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INTRODUCTION

The past one hundred years have brought tremendous changes to the lifestyles, art and culture of our civilization. Many of the changes have not been for the best, resulting in pessimism and despair, evident in much of our culture. When the more positive, energetic, uplifting emotions are expressed artistically, it is both reassuring and encouraging - all has not changed.

We seem to need a certain continuity in our lives, a goal, a direction, a point of references, without which we feel alienated, lost, negative. The same is true of art, a certain reference to tradition can enhance our appreciation and understanding. Yet, painting, my chosen field, can be appreciated by people on different levels, from the purely sensual, the referential, to issues of formalistic aesthetics; the more the three are combined satisfactorily, the more pleasing the work is in my opinion. On the sensual level, paintings are capable of conveying an idea or sensation to the widest audience.

Personal taste aside, there appear to be certain basic reactions to visual stimuli in all of us, reactions towards degrees of brightness and darkness, towards colour, varying saturations of hue and relationships between one hue and another, as well as towards various textures from the luxurious softness of velvet, to the roughest, most threatening impasto, and of course towards scale.

The work of Albert Irvin appeals on these different levels. His paintings contain many elements from the immediate impact and

uplifting experience of sheer colour, the visual documentation of energy, achieved through the evidence of the process of markmaking and the inherent liveliness of the overall structure due to this energetic process, to the coherent intentions of the artists which differentiate between expression for its own sake, and expression driven and controlled by the visions and intentions of the artist.

He is an artist of considerable experience who has been painting since he studied art at Norhampton School of Art in 1940, at the age of eighteen. Following six years in the Royal Air Force, he returned to study at Goldsmiths College School of Art in 1946, for four years. He has had many one-man exhibitions spanning his career as well as exhibiting in many group shows in Belfast, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Frankfurt and Berlin as well as cities all around England. He has been teaching in Goldsmiths College since 1962 and has won several Arts Council of Great Britain Awards.

My personal interest in his work began after seeing it in "Rosc '84" in Dublin. The interaction between vibrant and gentle colours on a large scale, the simplicity and directness of the markmaking and the overall structure, all contribute to an overall liveliness and boldness that can only be described as exhilarating.

I will now discuss his work in terms of his background, the tradition of painting which has been a source of influence and inspiration to him, in terms of content, and then I will attempt to evaluate the development of his paintings from 1975 up to 1983.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND INFLUENCES

THE TRADITION OF PAINTING

After Irvin left Goldsmiths College in 1950 the impact of American painting was fresh and strong, especially in London in 1956, when the Tate Gallery held an exhibition of Abstract Expressionism.

In 1960 he travelled to Salzberg to attend a seminar in American Studies. There he met two Scotsmen, Alex McNeish and Rod Carmichael, who persuaded him to have a one-man show at the 57 Gallery, Edinburgh, which was to be his first, and marked a turning point in his career. Until then recognition had been slow arriving, but on his return from Edinburgh, shows followed in London and he received a teaching post at Goldsmiths College in 1962.

In 1968 he received an Arts Council award to vist the United States where he met Jack Tworkov of the New York School of Abstract Expressionists, and Sam Gillam, a Washington, D.C. based colour or stain painter, from the school of Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland.[1]

However Irvin is very conscious of the tradition of painting through Art History, and as an English painter considers himself to be of the tradition that produced Turner, as well as the broader tradition of Europe.

This is not a contradiction, viewing his interest in Modernism however as:

> "In fact, what I think I have got from American painting is some sort of confirmation of the sort of ambitions that I feel to have been Turner's."[2]

He saw Turner as a "home bred God" and a "percursor of much in twentieth century art".[3]

He views his own work azs the "battlefield at the end of the battle".[4] He also believed that Rembrandt, Van Gogh and Soutine as well as the Abstract Expressionists saw their work in this manner.

Irvin believes that influences are always evident in the work of important artists, as art is a language we learn from other people, an awareness of the tradition and how it has evolved is important to the work.

> "A good painter is one who speaks for his time but within the language of painting."

> "I feel as close to artists like El Greco, Rembrandt and Turner as I do to Still, Pollock, Kline, Monet and Van Gogh as Picasso and Matisse."[5]

Even though Irvin works in a free manner with emphasis on simple forms, directness and colour, his work has evolved to this conclusion through his knowledge and understanding of the painters in the past as well as the history of his own work -

> "Tradition is very important to me that's why I never change easily without a great deal of soul searching."[6]

Indeed his work has not changed very radically in the past twenty years or so, but he is not alone in this respect, as some other artists who have worked quite closely to him over the years have similar reputation for consistancy (e.g. Gillian Ayres, John Hayland, Basil Beattie and Jennifer Durrant - see Appendix).

In his article in the Hayward Annual 1980[7], Peter Fuller selects the work which he considers to be the strongest and asserts that their strength is due to their transformation of traditional skills rather than their moving away from them. Irvin and Gillian Ayres are two of the artists he selects:

> "Among those which impressed me most as Albert Irvin's Boadicea, with is consummate sense of colour and scale .... he achieves his effects through an almost classical knowledge of painterly composition."[8]

This sentiment is echoed by Alexander Moffat talking of Heyland and Ayres:

> "An unwavering sense of responsibility to the artistic traditions both old and new, from which they sprang."[9]

This is equally true of Irvin's work.

It is encouraging to note that artists such as these have held onto the traditional values, incorporating them in new forms despite the nihilistic attitudes that persisted through the Seventies. This breakdown of values started in the nineteenth century, when the language was questioned and opposed from within, and new values were developed and upheld. However these new values have been frequently misapplied in the Modernist period in a search to produce art which was exclusively new, instead of building on from the values and traditions that already exist.

TURNER

> "I know that Turner was not an abstract painter ..... but I think that if his life could have extended into the twentieth century his painting would be dealing with a summation of these forces in abstract terms." - Irvin[10]

In his dramatic sense of colour and light, Irvin's work relates to the work of the Romantics of the nineteenth century, particularly to his hero, Turner (1775-1851). The Romantics attempted to escape from the restriction of form to the relative freedom of colour.[11]

Turner's position in the history of painting has become a subject of controversy as it has become apparent that he was indeed a forerunner of both Impressionism and Abstract Expressionism.[12] He pioneered what could be described as the first abstraction by disengaging colours from their usual surroundings and arranging them in accordance with the plastic demands of the picture. However his work was dealing with referential matter, he attempted to convey the inner dynamics of nature, expressed readily by elements themselves in constant movement, the sea, clouds, mist. He also wanted to express an understanding of atmospheric gradations and their diurnal variation. In this respect he influenced the Impressionist Monet, who used these aerial colours and their diurnal variations in his series of pictures of haystacks. In Turner's late paintings, even static objects such as architecture dissolve in light until everything the field of vision becomes covered with tinted steam. However although Turner pioneered the technique of breaking down light into specks of colour, his aim was to achieve an atmospheric glow of colour which was romantic rather than merely depicting nature. Turner was also

unusually perceptive of the inherent expressive quality of colour as paint. His watercolours of his later years, which he concealed from the public, reveal a remarkable sensitivity to colour, independent of form which is distinctly modern. He recognised the independent value of colour as capable of emotional effect and in this respect was a precursor of much in twentieth century art, notably the Abstract and colour Expressionists.

