'Analysing The Creative Process'

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Introduction

A. What is the Creative Process? What is art and Who is an artist?

I feel that too much emphasis has always been placed on the end product produced by artists, at present and throughout the History of Art.

How can we expect the student in the art classroom to create adequately if the processes of artistic creation are surrounded by fog? The child needs to know just how much of a role art plays in society. It is only through identifying the child's own creative work with that of the artists that an awareness of the cultural heritage is aroused.

Through recognition of the care, preparation and external influences involved in the creation of a finished piece of work will the child and future adult begin to cherish their environment, both natural and man made?

The art teacher is not merely an entertainer or dispenser of materials, but can with a sensitive, thoughtful approach to art eduction and the creative process gradually unfold the genuine creativity and self-expression of the child, all of which are essential to the development of a complete human being.

In this thesis, I will analyse and question the stages which I feel make up the artistic process and I propose that a similar approach should provide a learning basis in Art Education.

B. Outline of Contents

Chapter 1

(a) This chapter focuses on the need for motivation in education, particularly in the 'art' room as compared to the artists own search for inspiration for his work.

(b) 'Nature' has provided numerous artists throughout the history of mankind with inspiration for their work - major artists and their diverse approaches will be discussed.

(c) Likewise, "Nature" can be of vital importance as a source of inspiration in and out of the Art room.

Chapter 2

(a) What is perception? Is it necessary to stimulate perceptual awareness in the child?

(b) A discussion revolving around the understanding of 'visual language' as reflected in nature.

(c) Contrasting the way in which the artist makes use of these visual elements in his work with the child's own vision and his developments of them in his art work.

(d) Reasons why I felt it necessary to discuss the visual elements in this manner.

Chapter 3

(a) What does the artist aim for in his final product? and what external influences come to bear upon what he creates?

(b) The importance of the selective process to the artist and the need to stimulate selectivity in the child's own art work.

(c) The artist's personal vision is a major formulative factor upon the final creative piece.

(d) The child's understanding of the artist's vision can be developed through the study of History of Art and Appreciation.
The child's own vision can also influence his approach to creative activities.

(e) The artist's use of materials contrasted to the importance of materials in the Art Room.

(f) The artist's own predetermined objectives and the need and importance of evaluation of the child's work by the art teacher.

Chapter 4

This final chapter presents my argument as to why I feel there is a need for sequential learning in Art Education. I propose also a thematic approach of study based on a particular element in nature, 'Trees' followed by lesson plan suggestions carrying out a particular aspect of the theme in the classroom.

C. The Reasons for my choice of Study.

Before embarking upon the writing of this thesis I found it imperative to ask myself a certain number of questions as follows:

(a) How has my own personal work of four year's duration in the field of Art and Design prepared me to teach and guide children through the self-same creative process?

(b) What role has 'Art' played in my life?

(c) How can the work of the artist affect society and in what manner is 'art' relevant to the growth and development of the child?

As a student the observation of 'nature' has provided me with endless inspiration for my work. These observations I have constantly interpreted throughout my drawings, paintings, photographs, etc., into my particular area of specialization which has been "fabric design and embroidery". During the past two years in particular I have been fascinated by the study and contrast of the hard shapes of nature, e.g., rocks compared to the soft flowing gentle movement of water; it's reflections, variety in colour and growth. Some argue that a concentration on 'subject matter' and media can be limiting but I feel that in my case it has proved invaluable as I became increasingly confident as I saw my work developing from a central point and spreading into various directions, allowing me to discover an area where I was able to express myself freely. It is essential to understand fully your own approach to the creative process before attempting to guide children through the process also.

As an art teacher, I feel there afe certain objectives which should be attained:

(a) To understand the children I teach - their attitudes and feelings about the world they live in - their emotional perceptual physical and intellectual growth.

(b) To involve them in the creative process - providing a supportive environment.

(c) To educate them from the knowledge I have acquired and hope to continue to learn about the creative process.

(d) To enable these children to become more aware of the world they live in and the role 'art' plays in it.

Art activity generates 'creativity' and is as such vital in the school curricula. One of the most damaging factors of human life can be "mental conformity". The creative process stimulates the problem-solving faculties of the human mind enabling a person as a result of it to deal creatively with his life, job and fellow human beings.

In this thesis I do not attempt to say - This is creativity'. that it follows a set of particularly defined stages. Creativity occurs as a result of many influential factors and depends also on the individual.

Psycholigists for many years now have sought to discover the full implications of creativity - how it occurs - what environment is the most influential and if we can train people to be creative.

I endeavour to analyse, as I see, some of the stages which I feel ' the artist' must be involved in during the creative process, their vision, visual language and their use of media to express their feelings and thoughts. I identify also with the child - what inspires him? how he sees the world and how important is 'art class' to him in order to interpret and express what he wants. Throughout the thesis I have carried the theme of nature as I feel this is the area where I feel most confident in analysing the creative process.

As a result of my findings I propose that the 'Breadth' approach to art education is the most effective way of stimulating creativity. By that I mean that art

should not be isolated activities from lessson to less but instead should grow naturally from the initial point to the next, guided and supported by the art teacher in an effective environment.

The result being that the child becomes more confident, increasingly creative and able to express himself fully - the goal of art education.

Chapter 1

'Motivation in the Classroom'

The search for inspiration in creative activities affects both the artist and the art pupil in the classroom situation. Children usually possess a natural drive for expression. However, in the majority of cases, the teacher is looked upon as the major provider and stimulator of interests and activities amongst the children in her care. I consider that it is the art teachers primary duty in teaching 'Art' as a subject to arrange conditions so that the pupils will be anxious and eager to create art. The teacher must not only satisfy the needs of her pupils as a group, but recognise the needs of the individual, ensuring that each child believes that the art experience is especially designed for him. Motivation is essential - too often school art acquires a repetitive nature. Due to insufficient motivation, many children resort to copying from books, from each other and in general reproducing a type of 'formula' art.

It is essential as art teachers that we ask ourselves "What is Art?" What do we want our pupils to learn? The teacher should know the child whom she is trying to motivate, as there are certain characteristics of each age group quite different from any other. Art is a form of discovery. It relates the discoveries the artist has made about himself and his environment. Art education attempts to stimulate 'visual sensitivity'. If this is the case, well then, one of the major skills which must be developed in a child is 'observation'.

How does the child see the world? If art is about learning to see - a visual - sensory experience, it relates not only the information you receive through your eyes but also that of the other senses. Art education is not only concerned with the ability to see, feel, taste, hear and smell but is also concerned with the encouragement of awareness and perception. Sensory appreciation cannot be taught, it can only be experienced. Children, usually find inspiration through observation of their environment and through interpreting what they see in a personal way. As we know, the young child is a very sensitive receiver. How often do we see an infant pick up a dirty ugly stone, finger it lovingly and trot around with it grasped in his tiny hand or, even still,

fascinated with a shiny surface, or the ripples he sees as he drops a stone into the water. There is no doubt about it but the child loves sights, sounds, colours, touch sensations. They love to gaze, rub surfaces, sniff, lick scratch.

Two child educators, who centred their educational systems around the needs of the child were Maria Montessori and Freidrich Froebal. They fully appreciated the fact that knowledge and understanding can be found in diverse ways.

(a) Through direct experience and (b) Through the intellect.

Froebal identifies the first actions of the child as the observation of his surroundings and the reception of the external world. He felt that each individual had potential which must find

(a) Stimulus, (b) Nurture and (c) Finally express itself.

He saw the teacher as a part of the environment who must direct and never force growth. These three stages I find are equally applicable in the art classroom.

Without the first two stages that of stimulus and nurturing, the products of expression produced by the pupils would be very weak indeed. It is only through exploring ideas that the child can learn to make rich mental sensory associations which identify with his ideas and feelings and recognises what he wishes, finally, to express in visual form.

Maria Montessoris basic philosophy, in her educational system, was that all education must be self-education. She felt the beginning of education for the child was the training of the senses. She produced 26 pieces of apparatus for this purpose. The apparatus enabled the child to distinguish between rough, smooth/shiny surfaces. This, she felt, encouraged the development and co-ordination for the child and paved the way for self-education.

'Mudeja' ( ) speculates that children can be taught to observe just as they are taught to read. Art exercises in observation can be designed so that the child can become aware of the various types of visual stimuli.

But, how does the child relate the discoveries he has made about his environment in his art work? 'Rhoda Kellog' who analyses Child Art categorized the early pictorialism of the child in the following manner:-

1. Animals. 2. Buildings. 3. Vegetation. 4. Transportation.

The customary vegetation items drawn by the young child were trees and flowers. Up to the age of 7-9 the child's work is very symbolistic, after which they attempt to capture a realistic impression of the world as they see it. Visual representation is very important to the 11-12 year old child. He attempts to draw from nature a visual interpretation. However, he is also inclined to copy as he is frustrated by his own poor attempts at depicting the world he sees.

In examining 'Motivation' as an important factor in education, it is equally important to question what makes a child tick? What is he interested in at the present stage of his development and how can the art teacher stimulate his visual awareness, so that art class becomes for him not just a repetitive production process but an alive exciting exploration of his environment, a recording of his ideas and impressions, an expression of this assumulative information - in a creative form?

'The Artists search for Inspiration'

As an art student, I have, and am constantly searching for inspiration for my creative work and I am motivated by certain facets of my environmental and physical being to produce the type of creative work I do. In studying this process of motivation, so essential to the art teaching situation, I have decided to question, as close as possible, how the artist searches for inspiration. It is important to identify the parallel between the manner in which the artist and child approach their creative work. The child needs guidance and inspiration which can be provided by the art teacher. The artist is involved in a continuous search for inspiration.

In order to guide children in creating art, it is important first to understand the 'creative process'.

The first stage is 'the idea'. The artist identifies a certain direction for his work. In discussing this topic I have chosen 'the natural environment' as a theme because I feel

it relates not only to the child's work but also to the creative work of artists throughout the history of world art.

An artist may approach the exploration of an idea in a variety of ways. One might be a slow process of gathering ideas, through maybe a series of sketches or photographs before finally coming upon an aspect which appeals to him. The artist "Claude Monet" developed from general landscape theses to focus on the study of 'a haystack' under varying conditions of light. Sometimes the artist deliberately searches for inspiration or has a sudden flash of insight.

I identify the natural environment as one of the main sources of motivation for the artist, however, there are many other idea sources involved. The constructed environment has provided motivation to many artists. The imagination, or inner thoughts of the artist, can formulate what the artist sees. Man's sense of order also can extend what he sees:-

"Art can be viewed as an extension of man, because man utilizes the relational principles and sees in his art the essential unity between what he observes in natural forms, including himself" (J.J.de Lucio Meyer).

How can the artist use this source of inspiration in a creative way? The artistic process can be reflected in a variety of ways. The artist uses it as a form of self-expression; what he feels about the world he lines in. Self expression distinguishes the individual. Creative work can be of a narrative form - recording a group or spiritual experiences. The artist is a translator and an interpretor of human experience. The artist through his work can enhance and enrich his environment.

But essentially the creative process witnesses man's innate need for order - a manifestation of the human search for order out of chaos.

<u>The Artists interpretation of his natural Environment</u>

The natural environment has provided the artist with endless inspiration, therefore it is appropriate, I feel, to discuss this inspirational source in relation to the creative process and the artist who found adequate lifelong inspiration in the study of it, and

what aspect of it they chose to express in their creative wcrk.

Since the beginning of human art, man 'the Artist' has struggled to come to terms with the environment in which he has been placed. The artist's studies and records of his environment have been handed down from generation to generation. Each creation is an individual record made by man himself about his world. What does the artist see in nature that he considers worthy of interpretation?

In the first recorded human art, that of 'Prehistoric Man', the artist seems to create images in order to explain the natural forces in their lives. Why did prehistoric man choose to decorate his cave walls with hunting and natural scenes? Many archaeologists feel that these paintings witness man's attempt to order the environmental factors of his life. The cave painting appear to depict the changing seasons, the animals which he hunted and on which he depended for food and survival, the handprints of his family, all records of conditions and developments which influenced his growth. Many artists have reflected the brutality of nature, the fear and power it has over man. The dynamic forms in trees, spider webs, shells and honey combs have served as models for architectural structures. The organic qualities and inherant beauty of wood clay and fibres often find expression in the products of craft workers and designs.

"It is natures diverse system of organisation that have been nature's greatest gift to the artist" (Faulkner Ziegfield).

Nature provides us with an established order and it is man's eternal quest to understand this order and relate it to his man-made world. The artist has always depicted nature imposing on his own particular order. People create from objects and are inspired by objects they see around them, abstracting from them, as Kurt Rowland has indicated.

The stone carving of the Greeks represented the vine and the acanthus leaf - the French used the 'Fleur de lis' (the lily) for the arms of the King of France) - the Eskimos use the shape of the reindeer frequently in their pattern making. All these natural shapes feature regularly in their natural environment. The alphabet, the sounds we use in speech, man has recorded them pictorally using forms and shapes suggested by his environment.

"It is always to Nature that we turn to for significant teaching example"
(Leonardo da Vinci)

Leonardo de Vinci was amongst the first artists who instead of just recording the visual sensations of nature, instead sought to analyse it. He is quoted as saying:-

"Where nature finishes producing it's shapes, there man begins with natural things and the help of nature itself"

At that time in Florence artists tended to imitate nature - a concept which dominitated the Renaissance - surface values only. Leonardo, however, detached himself from this school of thought. His vision analysed the subject in depth, taking in both atmospheric and optical effects.

Many historians, philosophers and critics commented on nature as a source of art. The 18th century philosopher, George Berkley and John Ruskin (the art critic) believed that artists should try and see the world with an innocent eye without preconcieved ideas, so that they can depict what is actually visible. According to E.H. Gombrich, art never supplicates every detail seen by the artist - rather it creates illusions through suggestions or colours, forms, space and light that give the observer a sense of perceiving every detail.

In Europe in the 19th Century, man attempted to mingle trying to|· became a part of nature by reproducing its forms in every item both aesthetic and functional. Art Nouveau was a reaction against the machine age during which everything had become debased and unitive. The artists and craftsmen began to search for a direct return to nature. Objects began to grow literally - tea pots, clulery, wall-paper, furnishings, even lamp-posts.

"Think of plant forms, growing burgeoning, think of flowers in bud, in overblown blossoms as seed pods and you will have some idea of what art nouveau is about"

Some contempory artists have approached the depiction of nature in a scientific way, creating observational and orderly visual experiments - these were the "Impressionsists". They walked out of doors, directly from nature; they documented what they saw through a series of sketches, under varying climatic conditions, awakening the mysteries of visual perception.

"They taught us to see, colour in shadows, the good life, everything exists for their delight even floods and fogs" .

It was Cezanne, however, who sought to analyse not only our perception of the environment but also the structural harmones nature displays in its shapes forms and colours.

"To find nature herself, all the likenesses must be shattered and the further in the nearer to the actual thing" (E.K.Hart).

Cezanne searched for geometric forms in nature, the cone, cube, cylinder and sphere. Picasso took Cezanne's analytical theory further; he broke down natural forms totally rearranging them in his own order. This analytical approach affected all forms of art, architecture, interior and industrial design. William Morris reacted against the over decoration of everyday items. His designs for fabrics, wallpaper and furniture, whilst representing nature, emphasise basic shapes and patterns. "Le Corbusier" tried to find what he termed "The basic truths" and his very simplified formations for his architecture investigates the relationship between round and rectangular shapes.

Psychologists believe that man is born with an innate sense of order. Man has built himself a world of geometric shapes, yet in nature they are a rare occurance. Yes, Nature does impose a regularity and simplicity in her designs which are more organic and less contrived in comparison to man.

Piet Mondrian searches for what he terms "the dynamic equilibrium of the primordial pair" the reality behind natures superficial aspects. His concern was with the verticle and horizontal which starts with his sketches of trees which he continued for a period of over 5 years.

The chinese artists attach an almost mystical significance to man's relationship to nature and instead of trying to dominate it sought harmony with it out of reverence for its sacred order. The chinese artist first contemplated nature and then returned home to produce a refined archtype of the natural world.

As I have indicated, the list of artists who have studied and were inspired by nature is endless. How much does the studying nature infiltrate the art room? - this is a question I shall examine further.

'The Natural Environment' as a source of Inspiration in Art Education?

Art teachers have always found the study of nature a very relevant factor in the study of art. Not only can the child see systems of design, arrangement of colours, textures and patterns in nature but these observational studies, the collection of materials inspire the child in the production of art work.

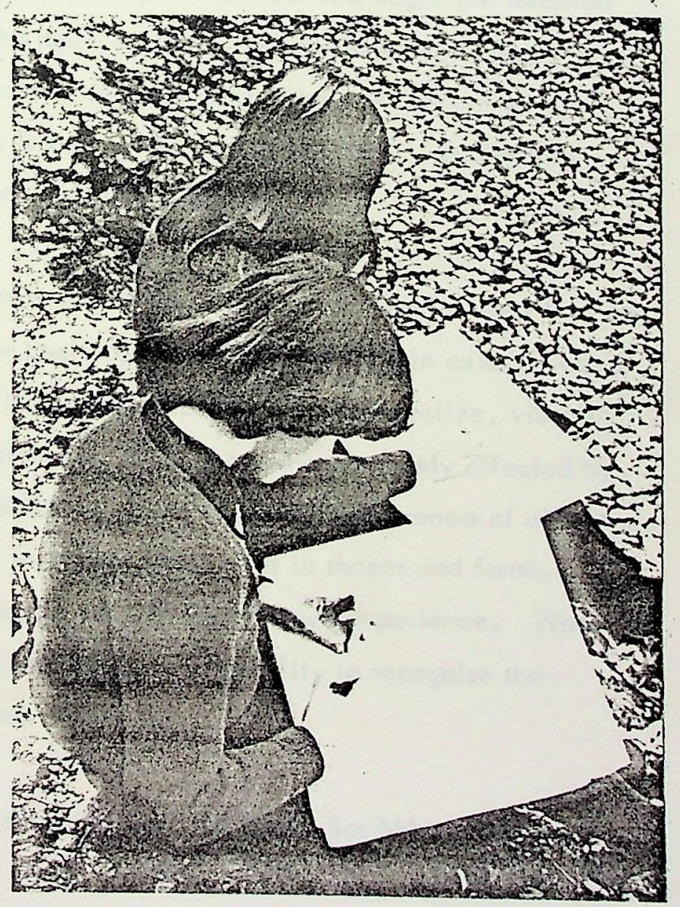
The introduction of Nature into the creative process is perhaps more relevant than on surface value. I have discussed artists whose work witness a gradual awakening to the forces which form the basis of the world they live in. In my opinion, it has become a priority in this modern world to stimulate and expose children to the forces which form their natural environment. Today, many children grow up in the well known cliched "Concrete Jungle". The adverse affects on the behaviour and attitudes of the young adult is well known. How can we expect these children to grow up with positive emotional responses to animals, plants and trees, even fellow human beings, when their whole life has been lived in a world of geometric shapes. The world becomes 'too real' for them I feel and they lose their capacity to wonder an element essential in the emotional make-up of every human being. What will the word Beauty mean to these children and how will they be able to tackle their adult working lives creatively? Is man imposing a computerized order on human life? Man must respct and live in harmony with his natural surroundings - his source of food, water and life. It has been the artists natural response to represent whatever new found knowledge acquired about his environment in his painting. I feel it is important that the child in the art class should be given the same opportunity, through observational studies of his natural environment. Each environmental painting of a child is a unique individual expression and a witness of his outlook of the world he lives in.

The drawing and painting of nature is a universal favourite theme of both adults and children. I feel that the art teacher can relate the pupils creative activity with not only the work of other children in different countries but also different eras. Their art work then does not just become an isolated activity in the art classroom.

I have discussed one aspect of the creative process, the observation and identification of a source of inspiration but how can the artist develop from this initial point to the final creation? The elaboration and exploration of the idea is of vital importance.

It is important that children are encourageed to think, extend and explore their ideas in visual form.

Sketching Outdoors



Trees !

Chapter 2.

Perceptual Awareness

The motivational and observational stages are essential in the creative process but I feel that the most crucial areas involved are the stages between the initial idea and the final product.

In order to come to terms with this developmental stage, I find it necessary to question the aims of art education at school level. The main aim, is not, I feel to release pupils whose ability to throw pots, print fabric, design chairs, which are technically unquestionable or children who can rhyme endless names of famous paintings and buildings, I would wish my pupils primarily to see and to become aware of the forces at work in their environment.

What is perception? Every art book, design or creative, in general use this word frequently. Arnheim says that the perceptual process is a cognitive function of the human intellect. What does he mean by this? When we speak about perceiving an object, e.g. 'a flower' we mean far more than just looking at it. Perception implies that there is some intellectual process involved. Perhaps an artist might analyse the visual relationships in the object.

Art education aims at aiding children to identify and attach meaning to what they see. 'Madeja' feels that it is how children begin to handle relationships in existing visual phenomena that may well determine their ability to select and generalize, visually in and out of the context of his environment. Children who are rarely affected by perceptual experiences show little ability to observe and little awareness of differences in objects. Awareness of variations in colour differences in shapes and forms, smoothness and roughness, all an essential part of the creative experience. When we speak about visual perception we usually mean the ability to recognise the whole of the visual field and some item within it.

A child draws in predictable stages, evolving from the 'Basic Scribbling Stage' to

an attempt to produce shapes - 'Preschematic Stage' - to a symbolic and finally a 'realistic attempt at protraying his work in drawings. It is at this final stage that the child becomes more aware of scale relationships. He begins to see his world in greater detail - the pattern of tiles on a room, the lines in the bark of a tree. Realistic colour is very important, e.g. brown tree trunks - green leaves. Perspective is attempted.

The child interprets his visual sensations on to paper - shapes, colours, textures, etc. The art teacher can help by focusing the childs attention, perhaps on one element at a time, e.g. shape, ensuring that the childs perceptions become more selective. As Henry Shaefar Simmain says -

"If one takes into consideration that the child grasps the world preponderantly by means of perceptual experience, then the creation of unity and form is his way of reaching visual cognition".

The artist has translated his perceptual experiences into a visual language. This visual language is the basis upon which Art Education is taught. What does the artist see in his environment? In this chapter I would like to discuss the basic elements of the visual language as seen in nature and interpreted by the artist and the child in their creative work. The childs work I shall discuss from the knowledge which I have acquired from the group of children that I have taught this year (10 - 12 year olds).

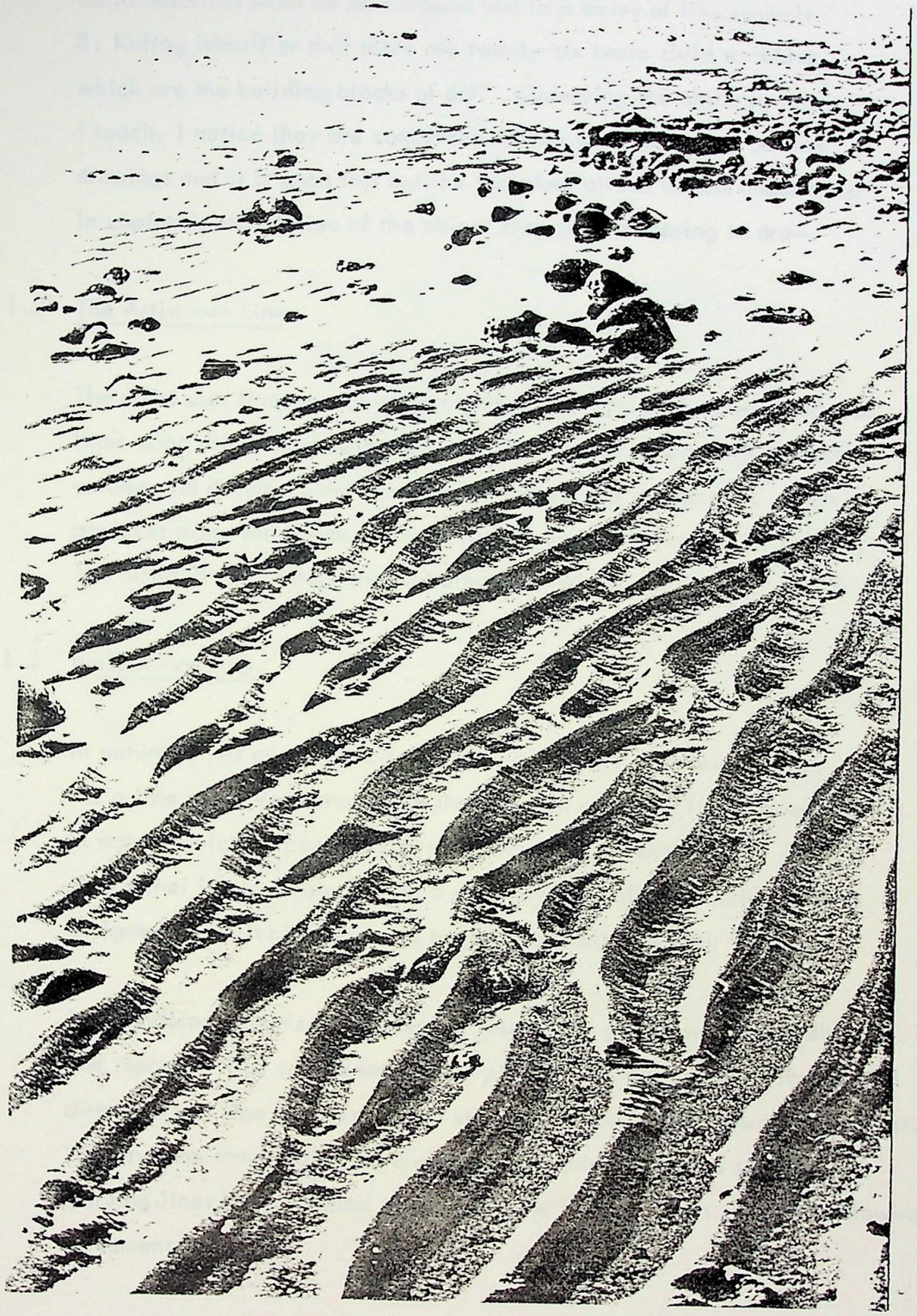
Visual Language - The Elements

1. Line

The official definition of a line is something which has length without breadth. A line contains certain elements, movement, direction, force, vitality and a dynamism of its own.

1.1. The Child -v- Line

Line is mainly a man-made concept to describe certain objects in his



Lines - The Seashore.

environment. A childs first drawing is a mass of lines. The child describes what he sees around him in a series of line symbols. R. Kellog identifies that there are twenty-six basic child scribbles which are the building blocks of art. Observing the children whom I teach, I notice they are concerned mainly with producing outline drawings and it is upon this outline that they attach utmost importance in capturing the realism of the object they are attempting to draw.

1.2 The Artist -v- Line

The artist uses lines in many expressive ways, straight, curved, zig-zag lines using different drawing implements. Lines in drawings suggest volume and distance, delineate forms and express movements. Man produces many self-made products with linear qualities - T.V. aerials, The Eiffle Tower, telephone and electrical wires.

