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**COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINÉ IS DEARTHA
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN**

MODERNISM IN THE CLASSROOM

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE

DIPLOMA FOR ART AND DESIGN TEACHERS

BY

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I hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted as an exercise for a diploma or degree in any other college or university.

Signed Anne Madden

1900

1900

ABSTRACTION

The subject of this dissertation was Modernism in the classroom.

It was initiated by a reading of the Chief Examiner's Report on the 1996 Leaving Cert Art Exam.

The Leaving Cert students had no interest or knowledge in Modernism at either a practical or theoretical level was identified.

In Art History the Irish students favoured topic was the Bronze Age. Doubting that we are a nation of budding antiquarians the writer sought to find reasons for such a preference.

The Research began with Modernism itself - what defined it. The theories and philosophies of Modernism were not themselves 'modern' merely the evolved theories of an earlier time.

A lot of research went into connecting the links in the ill-ordered chain.

The writer Jos Alsops book on the History of the behaviour we call art-collecting proved invaluable.

The Art Educationalists writing in the journal Studies in Art Education were addressing the same type of problems Irish students were having with Art History.

Their studies indicate that as art is an ill-structured domain art-history teaching methods need revising.

It seems that pupil understanding increases where classes combine teaching Art-History alongside studio practice.

The scheme applied the practical methods of analytical Cubism in a series of exercises ending in an abstract collage.

The writer concluded from her research and the classroom project, that there are 3 problems to address.

1. The Marginalisation of Art History at second level creates the first hurdle for the student.
2. The need to integrate Art practice and Art theory.
3. Restructuring of art teaching methods given that Art is an ill-structured domain.

Received of the Treasurer of the
Board of Education the sum of
Twenty Dollars

for the purchase of books for the
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This receipt is valid only when
presented to the Treasurer of the
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Witness my hand and seal of office
this 1st day of January 1907

Attest my hand and seal of office
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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- No. 1 Manet - 'Le Dejeuner Sur L'Herbe'
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- No. 3 Les Demoiselle Davignon Picasso
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INTRODUCTION

The decision to focus on Modernism in this dissertation and as the basis for a classroom project was influenced by my reading of the Chief Examiner's Report on the 1996 Leaving Cert Art Exam.

The dissertation begins by trying to define Modernism.

The problems raised by this necessitated adopting a Lattice-type knowledge-seeking strategy.

The lack of clearly defined Modernist boundaries fulfil the later posited theory, that art is an ill-structured domain.

The classroom project ongoing at the periphery of the dissertation research tries to introduce Modernism to pupils not yet acquainted with Art History.

The following research indicates that the problems associated with the low academic standard of Art History papers at Leaving Cert level is not exclusively an Irish problem.

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CHAPTER 1

MODERNISM - THE ARTIST AS GENIUS

'Art is committed to that perception of the world which alienates individuals from their functional existence and performance in society - it is committed to an emancipation of sensibility, imagination and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity'.(1)

The term Modernism seems to evade precise definition. It cannot be viewed as a series of movements, as many of its movements were concurrent (2). The terms alone, implies modernity, modern attitudes. And Modernism personified attitude - its beginning identified in a stance of opposition taken by European artists (French) in the late 19th century towards the dictates of 'society' (specifically the 'bourgeois' ruling class).

The Modernist position is one that is generally recognised to be at odds with convention. (The emergence of the term Post-Modernism would tend to indicate that Modernism itself has now become conventional). The Post-Modernist issue is outside the scope of this dissertation and will only be referred to where necessary.

The author Glenn Ward cites the key terms which define Modernism:(2)

- Experimentation
- Innovation
- Individualism
- Progress

- Purity
- Originality

To study the phenomena of Modernism many aspects of the society that produced it and the influences of preceding societies will have to be touched on. Modernism in the arts is a problematic issue. It cannot be slotted neatly into a single historical category or even adequately categorised. It refers to all aspects of human development.

Modernism can partly be understood if examined as part of a rapidly evolving society. Modernism is a reflection in art of changes that were occurring in areas ranging from the Philosophical to the Technological.

There is some justification in seeing the development of photography as part of the impetus that caused the shift. Photography forced the artists to question their role in society. If the camera was merely a recorder of reality, when then were they?

It is this notion of the individual that I shall first examine. At this period, the position of the artist was hidebound by societal conventions. The art world was dominated by the influential Academies. Their power was an extension of and dependent upon the goodwill of the conservative ruling classes.

At a time when art criticism was in its infancy the power wielded by the Academies and Salons was very real. They ensured art products accorded with the taste of the buyers. (To sell, goods have to appeal to consumer tastes).

A Modernist attitude at this point could be viewed as a reassertion of artistic integrity. It had less to do with a wish to break with a 'style' than an unspoken need to break the stranglehold the Academies had on their lives.

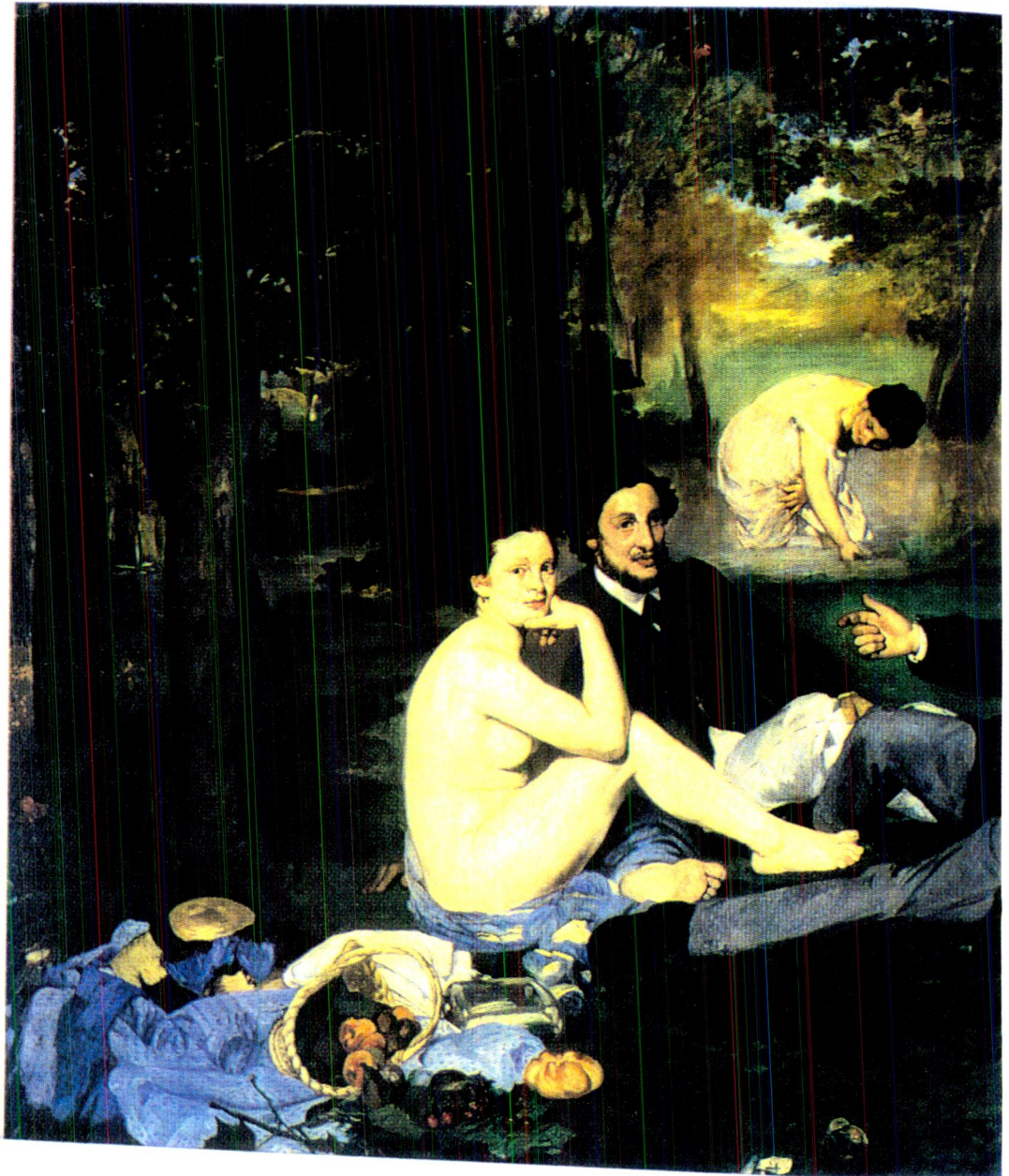
This self-analysis came about at a time of increasing self-awareness. The French Revolution of course had set in motion this shift from blind subservience to one of intelligent questioning. (4)

19th century Germany was awash with philosophers expounding idealist theories. Parisienne cafes were noted hotbeds of lively philosophical debating amongst writers, poets and artists. Information, the latest theories and philosophical arguments were disseminated in this manner. Kantian self-criticism is linked by critics as central to a Modernist approach.

The artists recognised that their art works were accepted at the Salon, if they complied with its unspoken dictates. The artists that are now pinpointed as being Modernist in outlook questioned such

Herbe

(104)
Paris



No. 1 Manet - 'Le Dejeuner Sur L'Herbe'

acquiescence. Did they truly identify with the mores of the Conservative society of their day, and if they did not should not their work reflect their difference. It is worth noting that those artists now pinpointed as being Modernist in outlook constituted a small minority. The majority of artists were quite happy to submit work year after year that was acceptable to the establishment.

It was not as if the general public wanted change either. They were quite happy for painting to sink into the abyss of entertainment and play a non-active role in society.

In France in 1863 when the Salon was challenged regarding its selection system the Emperor was forced to set up a Salon des Refuses to appease the loudly voiced discontent of those rejected - about 3,000 in number.

Artists like Manet and Cezanne whose work had been refused were now offered the Salon des Refuses. It meant they had to exhibit their work alongside paintings that would probably have deserved refusal on the grounds of incompetence. Though this could have led them losing all credibility with their peers, they chose to exhibit.

The public who came to view the paintings in the main did so in order to mock and jeer. It held a circus-like entertainment value for them.(5)

In a society that considered it indecent for a man or a woman to appear in public without wearing a hat, Manet's 'Le Dejeuner sur l'Herbe' was sure to provoke controversy (ill.1).

It is not the place of this dissertation to further analyse the painting. For our purposes it is suffice to state that it was a painting critical of society. It challenged the prevailing ideologies of that society, and those moral structures that were in place primarily to control the freedom of the individual. Such a stance by artists would have been influenced by Enlightenment scepticism. And according to Charles Harabui, Enlightenment ideals,

'...helps to explain modernist arts virtually complete disengagement from religious themes'.(6)

The French writer Emile Zola was a supporter of both Manet and Cezanne. He had been friends with Cezanne since childhood. He was vociferous in his declaration that no social program should impose itself on the creative mind.

"I state it as a fundamental that the work lives only by its originality; I must discern a man in each work, or the work leaves me cold", he wrote, and further along he declared art to be, " a negation of society, an affirmation of the individual beyond all rules and social necessities".(7)

And yet according to the noted Modernist art-critic Clement Greenberg, Modernist art should not be viewed as a break with the past. It is rather a continuation of those artistic traditions that went before albeit devoluted.

'The immediate aims of Modernist artists remain individual before anything else, and the truth or success of their work is individual before it is anything else'.(8)

Roger Clark in his essay 'The Post-Modernist Classroom' takes grave issue with the fact that such emphasis has been placed on the artist as an individual creator. He believes that the continued elevation of the artist under Modernism to be an abhorrence. In his essay he advocates the abandonment of such wrongly held ideals. He says -

'Post-modernist art scholars have unmasked this fraudulent image of artist-as-male-genius by shedding light on the social forces which enabled the great masters to gain their prominence'.(9)

Clark's criticism is with Modernism's continuing advocacy of the elevation of the 'original' artist to greatness. He claims that it is because of their privileged places within society that they were thus elevated.

It is a general held belief that such ideas on Artistic Genius stem from Renaissance Humanism. Since the Renaissance it is believed, that artists have wished to differentiate their work from 'mere' craftsmen and to stress the intellectual elements of their art. It became common knowledge that paintings depended on both mathematics and different branches of learning.(10)

Leonardo da Vinci is an outstanding example of such an artist. He is not a mere craftsman. His reputation rests on but a few paintings and yet he is easily the most revered painter in the world. His notebooks testify to the greatness of his intellect and also to his opinion of his own worth.

'...The miserable life should not pass without leaving some memory of ourselves in the minds of mortals'.(11)

The Art Historian Mary Ann Staiszewski in her book 'Believing is Seeing', would accord with Roger Clark's Post Modernist premise on the fraudulent nature of our reverence of genius. She too believes that the Renaissance concept which has continued into Modernity must be abandoned. She claims that it is privilege that is accountable for these male geniuses. She says that a lack of privilege is the reason we have no women geniuses and no geniuses of colour.(12)

A question this then raises, which is perhaps beside the point is why are not all males with privileged upbringings are geniuses. The position of women in history or outside history is very relevant but beyond the scope of this dissertation. The more pertinent question raised is on this point of privilege. I quote from the Encyclopedia of the Italian Renaissance.

'Throughout the Renaissance the majority of artists were of fairly humble origin;....In a sample of 136 painters, sculptors and architects in the years 1420-1540, 96 were the sons of artisans or shopkeepers'.(13)

At this period the artist was still a craftsman but with awareness of the value of what he was producing. It seems it was awareness of the inner self (as Leonardo was aware) that led to self-development on an intellectual level. These were the impetii that pushed the artist forward. This could only have occurred through their being a condusive intellectual climate that fostered learning. The development of writing on or about artists were also part catalysts in the changes.(14)

Man was emerging from virtual slavery under Feudalism. This precipitated a rise in self-consciousness. Writers had always been esteemed - not so the artist.(15) Post-Modernist Criticism does not question male writers claims to genius. But art has always suffered by virtue of the fact that the artist is manipulating not language, but materials of the earth. It has thus been linked with the manual which was historically deemed to require little intellectual work. Such are the prejudices that art and art education have continuously had to overcome.

But not all individuals would have responded equally to the changes of self-development offered.

David Fontana speaks of how in the 1930's as a result of the Behaviours-Movement, studies were made on how learning can affect behaviour. This came about at a time when it was questioned as to why the less privileged in society achieved less. Was it because of genetics or because of social constraints.

Studies proved that access to learning did improve intelligence. But recent studies have also shown that inherited intellectual characteristics also play an important part. So rather than genius being the product of only nature or only nurture it is rather a combination of the two.(16)

The first beginnings of a change of opinion about artists actually occurred before the Renaissance in DUantes 'Divina Commdia'. Here Dante speaks to Oderisi:

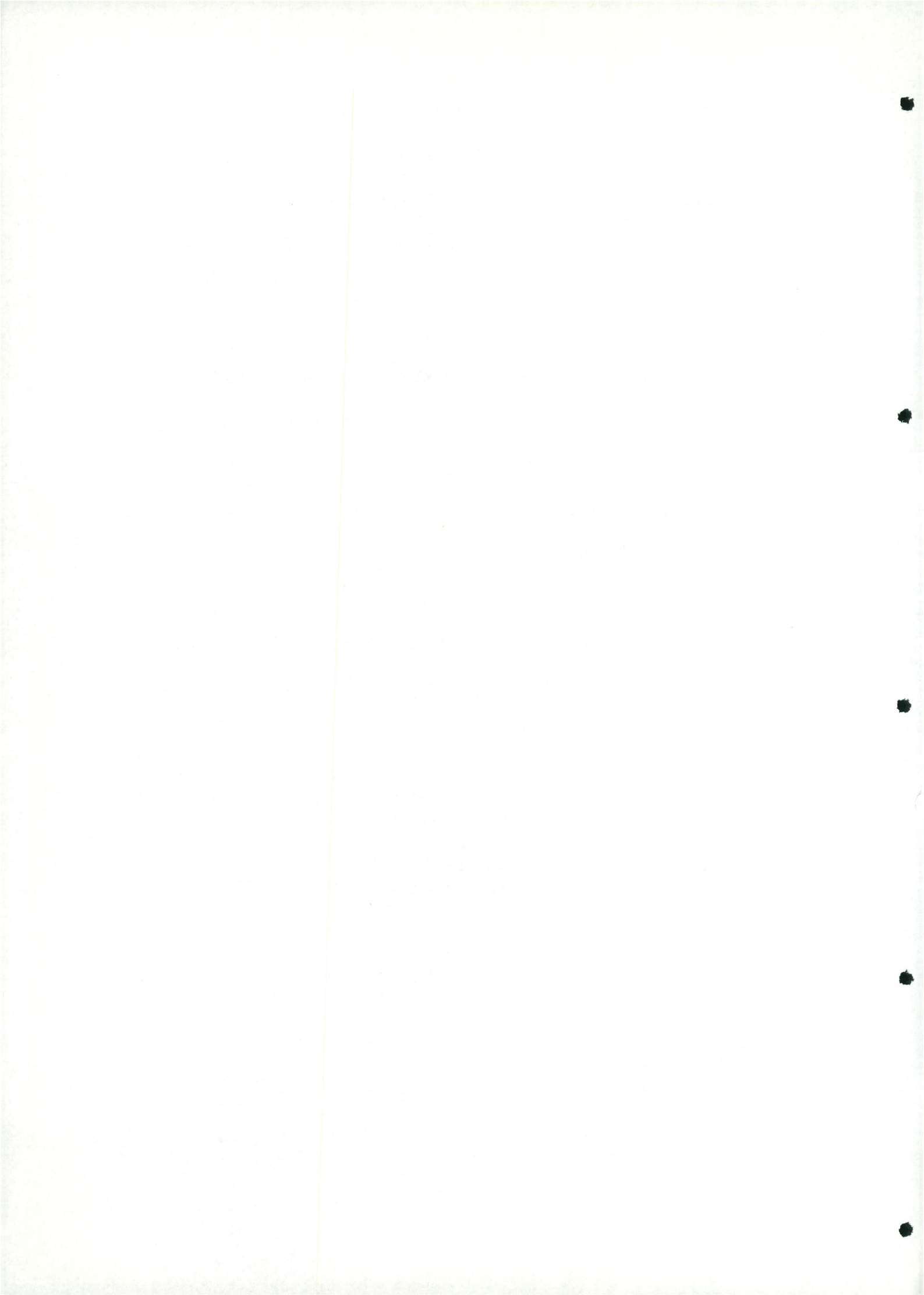
"Aren't you Od'risi?" I said, "He who was known as the honor of Agobbio, and of that art Parisians call *illumination*?"