In his use of light, energy and colour Turner was capable of producing canvasses that express varied emotions from the calmest stillness to the most violent energy.

Irvin also deals with light, colour, and energy in his work, but in abstract form, dealing with these forces directly in a non-referential manner.

ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM - POLLOCK

The scale and sheer physical presence of Irvin's work relates to American Abstract Expressionism.

> "I was knocked out by the exhibitions of American Art in the fifties .... provided impact and stimulus that was available nowhere else at the time."[13]

Abstract Expressionism provided a fresh, new way of looking at painting. It was seen as an heroic struggle for idealist high art and culture, seperated from social and political concerns. It combined a large bold scale, with energy and aggression which could only have come out of America at that time, with its roots in the European Modernist tradition of Cubism and Surrealism.

Pollock started his career by studying under a rabid traditionalist Thomas Hert-Benton. The origins of his style lie in his early drawings influenced by El Greco, Michaelangelo and Picasso. However his style developed a great deal away from any painting that went before him. Spontanaeity and freedom were achieved through his experimentation with a wide range of open, painterly affects, including dripping and spattering. His traditional drawing still compromised his spontanaeity and directness; so, in order to overcome this problem, he made the full transition to dripping and pouring. He tacked unprimed canvass to the floor, and working from all four sides he dripped paint from hardened brushes that never touched the canvass. He used commercial enamel paint which he thinned down to a pouring consistency.

> "Controlled pouring could thicken, thin and articulate the line at will in a way the loaded stick or brush could not."[14]

Irvin also works on the floor, at least part of the time, working around the canvass, occasionally standing it up or placing it at an angle. In his attitudes he has much in common with Pollock, his openess to means in which the painting will develop for instance.

> "When I am in my painting, I'm not aware of what I am doing. It is only after a sort of 'get acquainted' period that I see what I have been about. I have no fears about making changes, destroying the image etc., because the painting has a life of its own."
>
> (Relates to Irvin's comments in Chapter 2)
>
> "The modern artist, it seems to me, is working and expressing an inner world - in other words - expressing the energy, the motion and other inner forces."
>
> "The modern artist is working with space and time, and expressing his feelings rather than illustrating."
> - Pollock [15]

It is the sense of spontanaiety, energy conveyed by using vigourous movements of the whole body to create a gesture, and letting the painting develop in its own way, independent of references, but still relating to and expressing the forces and experiences of nature, that they have in common.

By relaxing through total physical involvement, and the resulting exertion and excitement, the subconscious controls the gestures and the images that they both make. Irvin realises, though, that automatism can easily lend an excuse for formlessness, instead of a liberating possibility for expressing form, hence his structures, compositions are more distinct in comparison to Pollock's allover dripping technique.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 1

1. Gerrit Henry, "A Metaphor for Human Being: New Paintings by Sam Gilliam" Arts Magazine 59 (February 1985) pp 78-79

   describes Gilliam

   > "For almost thirty years now, Gilliam has been carrying on a kind of non-violent guerrilla warfare with colour and form and space."

   He also shows signs of a different heritage to other Washington D.C. stain painters as the influence of New York school Abstract Expressionists has always been strong in his work.

2. Irvin quoted from Introduction to Catalogue, for his exhibition of 1976 in New 57 Gallery, by Cordelia Oliver.

3. Irvin quoted by Mary Rose Beaumont from catalogue for exhibition, Albert Irvin '77-'83

4. Ibid.

5. Irvin speaking in "Albert Irvin in conversation with Jon Thompon", Aspects (Winter 1980/81) p 2.

6. Ibid.

7. Peter Fuller, "The Hayward Annual 1980", The Naked Artist p 184

8. Ibid.

9. Alexander Moffat, "Reinventing the Real World", British Art Show, Old Allegiances and New Directions '78-84

10. Stephen Carter, "Bert Irvin Interviewed by Stephen Carter", compiled by Questa Deeds Artscribe No. 1 (January 1976).

11. August Wiedmann "Romanticism and the Aesthetics of Inwardness", Romantic Roots in Modern Art p 67

12 Ibid p 263

13. Ob. cet. 5

14. William Rubin, "Jackson Pollock and the Modern Tradition", Part 1 (February 1967), p 19.

15. Elizabeth Frank, Pollock, p 109

CHAPTER II

CONTENT

In Irvin's work there is a vitality and openess achieved through the direct methods he employs. Nothing is concealed, nothing obscured, no deep secret we have to unravel. We are left free to appreciate and evaluate the work through this directness. The excitement of the markmaking, the vitality achieved through colour, the experience the painter had in achieving the work, is there for us to enjoy also, as the history and growth of the work is not obscured, but is one of the vital factors communicated.

Hence the work is addressing itself fully to abstract concerns, which it does in a thoroughly positive and optimistic manner. The work is openly concerned with the combination and balance between colour, surface, and the gestures of the artist while involved in the process of painting, his own direct physical response to the work as it evolves, coupled with his thoughts, ideas and experience of what the painting should be. Thought and touch combine, separation of the two unnecessary if at all possible.

This is the basis of the work. However, no work exists within a void. All work is about expression and in exposing it, communication. The link between these two factors has always been a confusing and ambiguous area. In some work expression is geared specifically towards the communication of an idea, a set idea. Other work is geared towards freedom of expression, and the communication depends of the openess of the viewer towards that freedom, as well as through association.[1] I would like to discuss the intentions of the artist, the associations open to the viewer, and those the artist himself makes between his work and his environment.

First of all I will discuss the association between his work and music, landscape his environment, the titling of his work. Then I will discuss the formal aspects of composition, colour and process.

ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

Irvin's paintings are an allegory of hs passage through the world. He sees himself as an urban painter, "but I don't set out to represent landscape".[2]

He compares the rectangle of canvas to his urban environment, to tne floors, walls, ceilings, buildings and streets. In the same way as architecture shapes and constricts our environment visually, so the rectangular format influences the structure of the painting.

> ".... the way I think about the rectangle to a very considerable extent conditions ... shapes the way paintings turn out in the end."[3]

The paint marks that he makes are equivalents to the dynamic way in which he moves about the world. This journey through the world is also expressed in the titling of the work. Many of his titles are street names, the rule being that he has walked down the street himself, they are appropriate signposts of his journey.

Among his titles are many names of generals and admirals, e.g. Nelson 1979, Admiral 1981, reflecting the warlike nation of Britain, with a few names of artists.

In the catalogue for his exhibitionin the Third Eye Centre, Irvin explains why he titles his work thus:

> "Firstly, although my paintings are ostensibly abstract, they are informed by my passage through the world, the streets are a symbol of this .... secondly my paintings have to be identified and so do the streets. I do not like giving paintings a number or calling them 'Untitled', so I borrow names from streets for them."[4]

In his earlier work especially, the combination of a horizontal format and strong horizontal division between light transparent floating colour in the upper half of painting, and thicker more solid lower half, has led to many critics associating his work with landscape. As his work has developed recently away from this 'above and below' format, the association loses its relevance. This association with Turner and his own openly romantic attitude towards his work, combined with the expansive space employed in his work, are the only real links left in relation to the tradition of landscape as such, apart from the link between Irvin's use of light and colour. In his painting of 1979, Cathay, the blue washes of the background which graduate to a pale grey, have the same floating quality of clouds. In the midst of this there is a large body of yellows, dominating the painting with its sunburst, which exploits and explores all the yellows from cool lemon to warm orange. The overall impact of this painting gives a real sense of airiness and bright light similar to a landscape, but of course it is not, it is an expression influenced by the imagination of the painter, of the inside world rather than the outside one from which it merely borrows certain qualities. An appropriate quote comes from Irvin's interview with art critic Jon Thompson, who says:

> "Art should possess ... the richness and unexpectedness of nature without being about nature."[5]

In sentiment and outlook at least a somewhat tenuous link exists between Irvin's work and music. As Peter Fuller expresses it;

> "Comparisons between music and painting are rarely just".

but

> "Irvin expresses emotion through shape and colour in a way comparable to music ..."[6]

Irvin himself agrees with the sentiment of Stravinsky on his work;

> "My work is for anybody but not for everybody."[7]

He called one of his paintings after Egmont Street, as he finds Beethoven's Egmont Overture very stirring and heroic, qualities he would strive for in his own work, no doubt.

