

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

DISCUSSION: MATISSE'S FOUR BACKS (1909-1930) IN RELATION TO  
ASPECTS OF MY OWN WORK

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## INTRODUCTION

Matisse was aware of belonging to a tradition in his sculpture. The pose used in the group of sculptures, The Four Backs (1909-1930) can be traced back through Rodin to Michelangelo. In the early part of this century Artists such as Rodin, Matisse and Brancusi, among others, were involved in the development of sculpture from a renaissance based tradition of realism into a modern era. Sculpture was no longer based on realistic representation, but was reduced to its own basic elements of weight, gravity balance and volume. Matisse replaced realistic representation with suggestion, where the sculpture object acts to suggest the feelings and sensations of the Artist, which in the case of The Four Backs, were gained from study and contemplation of the female figure.

Chapter Four deals with aspects of my own work referring to six examples from a two-year period (1985-1986).

There can be a danger of imitation when comparing Matisse's Four Backs (1909-1930) with my own work. However, the distance in time and circumstances leaves space for each group of work to keep its own identity.

Matisse himself warned:

".....it is perilous to fall under the influence of the masters of my own epoch because the language is too close to ours, and one risks taking the letter for the spirit."

More contemporary Artists work could have been chosen for comparison, however, similarities in use of materials and techniques would have led to confusion. The work of British Sculptor Richard Deacon, is an example here.

Matisse's Four Backs (1909-1930) are very impressive sculptural objects. They contain a strong sense of accuracy and preciseness in their reference to the female figure.

Making a comparison is a learning process. The use of formal sculptural elements is looked at in both sets of work. Also each set of work functions on a level of feeling and emotion. They do not communicate in a literal, descriptive or narrative manner. The analysis of my own work takes place



after the work is made, and information gained from, each piece is used in later work.

By analysing both sets of work a learning process takes place which enables me to attempt to achieve the same level of accuracy and preciseness, evident in the Four Backs (1909-1930), within my own work.



FOOTNOTES INTRODUCTION

"Matisse speaks to you" - 1950

Quoted in J. D. Flam - Phaidon Press, Oxford - 1973.

Page 126 - Chapter 35.



