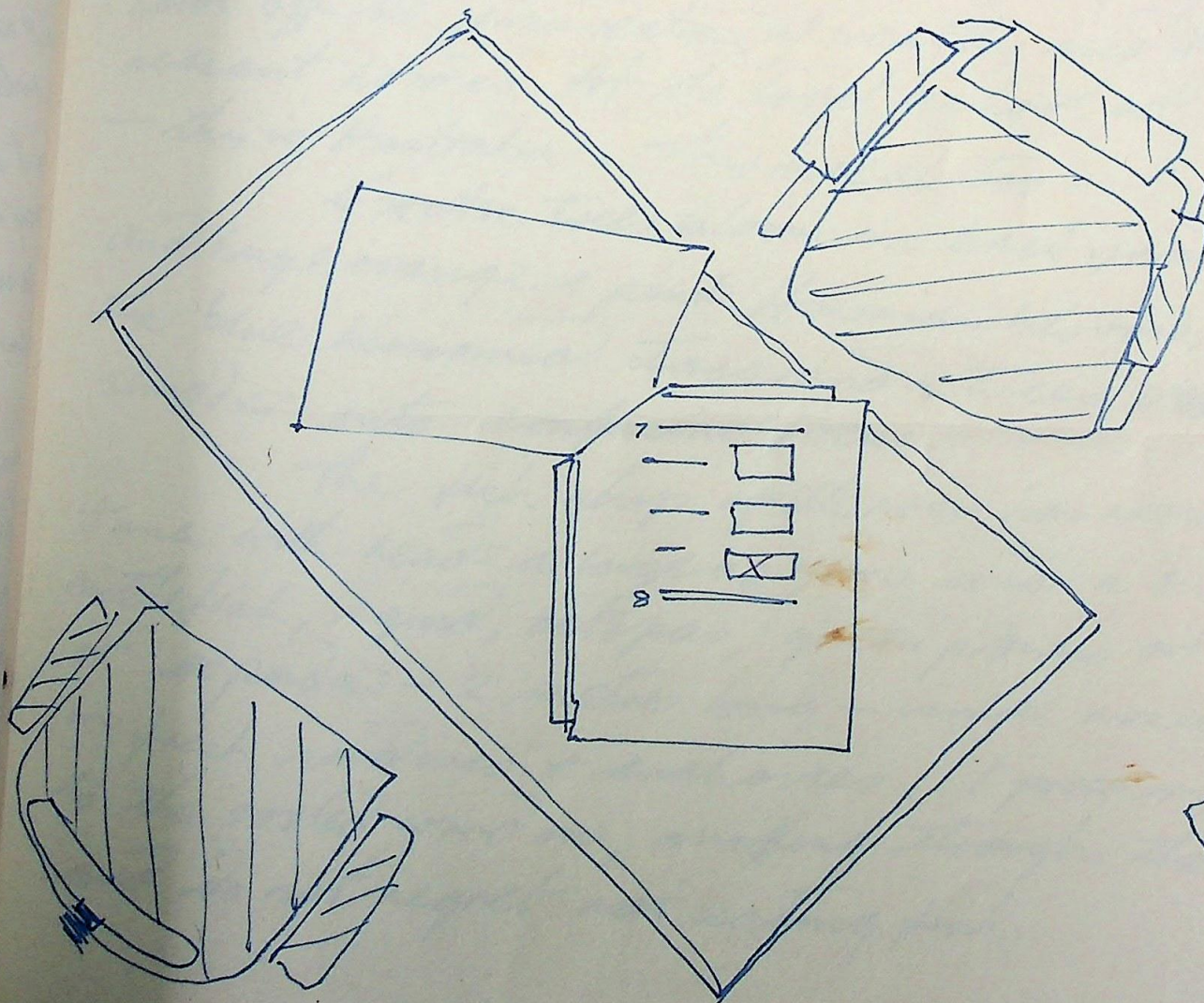
7. As you recall, which do you think is more dominant?

Environment place ☐

Environment people ☐

Same ☒

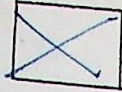
8. Draw a map of your present (place) environment, or (if there are a few) your most lived-in environment.



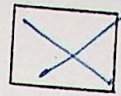


9. Are you happy in this (place) environment?

Yes!



No!



If 'yes', describe it.

If 'no' describe in detail the sort of place environment that you would hope to live in.

A small flat over an Italian tile-yard in the Western suburbs of Sydney — fast working class car culture laying rubber on the curve at the front of the building.

Hot smog burns nostrils FM radio cools ears with mellow cool but be pop.

Neighbours bark and children kite each other through the open patio door. Traffic noises screech and sirens wail. 2 children dead by automobile this month — barbed wire on flat roof by studio holds off the insurrection of wealthy mediterranean peasant hordes. At the local school are 35 nationalities — this is Australia. This is real too.

Exotic trees bloom in back yards — frangiapanis and huge orange & pink Hawaiian blooms, soon the blue blossomed Jacaranda trees will shudder into confusing focus.

The fish shop up the road has regularly huge tuna with heads as large as yours and a choice of cuttlefish, squid, octopus, green prawns or shrimp or espadras — 2 metres long — snipe nosed garfish or fresh sandolines & anchovies. I press my face to the cooled window, sniffing through the glass and do not regret not eating fish.



10. (a) To what extent did you imagine in your childhood?

See Q 4.

Perhaps I only imagine my 38-ness.

(b) To what extent did you make (create)?  
(Outside or inside of house?) - (More of which?)

Everything was made  
aeroplanes, soap-box-carts, bull whips,  
bows/arrows. Carved sticks of great  
magic power - complex things of  
string for hanging equipment, clever  
handles for jam-jars of tadpoles.

Later on there ~~were~~ were some kits of  
aeroplanes. But they never really  
existed before, nor the money necessary.

Camps were also made, of rocks, and  
branches and "found" corrugated iron



11. (a) How often do you recall childhood events?  
Tick appropriate box.

(1) Never ☐ (2) Seldom ☐ (3) Regularly ☒  
(4) Often ☐

(b) Answer if you ticked (3) or (4) what type of situations  
or stimulus causes you to recall?

listen.

2 weeks ago I was sick  
& glad to fill in these pages —

Now I am behind on 2  
shows + the school work —

I cannot spare the time for  
the remaining pages — I am sorry  
but to do it properly would here mean  
another week off !!! you ask good  
questions — however I think you must  
know a little more from these imperfect  
answers & in fact you have more  
material than I have EVER given out!

My work I think you know enough  
of — thank you for your letter & your  
interest, your interest has given me



12. Give an account of examples of your work to date under the following headings

- a. relevant to others - but irrelevant to you
- b. totally relevant to you - (describe this work in detail, with photographs included if possible.
- c. containing mystique - something about it, you don't understand
- d. Any lack of continuity - where there might have been a lapse and then the creation of seemingly very different work.

12a. more strength & more  
confidence for bashing my head  
against more walls.  
The same to you!

12b. Power to your elbow —  
Good luck  
Good Wishes,  
Arman



CHILDHOOD /

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

## Questionnaire

FORM B

NAME AUSTIN MACLENNAN AGE 39 years  
OCCUPATION ARTIST / ART LECTURER SEX MALE  
(WILSTER POLYTECHNIC) DATE 27th FEB, '82

### NOTE:

For this questionnaire I would ask you to be as self-analytical as possible. There may be points I have not covered, that you may consider relevant, and your elaboration of these would be appreciated.

Thank you.



1. Allowing 10 minutes only, draw a map of your childhood environment.

A) BLACKBOTH, PERTSHIRE, SCOTLAND (Blackboth is positioned centrally in Scotland)  
(0-2/3 years)  
→ fields and hills I remembered as a child (2 years old)  
→ rail tracks to the north of Scotland (passing north through Blackboth)  
Blackboth; - Born in County Police station (father in Perthshire police force)  
→ good passing through Blackboth the gateway to the north!

B) STANLEY, PERTSHIRE, SCOTLAND. (age 3-6 years)

School (which I hated) main single road through Stanley.  
Small wood/forest where I used to climb trees.  
→ where we used to play and fight with other kids.  
→ Police Station (we lived beside it)

C) KIRKROSS, PERTSHIRE, SCOTLAND. (age 6-11 years?)  
(Centrally located in Scotland)

main through road.  
Loch Leven (used to freeze over in winter time)  
Loch Leven castle was in the middle - where Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned and where she escaped from. People used to walk over frozen ice to the castle, in winter.  
→ Town Centre area.  
Police House  
→ meeting place called Leven House - with some triangular rooms and secret stairs to the attic ...)



2. Describe this environment (place) in geographical terms.  
E.g. If street - type of houses, door colours, factories,  
river, wide/narrow streets, shops,  
noise....etc.

If countryside - size of fields, rocky barren/flat fertile,  
forested, type of roads, sea or lake...etc.

### Blairatholl -

- A) Small 'hamlet'. Population possibly numbering only hundreds.  
The main roadway and railway to the north of Scotland passed through it. I recall only one or two shops, a few small buildings, a narrow stream running by the side of the house I was born in, fairly flat large fertile fields surrounding.

### B) Stanley -

Slightly larger than Blairatholl. It was off the main thoroughfare though. There was only one main street. The rest were small roads running perpendicularly, and into the main street. There were one or two housing schemes starting towards the outskirts. The school and the police station were possibly the two main 'spots' within the village. Stanley itself was surrounded by fertile, flat farmland (Fife-shire being one of the richest, most fertile counties in Scotland).

- C) Kinross - Small town (larger than Stanley) - possibly 5,000 inhabitants  
..... steeped in Scottish history... Some very old buildings remaining from 17th/18th centuries..... Several new housing schemes on the outskirts..... redevelopment in process of 're-modelling' - too much perhaps?..... Historically significant Loch Leven on the edge of Kinross... links with Mary Queen of Scots....



3. As you recall this (place) environment, do you have any particular visual images of

a. Place/s ☐

b. Object/s ☐

c. Both ☐

If 'place/s', please describe at length, as though you are experiencing it once again.

If 'object/s', please illustrate and describe your dealings in play or otherwise with it, emphasising scale in relation to you at the time.

If 'both', differentiate and describe each as outlined above.

C.

A) Blairtholm: - I vividly recall going with my mother (when age 2) up the hill (one of the hills) outside Blairtholm, to buy eggs from an old woman with hens. - I used to think of this old woman as a witch and enjoyed being 'frightened' at the prospect of visiting this old woman in her cottage. One day I turned a corner at the side of the house and encountered my first goose. It was as tall as I was. I had never seen anything so white before with <sup>dark</sup> eyes at each side of its head and with such a beak. We stood facing each other for some time. I was transfixed by this strange being, gripped by it. This remains my earliest, <sup>most</sup> vivid memory.

B) Stanley: - I recall playing in the shallow space between the police station and the house next door. I wasn't allowed to play on the lawn in front of the police station. We used to steal goodberries from the old lady next door. - I hated school but made good friends there. We used to fight, wrestle and play with water pistols.

C) Kinross: - I recall the wild grass patch behind the police station and the turkeys at one end of it, breaking a window in the police station with a golfball (by mistake) the policeman, 'Tapey Johnnie' (the tramp) who used to check if we knew our arithmetic tables on the way to school, picking potatoes in the field, dark lanes, snuffing comics.....



4. Was there a freedom allowed by this (place) environment?

Yes!

☐

No!

☐

If 'yes', please describe the nature of your freedom, and has it been regained?

If 'no', describe your inward reaction to this. Also, describe your concept at the time of the freedom you were not allowed.

Have you now gained freedom as a sort of back-lash? If so describe it.

- a) Blairhall :- yes! ....the open country spaces.
- b) Stanley : I found Stanley more confining.
- c) Kinross :- Yes! .... playing football, going to the film netiee on Saturday afternoons, going for walks and runs with friends in the country .... 'exploring' things .... going for walks by Loch Leven ....

I find the 'regaining' of freedom through making it and through 'being in nature'.



5. Was there a freedom allowed by your environment (people)?

Yes!

☐

No!

☐

If 'yes', please describe the nature of this freedom distinguishing between, Family: Neighbours: Teachers:...etc.

If 'no', describe your inward reaction, to this, considering emotional reaction, Resentment: Withdrawal: Childish hate:...etc.

- A) Blairatoll; - yes! I was too young to know who 'gave' me this freedom, but I felt free.
- B) Stanley; - I felt more constricted by schoolteachers and family, and possibly 'withdrew' somewhat.
- C) Kinross; - 'Some freedoms', some 'constrictions', by both teachers and family.
- Kinross was slightly bigger and I felt I could get up to more things in and around school with friends. ~~Our~~ Our teacher in primary 6, Mr. Hamlet, told us one day the shoes he was wearing had been all round the world, and proceeded to give us a geography lesson. I hated geography but was transported in imagination by these shoes in front of me having been to <sup>all those</sup> ~~some~~ far off places, ....



6. As you recall this people environment, are there any person/s (that you might have known by sight) that stand out in your mind (other than family)?

Yes!

☐

No!

☐

If 'yes', picture this image in your mind and try to ascertain what you think that person might have been like if you had gotten to know him/her.

b) yes.

A) BLAINTHOLL

THE OLD WOMAN ON THE HILL FROM WHOM WE GOT EGGS, I RECALL HER AS VERY TALL, WITH A LONG NOSE, AND SLIGHTLY STOOPING. I FIND IT HARD TO IMAGINE WHAT SHE'D HAVE BEEN LIKE HAD I GOTTEN TO KNOW HER BETTER (I WAS ONLY 2 YEARS OLD).

B) STAWLEY

MY PRIMARY ONE TEACHER - WHOM I 'HATED'. SHE SEEMED FIRM, FORBIDDANT, AND I SEEMED TO BECOME A CROPPER FAIRLY REGULARLY. I REMEMBER BEING 'AFRAID' OF HER. I DON'T THINK I'D LIKE TO HAVE MADE HER ACQUAINTANCE OUTSIDE SCHOOL.

C) KINKS

MR HAMLET, ANOTHER PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER. HE WAS VERY TALL (6'4") AND LEAN. HE SEEMED TO HAVE TRAVELLED A LOT AND HAD AN ATTITUDE OF LIBERAL, OPEN MINDED ENTHUSIASM. HE SEEMED TO CONVEY AN AIR OF IF I SAW HIM NOW I'D EXCITEMENT AND INTEREST. THANK HIM.



7. As you recall, which do you think is more dominant?

Environment place

☐

Environment people

☐

Same

☐

BOTH, IN INTER RELATION (people and place)

8. Draw a map of your present (place) environment, or (if there are a few) your most lived-in environment.

6) DRAWN WITH WORDS.....

