

**ANNE DALY**

**TITLE:** Adolescent Identity; Using Art to Bridge the Gaps Between Home and School.

**DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

This dissertation addresses issues arising around and concerning adolescent identity. A project based on the home was carried out. The intention was to provide pupils with a medium for self-identification, through consideration of one's home environment, thereby enriching adolescent development. Chapter One deals with childhood development and self-identification. The work of Erikson is used as a basis for further argument. In Chapter Two, the significance of the home and of our associations with particular objects is examined; reference is made to the work of Gaston Bachelard. Chapter Three is a documentation of the practical aspect of this dissertation, and includes the results and findings of the painting project. The appendix contains reproductions of the pupil's work. In conclusion, the project is assessed in terms of the theories introduced in chapter one, and in terms of its overall success.

Signed Anne Daly.

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Colaiste Naisiunta Ealaine is Deartha  
National College of Art and Design  
Faculty of Education

**ADOLESCENT IDENTITY:**  
**Using Art to Bridge the Gaps Between Home and School**

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education

in

Candidacy for the

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by

Anne Daly

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## Introduction

It is intended that this dissertation will address issues concerning adolescent identity. The project is aimed at post-primary students with a view to using art as a means of exploring identity through consideration of home and school.

In Chapter One the main stages of social development are outlined. An attempt is made to explore the role of the post-primary school in the overall socialisation of the adolescent. The agents of socialisation are explored. The influence of school and home, and their relationship are considered with reference to child development, with reference to what Fontana terms as *home/school conflict*.

As all teenagers undergo the search for personal identity, they very often encounter dissimilarities between home and school. An instance of the like might occur, for example, where a child is accustomed to criticism in the home. Whilst a teacher may assume that praise will provide incentive, in reality this might be totally alien to the child. Therefore the efforts of the teacher are likely to be met with hostility. Even in the case of pupils coming





from homes with similar ideals and values, the gaps between home and school may begin to seem so wide that an adolescent might feel they are almost leading a double life, or perhaps they live in disparate environments. The suggestion is made, that the art class might provide an excellent forum for addressing these issues, without pupils necessarily being aware that they are doing so, thus avoiding confrontation. Through the art-making process, difficulties arising from home/school relations might be resolved or eased. Here the role of art, and of art education is addressed and discussed with reference to the curriculum and educational system. Some important considerations on self-identity and adolescent development are introduced as a basis for further argument.

Chapter two deals with the significance of using the home as a theme for the research project. The idea was founded in the notion, which Gaston Bachelard supports in his 'poetics of space', that memories are motionless, and that they may easily become localised in spaces and objects within the home. Drawing and painting such objects can be a useful way of tapping in to the associations one has with them, or the memories which have become localised in them. Thus providing a means for self-identification.



Chapter three is a documentation of a research project, carried out with fifth year pupils in Coláiste Chíaran, Leixlip, by the author. The theme of the project concerned was 'my home'. The idea was based on a similar piece of work executed by the author titled 'Catalogue' (1998). The work consisted of 198 photographed objects from the home and 12 related short stories or anecdotes. The author's work was shown to the class, and it was put forward that if every pupil produced an image, relating to one object from their own home, as a class they could produce a piece which would be representative of any one's adolescent life. Pupils were introduced to five modernist movements/styles, in order to encourage them to treat the painting of the object in a meaningful and expressive way. The scheme of work has been included, along with copies of visual aids and support studies used, also included are copies of pupils' completed work. The purpose of the scheme was to enable the author to assess the project in terms of how pupils would react to the suggestion of depicting something of their home life, in the classroom. The project was aimed at provoking telling results, whilst avoiding confrontation for the pupils. A synopsis of the results has been included, along with some examples of completed paintings from the project.



In conclusion, the project results have been discussed and explored, in view of the social and psychological theories introduced in Chapter One. The findings of the project carried out were assessed and reviewed, in terms of what various pupils' work represent, indicate, highlight or suggest – depending on how much knowledge and information the author was given by each individual pupil. The conclusion serves to ascertain the outcome of the work carried out and to critique how successful or useful the scheme was in relation to its original goals and aims, and what it achieved.



## CHAPTER ONE

### **Social Development**

It is commonly accepted that human beings are social animals. According to Fontana, ' the relative defencelessness of the individual, particularly in early childhood, has helped to ensure over the millions of years of human evolution that people stick together.' (1)

While living and working in social groups, it has become evident that isolating the individual from others can lead to extreme intellectual and emotional problems. As humans we have come to depend on each other not only for support but also for approval. Much of our personal experience of life is coloured by other people's opinions of us. In being individuals we are not satisfied by simple living together in social groups, it appears that we also require the respect and support of the group, in order to develop into happy and well-adjusted people.

The social life of a child begins in the home. The first social relationship the child has is with his/her mother or caregiver (mother substitute). The term used by Ainsworth to describe this







early social bonding is *attachment*. The first social group the child belongs to is the family. For the majority of children, the family continues to be the most important social group throughout the formative years. Fontana informs us that for a five-year-old the ratio in favour of the home to the school is approximately 5:3, whereas in adolescence it rises to about 2:1 in favour of the home.(2)

Not only are our closest relationships formed within the home, but also located there are most of the child's physical possessions and leisure interests, or toys. Therefore, in a child's psychological development the influence of the home has crucial impact. The home plays a prominent role in determining how one's abilities are used, and in the forming of individual attitudes and opinions. The home also plays a pertinent role in determining the way in which motivation towards school, and in fact, one's future, develops. However, it is important to mention here that if the home is the child's initial and most important social group, the school is a close second. In many ways the school is of almost equal importance. The teachers and friends encountered there, can have untold influence on the child's life.



### **Agents of Socialisation**

In advanced urban societies, according to Musgrave, there are four crucial agents of socialisation (3). These are the family, the school, the peer group and the mass media. Through these agents a version of social reality (accepted norms and values) is created in the minds of the next generation. These minds, Musgrave believes, may either match that of adults or be deviant by their criteria along some lines.(4)

The first agent is the family. In the past it was the case that the family provided the main setting for the learning of all types of roles. Within the subsistence unit of the family the child became a worker. The child learned not only from his/her parents and siblings, but also from a large multi-generational extended family, such primary roles as sex role. Within contemporary society the family acts as a powerful agent of socialisation, especially for routine activities. The family provides what Musgrave calls *recipe* knowledge, for carrying out various roles in life.(5)

The second agent is the School. With the emergence of the social class system, different styles of life have evolved in



various social groupings. According to Musgrave, a result of this phenomenon is as follows. In the past and in less advanced societies most people had a very similar store of general knowledge. Musgrave claims that now, however, the stock of knowledge is distributed differentially amongst the groupings within any complex society (6). This theory has important implications for education. Often the main method of socialising the child is the regular presence of a role model, who is highly regarded and behaves in a consistent manner. Unusual family structure can exist in cases of extreme poverty, resultant of long-term unemployment coupled with alcohol or perhaps substance abuse. This can have a negative effect on the manner in which children are socialised. The educational demands of many occupations are such today that few parents are capable of teaching their children what they need to know for playing roles. Many parents have trouble helping their children with simple mathematics or science when doing homework, let alone more complex school work. Musgrave is of the opinion that school has had to take over much of the role of education which was once held by the family.(7)

The third agent of social development , the Peer Group, is the term given by sociologists to groups made up of people who are of the same age, and most often to groups of children or





adolescents. Peer groups play a normal part in the process of socialisation in most societies. They provide experiences to those growing up of the kind that are not available in their own families. It is important for adolescents to mix in groups that do not have great differences in rank and where individuals can achieve status on their own behalf. The school environment provides adolescents with the opportunity for integrating with peers. Musgrave claims that 'schools were established as formal organisations to socialise children because the task of recreating social reality was thought to have passed beyond the capability of the family.' (8) They are, however, for one reason or another only partially successful. The peer group, on the other hand, is by nature a spontaneous group dedicated to leisure. It is a powerful agent for socialising the young.

Finally the fourth agent, the mass media, is also a powerful influence on socialising the child. Newspapers, magazines, comics, books, radio and television are all available to the majority of the population. The television, in particular, is a medium which is present in every home and provides information, entertainment and role models for children. Current pop stars such as the Spice Girls, or Boyzone; aggressive action heroes like Jean Claude van Damme or Arnold Schwarzenegger, for example, are adopted by children and





adolescents as role models. The speech, habits and clothes of these idols of popular culture are widely imitated by teenagers and greatly influence the socialisation of children at present.

The home, the school, the peer group and the mass media, have been listed as the four main agents of socialisation. Nevertheless, after the home the school has the most significant effect on the development of the child.

### **Art & Self-Identification**

The period of development covered by post-primary education could, to a large extent, be considered a time when a young person starts the process of identity and self concept discovery. Between the ages of twelve and eighteen, personality development revolves around establishing an identity. According to Beihler and Snowman It is important that schools help adolescents during this period of development. Erikson states that, ' the task of forming a stable identity and avoiding role confusion is a difficult one for adolescents, even under the best of circumstances (9).



Erikson devised a theory of personality development which is based on the epigenetic principle of biology. In other words, just as there are several stages involved in foetal development, there is also a ground plan or blue print for personality development. The outcome of these stages in the formation of a psychologically whole individual. The theory describes eight stages from birth to old age. Three stages deal with the personality development of school-age children. These are; initiative vs. guilt (four to five years), industry vs. inferiority (six to eleven years), and identity vs. role confusion (twelve to eighteen years). (10) Erikson describes the concept of identity as follows :

'an optimal sense of identity....is experienced merely as a sense of psychosocial well-being. Its most obvious concomitants are a feeling of being at home in one's body, a sense of 'knowing where one is going', and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count.' (11). Individuals with a poorly developed sense of identity are susceptible to role confusion.