CHAPTER ONE - ILLUSTRATIONS





(1) MICHELANGELO: DYING SLAVE 1513

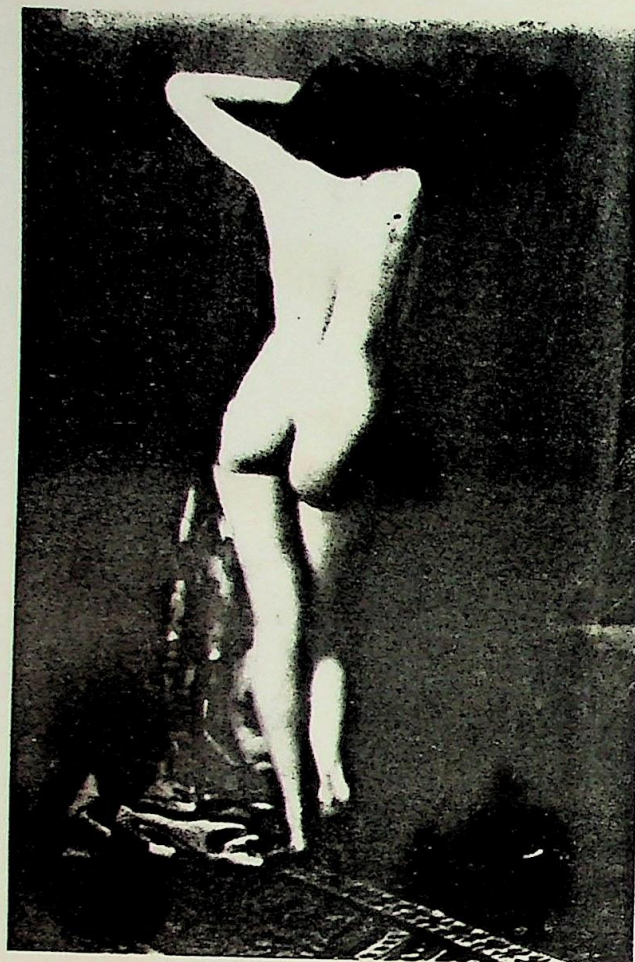




...created a figure that could stand as a symbol for

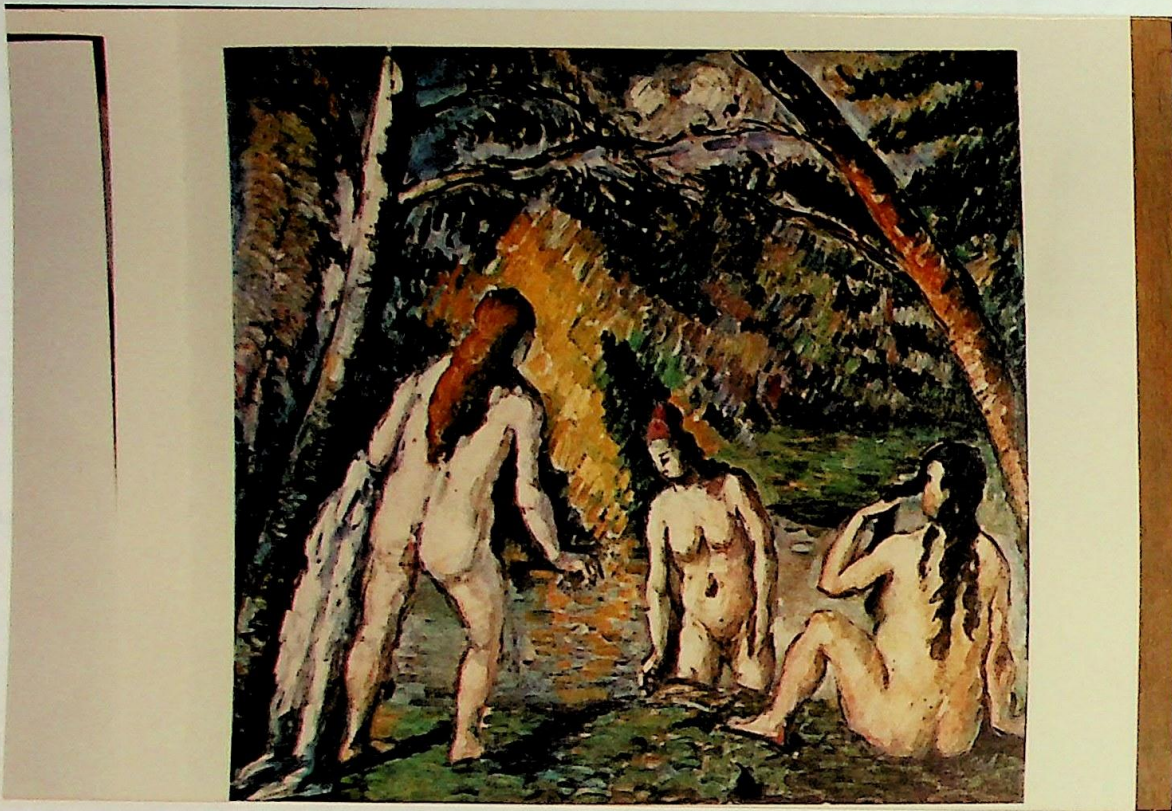
(2) RODIN: AGE OF BRONZE 1877





(3) Photograph of a pose, said to be used by Rodin for the  
TOILET OF VENUS (1885)





(4) CEZANNE: TROIS BAINGNEUSES (1879-82)



Matisse first used the pose of the Four Backs in 1904, in the sculpture Upright Nude With Arched Back. A related horizontal pose was used in 1907, in the painting Nublu and in the sculpture Reclining Nude. This pose can be related back through Rodin's Venus of 1885, to Michelangelo's Figure of Night and Dying Slave (1513). In 1918, Matisse drew and modelled the Figure of Night in the hope that he could:-

"Instill into myself Michelangelo's clear and complex idea of construction." (1).

In his studio, Matisse compared his last plaster version of the Backs (1930) with a cast of Michelangelo's Dying Slave 1513. He was impressed with the expressive body movements which evoked energy in repose, latent energy, and used these in his sculpture without Michelangelo's tragic implications.

At an early stage in his career, Matisse was convinced that in the female figure, he had found the essential theme of his work. The choice of pose for the Four Backs would have been an obvious one - given its long tradition and history. Matisse was always aware of being a part of tradition, especially with regard to his sculptural work. He used photographs as sources for a wide number of works, including, Two Negresses (1908), Small Crouching Torso (1908), Serpentine (1909), Upright Nude With Arched Back (1909) and also for some of his paintings, including, Standing Nude (1907). Rodin also used photographs and perhaps Matisse was aware of a photograph of a pose, said to be the one used by Rodin for the Toilet of Venus (1885). The pose is also related to Rodin's The Age of Bronze (1877), which caused a sensation at the Paris Salon, in 1877.