THE ART & DESIGN CENTRE, BELFAST  
and THE TERRACED HOUSE I LIVE AND  
WORK IN (in BELFAST).

THE LATTER IS WHERE I EAT, SLEEP  
AND PREPARE MY ART WORK (ie PLAN  
MY PERFORMANCE WORKS, AND QUITE RECENTLY,  
WHERE I DO MY DRAWINGS).



9. Are you happy in this (place) environment?

Yes!

☐

No!

☐

If 'yes', describe it.

If 'no' describe in detail the sort of place environment that you would hope to live in.

~~AA Design Centre~~  
A) Mostly, YES.

B) Timber House, —

YES, THOUGH IN AN IDEAL SENSE  
I'D LOVE TO LIVE OUT IN THE  
COUNTRY, POSSIBLY IN AN OLD FARMHOUSE  
SURROUNDED BY OPEN FIELDS, ROLLING HILLS,  
WITH A NEARBY STREAM OR LAKE, AND  
WITHIN EASY DRIVING ACCESS TO A LARGE  
TOWN OR CITY.



10. (a) To what extent did you imagine in your childhood?

A LOT.  
I RECALL IMAGINING MYSELF IN EXOTIC  
PARTS OF THE WORLD ENGAGING IN  
BREATH-TAKING EXPLOITS, ALWAYS ESCAPING  
BY THE SKIN OF MY TEETH.

(b) To what extent did you make (create)?  
(Outside or inside of house?) - (More of which?)

I USED TO DRAW A LOT, INDOORS MAINLY.  
THEN I DEVELOPED A NOTION WITH  
MY SISTER AND FRIENDS CALLED  
'THE GREEN HOTEL' WHICH WE  
PLAYED AT AND WITH IN THE COAL  
BUNKER BEHIND THE HOUSE WE LIVED  
IN IN KINROSS.



11. (a) How often do you recall childhood events?  
Tick appropriate box.

(1) Never ☐ (2) Seldom ☒ (3) Regularly ☐  
(4) Often ☐

- (b) Answer if you ticked (3) or (4) what type of situations  
or stimulus causes you to recall?

HOWEVER, SOMETIMES AN AROMA  
COME ACROSS WILL PROJECT ME IMMEDIATELY  
INTO MY CHILDHOOD PAST.



12. Give an account of examples of your work to date under the following headings
- a. relevant to others - but irrelevant to you
  - b. totally relevant to you - (describe this work in detail, with photographs included if possible.
  - c. containing mystique - something about it, you don't understand
  - d. Any lack of continuity - where there might have been a lapse and then the creation of seemingly very different work.

12a.

Some aspects of my undergraduate Fine Art study.

12b.

Drawing and painting from the earliest years.  
In later years, live work - performances.



12c. /...

This includes all the art I've done,  
and cared about.

12d.

I stopped making art (in the generally  
accepted sense) for a year in Vancouver,  
Canada, when I joined a Zen Centre.



13. Describe three of your latest pieces of work in detail with
- a. your description of its visual appearance
  - b. its source of origin
  - c. what you consider its impact to be on the viewer
  - d. what it does for you
  - e. how it differs from much earlier work

N.B. Please include photographs of work so I can relate what you say to them.

Pertaining to question 13, I'll enclose  
information on 1 recent work. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ The information is overleaf.

What it does for me is resolve  
inner and outer conflict, of the kind  
experienced by human beings every day.



spe.  
Los Angeles.

The exhibition consisted of small and medium sized wall pieces, one large free standing sculpture and some drawings. In all the three-dimensional work the artist used rusted steel treated with a matt varnish which gave a surface refinement to the work which was echoed in the excellent technical handling of the material. In several of the smaller wall-pieces a subtle harmony was achieved using steel mesh, wood and worn brick which created fine distinctions of colour and texture. The white walls of the gallery were an essential element of these works, with the shadow shapes reflecting the tension and excitement created by the diagonals and juxtaposed angles of the metal, an excitement which was contrasted, or perhaps emphasised by the artist's control of, and obvious authority over his medium.

The success and dramatic quality of the wall pieces was not, however, reflected in the rather cumbersome and dated free standing sculpture which seemed to lose its identity in its size and which would undoubtedly have been happier in an outdoor situation.

In some of the drawings, notably those using colour, space was organised to create the same tension that emanated from the small sculptures, both having something of the quality of the work of the American painter Franz Kline. Although all the works were not equally successful, this first one man show had a confidence which augurs well for the future.

Jean Duncan

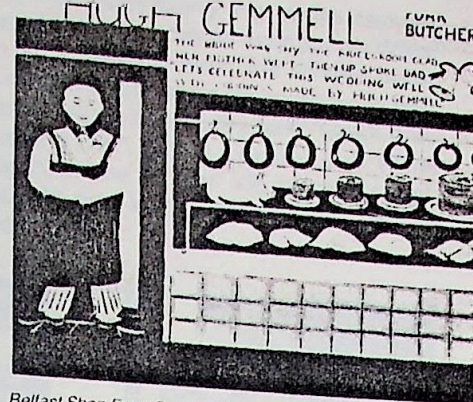
#### KATHLEEN BOWER

Octagon Gallery, Belfast  
1 December - 23 December 1981

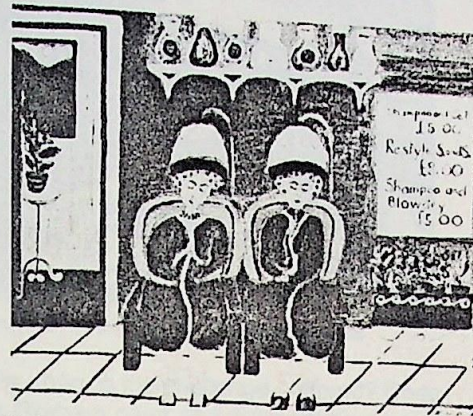
Breton said of naive artists: What has always passionately summoned me in such works as theirs, is their explosive disdain, their self generation entirely outside the cultural line assigned to our epoch.

Juan O'Gorman, the Mexican architect who was responsible for the design of the largest external mural of modern times, expressed his admiration of the work of naive artists: These breaths of freshness and pure creation, where the imagination is applied for the expression of freedom, are a wonderful relief in the stagnant academic atmosphere of our pretentious commercial modern times, and reveal the aspiration of liberty of the common people, their love of decorative free expression.

These two quotes refer particularly to the 'Palais Ideal' of postman Ferdinand Cheval at Hauterives, near Lyons, which occupied him for almost half of his life, the 'Chateaux des Assiettes' (Chateaux of Broken Plates) at Chartres by Raymond Isidor and the extraordinary 'Watts Towers' built by an un-



Belfast Shop Front Series, oil on canvas



Belfast Shop Front Series, oil on canvas

trained tile-setter, Simone Rodilla just outside Los Angeles over a period of 33 years. These men were naive artists in the truest sense in that they created works of great individuality using only the materials to hand. Beside them Kathleen Bower relates as a very distant cousin. Where she is lacking is in the use of her imagination - she is tied too tightly to her subject matter. And it is for that very reason that she succeeds as a social commentator. We see Belfast shop fronts and windows as she sees them. A naive artist, raw in technique she might be, but she sees with an eye capable of appropriate editing - particularly in her straight-on elevational records. Where the paintings are held together by the frame of a window or the architectural structure of a shop front, as in 'Mr Prichard, Chemist, Lisburn Road', they are like little painted mosaics of colour, highly decorative, very formal. Where her work fails is when she breaks with the two dimensional elevation and introduces complicated rhythms. Naive artists, exemplify an almost universal response towards colour and decoration and find expression with a directness and individuality which is fresh and unfettered.

Anne Davey Orr

#### ALISTAIR MacLENNAN

Crescent Resource Centre, Belfast  
5 December 1981

"We've been educated to analyse relationships within arbitrary fragments of whole systems, but not to experience underlying unities within these. We conceive of freedom as a relative condition dependent on positions within political, social and

economic structures.

This freedom is not real.

With the world at our feet we drown in a puddle. True freedom is unconditioned and unconditional. The fastest runner leaves no trace."

This statement, written by Alistair MacLennan two years ago, gives an indication of one of the most dominant concerns within his work - the desire to generate some degree of mental, or even 'spiritual', freedom through creative activity. His performance work has become deservedly well-known in Ireland (and elsewhere) over the past few years, but remains, for most people, a private and difficult type of work to come to terms with. When he enters into one of his 12-hour or 24-hour walking, standing, writing and/or arranging things pieces it would appear that he attempts to focus his entire awareness on the activity at hand, in a demanding and even exhausting ritual situation, whereby he re-constitutes his freedom through his art activity.

There is no doubt, given the context and content of most of his pieces, that he can attain a real and valuable sense of freedom during his performances, but this freedom is necessarily as relative as any other, and seems to depend largely on the transference of real-life feelings and desires into symbolic action, or symbolic gestures. In his 12-hour "Hanging" piece at the Crescent Centre he appears to have made a more public gesture than usual by using his old clothes, the agents of his erstwhile public persona, as the central pivot of his performance.



Each individual item of clothing was attached (about head-height) to a separate white string tied to the rafters, and arranged within a rectangular framework containing eight rectangular units. Below the clothes (mostly conventional-type clothes like sports jackets, shirts and ties) hung black polythene bags which brushed against the floor. The huge gym in which the performance took place was in semi-darkness, with spotlights illuminating the central rectangle. These were later switched off and white candles were lit around the perimeters of the rectangular units.



...seem to be an exercise on West-  
ern art's greatest icon, the female nude.  
Romantic undertones are mirrored in sev-  
eral drawings and particularly "Open Win-  
dow and Cat": cat on a quilted bed; book,  
closed, on the window sill; mirrored chest;  
a single tree in a garden framed by that  
open window.



Carol Graham, *Open Window and Cat*, oil on canvas

Why, then, is the challenge offered? Does Ms Graham paint and draw simply as she sees, immediately and without reasoning, which is one definition of intuition. What captures her vision is instructive to a point, but to disentangle compositional problems so painstakingly in pencil, then repeat the exercise in oil, must surely destroy that immediacy of intuition.

Whether deliberate or coincidental, Basil Blackshaw's exhibition fell into two groups. The first, hanging mainly along one wall, was a collection of twenty small drawings, principally wash and pencil, under the banner "Untitled Images". With the exception of two horse studies all were quickly-done pieces often on children's exercise book paper. The one common element was the speed and spontaneity of working. Very broad or large brush-strokes so translucent on paper with dried areas that left a crust and egg-speckling to allow contrasts of the surface texture. And very quick pencil lines posing as grass and tree leaves with tiny references to colour - yellow and green. Hints of the arboreal and architectural casually outlined by two or three

Basil Blackshaw, *'House at Rostrevor'*, oil on canvas



strokes, obviated those exercises in pattern line and texture and revealed the landscape derived starting point. And yet the impulsiveness was so often subjugated by his phlegmatic palette, a point not lost in the other group of paintings, done in oil.

The other twenty-two displayed a number of subjects in a number of painterly styles, which points to a handicap in the exhibition. As a stranger to Mr Blackshaw's work, the absence of a chronological guide was a little frustrating. The variety of subjects included portraits of men and cockerels, one of a dog, landscapes and gardens, horses with riders. And like the smaller wash drawings, some of the oils were done in very thin paint, strokes quickly done, as in "Green Landscape Dunadry" with a modestly described house tucked away discretely, "Cavehill" and "Frankie Brennan, Ardara". Against these were influences of post-impressionism; the portrait of "Brian Friel" with a pensive modelling of browns with patches of yellow left a maleable form in two-dimensions.

The single exception to his narrow palette, "House at Rostrevor", is much brighter and lighter with small quick brush-strokes building up the surrounding landscape on only one quarter of the canvas, which is otherwise almost white. Three trees stand thin and tall about an equally sparse number of blue lines which outline the house itself.

Perhaps the most interesting are the two cockerel paintings, particularly "Heany's Black". Again a lot of thin paint, with just a few colours - a black bird, light blue shadows in a white ring, and a grey strip right at the very top.

On the whole Mr Blackshaw's exhibition was somewhat low key. Whatever drama was possible with experiment, configuration was still paramount.

Stefan Klima

## NEW WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY ART AND MUSIC — PART I

Orchard Gallery, Derry  
11 December - 29 December 1981

New Works of Contemporary Art and Music, a show compiled by Graeme Murray and first exhibited in the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh in April and May 1981, is now showing in two parts at the Orchard Gallery in Derry. Part I features artists and musicians who have been associated with the Graeme Murray Gallery in Edinburgh since its beginning in 1976. These fourteen artists were invited to suggest another artist who would like to show and these invited artists comprise Part II.

The intention behind the show was to expose an area of work, which hitherto had infrequently been seen in Scotland and yet had regularly been exhibited in other centres of culture in the world. With such a

MacLennan's taut sense of visual order contributed a great deal to the piece, and despite the theatricality of the arrangement, there was never the feeling of a potentially embarrassing public "spectacle". Apparently the artist intended to give away or throw away his old clothes after the performance - another symbolic gesture but one which, in the context of this work, reinforced the impression that MacLennan is one of the few artists around, who is genuinely concerned with integrating his art and his everyday existence. It will be interesting to see if his personal 'metaphysical' approach is sustained in its present form, if indeed he is now introducing more public or social referents into his work.

Micky Donnelly

## CAROL GRAHAM BASIL BLACKSHAW

Arts Council Gallery, Belfast  
10 December - 31 December 1981

When a painter begins to explain-why they work I hesitate. Ms Graham tells us 'I paint intuitively and wish my work to both challenge and seduce the viewer'. This viewer was not seduced.

With the exception of the "Garden Interior" oil and the two interior and one exterior drawings, the other seven drawings can be viewed as extremely tight studies, almost assiduously copied on the other four canvases. Undoubtedly one can be seduced by technique, wherewith McLuhan's epithet of medium and message, if that is the described seduction. And one must admire the industry in describing each blade of grass or an entire equestrian epidermis. Yet, on a wider perspective moments are fixed, and at times, frozen, in time and space, and in the subconscious; the fated corollary is a subcutaneous emotion.

"Pointillistic Nude" is the only departure from the careful brushwork of the oil paintings, but only in technique. The myriad of



14. Accompanying this questionnaire there are four photocopies.
1. A lady opening a door
  2. A scene in a ploughing field
  3. Boy and violin
  4. Abstract composition

Please write a story on each of these.

1. EVERY ENTERING IS ANOTHER CLOSING.
2. IN HUMAN TERMS TRIANGLES CAN MAKE FOR JEALOUSY.
3. FRIEND OR FOE?
4. SOMEONE'S 'HERE' IS ANOTHER'S 'THERE'.