As adolescents approach independence from their parents and reach physical maturity, they are concerned about the kind of persons they are becoming. Their goal at this stage is development of self-identity (12). During adolescence, the young adult though an aware thinking person, is not in any



position to take action in changing his/her own circumstances. Throughout the teenage years the individual is still very much answerable to his/her parents, and may be dictated to, both in the home and at school, often with little regard paid to the young persons ability to formulate his/her own valid opinions, and act with responsibility. As a result teenagers are often hostile towards their parents, disillusioned with society, and at times discouraged with themselves. Second level education covers a dramatic period of change for the individual. While in primary school the child was guided, controlled and commanded by his/her parents. During the time spent in secondary school a transformation is taking place. Many teenagers are already going through, what is described by both Erikson and Marcia as the *moratorium* phase.

Marcia's use of moratorium stresses a state of crisis or an active exploring of alternative identity possibilities. Erikson's use of *psychological moratorium* stresses a delay of commitment in order to create opportunities for role experimentation (13). During the moratorium stage a certain amount of role confusion may be encouraged. Erikson feels that in adolescence some confusion is necessary to avoid foreclosure, (which is the willing acceptance and endorsing of parental values). Those adolescents who experience a stage of crisis or moratorium





tend in general to come to grips with themselves and become identity achievement types (14).

Art can play many roles, including the channelling of energies into productive outlets. However, the opportunity for self-identification should also be introduced at secondary school level. More than any other subject, art by its very nature should allow for and encourage creative development, and self-expression. Unfortunately, as Lowenfeld points out, 'Art in the secondary school is usually aimed chiefly at producing technically acceptable products. Little attention is focused upon the needs and desires of the secondary school student'. (15). This is unfortunate when one considers that most students taking art in school are not going to become artists, and in any case, some of the skills required in school would very likely need to be 'unlearned' if they attend art college. In focusing on learning skills, the art curriculum ignores the problems of the students as people yet 'it is from the needs, desires and frustrations of life that great art is made' (16). An important task of art education during the second level should be to provide confidence in the child or adolescents own means of expression. It is important that the student realises that art can be used as a means of formulating feelings and emotions and giving them tangible expression. One of the main objectives of





teaching art in schools, should be to provide the foundation necessary for ensuring that art is seen as an outlet and remains an option as a means of expression later on in life.



**Footnotes Chapter One**

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4. Musgrave, The Sociology of Education, p 33.
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## CHAPTER TWO

### **The Significance of the Home as a Theme**

Social development, all one's relationships and all human interactions take place within the social spaces which our lives occupy. Social space was examined and defined by modernist philosophers like Lefebvre and De Certeau. Lefebvre believed that space could be divided into three fundamental categories.

1. Material space, which is made up of actual buildings and information; 2. Social space, which contains personal space, mental maps of occupied space and 3. Representation, where the imagination exists and breeds. Lefebvre considered the home to be the primary example of social space. He refers to it as an 'almost absolute space' (20). The social spaces which we occupy do not merely consist of tactile things and our relationships to these things; they consist also of less tangible aspects which we ourselves construct through social interaction.

Most of one's memories of childhood and of growing up were formed in the home, many opinions or observations of life were also gathered there. This is not to say that everyone's childhood memories of home will be the same or even similar. There are, However, a considerable amount of rememberings which fall



under the category of shared experience or collective memory, through their relationship with the collective unconscious.

The *collective unconscious* is a Jungian term for that aspect of the unconscious mind which is commonly shared by all. It is considered to be inherited, transpersonal, and to consist of the residue of the evolution of man (21). The collective unconscious is described as a 'potentially' inherited from prehistoric times in a specific form of mnemonic images, which Jung refers to as the primordial image or the *achetype* (22). Jung believed that the artist does not follow an individual impulse, but a current of collective life which arises from the unconscious of the modern psyche. He believed that there are inborn *possibilities* of ideas which 'appear only in the shaped material of art as the regulative principles that shape it'. (23)

Jung's theories are centred around the symbol. A symbol always stands for something more than its obvious meanings. There are symbolic thoughts and feelings, symbolic acts and situations, which are not individual but collective in their nature and origin. These symbols are collective representations, emanating from primal dreams and creative fantasies. In this way they are linked to primordial or mnemonic images and collective memory. A home can embody such symbolism. For





example, a wardrobe being a container of not only clothes, but possibly also old shoe boxes of photos and memorabilia might represent order in one's life. Two cups might represent the conversations held between family members while drinking tea, and thereby be symbolic of the relationship between two people. For many artists the home has been a theme, an inspiration and a reference point. Among these are Vermeer, Van Gogh, Matisse and more contemporary artists such as Rachel Whiteread or Rita Duffy. The same is true of literature. Using the home environment as a source for art making provides a method of self-identification.

According to Bachelard, 'the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind' (24). Bachelard considered the house to be an 'embodiment' of dreams, in that, in each of its nooks and corners lies a resting place for daydreaming. In other words specific places particularised the topic of the daydream. In these particular places we acquired habits relating to or perhaps perfected details about, a certain daydream. To the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives, the locations of memories, Bachelard gives the name *Topanalysis* (25). A topanalytical study, then would define our localised daydreams and memories and their relationship to particular



objects. By removing these objects from the home and viewing them in a different context (objectively), one might as a result be able to understand more clearly their symbolic meaning. The personal significance of the object being thereby emphasised. The entire process involved, meanwhile, providing a valuable means of self-identification and aiding personal development.



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## CHAPTER THREE

### **The Research Project**

The project which has been carried out as research for this dissertation was based on the theme of *Home*. It was hoped that through using their own homes as a source for art-making, the adolescents involved would explore issues arising around identity, self-examination and consideration of personal relationships within the home, and would thereby address any existing conflict. Thus, resolving problems arising around adolescent identity by bridging some of the gaps between home and school, as it were.

The project was carried out by the author in Colaiste Chiaran, Community School, Leixlip. The class concerned was a group of twenty-four pupils. Among these were eleven males and thirteen females. Most of the pupils concerned were from a lower-middle class background. There was no discipline problem within the class, and pupils proved to be industrious. The overall academic ability of the class was good.





**Aim of Project**

The aim of the project was to produce a series of expressive paintings based on an object from the home, through exploring a Modernist movement or artist.

**Objectives of Project**

1. To address adolescent identity
2. To make pupils aware that art can be a valuable medium through which personal problems and ideas can be expressed and resolved.
3. To promote individuality, self direction and free expression and to encourage experimentation and use of imagination.
4. To encourage open exchange and presentation of feelings and ideas and allow pupils to identify with, and respond to each others work.
5. To explore the notion of referring to the home environment and one's relationship with home, and the possibilities of representing this in Art. And to encourage acceptance of home situations, and promote the depiction of these in an honest way, thus affirming self confidence in one's own background.
6. To explore drawing and observational skills and build an understanding of Art elements, line, shape, colour and composition while learning and improving on painting techniques and practical skills.



7. To build on knowledge of Art history, by creating an awareness of the diversity of Modernist movements.

8. To make pupils aware of the value of referring to artists work for support studies and general appreciation. To develop an interest in recognising the artists personal intention in the work.

### **Week One**

Objective – To produce an observational study of a selected object from home, using pencil as a medium.

The pupils had already been asked the previous week to choose an object and bring it into school. The object could be anything from their home which meant something to them, or which they felt represented their home life in some way. It was pointed out that this could include something very personal, (for example jewellery), or alternatively something as mundane as a tube of toothpaste, if they felt it represented something of their own life.

The introduction consisted of a slide show of the author's own work based on a similar theme (1). It was discussed how a series of personal objects painted by the class, might serve to



represent any one's adolescent life. The pupils were eager about the project and found the idea interesting.

The main intention was to introduce the theme, and promote interest in the project, by comparing and examining objects brought in by individual pupils. Pupils would also be encouraged to explore their relationship with the object, through close observational drawing. The lesson was an overall success, and the pupils' drawings were of a very high standard (Appendix 1, Figs. I & II, p.42 & 43). For homework pupils were given a handout which contained a list of five different modernist movements impressionism, expressionism, abstract art, cubism and surrealism (see appendix 2, p.44). A list of key artists were included along with principle interests of each movement and page numbers for their art history text books. Pupils were asked to research and write one paragraph about the movement which interested them most. The purpose of the pupils choosing a movement was to introduce them to modern art and also to encourage them to be more expressive in their own work by referring to the work of artists such as Munch, Kandinsky or Dali.





**Week Two**

Objective – To gain an understanding through research of the basic principles and themes behind various modernists movements and therein become aware of the variety of potential approaches to painting. Aiding in the consideration of how one would best portray an aspect of ones home.

The introduction was based around some questioning on colour theory to assess pupils' knowledge to date. Impressionism was introduced with particular emphasis on pointillism. The 'Circus' by Seurat was discussed in terms of application of paint and use of complimentary colours to create tones. A visual aid on basic colour theory was used in the discussion (Appendix 4, figure III, p.48).

The task for the lesson was to research. A large selection of general Art history books and magazines were made available to them. A visual aid of thumbnails was used, portraying the same mug treated in different ways, according to the styles of three different movements, a cubist style painting, an application of the pointillist technique, and one surrealist treatment. (See figure I, p.47). Constant reference was made to the art elements and how they were used within the various movements. A demonstration was given of painting in the



pointillist method devised by Seurat. ( see Appendix 5, figure I, p.49).

### **Week Three**

Objective – To carry out research on modernists artists and the means which *they* applied to expressing *their* intention in art. Emphasis on the art elements of line, shape, composition. Again, aiding in personal choices for pupils own paintings.