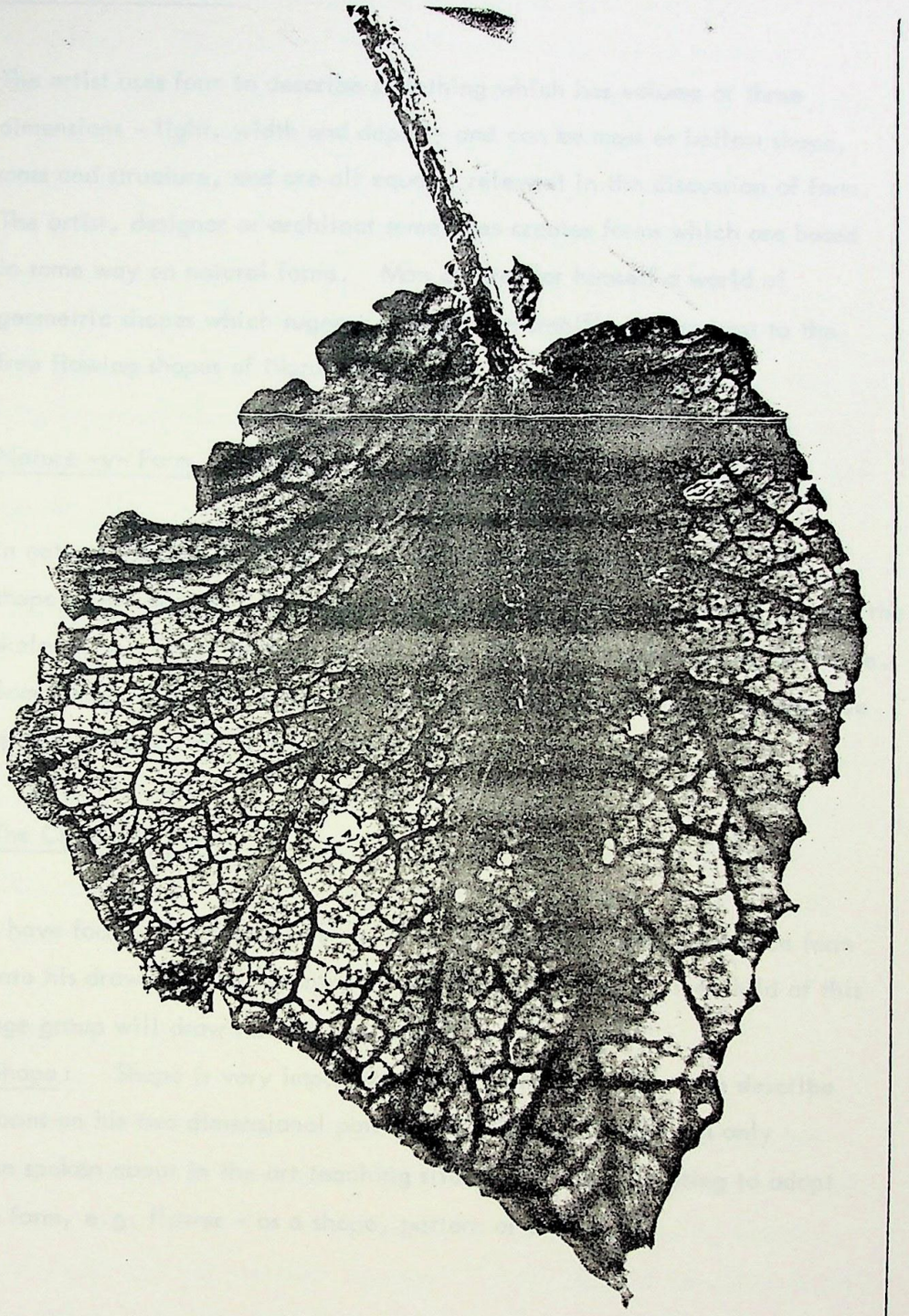
1.3 Nature -v- Line.

In nature, lines as we identify them do not exist. However, if we see a line as a directional force then we can see many linear qualities in nature which can be incorporated into creative activities. The directional lines of nature have a psychological affect which numerous designers, architects and artists exploit frequently in their work.

In a landscape, horizontal lines are restful and gentle suggesting distance and repose. This can be seen clearly if we look out to see. The upward direction and line of trees suggest strength, stability and upward movement. We have the same feeling in a church containing numerous solid pillars. Curving lines bring to mind streams and the flowing rivers - a gentle flowing movement.

2. Form

On analysis a form as we term it is"the inherant nature of an object that which the mind itself contributes the condition of knowing" (Oxford Distionary).



Structure and Form - A Leaf.

2.1 The Artist -v- Form

The artist uses form to describe something which has volume or three dimensions - light, width and depth - and can be mass or hollow shape, mass and structure, and are all equally relevant in the discussion of form. The artist, designer or architect sometimes creates forms which are based in some way on natural forms. Man creates for himself a world of geometric shapes which suggest strength and stability in contrast to the free flowing shapes of Nature.

2.2 Nature -v- Form

In nature, we see 'form' as the inner structure as well as the visual shape of the object. The mass determines the outside appearance, e.g. the skeleton of a horse determines the entire form and appearance of the horse. Sometimes, shapes in nature can delineate other forms, creating negative spaces, e.g. an archway formed by trees.

2.3 The Child -v- Form

I have found that the child (i.e. 11 - 12) does not really introduce form into his drawing unless pointed out to him. In general, the child of this age group will draw for e.g. an animal as a flat shape.

Shape: Shape is very important to the child as he uses it to describe forms on his two dimensional painting. 'Shapes' I feel, can only be spoken about in the art teaching situation when attempting to adopt a form, e.g. flower - as a shape, pattern or design.

3. Light

Light is very important to man. We describe light as something which shines and is brilliant and the agent by which objects are rendered visible.

3.1 Nature -v- Light

We wake up to the bright clarity of daylight and go to work. We return

home as the light is dwindling and we sleep at night when there is no light. The colours of our environment varies under changing light. In nature, light is affected by the surface qualities of the objects it touches, e.g. water becomes transparent and translucent as the rays of light penetrate it with varying degrees and the water takes upon it the colour of light. If an object is pigmented, then the colour of light may also be pigmented. Opaque objects depending on their pigmentation can absorb some of the brightness. Opals, diamonds and cut-glass retract and breake up the light rays. Psychologists say that bright lights stimulate us, low lights on the other hand are quieting and warm lights bright and cheering. Strong contrast between light and dark are dramatic.

3.2 The Child -v- Light

I have found that if I asked one of the children in my class to paint a picture of his house at night, the only difference to his painting he will make will be to paint the sky a deeper shade of blue and include in it perhaps the stars and moon; the houses will be bright and cheerful. Children do not recognise that our environment changes under lighting conditions.

3.3. The Artist -v- Light

The Impressionists' made careful, almost scientific studies, of the fall and colour of light on objects. The Dutch painters exploited the dramatic effects or 'chiaroscuro', contrasting light and dark, throwing almost a spot-light effect on the main figures. 'Tone' is a word we use to describe the fall of light upon an object. In drawing and painting 'tone' is used to suggest form.

4. Space

Space refers to the distance and void between objects.

4.1 Nature -v- Space

Space cannot exist without the forms which give it definition. We see space as the area between , e.g. two trees. Sometimes, man refers to an area of unbuilt landscape as space. Space is very important to the human being. Man needs space to move and breathe freely and easily. Cities can sometimes enclose man's movement.

4.2 The Artist -v- Space

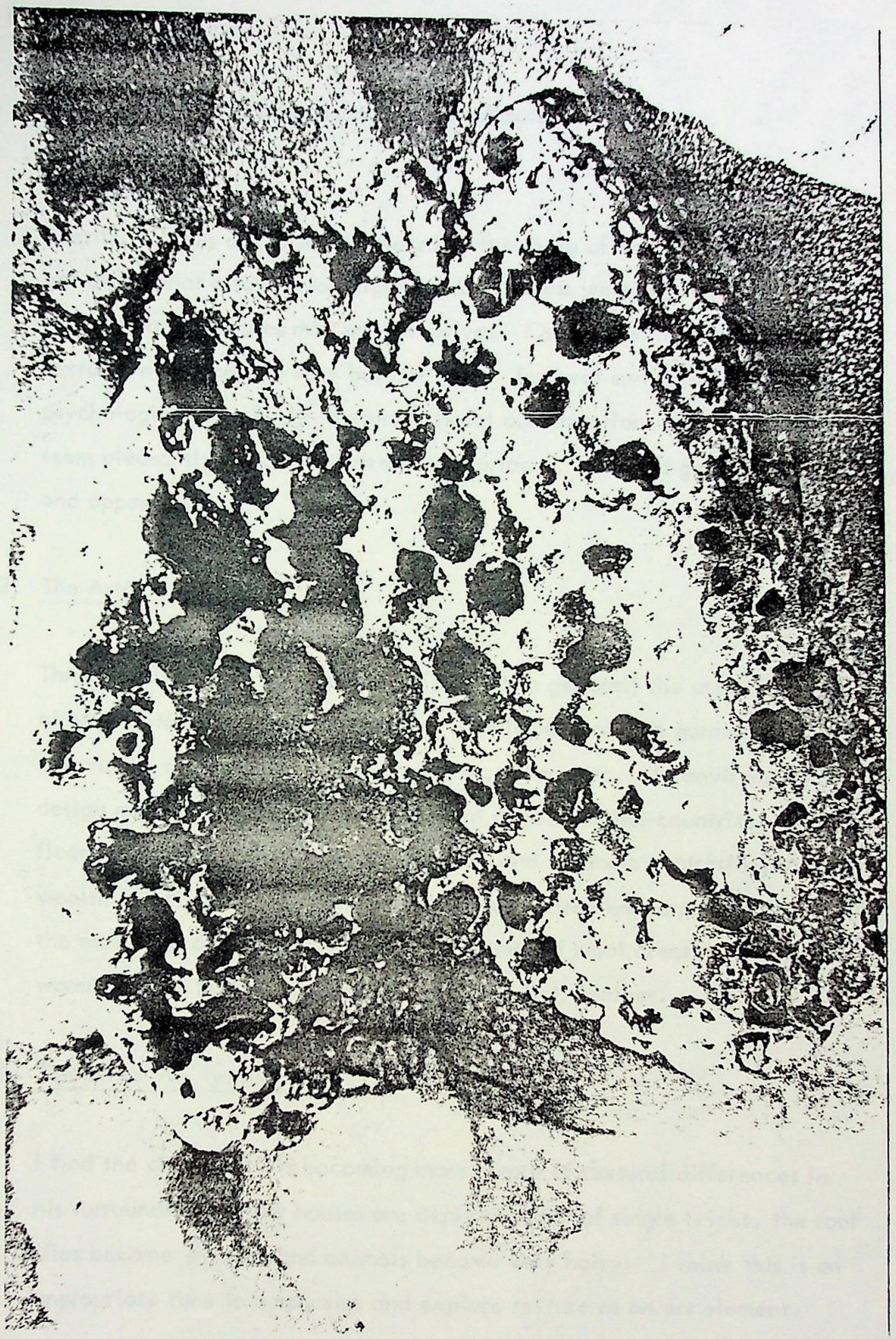
The correct use and distribution of space is essential in any artists composition or creative work. Paintings are unpleasant if they are to confused and cluttered with objects. The artist uses space expressively and the space surrounding the object is as important as the object itself.

4.3 The Child -v- Space

Henry Shaefer Simmar discussing the unfolding of artistic activity of man claims that even in a young child's drawing of simple outlined figures there is a definite relationship between the figure and its surrounding ground. There is an insoluble link between figure and around which marks the most primitive beginning of creativity. I find that children in their painting display this very conscious sense of order which can be improved and developed easily.

5. Texture

Texture is a substance that can only be determined by touch. Visual perception alone cannot determine the touch or feel of a surface. Every substance has an internal and structural texture and also an external tactile quality. Texture is the one visual element which involves a correlation between the two senses - Perception and touch.



Texture of a stone

5.1 Nature -v- Texture

We can identify two separate textural effects in nature:-

1. Tactile
2. Optical.

Tactile textures are directly related to the sense of touch. We are not aware that a rose briar might prick us unless we touch it. The perception of textures may be deceptive. Optical textures refer to textures which can be seen but not felt. Textural surfaces can affect us psychologically. Rough textures attract our attention. Rocky surfaces seem pleasantly irregular whereas soft surfaces, sand and grass, seem friendly and appealing.

5.2 The Artist -v- Texture

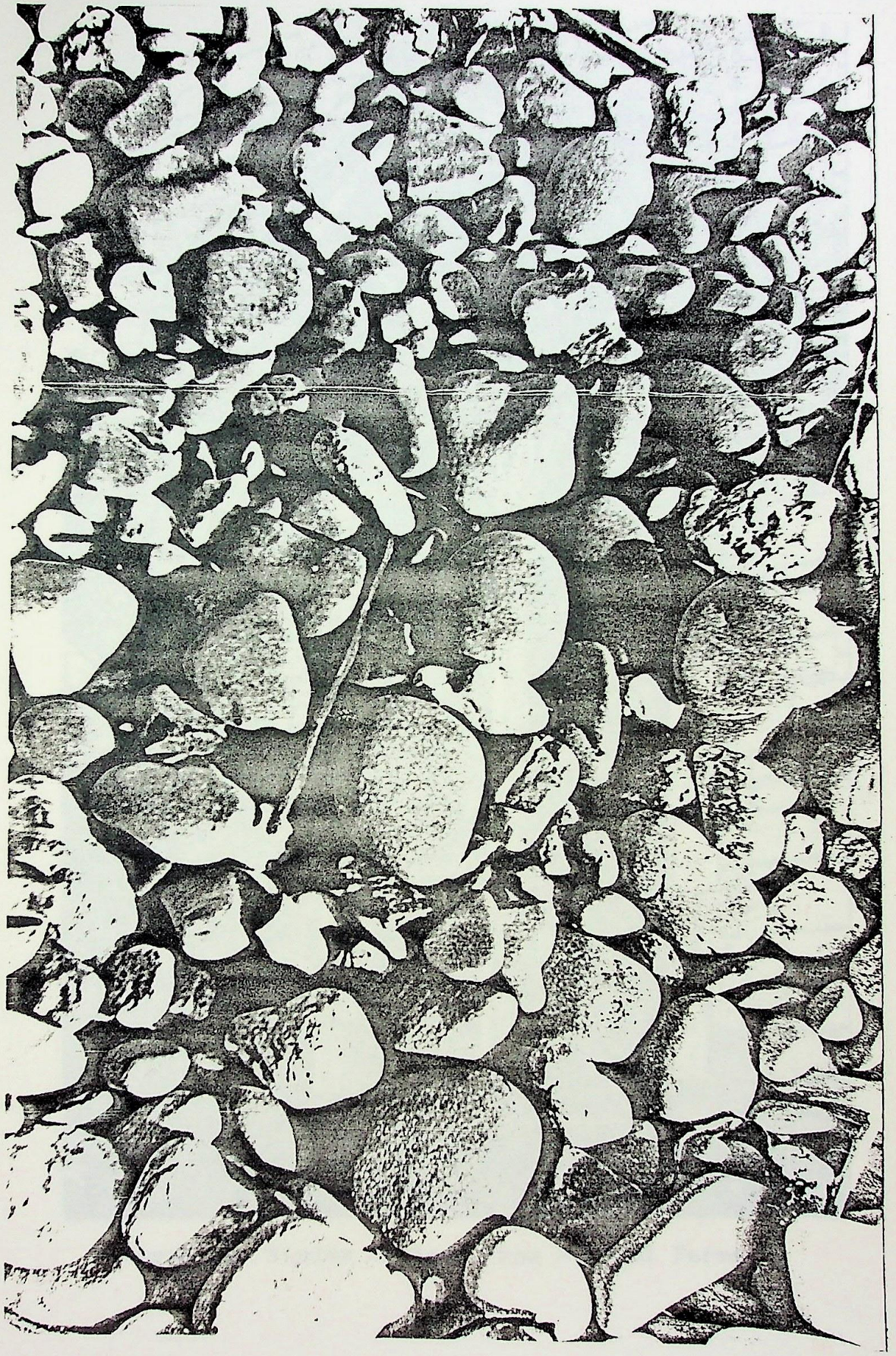
Throughout the history of painting (and art in general) the artist has attempted to record both optical and tactile textures, in garments, decoration of costumes, surfaces, plants, trees, etc. In environmental design man has used texture in effective ways. In hot countries, marble flooring is popular as it suggests coldness and hardness contrasting to the wealth of colour and heat of their climate. Here we carpet our floors, the roughness of the material and the warmth of wool creating additional warmth in our houses to conteract the cold wet weather.

5.3 The Child -v- Texture

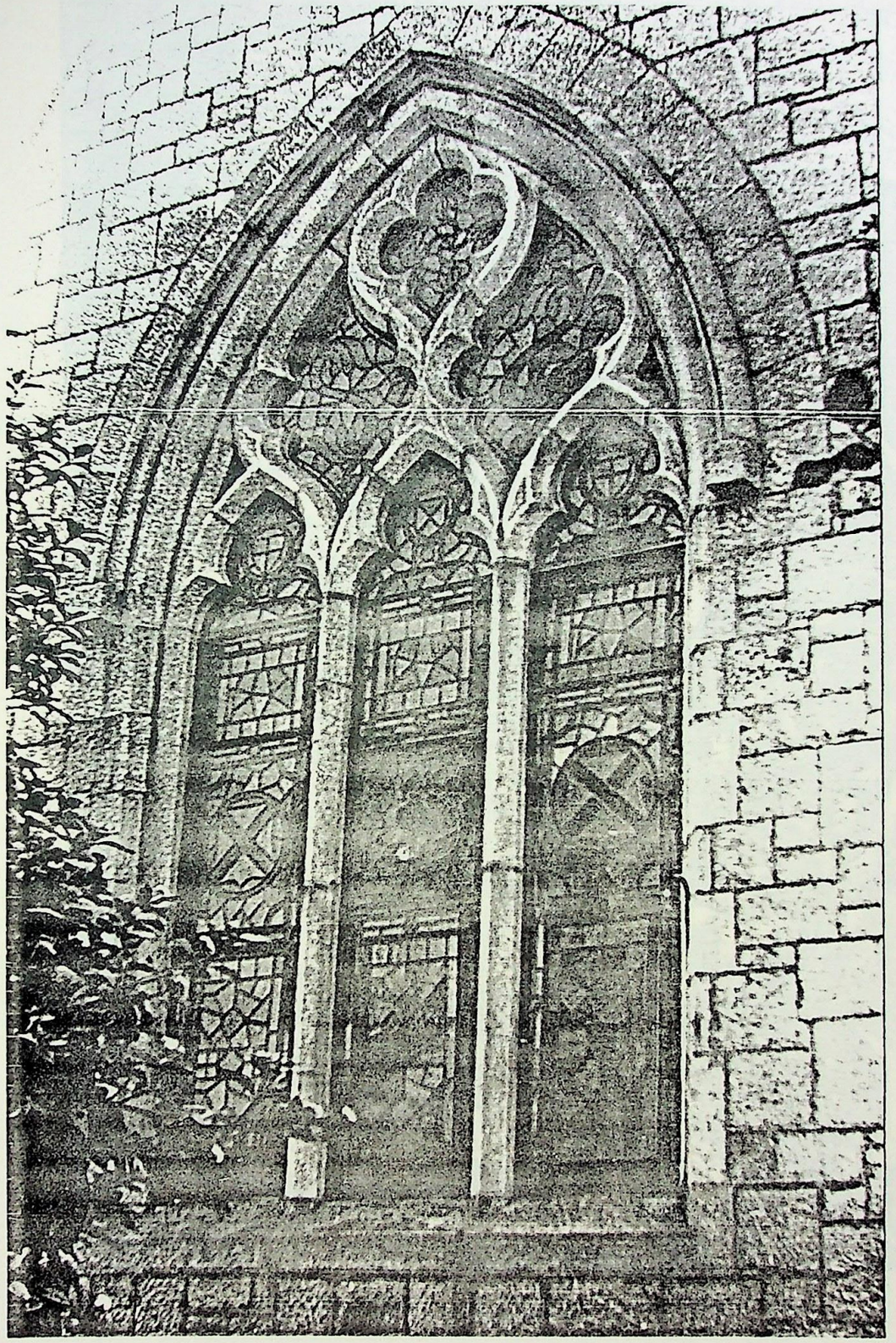
I find the child of 11 is becoming more aware of textural differences in his surroundings. The houses are depicted built of single bricks, the roof tiles become evident and animals become very hairy. I think this is an appropriate time to emphasise and explore texture as an art element.

6. Pattern

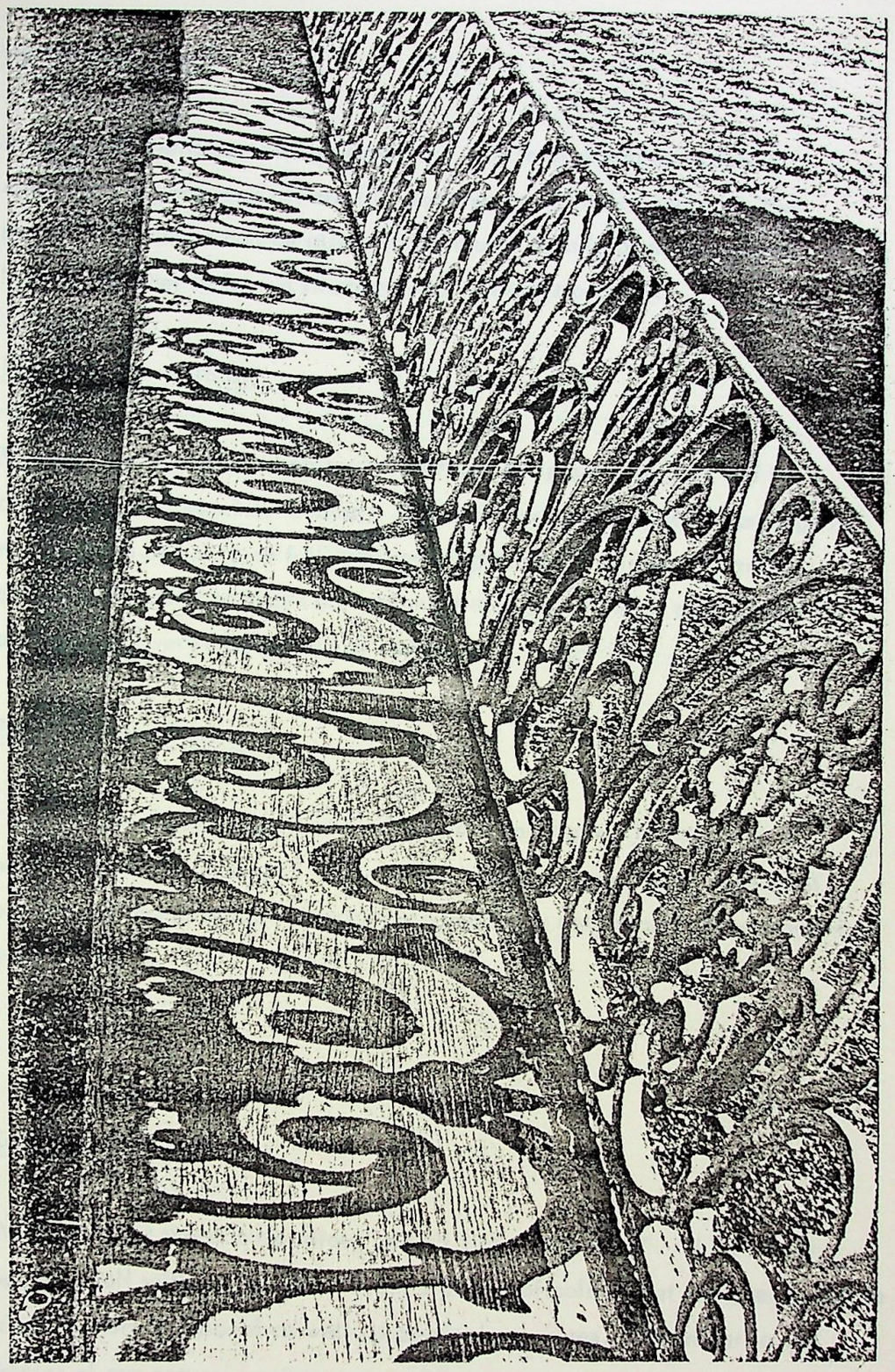
Pattern requires an element of repetition which can be regular or irregular.



Shape and Pattern - Stones on the Beach.



Design of Window Derived From Natural Forms.



Shape and Pattern - Manmade

6.1 Nature -v- Pattern

In nature patterns are mainly irregular. A pile of stones on a beach can create a pattern as all are rounded shapes of similar colour. The shapes of a pattern can be alike or distributed evenly as a honeycomb linking together to form a structural and coherant pattern.

6.2 The Artist -v- Pattern

Man-made patterns are seen in our fabrics, wallpaper, carpets and in almost anything man has created. These are usually consciously arranged, e.g. fabrics in $\frac{1}{2}$ drop or full drop repeat patterns. These patterns are once more a result of man's ordered mind and such definite arrangement of shapes are very rare indeed in nature.

6.3 The Child -v- Pattern

I have found that my pupils at first did not really grasp the concept of pattern. It is necessary, I feel, for the teacher in particular aspects of pattern making to relate to similar occurances in nature and in the man-made environment.

7. Colour

7.1 Colour -v- Nature

"Without light there is no colour and all light has colour". Life would be quite dull without colour. Every stimulus of colour that our eyes perceive produces both emotional as well as physical responses. We react to the colours of our natural environment. Bright sunny days strengthen the colours of our surroundings. Grass seems greener, skies bluer. People seem more cheerful on a day like this compared to a grey dull cloudy day. From the caveman's paintings onwards, colour has played a keyrole in determining the emotional as well as the aesthetic responses of man to his environment.

We tend to associate colours of our world with certain expressive qualities, e.g. red, we find, exciting as it reminds us of fire, blood; blue is cooling like water; green, as in nature, is refreshing. Warm countries bring to mind reds, yellows, oranges, whereas cold countries suggest greys, blues, browns, green, etc.

7.2 Colour -v- The Child.

Initially, the early stages of development in child art indicates that the child merely enjoys and recognises colours introducing her favourite by will all over her painting, whereas at the 11-12 stage realistic attempts at colours become very important. The Brown must be the correct brown as seen in the trunk of the tree - this leads on to a gradual awareness of the stage of reasoning and the differences and gradations in colour.

7.3 Colour -v- The Artist

Colour is a very important element to the artist who uses it in many expressive ways. For this reason he has analysed it's various relationships and categorized them under what is known as 'The colour wheel'. I shall list the various relationships involved without discussing in depth their wide and varied implications.

1. The Primary, Secondary and Tertiary colours.
2. Complementary colours.
3. Contrasting colours
4. Harmonious colours
5. Tonal colours.

There are many other equally important visual elements such as balance, growth and movement but I feel that I have touched on the basic visual elements which are important in art education.

You may enquire as to why I felt it necessary to resume the basic visual elements of which every proposed art teacher should be totally aware of already. However, my reasons for doing this are as follows:-

1. To clarify and analyse once more, the elements of the visual language by observing how I, as an art teacher, see them - contrasted to the manner in which the children I teach interpret them in their drawing.