15. Write as much as you can about the man in the accompanying photograph, the type of person you think he might be, age, nationality etc.

IRISH —  
EARLY 20'S —  
REFLECTIVE —  
A THINKER —  
FOND OF IRISH TRADITIONS —  
A ROMANTIC —

Thank you for seeing it through, and I hope it did not take up too much of your time. If you have any additional comments you wish to make about the questionnaire I would be delighted to accept them.

Yours sincerely,

Sean O Monachain

*Sean O Monachain.*





















## Questionnaire

### APPENDIX III

For this questionnaire I would ask you to be as candid and honest as possible. There are no points I have not covered, and you may mention in your report any other points that you think are important. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Thank you.



CHILDHOOD /

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

## Questionnaire

FORM B

NAME NOEL SHERIDAN AGE 44

OCCUPATION ARTIST SEX M

DATE 26/2/82

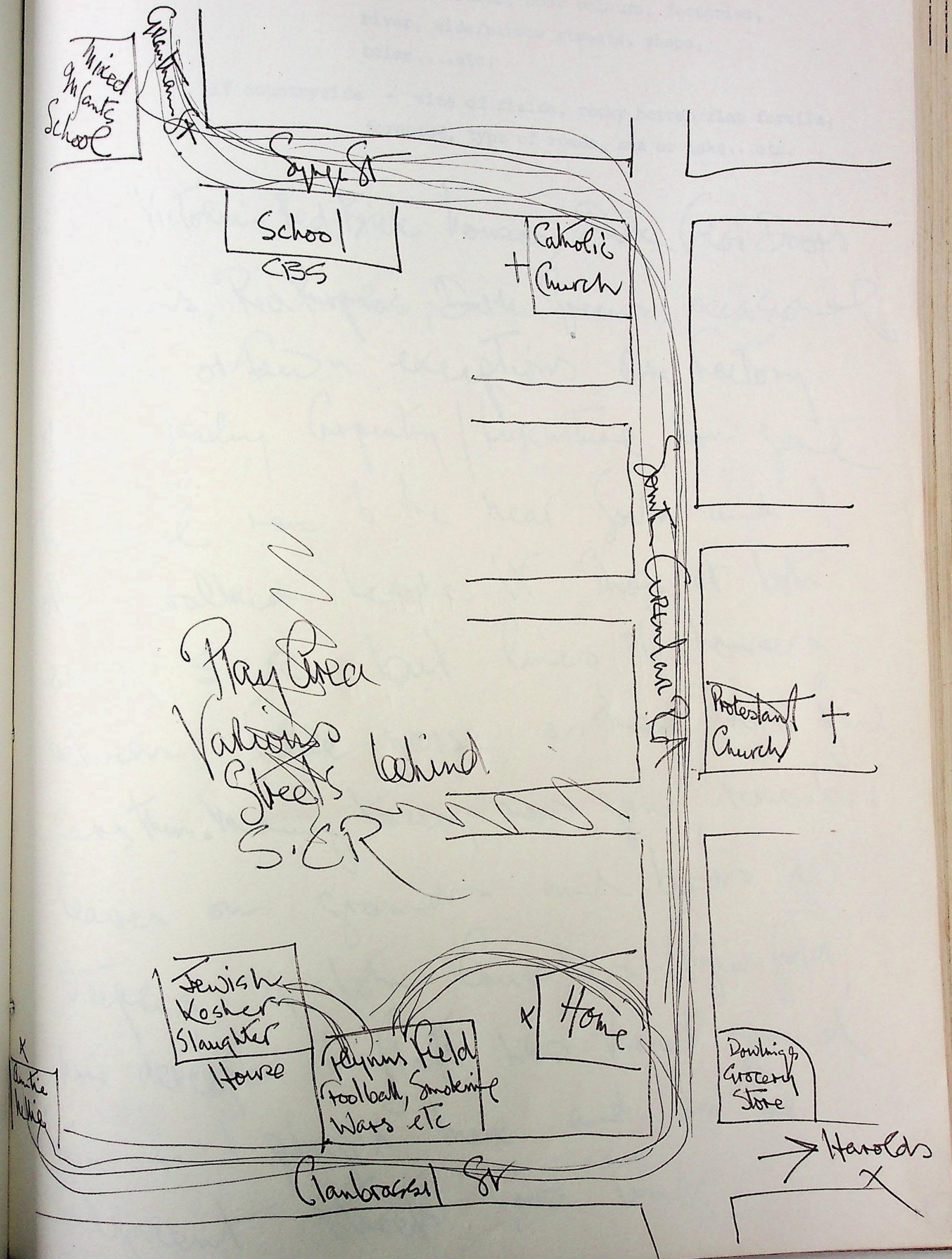
### NOTE:

For this questionnaire I would ask you to be as self-analytical as possible. There may be points I have not covered, that you may consider relevant, and your elaboration of these would be appreciated.

Thank you.



1. Allowing 10 minutes only, draw a map of your childhood environment.





2. Describe this environment (place) in geographical terms.  
E.g. If street - type of houses, door colours, factories,  
river, wide/narrow streets, shops,  
noise....etc.

If countryside - size of fields, rocky barren/flat fertile,  
forested, type of roads, sea or lake...etc.

Victorian Red Brick houses, Dark Colored Doors  
Browns, Red Purples; Dark Greens; occasional  
White or Tan exceptions. One factory  
Horn & Bailey Carpentry / Furniture now gone.  
The Canal ran to the near South and I  
often walked beside it. Shops at both  
ends of SCR but lines of houses  
between. Little noise as there were few  
cars then. Many trees, now gone, remember  
leaves on ground and birds in  
steeple of both Churches. Flynn's field  
now developed in flats, was vacant ground  
then & I played there and in the  
adjacent streets. Good times



3. As you recall this (place) environment, do you have any particular visual images of

- a. Place/s ☒
- b. Object/s ☒
- c. Both ☒

If 'place/s', please describe at length, as though you are experiencing it once again.

If 'object/s', please illustrate and describe your dealings in play or otherwise with it, emphasising scale in relation to you at the time.

If 'both', differentiate and describe each as outlined above.

attach text I wrote about Grantham & school  
as I remember it.



4.

Was there a freedom allowed by this (place) environment?

Yes!

☒

No!

☐

If 'yes', please describe the nature of your freedom, and has it been regained?

If 'no', describe your inward reaction to this. Also, describe your concept at the time of the freedom you were not allowed. Have you now gained freedom as a sort of back-lash? If so describe it.

It was very free. Yes it still feels ok  
but both myself and the place  
have changed. But it equals  
out.



5. Was there a freedom allowed by your environment (people)?

Yes!

☒

No!

☐

If 'yes', please describe the nature of this freedom distinguishing between, Family: Neighbours: Teachers:...etc.

If 'no', describe your inward reaction, to this, considering emotional reaction, Resentment: Withdrawal: Childish hate:...etc.

Family / Neighbours

OK

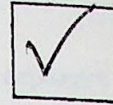
Teachers : Less / but naturally

as I was getting an education and that was part on the enculturation contract.

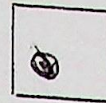


6. As you recall this people environment, are there any person/s (that you might have known by sight) that stand out in your mind (other than family)?

Yes!



No!



If 'yes', picture this image in your mind and try to ascertain what you think that person might have been like if you had gotten to know him/her.

"Man's Voice" the newspaper seller  
always interested me but I'm sure  
it was better to watch him than  
get to know him better. I preferred  
my mental image of him

---



7. As you recall, which do you think is more dominant?

Environment place

☒

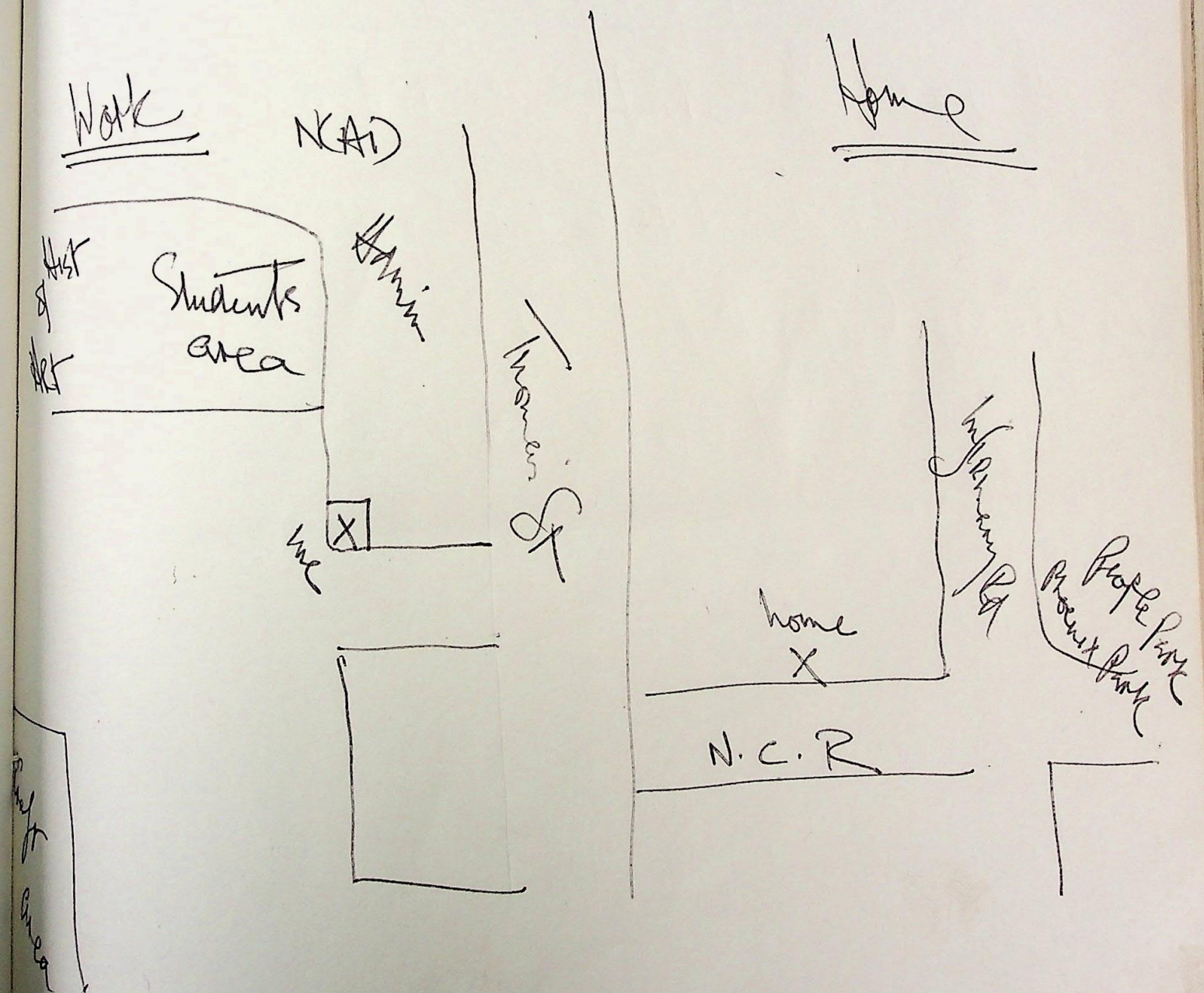
Environment people

☐

Same

☐

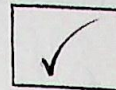
8. Draw a map of your present (place) environment, or (if there are a few) your most lived-in environment.



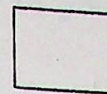


9. Are you happy in this (place) environment?

Yes!



No!



If 'yes', describe it.

If 'no' describe in detail the sort of place environment that you would hope to live in.

It's with good people in both places  
and that makes it work.



10. (a) To what extent did you imagine in your childhood?

a bit

(b) To what extent did you make (create)?

(Outside or inside of house?) - (More of which?)

Quite a bit  
more outside.



11. (a) How often do you recall childhood events?  
Tick appropriate box.

(1) Never ☐ (2) Seldom ☐ (3) Regularly ☐  
(4) Often ☒

(b) Answer if you ticked (3) or (4) what type of situations  
or stimulus causes you to recall?

I'll have to pass on this given the time available  
but refer you to the Spantman & text.



12. Give an account of examples of your work to date under the following headings
- a. relevant to others - but irrelevant to you
  - b. totally relevant to you - (describe this work in detail, with photographs included if possible.
  - c. containing mystique - something about it, you don't understand
  - ✓ d. Any lack of continuity - where there might have been a lapse and then the creation of seemingly very different work.

12a.

12b.



12c. /...

12d.

This characterises all of my work  
and is fundamental to making art  
in my view.

(no documentation as I haven't unpack  
this yet?)



13. Describe three of your latest pieces of work in detail with
- your description of its visual appearance
  - its source of origin
  - what you consider its impact to be on the viewer
  - what it does for you
  - how it differs from much earlier work

N.B. Please include photographs of work so I can relate what you say to them.

My documentation is still in storage.

---



14.

Accompanying this questionnaire there are four photocopies.

1. A lady opening a door
2. A scene in a ploughing field
3. Boy and violin
4. Abstract composition

Please write a story on each of these.

I did titles ~~OK~~? but they move it closer  
to story.

15.

Write as much as you can about the man in the accompanying photograph, the type of person you think he might be, age, nationality etc.

Do you mean your photo?

Looks bright and generous but may expect too much from others e.g. filling in long forms etc. Also concerned about others views which is OK as long as he decreases this later. 3 good teeth at least. A Winner!

Thank you for seeing it through, and I hope it did not take up too much of your time. If you have any additional comments you wish to make about the questionnaire I would be delighted to accept them.