"Brother", he said, "what pages truly shine are Franco Bologneses. The real honour is all his now, and only partly mine.

"While I was living, I know very well
I never could have granted him first place,
so great was my heart's yearning to excel.

"Here pride is paid for. Nor would I have been among those souls, had I not turned to God While I still had in me the power to sin.

"O gifted men, vainglorious for first place,
how short a time the laurel crown stays green
unless the age that follows lacks all grace!



"One Cimabue thought to hold the field in painting, and now Giotto has the cry so that the others fame, grown dim, must yield.(17)

What was most significant about this (and it caused much consternation in his own time) was that a man of letters was treating artists as important historical personages. Artists had never been considered important enough to appear in any history book.

Benvenuto Rambaldi a 14th century writer wrote a commentary on Dante which besought the reader to excuse such a liberty by his inclusion of artists along with noble persons in his work.


'...he shows how pride does not proceed in mortals only from ancient blood and brave deeds in war, and elegant manners, but also from excellence in the mechanic arts....Do not be surprised, O. reader, if the author places these artisans of the mechanic arts in the spheres of honor and fame'.(18)

Joseph Alsop maintains that this remembering of past masters marks a rebirth of such a habit.(189) It also marked new ways of thinking about art that had lain dormant or forgotten until the resumption of art collecting (20) as a behavioural trait.

To look at the Modernist notion of the artist as an original and a genius we have taken a meandering path. An understanding of Modernism does not lend itself to the linear approach to Art-History.

This approach would concur with Jerome J. Hausman's call for a need to move away from a 19th century approach to art making.

'A beaux arts tradition, a 'fixed objective base' for categorising art historical data, or an arts and crafts approach - each had its rationale developed in another time. If we are to meet the challenge ahead, it will be necessary to reorient our thinking to present day knowledge and dynamics.... The fields of the plastic arts, the history of art, and the design disciplines are themselves in flux, each reaching for broader ideational and operational significance. Our fields of knowledge and content will not stand still for us to fix rigid boundaries'.(21)



FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

1. H. Marcuse, "The Aesthetic Dimension", The Macmillan Press Ltd London 1979 p.9
2. G. Ward. 'Teach Yourself Post-modernism' (Hodder and Stoughton) 1997) p.33
3. '...art in this century is characterised by an enormous richness, complexity, contradictories, self-reflectiveness compared to art in previous centuries. It is arguable whether an overriding historicist view of Western art in the 20th century would not in fact be a gross reduction, a distortion of its exuberant diversity and contradictoriness.... A relapse into historicism and single categorical principles which ignore, indeed distort, the individuality of the contradictory ideas which prompted the developments we call modern art'.

Concepts of Modern Art, p.7
4. 'The dissolution of the monarchy and the academy began during the French Revolution, when the Republic was established and the academies were abolished. Although the academy, like the French monarchy, was quickly re-established, this dissolution marks the beginning of the gradual shift in the teaching and patronage of Art from a monarchical and public model to an individual enterprise supported predominantly by the private sector'.

M.A. Staniszewski, 'Believing is Seeing - Creating the Culture of Art', Penguin Books England 1995, p.163.
5. C. Harrison, Modernism, (Tate Gall. Pub)1997), p.24
6. C. Harrison ibid p.18
7. Frederick Brown Emile Zola - A Life Papermac 1997 p.110
8. C. Greenberg. 'Modernist painting' (in The New Art ed. G. Battcock (Dutton paperback 1973) p.75
9. R.Clark. 'The Post Modernist Classroom' (in Art Education No.98(Vol.51) p.8)
10. A. Blunt. 'Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1660' (Oxford University Press 1980) p.49
11. L. da.Vinci. 'Selection from the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci' p.274

12. 'The mythology of genius has held fast throughout modernity. We have now come to realise, however, that the concept of genius - the *natural* gift to create - is, rather, a talent developed thanks to privilege. If Genius is a natural attribute, why have there been no women Geniuses? No Geniuses of colour?

All of the Geniuses in Western culture were men, and here I am looking to individuals whose extraordinary accomplishments matched their mythic statures. Think of the geniuses that come to your mind: Picasso, Beethoven, Shakespeare, Einstein'.

M.A. Staniszewski. 'Believing is Seeing - Creating the Culture of Art' (Penguin Books 1995) p.125.

13. 'The Status of the Artist (in A Concise Encyclopaedia of the Italian Renaissance Thames and Hudson 1981) p.37
14. Albertis writings too plays a large part in this change.

'...that intelligence and a grasp of theoretical principles were as much a component of good art as craft training and manual competence; the emergence of the notion of individual genius the artists God like ability to create as well as record....'

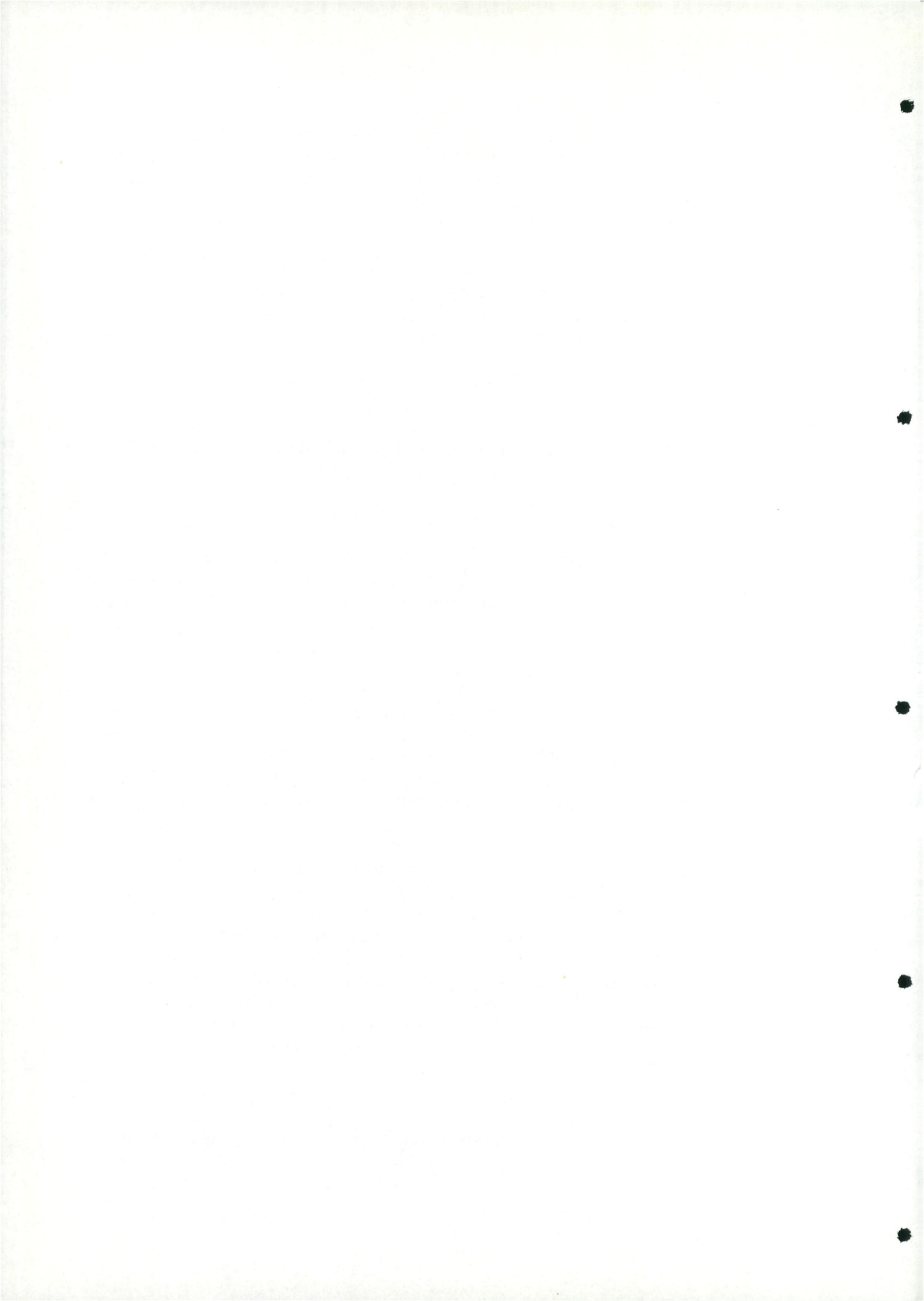
The Status of the Artist (ibid) p.38

15. 'I am fully aware that the fact of my not being a man of letters may cause certain presumptuous persons to think that they may with reason blame me, alleging that I am a man without learning. Foolish folk! Do they not know that I might retort by saying, as did Marius to the Roman Patricians; 'They who adorn themselves in the labours of others will not permit me my own'.

They will say that because I have no book learning, I cannot properly express what I desire to treat of....but they do not know that my subjects require for their exposition experience rather than the words of others. Experience has been the mistress of whoever has written well, and so as mistress I will cite her in all cases.... Those who are inventors and interpreters between Nature and Man, as compared with the reciters and trumpeters of the works of others, are to be regarded simply as is an object in front of a mirror in comparison with its image seen in the mirror, the one being something in itself, the other nothing'.

Leonarda da Vinci (ibid) p.2

Leonardo further expounds on this in p.6 where he quotes from Dante, Paradisoi p.94-96



16. D. Fontana 'Psychology For Teachers' (P.P.S. Books 1995) p.114
17. J. Alsop. 'The Rare Art Traditions. The History of Art Collecting and its Linked Phenomena' (Princeton University Press. Harper and Row, Publishers N.Y. 1982) p.286
18. J. Alsop *ibid* p.286
19. Although the canonical system controlled all Egyptian sculpture and the artist felt no urge to be original examples of signed works do occur.

'...art history's first known signature, meaning "I made this", is on a statue base in the wonderful complex at Saggara. This bears the name of Imhotep, the artist - architect - engineer of the whole complex, and the man who rose to the rank of grand vizier and was later deified. It is pleasing to see an actual artist's signature by one long among the gods"

J. Alsop *ibid* pp180-181
20. J. Alsop *ibid* p.183
21. J.J. Hausman. "The Plastic Arts, History of Art and Design - Three Currents towards identifying Content for Art Education (in 'Concepts in Art and Education. An Anthology of current issues' ed. by George Pappas) Pub. by The Macmillan Co. London 1970) p.44

CHAPTER 2

MODERNISM - THE AESTHETIC TASTE

Modernist or 'abstract' art works are not popular with the public. Many people feel alienated from such works on the grounds that they cannot understand them. The writings on such works also alienate people on the grounds of obscurity. As the writer Charles Harrison points out,

'...criticism and the making of art may not always be entirely distinguishable activities'.(1)

The Modernist critical tradition had its roots in the works of French 19th century writers who supported the work of Manet and the Impressionists. But by the turn of the century to the 1960's the most influential criticism has been either English or American. The most eminent names amongst the critics are those of Clive Bell, Roger Fry and Clement Greenberg. Where earlier historians had looked to the past in order to form judgements, Modernist critics tended to deal with their response to the work.

In 1967, the American Modernist Art Critic, Clement Greenberg asserted that the aesthetic effect of the work was where the content and quality lay, and not in the subject matter. Aesthetic judgements made on the basis of consideration of the subject (illustration) matter were invalid.

'Whereas one tends to see what is in an Old Master before seeing it as a picture, one sees a Modernist painting as a picture first. This is, of course, the best way of seeing any kind of picture, Old Master or Modernist, but Modernism imposes it as the only and necessary way, and Modernism's success in doing so is a success of self-criticism'.(2)

The writers linked to Modernism advocated that people look at artworks without using social or other considerations outside that of the picture itself. Paintings were just flat surfaces covered in paint. They desired people to see art as art and therein lies the limits of Modernist criticism.

Most people's fears in judging Modernist Art stems from the myth of the infallibility of the developed aesthetic taste.

Clive Bell's book 'Art' epitomises the style of early Modernist criticism which prioritised form and aesthetic value. In 1914, Clive Bell wrote

'...in the spectator a tendency to seek behind form the emotions of life is a sign of defective sensibility always. It means that his aesthetic emotions are weak'.(3)

Post-modernist critics would decry such a stance as 'arrogant and deluded'.(4) But has art criticism of this type conditioned people to fear even attempting to make their own judgement on art works.

Is it actually possible to have impeccable taste for quality in artworks.

The only way to answer this question is to look for historical evidence.



No. 3 Les Demoiselle Davignon Picasso

In 1906, when the painter Matisse exhibited a painting called 'The Joy of Life' at the Salon des Independents, the person most outspoken in condemning it was a leading modern painter, Paul Signac. He said it would not have been hung but for the fact that Matisse did not have to go through the selection committee as he Matisse, was on the hanging committee.

Signac a respected modern painter and member of the avant garde was at that moment acting like a member of the public.

When George Braque first saw Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon which is recognised as a key painting in his oeuvre, he was outraged. He thought the painting was a hoax.

In 1908 when Matisse was on the jury of the Salon d'Automme he rejected a painting by Braque sneering at the landscape with 'little cubes'.

And, In 1912, the Cubists rejected 'Nude descending a staircase' submitted by Marcel Duchamp.(5)

In 1909 when the art critic Roger Fry included two Picassos in an Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries entitled 'Manet and the Post-

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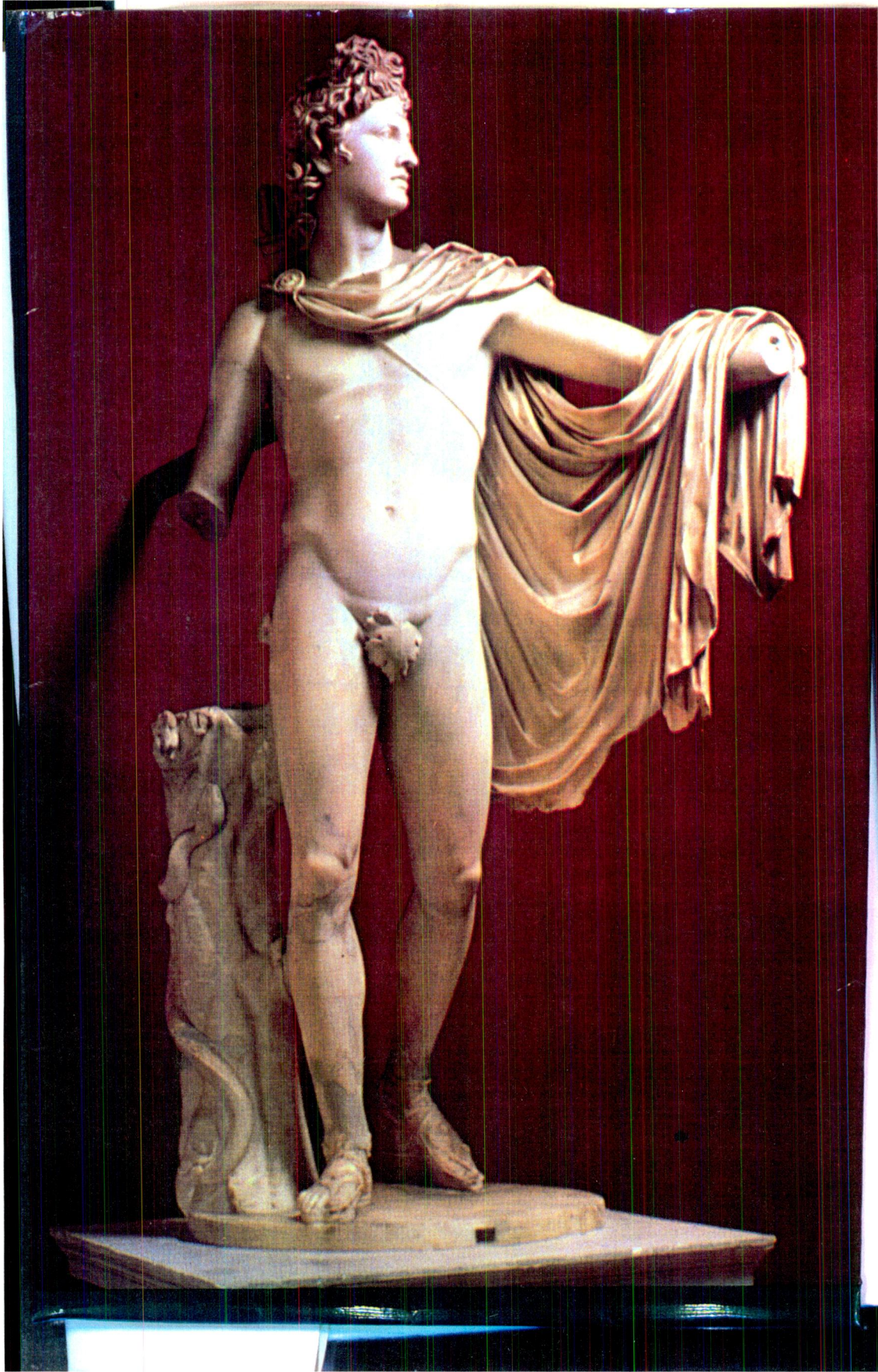
Impressionists' his paintings caused an uproar. One was a pre-Cubist portrait 'Portrait of Clovis Sagot' the other 'Nude Girl with Basket of Flowers'.

The artists in the Chelsea Arts Club put on an exhibition to ridicule the artists. One artist who signed himself Francois Rotton had painted a caricature of the 'Portrait of Clovis Sagot' and re-titled it 'Portrait of the Artist (painted with his left hand).(6)

The writer Leo Steinberg says that such incidents seem to follow a general pattern. Whenever a truly new and original art appears the artists are the first to condemn it. Leo Steinberg sees such aesthetic dilemmas as belonging to the domain of Modern Art.