2. To emphasise their importance in the creative process as a form of communication.

3. To relate them to the environment which will be of enormous benefit in the art teaching situation.

4. To recognise the artist's use of visual elements in their work.

5. To introduce them as starting points in a thematic sequential approach to art education.

This exploration and comparison of the visual elements I have found of enormous benefit to my art teaching and I hope it is of equal benefit to those who read it.

Chapter 3

The End Product

The creative process commences with an initial idea or frash of inspiration. Artists can, and are, influenced by their environment as we have witnessed at the onset and during the stages of creation. However, other forces are at work which determine or alter what the artist sees and the manner in which he interprets his ideas into what we term the final creative work. Man's art is not just an imitative procedure but it is a result of his interaction between what he sees, feels and does. The stages leading up to the final creation are of vital importance and lend meaning to the final creation, but it is during this final process that the mind, the vision and the skill of the artist really becomes active and sts about solving the problem of interpreting what they see and expressing it in a meaningful way so that as the old Chinese proverb says "a picture is worth a 1,000 words".

A real work of art should not be a monologue but a dialogue. As Kandinsky implies:

"A work of art consists of two elements, the inner and the outer".

The inner being the emotion and soul of the artist which has the capacity to evoke a similar emotion in the observer. It is a two way communication process.

What do we hope that the child should gain from art education and the creative process in general? I feel that there is no point in intorducing a subject, e.g. 'Puppets' from out of the blue to a group of students, without guiding them through the creative process gradually. Aimless experiments in art media can be detrimental. Art activity is a basic form of self-expression and a response to what the child sees and understands from his surroundings. Self-expression is the goal of every artist and to reach this object we can be very ardous. The child needs a supportive environment so that he can express himself fully. The art teacher can aid a child through all the stages of creativity - the creation of ideas for personal expression - the discovery of the visual qualities to express his ideas and feelings and finally the skill required in the use of his media of choice.

As I have previously suggested, certain influences between the artist's idea or inspiration combine to bring about the final creation. The following influences I feel are the most relevant at this stage:

1. The artist must select his design or image and the material in which he wishes to interpret it in.

2. The artist's vision, the way in which he sees or interprets his images into his final creation.

3. The manner in which the artist uses his media of choice.

4. The predetermined objectives the artist sets out to achieve at the onset of his creative process.

I will discuss each of these influences with reference to the artist and also the child based on the knowledge I have derived from my teaching experience.

Selection:

"The problem of selectivity involves the cognitive functions of recognition and the ordering and simplification of visual phenomena" (Arnheim).

Selectivity is a part of direct perception. The artist has now reached a point where he must now choose exactly what he wishes to express and in what media he feels he should interpret it in. In the artist's case the 'choosing' is usually of a personal nature. The designer or craftworker however may have an external limitation placed upon them so, therefore, their final creation is more of a problem solving activity between the consumer and designer. The artist, naturally, places his own limitations upon himself and his selective process as, e.g. a search for a balanced composition. Some artists use a viewfinder to aid the selection of an interesting composition from their collection of visual material. A craftworker, designer, for instance may be asked to design a wall hanging, for e.g. a church, which must retain a visual indication of what the building stands for and which will also blend in with the colour scheme of the building. In this case, the artist/craftsperson must search for

the happy medium between these set requirements and his own method of visual expression.

'The Material', the media, for executing the final design may be predefined by the artist himself or the artist could allow the visual material to suggest the material needed. In most cases, the artist, designer or artist/craftsperson will have a specialist medium which determines how he searches for inspiration at the beginning of the creative process.

Selectivity is very important to the child. During the early stages of childhood the child merely makes the decision to draw from the objects he sees around him. At later stages of development the teacher must aid the student in his attempts to organise the visual elements of his compositions. I found, that when introducing a class on drawing from plants and natural forms it was essential to encourage pupils to use a viewfinder and narrow their field of vision initially. Otherwise, the pupils struggled to include every element of e.g. a branch into a smaller sheet of paper and were so preoccupied with this task that the purpose of 'observation' of natural forms was diffused. Also, I feel, it helps to introduce and concentrate on one or two elements only at a time because the pupils cannot grasp the concept of line, texture, colour, shape, pattern, all at once. It is better, perhaps, to commence with one element, e.g. outline,and build up the pupils knowledge gradually.

When bringing the class outdoors to sketch I was greeted with wails of "What will I draw Miss?", "There's so much to draw"! Here again, the art teacher has an important role and must either choose a particular sight to draw or again introduce the use of a viewfinder.

One boy, having completed his given task (outdoors), asked if he could draw a picture of the river, of his own choice. This I allowed him to do. The finished product was very interesting as the child drew in his picture not only what he could see but what he knew to exist - a bird's eye view of the river as it twisted and turned - everything included - even the school which was behind the child'. A difficult task'. I think that if the ordering and simplification of visual phenomena is a part of direct perception, well then, this boy whilst 'ordering' would have learned more and obviously needed a specific direction to enable the given project to have more meaning for him.

Too often, an art teacher will bring children into the Art Gallery or, in fact, several institutions, in order to obtain full value from the day's outing. This activity, I feel, is worthless as the child sees too much and retains nothing of lasting impact. The child's attention should be focused on something, e.g. early Irish art, and a questionaire and sketch pad should be carried in his hands. In this manner the child will have attained one aspect of Irish art alone but, at least, he will remember it. At this stage, the selection process is in the hands of the art teacher and should be treated with respect as it is essential to a meaningful creative process.

The Artist's Vision

There are several ways in which an artist may interpret what he sees around him. The artist's vision can be one of the most major formulative factors in the final product. It is the individuality of each artist's vision which renders the 'variety' in creations which is a necessary indication of an active creative mind.

The artist may look on reality in a certain manner, e.g. 'imaginary'. The artist's vision may choose to analyse and explore a particular object, e.g. from all different angles. The artist could look at an object from an unusual viewpoint adding extra delight to normal vision.

Many labels have been placed upon on the artist's vision down through the history of art - imaginary, symbolic, abstractionist, expressionist, analytic, aesthetic and narrative.

Imaginary refers to a work in which the artist has altered or distorted the works he inhabits in his work. The artists imagination influenced by the idea produces another vision of life. Arthur Rackham in his illustrations represents nature but it becomes almost alive, peopled by his imaginary little figures which dance around his highly stylised plants, etc. 'Art Nouveau', likewise, freely distorted nature in a combined celtic ornament and plant formation.

'Surrealism' distorted reality and Salvadore Dale's work is perhaps most indictative of this type of approach.

From the beginning of human art, the symbolic depiction of nature has always been important to the artist. Early Renaissance and Byzantine artists tended to symbolize religious themes through natural subjects, e.g. dove-peace, lily-purity, etc. Graphic work today makes much use of symbolism, which allows for ease and directness of communication.

' Aesthetic ' artists have always sought to capture the beauty of nature. Constable and Gainsbourough immediately spring to mind. To the Chinese artist, the worship of beauty and the depiction of nature was almost a form of religion.

The analytic approach to nature can be seen at best in the work of 'Cezanne' or Mondrian who analysed the structure of natural phenomena.

An artist can abstract a particular element in nature, e.g. colour and use it as a basis for his work.

Sometimes in painting an artist will illustrate or narrate a happening, e.g. a biblical scene, this is usually referred to as a 'narrative' composition.

As I have pointed out there are many forms the artists vision may take which can alter the final product considera bly.

Children need to understand the function and role of art in society. It is vital that they are aware of what the artist sees; how he sees it and how he interprets this vision into his artistic work. This is where I feel the teaching of History of Art can be essential in Art Education. The child should become more observant and see more than is perhaps evident at first glance. The use of slides and discussions on the approaches of various artists to a similar subject will enable the child to comprehend the function of art in society and generate approaches which he himself can carry through his own art work.

During the early stages of perceptual development, the child reproduces the visual components in symbolic form. Colour is chosen more for its attractiveness than for any other reason. Later on the child attempts to reproduce objects realistically using

colour likewise as close to reality as possible. At the 11 - 12 year old stage I have found that the child becomes intensely interested in the imaginary viewpoint. His favourite T.V. Programmes, films, books, are about monsters and alien beings which are reflected equally in his paintings.

I have found that if my class are working upon a theme, e.g. 'Trees', I feel it is appropriate that their awareness is awakened to the correlation between their own drawn trees and the approach of the artist to a similar theme. 'Trees' for example have many symbolic connotations in art of numerous countries. Different movements in art history have treated the representation of trees in a variety of approaches. Trees can be treated symbolically, realistically, impressionistically or 3-dimensionally.

The Use of Materials.

The artist having now decided the format of the visual elements of his work must now choose materials or a particular medium to carry out his design.

Occasionally, the artist may have his own specialist area, e.g. pottery, so that his initial inspirational research would have been curtailed in that he would have only sketched objects which he would have felt could have been adapted into clay. Sometimes, the creation can work in another way, e.g. Michelangelo has been quoted as saying that his sculptures were inspired by material itself - 'materials' in the hands of the artist or designer receives a life of its own. The material used is as much a part of the artist as the hands that manipulate it.

'Skill' in the use of materials can make or break the final creation. A thorough knowledge of the material being used aids the artist to explore the inherant possibilities and opportunities involved. The artist experiments with the material until he produces the effect desired. The experiments in materials are witnesses to the search for true expression.

How important is the use of materials in the art classroom? Certainly, children are always anxious to experience and use new materials, tools, etc.

When introducing children to a new material, I feel that it is important that they are knowledgable in

1. How it has been used in the past.
2. How it is being used at present.
3. The procedure involved - the technical aspects as well as the safety aspects.
4. The limitations of the set material.

It is only when the child has a certain control over the material that he will be able to express himself genuinely in it. Victor Lowenfeld suggests in his writings that the continued use of craftlike materials in the art room may encourage a narrowing of interests and a concealment of true expression rather than an opening up of new avenues to explore. The material then becomes a mechanical and a substitute for expression. He felt that depth of expression could be achieved in two ways:

1. To concentrate on one material using it for a variety of subject matter.
2. To concentrate on subject matter and utilize a great number of materials in its development.

Lowenfeld emphasises that the main function of art materials is to provide a means for increased knowledge, understanding and expression in Art and not to be an end in themselves.

In my opinion, there are certain stages which are important in the introduction of materials:

1. Controlling the media:
   A certain competance is required and children appreciate and respect their work if a standard is set to which they can compare and contrast their work.
2. Lessons can be developed from the idea stage and carried through a variety of materials.
3. Children should be allowed to experiment and interesting results examined and recorded for further use.

At the beginning of the year, I found that my students were particularly interested in drawing but were disgusted by their attempts to paint. Therefore, I found it necessary

to build up their confidence and control in using paint efficiently and with care. These lessons carried over a period of time and I found the results were very promising. The children began to paint more imaginatively and with confidence. Paint was now a friend - not an enemy.

Predetermined Objectives

The final and most important influence in my opinion on the creative process are the fulfillment of the pre-determined objectives which the artist sets out from the onset to complete. How does the artist judge his work? What does he aim for? 'Medeja' sets out four aims upon which a finished work of art should be judged.

1. The vividness and intensity of the sensuous elements in the work of art, the effective quality of the sounds, gestures, and so on.

2. The formal qualities of the object - its design and composition.

3. The technical merits of the object - the skill with which the work is carried out.

4. The expressive significance of the object - its import or message or meaning as aesthetically expressed.

I think this is a good basis for judging whether a final creation succeeds or not. The artist carries the initial idea through many exploratory stages before he reaches a final point where he feels he has or can create a work of art which satisfactorily communicates what he sees, feels and interprets from his environment. The process of appreciation is the common ground between the artist and the observer.

It is important, in my opinion, that the art teacher sets similar standards and aims for the pupils in her classroom.

Art appreciation is essential as it enables the child to determine his likes and dislikes.

The final evaluation of a project can be another area where the pupils can see, along

with discussion, what is acceptable and what is not. The child becomes more and more confident as he sees his work expressing what he wants to express.

Too often we hear in the art room "Oh Miss - this doesn't look the way it should"!! This is a statement which I feel can and should be eliminated through the correct approach to the creative process.

Chapter 4

The Need for Sequential Learning

I strongly support the argument that there is a need for sequential learning in art education. Children involved in art education could only become confused if the art teacher switches radically from week to week both materials and subject matter. As a result of this approach to teaching, art pupils begin to feel that the art class is just an occasion to learn something new and different and to produce quick results. Often, we hear stories of superbly equipped art rooms which contain everything that the art teacher would dream of. I feel that an adequate supply of materials and an artroom is essential to art education but sometimes the well equipped art rooms produce a low level of results as too much emphasis is placed on materials and skill rather than the build up of the creative process.

Lowenfeld identifies two methods of art education: (1) The 'Breadth' approach and (2) The 'Depth' approach.

The 'Breadth' approach is where an art teacher introduces a variety of materials accomodating the different interests of the student and keeping their interest. The 'Depth' approach advocates feel that concentration of few materials leads to sequential learning.

Several surveys have been carried out on the two approaches and the results of the 'breadth approach in both aesthetic sensitivity and spontaneity is favoured. In the 'depth ' approach the risk is there that the pupils may feel that art is nothing more than a series of projects and experimentations with materials that bear little relationship to expression or creativity.

I propose that art can be taught in a sequential manner. Projects of continuing lessons can be planned over a period of time and relevant materials, resources and activities gathered.

I wish to point out, however, that I feel a suggested lay-out approach to sequential learning should hot be too rigid, but optional, to allow for alteration where necessary as it is 'human beings' that the art teacher is dealing with and should be able to respond to an extent to their attitudes and growth development of the age group.

Aim of Study.

1. To use the natural environment as a basis for generating ideas for art activities in general.

2. To incrase the pupils observation and awareness of the world they live in and develop an awareness of the role and function of art in society, through an analytical approach to the environment.

Selection of a Theme for Study.

In order to illustrate this study I have chosen to focus on only one aspect of nature - 'Trees'. However, I think that vast inspiration for numerous art activities can be derived from this source alone.

In the expolaratory table of objectives I have indicated four diverse approaches that can be derived from the one theme. Each final created product is only the result of a gradual growth from the initial idea through to a concentration on the visual element as seen in artistic creations and the environment. This will then lead on to the pupils own personal studies of the 'visual element' named until the final stage where the pupil interprets his findings in the materials suggested by the art teacher.

I will discuss one of the stages of my thematic approach to art 'Surfaces' and describe how it can gradually unfold into a 'class' project.

1. What is 'Texture'? - the differences between natural and man-made textures/ optical and tactile texture.

2. 'Feeling' our way around and through paintings.

3. Searching for rubbings in the classroom.

4. Focusing on 'Trees and Texture'.

   (a) Rubbings taken of different 'tree barks', also different leaves - (each one should be named and identified).

   (b) Drawing from natural forms - emphasising texture.

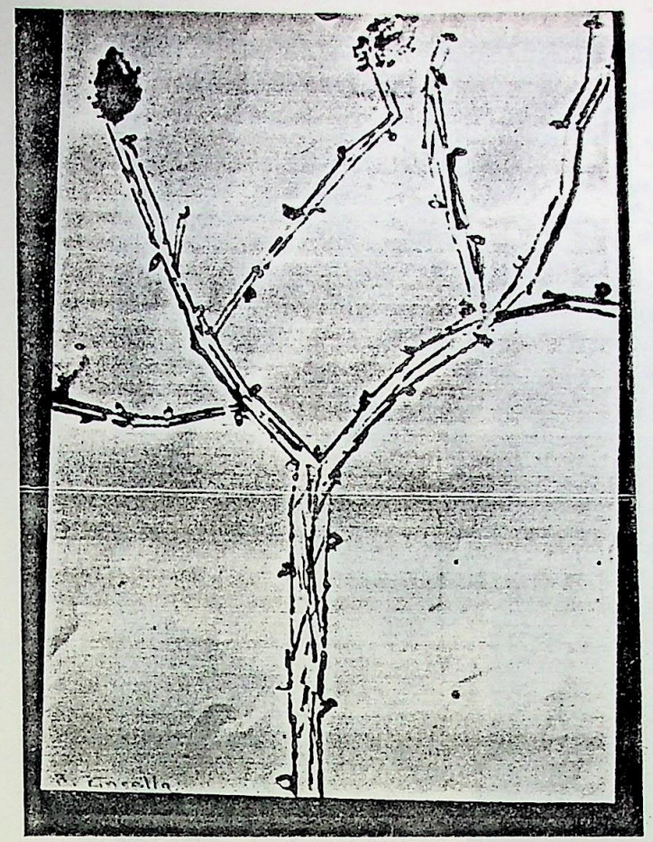
   (c) Collecting textural material (natural forms).

   (d) Developing 'Textures' into 'Wool' or String Collages.

Area of Study - The Natural Environment

Theme - 'Trees'

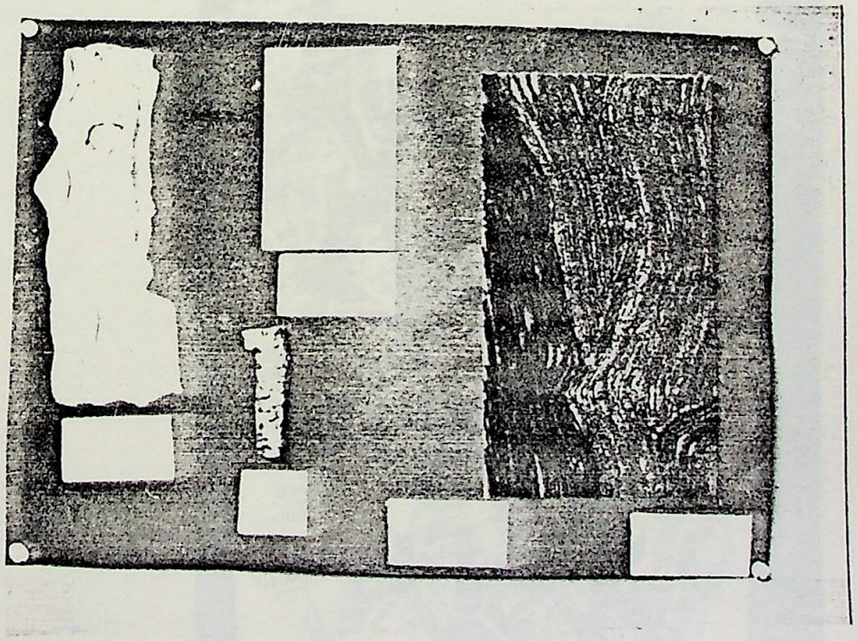
		A	B	C	D
1	Inspiration	Trees	Trees	Trees	Trees
2	Idea	Surfaces	Symbols	Patterns	Constructions
3	Visual Element	Textures - Optical & Tactile	Colour and Expression	'Shapes'	Form and Line
4	Cultural Link	Surfaces in - Painting Sculpture Architecture	Mood in Colour through Paintings	Nature as a source of Patern making through the ages	Forms in Sculpture and Architecture
5	Environmental Content	Natural surfaces versus Man-made surfaces	The symbolic associations of Colour	Regular & Irregular patterns for natural and man-made	Geometric Forms versus Natural Forms
6	Development	Rubbings, Drawings, Photos. Collected materials Paintings	Colours, The Colour Wheel, Paintings, Drawings, Photographs.	Drawings of natural forms. Rubbings, Colour ways, Varied arrangements of Patterns, Photographs.	Drawing Forms. Basic shapes - collages.
7.	'Materials' or 'Media' used	Tactile Collage	A symbol for each season	Fabric Print	3 Dimensional Construction



Trees.....Line...!

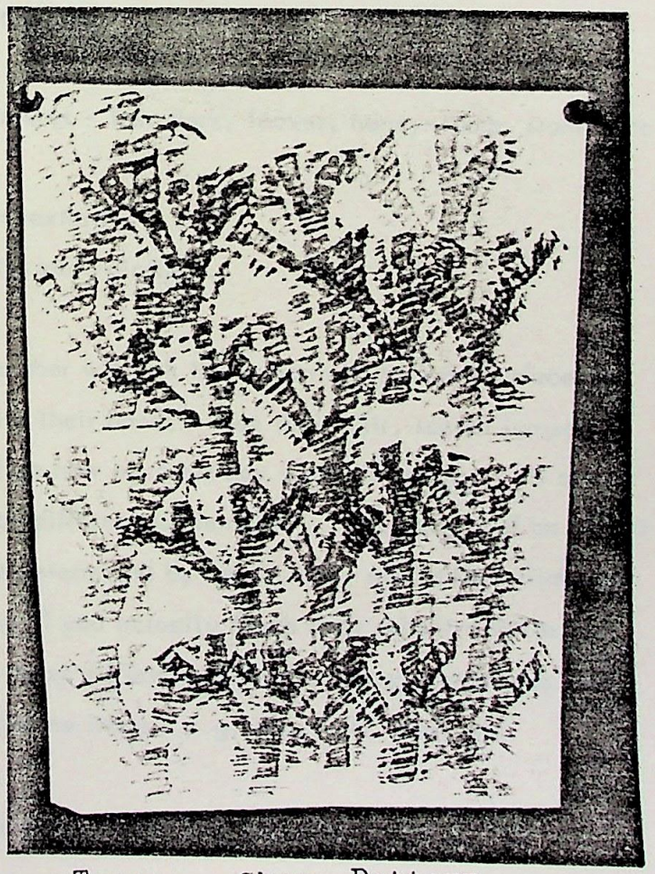
Trees.....Texture...

Bark Rubbings



Collage (wool) based on bark.

Trees....Texture,Colour.....



Trees....Shape,Pattern....

Lesson Plans Based On Theme Subject

Lesson 1

Subject:- 'Surfaces and Texture'.

Objectives:- 1. To discover what is meant by the word 'Texture' observing man-made versus natural textures and optical versus tactile textures.

2. To find textures in the classroom.

3. To observe the artists attempts and reproducing 'Texture' in paintings.

4. To take rubbings of 'Textures' in the classroom.

Materials Needed:- Crayons, paper (newsprint) and cartridge, light card, scissors.

Audio Visual Equipment:- Projector, slides.

Additional:- Examples of natural textures - Tree Bark, leaves, honey-comb, stone, etc.

Introduction:- Content - 1. What is texture.
2. 'Textures and Paintings.

Method: 1. The teacher will ask the students to feel the surface of the desk with their hands - then their hair, school jumper, skin. Notice how each surface feels differently - we call these surface differences 'Textures'. The texture of an object can only be determined by touch, e.g. snakes look slimy and slippery, but if you actually touch their skin it is quite dry. Nature has many different textural surfaces - examples will be shown of some items - e.g. tree bark, leaf, etc.

2. A slide presentation 'Textures in paintings'

List of Slides Required

Theme - 'Texture'

1. 'The Madonna with the Chancellor Rolin' - Jan Van Eyck.
2. 'Convergence' - Jackson Pollack.
3. 'The Chair and the Pipe' - Van Gogh.
4. 'Peasant Dance' - Breugal.
5. 'Infanta Margarita in Blue' - Valazquez.
6. 'Snowstorm and Steamboat of the Harbour mouth' - Turner.
7. 'A Lady and Gentleman at the Virginals' -
8. 'Bottle, Glass and Pipe' - George Braque.
9. 'The Haywain' - Constable.
10. 'La Loge' - Renoir.

Slide Presentation

Questions asked

Let's feel our way around these Paintings:-

Slide 1 'The Madonna with Chancellor Rolin' (Jan Van Eyck - 1435).

Q.1 How many different textural surfaces can we see in this painting?

Q.2 Do you like the Madoona's Crown?
What is it made of? - Look at her luxurious cloak'.

Slide 2 'Convergence' (Jackson Pollack)

Q.1 If you walked into that painting how would you feel?

Q.2 What does the painting remind you of?

Slide 2 'The Chair and The Pipe' (Van Gogh).

Q.1 Do you like this chair?

Q.2 Would you say it is comfortable?

Q.3 What is the tobacco wrapped in?

Slide 4 'Peasant Dance' (Breugal)

Q.1 Do you think these people are wealthy? Why not?

Q.2 Are the roofs of the houses slated?

Q.3 What are the water jugs made of?

Slide 5 'Infanta Margarita in Blue' (Valazquez - 1649)

Q.1 What do you like most about this painting?

Slide 6 'Snowstorm' (Turner)

Q.1 Would you lie to be in that boat?

Slide 7 'Lady and Gentleman at the Virginals'

Q.1 What materials are the following objects made of:-
The tablecloth, the floor, the chair, the walls, the window, the roof.

Slide 8 'Bottle, Glass, Pipe' (Braque)

Q.1 What can you see in this painting?

Braque was interested first in painting surface textures in still life groups and he then began to apply the actual materials to canvas rather than print them.

Slide 9 'La Loge' (Renoir)

Q.1 What is the Lady wearing around her neck?
Why is the paint so patchy, do you think?

Presentation: Content - 1. How to take rubbings.

Method Teacher will demonstrate the best way of taking rubbings Paper is laid flat on the surface and a crayon used on its side and lightly rubbed from side to side - dark colours work best. Paper can be shifted around and used to take other textures.

Application: Content Searching for rubbings in the classroom.

Method Pupils will be given a sheet of paper and crayons and asked to find as many different textural surfaces as they can in the classroom alone - the name of the object from which they take the rubbing should be written down beside it.

Evaluation

Lesson 2

Subject: 'A Nature Trail'

The teacher will bring the pupils outdoors.

Each person will be given two sheets of paper and a crayon (and a bag).

Three set objectives will be determined that:

1. Each person should take rubbings from 5 different trees and of 5 leaves likwise name of tree, if possible.

2. To collect interesting textural objects.

3. To sketch a tree, taking particular note of the texture and pattern of both bark and leaves and including it in the drawing.

Returning to the classrooms the finished drawings and rubbings will be discussed and the collected 'items' displayed and suggested topics for design and imaginative composition pointed out by the teacher.

Conclusion

My study and analysis of the creative process has led me to a deeper understanding of 'creativity' and the role of the child and the art teacher within it.

There are certain influential factors which I believe can alter and increase the creative output of the child in the classroom.

To conclude I would like to list some of these factors which I feel are imperative and suggest that they are vital considerations in the development of a satisfactory approach to Art Education in Ireland.

They are as follows:

The Teacher

1. His approach to teaching.
2. The Physical Environment.
3. Materials available in the classroom.
4. The Physchological environment.
5. The development of skills
6. Inspiration and Motivation.
7. Aspiration levels.

The Child

1. His personality.
2. Perceptual development .
3. Emotional needs.
4. The home influence.
5. Thinking and reasoning ability.
6. Personal motivation.
7. Development of the child's motor skills.

Everybody is born with creative faculties. Because education can kill or encourage creativity, Art Education is vital as it is a major stimulator of creativity.

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TEXT

CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH, THE WATERCOLOURS

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INTRODUCTION

Charles Rennie Mackintosh was born in Glasgow in 1868, the son of a police superintendent. Of all the designers who belonged to the Glasgow Style he was to receive the most attention and is now undoubtedly a cult figure of international importance.

Popular interest in his furniture and architecture eclipsed his watercolours and it is because few people are aware of the range of his artistic output that I propose in this thesis to take one area of Mackintosh's work: his watercolour paintings and discuss the role they played in his often tortuous career.

It is difficult to understand the importance of these paintings without a knowledge of Mackintosh's career as an architect, however I hope that by isolating them from his architectural work that it can be seen that his work as an artist succeeds in 'holding its own in any company', a criterium set down by Mackintosh himself.