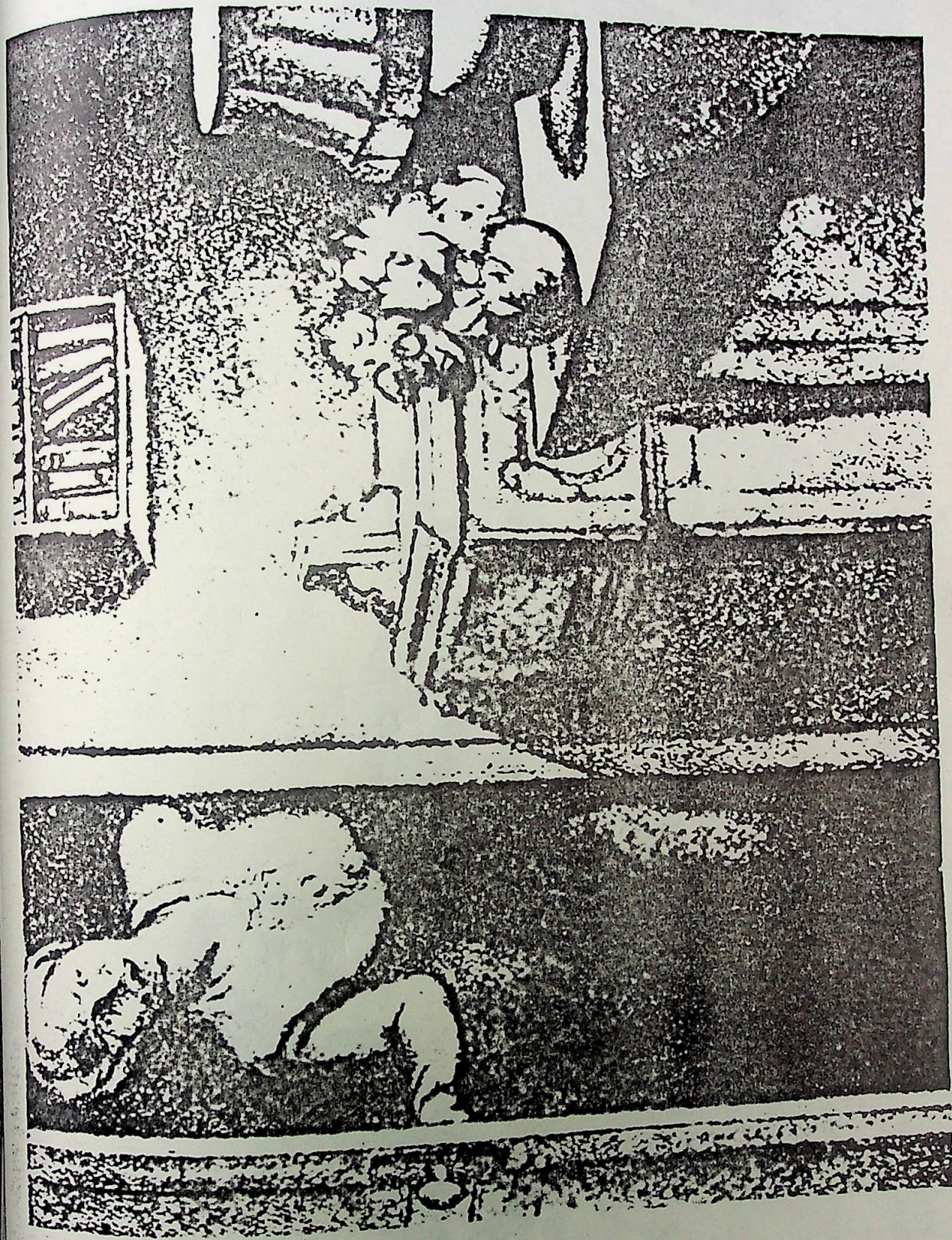
Yours sincerely,

Sean O Monachain

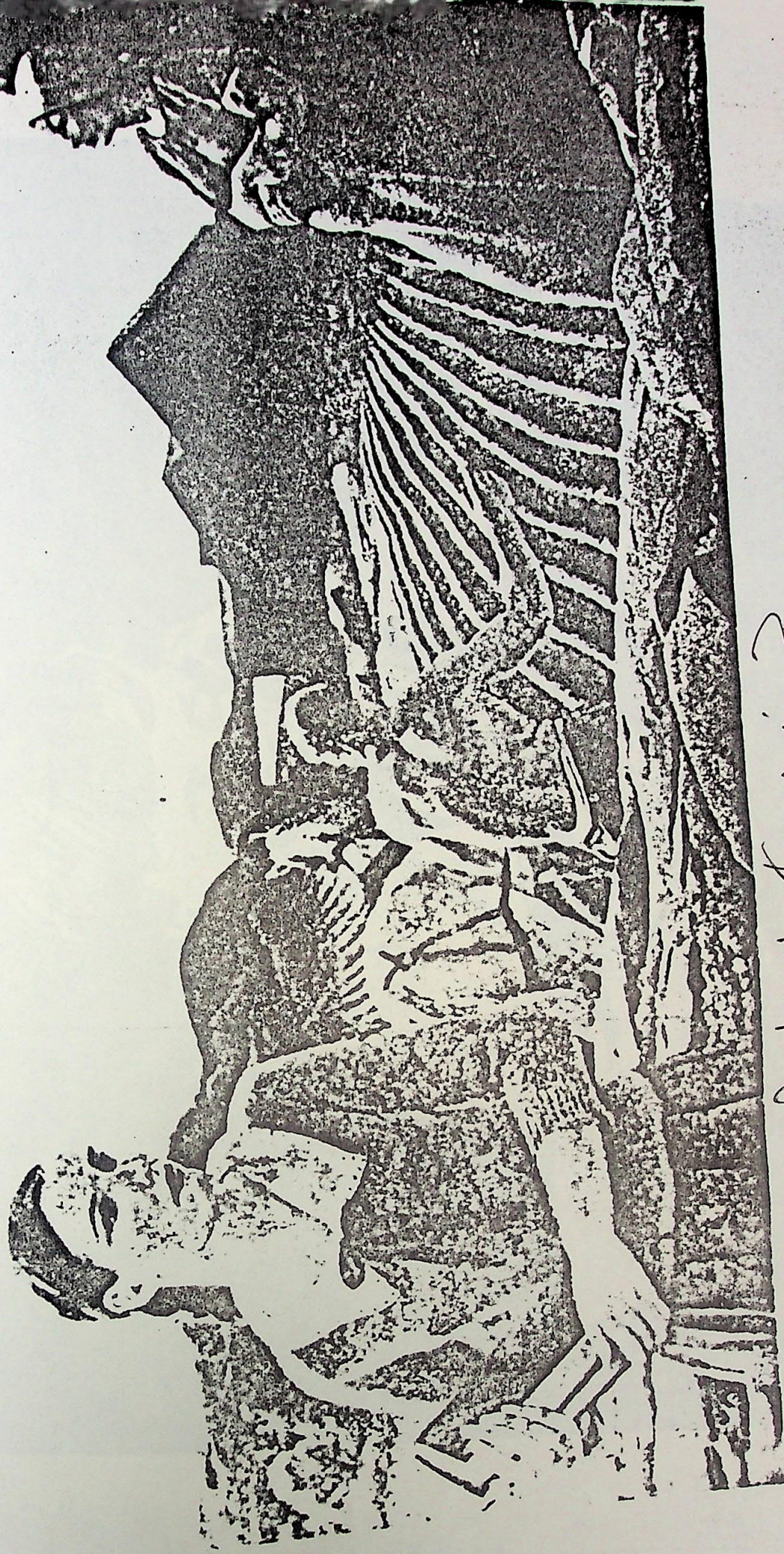
Sean O Monachain.



Is it OK to come in ?







Is it OK to go in?

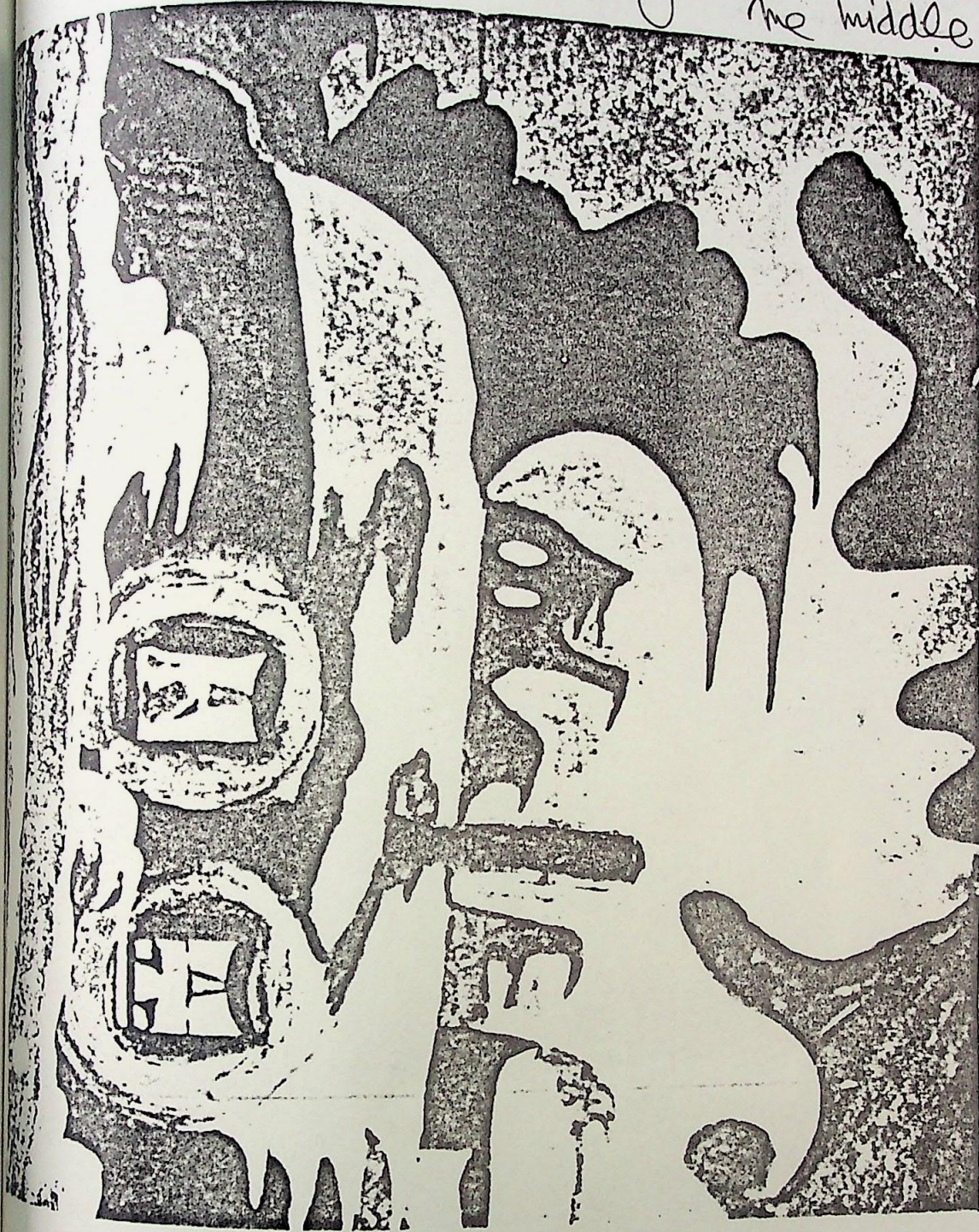


How can I get into it?





The in and out spaces are lost  
in this bad copy. How do you get onto  
the middle space





APPENDIX IV  
-----



CHILDHOOD

/

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

# Questionnaire

FORM B

NAME ROISIN O'SHEA

AGE 21 26.3.60

OCCUPATION STUDENT

SEX Female

FINE ART / NCAD

DATE 3rd 4.82

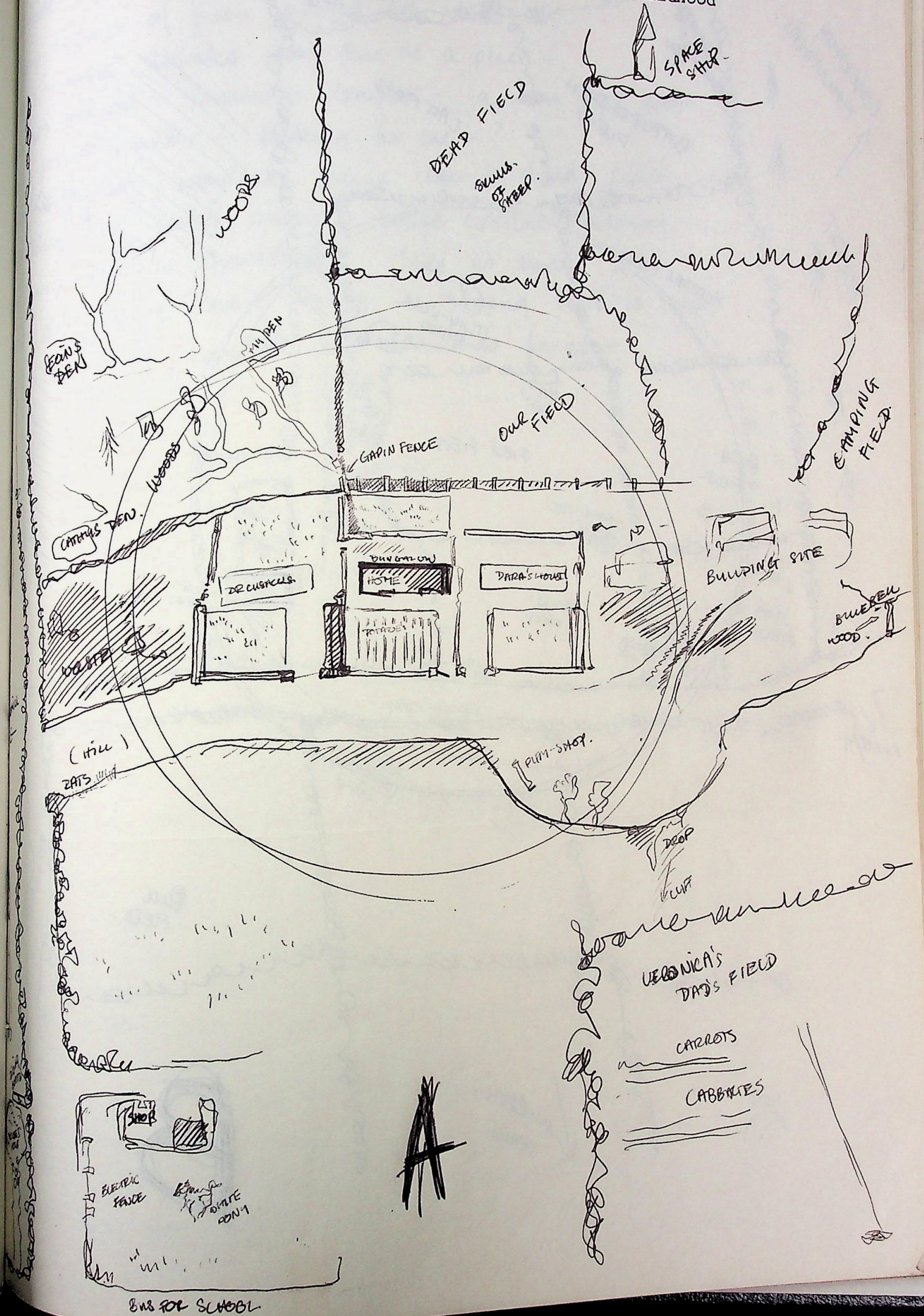
## NOTE:

For this questionnaire I would ask you to be as self-analytical as possible. There may be points I have not covered, that you may consider relevant, and your elaboration of these would be appreciated.