Rodin had convinced many of the best young sculptors of the still unexplored possibilities of the Nude. After 1900, Rodin's Nudes represented only themselves, the human figure. He had started the 20th. Century looking to nature for inspiration - and by working from life, he was able to broaden and naturalize the stylized repertoire of the nude. He had counter-acted period styles, by insisting upon an unself-conscious style, or no style at all. This allowed artists to discover their own styles and subjects.



In Matisse's the Four Backs, the first state (1909) takes its inspiration directly from the model. It is a realist work, influenced by Rodin, with its surface bumps and hollows corresponding to anatomical facts; describing muscle and back bone. The left arm raised above the head causes the right shoulder to rise also. The whole figure is imbalanced, with the upper section leaning towards the left hand side. The right leg is slightly flexed, while the left leg is stiffened to support the weight of the body. Perhaps the legs as they are, wouldn't support the figure if it was free standing. Matisse used the rectangular plate to support the figure, leaving himself free to work with volume, balance, tension and illusion without worrying whether the figure would stand or not. Indeed, it seems as if the legs were cut off the figure the rest of it would remain in its place. The legs are not used as supports.

Rodin's influence can also be seen in the first two stages of the Five Heads of Jeannette, (1910-13). The model, Jeanne Vaderin, actually posed for the first two stages - which are realistic points of departure. The head and crown of hair are treated as a single mass, with the second version looking more like a drawing with a uniform image emphasising the frontal view.

Matisse departed from Rodin in the phases following initial surface study. Abandoning the model, he relied on the imagination to enrich what had been seen and to encourage him to work from his feelings. Every aspect of the work was used as a carrier of character, unlike early Renaissance based sculpture, where expression depended on hand gestures or facial expression. Matisse was obsessed by unity in sculpture and was critical of Rodin's use of composition.

He talks of Rodin in 1908:-

"I could mention a great sculptor who produces some admirable pieces, but for him, composition is nothing but the grouping of fragments... ." (2).



Matisse's view was, that the whole of the sculpture could be greater than the sum of its parts. He had confidence in the sculpture object as an architecture, as a harmonious relationship of parts to the whole.

" I could only envisage the architecture of a work of mine replacing explanatory details by a living and suggestive synthesis." (3).

Rodin's need for simplicity led to an evolution in his work from eloquent statues and mixed assemblages like the Gates of Hell (1880-1917) to works that were moulded in one moment by the hand or drawn at one stroke. Rodin was fascinated by fragments, while on the other hand, Matisse placed equal responsibility for overall harmony on all parts of the composition. Fragments if natural, that is to say, accidental, only confirms the coherence and unity of the work of art.

The pose used in the Four Backs, was also influenced by Cezanne's painting Trois Baigneuses (1879-82), which Matisse owned for 37 years. The figures in both works are simple and lack illustrative details. They are round, smooth and full and suggest a slow lazy movement. Perhaps the figure in The Backs is standing in shallow water on a beach looking out to sea. This suggestion is strong in all four versions - being I feel, most obvious in Back IV. The wide base of the plate with the legs sinking into it, represents the water. The flat upright plate gives the illusion of distance and the figure shields her eyes from the sunlight in order to see in the distance. This theme would give a connection with Cezanne's Trois Baigneuses and also with Gauguin's painting The Moon and The Earth (1883). Gauguin used the same pose in his Moon and The Earth and the method used to develop the hair into a central axis in Back III (1916-17) and Back IV (1930), recalls pictures like the Tahitian Beach (1882) also by Gauguin.

Matisse was a painter before working in sculpture. He used sculpture to "compliment his studies". He would rest from painting by making sculpture.



"I would take some clay and take a break from painting." (4).

The difference in the arts is what attracted Matisse and he constantly referred one to the other:-

"What I found in sculpture, I used in painting." (5).

His sculpture was made for private reasons to fulfill private needs, which he was unable to do in painting.

Towards the middle of the 19th. Century, some painters ceased to believe in the illusion of three dimensional space. This marked the beginning of a modern era in painting, the first step in the reduction of painting to its own specific elements, its flat coloured surface. The image and representation were no longer identical. Matisse wrote:-

"I do not create a woman, I make a picture." (6).