'...I have little confidence in people who habitually, when exposed to new works of art, know what is great and what will last. Alfred Barr, of the Museum of Modern Art, has said that if one out of ten paintings that the Museum of Modern Art has acquired should remain valid in retrospect, they will have scored very well. I take this to be, not a confession of inadequate judgement, but an assertion about the nature of contemporary art. Modern art always projects itself into a twilight zone where no values are fixed'.(8)

Are such aesthetic 'misjudgements' confined to modern art? If bad judgements by those with supposedly refined tastes can occur with artworks from other periods does that mean our understanding of 'good' and 'bad' taste needs to be reassessment.



No. 2 The Appolo Belvedere Greco Roman

The Modernist Art critic Clive Bell asserted -

'To those that can hear, Art speaks for itself....'(9)

In his book 'The Rare Art Traditions' Joseph Alsop devotes one section to 'The Role of Learning'. In this, he shows how even the most eminent scholars and connoisseurs of art lose their finely honed aesthetic sensibilities when faced with works of art alien to their culture. When faced with the unknown, the connoisseurs proved unable to differentiate between 'Kitch' and quality. Alsop speaks about how we in(10) the West have invariably opted for the worst examples of Eastern Art and vice versa.

'The effect of Japanese prints on avant-garde 19th century artists like Degas is also a commonplace of art-history. But the point is that until very late in the game, even Western Artists and collectors with the very best eyes almost always chose the worst rather than the best, by the standards of Chinese and Japanese aesthetes and connoisseurs.

No serious Japanese collector of the 19th century would have given house room to the prints Degas loved, for instance.

By the same token, want of knowledge and understanding caused Western connoisseurs and collectors to miss the most golden opportunities to acquire the very best of Far Easter Art'.(11)

Alsop discussed the case of the Apollo Belvedere, a revered Greco Roman sculpture. When Michaelangelo painted Christ in his 'Last Judgement' he borrowed the Apollo. Michaelangelo hailed the Apollo as a 'unique miracle of art'. (12) The sculptor Bernini similarly in thrall, borrowed the Apollo when creating his Apollo and Daphne.

In his youth Goethe writing in his *Italienische Roise* said of the Apollo that it

'.....swept me off my feet'.(13)

And Goethe in his later autobiography says that the Apollo

'....carries off the victory before all others'.(14)

The feelings these artists and writers experienced was what Clement Greenberg and other writers call arts aesthetic effect. To experience a work of art in this manner is to experience the 'quality' of the work.(15)

The time is long past when people made pilgrimages to the Vatican to admire the Apollo. Since then, our feelings towards the Apollo have changed. Few serious people feel it worth their while to visit it.

'History explains the somewhat machine-made look of the Apollo's stony surfaces. This is a marble copy of a bronze original that was perhaps the work of Leochares, a fairly shadowy, probably Athenian sculptor of the late 4th century BC. Such Greek masterpieces of the great periods were copies by the thousands, mainly at second hand, and hundreds of years after their own time, in semi-industrial Greek statuary workshops that supplied a strong demand in Rome'.(16)

As Alsop states, 'bad taste'(17) and 'good taste' do not exist as such. The peoples of different places and eras have tastes of their time. But just as tastes change with time, the way that people see, changes with

Joseph Turner

Turner caricatured
This drawing, published in 1846, shows the mockery Turner endured from uncomprehending critics. His Snowstorm was described as 'soapsuds and whitewash'.



No. 4 Snowstorm Turner



time. The way people see, is dependent on how they have learned to see.

Most people even those who would claim to know nothing about the arts would accept that Turner's famous 'Snowstorm' is a masterpiece. Yet, the critics of his day, those most used to looking at art found it incomprehensible. It was sneered at and described as 'soapsuds and whitewash'.(18) His vision had moved beyond the limits of theirs. Time and education through familiarity have helped us appreciate it.

V. goan

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2

1. C. Harrison Modernism (Tate Gall. Pub. 1997) p.42
2. C. Harrison *ibid* p.42
3. Clement Greenberg 'Modernist Painting' in *The New Art* ed. by G. Battcock (Dutton and Co. US 1973) pp.70-71
4. Glenn Ward *Teach Yourself Postmodernism* (Hodder and Stoughton 1997) p.39
5. Leo Steinberg. 'Contemporary Art and the Plight of its Public' in *The New Art* ed. by Gregory Battcock (Dutton paperback 1973) p.208
6. Roland Penrose. 'Picasso, His Life and Work' (Granada Publishing 1981) p.186
7. Leo Steinberg *op.cit* p.217
8. Leo Steinberg *op.cit* p.225
9. C. Harrison *The Rare Art Trad. The History of Collecting and its Linked Phenomena* (Princeton Univ. Press 1982) p.81
10. G. Ward *Teach Yourself Post Modernism* (Hodder and Stoughton 1997) p.39

Clement Greenberg the Modernist Art Critic believed that 'True' culture was always under constant threat from Kitch.

'There are two meanings of Kitch in Greenberg's essay. On the one hand, it is a sentimental sort of pseudo art which rips off the products of 'quality' high culture. Perhaps we might think of certain performers of easy listening music as fitting this description. Or in painting, we might think of, certain artists who present 'Painting for Pleasure and Profit' programmes on day-time TV. Greenberg would include bad high culture in this definition as well. The melodramatic paintings produced by many artists during the Victorian era would be singled out for particular contempt'.

11. J. Alsop (*op.cit*) p.81
12. J. Alsop *ibid* p.3
13. J. Alsop *ibid* p.3

- 14 J. Alsop *ibid* p.3
- 15 C. Harrison *op.cit* p.42
- 16 J. Alsop *op.cit* p.2
17. J. Alsop *ibid* p.2
- 18 The 'Great Artists Their Lives and Inspiration' Turner (pub. by Marshall Cavendish 1985) p.107

CHAPTER 3

MODERNISM AND THE IMAGINATION

'Art mirrors but only what is selected in the Mirror'.(1)

'Art is not a mirror. It mediates and represents social relations in a schema of signs which require a receptive and preconditioned reader in order to be meaningful'.(2)

Both of the above statements are true. In each case what the mirror is reflecting has been manipulated by the human mind, by intelligence.

But connecting with what the mirror is trying to communicate presents a problem. The minds that will connect with the puzzle is the mind that is accustomed to thinking in a like manner. Once again if we look to Art history we will find graphic proof of this.

In the schools of 15th century Florence, the emphasis was on teaching mathematics. It was a commercial type of mathematics suited to the merchant known as Gauging. At that period the merchant class were in the ascent.

The artist Piero della Francesca is also the author of a mathematical handbook for merchants called 'De Abaco'. The writer Michael Baxandall in his book 'Painting and Experience in 15th century Italy' describes how painters made use of the viewers knowledge of gauging. In their paintings the artist would deliberately include

geometric elements calculated to invoke the gaugers response in the viewer.(4)

The response from the viewer is essentially one of classification. And classification has been identified as one of the vital steps in the process of understanding (5) Classification involves the ability to place information into categories which collectively interlink to aid greater understanding.

In our schools at second level, when it comes to the written work, abstraction is an accusation that is rarely levelled at poetry. Yet poetry often uses very esoteric language to transmit ideas.

Poetry is a major component of the current Leaving Cert English course. Some of the poems on the course could be classified as fairly abstract. Yet none of these poems have ever been cited as being inaccessible. The teachers appear to have methods of analysis that aid the pupil's understanding.

Below is a verse from 'Among School Children' by William Butler Yeats. It is on the current Leaving Cert Syllabus. It is regarded by many as Yeats' greatest poem.

'Plato thought nature but a spume that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things,
Soldier Aristotle played the law
Upon the bottom of a King of Kings;

World-famous golden thighed Pythagoras
Fingered upon a fiddle-stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard:
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird'.(6)


This poem is considered by teachers to be difficult for Leaving Cert Students - yet the imaginative use of language is not considered impenetrable.

One reason may be, is that pupils are daily using and transforming the language of words.

Words are more familiar to them than paintings. It is not current classroom practice below fifth year to discuss an art work at least once a week. It is not current classroom practice to begin discussing paintings with students before they reach fifth year in our second level schools.

From first year onwards students are tackling poetry on at least a weekly basis.

By the time they reach fifth year they will have four years of exposure to the imaginative art of language that we call poetry.



It would no doubt be considered an impossibility for them to tackle poetry such as the Yeats' poem at Leaving Cert level, if they had never had any real contact with the world of poetry prior to this.

Yet it is expected that the same Leaving Cert students should be capable of studying Art History in two years.

In her study, 'The effects of prior knowledge, presentation time and task demands on visual art processing', Judith Smith Koroscik, discussed what effect such factors had on understanding of art works, with varying levels of abstraction.

She found that prior knowledge was a crucial factor in understanding abstract work. The more representational the work the easier it was for the viewer to find meaningful links.

She also found that when less rather than more works were used (as in slide-shows) the students were able to process the works more easily.

Where abstract works were presented without contextual information, the students were able to remember very little about the works. They did not have the necessary accompanying information that aided

understanding (the historical, social, political economic or religious context) that had enabled such works to be produced.

She concluded that

'Educators take on an arduous task when they attempt to identify pre-requisite knowledge for the processing of artworks that display varying levels of abstraction'.(8)

Pupils only begin studying Leaving Cert poetry having attained a wide knowledge base (at least 3 years studying poetry) from which to work from.

By fifth year they would be capable of transferring prior knowledge regarding metre, mythology, period of classification etc. onto the new poem.

The teacher would be adept at providing verbal cues to aid pupils elaborate on possible meaning. This is because she is working within a set number of poems proscribed for that year.

The current Art History course extends from the Stone Age to Modernism. The pupils must absorb all of this knowledge over a two year period. They are then expected to apply this knowledge in an intelligent manner (non-rote) to their exam questions.

'One of the most important characteristics of intelligence is the ability to transfer previously acquired knowledge to new learning situations. In order for students to make use of their cognitive resources they must find meaningful connections

between their existing knowledge and whatever they are attempting to understand'.(9)

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 3

1. Roger Clark 'Constructing a Post Modernist Classroom in (Art Education Vol.51 No. 6 No. 88) p.6
2. Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock 'Old Mistresses, Women Art and Ideology' (pub. by Routledge and Kegan Paul 1981) p.119
3. C. Harrison op.cit p.10

'...there is relatively widespread agreement that such works as these have on the whole remained incomprehensible and in many cases unattractive to the great majority of people who would no doubt see themselves in all other respects as qualified inhabitants of the modern world'.

4. Michael Baxandall 'Painting and Experience in 15th century Italy' (pub. by p.86-87)

'...many of the painters, themselves business people had gone through the mathematical secondary education of the lay schools: this was the geometry they knew and used. On the other side, the literate public had these same geometrical skills to look at pictures with: it was a medium in which they were equipped to make discriminations and the painters knew this. An obvious way for the painter to invoke the gauger's response was to make pointed use of the repertory of stock objects used in the gauging exercises, the familiar things the beholder would have been made to learn his geometry on - cisterns, columns, brick towers, paved floors and the rest..... When a painter like Piero used a pavilion in his painting, he was inviting his public to gauge'.

5. David Fontana 'Psychology for Teachers' (pub. by Macmillan Press Ltd 1995 pp.110-111)
6. W.B. Yeats 'Among School Children'
7. Judith Smith Koroscik 'The effects of prior knowledge, presentation time and task demands on visual art processing' in (Studies in Art Education vol. 23 Part 3, 1982) pp.13-22
8. Judith Smith Koroscik ibid p.22
9. J.S. Koroscik, Georgianna Short, G. Stavroponlous, 'Frameworks for Understanding Art: The Funcion of Comparative Art Contexts and Verbal Cues' in (Studies in Art Education 33 (3) 1992) p.154

CHAPTER 4

MODERNISM AND THE LEAVING CERT EXAMINATION

Modernism has dominated art for the past 100 years yet this is not reflected in the work being submitted for the Leaving Cert Art Exam.

If the Leaving Cert Art Exam were taken as an indicator, the average Irish school-leaver would appear to be more interested in the Bronze Age than the Modern Age. Questions on contemporary art, or art that veers towards abstraction are not being answered. Also the general standard of answering questions on the History paper was not very high.(1)

The following is a selection of the findings made by the Chief Examiner in his report on the 1996 Leaving Cert Art Exam. I will begin with the History of Art paper.

<u>Irish Art</u> (Higher Level) (No. of candidates answering from a sample of 338)	
(A)	148 - Bronze Age
(B)	12 - Living Artist
(C)	0 - Kathy Prendergast(2)
(A)	Although the Bronze Age was the most popular choice, candidates appeared to have <u>no knowledge of Bronze Age culture, and its artefacts</u> .(3)
(B)	With the question on Living Artists, most candidates confined their discussion to <u>materials</u> , <u>themes</u> and <u>biographical</u> details. <u>STYLISTIC INFLUENCES</u> , did not feature strongly.(4)

European Art (Higher Level) (No. of candidates answering from a sample of 338)	
(D)	114 - Giotto
(E)	0 - Picasso/Bronze
(F)	21 - Cezanne(5)
(D)	Most candidates could not name a second work by Giotto and merely focused on the stylistic difference between his work and that of Cimabue.(6)
(F)	Most candidates ignored the influence of Cezanne on Modernism. Answering was of a vague nature and did not analyse in any meaningful way, the examples given.(7)

The Chief Examiner's report states that overall the standard of answering was poor.

'Instructions like 'describe and discuss' 'compare and contrast' and 'define' were ignored and unfocussed narrative of a general nature was, regrettably all too frequently encountered by examiners'.(8)

The Chief Examiner's findings in the practical components of the exam show the same bias.

With regard to the question on Imaginative Composition he says, 'Stylistically, naturalism and realism predominated, with few taking up the abstract option'.(9)

And on the Still Life paper, he comments,

'Very few abstract or cubistic treatments based on the objects chosen, were presented by candidates'.(10)

In the History paper, did the majority of candidates opt for the questions on the Bronze Age and Giotto from a reasoned intellectual preference? Or were the Abstract Art options avoided because they were considered too difficult?

The Chief Inspector has noted the failure of the Irish student to display a deep (and therefore more meaningful) response to either Modernism or other art.(11)

This low standard is a reflection of the level of the candidate's knowledge base. For a pupil to successfully answer an Art History question, they need to be able to access information from a wide variety of sources.

This will become an obvious necessity once the new Art History curriculum comes on stream. But it has always been true in relation to dealing with Modernism in Art.

But to develop a point made in the last chapter I believe that if pupils are unused to looking at art objects in any serious way (on a regular basis) or expressing their opinions, they will lack those language skills needed to appraise, in their written work.

'...conceptual understanding of art is clearly linked to the development of language skills'.(12)

For example, a set of rules, could be given to infallibly identify Gothic architecture.

But with Modernism there is no such consistency.

For the teacher using teaching methods suited to the well-structured domain abstraction in art in the Modernist period poses many difficulties. At its simplest, Modernism is not immediately accessible.(14)

Because the works are unfamiliar there may be a fear in finding ways to deal with them.

'A curriculum that has the potential for exposing students to a greater number of overlapping and interconnected ideas has a greater likelihood for facilitating transfer. Transfer occurs when two different ideas or concepts are seen to have elements in common.In art, the overlapping elements could be ideas common to both art-history and social-history or seeing connections between art historical study and the history of aesthetics..... A potential hazard in discipline - based curricula is the temptation to develop ideas of content from each field independently despite the fact that there are overlapping ideas among them'.(15)

For the teacher working in the ill structured domain of Art, to use the lattice method outlined would require that they can provide the student with a wide knowledge base.(16) It is challenging for the teacher as well as the student.

'...it requires positive teaching; and because artefacts which are deemed to be works of art stem from realms of extraordinary achievement this necessary teaching often features the communication of rare and sophisticated concepts'.(17)

Difficulty in understanding also arises when there is a breakdown in the transmission of knowledge. I think it is fair to say that those bodies responsible for setting examinations also have a responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are being produced to meet the needs of all subjects on the curriculum.

As art is a subject dealing with aspects of the production and assessment of visual objects, it follows that the pupil must be familiarised with the subject using good visual aids (well illustrated books included).

The IMMA is the only outlet in Dublin selling slides on Modernist Art. They currently have 25 slides for sale. 14 of these slides are of Irish Modernist Art. There are no videos available on Irish artists who fit into the category or Modernism.

Now I would also like to point out, that there are no slides available from the Office of Public Works on any of its monuments nor from the National Museum on any of its exhibits (including the Bronze Age).

This then once again raises the question that the problem with

Modernism is more than a lack of resources, which would appear to be the case.

The painter Eugene Delacroix said

'...painting is nothing but a bridge set up between the mind of the artist and that of the beholder'.(18)

...and it is the job of the art teacher to guide the pupils across that bridge.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 4

1. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report 1996 ibid p.6
 'At Higher Level candidates should be conversant with what distinguishes the major historical styles from one another. Discussion of visual qualities and characteristics - of artworks, of individual artist's personal styles, and of artistic movements and trends - are frequently the weakest elements in answering. Quite detailed information about different individual artists was undermined, all too often, by poor knowledge of the larger context of the art style or historical movement - even on a very basic, stylistic level'.
2. Leaving Cert. Examination 1996 (Art Including Crafts) Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report Ordinary Level Chief Examiner's Report (Dept of Education 1996) p.23
3. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report 1996 ibid p.2
4. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report 1996 ibid p.2
5. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report 1996 ibid p.23
6. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report 1996 ibid p.3
7. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report 1996 ibid p.4
8. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report 1996 ibid p.6
9. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report 1996 ibid p.8
10. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report 1996 ibid p.10
11. Higher Level Chief Examiner's Report 1996 op.cit p.4
12. Arthur D. Efland 'The Spiral and The Lattice: Changes in Cognitive Learning Theory with Implications for Art Education' (in Studies in Art Education 36(3) p.143
13. A.D. Efland ibid p.144
14. A.D. Efland ibid p.152
 'Pluralistic notions of the nature of art abound, including the notion that contemporary art forms are doubly coded, where the same work may intentionally convey different or conflicting meanings to the viewer.'