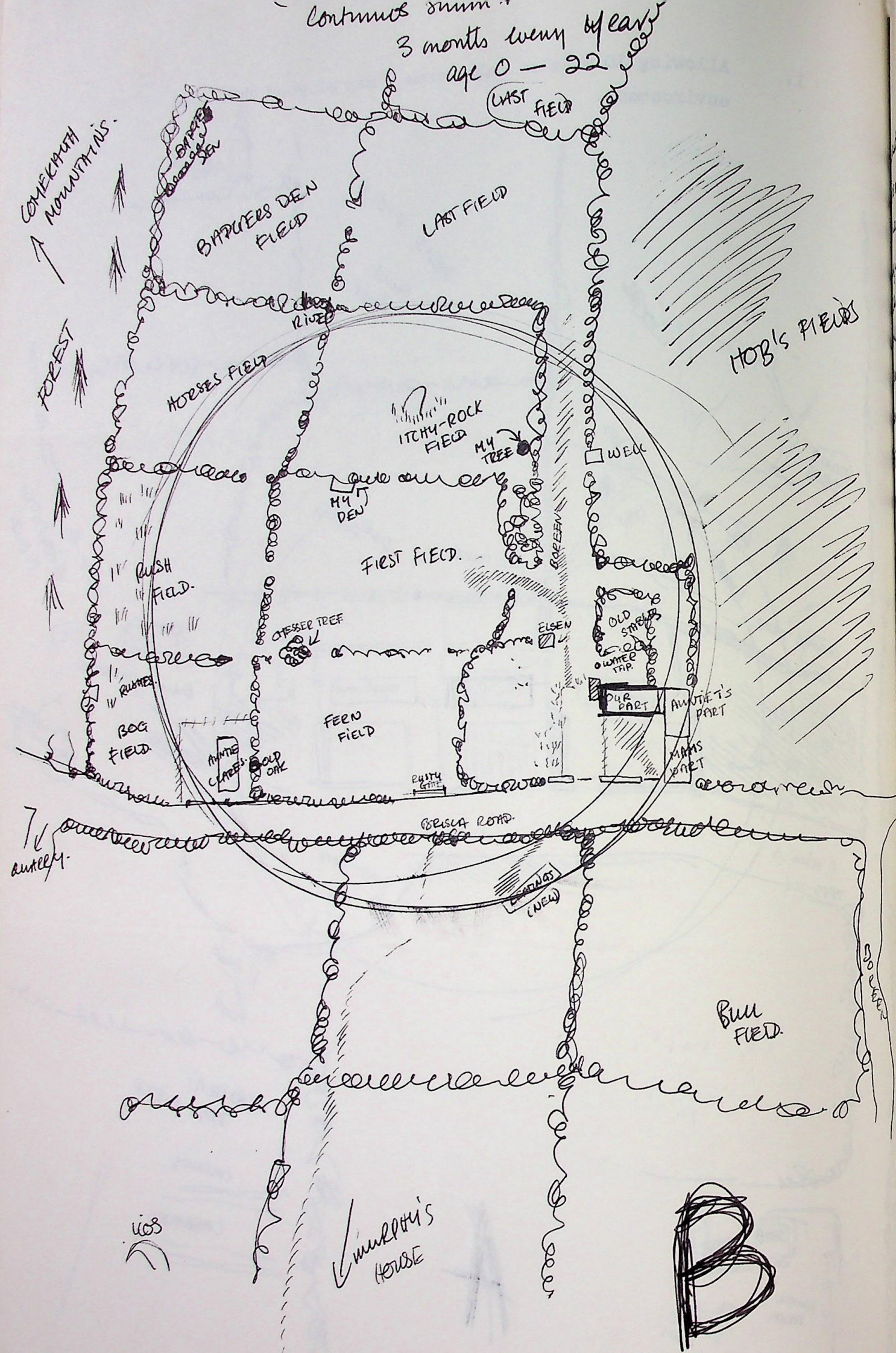
Thank you.



1. Allowing 10 minutes only, draw a map of your childhood environment.







Field -  
expansive of green littered with skulls etc...  
humans? Activated great fear as a place -  
reamed - persecution complex - a man once seen  
possible hunter - looking for me - ?  
attraction / repulsion being close to dead field.  
ship two fields away - large conical building -  
lives in spaceship? Make us away. -  
the enemy leave traps - string tied to trees  
holes dug, covered with branches ferns -



3. As you recall this (place) environment, do you have any particular visual images of

- a. Place/s ☒  
b. Object/s ☒  
c. Both ☒

If 'place/s', please describe at length, as though you are experiencing it once again.

If 'object/s', please illustrate and describe your dealings in play or otherwise with it, emphasising scale in relation to you at the time.

If 'both', differentiate and describe each as outlined above.

ENVIRONMENT

leaving the back garden, squeezing through the gap in the fence - sometimes cows would come through. Crawl over the stones to the left and drop to the mud path below - knees cover my head. - The cats scatter, 'funny' gets wilder every day. I run, barefoot, pick up a stick, beat the nettles, left - right. Get scratched climbing my tree, covered with wig - leaves disappear below me, I see as far as the windmill, back as far as the space-ship, down to where the white pony gallops. I use my stick as a horse to cover more ground as I gallop along the mud trail, my stick is sometimes 3', sometimes less, usually I have to whip my horse as I go - sapling in hand. Back to the night crawl through hole in hedge, banked-wine snags my t-shirt, stick used as bashing instrument again, I reach my den. - Repair any damage Dads gang may have done. Den is made from low bushes adjoining, floor of gathered ferns camouflaged with leaves/branches at the front, no-one should know. Dot-leaves on the floor, rub away the pain of stinging nettles. - Time to make dinner - gather red-bell from trees, primroses from trail, bluebells beside the tree, mush together on my flat stone, using my rolling pin - small oval stone. Hear Cathy and Mary, we go to dead field. - Crawling together along the hedge, put on shoes, afraid - the dead field is ahead, we watch together cautiously, never walk in dead field - how many bones today? - are the dogs here? - the man? See the space ship? - we must leave never stay long. We all ride our horses down to the rats...

MY DEN - two bushes, Approx 3' gap between & 3' gap to the ground. (my age 5)  
utensils, flat rock, same size as dinner plate, bread board. Rolling pin - approx 5' long - use with one hand. Leaves (sometimes dotleaves) used as plates to serve food - sometimes mud pies - sometimes bennies.

4. Was there a freedom allowed by this (place) environment?  
Yes! ☒ No! ☐

If 'yes', please describe the nature of your freedom, and has it been regained?

If 'no', describe your inward reaction to this. Also, describe your concept at the time of the freedom you were not allowed. Have you now gained freedom as a sort of back-lash? If so describe it.

(A)  
able to walk from home/house to green fields, intriguing woods, lands of adventures waited every day. River, swimming freely. - home from school, coming through bluebell woods, being for dinner. Spending hours alone imagination conjuring up believe existences, make-believe people. Didn't have friends, and brothers belonged to 'gangs'. Had lonely freedom.

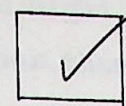
have always had the same freedom, whenever I need to I come to our summer environment and behave in exactly the same way, spending hours on my own - revisiting childhood/adult moods, dens, ..... relieving any tensions that may build up the city.

(B)  
Childhood was spent in Cork city from 1-5 then from 5-8 in Wex. 8-12 in Rathgar in Dublin - But continuously we went to Waterford 3 months every summer. In Kilrossanty outside Dungarvan. We have our own house (400 yrs old) + 15 acres of land, divided between 23 of my cousins every summer. In ways more freedom was experienced during these months than at any other period of my childhood. (Alternative map drawn as childhood environment).

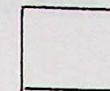


5. Was there a freedom allowed by your environment (people)?

Yes!



No!



If 'yes', please describe the nature of this freedom distinguishing between, Family: Neighbours: Teachers:...etc.

If 'no', describe your inward reaction, to this, considering emotional reaction, Resentment: Withdrawal: Childish hate:...etc.

### ENVIRONMENT A.

CITY.) (MONTCLAIR.) sealed off - green - quiet residential.  
RIDEWAY. all children play in the green - mothers took it in turn to watch. Relative freedom.

ARNEY.) (SHARNORK) 3 Houses, fields all-round.  
DRIVE school had 2 classrooms - knew everyone.  
school seemed very short, 1 teacher for two classes.  
walked home from school - usually through woods  
play time - 3 - 7, seemed very long - usually roamed quite far.  
Saturdays & Sundays roam all day - memories of being lost for hours parents had to find me. Neighbours, only 1. very relaxed.

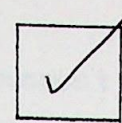
### ENVIRONMENT B.

Allowed complete freedom from 9 in the morning until 10 at night or later - if wanted, systems of whistles arranged. Our family - 3 blasts on the whistle - Auntie Clare's kids 1 blast, Auntie T's 2 blasts -  
if travelling far, notice must be given of whereabouts -  
usually went to neighbouring farms, help with livestock or hay-making

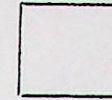


6. As you recall this people environment, are there any person/s (that you might have known by sight) that stand out in your mind (other than family)?

Yes!



No!



If 'yes', picture this image in your mind and try to ascertain what you think that person might have been like if you had gotten to know him/her.

ENVIRONMENT (A.)

Cork - Mental Boy - blonde hair.  
was very afraid to associate with him  
Am completely unsure as to the result of knowing him.

ENVIRONMENT (B)

No strange faces - all faces were known / familiar to me, all families were known.  
Had no desire to have friendships  
so people had little or no effect on my childhood past-times.



7. As you recall, which do you think is more dominant?

Environment place

☒

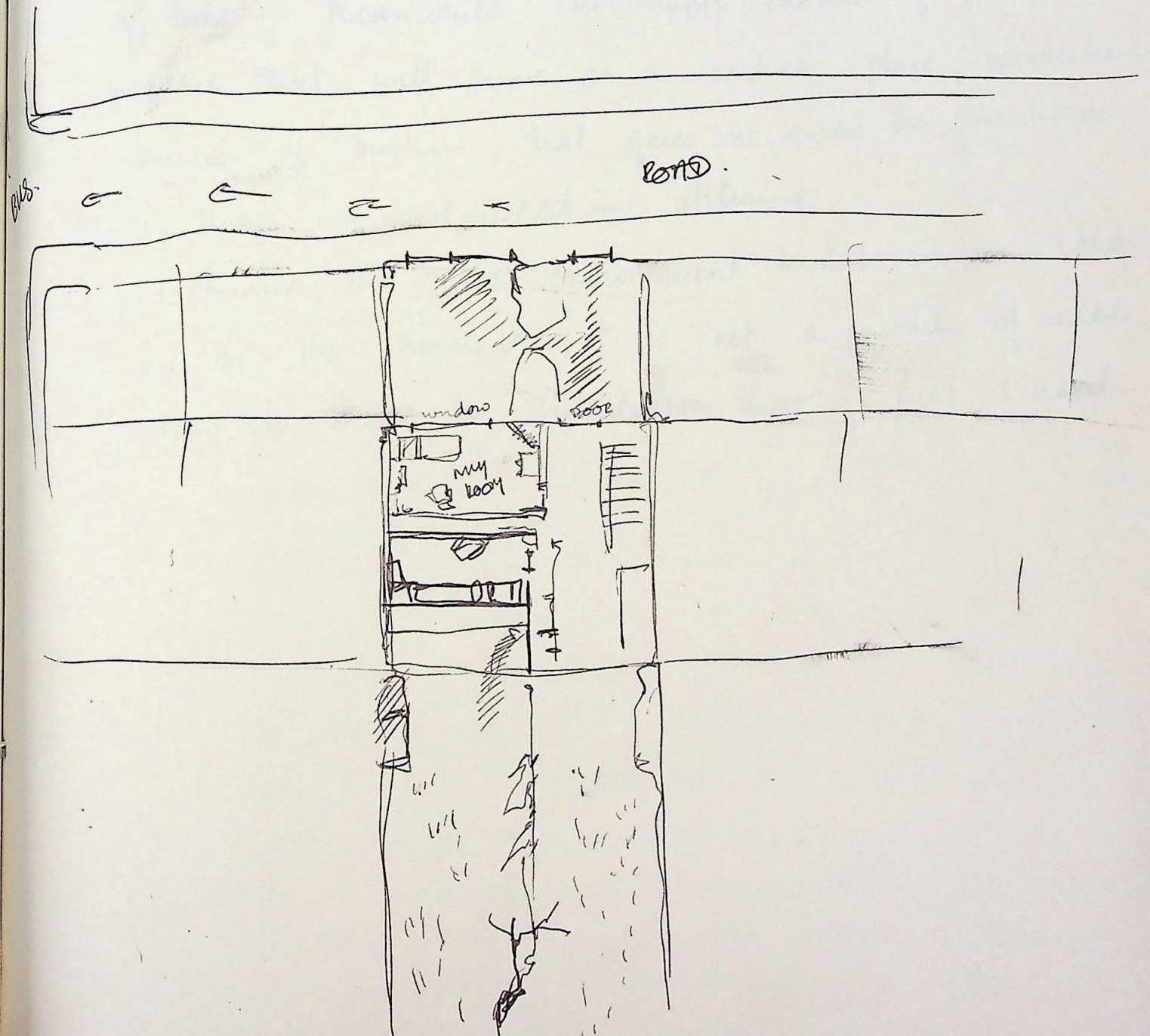
Environment people

☐

Same

☐

8. Draw a map of your present (place) environment, or (if there are a few) your most lived-in environment.





9. Are you happy in this (place) environment?

Yes!

☐

No!

☒

If 'yes', describe it.

If 'no' describe in detail the sort of place environment that you would hope to live in.

hope to eventually return to environment (B) for longer periods of time - Meanwhile I'm happy enough if I could find someplace that will serve as a nesting place, somewhere in the suburbs of Dublin, that gives me access to facilities and people that I'm interested in utilising. I feel that finding the right environment to live in is a long way off as at the moment, it is not a priority of mine. More important is access to stimulation that I feel I need.



10. (a) To what extent did you imagine in your childhood?

100% - Since I had no friends (cherie? or not.)

I spent all my childhood time on my own.