Matisse resorted to sculpture more frequently, at times, when his painting was modern, that is flat. What was impossible in painting was possible in sculpture. The organisation of volume was simply the proper concern of sculpture in the same way as colour was treated in painting.

Sculpture restored the feeling of three dimensional volume which flat fauvism had taken away. Other painters including, Daumier, Renoir, Gauguin and Degas all turned to sculpture in order to recover the depth, volume and weight that was obtainable in painting.

We can look at the Four Backs within the context of a link between Matisse's paintings and his sculptures in the round. When the female image comes to the fore, the background is read as depth. The figure appears as a bather seen from behind striding towards the illusionistic distance into the fictitious pictorial background.

But Matisse being a modern painter, knew that the surface could no longer be expected to simulate depth or disguise its own nature and so the figure presses in vain against the impenetrable wall.



In Back 1, her breast is flattened against it and her fingers are spread out. While illusion unfolded a horizontal space at the figures feet, reality raises a wall in front of her and communicates it's vertical flat character. The Backs shift back and forth between a fictitious depth and a real surface - thanks to a subtle inter-play, that is most strikingly illustrated by the fact that the woman's right leg sinks into the imaginary depth, while her left hand rests on the edge of the plate; Backs 1, 11 and 111.

If we consider how the figures would work if they were fully realised in three dimensions, the inbalance of the first figure, or the vast bulk of the last shows us how Matisse positively used a flat relief to express volume and turned a restrictive format to it's full advantage. It may well be that the relief was as far as Matisse needed to go towards sculpture in order to deal with volume. Matisse worked on each of the last three versions (1916-17-30) by using a plaster cast of the previous state - hence the constant dimensions of the rectangle, within which the figure is inscribed as though it were a canvas.

Matisse's apparent move towards abstraction as seen in the Four Backs was a re-défini-tion of the figure as if taking a look at the female figure for the first time. It was a thorough re-examination of the figure and reduced it to it's essential character. The figure goes from a realistic image in Back 1 to a more simplified version in Back 11. The legs are more volumetric, while the upper section is reduced to it's basic shape losing a lot of anatomy details. In Back 111, the balanced formal volumetric shapes become evident and are developed to a conclusion in Back 1V. The essential character of the female is retained, while the form of the sculpture developes towards abstraction.

Matisse reduced the figure to it's essential elements. He said:-

"I'll condense the meaning of the body in seeking the essential lines. At first, this charm will be less obvious, but it must eventually emanate from the new image I have obtained, which will have a wider more full-human meaning." (7).



This "less obvious" charm, lack of aggression, balance, order and a quality of self-contained internal life are qualities common to all of Matisse's sculptures. Even with the Backs, in spite of their scale, one gets the feeling of remoteness and distance. The Backs, as with all of Matisse's sculptures are not aggressive.

It was a thorough re-examination and re-construction of the essential figure without any of the crowding or distraction found in traditional Renaissance based sculpture.

Sculpture's greatest asset and principle limitation, was that it was down to earth and immediate. Matisse emphasised the need to get back in touch with reality, for it was reality that nourished an artistic vision.

He taught:-

"Learn to walk on the ground before walking on the tight-rope." (8).

Modern painting prevents the artist from identifying physically with the model, it dis-associates presence from reality. In sculpture at the turn of the century, it was still possible to feel they coincided and that is why Matisse took up the art. At the beginning of the 20th. Century, many artists and critics saw sculpture as the last bastion of order and good taste, after paintings slid downwards towards modernism. Sculpture was considered a strict, narrowly defined and less flexible to change than painting which seemed in total disaray.

Approaching sculpture from outside a sculptural tradition and never having modelled on the scale of life, Matisse had remained untouched by the convention of one-to-one representation that had been it's basis since the Renaissance. In his Walking Man (1877-1911), Rodin used realistic bumps and hollows referring to anatomical facts of the figure. On the other hand, Matisse in his Serf (1900-03), dismissed all narrative and analytical representation.



It was as a modern painter, that Matisse stripped away all picturesqueness from his sculpture. He rejected the illusion of representation and sought to reduce sculpture to it's own basic formal elements, i.e. weight, volume, balance, gravity and space.