15. A.D. Efland *ibid* p.150
16. Dr. Niall Ferguson (fellow and tutor in History at Jesus College Oxford) from *Education and Living in the Irish Time* 5 January, 1999 p.11

'I owe a huge debt to my teachers and to Ronnie Woods in particular. But for him I would not have become an historian. In his classes there was no limit to what you could read. It has an intellectual liberation. He encouraged a sense that history was an individual quest for truth and not just something you had to learn. You could study things that mattered in an independent way, instead of being handed a text book and told to learn it'.

17. Andrew Mortimer 'Critical Studies in Art and Design Education' ed. by David Thistlewood (pub. by Longman 1990) p.6
18. Eugene Delacroix 'The Journal of Eugene Delacroix' (ed. by Hubert Wellington (pub. by Phaidon - Oxford 1980) p.346

CHAPTER 5

MODERNISM - THE CLASSROOM PROJECT

The classroom project linked to the dissertation on Modernism took place in St. Mary's Secondary School Baldoyle Co. Dublin.

St. Mary's is an all girls convent school run by the Sisters of Charity. It has about 450 pupils.

The project took place with a fifth year group for one double period (80 mins) per week. The class were assessed by their art teacher to be of mixed ability.

The art room is recent to the school. It is a bright well equipped room.

The project was undertaken by the trainee having read the findings of Chief Examiner on the 1996 Leaving Cert Art Exam. This report indicated that the questions on Modernism in the Art History paper and a Modernist approach in the practical area were by and large avoided by the exam candidates.

Was Modernism being avoided because it was too difficult or the fear of the unknown?



The clearest objective the trainee had when she began was that she wanted the class to undertake a series of exercises in abstraction leading to the eventual making of an abstract painting.

She was guided in her approach to abstraction by a successful Fine Art painter whose work would be classified as both Modernist and abstract.

The project began with the first lesson focusing on line and tone.

The teacher had set up a still life arrangement which consisted of 3 large forms draped in white fabric. The pupils using viewfinders had to make three thumbnail sketches of 3 different areas on the still life. They then had to choose one area draw it on a larger scale and develop the drawing using tone.

The pupils were given irregularly shaped viewfinders. The idea of using odd shapes had been suggested to the teacher by The Art Teaching handbook.

It was a challenging task for the class to make drawings from white fabric. They had to follow the abstract lines of the draped fabric and translate this onto their page. They were basically working with

abstract shape using line and tone. The absence of objects with illustrative value meant they had to totally concentrate on the form.

The second lesson in the scheme was aimed to introduce the pupils to the work of 4 modernist artists who worked in an abstract manner. Although at this stage the teacher had not yet arrived at a clear aim in her dissertation which was on the theme of Modernism.

The class had not yet begun Art History and so they knew very little about art beyond the practical elements.

The teacher showed 20 slides on the works on Morris Louis, Picasso, Jasper Johns and Paul Klee.

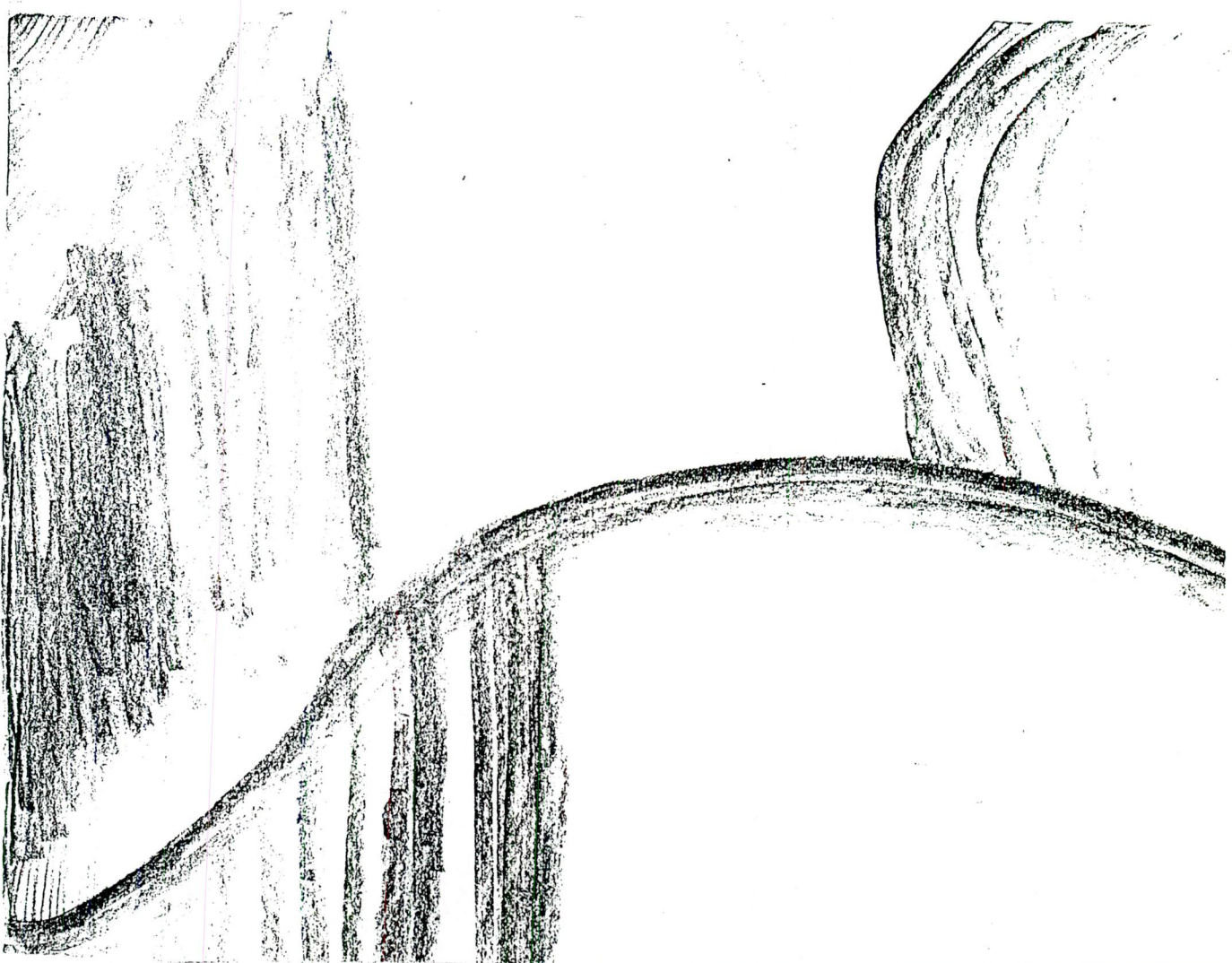
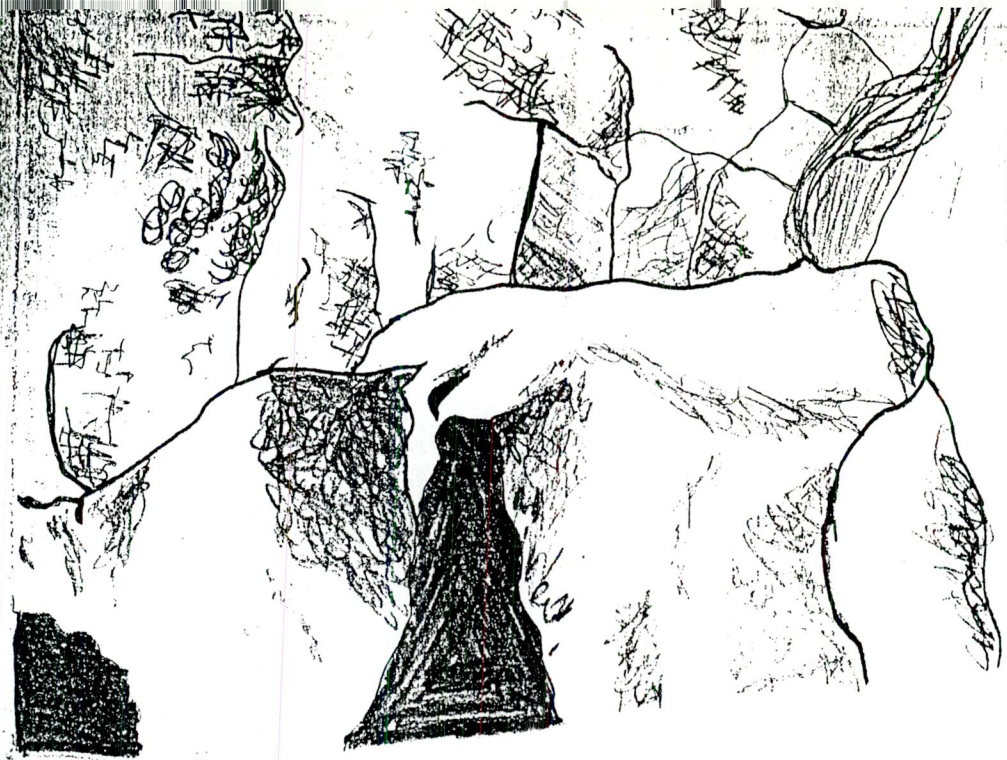
She first showed each slide for one minute or so without any commentary or verbal cues such as titles. She asked the pupils to simply write numbers 1-20 on their pages to correlate with each slide and to write down the answers to these two set questions.

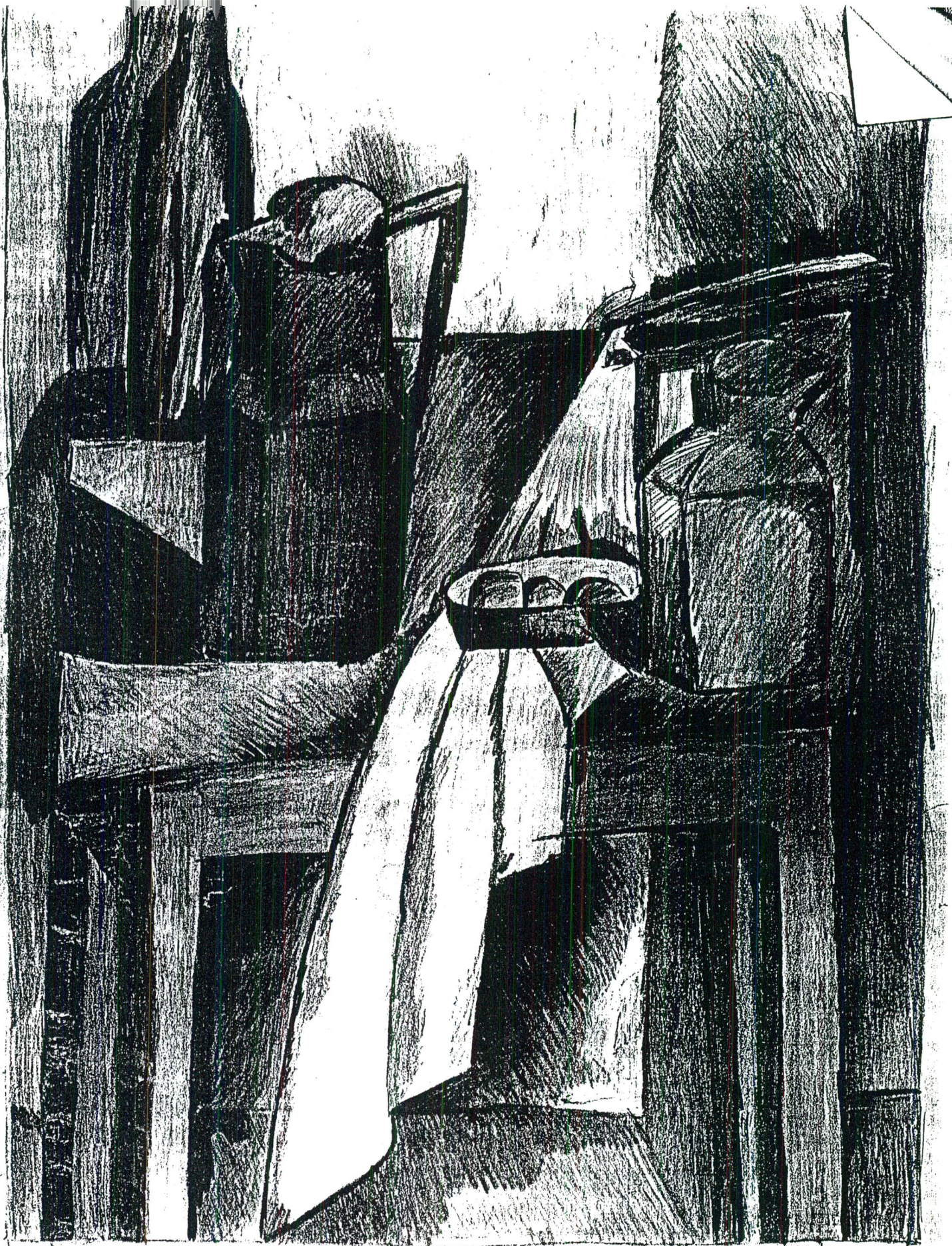
'Do you like the painting, and why?'

'What do you think the painting is about?'

She told the pupils to feel free to write their true feelings. The work was not going to be collected but only used in that class for discussion.

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Becker





Huone Aileen

Having gone through the slides once with the students filling in their answers she then went through each slide a second time. But this time she first gave the title of the painting which the students then had to fill in on their questionnaires. A class discussion ensued about the works in question. She felt that she should perhaps have had a typed questionnaire pre-prepared. Although she wanted to keep the questions to a minimum, and keep the format as simple as possible, given that this was these students first encounters with Art-History.

The discussion focused on formal elements and also discussed possible content or not.

In the next lesson (No. 3) the teacher again concentrated on drawing. Again the students were asked to focus in on areas of a still life group. This time the emphasis was on texture and pattern in natural and man-made objects.

The pupils had to select and draw sections of objects focusing on their textural qualities. The support studies by Grosz Hockney and Braque were used to initiate discussion on texture and how the artists dealt with this problem.

The students were then given as homework a choice of a Cubist art work to copy. The purpose of this exercise was to make them study an

artwork for a prolonged period. Some students said it took them over an hour to complete their drawing.

Leonardo da Vinci in his notebooks comments on such a practice

'And adverse opinion says that to acquire practice and do a great deal of work it is better that the first period of study should be employed in drawing from various compositions done by diverse masters on paper or on walls. And that in this way practice and good methods are rapidly acquired; to which I reply that this method will be good, if based on works of good composition done by skilled masters'.(1)

The students had a choice of good quality colour photocopies of the works of Picasso, Braque or Cezanne.

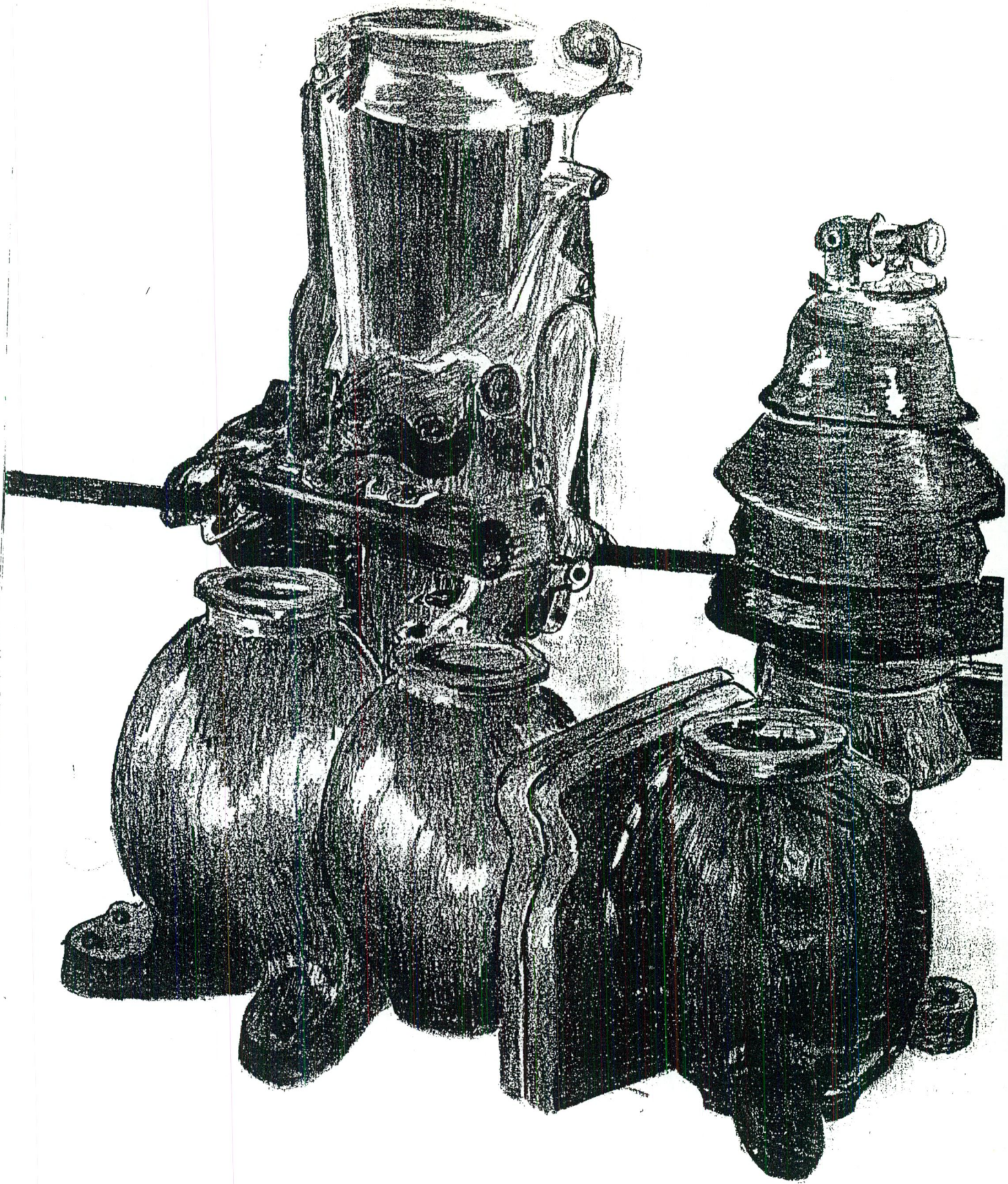
They also had to answer five questions on their chosen artist. The questions were discussed in class before students left.