My sisters and brother were otherwise occupied -

so I imagined full-time on my own. I was part of epic tales of drama, carrying important messages between families, always being pursued by the 'baddies' - usually (wasps) - I was completely content living in such a dream-world. I suffered from black-outs up to the age of 8 - common in children who just want to switch off - overloading their minds or whatever.

(b) To what extent did you make (create)?

(Outside or inside of house?) - (More of which?)

Outside - I made dens where-ever I went, always bashing out hollows and creating my living-space then hiding it.

I made castles from mud & pulled the wings off butterflies, they would be my live people and not fly away. I constantly prepared food, from whatever was handiest, <sup>(mud etc...)</sup> - Sometimes I made garments to wear from leaves, branches, ferns, - necklaces of daisies, head adornments, fashioned walking sticks cutting, and peeling away the bark; - hunting spears and bows and arrows -

↓ from bamboo

I always collected stones, & used to wash them, put perfume on and store them.

Inside - I adored fashioning things with my hands from clay, plasticine anything - painting on any surface -

Used to fashion dough into people or shapes and my mother would like it. - Enjoyed creating environments for my dolls, toys to cut in, it usually took in the whole room, beds becoming huge mountains with pillows bunched beneath the blankets, living spaces fashioned from scarves into tents - bundle beds as sky scrapers. etc...



TITLE/SUBJECT/DESCRIPTION OF ITEM															
AUTHOR/PRODUCER OF ITEM															
PUBLISHER								DATE PUBLISHED							
HELD CENTRE				UNIT OF INSTRUCTION				Accession number							
LOCATION OTHER								BOOKS:- DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION							
								DECIMAL No. ON CARD							
NOTES															
DATE TO WHICH ITEMS REFER															

STILL MOVING SMALL LARGE PERIODICAL STATISTICAL DISCURSIVE REPORTS BIOGRAPHICAL VISUAL SOUND WRITTEN ACTUAL MAT. B C A D 2000  
 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P  
 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

SUBJECT INDEX  
 ART  
 Education

11. (a) How often do you recall childhood events?  
Tick appropriate box.

- (1) Never ☐ (2) Seldom ☐ (3) Regularly ☐  
 (4) Often ☒

(b) Answer if you ticked (3) or (4) what type of situations or stimulus causes you to recall?

constantly recall childhood events - usually when in conversation with the family - their memories often trigger mine to remember more. Often when I'm thinking quietly I find myself not remembering childhood events, tracing over them again, quite spontaneously. If I'm in the actual environment, the memories flood in, from the visual stimulation.



12. Give an account of examples of your work to date under the following headings

- a. relevant to others - but irrelevant to you
- b. totally relevant to you - (describe this work in detail, with photographs included if possible.
- c. containing mystique - something about it, you don't understand
- d. Any lack of continuity - where there might have been a lapse and then the creation of seemingly very different work.

12a.

12b. 'LIVE WEEK'

Researching for a piece that I was to produce for the 'live art' week, I decided on a course of action, that became a piece of work 'totally relevant' to me - intended to visually show my menstruation from the age of 11 - 21 but couldn't find an way. For five days I had myself locked in a room. I reduced outside interference by taking. I used no tampon or towel, wore no clothes. I wanted to observe / record period without interfering with it as I would normally do. - The five days became the strongest piece of work I'd done. I had documentation in the form of writing, drawings, photographs taken on self-timer; I thought solidly during those days assessing anything and everything that came into my head, and then throwing those away and sticking down to more important crisis in the piece of work coming up. Those days have remained an important piece of work to me; the final live piece was also relevant, 'information included with this questionnaire.



12c. /.. "M202"

I produced a black and white video in first year, that I find quite obscure now and find it hard to understand why I did it that way. When I made the video I was trying to find a starting point as well as ascertaining myself over some stupid reactions to the 'femaleness' of work I was doing. I had become a 'female' target. — The piece was a short strip-tease with 'cabaret' (the film) connotations mixed up with aggressive feelings about nazism, camps etc. The project was entitled "a day in the life of ...." I had just finished reading a day in the life of Ivan Ilovich. So I decided to do a strip-tease, "as in a female form of degradation", as I knew something about. I was mixed up about my feelings about the Nazi element, because I've read Nazi books for as long as I remember, my father always having had a morbid fascination with that era, talking to us often on the subject. My film was something to do with "a day in the life of prostitute in a Russian labour camp" — with 2 SHills from Auschwitz

12d.

I had a huge lapse, mainly to do with an event in my personal life, that totally disrupted my way of thinking on the type of work I was doing. This lapse destroyed my 'wanting to make | do' anything as I felt nothing I did could be as strong as what had happened. My work now may seem to an outsider to be different, but in fact it is continuing, but in a more public way, having half solved my dilemma between public/private



13. Describe three of your latest pieces of work in detail with
- a. your description of its visual appearance
  - b. its source of origin
  - c. what you consider its impact to be on the viewer
  - d. what it does for you
  - e. how it differs from much earlier work

N.B. Please include photographs of work so I can relate what you say to them.



14. Accompanying this questionnaire there are four photocopies.
1. A lady opening a door
  2. A scene in a ploughing field
  3. Boy and violin
  4. Abstract composition
- Please write a story on each of these.

15. Write as much as you can about the man in the accompanying photograph, the type of person you think he might be, age, nationality etc.

Age - approx 23.  
Nationality - Irish.

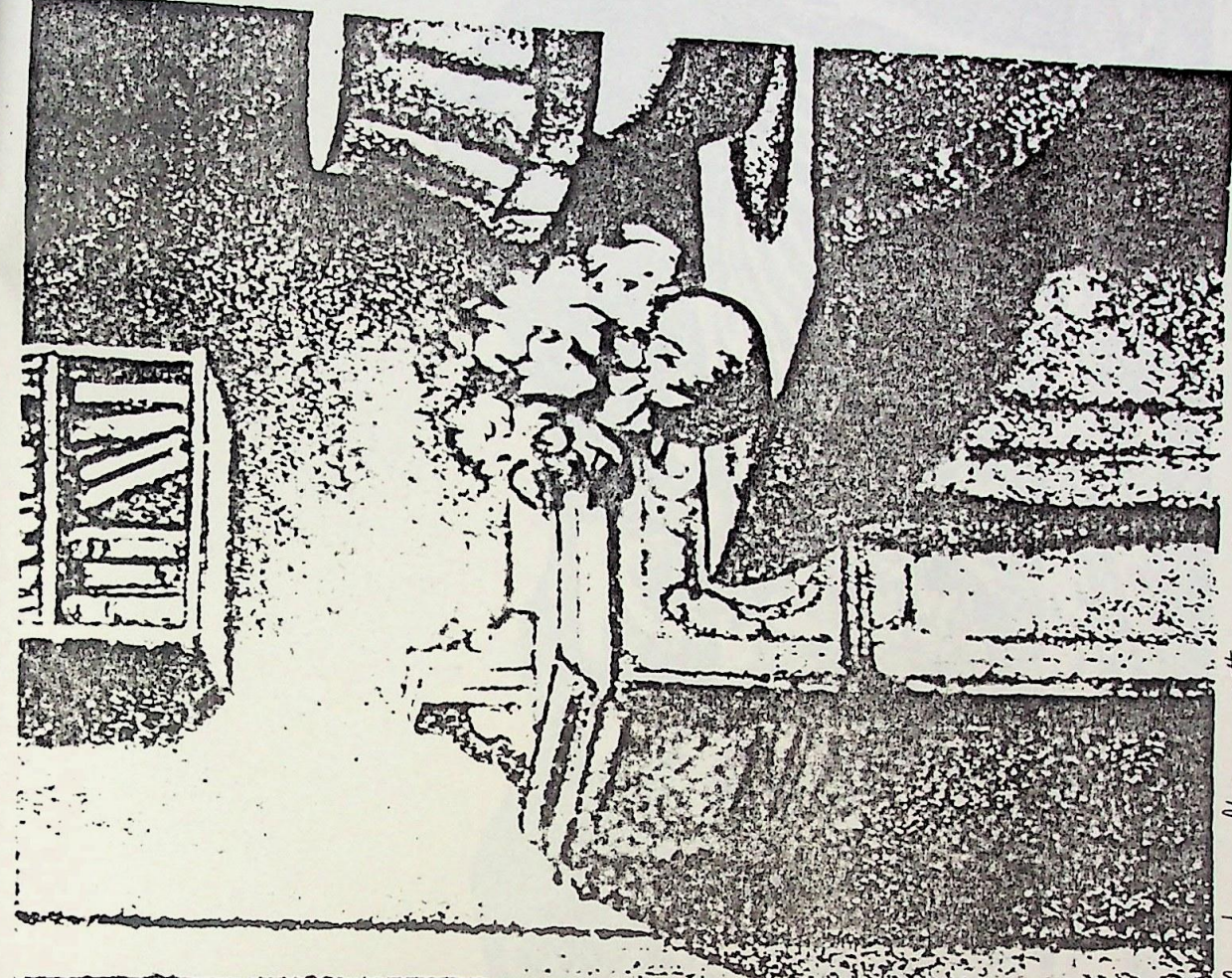
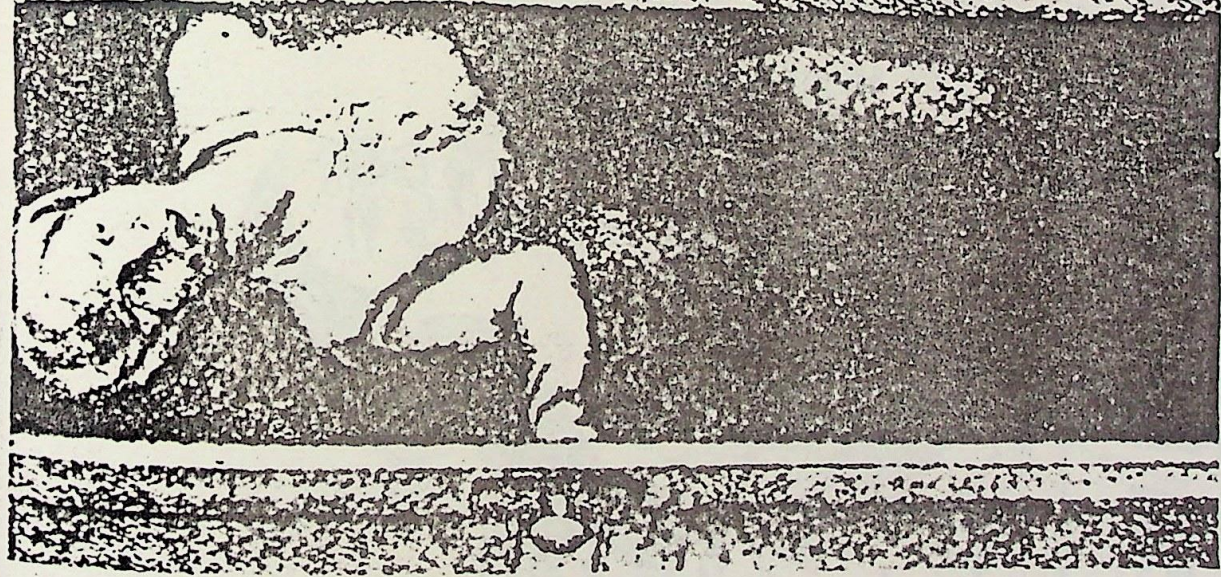
Thank you for seeing it through, and I hope it did not take up too much of your time. If you have any additional comments you wish to make about the questionnaire I would be delighted to accept them.

Yours sincerely,

Sean O Monachain

*Sean O Monachain.*





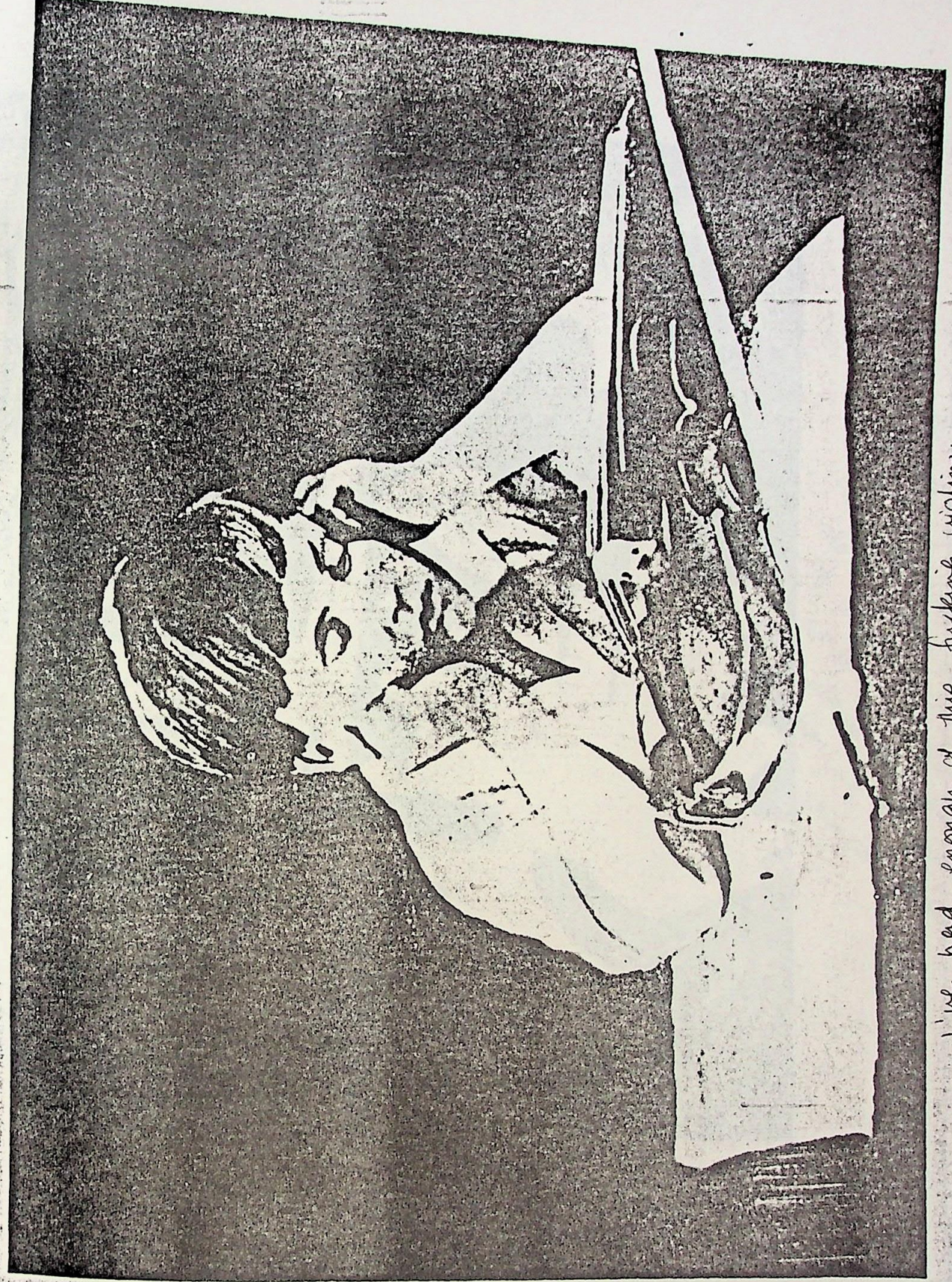
The Baby's head on the table has flowers sitting out of it.  
The woman shows her disgust at the pornographic movie on T.V.  
Her husband sleeps. Neither head very much





Her heart breaks as she knows he'll never be here.  
He belongs to his wife - 'thine's the children -  
But he's so macho, so much a man, his dark rugged looks.....  
I must leave town find another place to teach.