The main association that can be made between painting and music is one of pure abstraction. The pure abstraction of music has been accepted for centuries. It is considered acceptable that music can stir the emotions, create atmosphere and evoke associations, without reference to outside stimuli or mere simulation. This is only beginning to be acceptable in the realm of visual art, despite the claims of John Ruskin;

> "That the arrangement of colours and lines is an art analogous to the composition of music and entirely independent of the representation of facts. Good colouring does not necessarily convey the image of anything but itself."[8]

However Irvin himself frequently makes references to the sentiments of various composers. He likes this quote on the work of Gustav Mahler:

> "In his music he continually sought to test any hope for the meaning in life ... For Mahler did not give way, as many artists in the twentieth century have done, to nihilism, to the utterance of absurdity and hate .... Drawing on his experience of love, and accepting his deepest weaknesses he conveyed the convictions of one who has meaningfully existed and who can express gratitude for life. He dared to be and communicate joy in being, however much coloured by suffering and tragedy."[9]

This reflects his own aims in his work, as he paints about being in the world. He agrees with Shopenhauer also, in regard to art being an attempt to answer the question "What is Life?". He feels that there are truths he can approach only through the boundless, mysterious and necessary language of painting.

IDEAS ON FORM

Irvin likes to believe his notion of content is straightforward, that art is about being in the world and being acted on by the world, and then trying to find some form of expression for that interaction. He sees painting on a very practical level as something you do, and also as a very sensual thing related to feelings and emotions.

He enjoys moving around great expanses of canvass, where te practical side of doing the painting is very strong and the sensual aspect very absorbing as one is sucked into the painting by the process, as it is necessarily all-absorbing when tackling a large scale. He says he likes

> "pushing paint and colour around"[10]

and equates this with Matisse talking about doing his paper cut outs and describing the sensation of colour being in the hand, having a handful of colour in a very real, physical sense, and manipulating it.

Irvin talks of his paintings in a sensual way as well as on a purely practical basis.

> "It's the sensual level that I think of as the level on which my work is most easily accessible."[11]

He believes that the word 'abstract' is a difficult word to use as it can be demeaning, and should only be used in a qualified way. Paintings, in his opinion, need to have a certain independence, but not in a manner that seals them off from "the human condition and the world in general."[12]

He is not convinced that some kinds of art speak more directly and more forcefully than others, so he cannot see himself being

drawn into any arguments of figuration versus abstraction, as he would not agree that there is an appropriate division between the two.

As said before, painting, in his opinion, is concerned with being a human being in this world and being acted upon by the world.

"The human being in these paintings is me."[13]

He considers that paintings convey a message that, through their simplicity and direct connection with the experience of just being alive, can be communicated universally.

"What I would like to do is paint the life force itself."[14]

His example of universality or timelessness of pure art is that of Beethovens Fifth Symphony - it is actually about nothing in the sense that music is abstract, but the way it is conceived, used, contexted and orchestrated leads it to become a great piece of profundity, capable of stirring emotions over a span of two hundred years regardless of social or historical background. (Due to the popularily of this tune, this point is difficult to assess).

However this is the degreee of edifice, of univerisality of voice Irvin would hope to achieve, through qualities of loudness and softness, gentleness and vulgarity.

Irvin's discussion of his work is always on a very firm practical basis, with not need for complicated aesthetic jargon, he discusses his ideas through his experience, always on the level of formalistic and sensual concerns that are necessary to the creation of the work.

"For a number of years now I have been searching for a language which would allow me to treat the canvass as an area in which there could occur an open ended yet dynamic play of colours and marks .... you can never do the paintings you'd like to at any one time, only the paintings you have to do. It's only in retrospect that you can really know exactly what it is you have achieved."

"I was trying to make a simple structure on which to hang the colour, but this resulted, often, in the structure being too much in evidence.[15] Structure for me has to be there, but discreetly so."

As I have said, his discussion of the work relates closely to it, it is always relevant. His work is an area in which there occurs a dynamic play of colours and marks and because of their liveliness one can assume they occured quite spontaneously, but not 'accidentally'. They are the result of experience, of what risks to take, what colours to use, how to achieve a 'spontaneous' gesture, all of these things take practice and experience to work successfully and consistently.

Knowledge and experience in the medium gives the artist the freedom to let the unconscious take over, let the work come spontaneously, which is so necessary for work of this nature, where the freshness, the directness of the gesture is of huge importance. This necessity to 'let go' results in a natural progression in the work which is often only clear to the artist in retrospect.

As Irvin claims he feels a need for structure, but not a structure that is obvious, his work has evolved very much towards a looser and freer compostion. His early work was based on a structure of lower and upper halves, but as his work progressed from the seventies and into the eighties, the structure has become very flexible indeed, as I will discuss further in Chapter Three, being based on the use of more

variation, of gesture and marks, their scale in relation to the canvass, as well as each other, variation also in a more exciting tension between habitual diagonals that move from place to place in successive canvasses and vary their angle and spatial relationships with the more passive horizontals which achieve a greater sense of liveliness in some of the works.

Everything in Irvin's work is well considered even down to the straightness of the lines he incorporates. None of his lines are what would be described as 'dead straight'. This is for more than the obvious reason that they are very 'honest' paintings. In his work a bar is wide because a wide brush was used to create it and the brush strokes are visible in evidence of this. Where a mark is made over a long distance the paint is seen to bleed out. The paintings are the result of direct contact of the artist with the materials with no corrections or artificial methods of achieving the marks. Similarly his lines are not 'dead' straight because it would be physically impossible for the human arm to create a gesture that wide, which would be straight to the extent of mathematical precision. However this is not Irvin's only reason for allowing his lines to be natural. He recognises the contrast between the fluid line of the gesture and the rigid structure of the edge of the canvass. He characterizes the horizontal rectangle of the canvass (he consistently uses this format) as two arresting verticals and two demanding horizontals, which together bound the area in which the living out of the gestural life of the painting take place. This distinction is obviously of great importance. Similarly he regards Hoffman's comments on the simultaneous operation of flatness and depth relevant to his own

work. He believes that the play that occurs between activity at the surface of a painting and its implied depth is crucial. He relates this to the absence of straight lines within the canvas of his work as he explains that the relationship between what is 'on' the surface and what is within or behind the surface in visual spatial terms depends on configurations of colour and their modulations and is different to the kind of overlap and dealing with space that is achieved by the overlapping of two very obvious very firm rectangles for example, which would give the very distinct illusion of sliding behind each other. Irvin prefers to use colour and light to modulate the surface of his canvasses, wich gives way to a more complex, atmospheric, flexible interpretation of the spatial dynamics of the surface to the viewer. In fact this ambiguity usually leads the spectator to analyse the surface and determine which layer of paint is painted over which, as one's curiosity is aroused by the flexibility of the spatial interpretations open to one.