These questions were;

1)	Do you think the painting has a harmonious composition (balance)?
2)	Do you think the artist has arranged the objects in a pleasing manner?
3)	Describe the 'shapes' you see.
4)	Describe the patterns.
5)	Do you like the painting?



STUDENT'S WORK



Yvonne Allen

STUDENT'S WORK using Cragg sculpture.

The trainee teacher was now in the fourth lesson and this time the lesson focused on composition and the creation of mood through tone. Light- cheerful, Dark- ominous. The support studies used were works by Leger and Seurat. The pupils were given an exercise in tone for their homework. They had to draw from a photocopy of a Tony Cragg Sculpture titled 'In Camera'. At this stage the teacher was not happy that the project was going in the right direction.

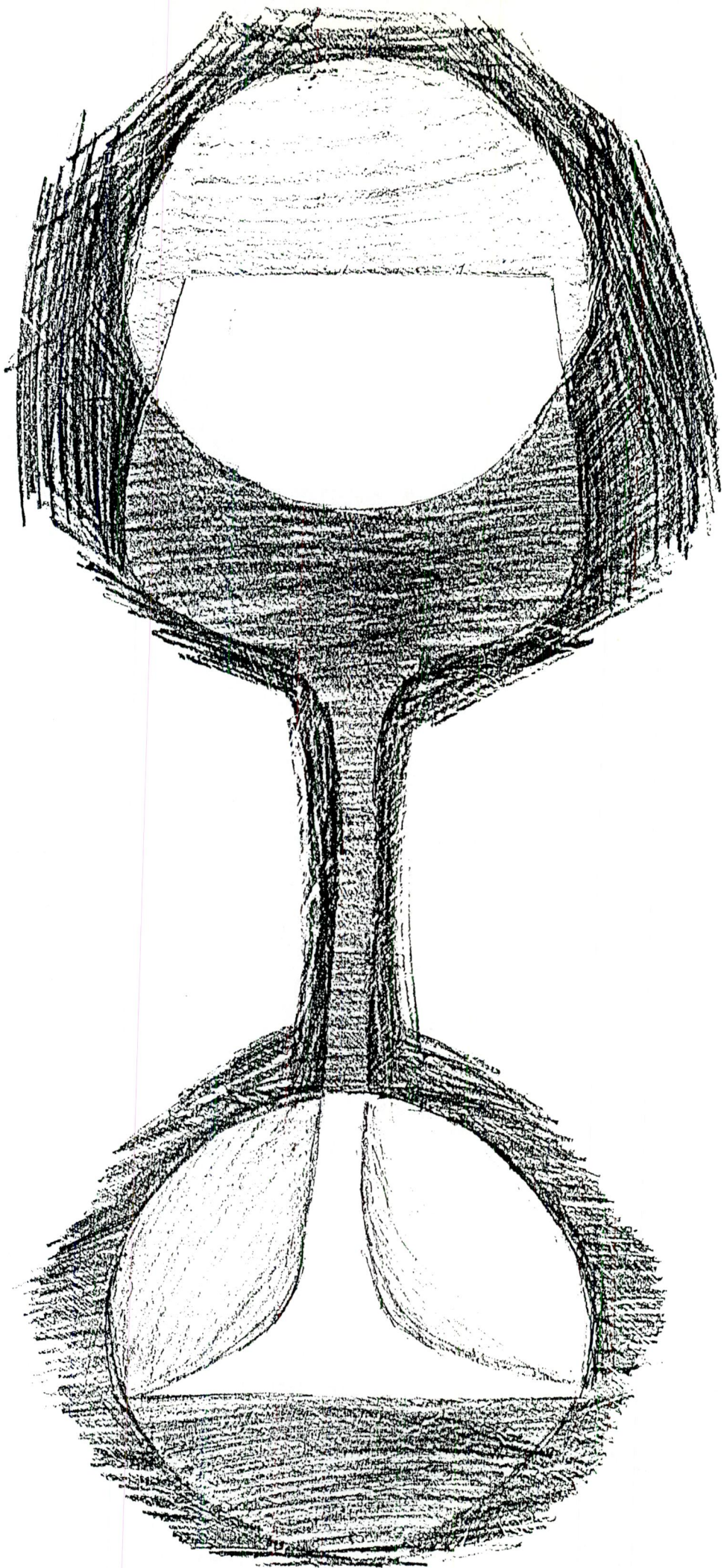
She felt that for them to gain real understanding of abstraction another approach was needed. She decided that they would make a series of drawings using the principles of Analytic Cubism as outlined in a book produced by tutors in the Chelsea School of Art.

She felt that using such an approach was based on sound principles. The pupils were not 'imitating' the 'appearance' of Cubist works.

They were gaining an understanding of both the theory and practical methods that had led Cubism to evolve.

In the first lesson, the pupils were introduced to Cubist drawing by looking at the works of the artists Juan Gris and Carlo Carra.

One work by each artist was the focus of discussion. At this early stage the teacher drew the pupils attention to recognisable imagery in



Mason
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STUDENT'S WORK

the drawings. She also drew their attention to the titles. These verbal cues were to help them make a deeper response to the works.

The teacher then focused on the formal, structural elements of the work.

The teacher did not consider the response of the class to be enthusiastic.

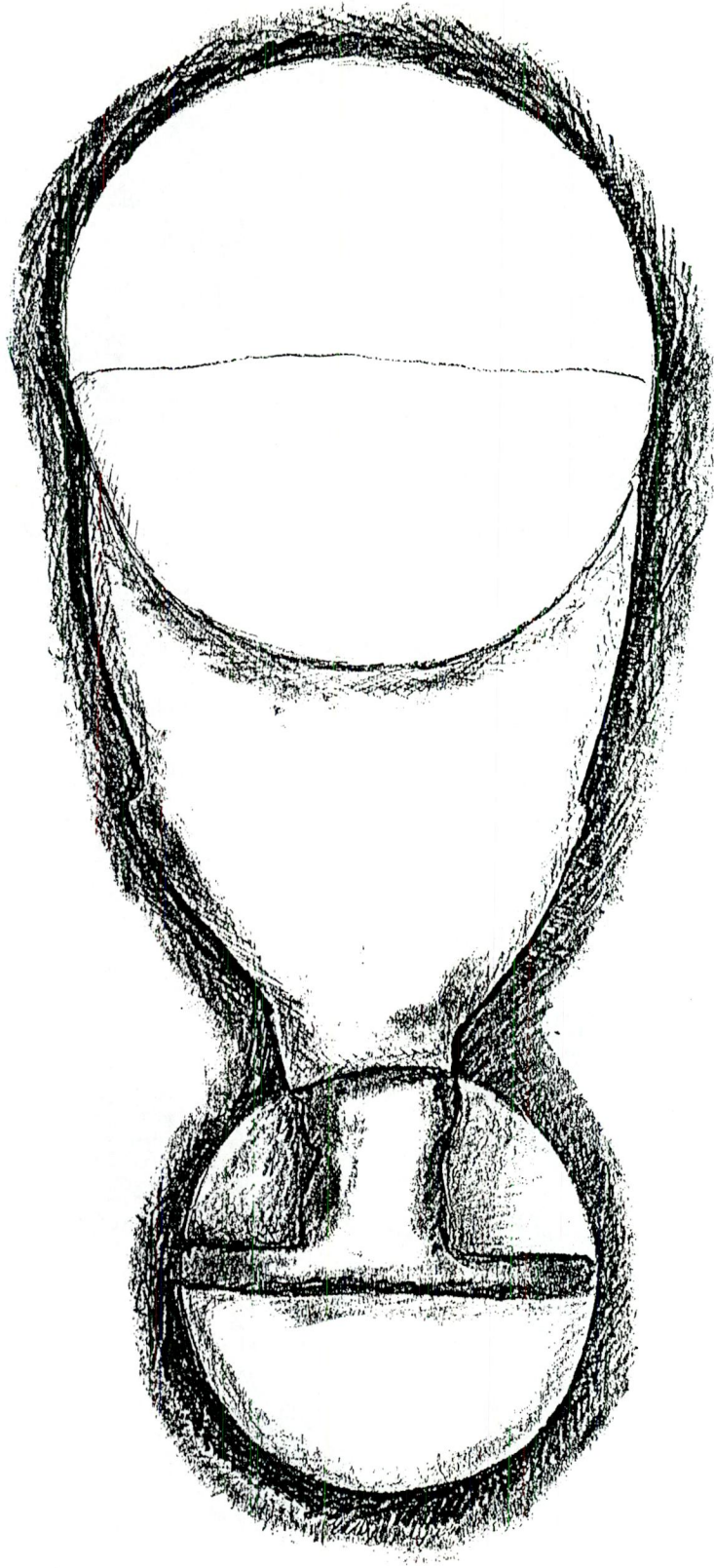
They were reticent about voicing their opinions.

The writer Brandon Taylor has written

'...distortion in any of its particular forms is one of the most obscure and difficult topics in the whole of modern aesthetic thought, and its application to Cubist art is a particularly baffling subject upon which little has been written, and probably even less understood... Collateral information about the artist's intentions is not always easy to find; and, in the case of the modern picture and particularly the Cubist one, extremely difficult if not impossible to convey to an audience lacking a considerable degree of cultural and historical awareness'.(2)

Just such an 'audience' was this typical fifth year class.

The objective of the lesson was to introduce pupils to the use of superimposed elevations and a method of creating planal recession using shading.



STUDENT'S WORK



The teacher explained the new terms 'elevation', plan and superimpose.

She explained with the use of visual aids, that they would be drawing their objects superimposing 3 different elevations

1) Side (contours only) elevation

2) Top elevation

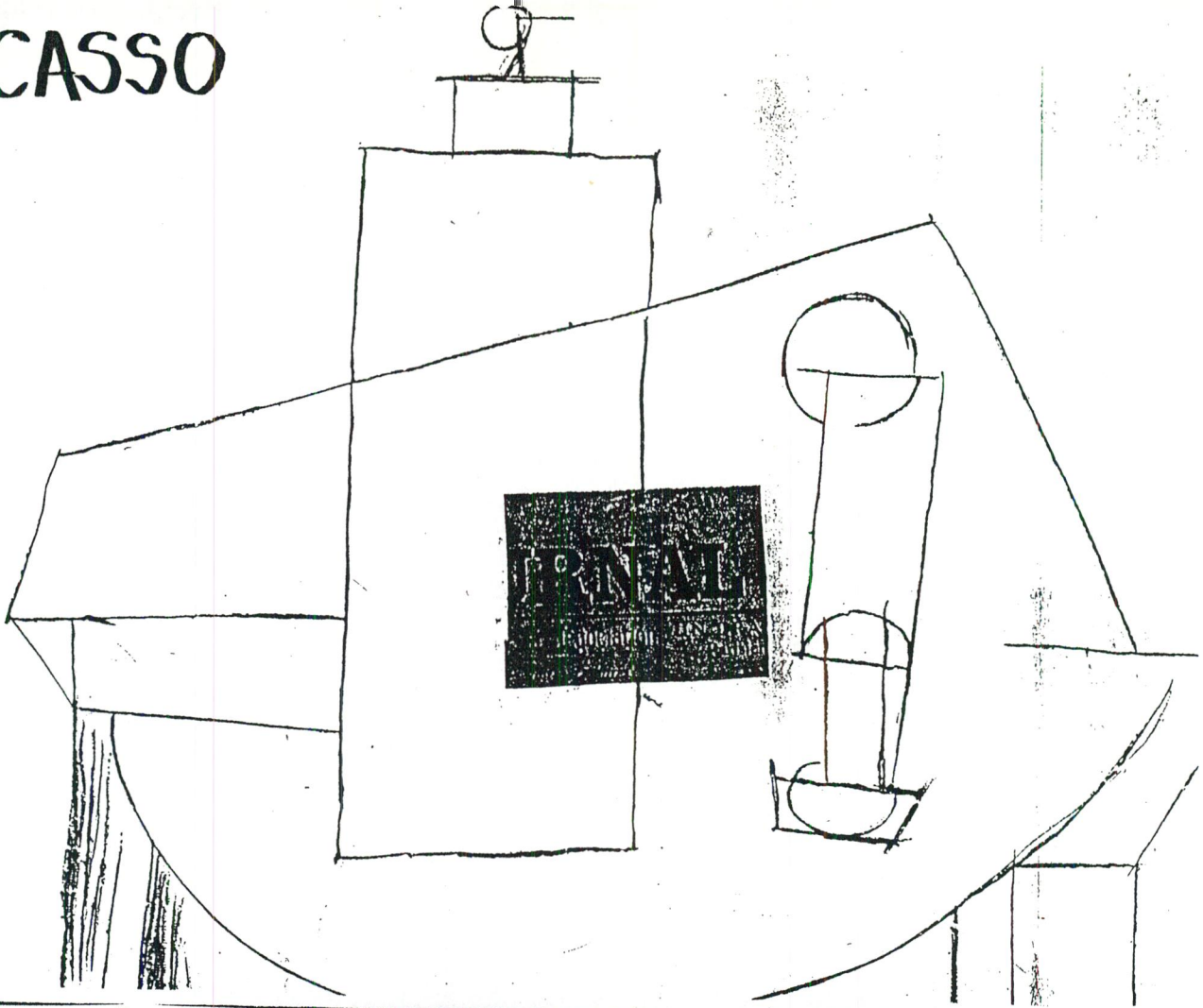
3) Bottom elevation

Each elevation would be superimposed back onto the object. Having done that the pupils were to shade either above the lines, to create the illusion of overlapping flat planes.

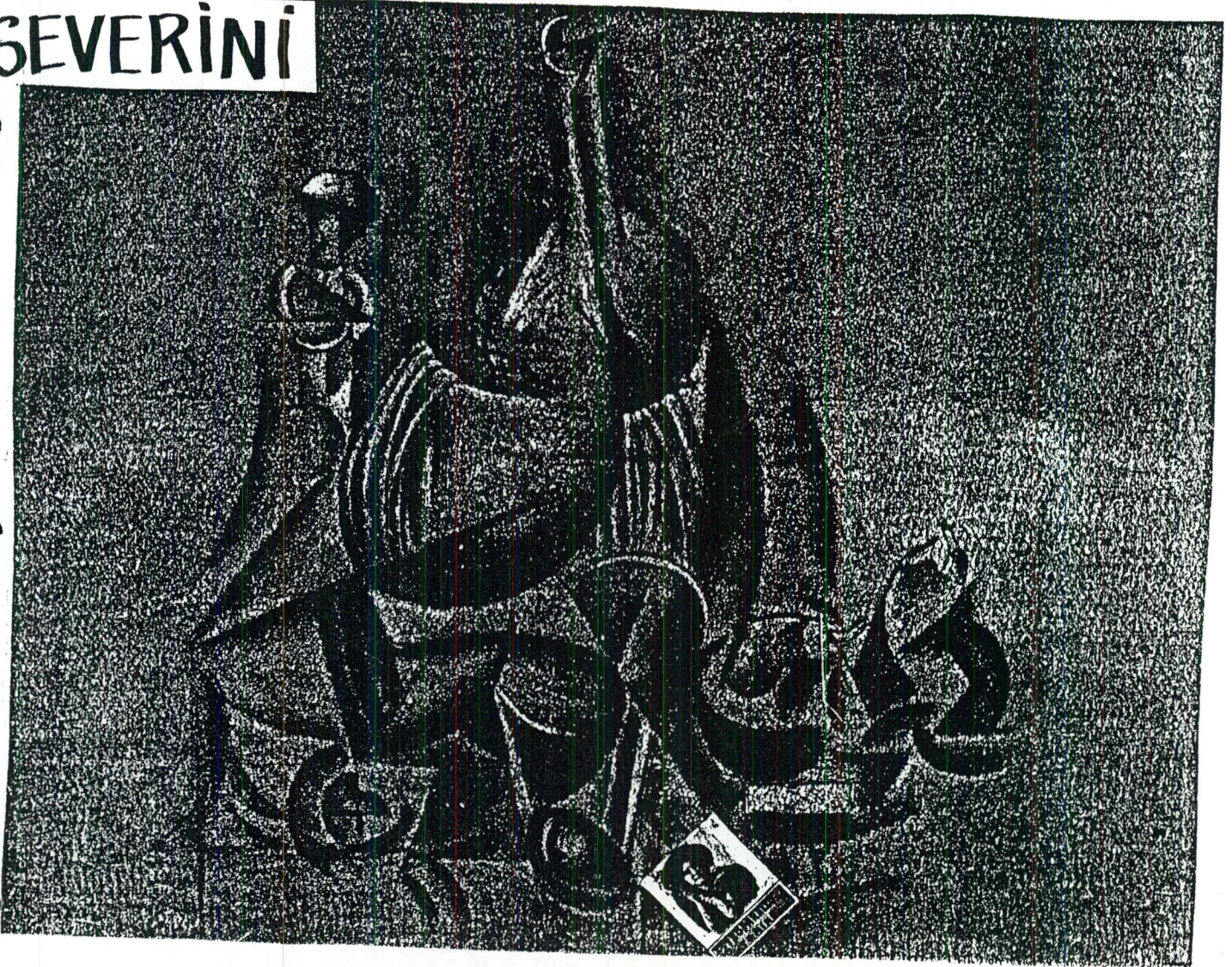
It was a simple exercise and all were enthusiastic about 'getting it right' and following each of the stages. There were problems with the shading. This was often used in the conventional manner rather than with the objective of giving the illusion of overlapping flat planes.