I've had enough of this fucking violin.  
Can't stand having to do it every bloody night -  
go practise - says mum - its all night for her.  
But she never had to learn the fucking violin





The two beings  
clashed against  
the roaring torrent of  
blue unfeeling backwards  
into the blue curve  
of wizardry — howling  
words of ice across the  
plains of icicles  
hanging horizontal music  
stirred the sea.



APPENDIX V  
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CHILDHOOD

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

## Questionnaire

FORM B

NAME *Gerard Cosc*.....

AGE *27*.....

OCCUPATION *Sculptor /*  
*Art Teacher*.....

SEX *Male*.....

DATE *26-2-82*.....

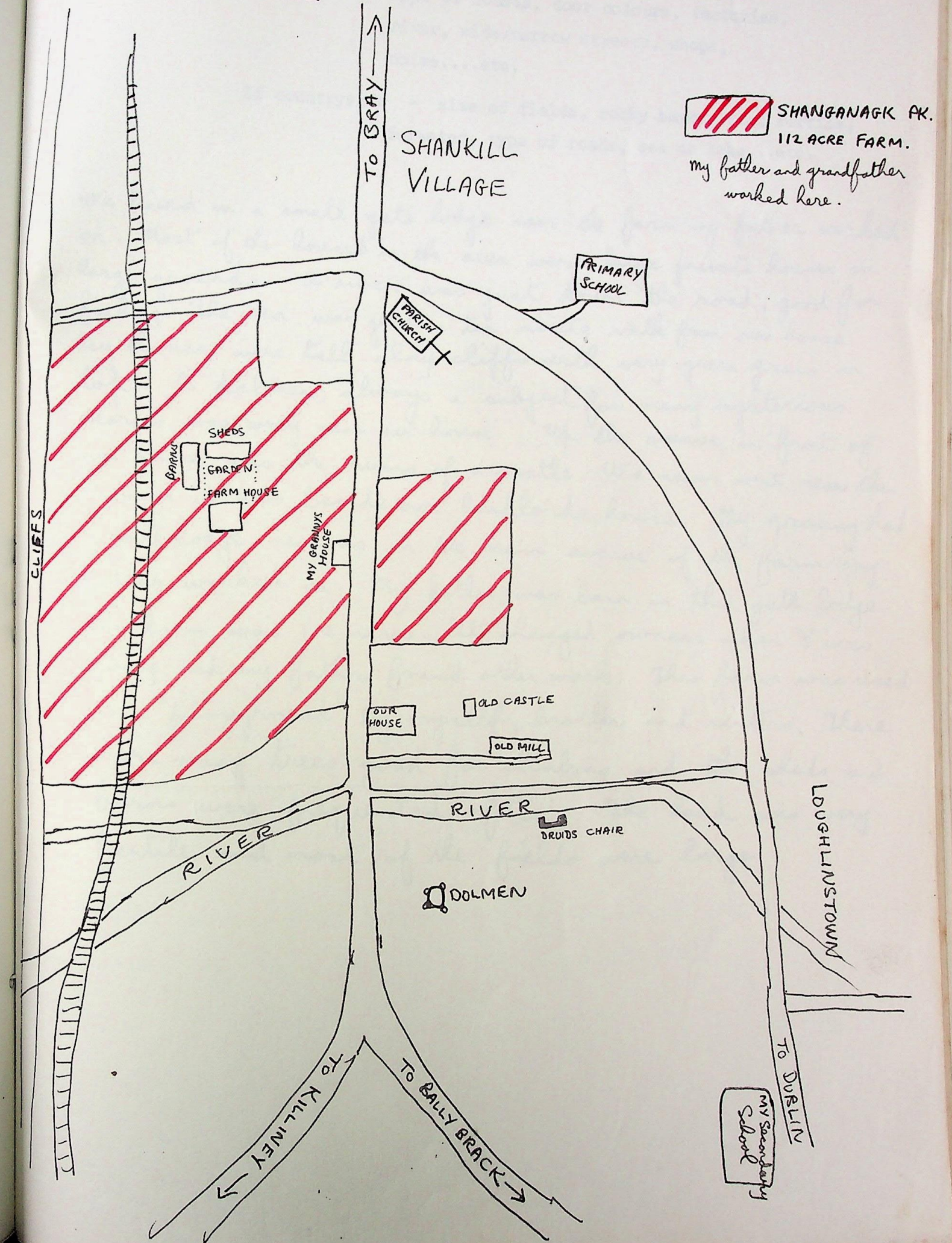
### NOTE:

For this questionnaire I would ask you to be as self-analytical as possible. There may be points I have not covered, that you may consider relevant, and your elaboration of these would be appreciated.

Thank you.



1. Allowing 10 minutes only, draw a map of your childhood environment.





2. Describe this environment (place) in geographical terms.  
E.g. If street - type of houses, door colours, factories,  
river, wide/narrow streets, shops,  
noise....etc.

If countryside - size of fields, rocky barren/flat fertile,  
forested, type of roads, sea or lake...etc.

we lived in a small gate lodge near the farm my father worked on. Most of the houses in the area were large private houses on large grounds. A river was just down the road, good for fishing. The sea was just a ten minute walk from our house. By the sea were tall clay cliffs with very green grass on top. A dolmen, always a subject for many mysterious stories was very near our house. Up the avenue in front of our house was the ruins of a castle. We never went near this because it was beside our landlords house. My granny had a gate lodge near us on the main avenue of the farm my father worked on. My father was born in this gate lodge. The farm was 112 acres. It changed owners when I was young and my father found other work. This farm was used as a "playground" by myself, brothers and sisters. There were many trees good for climbing and the sheds and barns were frequented often. The land was very fertile and most of the fields were large.



3. As you recall this (place) environment, do you have any particular visual images of

- a. Place/s ☒
- b. Object/s ☐
- c. Both ☐

If 'place/s', please describe at length, as though you are experiencing it once again.

If 'object/s', please illustrate and describe your dealings in play or otherwise with it, emphasising scale in relation to you at the time.

If 'both', differentiate and describe each as outlined above.

most memories from childhood revolve around the yard and buildings of the farm. One or two trees stand out also. These trees were very tall but easy to climb. A view of the entire farm could be seen from the tops of them. Many good chestnut trees also. The new owners of the farm did not live in the main house so it was alright for us to play in the yard and among the barns and out houses.

I have very strong memories of an old shed we used as a "gang" hut and also of the view from the tops of the trees.

The sea also was very popular with us but my memories of it do not come until later.



4. Was there a freedom allowed by this (place) environment?

Yes!



No!



If 'yes', please describe the nature of your freedom, and has it been regained?

If 'no', describe your inward reaction to this. Also, describe your concept at the time of the freedom you were not allowed.

Have you now gained freedom as a sort of back-lash? If so describe it.

as I have said the new owners of the farm did not live there so myself and my brothers & sisters had great freedom in our use of the barns etc for our play. I should think we even considered it our own as my father was retained as a caretaker.

Even at harvest we thought nothing of building huts out of the bales of straw.

It was our place.



5. Was there a freedom allowed by your environment (people)?

Yes!

☒

No!

☐

If 'yes', please describe the nature of this freedom distinguishing between, Family: Neighbours: Teachers:...etc.

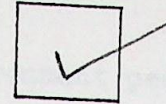
If 'no', describe your inward reaction, to this, considering emotional reaction, Resentment: Withdrawal: Childish hate:...etc.

My parents were always happy to know where we were. I think it was because my father and uncles grew up on this farm. There was never any restrictions to what we did once no damage was done to anything. We had to respect this place as it was not our own and this was the only restriction placed on us. Neighbours we did not have many. We went up to the farm to play because it offered our imaginations much freedom, much more so than playing with other children from the village who all belonged to gangs and playing consisted more of fighting.

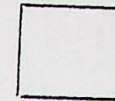


6. As you recall this people environment, are there any person/s (that you might have known by sight) that stand out in your mind (other than family)?

Yes!



No!



If 'yes', picture this image in your mind and try to ascertain what you think that person might have been like if you had gotten to know him/her.

My granny is the oldest memory of a person other than my immediate family. I still remember one of the gardeners from the farm and a teacher from up the road who thought me during my first years of school. There was also another gardener who lived near us, and his wife, they were both very friendly and welcomed a visit from me or my brothers or sisters whenever we could. The wife made beautiful soda bread, which always seemed to be hot from the oven.



7. As you recall, which do you think is more dominant?

Environment place

☒

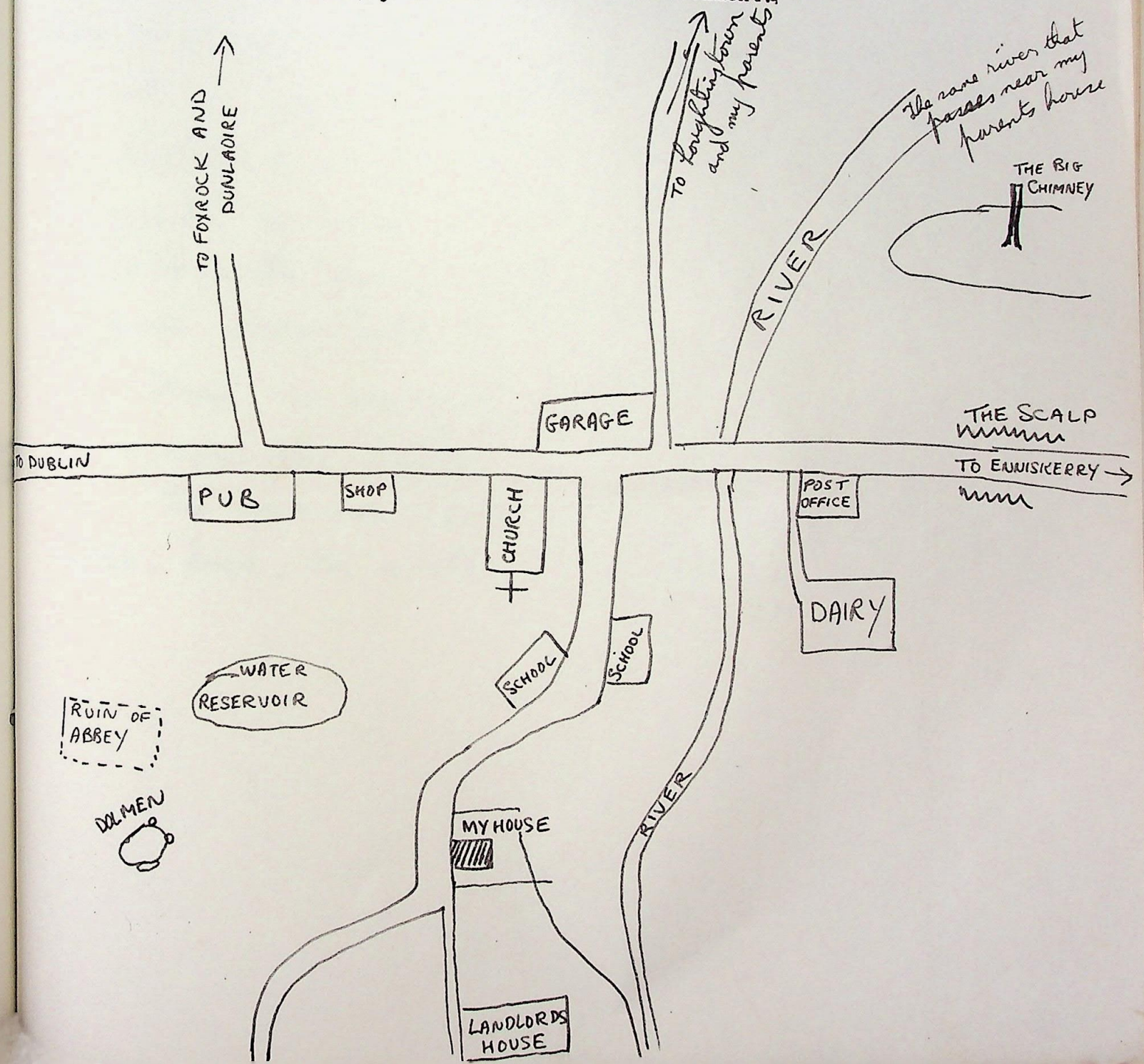
Environment people

☐

Same

☐

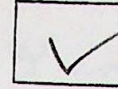
8. Draw a map of your present (place) environment, or (if there are a few) your most lived-in environment.



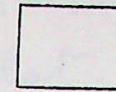


9. Are you happy in this (place) environment?

Yes!



No!



If 'yes', describe it.

If 'no' describe in detail the sort of place environment that you would hope to live in.

Not many houses in the locality. Quiet peaceful atmosphere. Woods, forests and mountains not very far from my house. I have a large garden and I use the field behind the house as a work area where I make my sculptures. There are no large housing developments nearby. Neighbours are friendly. It is not too far from Dublin city.

The house is near the road ~~but does not~~ yet it is quiet as most of the garden is surrounded by a field or the avenue. People on the road do not have a good view into the garden.

There are many beautiful walks through forests or across the hills.

In summer there is nowhere else I would rather live, In winter it is very open to the elements.



10. (a) To what extent did you imagine in your childhood?

I would think I imagined a lot. I had not many friends my own age so would invent "people" to play with. Also the old farm where I played offered great possibilities for all types of imagining (both people and places).

(b) To what extent did you make (create)?

(Outside or inside of house?) - (More of which?)

I made lots of huts and tree houses, out of wood, branches grass and bales of hay. At home I was very into drawing and painting.

It would be hard to say now which I created more, inside or outside the house, perhaps more outside in earlier years and then from about 8 or 9 more inside (more time spent painting and colouring pictures).