This is what Irvin hopes the extreme openess in the way they are painted will achieve as he believes that it is one of the things that is imaginatively available to the spectator - the recreation of the painting.

> "This is one way that a painting can exercise the imagination of the spectator by offering him the possibility of entering into the process of making it."[16]

This openess of form is of course what leads the work to be described as 'gestural', which ca be interpreted in a very negative fashion, as many people would like to believe that anything that is worthy of credit must be worked hard for, which the openess and spontanaeity in Irvin's work might appear to contradict.

> "I also know that when others use the word gestural, about my paintings, it carries with it a distinct and intended note of criticism ..... a discreet suggestion ..... that things have not been fully considered."
>
> "In reality .... things have been carefully considered - often it's been agonised over for long periods of time."[17]

Because of the nature of his work, verticals do not often occur in the work unless they are at a slight angle (always towards upper right). This is because Irvin recognizes that some movements of the hand and eye are more natural than others. As Irvin follows his instincts, verticals have not been ruled out of his work, they simply do not present themselves during the working process.

> "Well if you work on the scale that I work, using the tools that I use, it is hard to imaging how the act of painting would not be apparant in the end product."[18]

Irvin often used scrapers to push and pull the paint across the surface of the canvas, and that lent the paintings a strong sense of building and layering.

> "More recently I've been standing up to the canvas and working with a brush allowing it to have its way, talking to it almost so thought and action are one."[19]

Irvin is concerned that all the work that has gone into a painting (or as much of it as possible) is visible in the end product. From the bare or lightly stained canvas on right up to the heaviest impastos, the progression is quite obvious on inspection. Even the method and direction in which the strokes are applied are visible on the surface.

> "It should be apparant in the finished thing exactly how the painting occured."[20]

He likes the notion that painting is magical, but not that it should mystify the viewer. It should have a certain power, but also the key to its reconstruction should be there. Irvin relates this phenomenon as being the difference between painting and music - the painters performance and the manuscript are unfolded together in the work.

The experience of life he brings to a canvas combines with his experience of his medium but incorporated into a work where the life story of the painting is there for the receptor to unfold.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER II

1. In an interview with Elizabeth Frank in Pollock, p 110, Jackson Pollock makes the following statement, which I find relevant:

   "I think they should look for, but not passively - and try to receive whate the painting has to offer and not bring a subject matter or preconceived idea of what they are looking for ..."

   "Painting, I think, today - the more immediate, the more direct - the greater the possibility of making a direct - of making a statement ...."

2. Irvin speaking in "Albert Irvin in Conversation with Jon Thompson", Aspects, (Winter 1980/81), p 1.

3. Ibid p 2.

4. Albert Irvin 77-83, A Third Eye Centre (Glasgow) Travelling Exhibition Catalogue.

5. Jon Thompson, Aspects (no page numbers).

6. Peter Fuller, "The Hayward Annual 1980", The Naked Artist p 186.

7. Ob. cet. footnote 2 (Stravinsky Quoted) p 1.

8. August Wiedmann, Romantic Roots in Modern Art, p 73.

9. A quote from David Harbrooks book Gustav Mahler and the Courage to Be sent to me in a letter from the artist.

10. Ob. cet. 2 p 1.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Mary Rose Beaumont quotes the artist in Albert Irvin 77-83, A Third Eye Centre (Glasgow) Travelling Exhibition Catalogue.

14. Clare Henry quotes the artist, Glasgow Herald May 4, 1983.

15. Ob. Cet. 2 p 1.

16. Stephen Carter quoting the artist, Artscribe No. 1 (Jan 76)

17. Ob. cet. 2 p 2

18. Ob. cet. 2 p 2

19. Ob. cet. 2 p 2

20. Ob. cet. 2 p 2

CHAPTER III

CHANGES

A definite development in format can be detected in Irvin's work, from 1975 up to the present. The development occurs within the range of the work, the overall emphasis on sheer force of colour and the audacious confrontations between near horizontal and near vertical elements, which occur in successive paintings, remaining present although in varying spatial relationships. Constant also are the various orchestrations of colour, of dark and light, strong hues mingling with or opposing muted pastels. Degrees of transparency and opacity occur among the passages of intense and excited gestural markings and quiet, passive veils of colour, punctuated with clearly defined bars, painted one layer of colour on another, and rivalling the colour of the surrounding field. These bars, straight only to the point of credibility, never quite parallel, float and jostle with one another creating a satisfying tension in the work that is not disturbed by any nagging illusionism.

In the earlier work there is a degree of contrast evident, which divides the canvas into upper and lower zones, the upper half consisting of thin transparent layers of colour, while the lower zones are dominated by a denser application of paint, which lends them a heavier more solid sensation than the floating washes of thinner colour. The upper zone is consistently dominated by a series of near verticals or diagonals that slope down in the direction of the lower left hand corner of canvas, but rarely reach it. Whereas the lower half which adopts the horizontal format changes considerably over successive paintings, from a large block consisting of layers of colour, in Senrab 1975 (No. 1) into a breakdown of the block into a series of horizontal lines, Plimsoll 1980 (No. 5), and its illumination

in several paintings, where it moves up the canvas to confront the diagonals, sometimes resulting in its breakdown into several elements, with varying spatial relationships with the diagonals.

In "Remarks", One Magazine July 1974[1], Irvin discusses the work in his German Exhibition February - March 1974. He speaks of his search for the unanalysable, for a form in which strictness and freedom blend, where their concentration must be their expansiveness, their limitation their limitlessness. He equates his work with his life experience thus:

> "I walk in the street, I ride in an underground train, I fly in planes. On, below; above; through and around the space I exist in."[2]

This sums up the exploration of the painting in the same terms as his exploration in life. The paintings are a constant dialogue between what is on the surface, what appears to be further behind or in the surface, the illusions created by various applications of paint, from thin transparancies which have soaked into background right through to thick application that is in front of the overall surface plane. Colour also reinforces and undermines these illusions. By recreating the process used to build up the structure of the painting we can follow the history of the painting backwards layer after layer and find that the dash of bright orange that is jumping out of the muddy brown surface, for example, is in fact almost buried underneath the dashes of black or blue, the illusion is destroyed. (Sul Ross 1981 (No. 7)). It is the development of these elements, these illusions which outlines the main direction of development in his work over the years. The development has been towards a greater unity, which has in turn led to a structure in which every part is intimately bound up

with the existence of every other part, to the extent that it would be wrong to refer to them as parts, where the maximum scope is provided for both the creation and disintegration of these illusions we call painting.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF DEVELOPMENT

In an interview of 1976, Stephen Carter[3] describes Irvin's work as having grown up through a series of procedures, especially in relationship to colour. For instance, certain areas of a canvas may remain raw, others may remain at the first painting stage, as thin stains of translucent colour, and others go on to become worked surfaces. Since 1971 Irvin's painting process has involved the canvas being vertical, horizontal or even tilted[4], and according to Irvin this modification of the working process has led to changes in image.