Pupils continued with research. The Art elements of line, shape, colour and composition were further explored through a brief introduction to the basics of cubism and of abstraction, and a painting demonstration. (Appendix 5 ,figs II & III, p.49). The movements were referred to in a very practical and visual way, so as to avoid discouraging pupils by overloading them with Art history and theory. Photocopies of support studies with written information were given to each pupil also. Extra material was given to those showing interest in other movements which had not been dealt with in class – such as pop art. Pupils were given a handout to complete for homework . (Appendix 3, Figs I & II, p.45 & 46).



**Week Four**

Objective – To produce thumbnail sketches, (or visual ideas) for one's painting which best expressed what it is one wishes to convey of home. These were to relate in style to the chosen artist or movement.

A visual aid of thumbnails was used, portraying the same mug treated in different ways, according to the styles of three different movements, a cubist style painting, an application of the pointillist technique, and one surrealist treatment. (Appendix 4, figure I, p.47). This week they were introduced to Surrealism, and they work of Dali and Magritte. A surrealist style painting was completed of the mug and bottle for demonstration (Appendix 5, fig. IV, p.49). Particular interest was shown to Surrealism and pupils were impressed by the possibilities for imaginative composition, which they may not previously have been likely to explore. For homework pupils completed preparatory sheets for paintings. (Appendix 6, figs. I & II, p. 50 ).

**Week Five**

Objective – To improve paint application techniques while beginning to work on backgrounds of paintings. To gain an understanding of the impact of colour symbolism.





The introduction of this lesson consisted of a discussion about colour symbolism, and the possibilities for using colour to create mood and expression. The work of the German Expressionists; Munch, Kirchner and Franz Marc were used as examples. A painting of the same mug and bottle used in preceding lessons was completed in an expressionist manner as a demonstration (Appendix 5, fig V, p.49 ). Pupils showed a keen interest in learning about the expressionist paintings of Kirchner and Die Brücke; which high-lighted the negative aspects of modern society. And Der Blaue Reiter, in particular the paintings of Franz Marc and Macke, which referred nostalgically to nature as a means of commenting on the ills of modern society.

### **Week Six**

Objective – To improve painting skills and application techniques, thus ensuring that original intention is conveyed effectively.

A slide show was given as a general recap, and one slide from each of the movements was included. Pupils were questioned about the slides and about the treatment of line, shape and colour. Questions were asked about composition and subject matter, and about the painting techniques applied. A





demonstration of painting techniques using acrylics was given— impasto glazing, washes, wet on wet, wet on dry, and so on. A paint applications board was shown to pupils, to which a variety of different painting techniques had been applied (Appendix 4, fig.II, p.47). Pupils were encouraged to experiment with these techniques in their own paintings. All the paintings remained quite unique, as the pupils had made many choices and decisions of their own, and had received a lot of individual attention while working.

### **Week Seven**

Objective – To complete paintings and mount them on card. To carry out an effective class evaluation on the project and on individual paintings with regard to colour, composition, content and meaning.

This lesson was used to finish paintings. Many pupils decided to varnish them with PVA. The paintings were mounted on sugar paper. Pupils were asked to answer a questionnaire about the project and their own paintings.( Appendix 8,p. 60).

An evaluation of the painting project was carried out in the class, and the learning in which the pupils had engaged was discussed. The practical skills and painting techniques which had been acquired were examined. Pupils evaluated the finished paintings and discussed the overall outcome of the scheme. Great interest was shown in each others work, once



the project was complete and many pupils discussed and offered possible interpretations for each other's paintings.

### **Results of Project**

The sequence of art lessons carried out, aimed at increasing self-identity, proved successful in terms of the art process involved. The fifth year class had little prior knowledge of 20th Century art and had gained a considerable grasp of the concepts behind the various movements. Colour theory was explored. Effective use of the design process was implicated. Various paint application techniques, and other practical skills such as mounting and finishing were learnt. The pupils chose their objects with care, and most had a strong personal attachment to the objects, this shows that pupils were engaging in the project and thereby addressing their own identity in terms of the home.

The success of such a project in terms of personal development in the long term is difficult to assess, however, this project appears to have played a part in the process of personal development itself. Throughout the project the pupils and author related largely on a one-to-one basis. Much of the discussion about the paintings was in the form of verbal communication between individual pupils and the author. There were a number of recurring sub-themes. The family was dealt with by a number of pupils, who looked at their position within the family unit. *Three Russian Pots*, (Appendix 7, Fig 1, p.51) is an example of one such painting. The pupil informed the author that her father travels frequently through work, and the pots had been a gift which he brought back from Russia. The pupil is an only child and indicated that the three pots directly represented her family.





*Spinning Dice* also represents family interaction (Appendix 7, fig. 2, p.52). According to the pupil involved the painting represents her family who are lively. In her home, games are often played and card-playing is a frequent activity amongst her family and others. The pupil also stated that the dice was intended to look as though it was 'spinning out of control'.

Other pupils dealt with self-image in relation to home (Appendix 7, figs.III–V, p.53–55). *Pressure* is intended to reflect the pressure from parents in relation to school and studying, according to the pupil who painted it. The corkscrew has been represented as a pneumatic drill, but was also intended to symbolise a female figure – the pupil herself. A male figure is leaning on the drill, representing her father. The pupil who painted *Girl in Jar* expresses the feeling of being trapped or not being able to make one's own choices. *Broken Mirror* also deals with self-image, in the painter's opinion.

Although the theme was 'the home', some pupils created images which relate more to peer-group or popular culture. Perhaps these pupils viewed these areas as being a more prominent influence on their lives than home, at the time. *Malibu* (Appendix 7, fig VIII, p.58), in the eyes of the painter, is a comment on teenage-drinking. *2PAC*, (Appendix 7, fig.IX, p.59) is a portrait of the American pop-idol, Tupac Shakur, who was killed in 1997. This painting was created in the style of *Marilyn*, by Andy Warhol, and refers also to popular culture. The pupil involved used a CD cover as his object from home, and advised that he listens to a lot of music in his bedroom and this is how the object related to the theme of home.



There is clear evidence of the pupils engaging in self-identification. Some of the paintings refer directly to issues of one kind or another arising around adolescent development. It is impossible to ascertain, however, whether any real conflict exists between home and school or if there are any serious signs of problems present. However, even if they are only representative of temporary moods or feelings, the pupils' paintings imply that adolescent identity *is* being addressed to some extent. Therefore, one feels that creating the paintings provided a useful medium for personal expression of feelings, and in that way contributed to the personal development of the individual adolescents involved.

Although the project was an overall success, there were some basic faults with the scheme. Pupils were reluctant to talk about the meanings of their own work in front of the whole class, or to write about the personal association with the object. Certain factors affected this. Primarily, it was a fifth year class and therefore a mixed group, within which not all pupils knew each other well enough to feel comfortable about disclosing personal information. Thereafter, it was the first scheme with the author and this class, perhaps over time having established a stronger relationship, pupils would be more comfortable with the project. It is likely that within a smaller group, individuals would find it easier to participate. Clearly, many of the pupils within the group have a very strong interest in art, a number intend to go to art college. The project was taken seriously, intentions appeared sincere, and pupils *were* prepared to discuss their paintings on an individual basis. The project would not work as successfully with a class less interested, less co-operative or of lesser ability. Unfortunately, it is these adolescents who would be more





susceptible to problems relating to self identity and adolescent development.



**Footnotes Chapter Three**

1. 'There is no House Style'. Irish Times, Wednesday, June 28, 1998.



## CONCLUSION

Since drawing is a natural and spontaneous activity many clinicians use art as a means of encouraging children to express themselves and to communicate their concerns. Psychologists regard drawings as a potential source of information on the individual child's intellectual maturity, personality type, and emotional development. The Draw-A-Man (DAM) test was devised by Florence Goodenough in 1926, to measure intelligence. Personality was assessed by the Draw-A-Person (DAP) test, devised by Karen Machover, 1949. Elizabeth Koppitz later researched the Draw-A-Person test in 1968, and felt it could measure emotional adjustment or disturbance.

Such tests prove useful in communicating with children who are unable to express themselves effectively through language, for one reason or another. They utilise the nature of drawing. In fact, the very activity of drawing can also be therapeutic in itself. In this dissertation it is suggested that drawing and painting can be used as a medium for older children, or adolescents, to consciously express their feelings and emotions with meaning and intention. Thus encouraging self-



identification. The results of the research project indicated that this might play a role in adolescent development.

On examining Musgrave's *agents of socialisation* it was found that of the four agents listed; home, school, peer-group and mass media; the home has the most significant effect on the socialisation of the child.(1) School is a close second. The research project carried out by the author dealt with the theme 'home', in order to encourage pupils to draw from their immediate environment for the provision of subject matter and content for their art-works. It also intended to present a means of self-identification, through the examination of personal feelings and situations connected with the home.

Erikson claims that the stage of psychosocial development for adolescence, is that of identity vs. role confusion. (2) A certain amount of role confusion is, however, healthy during this time. Marcia outlines four identity status's; identity diffusion, moratorium, identity achievement, and foreclosure.(3) Establishing a strong identity is difficult for adolescents because of today's changing social values. During this period it is common for adolescents to declare a psychosocial *moratorium*, others may establish a negative identity.





There are a number of negative emotional characteristics associated with adolescence, among these are eating disorders substance abuse, schizophrenia, depression, and suicide. Many sub-themes were evident in the pupils paintings. There was clear indication of pertinent adolescent issues being addressed. Some of the sub-themes were; popular culture, alcohol abuse, entrapment, stress, diversion, gender, family, self-image, uncertainty, time passing, and, man and nature. While examining their own identity , in terms of the home, pupils explored issues arising around and greatly affecting adolescent identity. Considering the amount of alternative themes which pupils introduced when asked to deal with 'the home', One can only conclude that peer-group and mass-media, as agents of socialisation, have a far greater influence than the home or school, for many adolescents.