The scope of his watercolours is as wide as the scope of his many talents. Abstractions, still lifes and landscapes stand side by side and are all mastered. His work in watercolours can be broken down into three broad areas and that is the way in which I shall structure this thesis.

Part One deals with the background of the period in which Mackintosh began working and deals with the atmosphere of the time which was to encourage his work at an early stage. It traces his beginnings as a student through to his symbolistic works of the mid 1890s.

Part Two deals with Mackintosh's flower paintings, most executed at a stage when he had completed his major architectural works.

Finally, Part Three deals with Mackintosh's work from the South of France, original and isolated works which were the culmination of all his previous work, the final flowing of a genius oblivious of

the obstacles dividing two dimensions from three. The committing of three dimensions to the two dimensions of watercolour and paper is an achievement as great as any of his design and architectural work.

PART I

The late Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century was a very busy and exciting period in Glasgow. It fully deserved its description as the second city of the Empire as its industrial output was immense which helped create much wealth in the city. This wealth was to encourage many artists and, although it came from a limited number of people, it turned Glasgow into a blossoming artistic society. The Glasgow Boys emerged as a very influential group of painters and they were to gain much recognition, and by careful cultivation of the far-seeing art dealer, Alex Reid, the demand for contemporary art grew and was as advanced as anywhere else in Britain.

The time was right for any designer to begin a career as the atmosphere created by the painters made evident. In 1880, one such designer made the break and paved the way for many more to follow. He was George Walton and at the time, he was a 21 year old bank clerk. His decision to give up his job and set up as a designer was a direct result of contact with the artistic community; his brother, E.A. Walton was one of the Glasgow Boys.

The designers were inspired by the painters use of colour and also were provided with a source of imagery. 'The Druids: Bringing in the Mistletoe' by E.A. Hornel, with their tall, straight backs and stiff necks of the ritualistic Druid figures, was a painting, which Charles Rennie Mackintosh must have seen and most likely was inspired by in his designs for posters, chairs and his architectural detailing.

The conditions in Glasgow were thus perfect for transformation of the new artistic awareness from being a passing phase into a movement with its own identities and with lasting qualities, comparable with the work of the arts and crafts designers in London, for example, or with that of the many variations of Art Nouveau on the Continent. It is most likely that the development of a new Glasgow style would have continued from Walton's beginning and the

Glasgow School of Art would have flourished under Francis Newbery's leadership, but the process was given certainty when Charles Rennie Mackintosh appeared as a focal point in the development of the new style. His was the genius that was to guarantee Glasgow a place among the best. His work gained most recognition of the time and he is readily recalled when the subject of Glasgow art and design is discussed.

Mackintosh worked very closely with a colleague from the firm of architects, Honeyman and Keppie, which he joined in 1889, named Herbert McNair and with two sisters, Margaret and Frances Macdonald. They became close friends and in 1899, McNair married Frances Macdonald, leaving Mackintosh to marry Margaret Macdonald in 1900. Their development as a group, given the name, 'The Four' was a result of the insight of Francis Newbery, who in 1885 had been appointed Headmaster of the Glasgow School of Art. His contribution to the furtherance of Glasgow's reputation as an artistic centre was as important as that of Mackintosh and his colleagues. Although he did an immense amount of work in forging links between design and industry and commerce in Glasgow, and was the driving force behind the project for a new, purpose-built college, to which he added new departments, his introduction of Mackintosh and McNair to the Macdonald sisters was probably his most significant contribution, putting him in the position of catalyst in the development of Glasgow's artistic reputation.

The Macdonald sisters, whose family had moved to Glasgow from Staffordshire in 1890, were day pupils at the School of Art, while Mackintosh and McNair were night pupils. They were creating exciting and original work independently but Francis Newbery saw definite similarities in their work and executed the aforementioned introduction.

As 'The Four' were established as the superior artists/designers in Glasgow, Mackintosh was to establish himself as the most innovative among the four. One of George Walton's first major commissions was to furnish the interiors of Miss Catherine Cranston's Tea Rooms in Buchanon Street, Glasgow. On this project Mackintosh was

employed to provide wall murals, very much a junior role compared to Walton's, who prior to the emergence of 'The Four' was establishing himself as the most progressive and creative designer in Glasgow. However, when seen next to Mackintosh's work, Walton's work appeared conventional causing Miss Cranston to give Mackintosh the more important job of reconstructing and extending her new Tea Rooms in Argyle Street. Mackintosh also designed all of the furniture for Argyle Street, some of which (Fig. 1) has been described as the best of all his furniture designs.

This opportunity was the break Mackintosh needed in building his reputation. The following year Walton moved to London. Walton, who designed the wall and ceiling decoration in Argyle Street, must have realized the talents of Mackintosh in relation to his own capacity as a designer in Glasgow, and even though there were other reasons contributing to his move south, such as his brother, E.A. Walton, having already moved there and, having less intense reliability on a Scottish background from which to draw his imagery than Mackintosh, has to be seriously considered as being a major factor in influencing his decision to move. Herbert McNair was to experience a similar feeling to Walton just before he left for Liverpool in 1898. McNair was possibly ahead of Mackintosh at one crucial stage in their development in furniture design, but for the remainder of their respective careers, Mackintosh was the superior designer.

This was due to the fact that Mackintosh had better all round ability than McNair. Mackintosh would carry a project through every minute detail, giving the same attention to the design of a door handle as to the door and, in turn, to the building in which both were situated. However, McNair never lost his willingness to discover new forms, an attitude nurtured since his very early days as a junior in Honeyman and Keppie, when during quiet moments in the studio, he would make tracings of furniture from catalogues, making his own modifications as he did so. This was a practice, which it is said he passed on to Mackintosh. It was this feeling for innovation which prompted McNair to design a somewhat questionable three-legged chair for the Scottish Section of the Turin Exhibition

in 1902, causing Mackintosh to comment,

There is hope in honest error.

Once the structure was set up, in which Mackintosh was to work, he quickly gained much attention around the Glasgow art circles. His critics at first were at a loss as how to judge his work. They were often cautious and sceptical, subjecting his designs to much misunderstanding and ridicule. However, Glesson White of 'The Studio' Magazine was to do much to help through giving exposure in his magazine. The publicity Mackintosh and the other members of'The Four' were to receive from The Studio was very instrumental in propagating their international reputations due to The Studio's reverential foreign circulation.

Much of the early acclaim they received and the outrage they caused came from the graphics they produced. They were accused of deliberately attempting to outrage and of being morally decadent, a feeling no doubt attributed to its association in the minds of the critics with the whole Oscar Wilde - Aubrey Beardsley ethos. However, 'The Four' saw their work as creating a new iconography for a new age out of forms of the past. Also, the very strong religious devotion of the Macdonald sisters would dispel the moral decadence theory.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh's training as an architect would have involved him in attending classes in all the branches of the arts and would have introduced him to metal, glass, ceramics and fabrics. Mackintosh attended these classes enthusiastically and saw them as an integral and important part of his design training. He did not agree with the classification of artists into painters, architects, potters etc., he involved himself in as many different areas of creativity and could not divide his talents or indeed his personality to assist classification. His success in so many media is a direct result of his own opinions of the role of the artist/designer. He believed, and the volume of varied works he produced is testament to the fact, that his role was one of an all-rounder and he entered each

design or creative project with an equal eagerness.

This system was a particularly healthy one, as efficiency in one discipline inspired a greater efficiency in another. Mackintosh owes much of his success as an architect and designer to his artistic response to formal problems. He would have been dismayed by the way his architectural work has been allowed to overshadow his craftwork and his painting. His whole design vocabulary is made apparent by a continuous presence of natural forms in his work, based upon his reaction as an artist to nature. From his skills in observing nature, epitomised by his flower studies from 1900 onwards, came his marvellous ingenuity in adapting natural forms to new purposes. Mackintosh often encouraged this attitude in others as the following extract from a lecture entitled, 'Seemliness' (c.1901 - 1905) shows:

> *The architect must become an artworker, the artworker must become an architect.... the draughtsman of the future must be an artist. Art is the flower, life is the green leaf. Let every artist strive to make his flower a beautiful living thing - something that will convince the world that there may be, there are, things more precious, more beautiful, more lasting than life.*

This is the background that was to be so successful for Mackintosh in breaking down the barriers that existed in classifying artworkers. His own strong convictions, coupled with his immense natural talents, enabled him to produce a huge variety of brilliant work. Therefore it is not difficult to imagine how the man who designed the Glasgow School of Art was also the man responsible for the many beautiful watercolours, which are the subject of this thesis. Before a new tradition can emerge, there must be those who break with the ossified conventions of old and prepare the way for the real innovators of the style of the future.

We have seen how George Walton prepared the way for Charles Rennie Mackintosh, enabling Mackintosh to link the Art and Craft movement with the internationalism of the Modernists proper. Mackintosh did this most successfully through his architecture, and yet paradoxically, there was a connection with the past in his work, if only in the way

he showed the practical, functional spirit of Scottish vernacular architecture of the Seventeenth Century, that of laying emphasis on local building materials and traditional craftsmanship. Thus it appears that Mackintosh took on the role of prophet, albeit without honour, during his own lifetime, in his own country. He is now, of course, recognised as a designer of rare, if at times unfathomable, genius.

Glasgow's failure to appreciate Mackintosh at the time, however, is one of the real tragic elements of his career. In 1913, Mackintosh left the firm of Honeyman and Keppie, in which he had become a partner, and set up on his own. This was not to be a success and with little prospect of any commissions in the near future, Mackintosh left Glasgow, exasperated, it seems, by the City's philistinism. This was an extremely difficult time for Mackintosh resulting in a crisis of confidence. He was losing confidence in himself and was unsure of the confidence of colleagues and clients in him. Mackintosh was never really popular with the majority of his colleagues in Glasgow, inside or outside his own practice, so few people would have been sorry to see him leave the city. Mackintosh was to receive further insult after he left as vicious rumours spread of a man whose invention came out of a whiskey bottle. Mackintosh could nothing to dispel these stories, nor could the friends he did have, as his enemies acquired positions of greater power, thus giving the stories greater credence. It is true that Mackintosh did drink as did most of his contemporaries, however, if Mackintosh had not been the genius he was, his drinking would have been ignored. Mackintosh settled in Walberswick, close to where the Newberys were staying and worked primarily on flower studies, the best of his career. He produced thirty of these paintings during his time in Walberswick, hoping that they would be published in book form in Germany.

The outbreak of war prevented publication of the book but Mackintosh continued producing watercolours throughout the war. This period must have been an attempt by Mackintosh to restore his much damaged self confidence. The outbreak of war was to have further consequences

for Mackintosh as Mary Newbery Sturrock, daughter of Francis Newbery, who was in Walberswick at the time, believes Mackintosh was about to leave for Vienna. He had already exhibited in Vienna and built up strong contacts with the Vienna Secession. The war put an end to this plan. (Mackintosh's strange appearance and accent aroused suspicion and prompted the police to search his studio, where they found his correspondence with Vienna, leading them to believe he was a spy). Vienna might have offered no greater opportunities for new work but it did have a thriving artistic community which would have provided Mackintosh with the moral support he lacked in Glasgow.

Before discussing Mackintosh's work of this period it is necessary to describe his development as a watercolour artist which led to this point in his career. As a young man, Mackintosh spent much of his time, travelling throughout Scotland, and later England, visiting villages, churches, monasteries etc., sketching all the time. He showed an alarming willingness to look and draw. He began in pencil but as his art school training developed he began to use water colour in his drawings. At this stage, his drawings were merely records of his journeys and reference books for his future work as an architect. The introduction of colour was used only to highlight or pick out detail. His drawing, 'Tomb, Elgin', 1889 (Fig. 2) is an example of his early descriptive work. The picture is successful in that it is a fair representation of architectural detail sufficient for Mackintosh's purposes but when compared to his later work in the medium it is evident how vastly he was to improve and develop. He shows how he has mastered the basic discipline of laying down washes, but his attention to composition and colour is way behind that which he was to make evident on his Italian tour.

Mackintosh undertook a tour to Italy early in 1891 as a result of winning the Alexander Thompson Travelling Scholarship. Over the course of his tour his drawings were to take on a greater feel of conceived paintings rather than merely recording details. In 'Cloisters, Monreale', 1891 (Fig. 3) Mackintosh has obviously given

consideration to composition, the framing of the convent in the archway convey the impression which Mackintosh had of Italian architecture. While in Monreale in April of 1891 he was particularly impressed by the carved capitals in the cloister. He counted 112 of them and noted each one was different. The next month, May, found Mackintosh in Orvieto where the different coloured stone used in the cathedral there (Fig. 4) has caught his attention. He has obviously noticed the strong pattern the banding of the stone creates and is using this as the main element in this painting. It also is a very colourful painting: Mackintosh was was experiencing the atmosphere of strange and wonderful cities which he might never have expected to see and was endeavouring to capture this atmosphere in his paintings. 'The Baptistry, Sienna Cathedral' 1891 (Fig. 5) is evidence of Mackintosh's development in style, and when compared to Fig. 2, it is clear to see how his technique has become more fluid and assured. His use of colour is also becoming more confident and it is useful to note how he is mixing his washes in the background, giving a greater feeling of depth and dimension.

Mackintosh's work on his Italian tour conforms his competence in draughtsmanship and is an early indication that he was progressing in the art of watercolour painting. However, up to this point he has yet to show any use of inventiveness or really stretch his imagination. It was in the year after the Italian trip that Mackintosh's work in watercolour made a dramatic change. 'The Harvest Moon' 1872 (Fig. 6) is in total contrast to anything that has gone before. To take his use of colour, for example, he has chosen much stronger colours, deep purples, greens and blues, with contrasting touches of orange and yellow. Nor has he been afraid of using dark areas to achieve his desired impact. The painting has been carefully worked out and carefully drawn. It is the beginning of Mackintosh's work to depend upon the imagination, yet it is based upon reality. He shows a clear awareness of Michael-angelo in his drawing of the central figure. However the unearthy atmosphere of the painting has it origins in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites, whose work was known in Glasgow. He was inventing a whole new world of angels, melancholic figures and evil plant life.

This new departure in Mackintosh's work was contained in a quarterly handwritten periodical which was passed around the students of the Glasgow School of Art, called 'The Magazine'.

In'Descent of Night' (c.1893 - 1894) (Fig. 7) Mackintosh uses imagery which is relatively easy to explain. It was included in the April 1894 issue of 'The Magasine' and like the central figure in 'The Harvest Moon' this painting features an angel, however this time, naked and more in accordance with naturalistic forms. The arms and the hair merge and are transformed into tree forms descending into the horizon. Coming out of the picture towards the viewer is a flight of birds ressembling birds of prey. The bird image was to become more stylised and used more and more in different media throughout his career. Again, the use of deep atmospheric colour enhances the eerie impression. In the 'Tree of Personal Effort' 1895 (Fig. 8) and the 'Tree of Influence' 1895 (Fig. 9) Mackintosh's imagery is becoming less intelligible yet it is obviously still based on nature. These two paintings are from the Spring 1896 issue of 'The Magazine' and appear without comment, however it is possible that they relate to issues being discussed by the students at the time. Equally as they seem to have eluded all commentators it is also possible that Mackintosh's contemporaries may have also found them unintelligible. In them he has pushed his symbolism of nature to his most extreme. Regardless of their meaning, they are very much designed paintings and as such are highly sophisticated pieces.

The overlapping of layers, tree upon sun or sun upon tree, is repeated years later in his more formal plant studies. Mackintosh soon forsook this style for a gentler imagery of which 'In Fairy Land' 1897 (Fig. 10) gives an adequate indication. The same symbolism of 'The Magazine' drawings has been replaced with more realistic figures, wreathed in flowery tendrils. This style was to be shortlived as at the time Mackintosh was becoming increasingly absorbed in his design and architectural work. Mackintosh continued to travel at this period and while in Dorset in 1895, painted 'Wareham' (Fig. 11) and 'Porlock Weir' (Fig. 12). His interest in

landscape painting was increasing but still with an architectural element. His ability to display man made forms in conjunction with nature is an underlying theme in much of his watercolours, which was to come to its full fruition in his Mediterranean paintings of the 1920s.

PART 2

Charles Rennie Mackintosh had always sketched flowers ever since his student days. However, like the sketches of buildings which they appeared alongside, they were always in pencil and were recorded as much for their value in giving him a design vocabulary as they were for their own beauty. The detailing of his architecture and furniture drew its inspiration from petals, seed pods and stems of flowers. By the year 1901, this phase of Mackintosh's flower drawings had passed and the first tentative use of colour appeared in his drawings. The use of colour for Mackintosh was to become most important, not simply in illustrating the delicate and many varied flowers, but also an integral part of the design and pattern of the picture. Mackintosh spent his honeymoon in Lindisfarne in 1900 and returned the following year. It was on this trip, accompanied by Herbert McNair, Frances Macdonald and Charles Macdonald (brother of the two sisters) that Mackintosh produced a series of memorable flower paintings. They were conceived as pictures in their own right and were the beginning of a format to which he adhered for the next ten years.

'Sea Pink, Holy Island' (Fig. 13) painted in July of 1901 is an example of one of these early drawings which pioneered Mackintosh's new style. See how he has isolated a clump of sea pinks from their setting against the rocks and over a careful pencil outline laid a colour wash. To the initial drawing Mackintosh would add subsequent views of the different parts of the flower, building up a structure and pattern. Specific areas of detail would then be picked out in colour. He would finish his drawing by incorporating into the overall design the box in which he identified the subject and signed and dated it.

Mackintosh used these drawings as a sort of family album including the initials of those who were with him when made the drawing. In Fig. 13 the 'M' stands for Margaret and the 'T' for Tosh, his own familiar name among friends. It was thought that the inclusion of

Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh's initials in these drawings was because she had helped in their execution but this is not true as nobody was allowed to touch Mackintosh's work, not even his wife.

In (Fig. 14) 'Faded Roses' 1905, Mackintosh shows us one of his earliest examples of cultivated flowers. He would have had time to spend on such a painting as his architectural output was not much during 1905. It is important in that it points the way to the development of Mackintosh's mature style of watercolour painting. The colours are strong and solid, the forms are naturalistic yet not distorted like those in his works of the mid-1890s, and the dark background was to be repeated in the flower paintings of 1915 to 1923, which he was to paint in Chelsea.

The increasing maturity of Mackintosh as a painter coincided with a greater maturity and sophistication in his design work. Common traits existed in both disciplines, delicacy of line and colour, contrasting with bold pattern and skilful presentation. The emphasis is now being placed on design and pattern rather than content and emotion. By the time Mackintosh came to paint (Fig. 15) 'Spurge' 1909 and (Fig. 16) 'Cuckoo Flower' 1910, the style and format of the flower paintings had become well established. By this stage he is including more detailed colouring, note the leaf in the bottom left of Fig. 15 and the additional buds alongside the main flower in Fig. 16. Structure has also become more important in the paintings as Mackintosh strives to emphasise not only the beautiful colours of the plants but the way they are actually built. The composition and layout of the paintings are such as to exploit the flowers' structure to create his desired pattern and design. Mackintosh is aslo giving more consideration to his signature box in the overall composition. It has moved closer to the subject matter and indeed become part of it, supporting it and adapting its shape to the spaces provided by the natural shapes of the flowers.

By 1914, Mackintosh and his wife had moved to Walberswick in Suffolk where Mackintosh was to attempt to recuperate from the difficult times he had experienced prior to leaving Glasgow. This he did

through watercolour painting. He genuinely needed to regain his self confidence if he was to make a serious effort at establishing a practice in London, which was on his mind since leaving Glasgow. Mackintosh's sense of pattern and sensitivity of pattern was now much more accentuated giving a more finished look than in earlier drawings. This was due to a large extent to the greater effort made by Mackintosh as the Walberswick drawings were intended for publication. The flower drawings of this period appear not only more finished but more stylised and decorative than before. Pattern in the flower itself, and in the way it is drawn is emphasised at the expense of the natural shape of the plant, as Mackintosh seems to have in mind the final printed reproduction. The positioning of the flower in the page is more deliberate than ever. Colour is used now with greater purpose, defining detail rather than as an overall wash. Mackintosh is striving for a greater finish in these drawings and in achieving this has had to sacrifice much of the natural shapes seen in earlier work. A private pastime is now bowing to the more positive and commercial demands of public taste.

In 'Petunia' 1914 (Fig. 17), Mackintosh has paid particular attention to detail and emphasised the formal quality and pattern of the bloom. He builds up a strong colour scheme from the bottom of the picture to the top, describing to us effectively the stages in which he works. This manner of precise line drawings, combined with astute colour observation allows us to know how he worked and to see the brilliant draughtsman that he was. Were parts of the flowers left uncoloured so that Mackintosh could show off his skills of draughtsmanship and appreciation of line? 'Borage' 1914 (Fig. 18), also has coloured and uncoloured blooms but perhaps Mackintosh is doing this deliberately so as to make the structure of the plant more evident.

It is unfortunate that Mackintosh's brief (if he had one) for these drawings is not known or the exact nature of the book in which they were to be published. It is intriguing to note how Mackintosh has overlapped the petals in Fig. 18 to give an even stronger colour.

(Fig. 19) 'Cactus Flower' 1915, like Fig. 17 is of a cultivated flower. This is one of his boldest flower drawings where the intensity of the colour has obviously attracted Mackintosh. He has arranged his subject to achieve the best possible composition, creating marvellously intricate and delicate negative shapes between the three flowers represented. The solidity of the leaves of the cactus plant are in stark contrast to the elegance of the drooping flowers.

(Fig 20) 'Fritillaria' 1915, is also a drawing full of delicacy and elegance, yet it is a study of a wild flower. Fritillaria is a flower with such obvious appeal for Mackintosh that it seemed inevitable that he would eventually paint it. The chequer work on its petals is strongly reminiscent of the rectangular and square motif so popular in all Mackintosh's work. He is so taken by it that it also appears in the signature box. It is a drawing full of contrasts, contrasts in colour, shape and form, although despite this it manages to hold itself together in a composition most pleasing to the eye due to an underlying rhythm.

Rhythm also plays an important part in (Fig. 21) 'Gorse' 1915, where there are rhythmic movements in the tangled stem moving towards the brightly coloured petals of the flowers. Their irregular appearance over the picture plane enhances the natural rhythm of the plant. This is a particularly complicated drawing which is a prime example of Mackintosh's meticulousness and can be compared with 'Harvest Moon (Fig. 6). Mackintosh is aware in both instances that painstaking attention to the minor detail will help him achieve his goals. (Anemone and Pasque' 1915 (Fig. 22) is another of Mackintosh's highly finished watercolours of this period. It is a combination of like flowers, merging in one painting. The spontaneity of some of his earlier flower drawings in which this is lacking is substituted with a more sophisticated composition. Again overlapping helps in its appeal. Subtle variations of colour are evidence of Mackintosh's increasing compatability with the watercolour medium.

About this time, while he was in Suffolk, Mackintosh produced a

small number of landscape paintings which, although they were by no means as assured in technique as his later Mediterranean paintings, were also evidence of the development and progress in his style of painting. (Fig. 23) 'Venetian Palace' 1914 is a typical example and gives us an indication of what was to interest Mackintosh when he got to France. The riverside building is similar to the many vernacular buildings which crammed his sketchbooks from his early student days. His interest now moved from recording the buildings' particular architectural features to showing the building in its environment. Buildings such as these in France were to catch his interest years later.

In 1915, the Mackintoshes left Suffolk and arrived in London where they found studio space in Chelsea and where they were to remain for the next eight years. The disastrous economic situation of the time forced Mackintosh to change his style in order to earn a living. Perceiving the public taste for larger, more finished paintings of the flowers which grew in their gardens, Mackintosh turned to painting bunches of cultivated flowers, arranged in vases in the hope of stimulating sales. He took on these paintings in the same uncompromising manner for which he was known and despite producing startling and magnificent paintings, none of them found purchasers.

The earliest of these paintings, 'Anemones' (Fig. 24) and 'Begonias' (Fig. 25) were painted in 1916 while Mackintosh was working on the Northampton house of the engineer, W.J. Bassett-Lowke. These interiors (Fig. 26) described by Mr. Bassett-Lowke as

distinctly futuristic in character

were featured in the 'Ideal Home' in August and September of 1920, however no mention was made of Mackintosh's name. This project was one of his most striking interiors, much concern being given to strong colours and formalised patterns. This feeling was echoed in his paintings; the colours in 'Anemones' vibrate against

PART 3

one another. Mackintosh would make bold arrangements of flowers in vases and set them on a table, often with a realistic background. In 'Anemones' some of Mackintosh's textile designs can be seen reflecting in the mirror. For 'Begonias' Mackintosh has reduced the background to a dark mass to contrast with the detail of the flowers and the vase on the table. The boldness of this painting is particularly apparent, although it still maintains a sense of grandeur due to the full shape of the flowers. The tulip was a favourite motif in the carved decoration on Mackintosh's furniture, it was also popular in the textile designs. Mackintosh was attracted to its elegance and in 'White Tulips' (Fig. 27) c. 1918 - 1920, the flowers, structure and elegance are emphasised by the clear background. He felt that the flowing rhythm of their long stems allowed the 'White Tulips' create their own image. However, for 'Yellow Tulips' (Fig. 28) c. 1922 - 1923, Mackintosh has included in detail a specific background setting. He is still primarily giving us another flower painting but the somewhat meagre display, compared with former paintings, and open arrangement suggest that Mackintosh was now looking for more of a challenge. He has given much care to the painting of the background, thus it fights with the flowers in the foreground for the viewer's attention.

'Yellow Tulips', one of Mackintosh's last flower paintings made before he left for the South of France is an indication of his greater devotion to watercolour painting. It was the beginning of a new style for Mackintosh. He had established himself as an accomplished watercolourist with his flower paintings but they were not extracting the best he had to offer. In 'Venetian Palace' (Fig. 23) Mackintosh had begun looking for a new vocabulary through which to express himself in watercolour and it was to landscape painting that he was finally to turn to create his finest work.

No major commissions arose out of the work for Basset-Lowke prompting Mackintosh to give up architecture entirely for a full time career as a watercolour artist.

PART 3

In 1923 Mackintosh accepted the advice of friends and left for a long holiday in the South of France. At this time, he was experiencing the same feelings he had felt prior to his leaving of Glasgow; architectural commissions were not forthcoming and most of the projects he did work on were not carried out due to lack of finance and planning permission not being given. J.D. Ferguson, the Scottish painter, was a neighbour of Mackintosh's in Chelsea and was instrumental in Mackintosh's choice of location in France, close to the Spanish border on the Mediterranean. He had visited the area many times previously on holidays. The move for Mackintosh had dramatic consequences on his life, both beneficial and detrimental. It meant he was finally isolated from the artistic society in Britain, yet it afforded him the opportunity to paint in the open air, undisturbed, an ideal situation to Mackintosh. The geographical separation meant that this final outburst of talent went unnoticed, however it must be said that he probably would not have reached the peaks he did had he remained in Britain as spiritual isolation from the establishment was forcing Mackintosh into a dismayed state.