> "The wall image has divided into a top and bottom. The top is usually more fluid, either brushed on very liquid or allowed to run, sometimes with paint already wet; the bottom usually much thicker, the paint applied in layers of one sort or another."[5]

Senrab 1975 (No. 1) appears to be a painting in such a manner (I will discuss it in more detail in the next section), it is divided into two definite halves, a top and bottom, the top half consisting entirely of lucid, liquid stains, the bottom two thirds a strong block of colour, with distinctive layers and gestures.

In Albion 1977 (No. 2), there is an important shift in the composition which leads to a more dynamic tension between upper and lower zones.

Vigorous diagonals dominate the upper two thirds of painting and meet with a near horizontal bond of wide energetic brushstrokes which demarcate the lower zone.

This schematic division of the canvas continues to develop over the following years. Irvin believes that the paintings of these years (1977-78) were necessary as they enabled him to work out

the theme of 'near horizontals' and 'near diagonals'[6], exploiting their ability to complement and oppose one another. Other examples are Flodden 1978 (No. 3), and Cathay 1979 (No. 4), where a new departure occurs, gestural marks resembling Oriental calligraphy, appear in the horizontal band, Plimsoll 1980 (No. 5) where the upper 'block' dissolves into a more fluid form, made up entirely of calligraphic markings, or slashing movements of the brush, which still run in the same general direction as the previous diagonals. Plimsoll 1980 seems to point towards the loosening of this habitual format. In the background there are blurred loosely rendered marks in the form of large squiggles and oval shapes, appearing all over the canvas beneath the major forms.

There is a sense of freedom, luminosity in these markings that, in my opinion resemble neon light, also, their appearance as large bold haphazard shapes reminds one of grafitti, their blurring reminiscent of spray painting.

The sense of colour in Plimsoll 1980 is also much brighter and livelier, teaming up with the bold markings to create a more lively, fresher approach than in previous paintings.

In Plimsoll also, the horizontal base element which acts as a foundation to the more vivid tilted strokes, shows its first signs of transformation into separate elements. Instead of a band of paintwork continuing along the lower edge of canvas, it has evolved into a system of nine parallel lines, three down and three across demarcating the base, in a looser more casual fashion.

Mile End 1980 (No. 6) is an example of the complete reorganisation of the painted surface. No longer a sense of upper and lower halves, no block of diagonals flaoting above a horizontal band. Instead there is a fairly deep grey background with markings similar to those in the background of Plimsoll, but with a greater degree of figure/ground differentiation as the marks are white and applied when the grey washes have dried so that they remain distinct.

A series of cream vertical markings which are a combination of those at the base of Cathay 1979 (No. 6) and the more orderly set of lines in Plimsoll, but with the energetic effect of the white and orange diagonals also in Plimsoll dominate the lower left-hand side of composites. This painting points to the more overall system of composition, with increased interaction between the various areas of the painting which is characteristic of Irvin's paintings in the 1980's.

Strong diagonals running from top to bottom of the canvas become an important feature of the work from Rivoli 1981 (No. 8) continuing through Sultan 1982 (No. 11), Samson (No. 12) and Prospero (No. 13) of that year, Yupon (No. 16) and Linden (No. 17) in 1983, with exceptions of Avalon 1981 (No. 10), Pegasus (No. 14) and Beatrice (No. 15) 1982.

With these paintings from 1980 onwards there is a growing emphasis on the placement of elements in front of and behind each other. This is achieved through differing levels of opacity and transparency in the marks and bands, combined with the use of series of parallel bars interweaving across the surface of canvas. The result of this is a greater interaction

between colour, gesture and the boundary created by the hard edge of the surface of the canvas, as well as more extensive play between the spatial relationships within the painting due to the changed format and more heightened colour confrontation, as complimentaries appear unmuted side by side.

I will now concentrate on tracing this development through a study of a selection of Irvin's paintings, in terms of structure and of colour which are essentially intrinsically combined in his work but can be separated in terms of describing the type of mark, scale used to create composition, and then the spatial depth created when we see these elements in terms of colour.

In the painting of 1975, Senrab (No. 1), we are confronted with that which has been described as Irvin's landscape format. I would not be inclined to agree with this categorisation, especially in regard to this painting, but however the upper and lower zones are distinct, which is the main characteristic of a landscape. Unlike later paintings the lower zone, which I would describe as the horizontal element, is quite dominant occupying the bottom two-thirds of the painting. This division of canvas into two separate zones is caused chiefly by the different application of paint in the two, as I have already clarified. The top half consists of a subtle soak and stain technique akin to watercolour, the different marks blurring and mingling with each other, because successive applications occur before the last layer of paint has dried. The lower region contrasts with this not through colour, but through a totally different technique of applying the paint, one where thicker layers are spattered and spread across each other, but only when the paint has dried, these layers remain distinct because of this. This

section is wider as well as deeper than the upper zone and is definitely more substantial because of this combined with the use of more viscous layers of paint. It could also be described as a more vital, livelier section as the energetic method in which the paint was applied is quite obvious, very different from the gentler watercolour style techniques of the upper zone.

Between the time when Senrab was painted and 1977 when Albion (No. 2) was, a change of emphasis in composition has occured, Albion being one of the first paintings to adopt the diagonal shift in the upper zone. This causes a more dynamic tension between the upper and lower areas, with the horizontal tilting upwards toward the left, to challenge or counteract this new movement. However in the case of this painting the union of the two in my opinion, does not quite work, as there is a general awkwardness about this compostion. Perhaps this is a personal judgement based on the fact that I find the bands of colour in the diagonals that go from the upper right hand side, down in the direction of the lower left, very unconvincing, because I simply could not make a gesture like that myself (it looks the wrong way around to me, but that is a personal judgement). Another factor of the composition, difficult to come to terms with, is that the near horizontal band of paintwork goes beyond the left hand side and also touches the bottom right but stops short of the actual right hand of the canvas, giving the impression that the painting has been cropped. However, I know that this is not the Irvin's practice, he accepts the edges of the paintings right from the start, as a necessary boundary.

Albion does however mark a departure from a more passive interaction between upper and lower zones, to an extensive use of what Irvin describes as 'near horizontals' and 'near diagonals'[8]. Throughout 1977 and 78 Irvin worked on this theme in paintings like Flodden 1978 (No. 3) and Trafalger 1978 and emerged capable of using these elements in a freer, more zealous and assured way.

In his interview with J. Thompson, Thompson describes these paintings as being tight, and Irvin agrees, as he had been searching for a structure that would create more movement in the work and after finding it there were many paintings created out of necessity before he could relax and use the structure more freely. Much of the awkwardness in Flodden 1978 is caused by this tension, the upper diagonals tilt awkwardly and come to sit on the horizontal band like a leaning sculpture on a plinth. Irvin feels with hindsight that paintings like this, and Trafalger 1978 were too schematic, too abrupt, like cut-out images against the bare canvass which he was using at the time.