The success of such a project in terms of personal development in the long term is difficult to assess, however, this project appears to have played a part in the process of personal development itself. It provided the pupils with a valid experience through which they could investigate and hopefully come to a greater understanding of their own identity, while involving themselves with the process of art-making.



**Footnotes– Conclusion**

1. Musgrave P.W., The Sociology of Education, (third ed.)  
(Mentheun & Co. Ltd., London 1979)p.32.
2. Beiler R. & Snowman J., Psychology applied to teaching,  
(seventh ed.), (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1993) p.130  
Beiler & Snowman , Psychology applied to teaching, p.93.



## APPENDIX 1

Example of pupils initial drawings of objects from home.



Fig. 1 – Pencil drawing by pupil of object brought in from home

10/1/78

10/1/78 10/1/78 10/1/78 10/1/78 10/1/78

10/1/78  
10/1/78



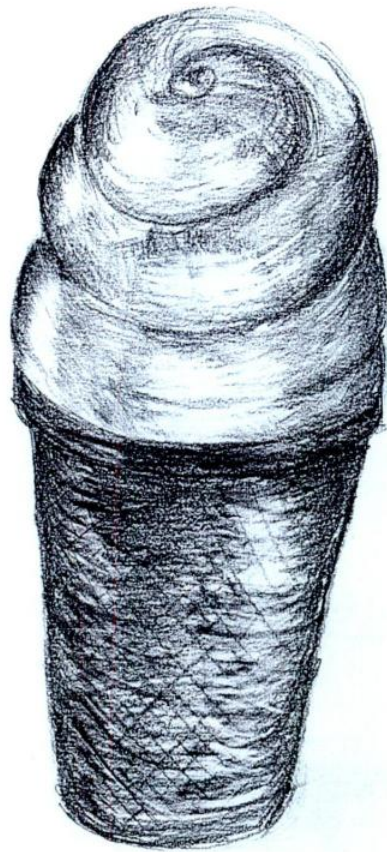


Fig. II – Pencil study by pupil of ice cream syrup, from home.





**APPENDIX 2**

Fifth year Class – HOMEWORK – Miss Daly (10/10/98)

**IMPRESSIONISM**(Light and how it actually affects colour) (*Pages 140–144*)

France	Edouard Manet	(1832–1883)
	Edgar Degas	(1834–1917)
	Claude Monet	(1840–1926)
	Auguste Renoir	(1841–1919)

**POST-IMPRESSIONISM**

The Netherlands	Paul Cézanne	(1839–1906)
	Paul Gauguin	(1848–1903)
	Vincent van Gogh	(1853–1890)

**POINTILLISM**(Colour purity, how colours play off each other) (*Page 148*)

Georges Seurat	(1859–1891)
Paul Signac	

**EXPRESSIONISM**(Colour symbolism and feeling/mood) (*Page 166*)

Norway	Edvard Munch	(1863–1944)
Germany	Franz Marc	(1880–1916)
	Grosz, Nolde, Kirchner, Macke)	

**ABSTRACT ART**(Colour/composition/line/form) (*Pages 174–177*)

Russia	Wassily Kandinsky	(1866–1944)
Spain	Joan Miró	(1893–1983)

**CUBISM**(Structure/composition) (*Pages 169–170*)

Spain	Pablo Picasso	(1881–1973)
France	George Braque	

**SURREALISM**(Symbolism and the unconscious mind) (*Page 178*)

Spain	Salvador Dalí	(1904–1989)
France	Henri Magritte	



## APPENDIX 3

Examples of pupils homework on chosen modernist movement.

fifth years  
Theme - Home

Garvin Nolan.  
Homework mini diary.  
for 31<sup>st</sup> November.

The movement I have chosen to base my painting on is Cubism.

This movement took place in Spain in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. An artist who is commonly associated with this particular type of painting is Pablo Picasso. One famous painting by this artist is titled Collage 1913.

collage or collage which means to paste and he uses this in a cubist style. The reason I find this work interesting is because it ~~used~~ uses shapes and forms to create paintings of depth.

When working on this painting it is likely that the artist in question was concerned mainly with how the line direction was formed on the page by the angle the shapes were pasted down.

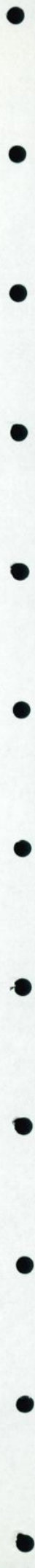


← Take a section from the painting you are referring to and reproduce it in colour using whatever medium you wish.

The object I have chosen to base my painting on is a mustard I picked this object ~~ten~~. Because — you can use the other side of the page for this → two lines will suffice.

Fig. 1





Claire Quigley.  
fifth years  
Theme - Home

Homework mini diary.  
for 31<sup>st</sup> November.

The movement I have chosen to base my painting on is surrealism

This movement took place <sup>mainly</sup> in Spain in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An artist who is commonly associated with this particular type of painting is Salvador Dalí. One famous painting by this artist is titled Soft Construction with Boiled Beans: Premonition of Civil War ✓

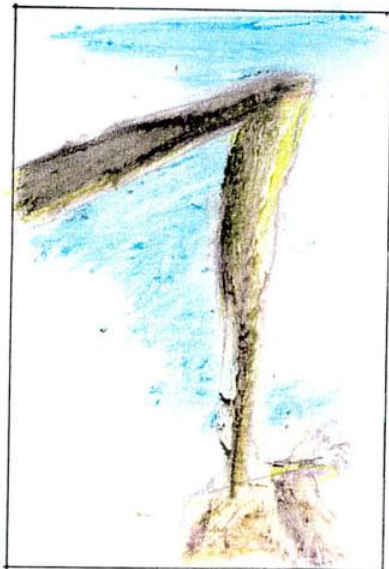
(i only  
ed in  
89)

The subject of the painting is different limbs. ✓  
A distorted human form, which suggests the humor of civil war.

The reason I find this work interesting is because the scale is changed and the body parts painted are largely emphasised. ✓ emphasized

When working on this painting it is likely that the artist in question was concerned mainly with how civil war would affect the person's body and mind. ✓

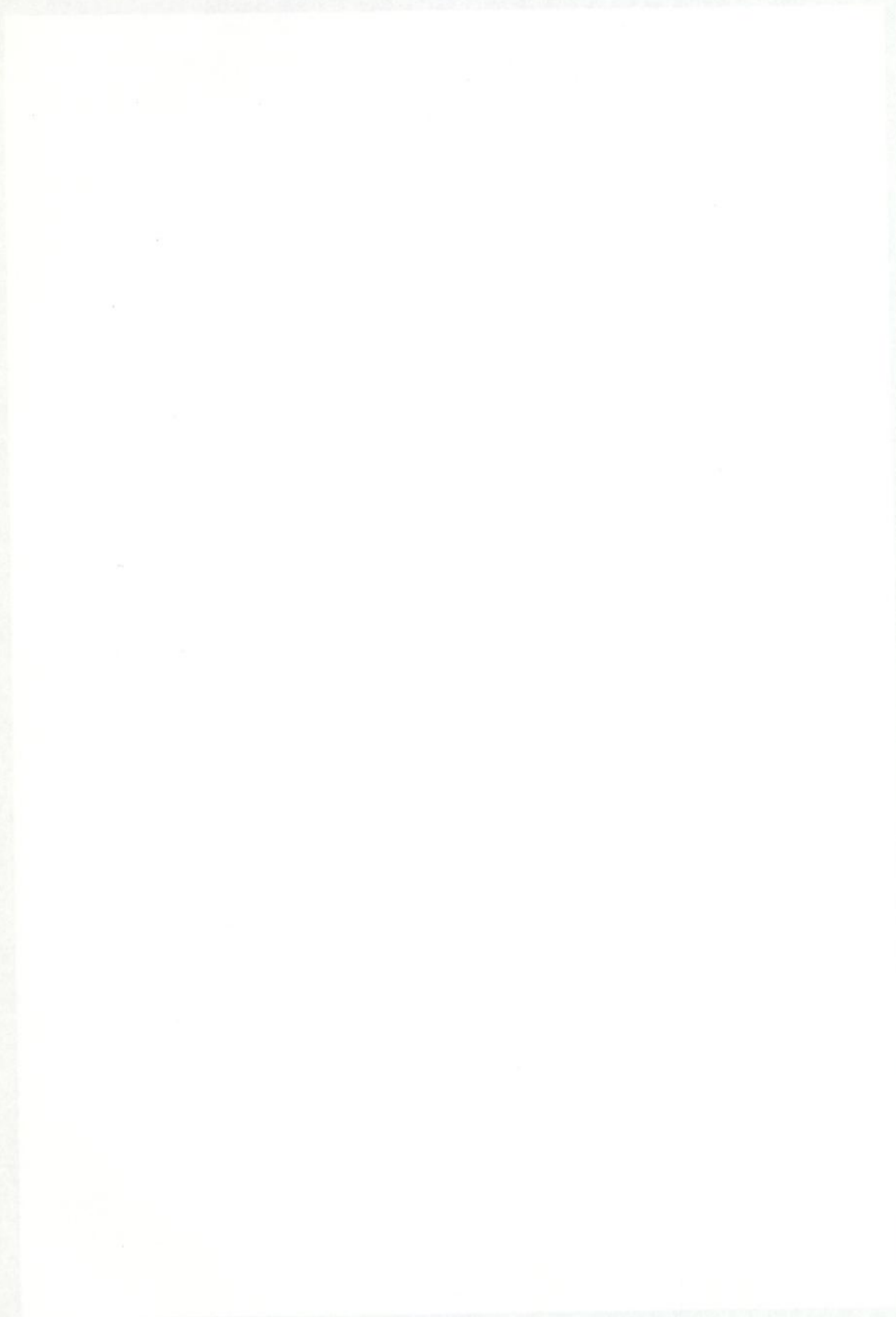
- I think he is also using the human body as a symbol for the country as a whole & how it would be affected too.