The interaction of unspoilt natural features, with vernacular buildings and surrounding man made structures was increasingly becoming the main theme of his work, a theme which found a perfect setting in the villages of Southern France. Man's effect upon nature had always intrigued Mackintosh and the tranquil mixture of roads, paths, houses and fields with the organic and rocky geography of the area around Port Vendres, where he eventually settled, was the subject of Mackintosh's major aesthetic concern. He placed particular emphasis on pattern, natural and man made, and his technique of painting every object in considerable detail from the foreground right through to the most distant object gave the paintings a strong feeling of mass and form. He had previously used this style in 'Yellow Tulips' (Fig. 28), to create an illusion of depth while maintaining the two dimensional proportions of the paper by the overall surface detail. He achieves his original

interpretation of nature and architecture through the consistency of his detailing, although the scale obviously changes one is always aware that distant objects are on the same flat plane as those in the foreground.

Mackintosh's Mediterranean pictures have an eerie stillness; everywhere is deserted, while man's influence is clear to be seen there are no actual people to be seen. This total lack of human life creates an uneasiness in the viewer. The two dimensional representation of a real landscape gives the paintings a surreal atmosphere. Mackintosh's method of working along with the simple lack of desire to capture movement will help explain these facts. Although he worked outside as much as possible there is no evidence of the effects of wind on the petals and stems of flowers and the ripples of the water in the bay around Port Vendres are frozen into a static diagram. In fact, Mackintosh went out of his way to eliminate the effects of wind on his paintings and often stressed how the 'tranquilité ' of Port Vendres helped him paint in letters to his wife. In the letters he would enthuse about a day that had no wind as he would get many hours painting then from a day. Some of these paintings Mackintosh spent weeks on and unlike the earlier flower studies where mistakes were incorporated into the painting, hours were spent assuring that the detail was perfect.

Colour was also important in the Mediterranean paintings. Mackintosh used it to capture the strong light of the Mediterranean, so the paintings are much brighter and clearer than the work he produced in Suffolk and Chelsea. He disliked the feeling that his paintings were sombre and rose very early and painted at six and seven in the morning so that he would have perfect light. This was testimony to the conviction Mackintosh now had in his work, which he empahsised in his letters to Margaret, saying that he must and cannot miss any perfect days.

In fact his letters to Margaret offer the only real clues as to how the last few years of his life were spent. Margaret had returned to London in May of 1927 to undergo medical treatment.

In the letters Mackintosh expresses his concern for her health and his depression at being alone without her but he also says how much he enjoys writing to Margaret and found it a great relaxation from his painting. He was also greatly excited by letters from Margaret containing news of friends and acquaintances.

Apart from the letters, very little is known of the Mackintoshes' stay in France. All the watercolours bear the date 1927 and not all were signed. With this in mind and the fact that there was no obvious development in a single direction, it is necessary to discuss the Mediterranean paintings as small parts of a greater achievement, one gigantic work, built up of elements with similarities, the most striking being the not surprising relationship of the finished pictures to architectural forms.

'Fetges' (Fig. 29) c. 1923 - 1926, is evidence that Mackintosh made at least one visit into Spain. This painting was considered by Mackintosh as one of his best of the Mediterranean series and is typical of the series. Natural forms are echoed by man made forms. It seems that the organic growth of the village along the hillside is in direct response to the rock formation in the left foreground. Both possess a many varied surface, flat planes in all directions and both while interlocking with each other, fit comfortably into the hillside. This painting he sent back to Margaret to take into the Leicester Galleries, where a price of £30 was put on it. Mackintosh felt this was 'quite ridiculous' but went to tell Margaret to sell for £10 if she wished.

'The Fort' (Fig. 30) c. 1924 - 1926, is another example of the planes of nature and man combining in expansive landscapes. The forts which were placed along the border with Spain intrigued Mackintosh. He produced several watercolours of them and included them in the distance of other paintings., Like Fig. 29 the painting reflects the greenness of the countryside. Mackintosh saw green in most of his paintings and in those where he stopped to study closer the colour, he often had to fight against using green where there was actually none.

'Port Vendres' (Fig. 31) c. 1924 - 1926, is a painting in which portrays the random patterns of pathways and roads across the countryside. Massive slabs of rock are criss-crossed, with the winding line of the paths. The bulk of the subject matter is denied by the contrasting shadow areas and highlights, giving it a bright appearance. Note the presence of one of the forts looming over the rock. The Mackintoshes moved from Port Vendres to Mont Louis during the summer months to escape the heat as they found it cooler in the mountains.

'The Village of La Lagonne' (Fig. 32) c. 1924 - 1927, was in easy reach of Mont Louis and provided good text for Mackintosh's continuing depiction of the area. The very busy shapes of the roofs of the houses in the village are beautifully contrasted by the sweeping fields moving towards the mountains. It is interesting to feel the sense of distance in this painting by following the road out of the village, around the clump of rocks which could easily be another village, and up and over the rolling hills. The painting has tremendous rhythm which is contrasted by intricate detail in the foreground. 'La Lagonne' is one of the few paintings where apart from roads and buildings, man's presence is confirmed by carts, ladders, piles of wood etc., but if it is reassuring in one way it increases the eeriness in another. If such definite proof of mankind exists why are there no people? It may have been that Mackintosh was simply not interested in the people who must have inhabited the villages in his paintings or he may have been deliberately trying to achieve a certain atmosphere by omitting them.

'Mount Alba' (Fig. 32a) c. 1924 - 1927, also close to Mont Louis, is another painting possessing terrific natural rhythm. The terraces of crops seem tied up by the curving roadways and again strong use of the colour green. 'A Hill Town in Southern France' (Fig. 33) c. 1924 - 1926, has a more varied use of colour. Mackintosh is working harder to keep his palette brighter while continuing to contrast simple house shapes against the hillside. This painting has a strong 'left to right' bias to it which is exaggerated by the treatment of the sky, which seems slightly

more dramatic than the skies of his other paintings.

'A Southern Town' (Fig. 34) c. 1924 -1927, is a much different painting with a definite vertical thrust. The elements are the same as in previous paintings but in this one Mackintosh has chosen to emphasise the complex patterns of the village roofs. See how they contrast with the more fluid patterns in the background. At this point, the figures outside the cafe are almost conspicious by their presence.

Mackintosh wrote to Margaret that each of his paintings has something but none has everything, so in 'Summer in the South' (Fig. 35) c. 1924 - 1927, it is the strong sense of colour that is the dominant feature while in 'Palalda'(Fig. 36) c. 1924 - 1927, and'Boultenère' (Fig. 37) c. 1924 - 1927, two very similar paintings, it is Mackintosh's fascination with the organic villages clinging to the hillside which comes forward.

'Heré de Mallet' (Fig. 38) c. 1925, is a painting with a superb sense of design yet it does not rely on the usual architectural vocabulary, neither does it comply with the established colour schemes. Here Mackintosh addresses himself to the shapes and forms presented by the exposed geological strata. The painting has immediate impact, a bright blue sky boldly contrasts the almost orange cliff face. Mackintosh's eye for natural patterns has helped him turn what is essentially a piece of rock into a very successful and striking painting.

'La Rue du Soleil' (Fig. 39) 1926, has similar attributes to Fig. 38. Mackintosh is forming abstract patterns from ordinary happenings. The treatment of the reflections in Fig. 39 is similar in style to the treatment of the layers of rock in Fig. 38. In 'La Rue du Soleil' Mackintosh has caught the sunlight in the bay and rendered it motionless in such a way that the single movement of the painting now possesses a timelessness matched by the solidity of the rocks in Fig. 38. A similar effect is achieved in 'Port Vendres' (Fig. 40) c. 1926 - 1927, with the ripples in the water frozen for

ever. Mackintosh enjoyed spending time by the harbour watching the traffic of the cargo ships with their varied loads. A comparison between this painting and a similar one from over ten years before (Fig. 23) shows how much assured Mackintosh's abilities in the watercolour medium had become.

The tranquility that Mackintosh said he needed to enable him to paint is captured beautifully in 'The Little Bay, Port Vendres' (Fig. 41) 1927. The gentle wavelets caressing the shore, the calm of the bay in the background and the fishing boats lying idle, all combine to give a soothing feeling of peace. The rhythm and pattern of this painting is more carefully planned and more deliberately constructed to bring about this feeling. There is also an aura of quietness about 'Le Fort Maillert' (Fig. 42) 1927. This painting had a special relevance to the Mackintoshes as it ressembled the views of the castle on Lindisfarne where they spent their honeymoon and Mackintosh refers to this painting as the painting of 'our fort' in letters to Margaret. It has an abstract composition which is complimented by the large areas of flat colour. The flatness of the washes exaggerate the two dimensional plane of the paper and is only slightly relieved in parts by the presence of shadows.

Mackintosh spent over a month on 'The Rocks' (Fig. 43) 1927, endeavouring to watch the accidental structures of nature which appeared in the rocks in his painting of them. In the course of painting this picture Mackintosh seemed to enter into a battle with nature. He found it increasingly difficult to finish this painting as time went on and it wasn't until he felt that

it is now doing what I want it to do

that he was actually able to make progress with it. He also felt that this was one of his better efforts. The rhythmic patterns of the rocks in the foreground are in confrontation with the more organised patterns of the village buildings across the water, yet as in many of his works both are given the same attention, the

CONCLUSION

unusual consequence being that although the painting is essentially two dimensional, the treatment of depth causes a juxtaposition of planes and a reaction between what is natural and what is man made.

This was the essence of what the Mediterranean paintings were made of. The result of a formally trained architect bringing to painting the highly skilled qualities of draughtsmanship, more accustomed to a T-square and dividers rather than a brush and palette. Mackintosh already had a finely tuned aesthetic sense before he began work as an architect so the combination of artist/architect has brough to painting something that could not have existed independently in either discipline.

CONCLUSION

Mackintosh crossed the barriers between two and three dimensions with such ease because he never saw any barriers. Painting in Port Vendres was as much a part of what he was as designing any of the magnificent buildings which he did in Glasgow.

Any assessment of one area of his work will automatically lead into questions on other areas. Yet, I hope I have shown that Charles Rennie Mackintosh has the right to be classed as an accomplished watercolour artist despite his own feelings that such a classification cannot exist as it is impossible to isolate one part of a greater artistic drive. Mackintosh strove for excellence in all of his artistic endeavours and certainly achieved it in his watercolours. I believe that they can be appreciated on their own merits and that the man who painted them was as much an artist as he was an architect.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh returned to Britain in 1927, seriously ill with cancer of the tongue and died the following year, aged 60 on 10 December 1928. Four years later in 1933, his wife, Margaret, died alone in London.

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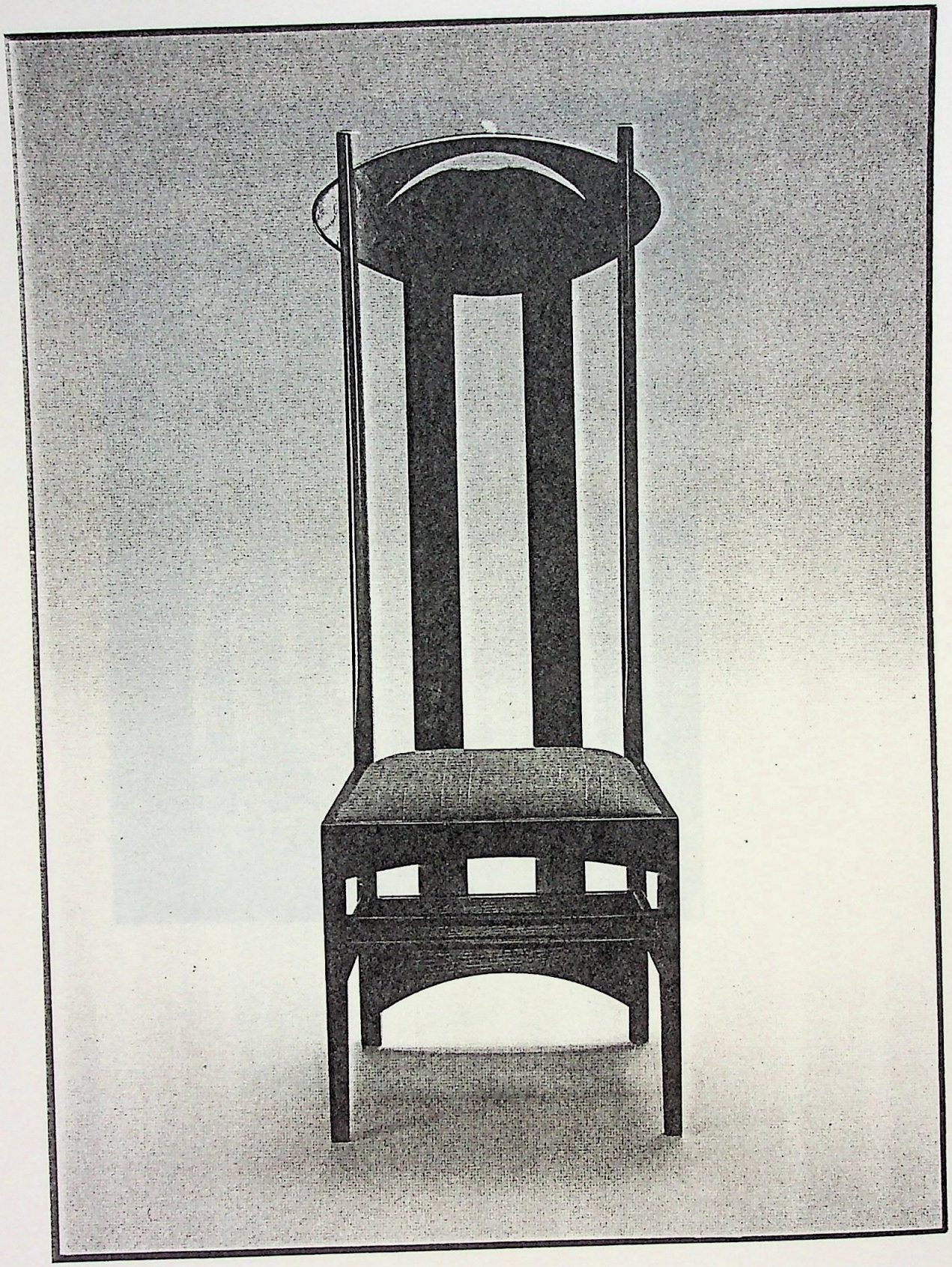