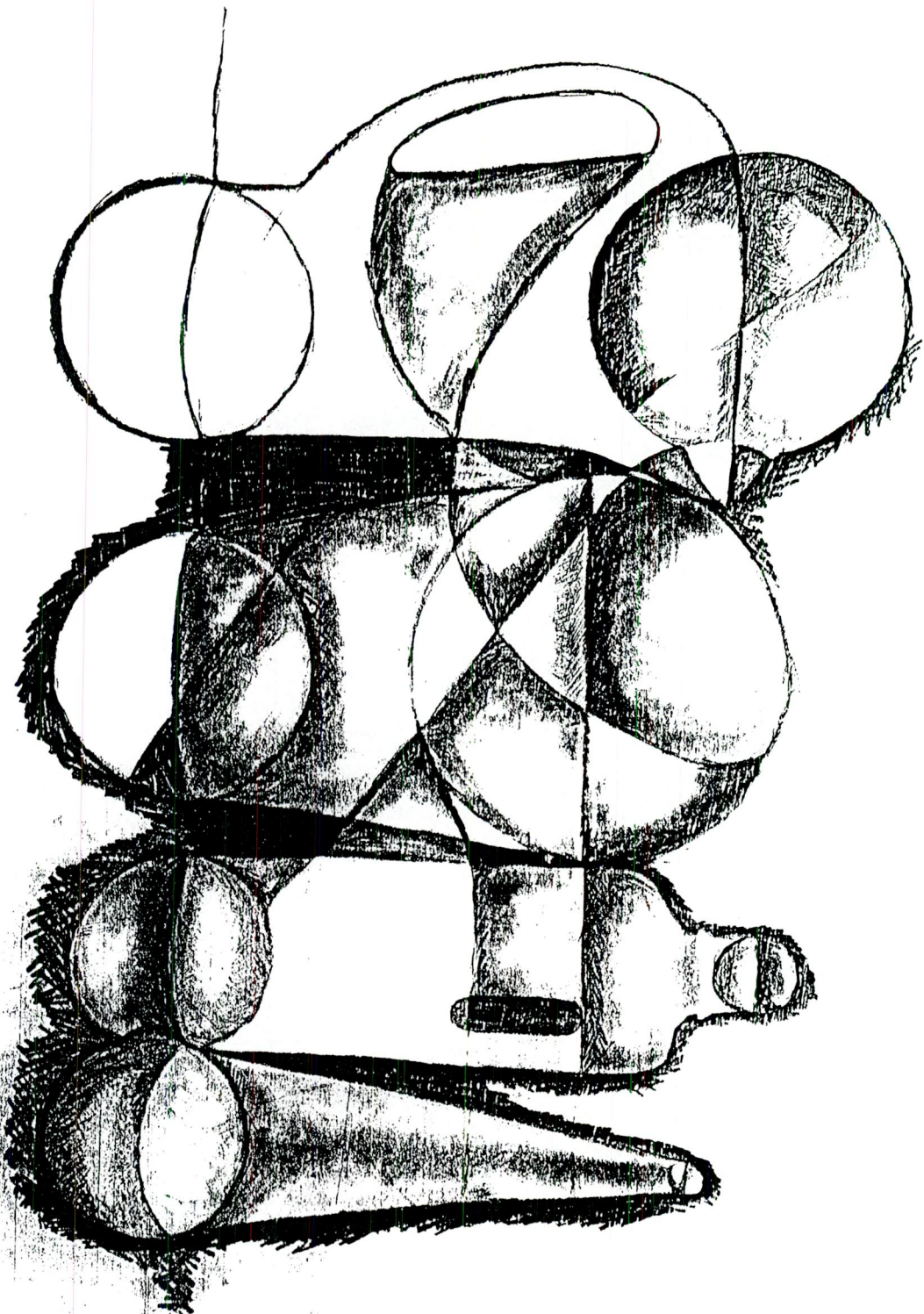
The next lesson was an exercise much the same as before only this time using a group of objects. An added task was that the pupils had to begin their drawings using negative space. The objects were arranged on tables against a wall. The back of the table was the

PICASSO



SEVERINI





Leslie (Bernice) C

horizon line. The teacher demonstrated how they should proceed with this.

It was carried out in two stages Beginning on the left hand side of the page the pupils were to draw along the horizon line and keep above it at all times. Their pencil was to draw the top outline of the objects only and draw along the horizon line until they came to the next object.

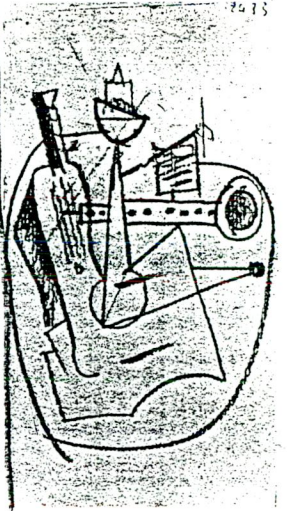
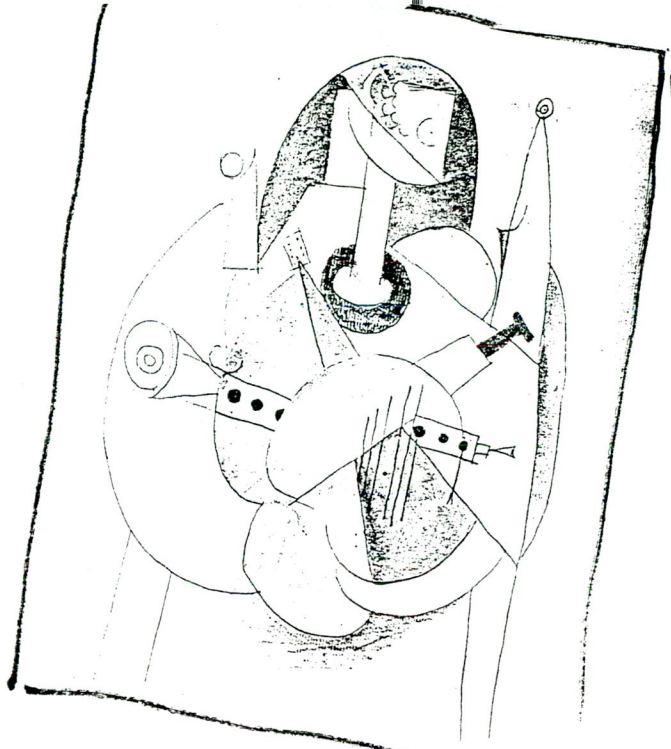
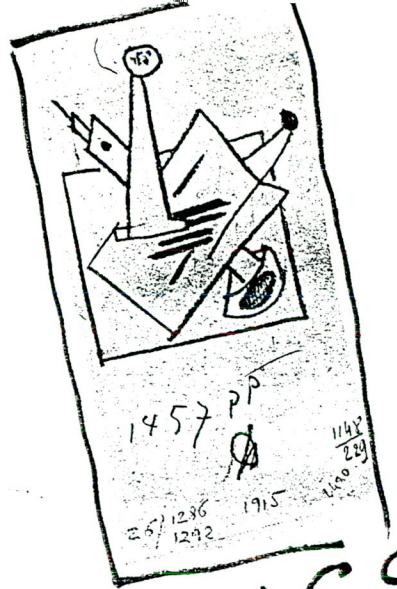
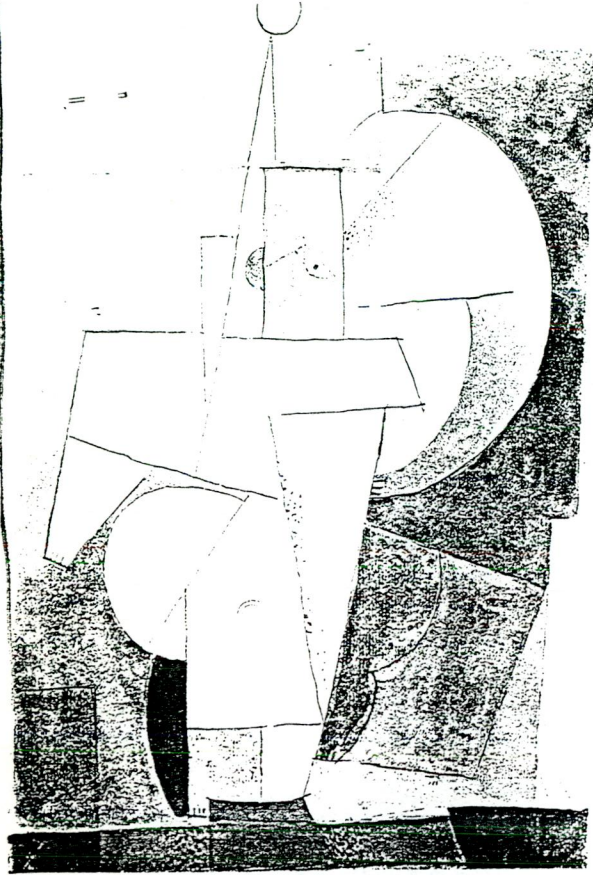
The process was repeated with the shapes below the horizon line.

This helped students with proportion and it was also an abstract way of looking at the still-life arrangement. Having done this the pupils superimposed their elevations.

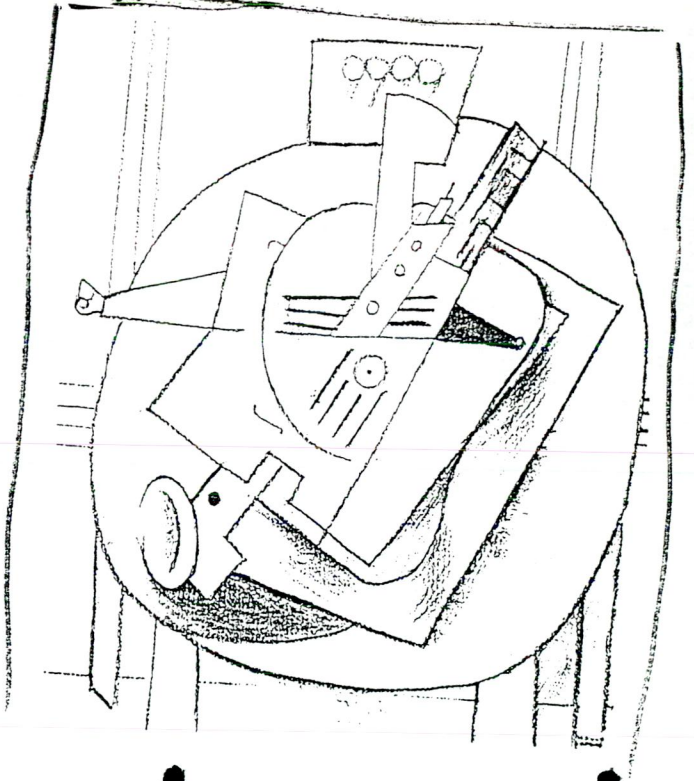
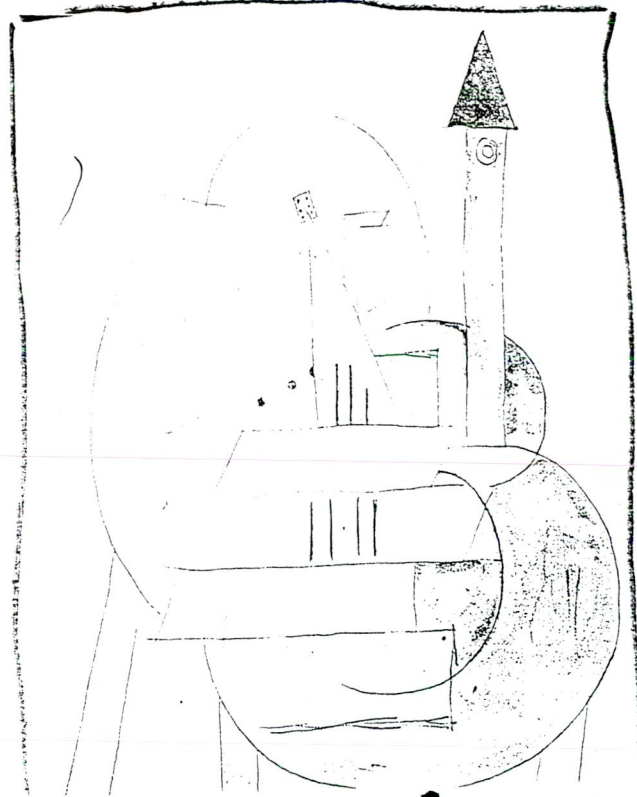
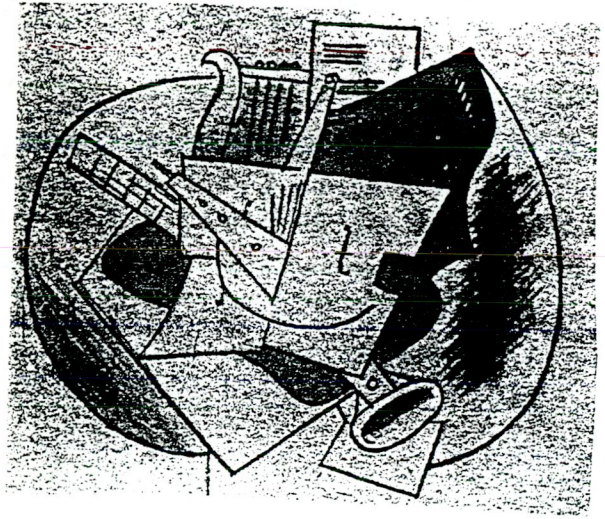
The project continued the following week using their unfinished drawings.

In lesson No. 7 the pupils had to further develop their drawings using Cubist Analytical Methods.

Two drawings, one by Picasso and one by Severini were used. The drawing by Picasso was used to reinforce what the students had learned the previous week. The abstract nature of contour line as a visual code was discussed as were elevations and the function of tone.



PICASSO



This led into discussion on the Severini drawing which was looked at for its tonal properties and the sense of rhythm within it.

The pupils task was to examine their own drawings and to seek areas of imbalance. These were to be rectified by adding or erasing lines and shapes based on the existing state of their drawing without reference to objects. They had to try and create a sense of rhythm within the composition.

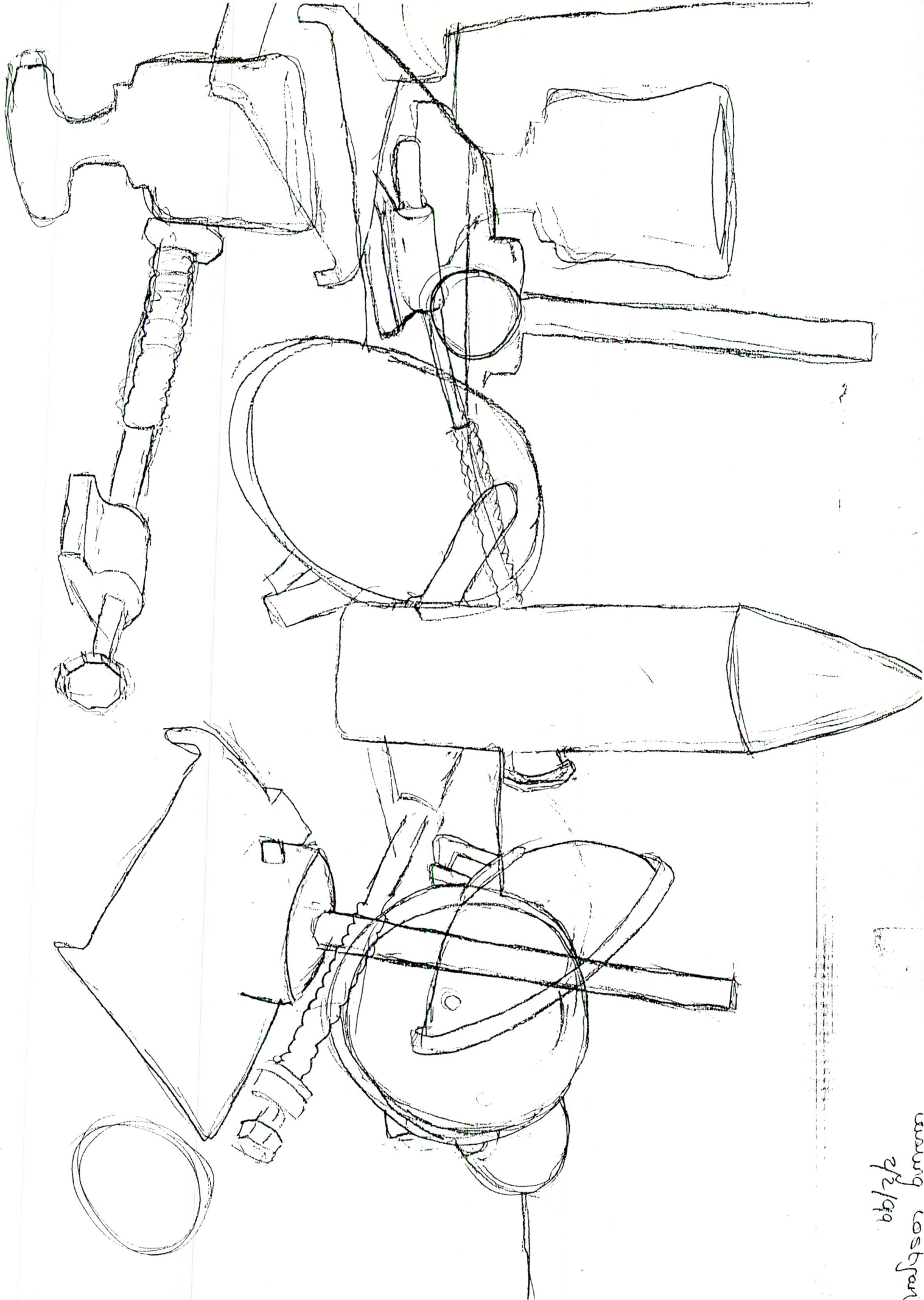
They then as before had to use shading to show overlapping planes.

Most of the drawings from even the weaker pupils looked quite strong. All of the work showed a strong structural element that held it together.

The next lesson was aimed at further developing their understanding of Cubism through the production of a drawing, abstracted from three superimposed drawings of a still-life arrangement.

The lesson began by looking at boards showing seven drawings by Picasso. These drawings were preparatory drawings for paintings.

By this stage the teacher was aware of the writings of people like Georgianna Short and Judith Smith Koroscik who advocated combining art historical analysis with practical work.



STUDENT'S WORK

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'Findings indicate that studio experiences alone do not enhance students' ability to understand or appreciate well-known or historical art works. Students experiencing the studio-only curriculum were as unable to understand unfamiliar art works from history as English students who had never taken an art class at the secondary level. However, when critical and historical enquiry (in the form of discussion or writing activities) were incorporated into studio experience high school art students were able to transfer their art understandings to a historical art work without difficulty'.(3)

The class gathered around the teachers table to discuss the drawings.