← Take a section from the painting you are referring to and reproduce it in colour using whatever medium you wish.

The object I have chosen to base my painting on is...  
I picked this object because — you can use the other side of the page for this → two lines will suffice.

Fig. II





**APPENDIX 4**  
Sample of Visual Aids Used.

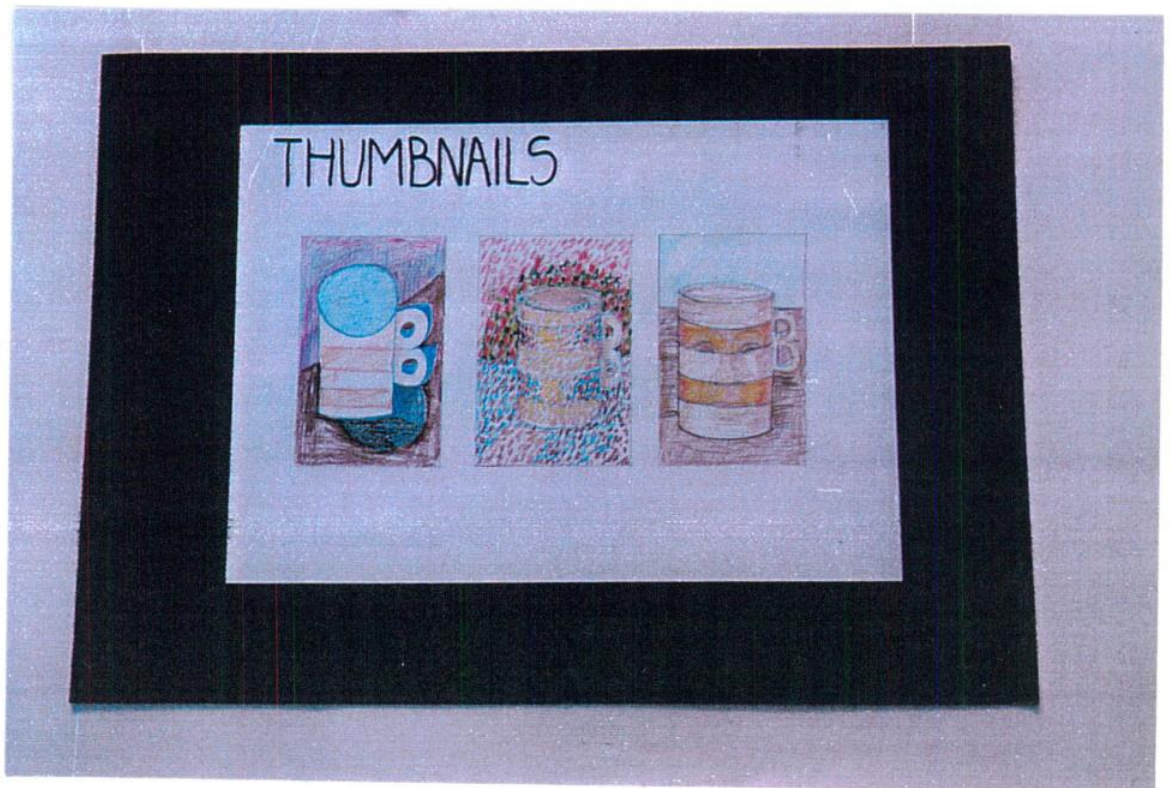


Fig. I – Thumbnail sketches for design of painting.



Fig. II – Paint application techniques.











# APPENDIX 5

Two objects depicted in five different modernist styles.  
Completed lesson demonstrations by author.



Fig. I Impressionist style



Fig. II ABSTRACT



Fig. III CUBIST STYLE

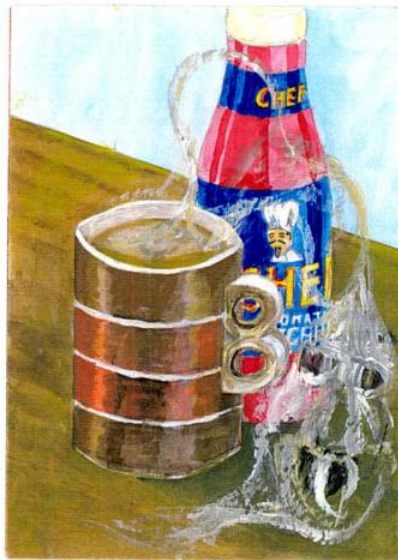


Fig. IV SURREALIST

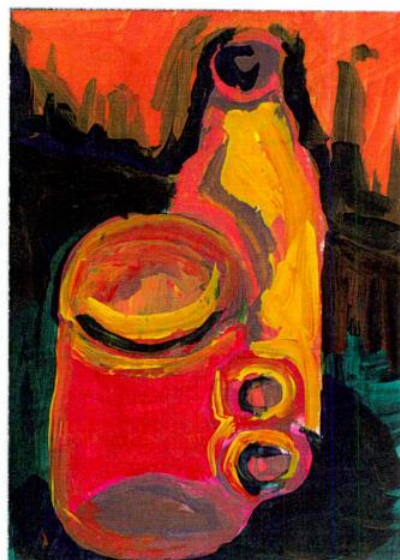


Fig. V EXPRESSIONIST





## APPENDIX 6

### Preparatory work by pupils.

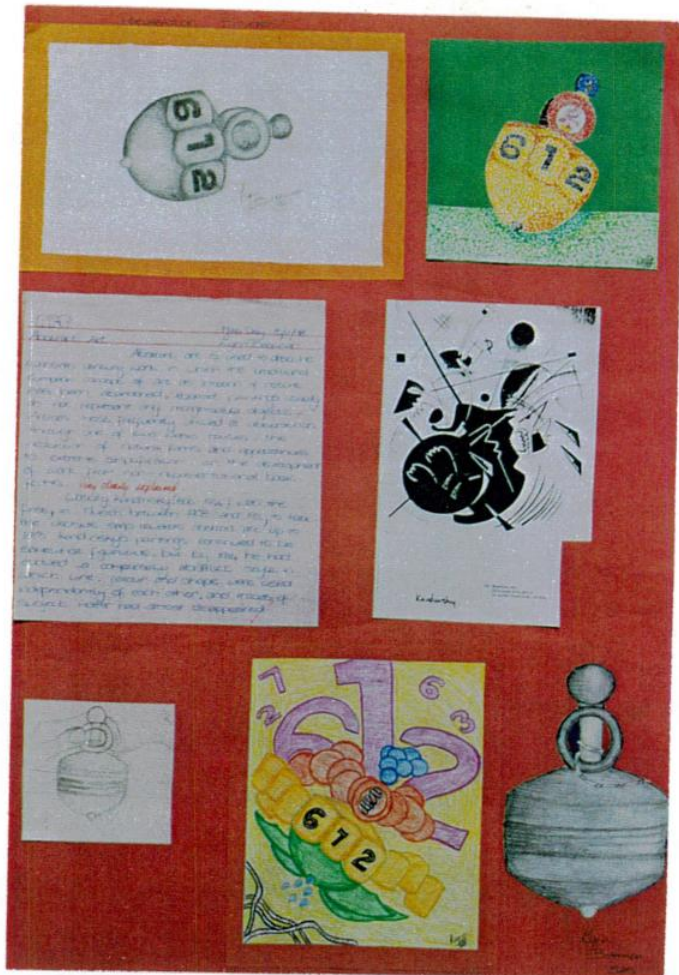


Fig. I

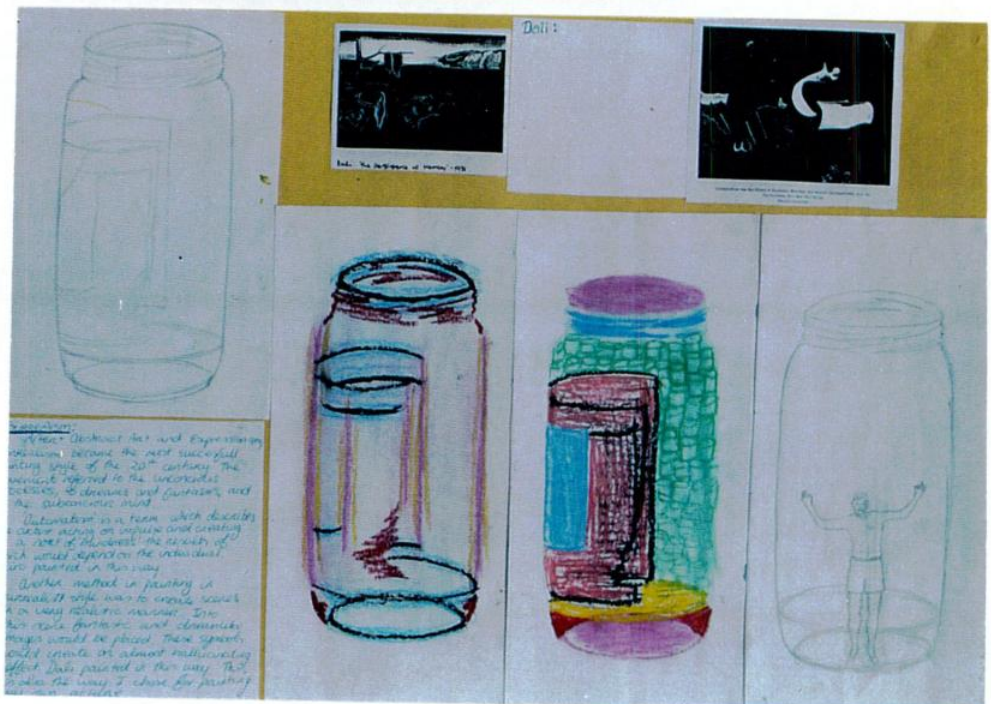


Fig II





**APPENDIX 7**  
Pupils completed paintings



Fig. 1 – *Three Russian pots*, Mairead McKay, Acrylic, 60x42cm.