Fig. 1 Argyle Street Tea Room Chair, 1897

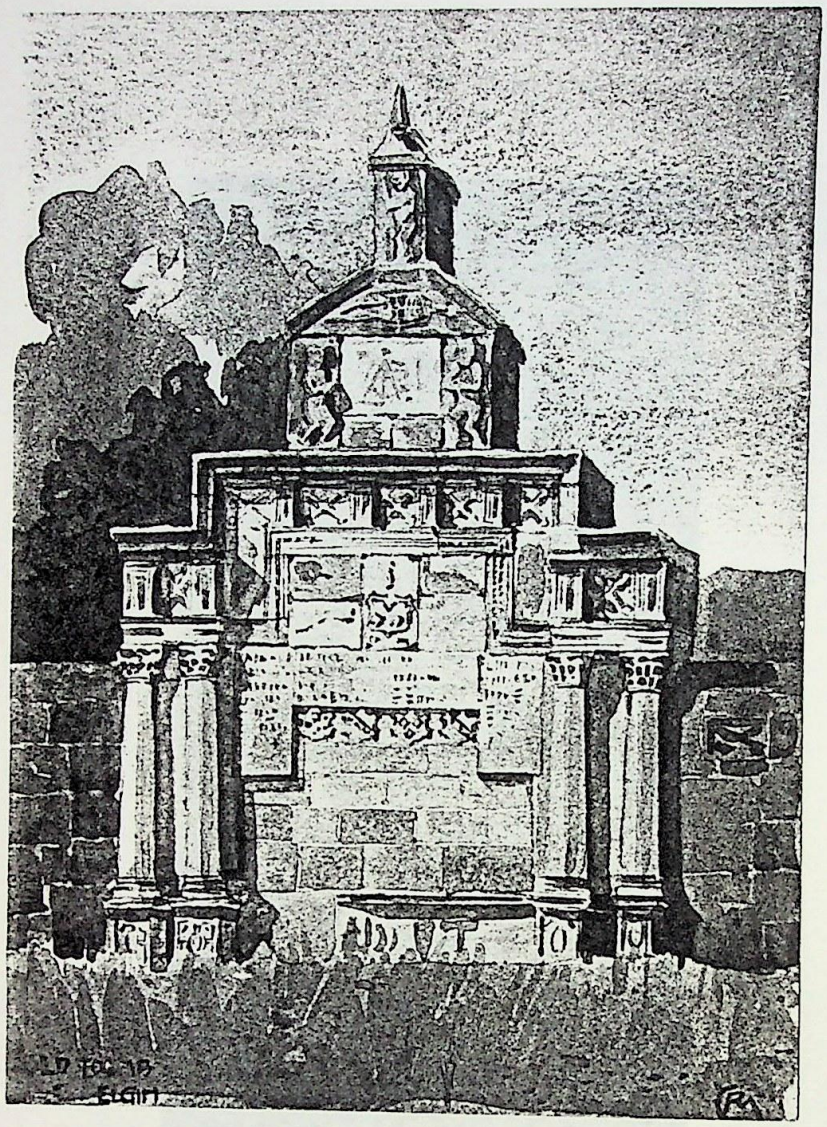

Fig. 2 Tomb, Elgin, (318 x 241mm), 1889

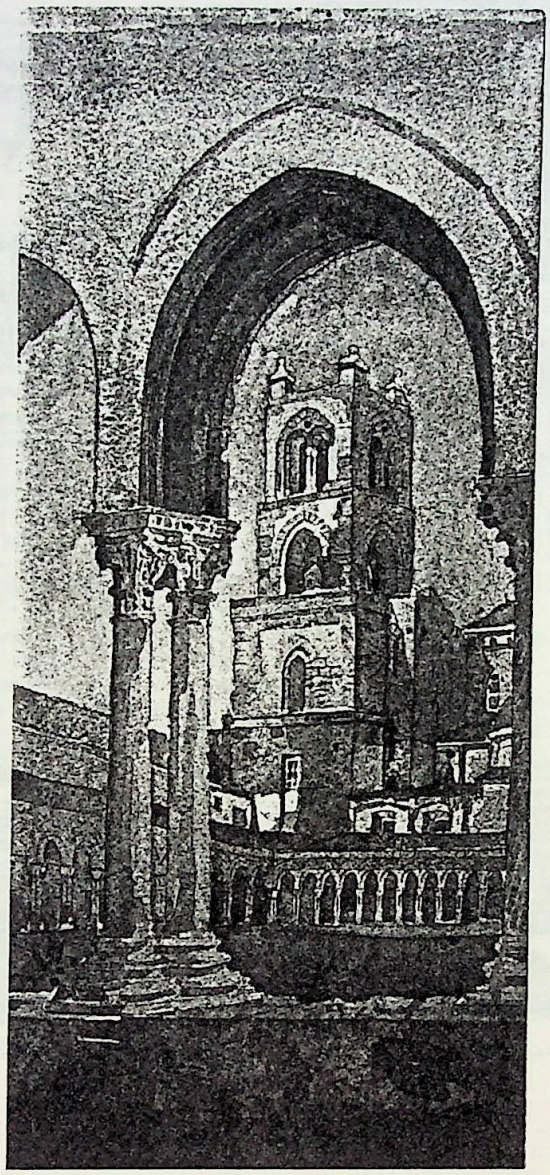

Fig. 3 Cloisters, Monreale (368 x 165mm), 1891

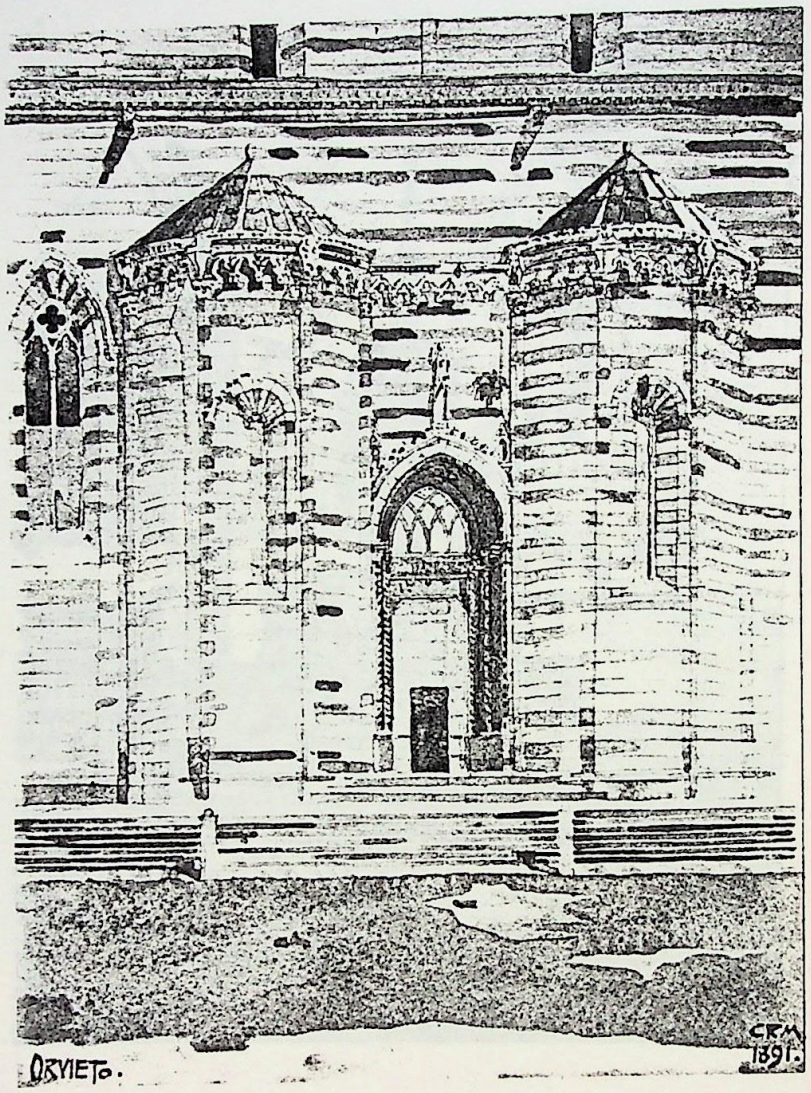

Fig. 4 Mosaic Bands, Orvieto (223 x 305mm), 1891

CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH WATERCOLOURS

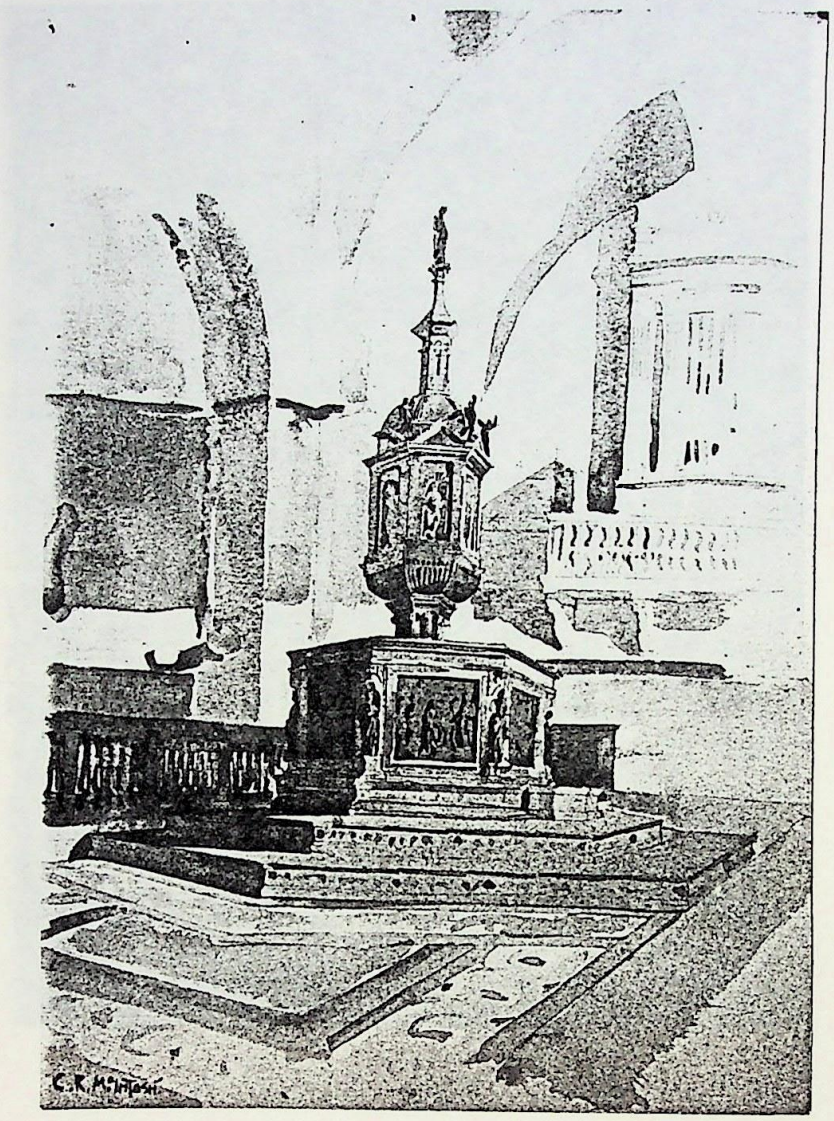

Fig. 5 The Baptistry, Sienna Cathedral (391 x 279mm) 1891

Fig. 6 Harvest Moon, (352 x 276mm), 1892

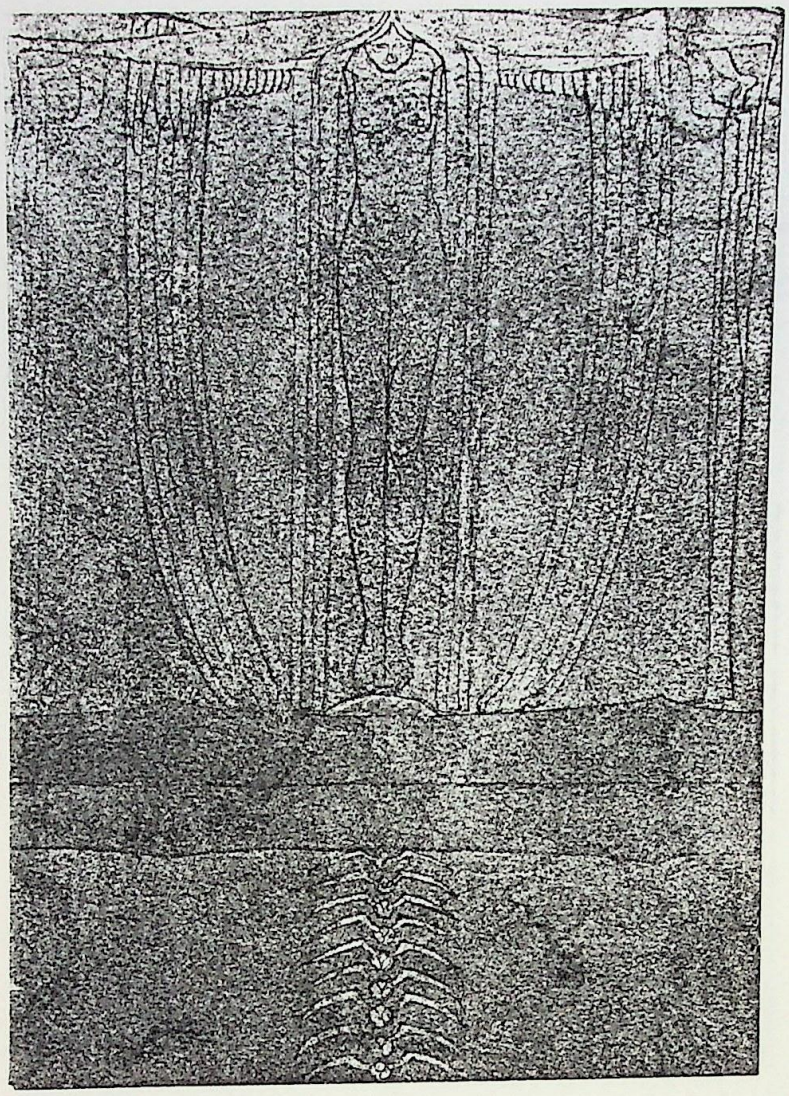

Fig. 7 The Descent of Night, (240 x 176mm), 1893-94

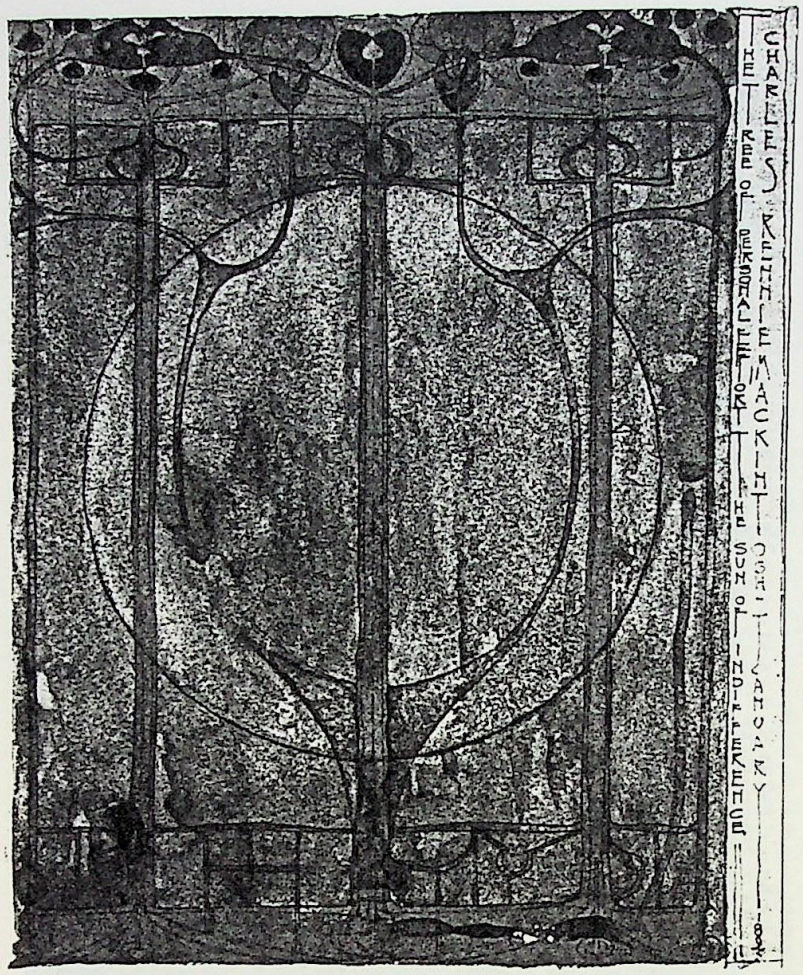

Fig. 8 Tree of Personal Effort, (211 x 174mm), 1895

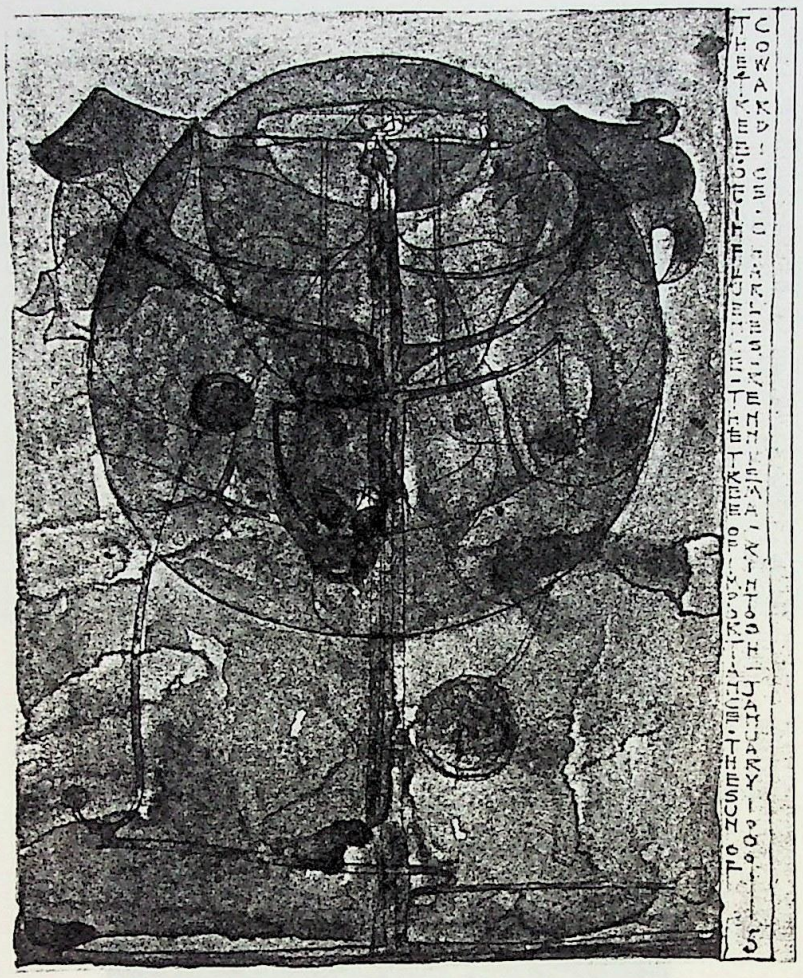

Fig. 9 Tree of Influence, (214 x 172mm), 1895

Fig. 10 In Fairyland, (370 x 176mm), 1897

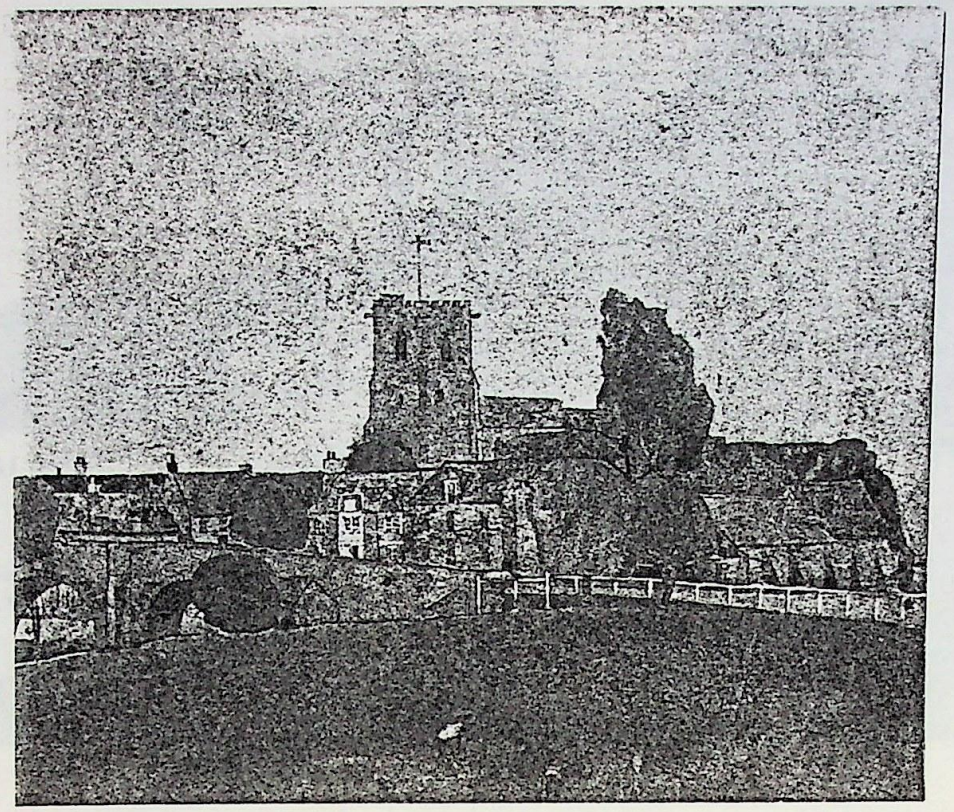

Fig. 11 Wareham, 1895

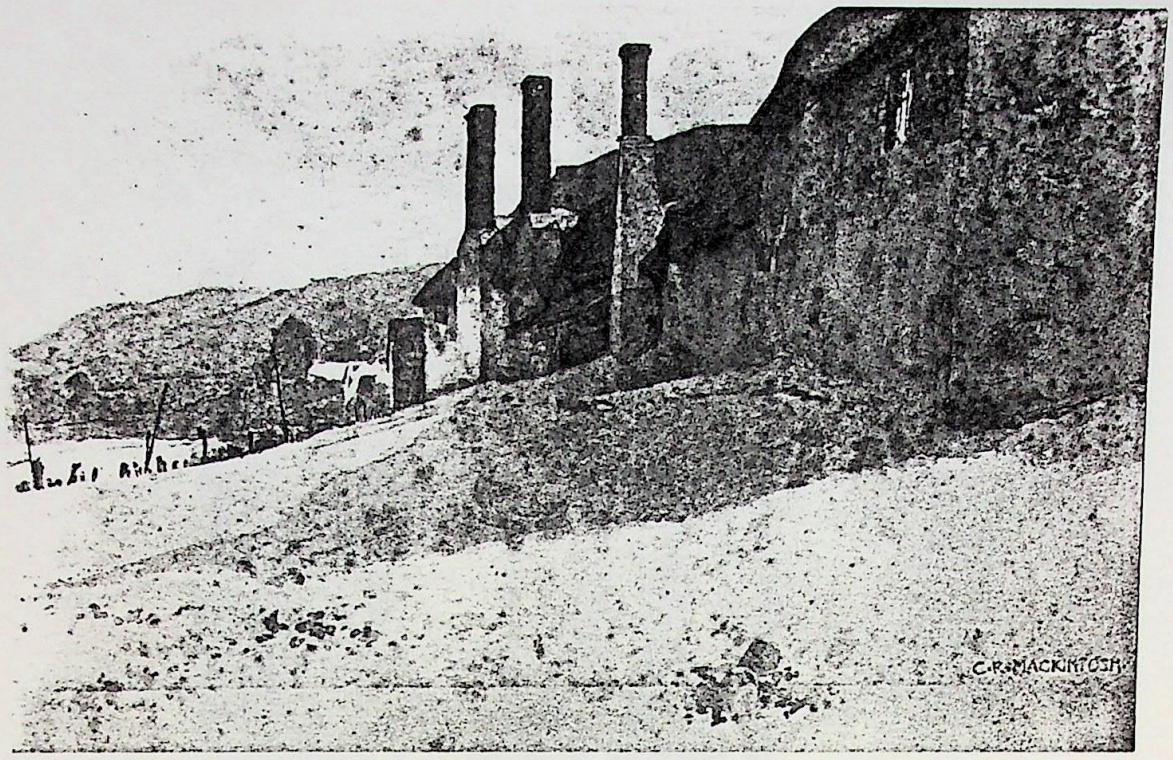

Fig. 12 Porlock Weir, (274 x 413mm), 1895-98

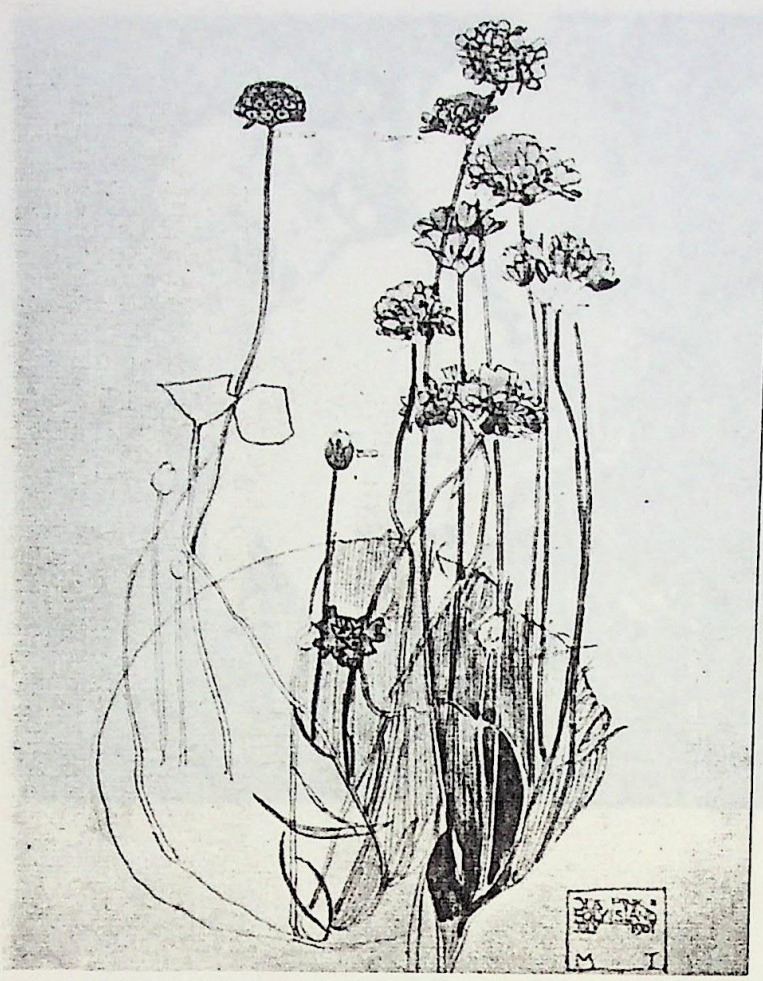

Fig. 13 Sea Pink, (258 x 202mm), 1901

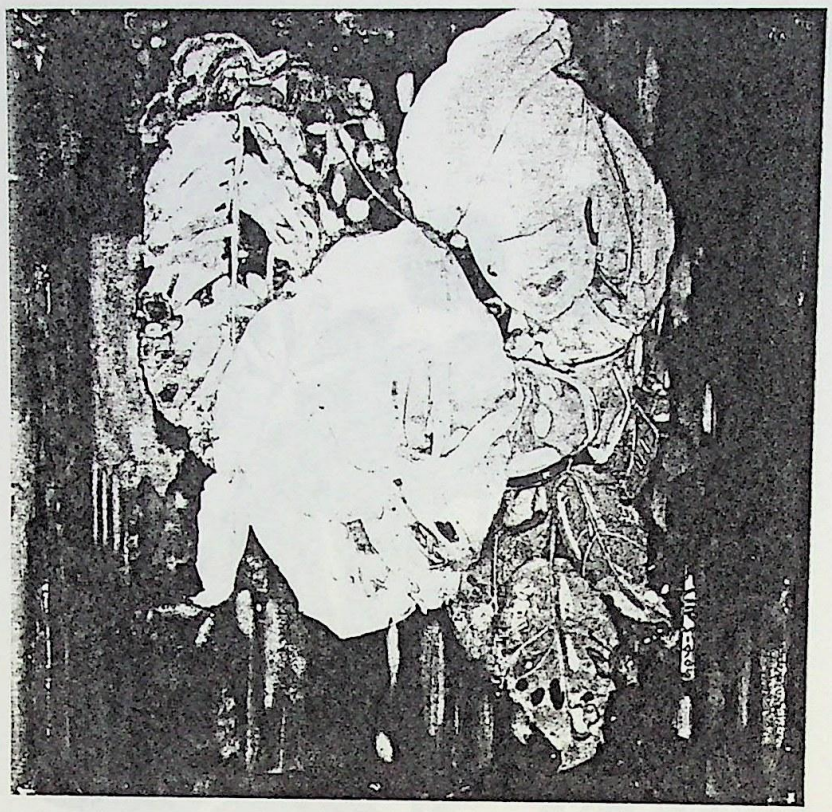

Fig. 14 Faded Roses, (285 x 202mm), 1905