In Cathay 1979 (No. 4), however we can see a breakthrough. This painting is much lighter in both texture and atmosphere. Almost as if a burden has been lifted, freedom has been found. It is actually the second version of another painting which Irvin felt to be unsuccesful.
Painted on the floor, resulting in puddles of paint which conglomerated while drying, giving variation in transparency of the paint, but at the same time leading to a fairly even, overall surface. The sensation of airy or vaporous top combined with substantial bottom have completely disappeared as the whole surface hovers and floats in space. The block of diagonals that

dominate the painting, are merged together and contained within the picture frame, which gives a more satisfying sensation, they are hovering, not dashing dramatically off the canvas. The horizontal element which underpins the diagonals is centred, stopping short of both sides of the canvas. It consists of a series of almost vertical calligraphic marks, each one individual, with a distinct personality, like Oriental brushstrokes, a departure from previous practice. A solid gash underlines the calligraphic marks, creating a relative sensation of insubstantiality throughout the rest of the canvas.

Yet another breakthrough in composition occurs in Prospect 1979, continues through Kambalar 1979, Pilgrimage 1980 and also Plimsoll 1980 (No. 5).

Plimsoll is very similar in compositional terms to Cathay except that now the calligraphic markings are contained within the block of 'near diagonals'. There are also free markings emerging from the background in both this and Kambalar and Pilgrimage, which give a fresher more energetic feeling to the work than Cathay.

In Prospect 1979, Irvin starts to exploit the use of parallel bars as horizontal element, painted quite freely with the paint bleeding out as the mark progresses along canvas. He achieves this with increased success in Plimsoll where he adopted the breakdown of these lines into sets of three across and three down. This breakdown gives more clarity as well as flexibility to this system of marks. They also cease to underline the painting as much, for the background is visible between and below them, they are suspended in 'mid-air'.

The paintings of this period can be seen to become progressively more demanding physically on the artist, especially in such expansive use of the calligraphic mark, which necessitates a dashing, slashing movement, like a whip, quite different from its use in Oriental art, being used there on such a small scale. Most of Irvin's canvasses are 7 x 10 feet. The energy suggested in these paintings is no illusion, a great deal of it was necessary to create the marks in the first place.

In Mile End 1980 (No. 6), there is little comparsion to previous compositions. The main body of calligraphic marks are almost vertical, and occupy the lower left hand side of canvas. In the space that is left above them there is an almost vertical, seemingly haphazard, arrangement of deep blue strokes. The upper right hand side is dominated by an area of thick grey paint, almost square in shape and different in texture and sensation to any previous image used. There is a sense of a heavy block of paint painted on top of the otherwise hazy transparent background where freeflowing marks occur, to which I have previously referred.

In Rivoli 1981 (No. 8), the bands of bold diagonals which run from corner to corner, have only their direction in common with the other paintings. Their boldness is unprecedented. A band, consisting of four smaller bands, evenly painted in contrasting colours touches both the left hand corner and the right hand top corner at it's extreme sides. Painted with a precision that somehow is uncharacteristic of Irvin, and an accompanying awkwardness which is equally uncharacteristic.

But it does point towards the more extensive use of these broad, near diagonal bands, in the future, which depend largely on colour to determine the extent to which the dominate successive canvasses.

This is also the painting where any sense of a bottom, horizontal element as constant, deteriorates, as from now on the horizontal bars occur all over the canvas, resulting in a series of parallels interwoven at different levels all over canvas such as in Pegasus 1982.

DEVELOPMENT AND UNITY OF SURFACE

In Rivoli 1981 (No. 8) as well as seeing the development of abrupt diagonals dominating the canvas and the deterioration of the horizontal as a method of balance and containment of image, it also marks the shift of emphasis in image, from above and below to in front and behind, due to the background's more subtle colouration which recedes in contrast to the bold colours of the diagonals.

This interweaving and manipulation of space backwards and forwards within the picture plane becomes more consistent when the work, which begins in Agamemnon and Avalon in 1981. As well as the sets of bars being placed in front and behind each other there are also layers of successive colours visible under each set, the history of the painting. This can be seen in details of Avalon 1981 (No. 10). In Sultan 1982 (No. 11) the diagonals which slope from top to bottom of the rectangle are very clearly depicted as being both in front of the sets of horizontals as well as over them. The transparency of the two diagonals on the right hand side reveals the horizontals underneath.

Yupon 1983 (No. 16) works on a similar level. The diagonal paintmarks that blend together to cover most of the upper right hand side of the painting appear to be distinctly on top of the muddy brown background, not just in terms of colour, but in terms of opacity also, as the paint has been applied thickly and freely on the flyaway marks resulting, sit on top of the brown surface, where they have strayed from the main body of pink and orange paint.

At the base of canvas are three sets of horizontal bars, the set on the far right being four deep and the remaining two sets three deep. Each 'bar' appears to be at least two layers deep, as different coloured layers are used. Obviously a red/orange colour was used on the bottom layer as the application of layers lies underneath the diagonal that intersect them. Of these diagonals the middle two are the most transparent, revealing all elements of painting that lie beneath them. More opaque layers of blue and black paint have then been applied on top of these diagonals to the horizontal bars.

These elements of opacity and transparency are crucial clues in the viewer's participation the work through reconstruction as they help reveal the steps taken by the artist.

They also assist the overall unity of the paintings, the unity of the overall structure, of the colouration and the unity of the paintings past and present.

Colour is however increasingly vital in the unification of the surface. It has of course always been one of the most vital elements in Irvin's work, and I would like to outline his developing use of colour and how it eventually becomes such a stronger more active element.

DEVELOPMENT OF COLOUR

It is obvious that colour is absolutely crucial to Irvin's work. Much of the atmosphere, excitement and spatial structure of his work depends on the interaction of one colour on another or more subtly, different variations of the one colour (e.g. Senrab 1975, Avalon and Agamemnon 1981, Nelson 1981).

Irvin has explored many variation of colour over the course of his work frequently changing both degree of chromaticity and achromaticity, changing from variations of the brightest reds in one painting, to icecream pastels combined with strong orange and blue in another.

If his shift from one range of colours to another seems unexpected, it could be due to Irvin's having no fixed expectations when he deals with colour. He believes that you simply cannot lift colour relationships from the world and expect them to behave as you would expect in a painting, they have no fixed relationships with each other.

> "In my experience the damned stuff never behaves in the way you think."[10]

To deal with this degree of uncertainty Irvin adopts a process of trial and error. He frequently uses sheets of coloured paper to work out ideas for different colour arrangements, and even then when actual paint is used the colours act differently. In this respect colour is one of the livelier, more unpredictable elements in his work. He believes that "the experience has to be absorbed first"[11], then in a few years it will come out in the process of working.

Irvin would also disagree with the notion that colour conforms to a simple map of the emotions. He believes that these ideas take away from the life of colour itself. It is easy to understand Irvin's aversion to such laws on colour as colour is such an active, changing, consummate element in every painting.

As mentioned, my first experience of seeing Irvin's work was at Rosc '84 where I found the colours of his paintings exciting. The three paintings exhibited were all very different in mood and feeling. Avalon 1981 was a shock brilliant orange-pinks, reds with white and blue. This is lost in reproduction unfortunately, but the effect in reality is quite stunning. Beatrice 1982 howver is much dreamier, icecream pastels float with blues, yellows and oranges. Yupon 1983 situated in the basement, with its strongly patterned dark walls, somehow seemed more sombre and structural.

This degree of differentiation in effect is not surprising to find in Irvin's work. He is an experienced artist which enables him to place his confidence in his intuition and judgement, knowing that he can make it work.

Every painting seems to have its own personality, its own needs, there is little sense of a series, certainly not a premeditated one.