Fig. II – *Spinning Dice*, Lynn Brennan, Acrylic & Graphite, 60x42cm





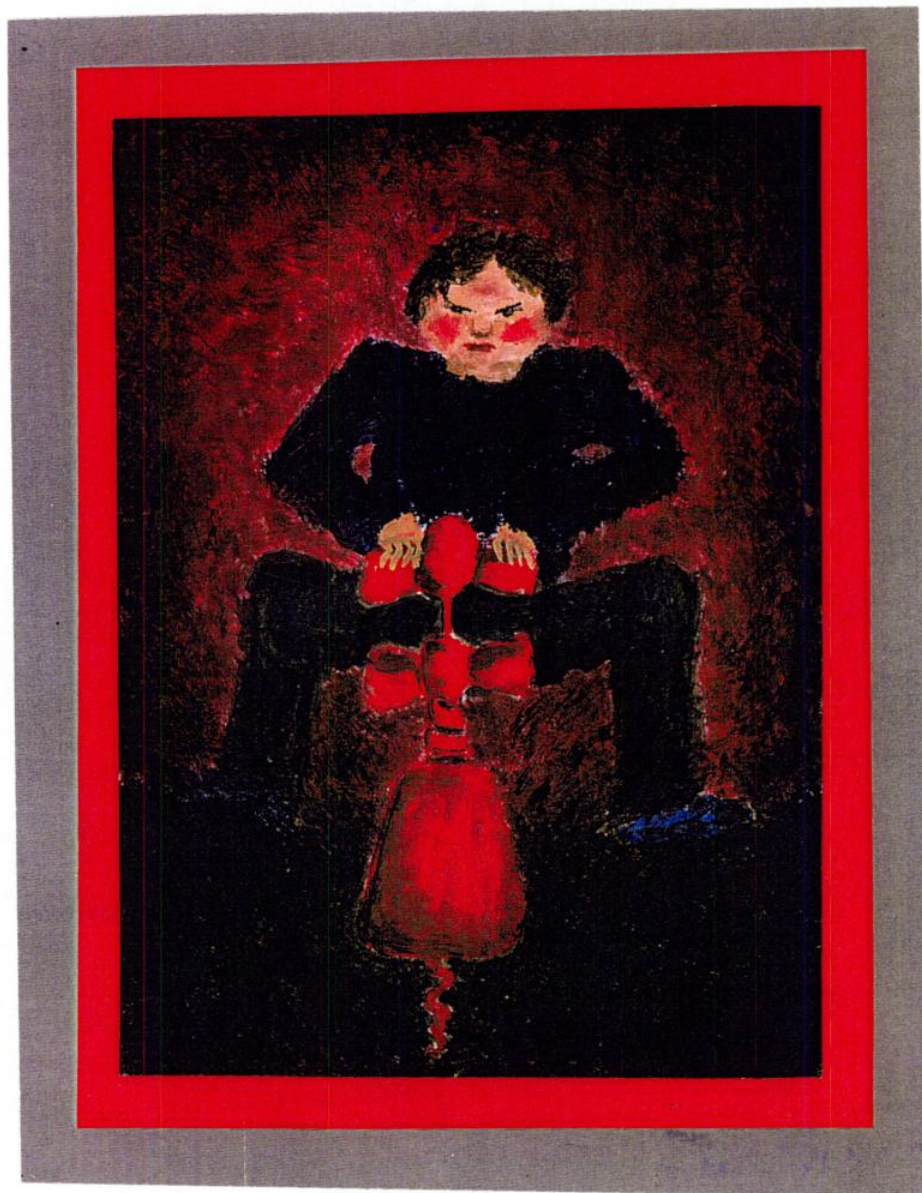


Fig III – *Pressure*, Aoife Concannon, Acrylic, 46½x 34cm.







Fig. IV – *Girl in Jar*, Elaine Brooks, Acrylic, 60x42cm.





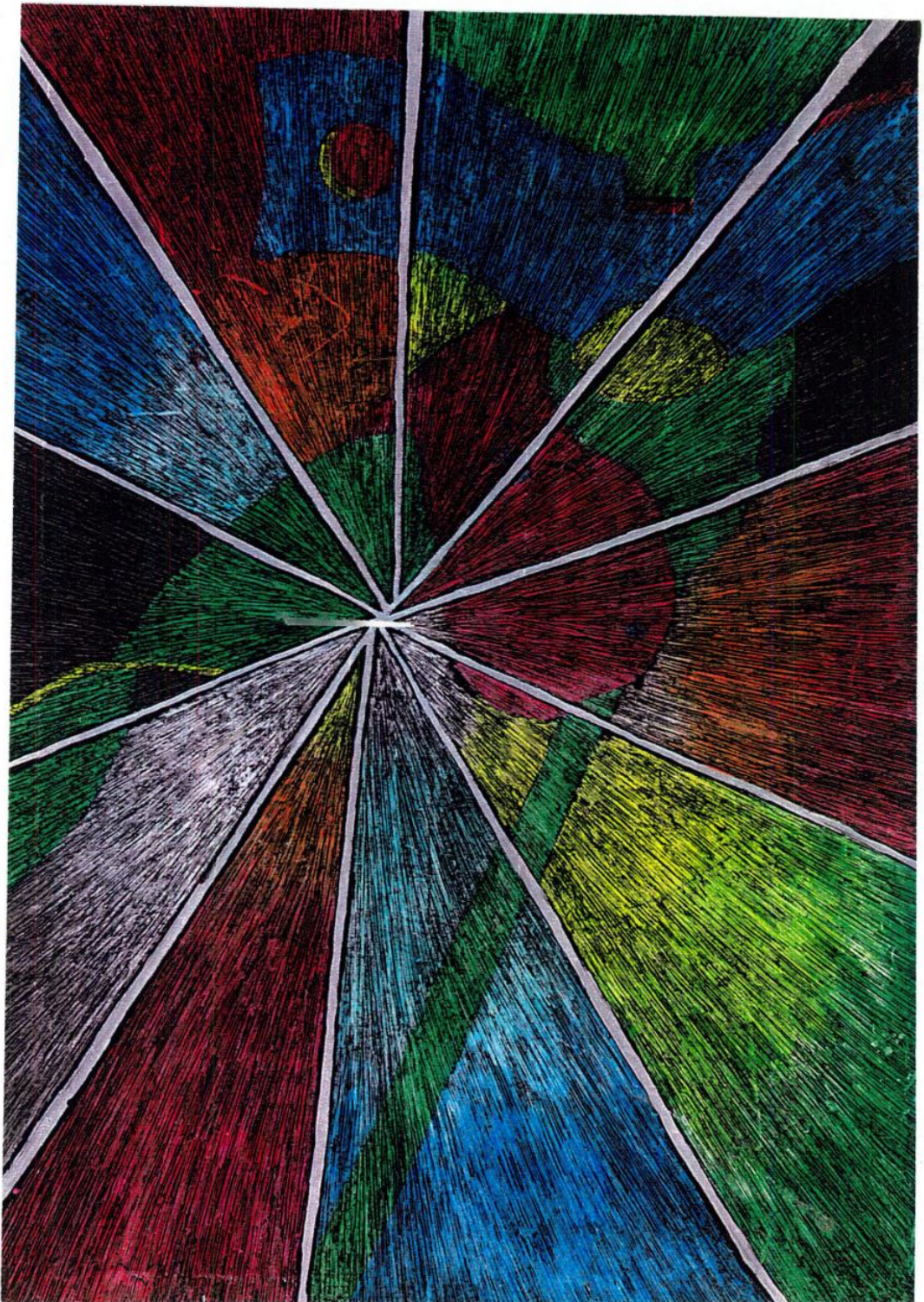


Fig. V – *Broken Mirror*, Julie Hughes, Acrylic & Wax-crayon, 60x42cm.