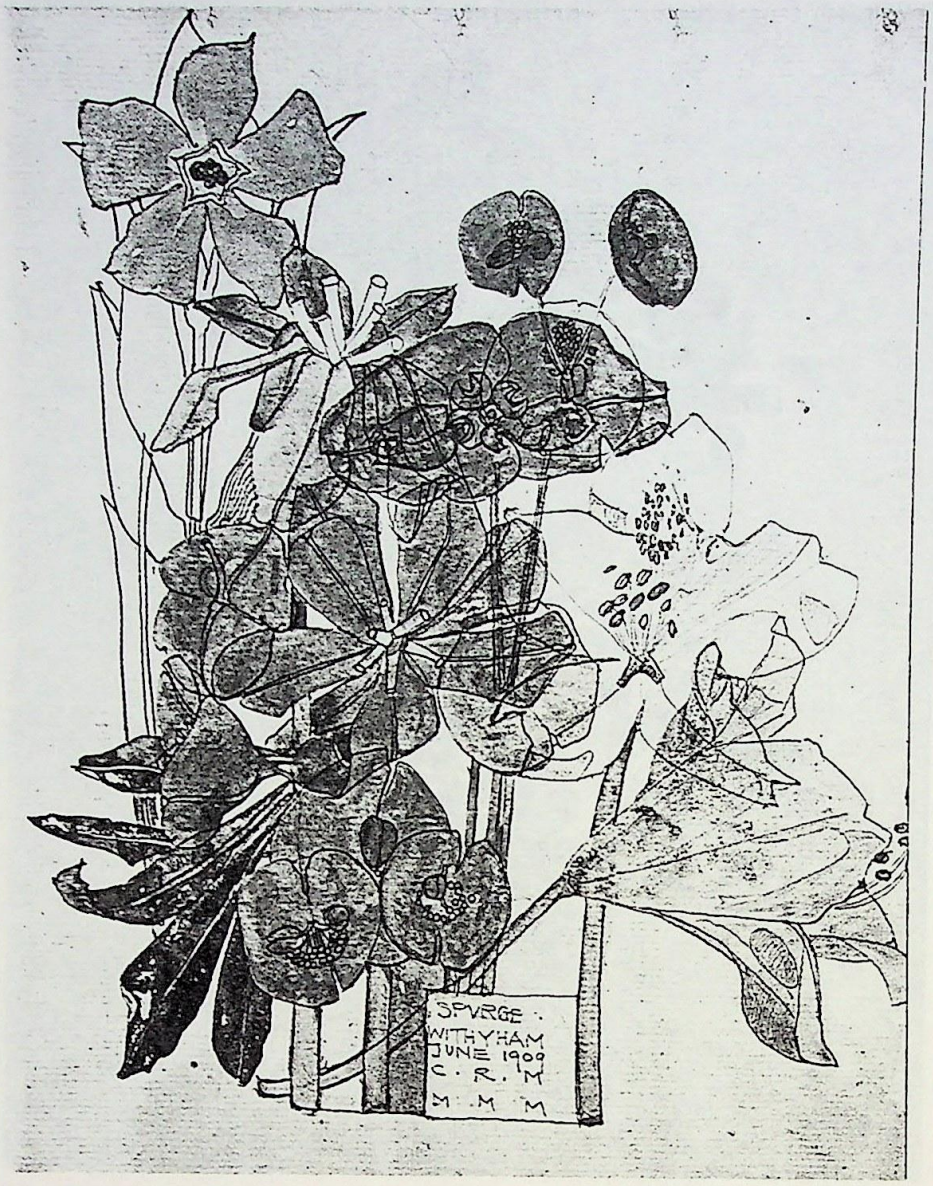

Fig. 15 Spurge, (258 x 202mm), 1909

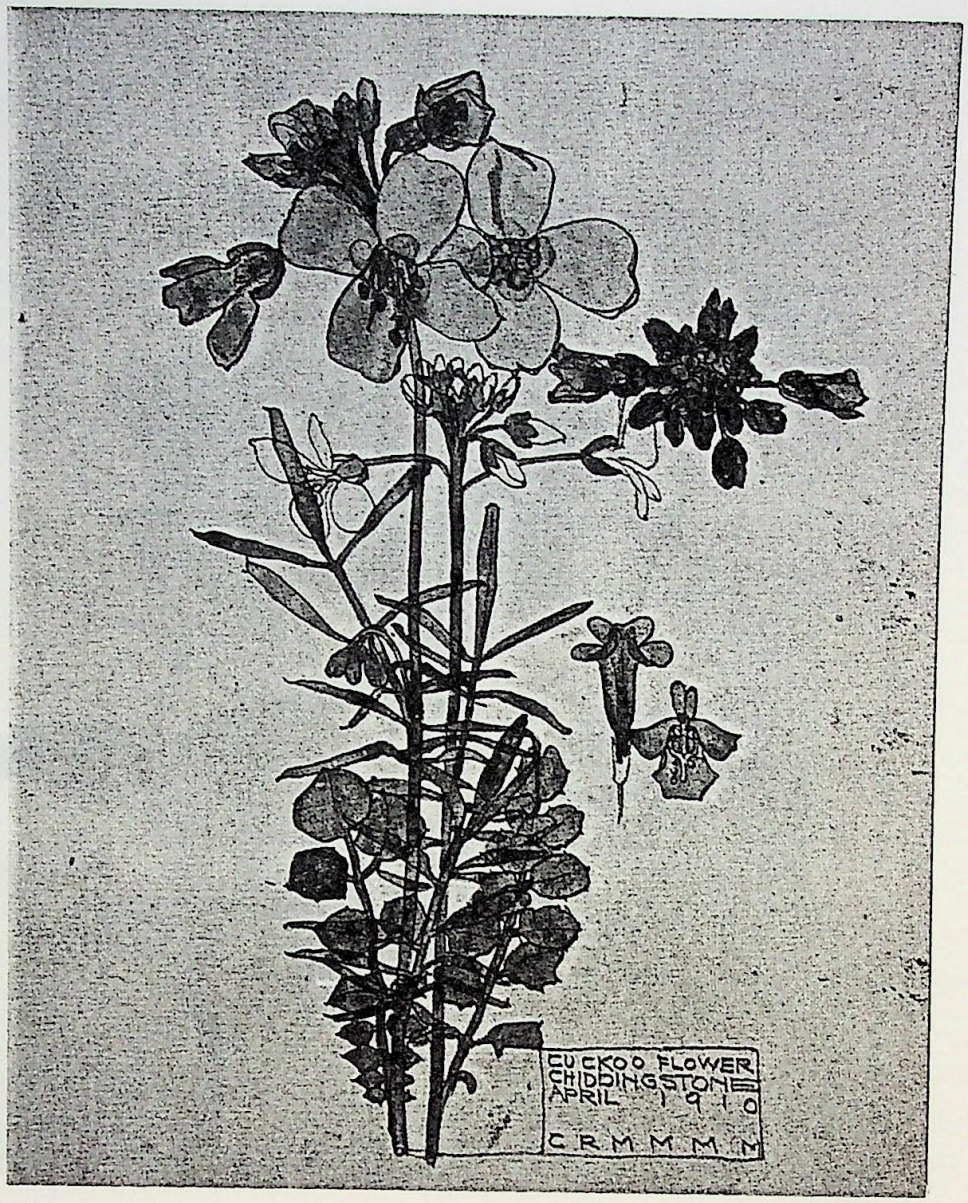

Fig. 16 Cuckoo Flower, (258 x 203mm), 1910

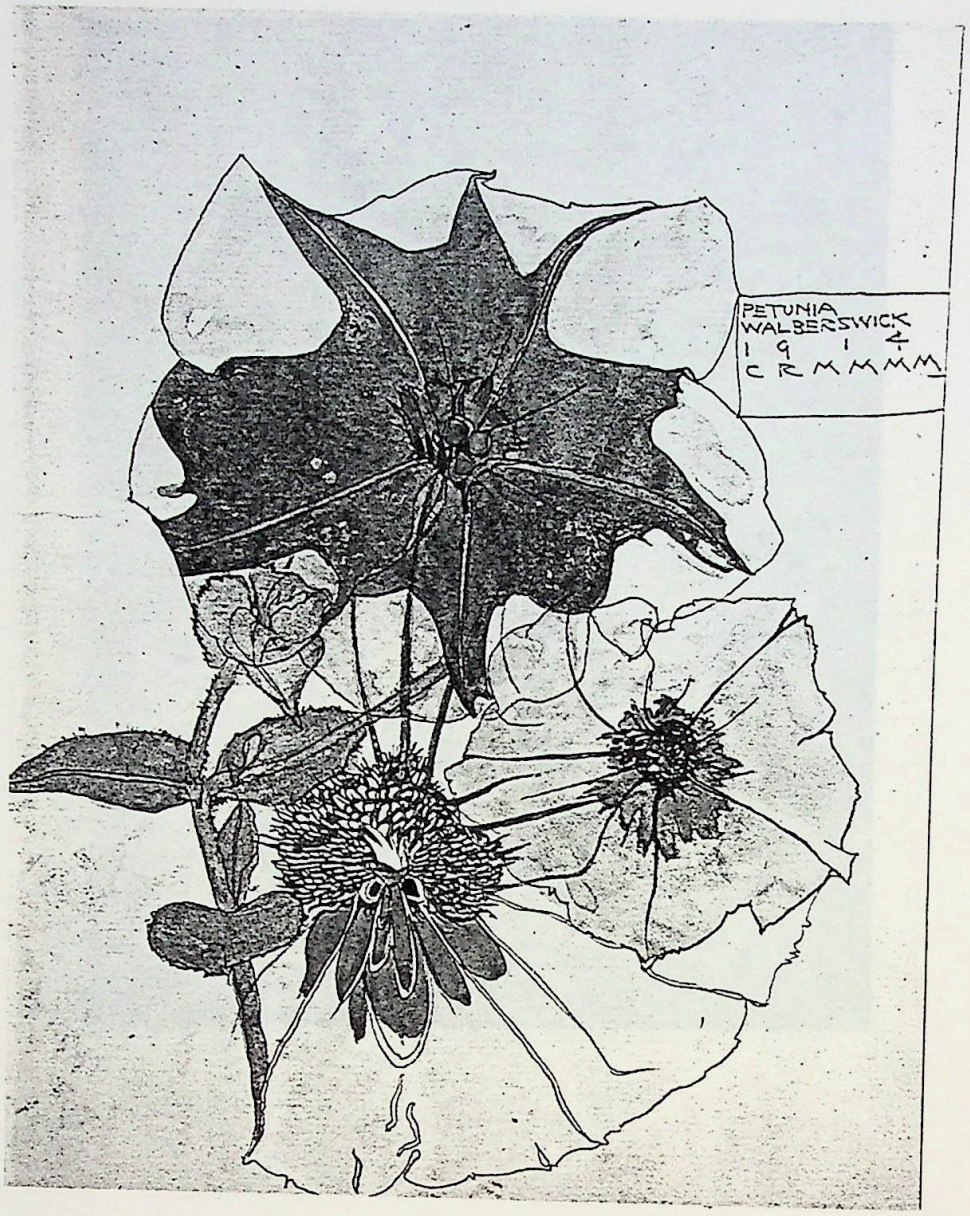

Fig. 17 Petunia, (258 x 202mm), 1914

Fig. 18 Borage, (258 x 202mm), 1914

Fig. 19 Cactus Flower, (258 x 202mm), 1915

Fig. 20 Fritillaria, (253 x 202mm), 1915

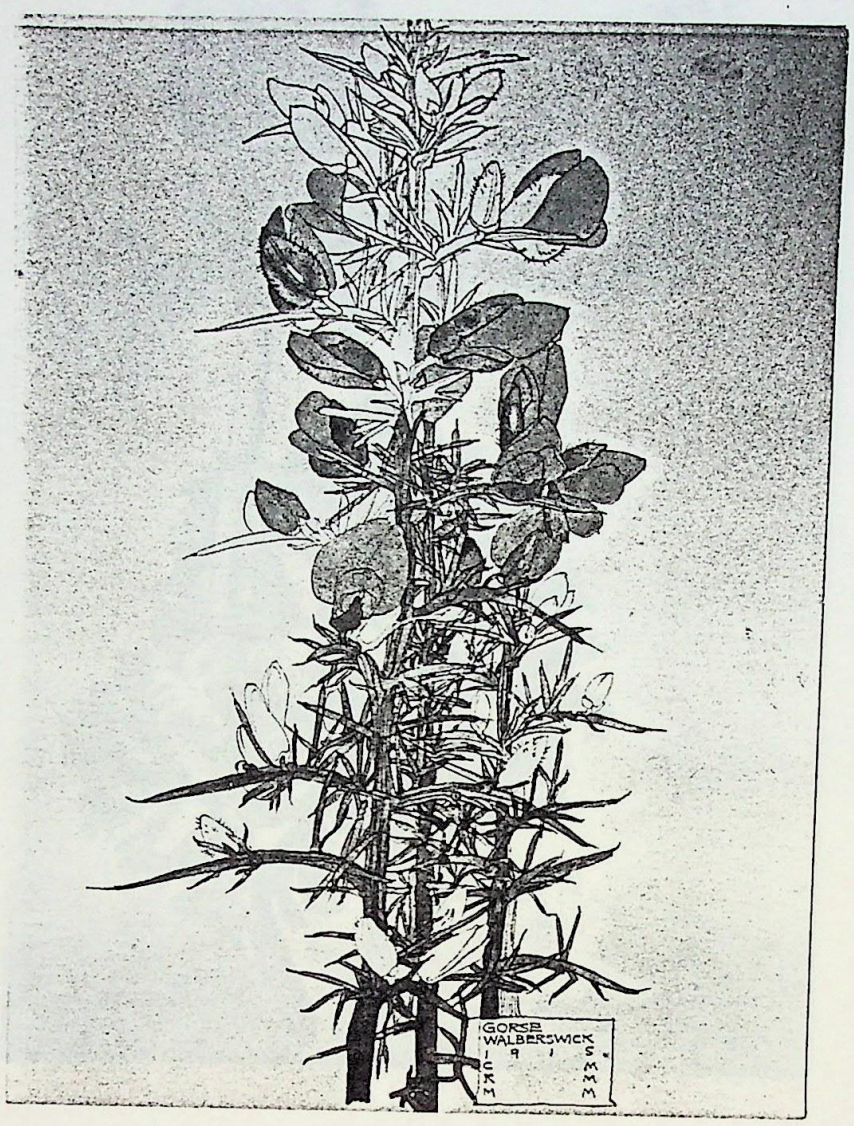

Fig. 21 Gorse, (272 x 210mm), 1915

Fig. 22 Anemone and Pasque, (253 x 208mm), 1915

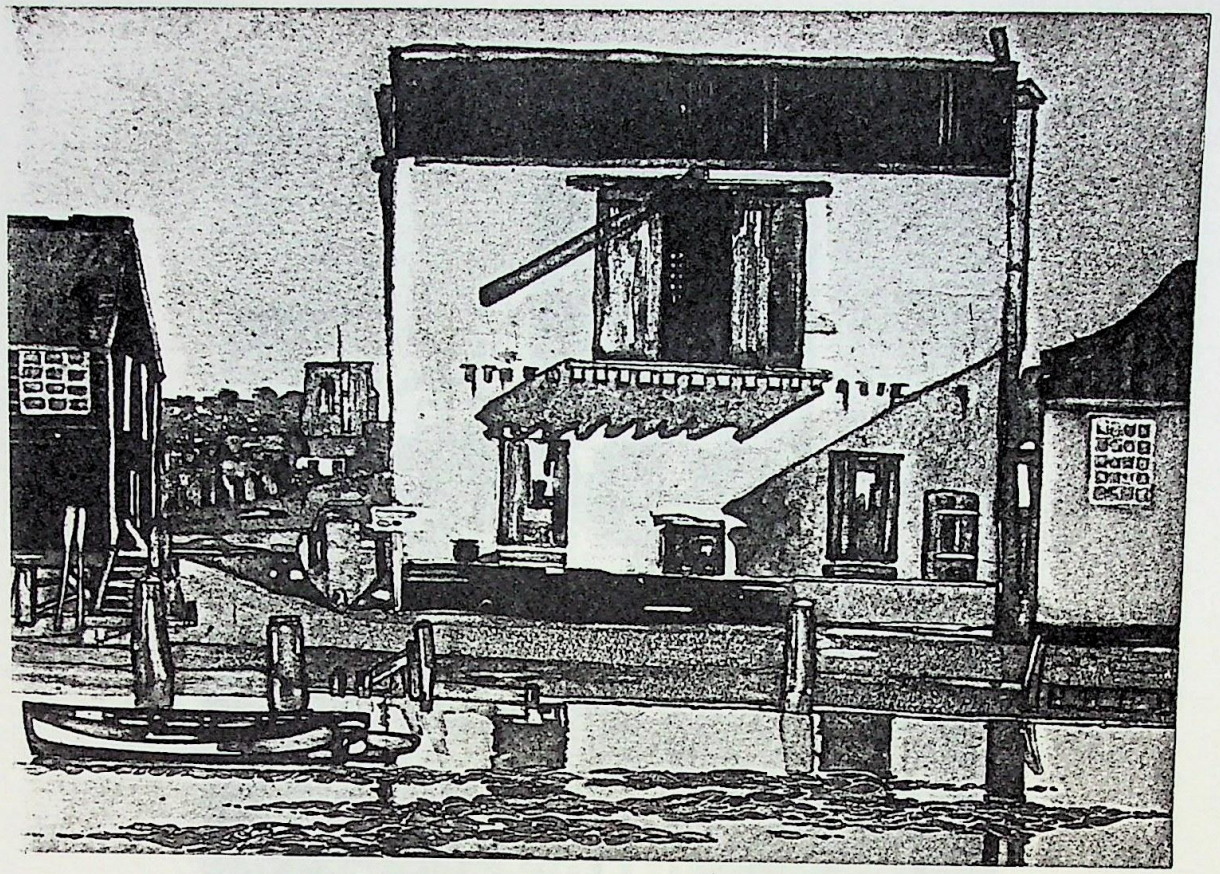

Fig. 23 Venetian Palace, (410 x 564mm), 1914

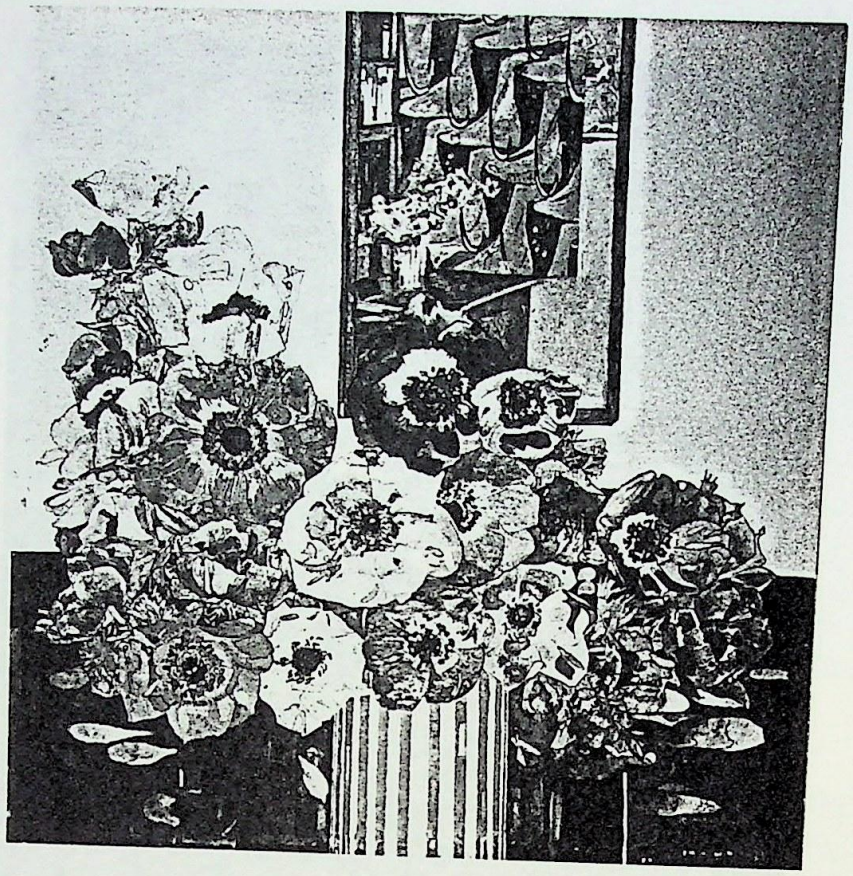

Fig. 24 Anemones, (505 x 495mm), 1916

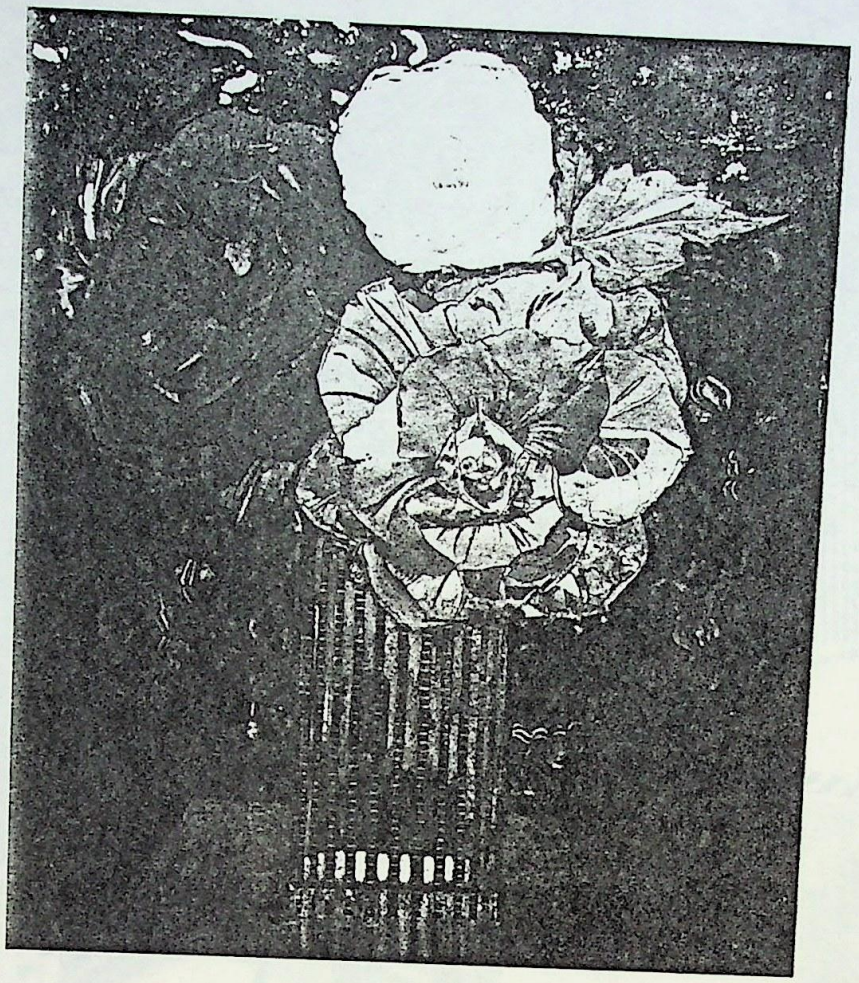

Fig. 25 Begonias, (425 x 373mm), 1916

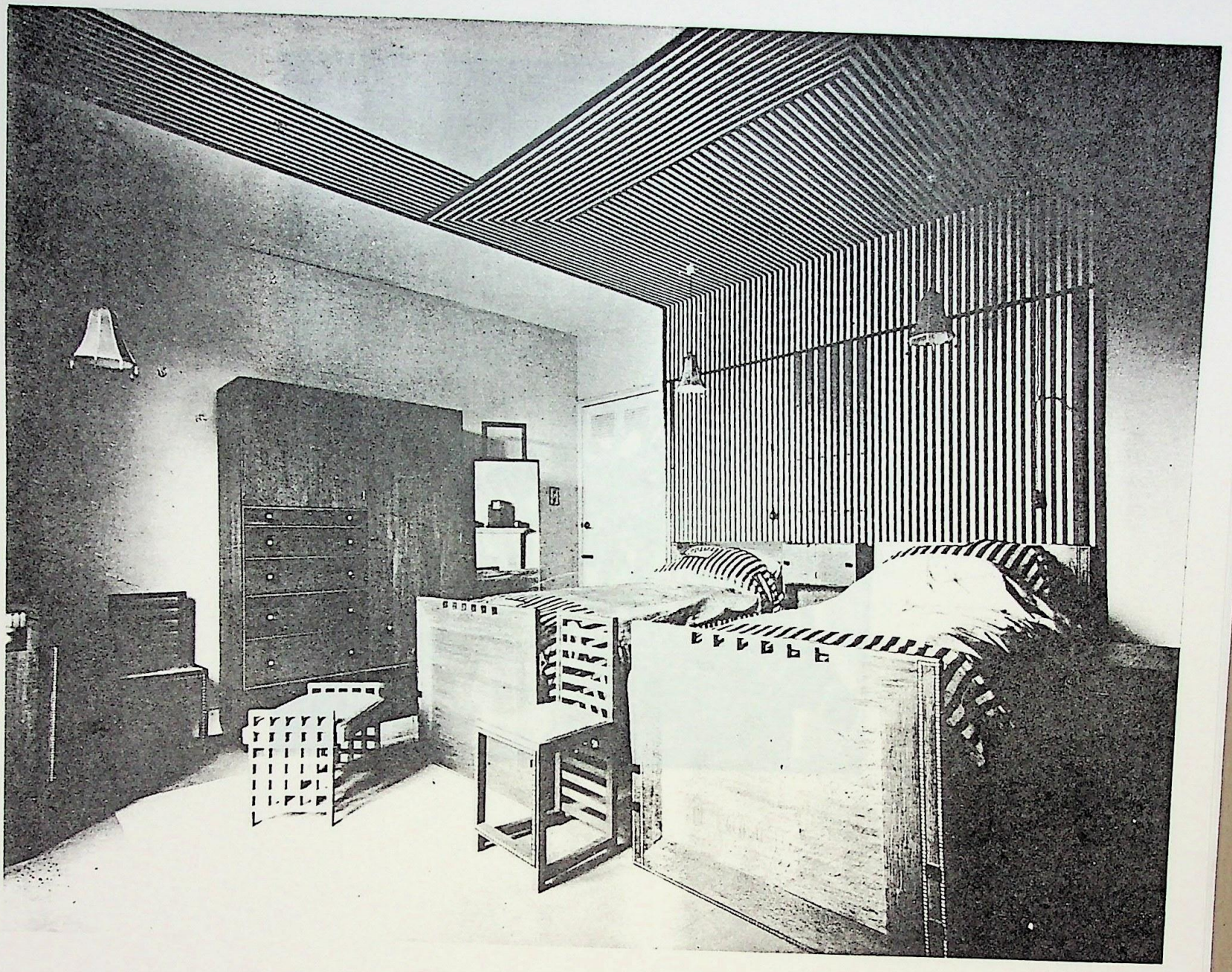

Fig. 26 Interior, 78 Deangate St., Northampton

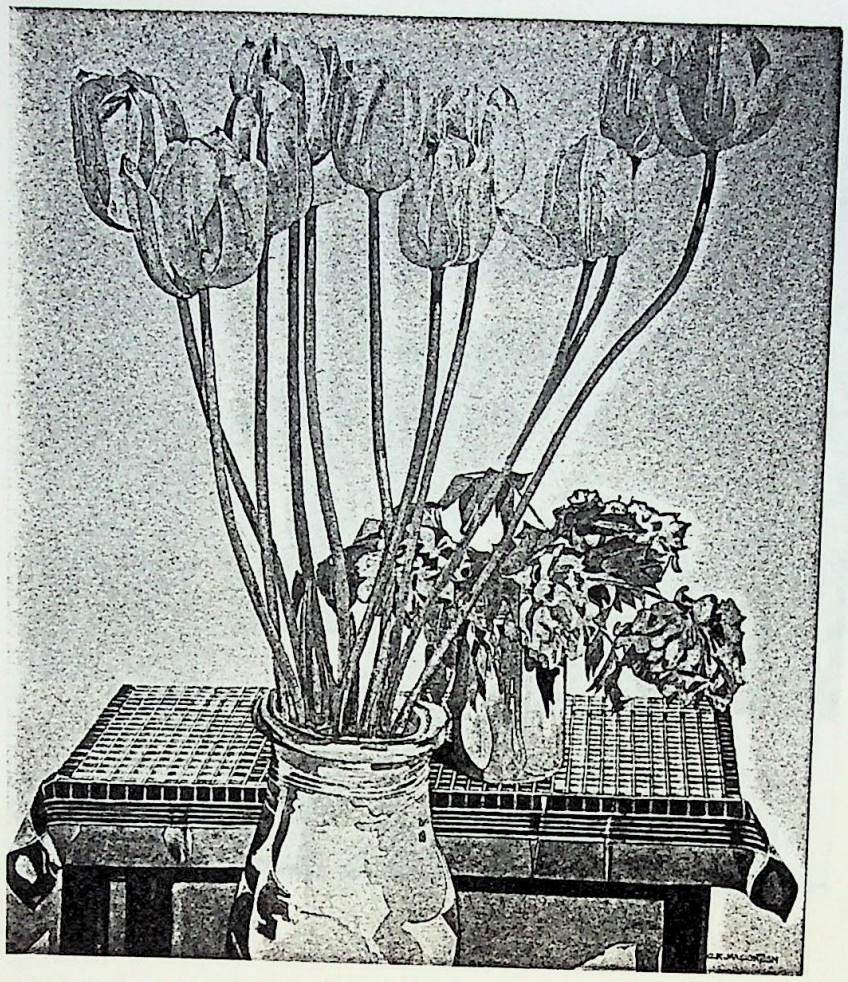

Fig. 27 White Tulips, (405 x 352mm), 1918-20

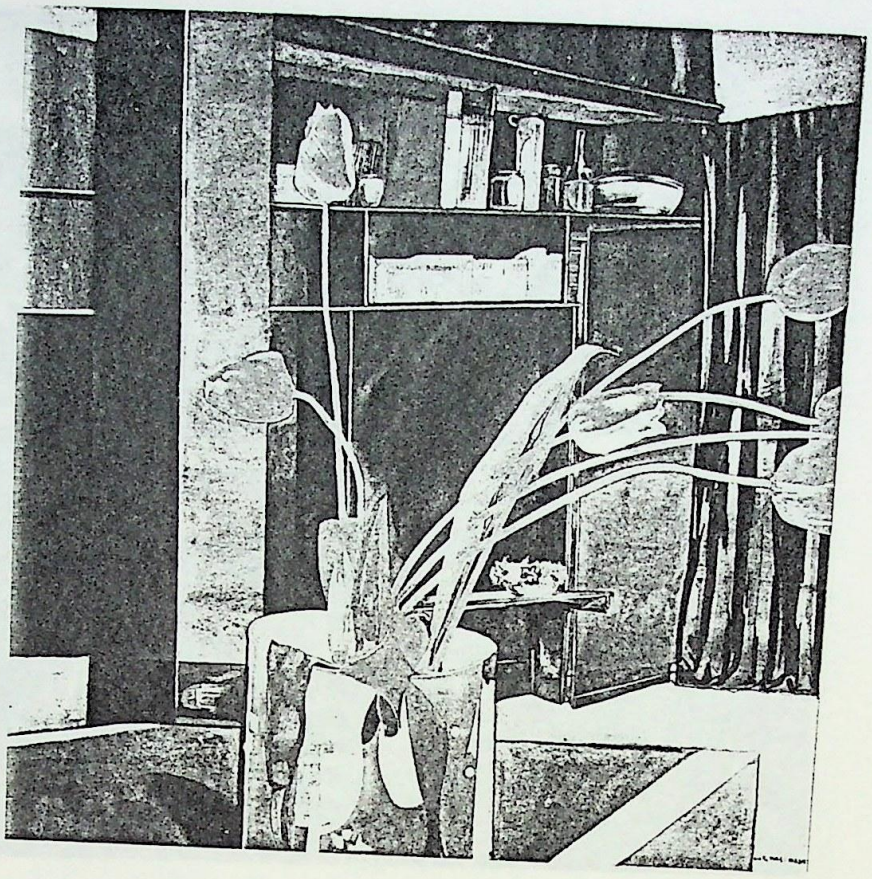

Fig. 28 Yellow Tulips, (495 x 495mm), 1922-23

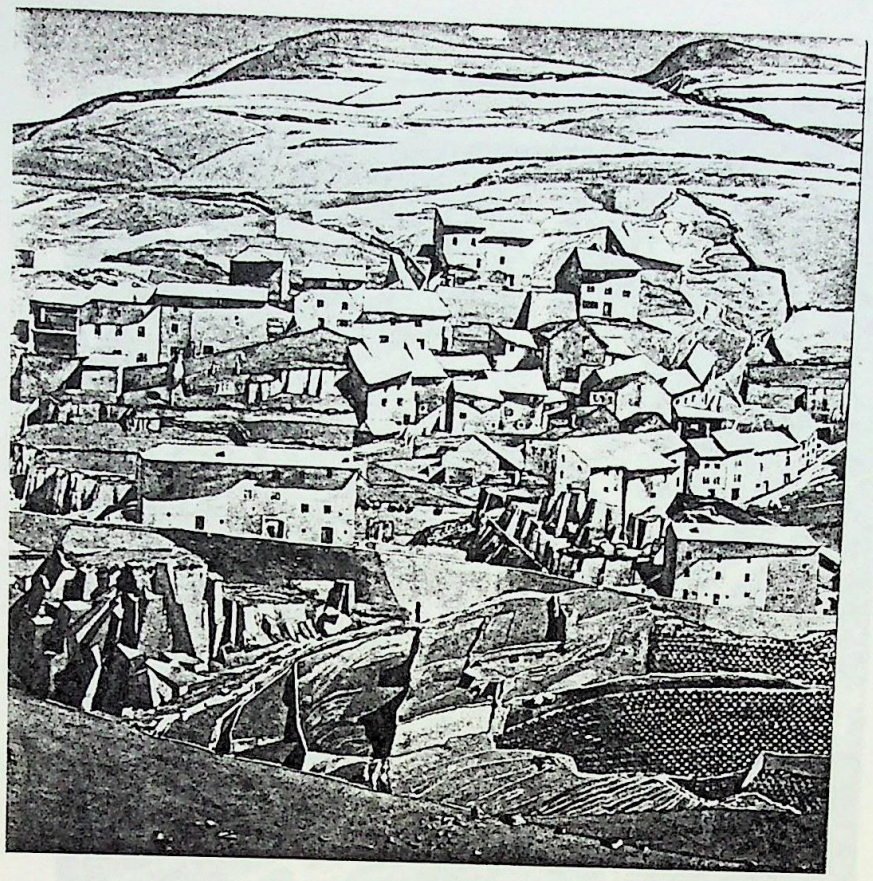

Fig. 29 Fetges, (465 x 458mm), 1923-26

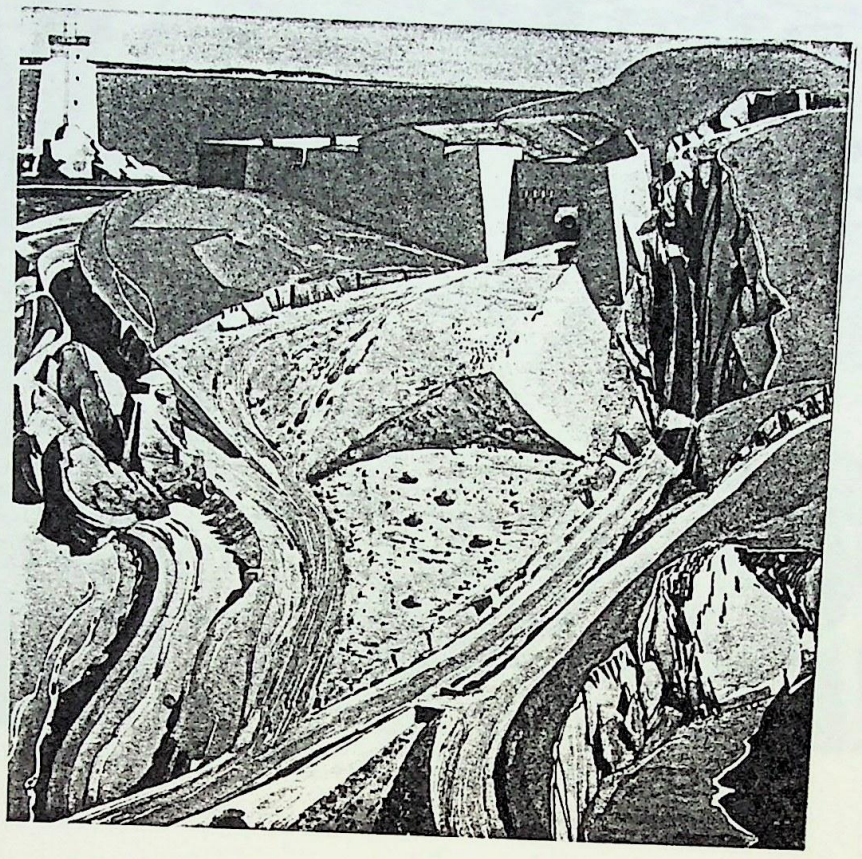