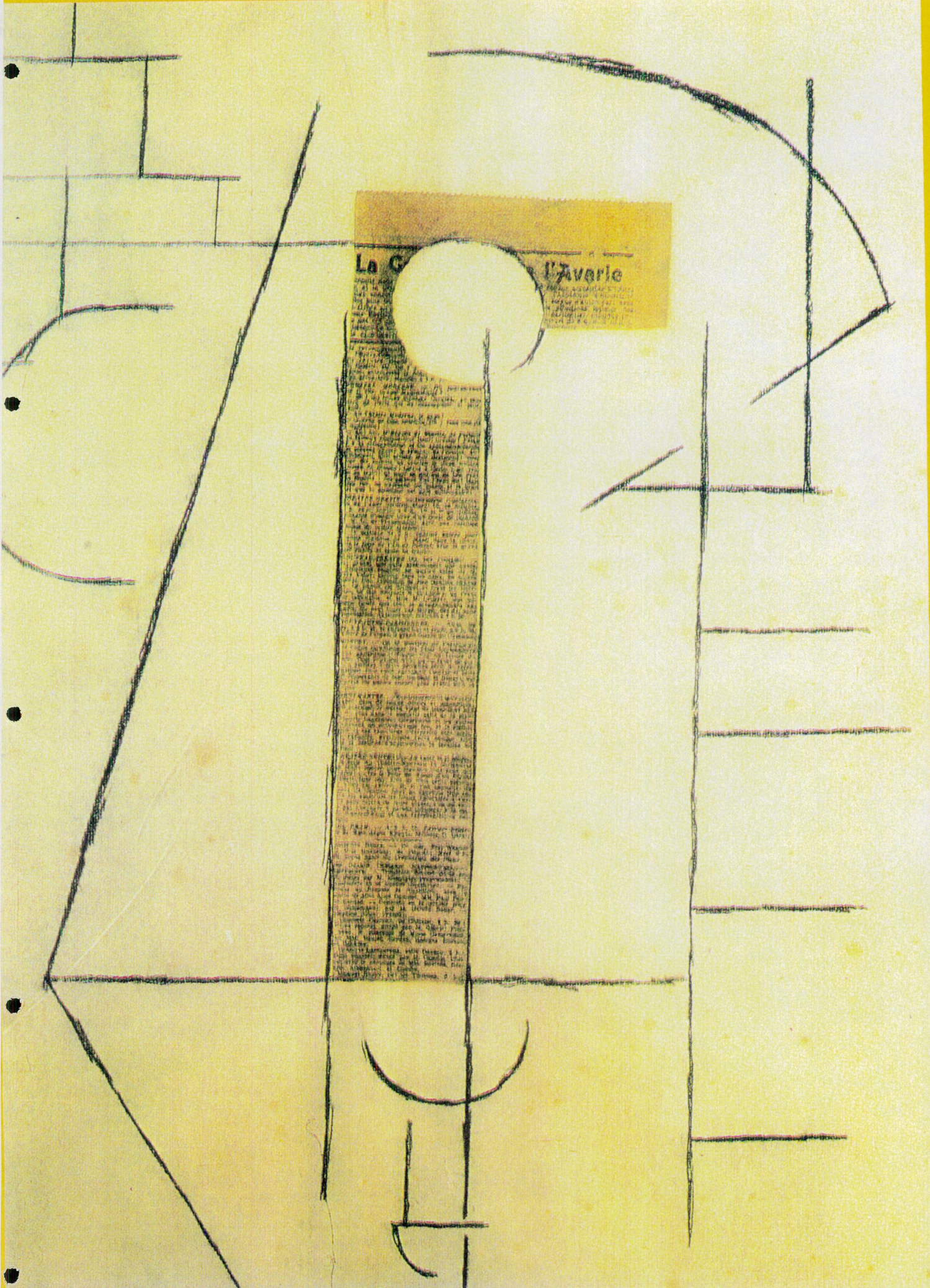
They were able to identify in the drawings the same methods that they had been using.

They were anxious to use terminology such as superimposed elevations when pointing out familiar elements.

The teacher then demonstrated the required tasks. Tables were set up with groups of objects. In the centre of each table was an 'anchor' object. This object was to occupy the central area of their page.

Using a viewfinder attached to her drawing board the teacher indicated the central vertical line which ran through the edges (top and bottom) of the viewfinder and through the page.

The tallest vertical object on the table was to have this central vertical running through its middle.



Picasso



Using the line of the table as the horizon line the pupils had to draw the objects using negative space (as they had done in an earlier lesson).

They then had to move seats to view objects from a different angle. Looking through their viewfinders the anchor object would continue to occupy the central area. The pupils had to superimpose the new drawings on the old.

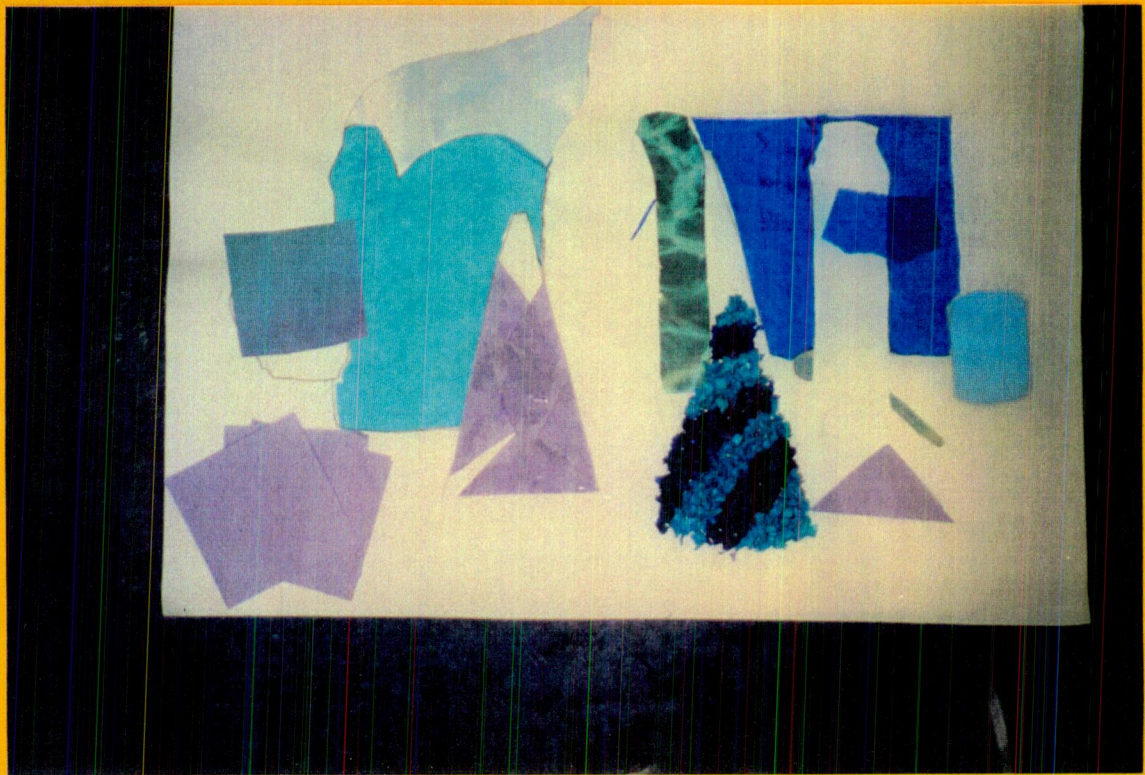
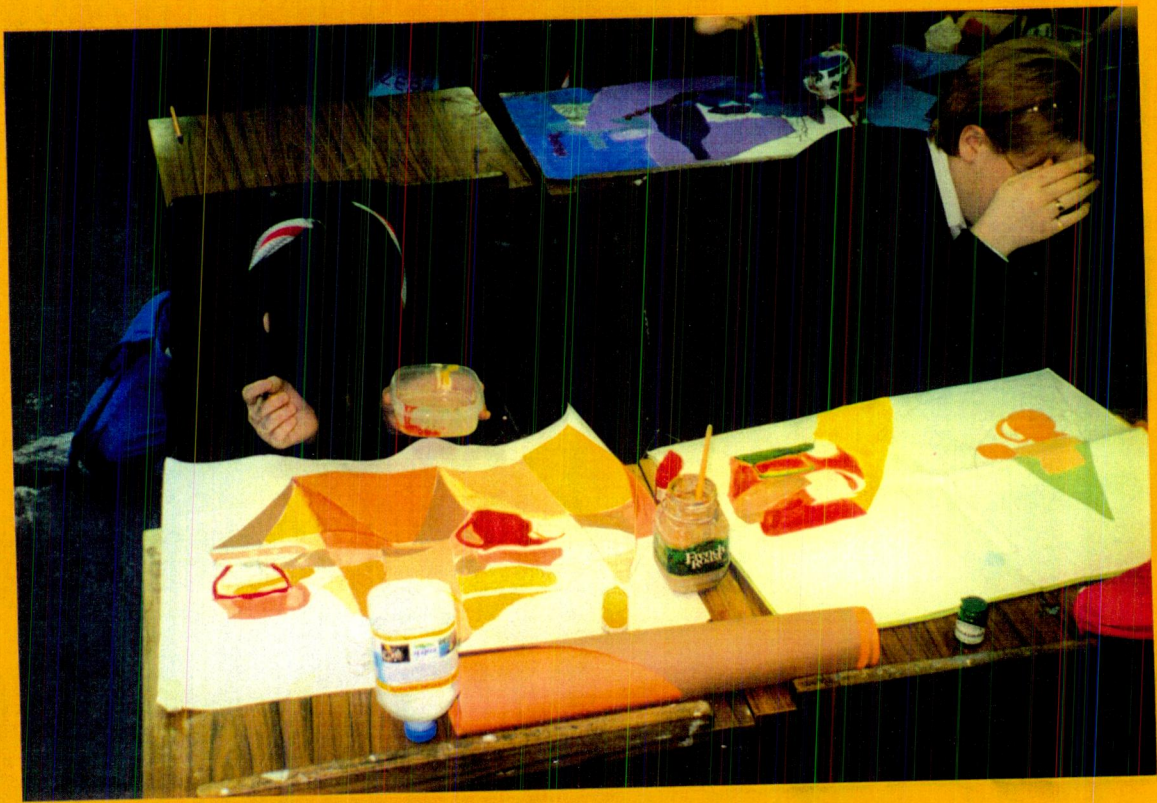
This was repeated once more.

The following week the pupils had to further develop these same drawings with regard to rhythmical elements. This relied on their own judgement as well as teacher guidance. They were then to use these drawings as the basis for an abstract collage.

Again, the drawings of Picasso and Braque were used in discussion. Works were used where he had begun to apply collage to areas.

Braque was important as it was he who had first introduced collage into painting.

A discussion took place about how revolutionary this was.



STUDENT'S WORK

The class worked on developing the rhythmical elements (as they had done in the previous exercise) of their compositions and also began to apply collage. They were instructed to stick to tones and shades of the one colour for most of the composition and perhaps using one contrasting colour in isolated areas.

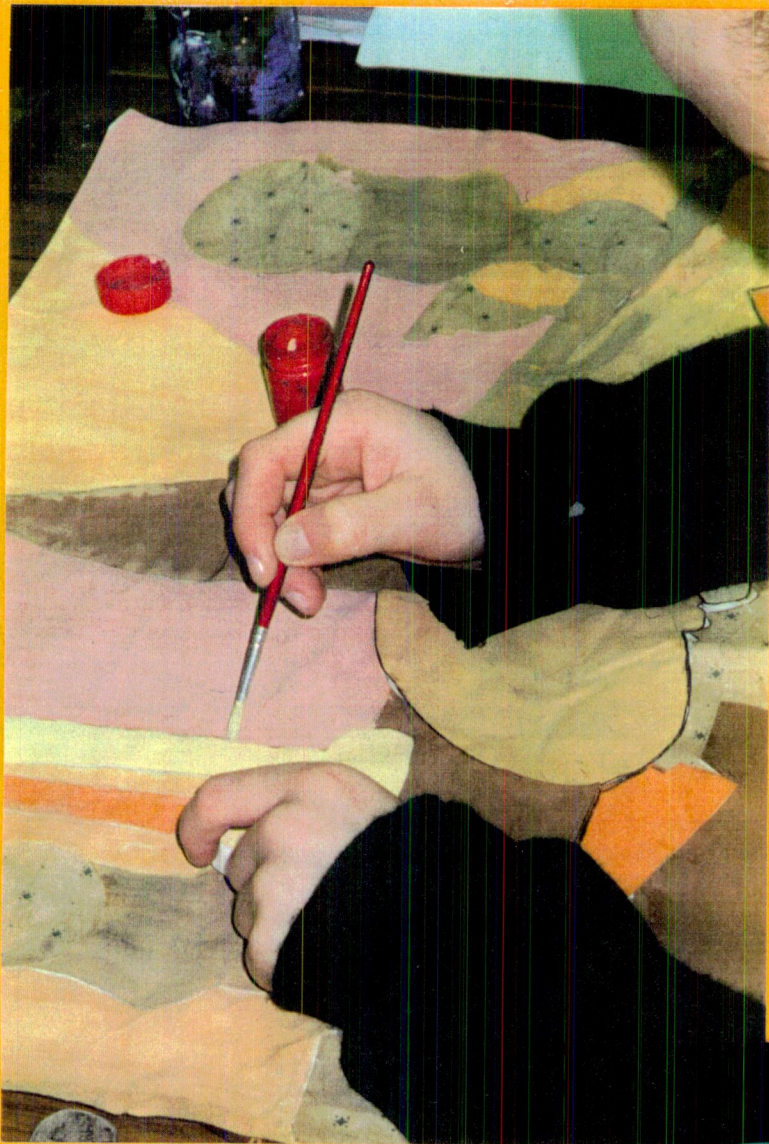
The following week the class began with a focus on collage.

The teacher had two boards, each board had an abstract collage by Picasso and beside it an abstract collage similar in structure and colour scheme.

Discussion focused on one board and began with the Picasso. The teacher asked how this painting was different from the previous week - the greater use of collaged elements. She went into how the underlying structure of his drawing gave it strength - their drawings were included in the discussion. His use of colour as a structuring element was also discussed.

They then compared the collage whose artist was not named. It was discussed in the same terms as the Picasso. They were then invited to say which was the most abstract, the most modern. Opinions differed. They were then told that the second collage was a 12th century Japanese Collage known as a picture poem.

The second board was produced and discussed in like manner.



STUDENT'S WORK

The use of such a comparative method is advocated by Judith Smith Koroscik in her paper 'A Comparative Framework for Designing Visual Art Curricula'.(4)

In this paper Koroscik questions art teaching methods based on traditional approaches which only focus in on what are the key facts worth learning.

Such approaches aid students capable of rote - memorisation. However, they do little to develop powers of analysis. Such pupils have a narrower knowledge base which prevents understanding of advanced concepts. Koroscik advocates approaching the study of art works by offering the pupils different points of view from which to develop greater understandings.

Such an approach would call for greater flexibility on the part of the teacher regarding the range of ideas they could provide to their pupils. Teachers would have to seek meaningful connections to art objects in outside but related areas. Koroscik advocates using a comparative method using similar works to 'exemplify key ideas'.(5)

Using such an approach involves the teacher making critical decisions about what materials to use.



Cubist painting by Mainie Jellett after
Fra Anjelico.



The students should be helped find meaningful connections about that which they already know and that which is new to them.

She cautions about overwhelming students with too many ideas at once. An earlier study by Koroscik would back this up.(6)

She stresses -

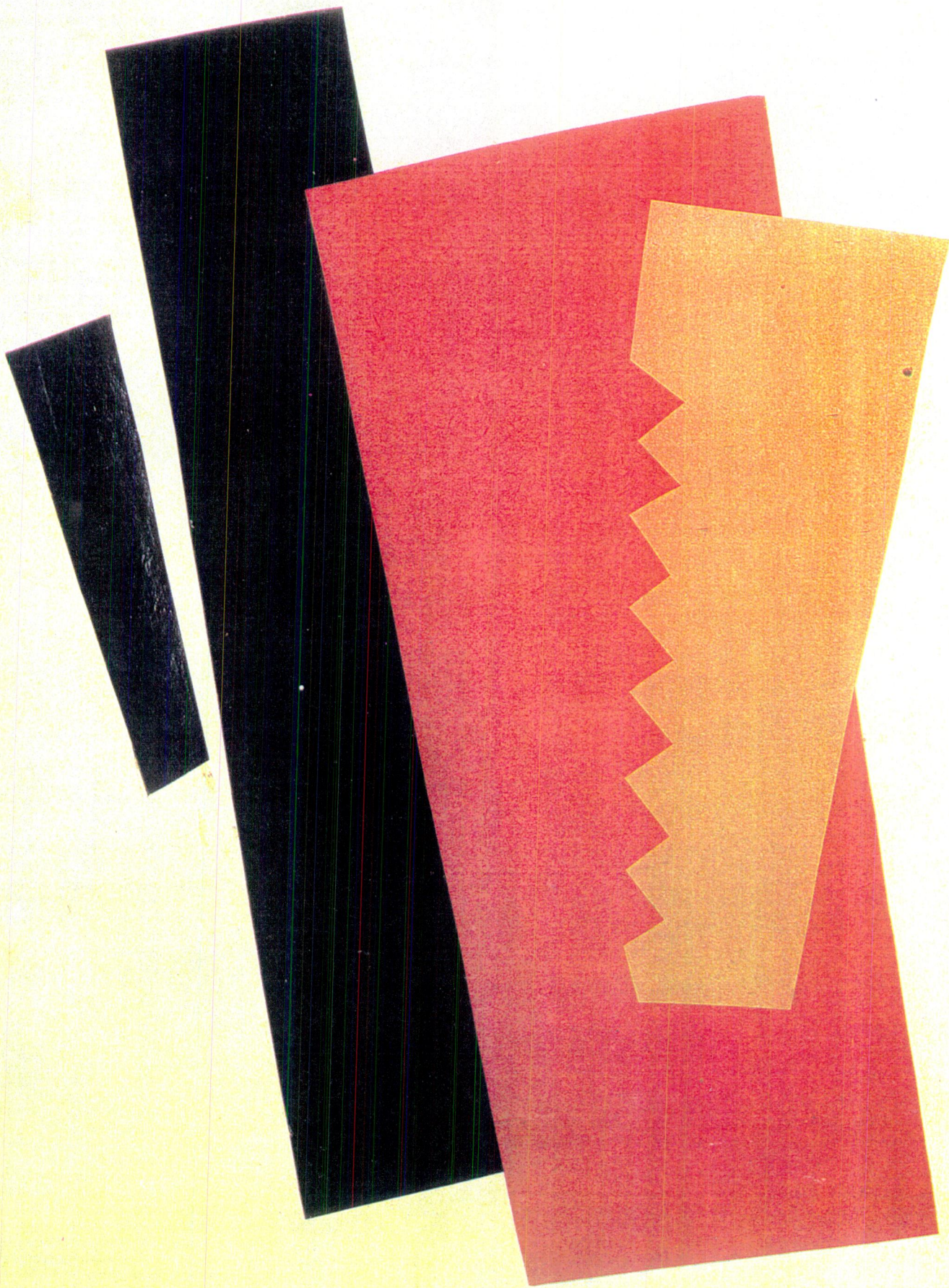
'It is equally important that teachers should not assume that their students will automatically grasp connections between the study of artwork and related studio activities. Repeated opportunities are needed for students to articulate the nature of any connections they find'.(7)

While they were working through their collage project the teacher took the class on a trip to the National Gallery in Dublin.