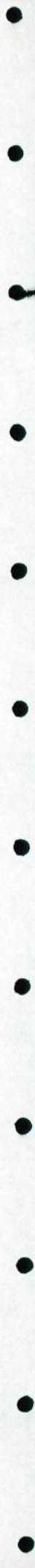
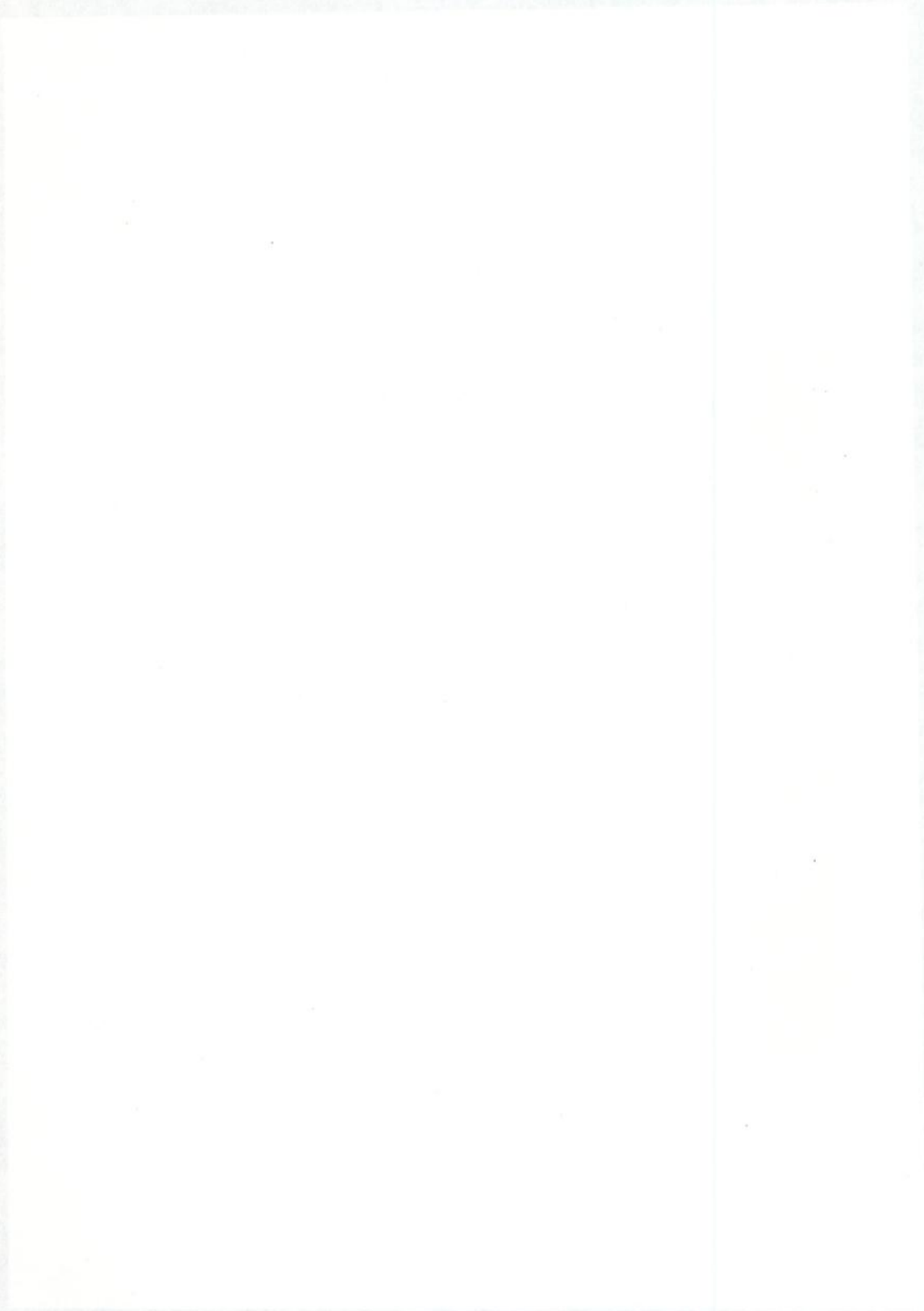




Fig. VI – *Floating off*, Grainne Healy, Gouache, 60x42cm.



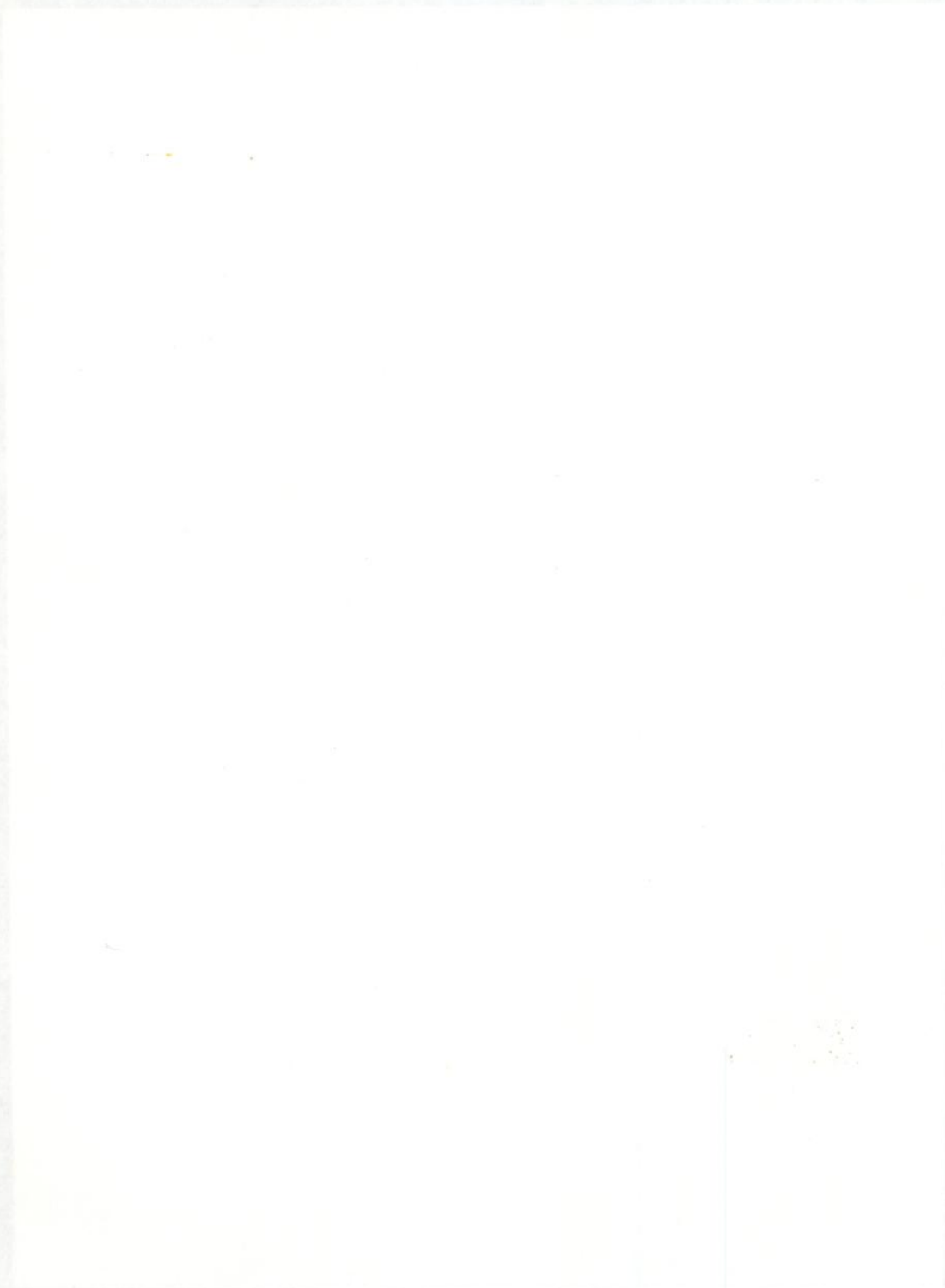




Fig. VII – *Oasis*, Brian Keville, Gouache, 60x42cm.