Rodin referred to the Walking Man (1877-1911), as a "walking temple", But Matisse discovered that "temples" do not necessarily have to walk in order to escape inertia, since weight itself is a force. The apparent inertia of the stationary mass camouflages the action of weight, the load in the architectural sense. It hides two contradictory actions, the figures weight thrusting into the ground and the upward surge of energy rising like a sap in a tree.

The end of pictorial illusion in painting led to surface being stressed, whereas, in sculpture, the emphasis was on weight. Modern sculpture is heavy, the same way as modern painting is flat. The Serf (1900-03), is more modern than the Walking Man (1877-1911), because it weighs more heavily on the ground.



FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER ONE

- (1). Matisse - Laurence Gowing.
  - (2). "Notes du Peintre" - From "Sculpture of Matisse" by Albert Elson.
  - (3). "Notes du Peintre" - From "Sculpture of Matisse" by Albert Elson.
  - (4). Statement to:- P. Courthion. Quoted in "Matisse" by P. Schnider. Pg. 541.
  - (5). Statement to:- P. Courthion. Cited in Guichard-Meille. Pg. 170.  
Quoted from "Matisse" by P. Schnider. Pg. 542.
  - (6). "Notes du Peintre sur son dessin" - From J.D.Flam. Pg. 82.
  - (7). "Fauvism: origin and development" - by Marcel Giry. Chapter V. Pg. 198.
  - (8). "Matisse as a Teacher" - From Canadian Art, by J. Lyman.  
February 1955. Reprinted in Studio International - July 1968.
-



CHAPTER TWO - ILLUSTRATIONS





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6

(5) MATISSE: JEANNETTE I 1910

(6) MATISSE: JEANNETTE II 1910





7



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(7) MATISSE: JEANNETTE III 1911

(8) MATISSE: JEANNETTE IV 1911





(9) MATISSE: JEANNETTE V 1913





(10) MATISSE: La DANCE 1910





84. *Mauk*, 1910. Oil on canvas, 260 × 389 cm. Leningrad, Hermitage Museum.

During the process of painting, the music-makers were slowly turned round to face the spectator. Both *Dance* and *Mauk* were designed to be looked at from below, in the stairwell of Shchukin's palace.

(11) MATISSE: La MUSIQUE 1910





(12) MATISSE: BATHERS BY A RIVER 1916-17



After 1900, avant-Garde artists in Germany, Belgium and France began to discuss the merits of pre-historic, African and Oriental art. At this time, the extent of African influence on the development of sculpture and painting was subject to much debate.

In 1916, Maurice de Zayay wrote:-

"Abstract representation didn't exist in Europe till acquaintance with African art."

and "Abstract art is unquestionably the offspring of Negro art." (1).

African art would have encouraged movement towards a modern sculpture. It would have led away from the naturalism which dominated Western sculpture since the Renaissance, by suggesting the possible ways of abstract and geometric forms to convey emotion.

In the Heads of Jeannette series, (1910-13), Matisse treated the forms and masses in a manner which suggests African influence. In Jeannette III, (1911), the mass of hair is divided into sections separated by spaces. The neck becomes slightly exaggerated, pushing the face forward. The traditional plinth seen in Jeannette's I-II, (1910), is replaced by a support structure which is part of a figure. In state IV (1911), the forms in the hair and head are further divided up into separated masses, with certain factors such as the nose, eyes and neck exaggerated. In Jeannette V, the separated masses of the hair in state IV are simplified and united with the head. The front hair becomes one mass, with the forehead and nose. Jeannette III, IV-V, are less descriptive than states I-II. Matisse used arrangements of masses and volumes to express the essential character of the model.

For Brancusi, Picasso, Derain and Matisse, tribal art revealed alternatives to the classical ideal of a figure measurable as seven or eight heads high. Also for Matisse, tribal sculpture may have stood for proportion guaranteed by the artist's feelings. Proportion had become a matter of aesthetic intuition detached from requirements external to the sculpture.

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African art had the ability to express emotion by use of formal arrangements of volume and masses. Matisse learned that African statues were based on the material they were carved in, according to invented designs, while European sculpture depended on a realistic description of the figure. Tribal art showed the fundamentals to which the human form could be reduced, in order to keep it's identity while being released from centuries of Western over-refinement.

The Cubist movement (1907-10), came to appreciate primitive art in an analytical manner. In painting, the separation of parts typical of African art provided a move towards eventual fragmentation and non-objectiveism, whereas in sculpture, it led to greater clarification and concrete articulation. Matisse was interested in the accurate drawing of the Cubists', however, he was not interested in the:-

"Investigation of the plane which for the Cubists' was based on reality." (2).