The purpose of the visit was to gather information for Part 2 of the project.

For Part 2 of the project the students will be making a painting using the approach of the Irish Cubist painter Mainie Jellett. Jellett along with Albert Gleizo devised a method of deconstructing pre Renaissance paintings to create Cubist paintings.

That Jellett and Gleizes focused on the works of pre Renaissance Artists would appear to bring Art History full circle.



Рогова



Artists such as Fra Anjelico made pointed use of formal cues that would appeal to those versed in gauging and geometry (discussed in Chapter 4). That the Cubists Jellet and Gleizes with their focus on structure and geometry in painting should feel drawn to use such works five hundred years later, perhaps attests to the power and success of the visual cues used by Fra Anjelico.

The class spent a full day in the National Gallery making drawings of a chosen work. One full colour study, one line and tone drawing and one drawing attempting to break the painting into its underlying geometric forms.

In class they continued at the practical level of working on their collages.

For support studies the teacher used the works of two Russian Supremacists, Popova and Olga Rozanova. These works were clearly seen by the pupils to be related to their own work.

Different pupils attempted to answer the questions which revolved around the collages. They were attentive and in the class evaluation it was apparent that they had a fair understanding of how one could approach such works with a view to understanding.

The stage the class are now at with the collages has no structure superimposed by the teacher. It involves the pupils having to use their imagination and their own judgement - promoting self discovery. In England the art teacher Marion Richardson advocated trusting the pupils own judgements(8) as regards materials used and formal choices. Making art is not necessarily a competitive activity.

By guiding the pupils through the process the teacher felt it was more like bringing them across that bridge of Delacroix (end of Chapter 4). And going across a bridge is more about expanding knowledge of an area rather than remaining in a sheltered site.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 5

1. The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci (Oxford University Press) p.179
2. Brandon Taylor. ' Art History in the Classroom: A Plea for Caution (in Critical Studies in Art and Design Education) pub. by Longman UK 1990) p.106
3. Georgianna Short. 'The High School Studio Curriculum and Art Understanding: An Examination' in Studies in Art Education A Journal of Issues and Research 1998 40(1) p.46
4. Judith Smith Koroscik 'A Comparative Framework for Designing Visual Art Curricula' Art Education Policy Review (Formerly Design for Arts in Education 1992 Vol.94(1) pp.17-22
5. Judith Smith Koroscik ibid p.19
6. Judith Smith Koroscik 'The Effects of Prior Knowledge, presentation time and taime demands on visual art processing'. (Studies in Art Education 1982 Vol.23(3) p.21

'...instructional demands and presentation time influence visual art processing. Thus, one might question the traditional practice of displaying large collections of artworks to students in slide lecture presentations. Students might be better served if classroom viewing activities provided for the detailed examination of a smaller number of artworks'.
7. Judith Smith Koroscik (A Comparative Framework for Designing Visual Art Curricula) op.cit p.21
8. John Swift ' The Use of Art and Design Education Archives in Critical Studies (in Critical Studies in Art and Design Education edited by David Thistlewood Longman UK 1990) p.162

CONCLUSION

The Chief Examiner in his report on the 1996 Leaving Cert Art Exam (p.6) drew attention to the use of the 'rote' answer by exam candidates. Studies by Art Educationalists such as Koroscik have identified that such a method is used where the student has a poor understanding of the subject.

That pupils should have a low standard of answering questions on the Leaving Cert Art History paper shows that something is glaringly wrong.

Art History is not introduced as a subject until the last two years of second-level schooling. As was pointed out, if such were the case with poetry, students would most likely also have a problem in this area. Given the marginalisation of Art History at second-level it is not surprising that pupils have difficulty with the subject.

The methods used to teach Art History need careful re-examination.

Art is an ill-structured domain and the methods used to teach within well-structured domains cause problems in that they limit the wide knowledge base to approach a subject such as art. The model of the

Lattice curriculum as outlined by Efland is more suited to Art learning than the current Spiral model.

Modernism in the classroom is a viable option where the pupils have had a good back-up of Art History knowledge. Where they do not have this knowledge base it is a slower more mechanical process.

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Georgianna Short 'The High School Studio Curriculum and Art Understanding: An Examination; Studies in Art Education 1998 40(1) pp46-65.

Roger Clark 'Constructing the Post-Modernist Classroom' (Art Education The Journal of the Nat. Art. Educ. No. 1998 51(6))pp.6-11

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COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINÉ IS DE ARTHA - NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN - FACULTY OF EDUCATION
 LAYOUT FOR SCHEME OF WORK

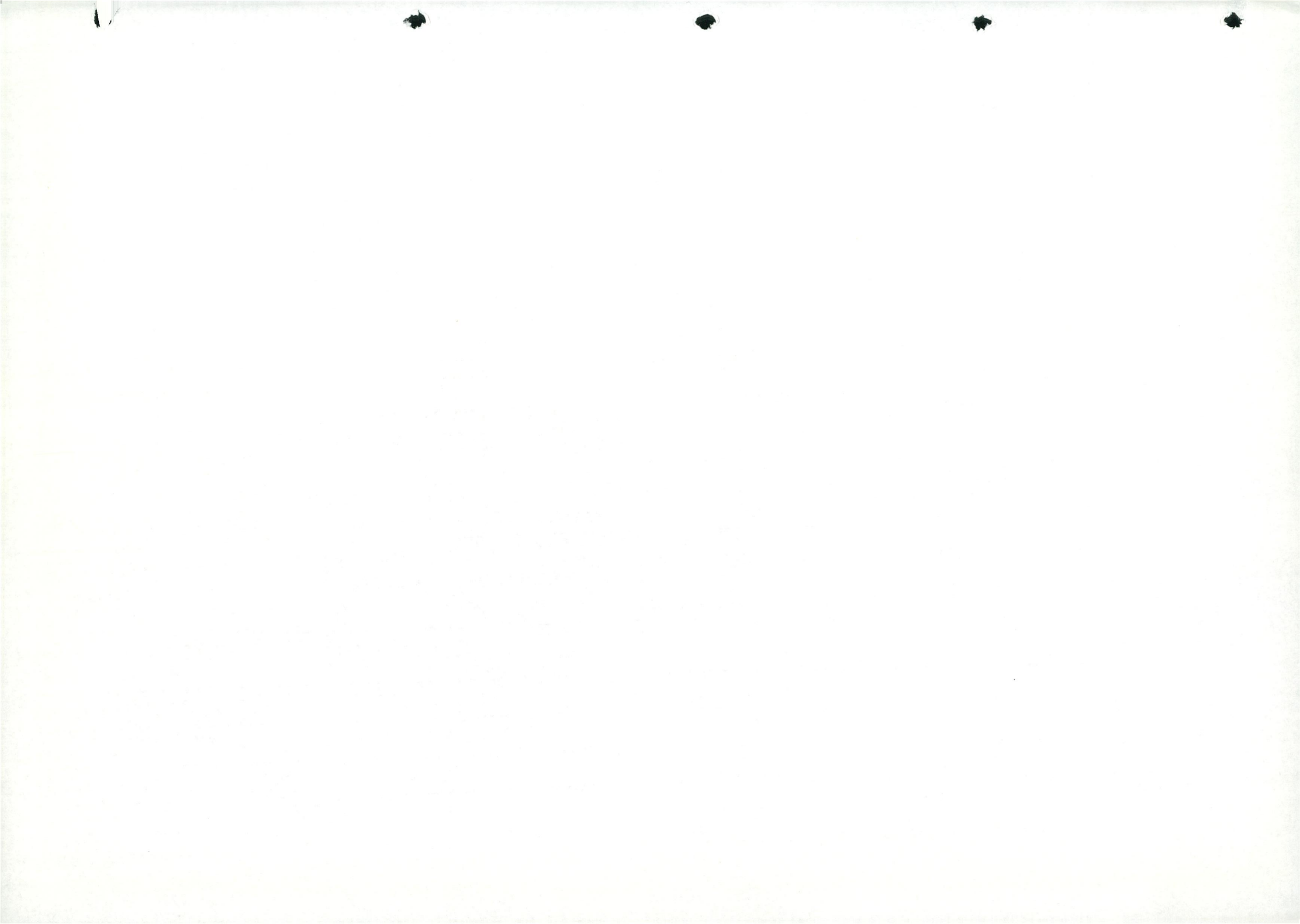
STUDENT NAME: Anne Madden

THEME: Abstract Still Life Part 1

AIM OF SEQUENCE: To ~~make~~ Create an abstract composition based on a still life

Week & Date	Class Group & Time	Introduction Motivation	Demo./ Visual Aids	Source	Art Element	Task	Skill	Materials	Support Studies	Home/ Activity	Cross - Disp. Connection
10/10/98	5 th Year 80 mins	Use of Viewfinder	Demo on use of view finder (on table table + cross-hatching.	draped fabric	Line Tone	To make 3 Thumbnails + 1 lger. section of fabric	drawing	Pencil	Friend + Durer.		
17/11/98.		Slides on 4 artists (abstract) Class discussion on work.	Slides + L.A.	Artists Work.	Form	To discuss a selection of slides, to express opinions.	Observations.		Paul Klee Morris Louis Picasso Jasper Johns.		
24/11/98.		Texture Board + supp. studies based on texture	Drawing of textures natural form.	Still life Materials natural + man-made forms.	Shape + Texture + Line.	To select + draw sections of objects focussing on their textural qualities. Sections to be enlarged.	Drawing Selection	Pencil	Hansen Engelfeld Hodener Braque Grosz.	Handouts of Cubist artists under to make drawings from these.	
1/12/98		Seurat Leger + work on <u>tone</u> .	Vis. aid on tone + vectors of anal. Demo. on vectors + use in pict. object.	Still life.	Tone.	To make drawings with an emphasis on form + solidity with high contrasts of light/shade.	Drawing + Measuring.	Pencil.	Seurat Leger.	Tonal drawings using Tony Cray sculpture.	
12/1/99		Talk in Cubism.	Vis aid on how to make a superimposed deviation.	Still life object.	Line + tone.	To make a superimposed elevation of a single object. To indicate diff planes by shading.	Drawing Measuring Observation	Pencil	Juan Gris Carlo Carrà.		

POTENTIAL LESSON DEVELOPMENT:



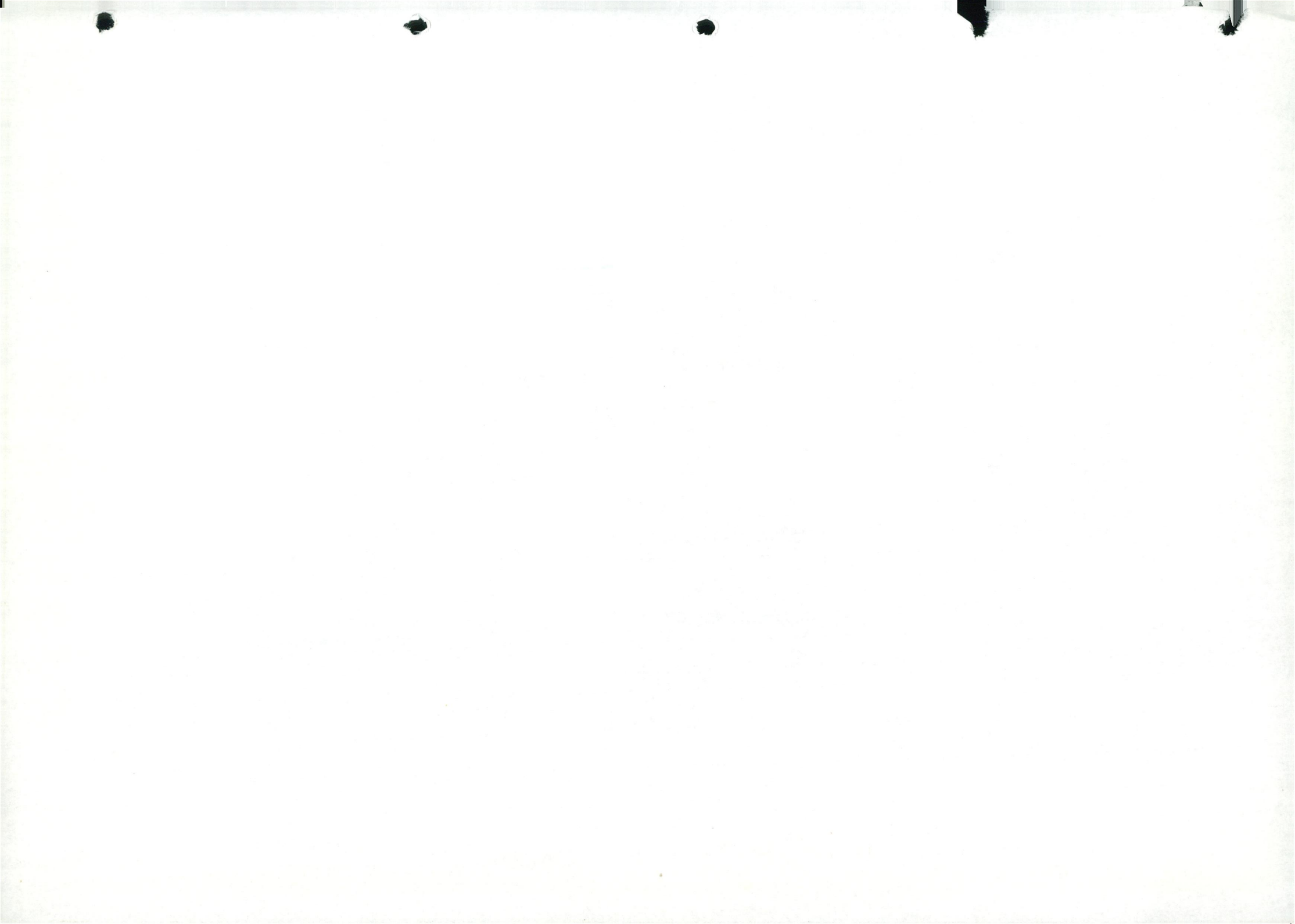
STUDENT NAME: Anne Madden

THEME: Abstract Still Life (Part 1.)

AIM OF SEQUENCE To create an abstract composition based on a still life.

Week & Date	Class Group & Time	Introduction Motivation	Demo./ Visual Aids	Source	Art Element	Task	Skill	Materials	Support Studies	Home/ Activity	Class - Disc Connection
19/1/99	5 th Year 80 mins	Discussion on work by Picasso in relation to drawings of prev. week.	Vis. Aids on drawing in line using negative space. + photo showing the superimposing drawings on objects	Still life	Line	To make a drawing 1) using neg. space 2) adding elements 3) if time, start shading	drawing + Observation	Pencil	PICASSO		
26/1/99.		Discussion on visual texture, Tone Texture, Abstract elements	Demo. on linking areas to create rhythm.	own drawings	line + tone	EXAMINE DRAWING FOR AREAS OF INFLUENCE Show planes by use of tone.	Drawing + selection	Pencil	Picasso + Severini	Collage from newspaper to create tone using print.	
2/2/99.		Board with 7 drawings by Picasso - discuss breakdown of pict. plane.	Vis. aid on use of neg. space in drawing + moving your viewpoint using an anchor object.	Still Life	line + shape.	Making a drawing moving your viewpoint	DRAWING	Pencil Viewfinder	Picasso		
9/2/99		Discuss. on use of collage in Picasso's work Japanese	Demo. on linking shapes to create rhythm.	own work.	+ Line shape + form.	To develop drawings of prev. week adding + removing lines to create rhythm.	Drawing cutters	Pencil Paper, Scissors.	Picasso + Severini		
23/2/99.		Discuss on ideas of abstraction on modern + then look at Japanese abstract collage.	Demo. on how diff. shapes + col. can make better harmony etc.	own drawings.	Shape + colour	To continue with their collage + being thoughtful as to selection of colours + shapes.	Cutting + Painting + Pasting.	Paper	Picasso + Severini Japanese Collage		

POTENTIAL LESSON DEVELOPMENT



OR LAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINÉ IS DEARTHÁ - NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN - FACULTY OF EDUCATION
 LAYOUT FOR SCHEME OF WORK

STUDENT NAME: Amne Madden

THEME: Abstract Still Life Part 1

NAME OF SEQUENCE: As before

Date	Class Group & Time	Introduction Motivation	Demo/ Visual Aids	Source	Art Element	Task	Skill	Materials	Support Studies	Home/ Activity	Cross-Disc Connection
1/3/99.	5th year All day.	Paintings in gallery		National Gallery.		Study (with) still. prin. art for 2nd part of the project.	Drawing.				
3/3/99	5th year 80 mins	Discuss work of Rozanova + Popova.	Demo. on shape + creating pleasing comp. ref. to artists.	Book on Collage.	Work on Collage.	Work on Collage.	Painting Cutting Drawing	Paper + Paint.	Rozanova Popova.		
4/3/99.											

POTENTIAL LESSON DEVELOPMENT