11. (a) How often do you recall childhood events?

Tick appropriate box.

- (1) Never ☐ (2) Seldom ☐ (3) Regularly ☒  
(4) Often ☐

(b) Answer if you ticked (3) or (4) what type of situations or stimulus causes you to recall?

Mostly when I'm walking across fields or farms in the locality I live in now, or if I see young kids playing as I did, or see a kids tree hut. This can also happen if I see trees like the ones I used to climb.

Sometimes when I'm in the locality of my childhood all sorts of memories are recalled by me.



12. Give an account of examples of your work to date under the following headings

- a. relevant to others - but irrelevant to you
- b. totally relevant to you - (describe this work in detail, with photographs included if possible.
- c. containing mystique - something about it, you don't understand
- d. Any lack of continuity - where there might have been a lapse and then the creation of seemingly very different work.

12a. I don't feel that any of my work is irrelevant to me. If something seems irrelevant I look for some part of it that is relevant.

12b.



12c. /... I think that my recent work (well even work done in college) contains a certain amount of mystique and although I work to clarify and remove much of the mystique there is always a certain amount that remains in the work.

Yes, there is often something in the work I do not understand, sometimes weeks months even years go by before I see something in the work I have previously missed.

One sculpture I made five years ago I still do not know why I made it and understand little about it but feel (or know) it is one of the best things I ever made. Visually it has a strong (even powerful) impact on the viewer.

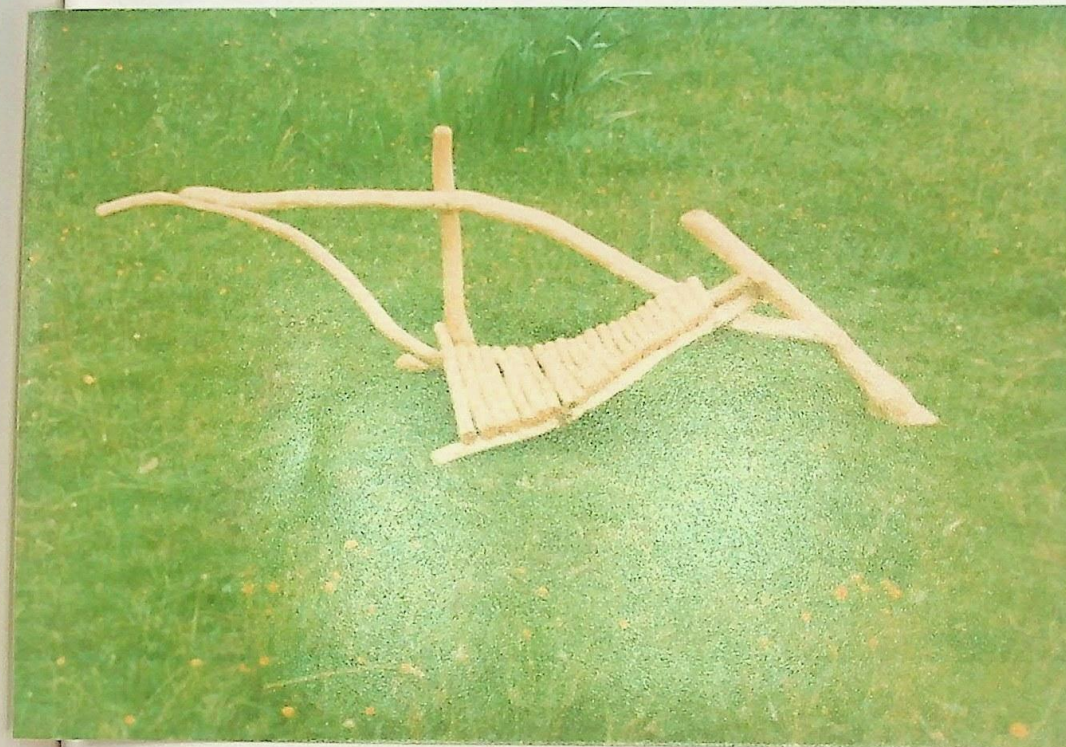
12d.

After I finished my post graduate year in Dusseldorf I returned to live here in Kitterman. But it was over a year before I began to make sculpture. This was due mainly to lack of materials (and/or the money to buy them). I began working outdoors and used only wood found in the locality (branches of trees). The work I began making was totally different to anything I made previously. I had worked outdoors before but the work was always temporary. Now I am making permanent pieces which earlier I only made indoors. Also I find that while working outdoors I come to understand more about the work and why I must carry on doing it.



13. Describe three of your latest pieces of work in detail with
- your description of its visual appearance
  - its source of origin
  - what you consider its impact to be on the viewer
  - what it does for you
  - how it differs from much earlier work

N.B. Please include photographs of work so I can relate what you say to them.



- made from branches of an ash tree. Bark is stripped of wood. nine feet long, three feet high, three feet wide. all parts doweled together.
- mostly old farm implements (ploughs and harrows) and a horse. The shapes of the branches are also a source.
- perhaps one of *deja vu* or feelings of the environment where it is to be seen.
- many ideas for further works. a reason to continue with my work.
- all wood is as it came from the tree. The appearance of the wood is not changed in any way. all work previous was, done with timber from the N. ...





- a) a triangular form made of ash branches.
- b) The branches themselves (or their shape) produced the shape of the sculpture. I worked on something I only glimpsed briefly before I began work.

c) to question

d) This sculpture works very well for me. It was the first I made in my new environment.

e) All earlier works looked more solid. This has a rhythm all its own. Again the use of branches with bark removed.

a) nine feet long. made of beech and stone. Looks a bit like many things from a plough to a boat.

b) The shape of the branches and the shape of an old reed boat used in north Africa and a boat's rudder.

c) one of mystery and questioning

d) This does a lot for me but I cannot really sum it up. It is one of the sculptures I am happiest about. The stones worked well with the wood.

e) same as other two.





## Question 14.

- 1) She was working in the kitchen, possibly baking or cleaning. She heard noises coming from another room in the house. Leaving the kitchen she goes quietly up the hall to the room. Opening the door she sees someone in the room.
- 2) Two women and one man but none of the figures are looking at the others. All look in other directions. The man looks to the horse and plough. The woman in the field looks up at the sky, thinking of the summer ahead. The girl with the books walks away, thinking of her friends in the university in the city many miles away.
- 3) Sorrow. His parents want him to learn the violin but he would rather spend these hours of practise out playing with his friends. But he knows he learns the music very well.
- 4) There is not much I can say about this but from keeping hens I could say I am reminded of the heads of hens and cocks.



14. Accompanying this questionnaire there are four photocopies,

1. A lady opening a door
2. A scene in a ploughing field
3. Boy and violin
4. Abstract composition

Please write a story on each of these.

*see previous page.*

15. Write as much as you can about the man in the accompanying photograph, the type of person you think he might be, age, nationality etc.

Thank you for seeing it through, and I hope it did not take up too much of your time. If you have any additional comments you wish to make about the questionnaire I would be delighted to accept them.

Yours sincerely,

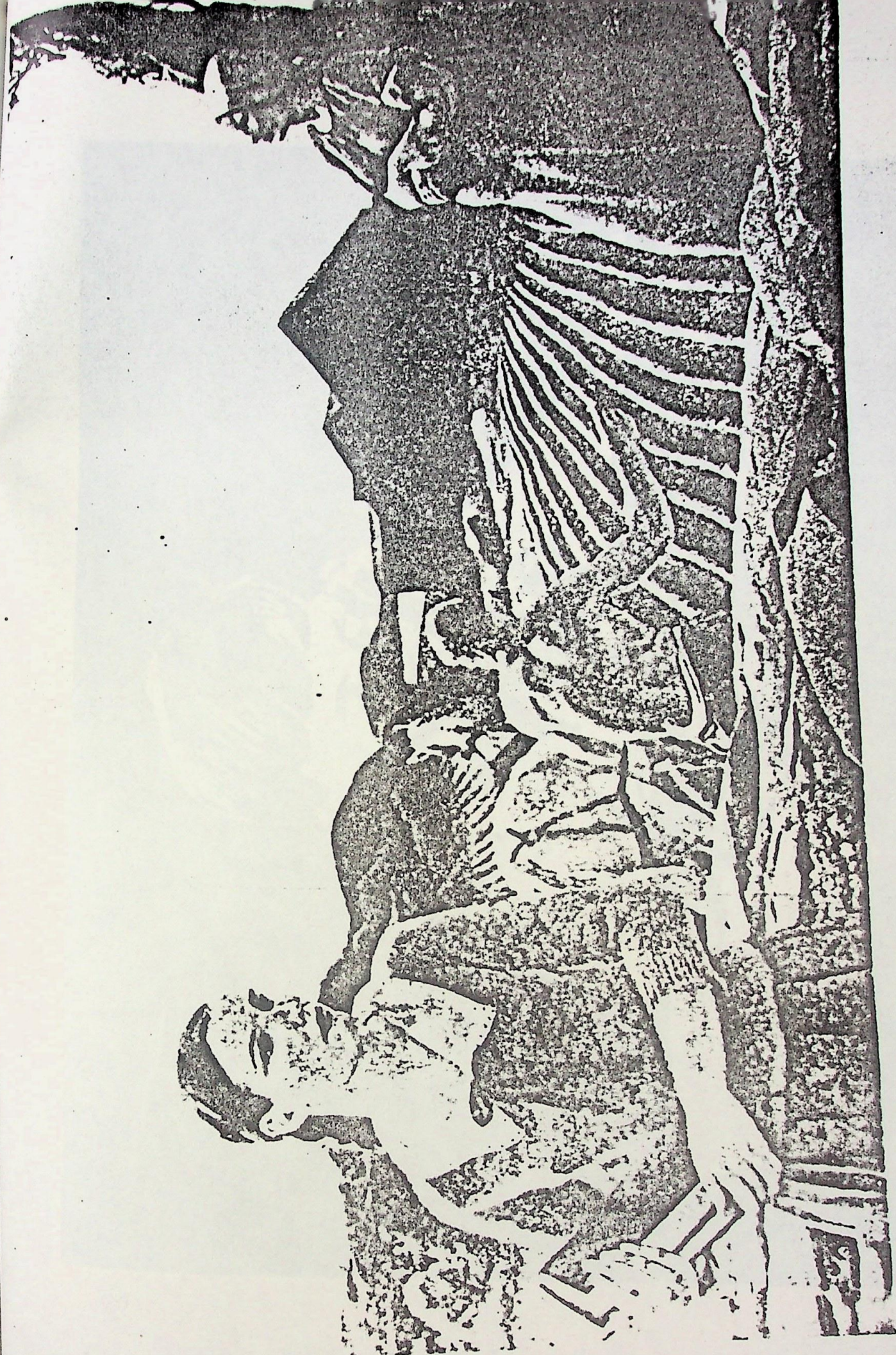
Sean O Monachain

*Sean O Monachain.*





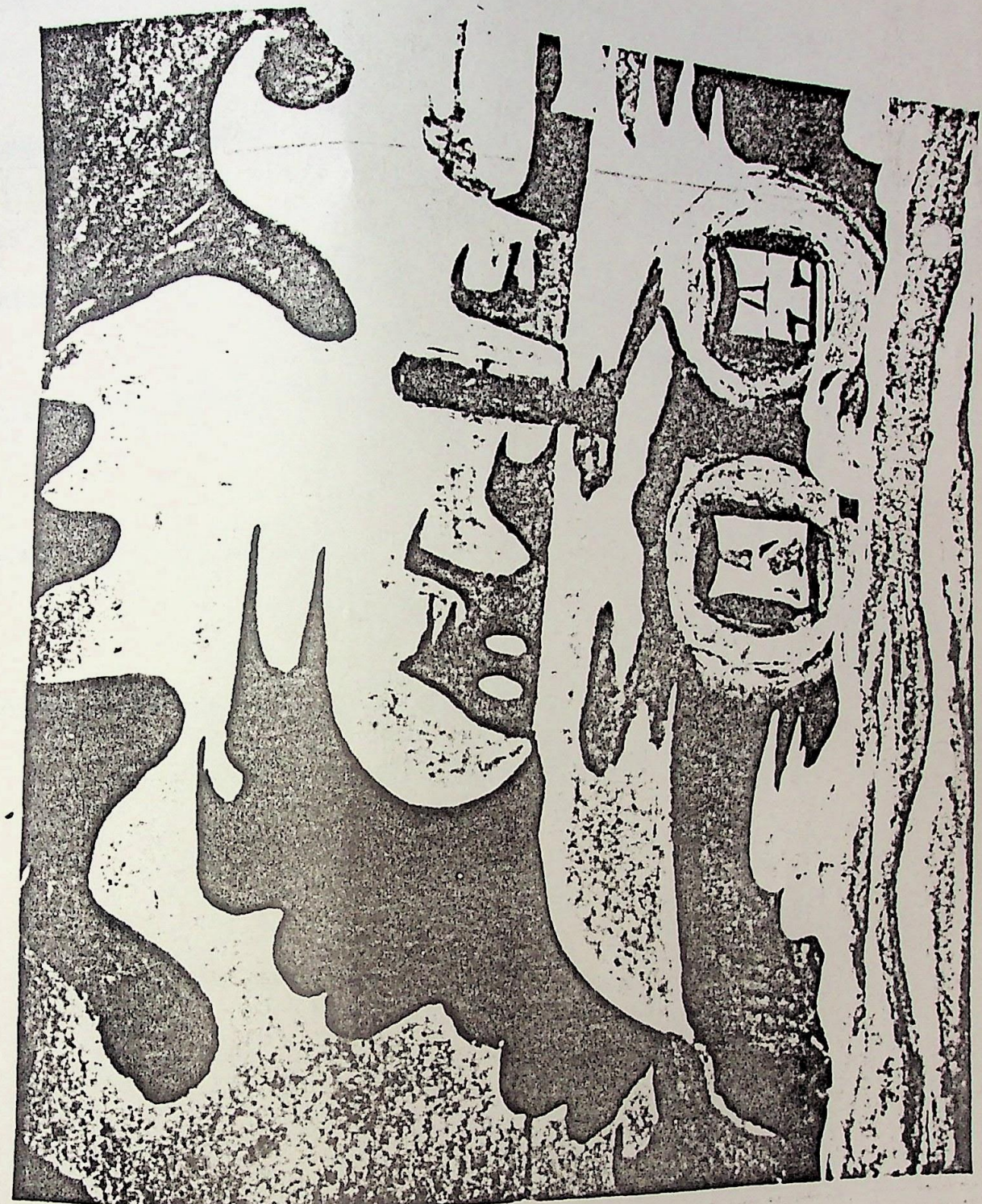














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