Whereas for Matisse:-

"It had to appeal to the imagination." (2).

For Matisse, the reality of the sculpture was not realism, rather, it was revealed through feelings and sensations. The same is true of construction, the stage after initial observation. It was the feeling arising out of his perception of the figure that Matisse sought to express. He did not identify with the wild beast itself, but with ...

"The passion of the wild beast." (3).

The probing beneath the surface disclosed not detail of muscle and bone, but a whole, consisting of perfectly interlocking parts that could only be grasped by feeling. In the Four Backs (1907-30), Matisse expressed not the realist anatomical features, but his feelings towards the figure. Back 1 is based on realistic studies of the figure, which Matisse used to inform and develop his feelings and sensations towards the figure. Matisse was able to work with those feelings and sensations and proceed to discard any characteristics that were unnecessary or superfluous in Backs 11-111.



In Back II, (1913), areas of the head and left arm are reduced in detail, also the back area and the right shoulder. The left leg is simplified into more definite cylindrical shapes.

In Back III, (1916-17), further elimination takes place. Large areas of the back are taken out, while the legs are simplified further into straight columns without anatomical detail. The hair is extended down along the back exaggerating the central line of the spine. Both head and arms lack descriptive detail and the overall figure becomes simplified. In Back IV, (1930), the figure is reduced to the essential volumetric shapes, necessary to express the feelings and sensations the artist felt towards the figure. In the Four Backs, Matisse retained the initial presence of the figure, despite changing drastically the outward image of the figure. Matisse organised his volumes and masses with reference to his own inner feelings and intuition, after putting aside some of the narrative and descriptive references to the figure evident in Back I.

Matisse was above all in search of expression. He did not distinguish the feeling he had for the figure and the ways of expressing it. For him, expression did not mean violent gestures of the hand or facial movements, but involved the whole arrangement of the sculpture. He worked directly from a distillation of his own sensations, derived from contemplation of the model.

This same principle is found in primitive sculpture. In this process of emotional participation, the subjective construction coincides with the subjective structure. Provided that it is successful, the art work is charged with a current that connects the finished form to an initial presence. To emphasise the importance, Matisse placed on this emotional participation, he would often resort to images from vegetable metamorphosis:-

"When you draw a tree, feel that you are growing with it." (4).



The development of sculpture by reduction towards its basic formal elements would continue on to full abstraction. Perhaps we can see this development in miniature in the Four Backs. Back 1 is still a realistic model based work. In Backs 11-111, the artist begins the process of reduction, taking out everything which is unnecessary and putting more emphasis on the aspects he considers fundamental. Backs 11-111 are periods of decision where he considers which aspects he wants to hold onto and develop and in Back 1V, he exaggerates these elements, volume and balance to their final state. He finishes up with an abstract looking figure in Back 1V.

However Matisse had a fundamental attachment to the figure and he refused to break the link between the object and the model. His concern for the unity and integrity of the physical subject seems to be at odds with his equal interest in individual elements such as colour in his painting and volume in his sculpture. He maintained that any abstract work of art should always contain a link however remote to the real world and it is important that the artist be aware of this link, even if it isn't easily visible to the viewer.

His acceptance of the reduction process, combined with his reluctance to go to ultimate abstraction led him to a solution - that he alone adopted at this time. Since the identity of the model could no longer be stamped onto the object by means of realistic representation, it had to be suggested.

Moreover, it had to be suggested in a way that was not incompatible with the reduction to the specific nature of sculpture. While the latter prevented any recourse to realistic representation, it could be accommodated to an abstract presentation of the model. Provided that the artist and the viewer know that it was not a representation, the model's image could be established.



In Back IV, (1930), the lines and volumes are adequate to suggest the female figure. However, it is not a detailed description of the figure, but rather the essential information necessary to establish the image of a figure. In this way, Matisse came to separate the artifact from the vision that he instilled in his own consciousness and that of the viewer. In Backs III-IV, the image of the figure is evident, but it demands the imagination of the viewer to fulfill it's potential as an image. It is in the vision, which is separate from the artifact, that the object is fully realised and transformed into a work of art.

While separating the work of art from the artifact, removing the vision suggested to and by the artifact from the material support of the work, is by no means an easy task in painting - it is more difficult in sculpture. In painting, the artist can at least depend on the structural differences between the three-dimensional model and the two-dimensional canvas.