Fig. 30 The Fort, (450 x 452mm), 1924-26

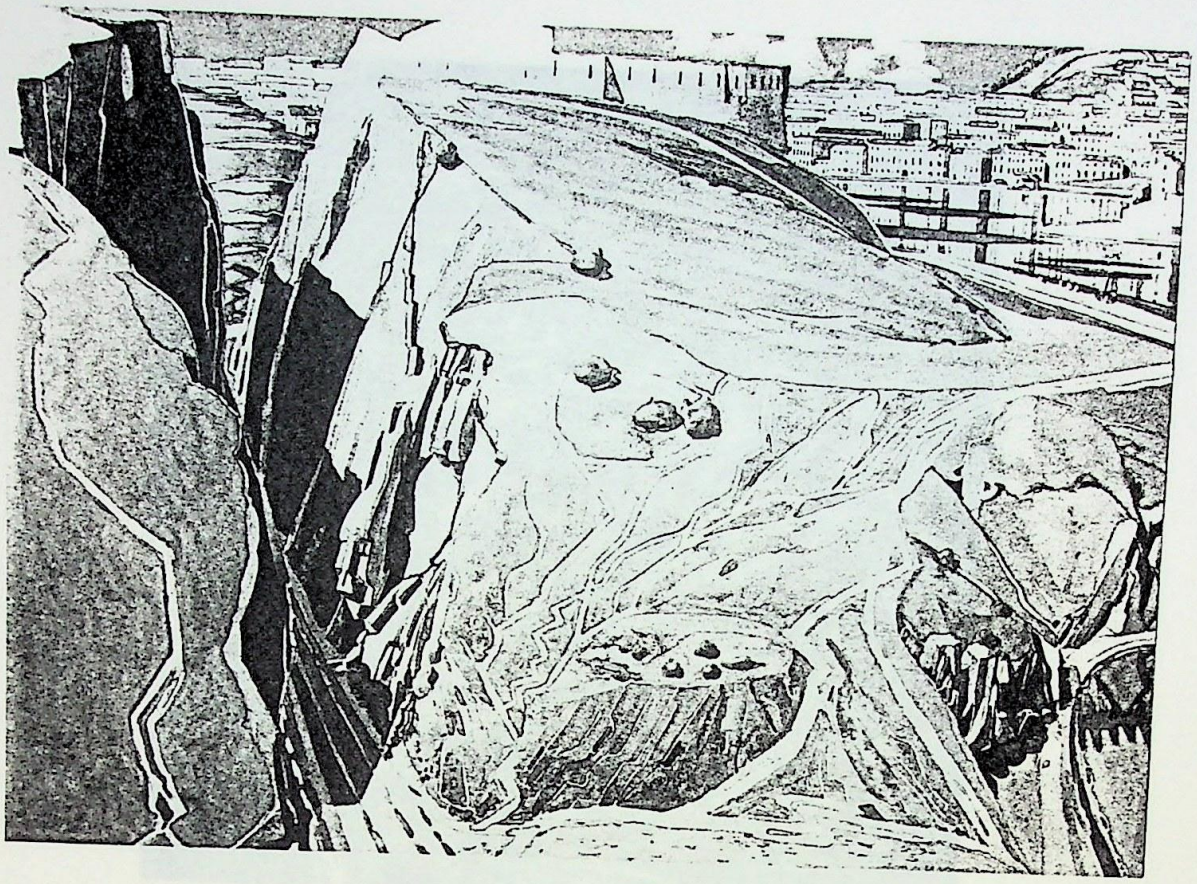

Fig. 31 Port Vendres, (288 x 396mm), 1924-26

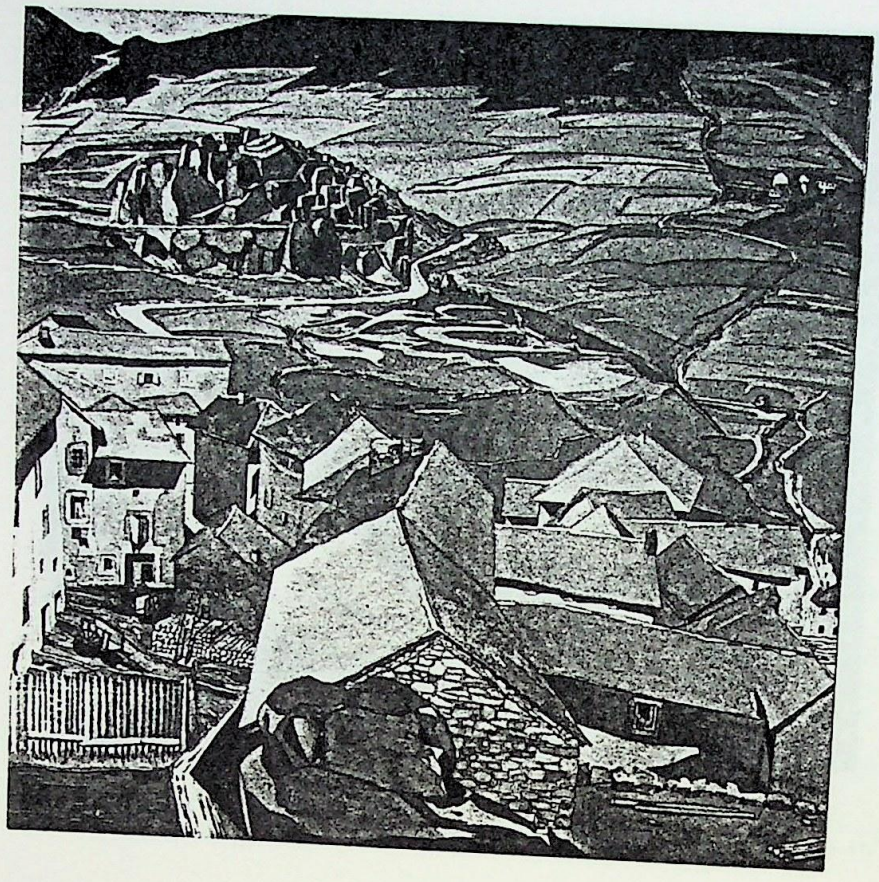

Fig. 32 The Village of La Lagonne, (457 x 457mm), 1924-27

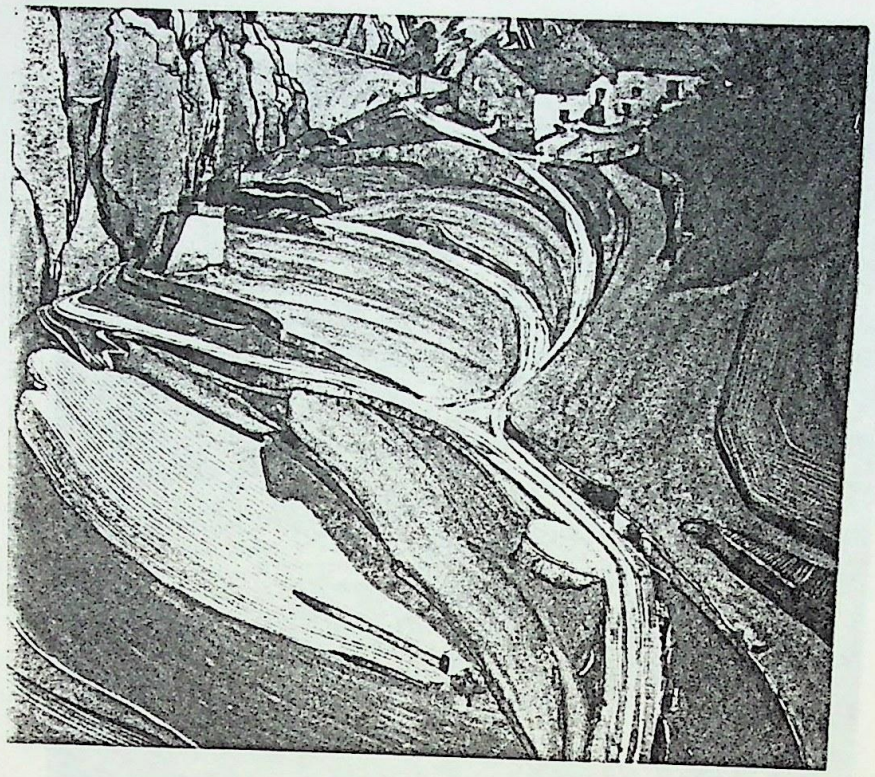

Fig. 32a Mont Alba (370 x 420mm), 1924-27

Fig. 33 A Hill Town in Southern France, (420 x 420mm), 1924-26

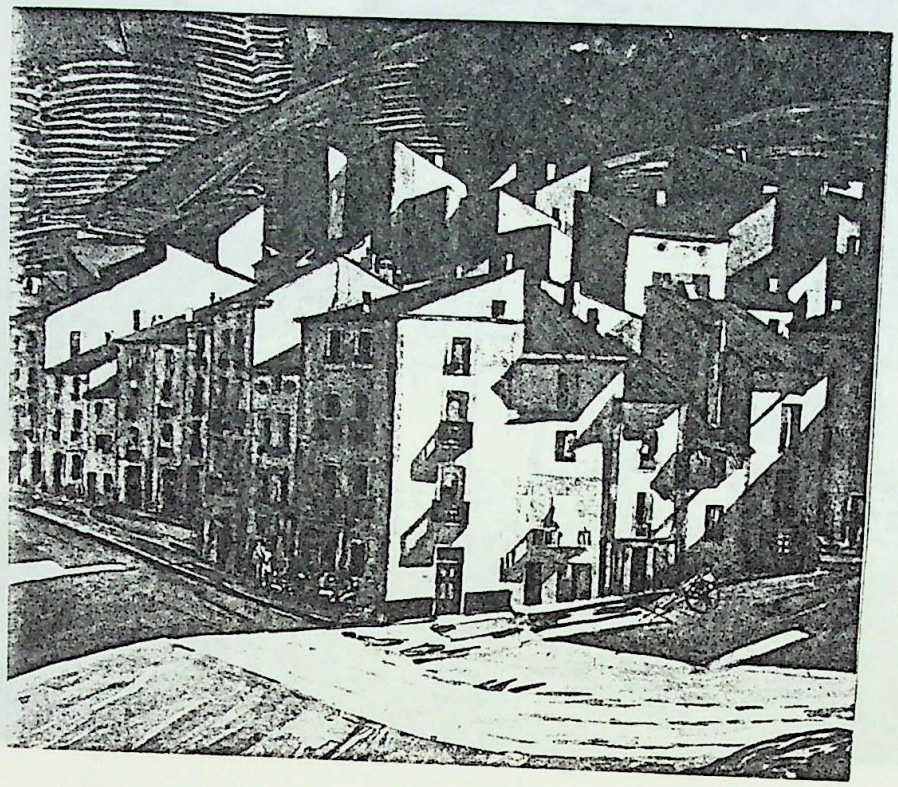

Fig. 34 A Southern Town, (322 x 376mm), 1924-27

Fig. 35 Summer in the South, (283 x 385mm), 1924-27

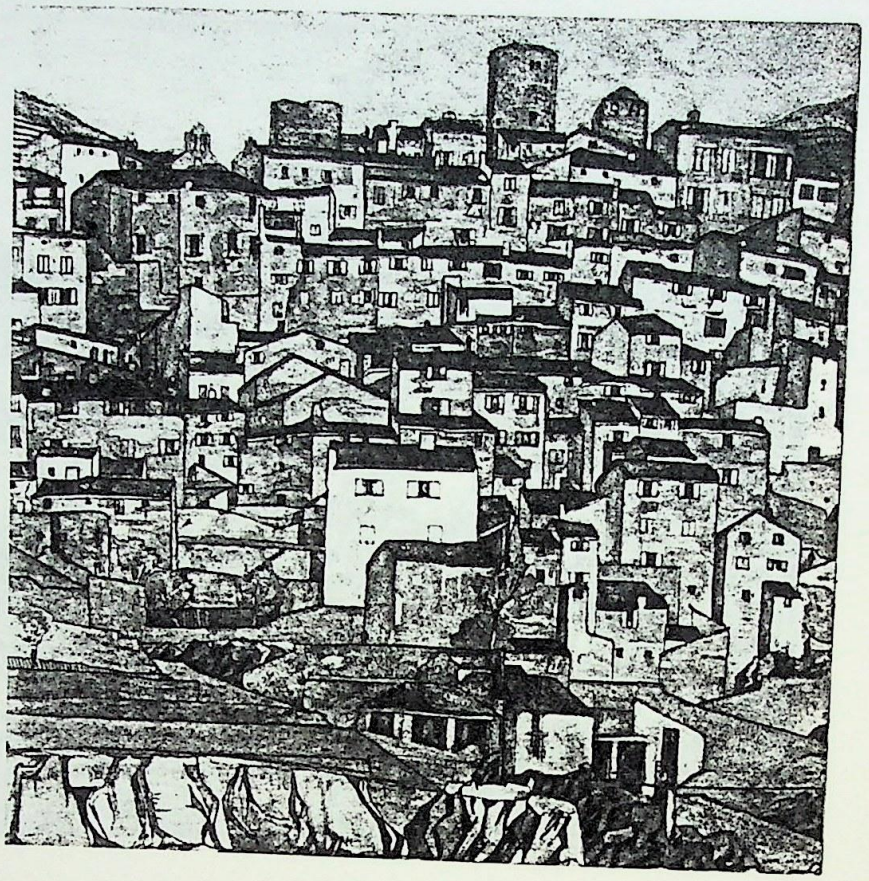

Fig. 36 Palalda, (515 x 515mm), 1924-27

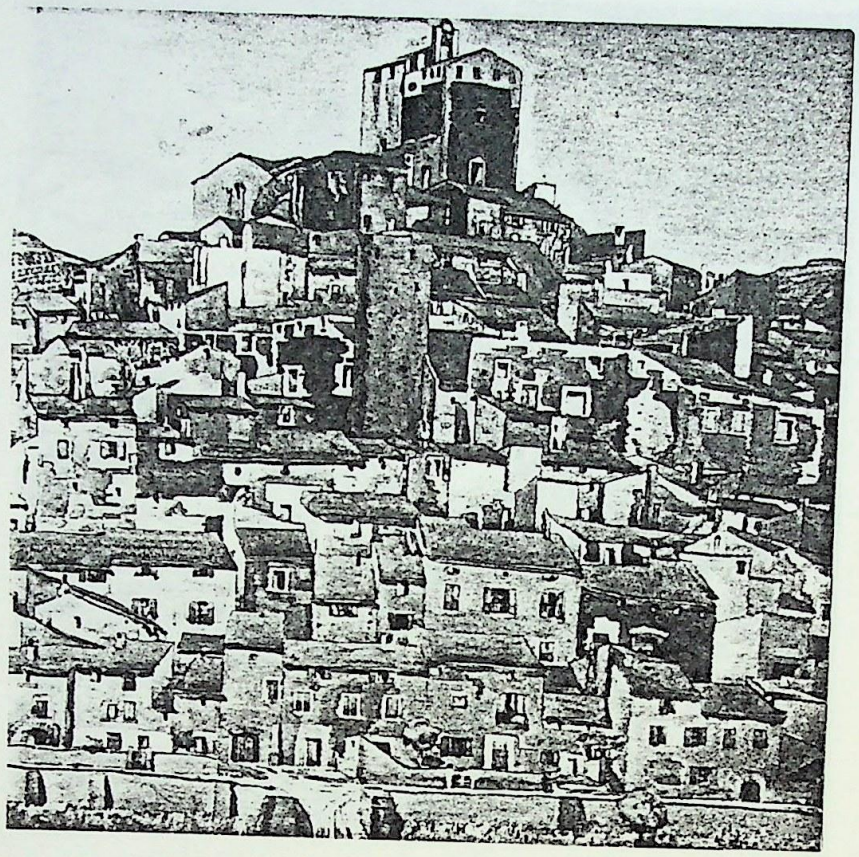

Fig. 37 Boultènere, (447 x 447mm), 1924-27

Fig. 38 Héré de Maillet, (460 x 460mm), 1925

Fig. 39 La Rue du Soleil, (405 x 390mm), 1926

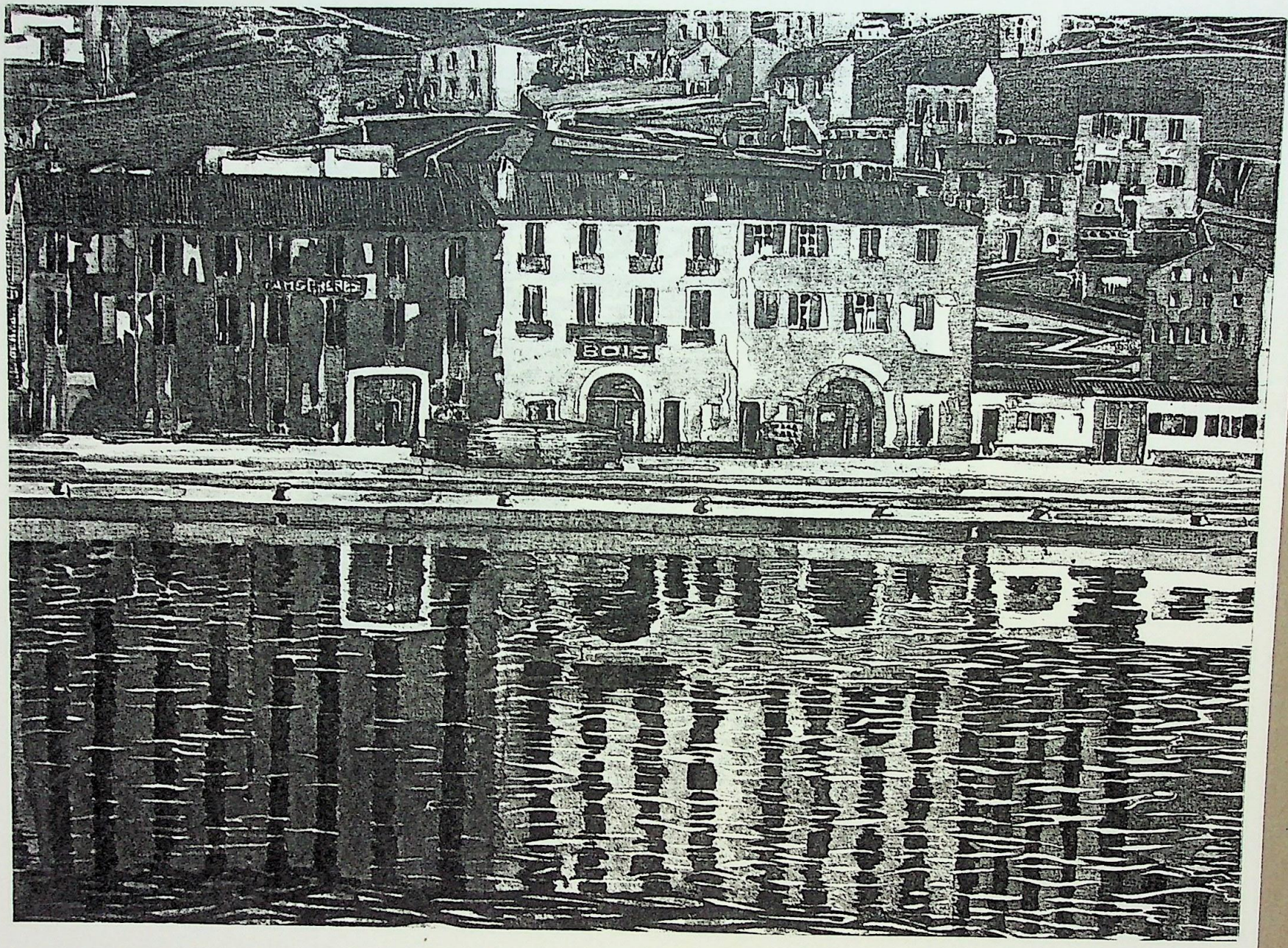

Fig. 40 Port Vendres, (276 x 378mm), 1926-27

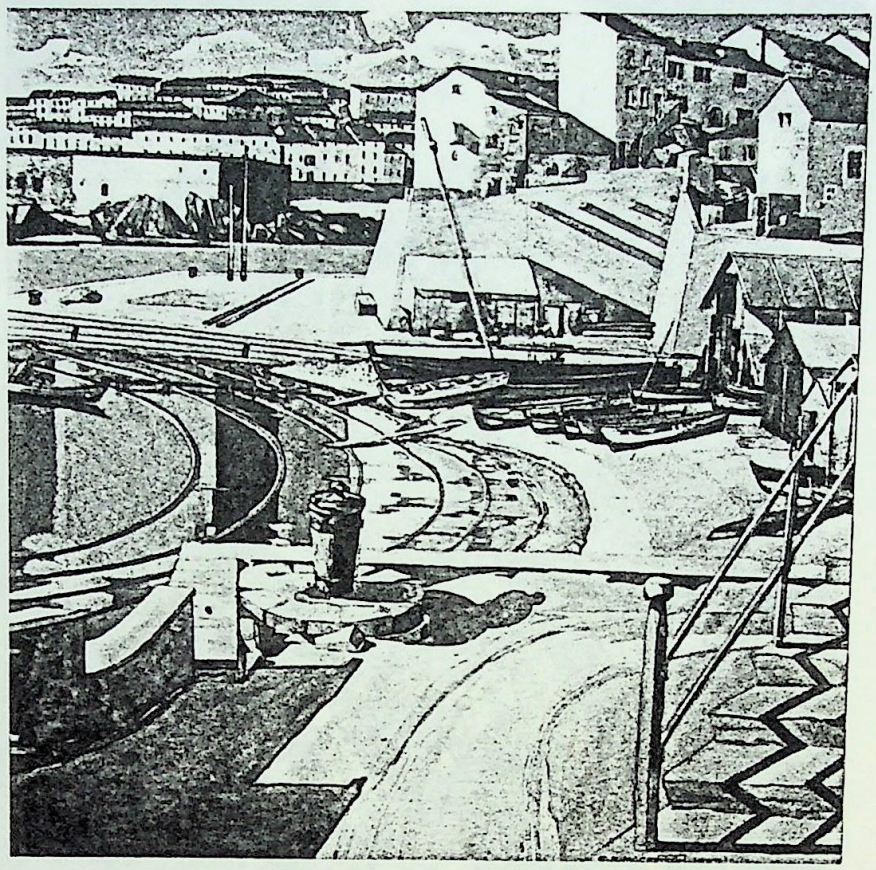

Fig. 41 The Little Bay, Port Vendres, (393 x 394mm), 1927

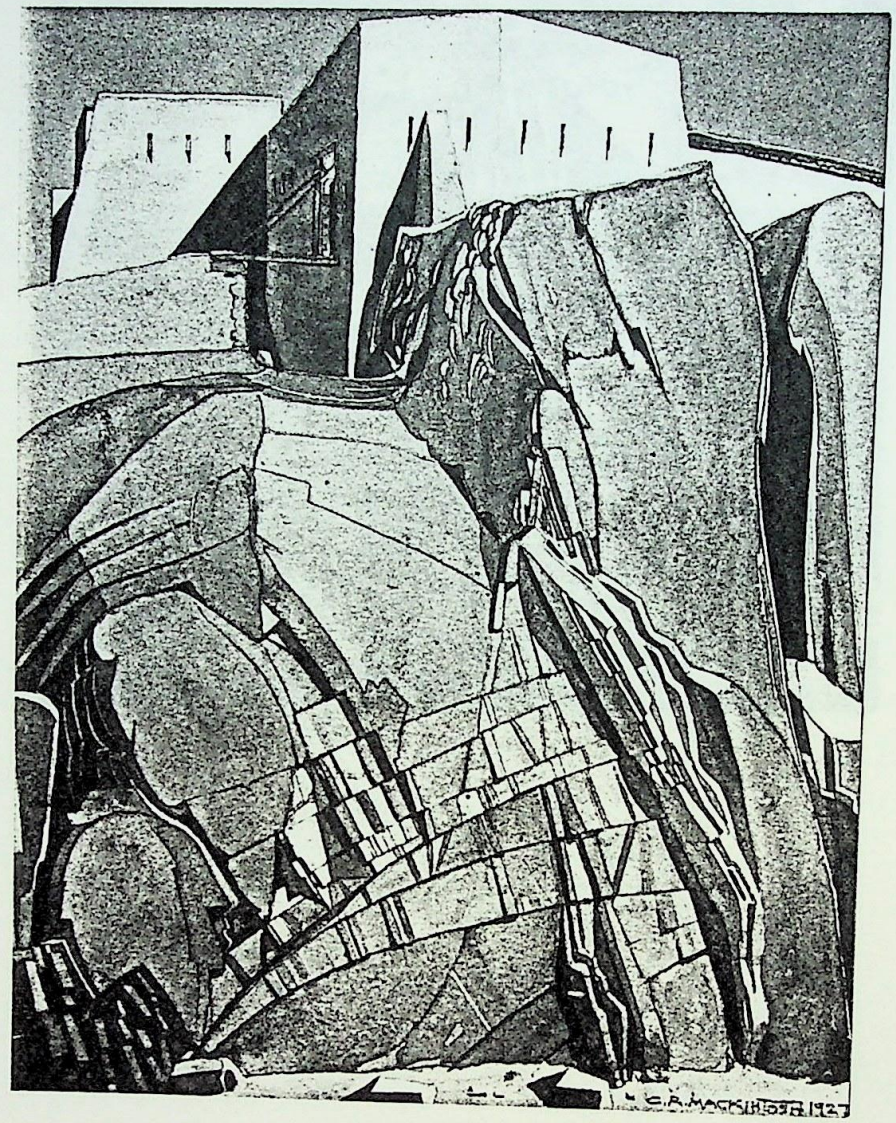

Fig. 42 Le Fort Maillert (358 x 285mm), 1927

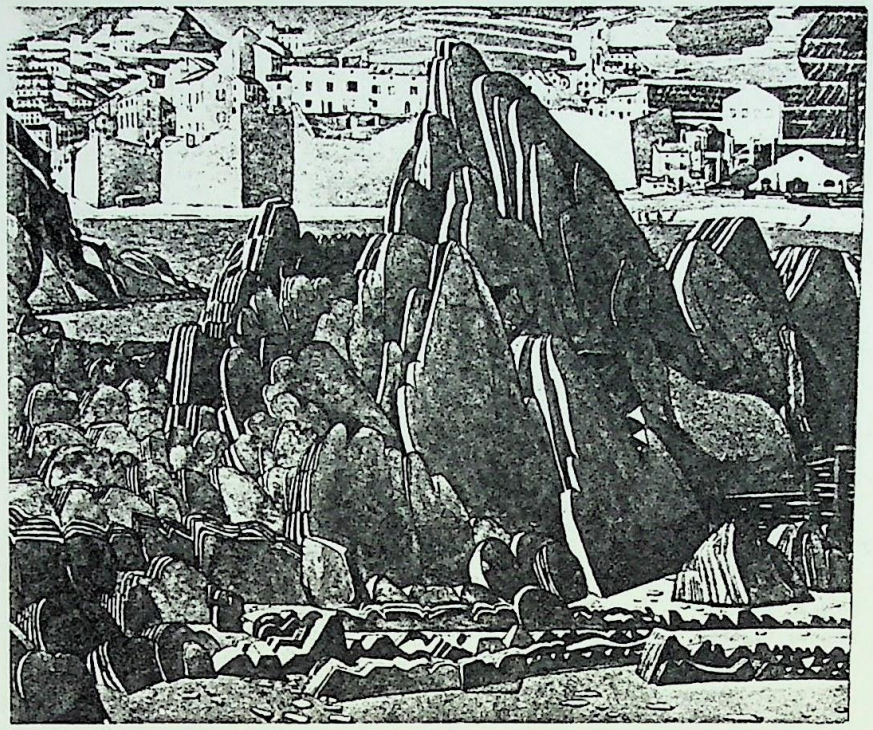

Fig. 43 The Rocks, (305 x 368mm), 1927