Irvin's range of colours is wide, and the scope in any particular painting can vary from the limited range of Senrab 1975 for instance, where different tinctures of red dominate, darkening to wine and brightening to near orange, to the variation of a polychromatic like Linden 1983 for example, with with its shades of wine and dusky orange in background, its

primaries red and blue show all their dramatic strenght, bright green, orange, pink and black.

Just as various colours are displayed right across the canvas, red answering green from opposite sides in Linden for example, a painting like Mile End can be almost monochromatic, its range being from cream/white, blue/white through blue greys to ultramarine. Samson 1982 would appear to have similar limitations if the transparency of some of the washes did not reveal the red, pink and yellow underpainting. Irvin's confidence with colour enables him to achieve as much excitement within the range of pure reds in Agamemnon 1981, as there is in Linden 1983 or Rivoli 1981, with their complimentaries.

However there appears to be a greater tendency to distribute differing colours across the canvas in his work from Rivoli 1981 onwards. From Senrab 1975 to Sul Ross 1981 the use of primaries is very limited. Albion 1977 has a range of subtle tertiaries in the diagonal bands opposing the pinky red horizontal band. However, spots and stripes of contrasting colour seem to have formed the underpainting of this band, suggesting Irvin has used varying colours and decided finally on a limted range to complete the painting.

Cathay 1979 explores a wide range of yellows from lemon to orange and a muted range of pastel blues, the tone is light and airy over the entire surface. Plimsoll 1980 is very cheerful with its lilac background and range of oranges and white diagonal markings. The energy employed in the markmaking enlivens the surface and gives life to the colours themselves. Rivoli 1981 is static in composition in comparison. Its energy

derives from the straightforward composition and bold use of bright green, red magenta, and orange on a muted background.

Prospero 1982, Linden and Yupon 1983, owe much to the varying degrees of tone and hue employed across the canvasses. Irvin's format of near horizontal and near diagonal appears in Prospero in the form of a single complimentary green line down the canvas intersecting with a similar green line cutting across at centre. There are other bands in pink, orange, red and blue, as they are part of a series of lines, but the green jumps right out from the red background. This also causes a contradicion in spatial terms. We are used to reading a series of parallel lines, intersecting other elements on the same level, as sitting beside each other in spatial terms. But here this theory is completely undermined as the series of lines fades from green right back to pink which is hardly distinguishable from the background.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER III

1. Albert Irvin "Remarks Notes on my German Exhibition February - March 1974". One Magazine (July 1974).

2. Ibid

3. "Bert Irvin interviewed by Stephen Carter, compiled by Questa Deeds", Artscribe 1 (Jan. 1976)

4. Albert Irvin is one of four artists featuring in a BBC2 TV film "A Feeling for Paint" where he appears working on two canvasses, one haning up on the wall, and one propped up horizontally on bricks on the floor.

5. Ob Cet 3

6. Jon Thompson "Albert Irvin in conversation with Jon Thompson". Aspects (Winter 80/81) pp 1-2.

7. "I consider painting as an object - its edges are established from the beginning, the paintings are never cropped."
Ob Cet 3

8. Ob Cet 6 p 1.

9. Irvin categorises these paintings as being necessary, in the sense that Kandinsky meant when he spoke of "inner necessity".
Mary Rose Beaumont, "Albert Irvin Works 1977-83" in the catalogue to Third Eye CEntre (Glasgow) Ltd. Exhibition of 1983.

10. Ob Cet 6 p 2.

11. Ibid.

CONCLUSION

> "The failure of much psychological writing about artistic activity and the unconscious is out of the inability to comprehend, in a verbally orientated culture, the depth and the intimacy of the marriage between the artist and his medium .....
> ..... as far as I can see, an artistic medium is the only thing is human existence that has precisely the same range of sensed feelings as people themselves do ....."
>
> Robert Motherwell[1]

It is in his ability to express and communicate this range of sensed feelings that Albert Irvin is successful as a painter. I believe that this is a direct result of the closeness between himself, his ideas, his feelings and his work. The enjoyment he receives from the whole process of making the work, lives on in the work because of the direct manner in which it is painted.

> "The whole business of dealing with materials is inspirational .... I love the tools, brushes and the things that I make for myself to apply the paint. The paint itself, is a sensuous delight to manipulate."[2]

Irvin's knowledge and understanding of the tradition of painting, of the methods, processes, ideals and ideas carried down through the centuries and reinterpreted to suit the particular needs of each era and individiual have helped him considerably to develop as an artist in his own right.

With Turner and Pollock in particular he discovered that the force of light, colour, energy and spontanaiety could suggest a greater depth of expression when used independent of referential matter. This left him free to develop his own work which addresses itself fully to the abstract concerns, in a positive and optimistic manner. With life itself as subject matter, Irvin continues to create paintings of considerable enjoyment and significance.

FOOTNOTES CONCLUSION

1. Robert Motherwell "The Creative use of the Unconscious by the Artist and by the Psychotherapist", Annals of Psychotherapy Vol. 5, No. 1 (1964).

2. Albert Irvin, extract from (my) correspondence with the artist.

APPENDIX

Although Albert Irvin has worked independently throughout his career, in his ideas and beliefs in the process of painting, he has much in common with his contemporaries.

In Contemporary British Artists they voice their opinions -

"The wordless, non literary, two-dimensional and marvellously silent medium of paint which is pigment, and colour, which is used to make line, shape, intensity, weight, tone, structure, composition, content and area with chosen materials, are the questionable limits of painting. Through colour, can be created a vision of human scale and a sense of experience of space - an art which is finally unrestrained."

Gillian Ayres, 1979

"Painting, for me has an exactitude which is directed by feeling. The means are visible but the relationships are felt. Choices are made and structured through specific interactions. We see the cause but it is the 'felt' effect towards which we obliquely strive."

Basil Beattie, 1979

"The shapes and colours I paint and the significance I attach to them I cannot explain in any coherent way. The exploration of colour, mass, shape is, I believe, a self exploration constantly varied and changing in nature. A reality made tangible on the painted surface."

John Hayland, 1964

"I use my experience of the visible world as starting points for my paintings. A starting point can be my wish to create a visual equivalent for a particular experience in purely painterly terms, within a tradition of painting - and in so doing I discover (for) myself. I believe the asking of visual questions is the practice of painting and both making pictures and looking at them, takes much time and love."

Jennifer Durrant, 1979

"Remarkable for its sustained innovation and the quality of its ideas, their work is a tribute to the modern spirit at its most courageous. All these artists share a vision of painting which affirms and which celebrates, in vibrant and resplendent colours, life and nature ..... The understanding of what it takes to make great art, the idea that quality comes from a lifetime of devotion to craft and the acquiring of skills, has given their work an authority that speaks powerfully for itself."

Alexander Moffat
"Reinventing the Real World", British Art Show - Old Allegiances and New Directions 79 - 84

"What I'm not hoping to do is to paint another picture because there are enough pictures in the world. I'm hoping to make a new thing for the world that remains in the mind like a new species of living thing."

Frank Auerbach
(Interview with Catherine Lampert in Frank Auerbach, catalogue to an Arts Council of Great Britain exhibition, 1978).