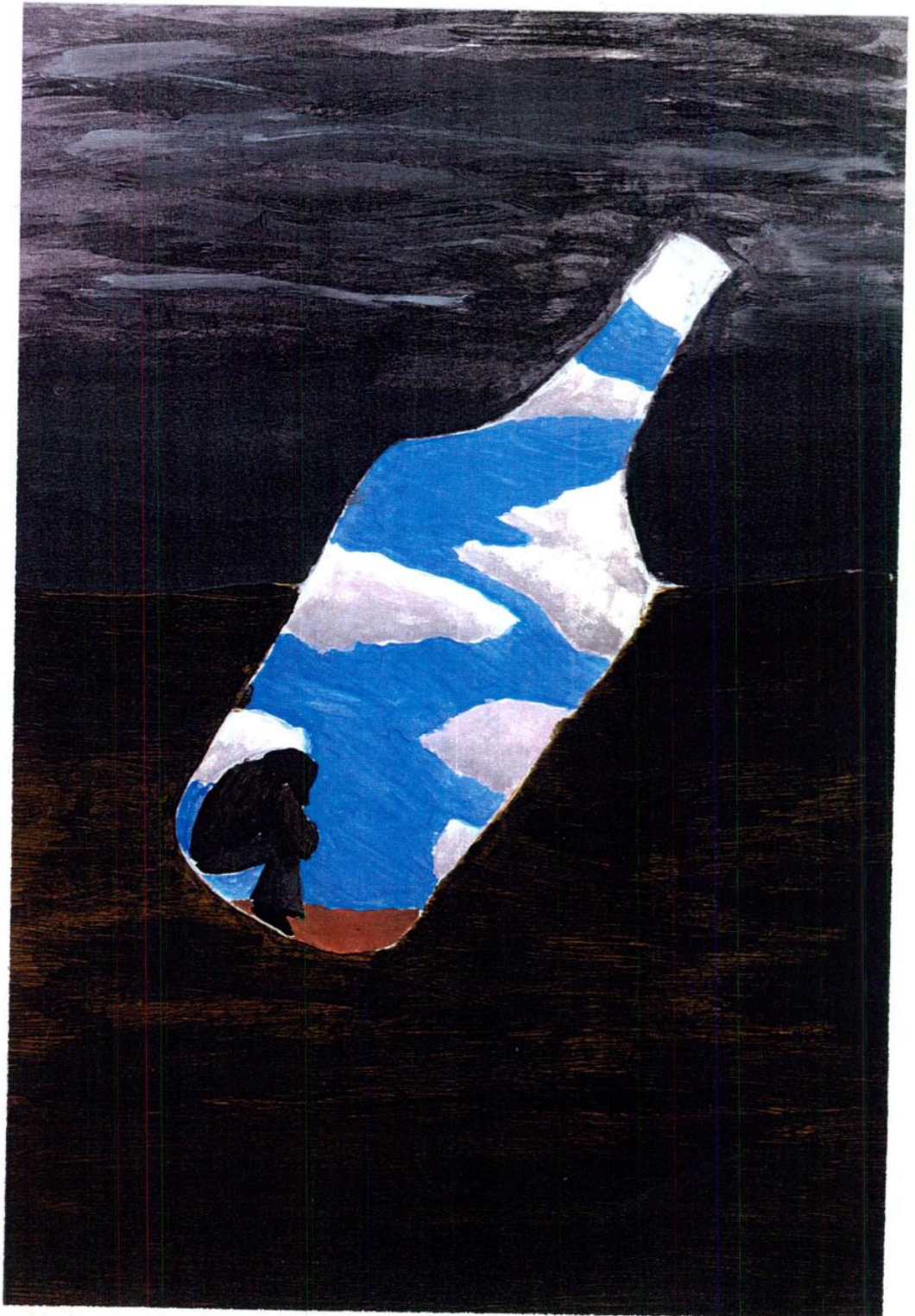
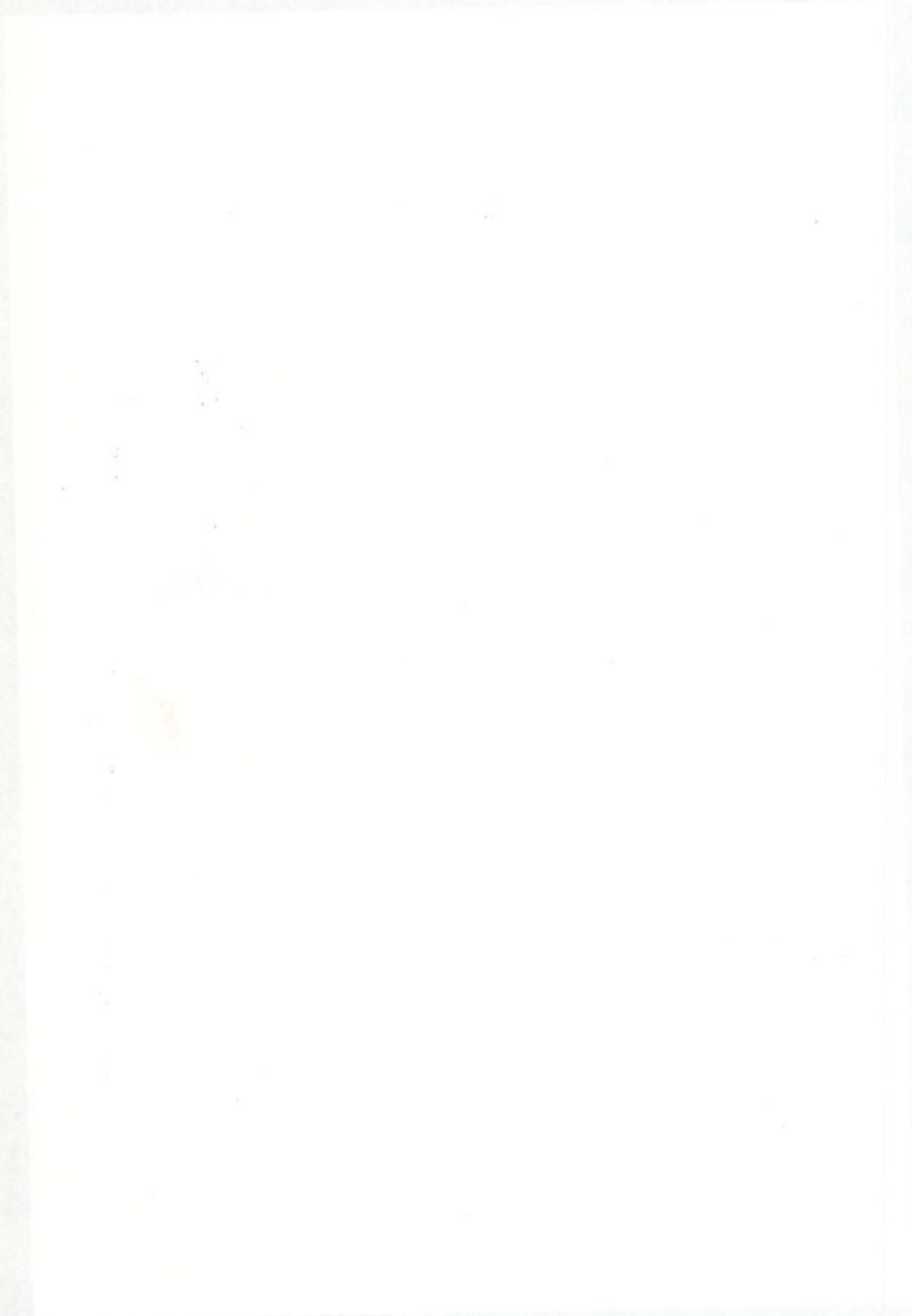


Fig. VIII *Malibu*, Matthew Lennon, Gouache & Acrylic, 42x60cm.





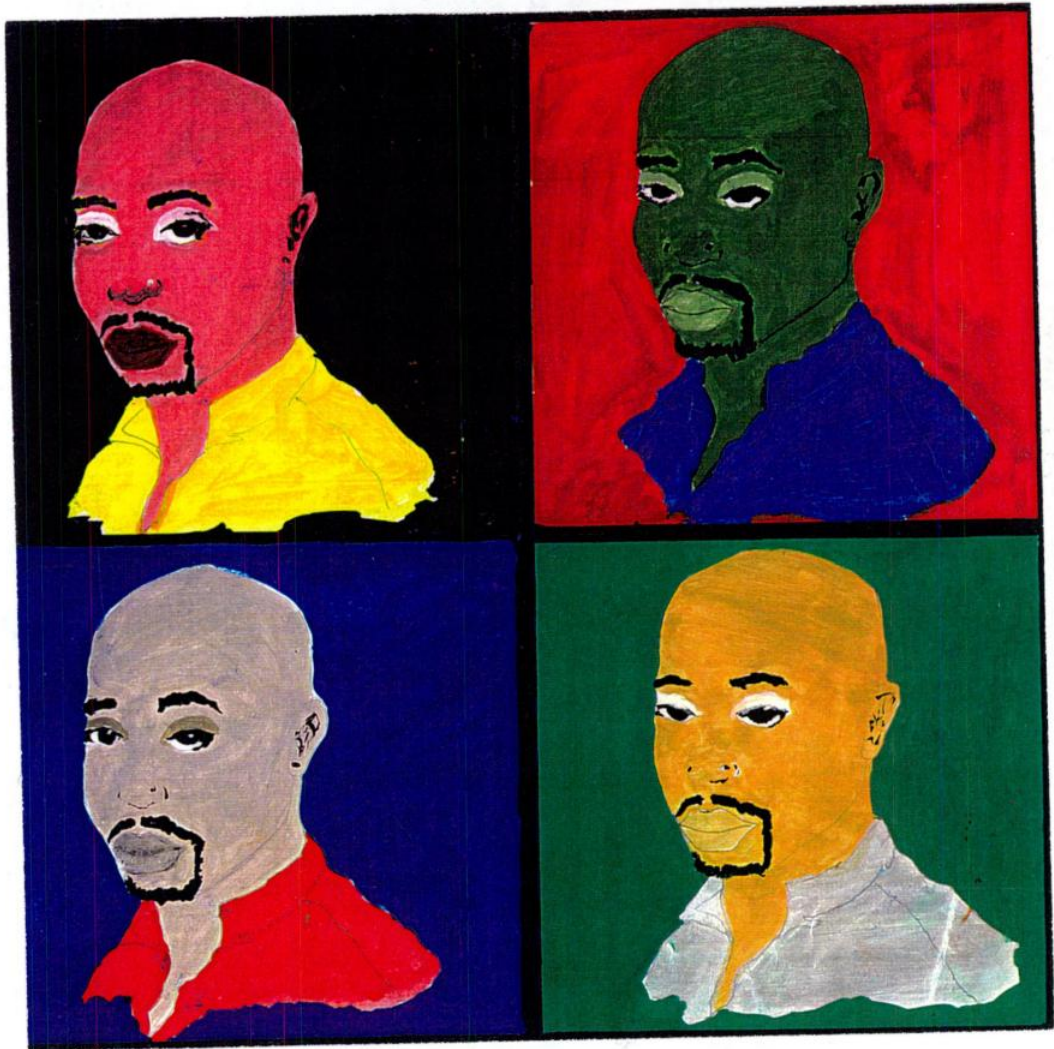


Fig IX – 2PAC, Rowan Kelly, Gouache, 16½x16½cm.



2

**APPENDIX 8****PAINTING PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. At the start of the project did you find the subject interesting?  
Yes/No

2. Have you ever made a painting of a personal object before? If yes, describe.

3. Do you think the drawings made from the object helped in coming up with the composition? Yes/No

4. What part of the project, if any, did you find difficult? Why?

5. Do you feel you have overcome that difficulty? Yes/No

6. Did you learn any new techniques or skills during the project?

7. Did the examples shown to you of artists and movements guide or influence you in designing your painting? Explain how.

8. Describe your painting.

9. Did you refer to your interests or pastimes in your painting?  
If yes, what are these?

10. What clues do you think your painting can give about:  
(a) you as a person, (b) any adolescent?

11. In what way do you think it reflects your home life?

12. In what way do you think it reflects your personality?

13. What do you think the object which you have painted symbolises?

Does it have a specific meaning to you?

What do you think the object might symbolise for someone else looking at your painting objectively?

14. Were you not pleased/pleased/very pleased with the result?

15. Did you enjoy the painting project? Yes/No

16. If you had to choose a simple title for your painting what would you call it?





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