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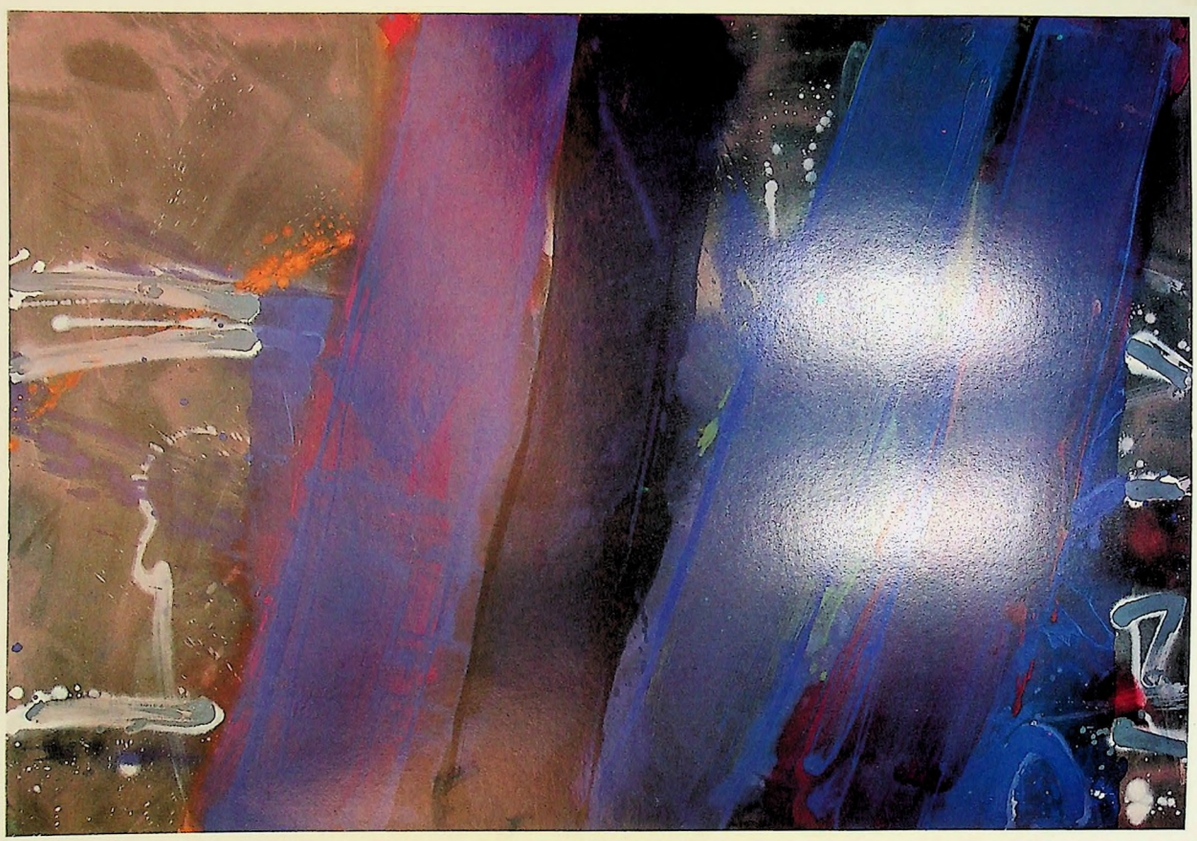

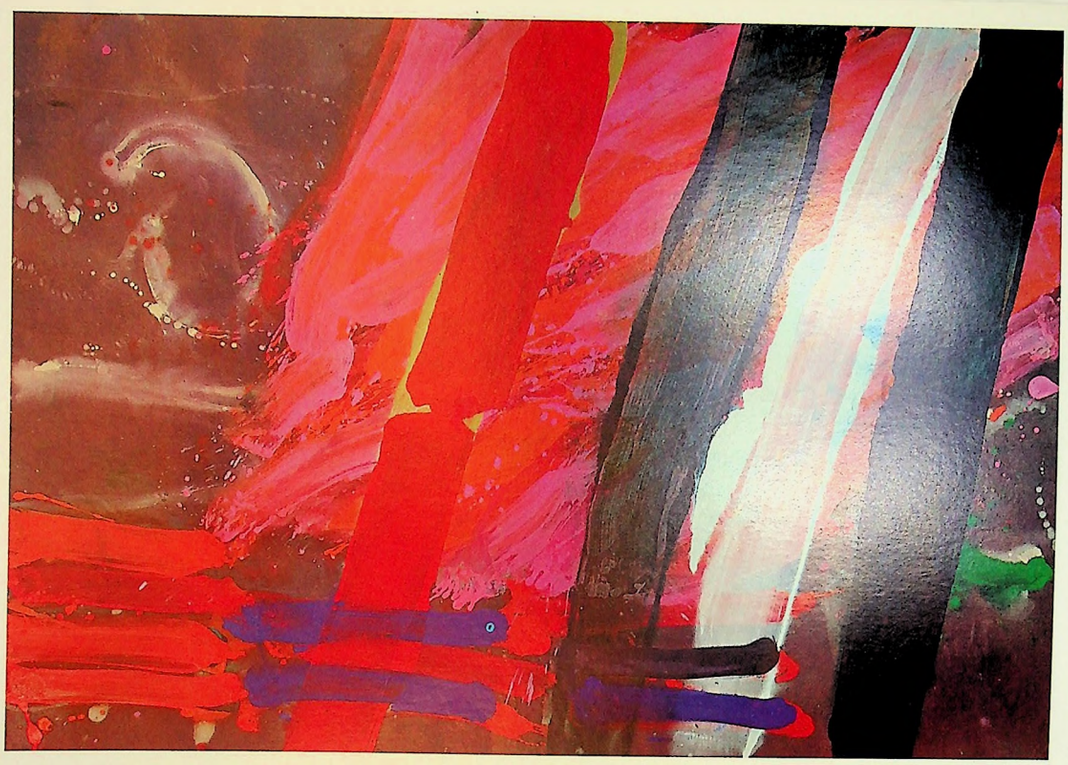

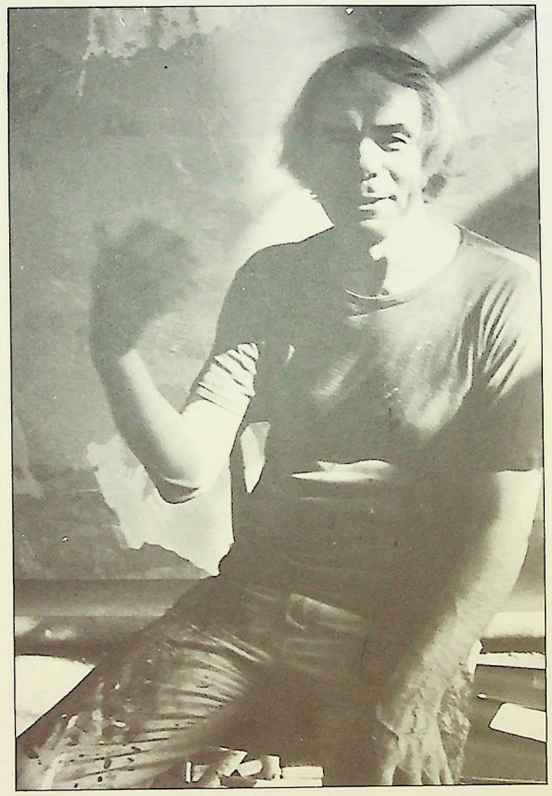

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