In sculpture however, the model and the work of art are both volumes. The aesthetic demands that the work should be disassociated from the artifact. The work is not what is seen physically: it is in the vision - a moment in time. It has gone from the permanence of the material shaped by the artist, for the fleetingness of a consciousness - stirred by feelings.

He had used the same method in painting. While simple meanings could be made to coincide with their support, a relationship between several contradictory meanings could only be established outside the actual material of the paintings or sculpture. In a picture, a red rectangle appears as an objective fact, while a green rectangle is another fact. However, the harmony between red and green is not located on the canvas, it consists only in the subjectivity that create or perceives it. To separate the vision from it's material support, it was thus vital to raise the question of the objective and subjective in order to allow for the imagination of the audience to multiply the number of contradictory meanings within an object.



Individual viewers can bring their own interpretation to a piece, an example being;- "Pierre Shnider's" suggestion that - the Backs series (5). develops from a human figure into an image of a tree.

Even in Back 1, the lower part of the body is influenced by the tree image, with the left leg beginning to harden into a tree trunk. In Back 1V, the forms complete the transformation into a solid vertical mass. The central stem reaches down to the ground, a cylinder positive at the top, hair and spine and negative at the bottom space between the legs. It runs as if with sap, on either side of it, the static density of the body could be a tree trunk shown in a vertical cross section. "Pierre Shnider's" theory isn't quite convincing as the female figure remains evident even in Back 1V. However, this shows us how the viewers imagination can contribute to the work of art.

Matisse undertook to apply this principle - one already exceptional and revolutionary in painting to sculpture, which by it's nature seemed impervious to it. An example of the application of this method is found in the use of the series which Matisse first used in his sculpture. The series encourages us to separate object and vision. Madeline 1, (1901), and Madeline 11, (1907), are the first pair of sculptored works to embody contradictory states of an identical vision.

Altogether, there are three series of three sculptures, The Reclining Nude, (1907-27-29), The Crouching Nudes, and Henriette, (1925-27-29), one series of the Four Backs, (1909-30), and one series of the Five Heads of Jeannette, (1910-13).

With the Backs, and other series of work, each state is a separate individual finished sculpture. Given that they were made over a period of 21 years, we can look back and see a process and progression. Perhaps the real subject matter of the Backs is the process of reduction itself.



Because of the time in between each sculpture, Matisse's other work in both painting and sculpture would have influenced their development. Backs 1-11 were contemporary with the large wall decorations, La Dance, (1910) and La Musique, (1910).

- (6). Albert Elsen, in his book, compared the third state (1916-17), with the painting Bathers by a River, (1916). The earlier versions are now questioned. The sculptured rectangle is divided into parallel, vertical zones of unequal width, similar to Bathers by a River, (1916). These vertical zones are developed and clarified in Back IV, (1930), and gives the impression of balance and finish. Although each Back is an individual self-contained sculpture in terms of Matisse's work as a painter, they can be considered stages in his development.

There are many series in Matisse's paintings also, but there each stage covered over the previous one on the same canvas. In sculpture, as in drawing and lithography, the artist was able to make progress without having to rub anything out. Matisse was able to extend to sculpture, his achievements in painting - that is the separation of presence from form despite the greater materiality of sculpture, which seemed alien to this idea.

He introduced transparency and lightness into the domain which seemed synonymous with all that was opaque and heavy, especially after modern art had reduced sculpture to its own specific nature, that is to be a mass of weight. He succeeded because this movement towards the basic formal elements in sculpture, at a later stage set another process in motion; The process of separating the essential vision from the formal. Presence requires form, but it cannot make itself felt if it is confused with form.

This distinction could be made all the more obvious because the basic monumentality of sculpture prevented it from hiding itself behind illusionistic representation.



In Back 1, representation is somewhat realistic, but the piece contains a fundamental sculptural presence, which is brought to the foreground in Backs 11, 111-1V, at the expense of realistic representation.

Matisse's sculpture was at once heavier and lighter than the model, or at least, than the model's realistic image. Sculpture in this tradition does not represent the body - it is the body. The body is the sculptor's medium within which the whole meaning is contained.



FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER TWO

- (1). M. de Zayas's "African Negro Sculpture" - New York, 1916.  
Quoted in "Heroic Years from Humble Treasures" from 'Changing'  
by Lucy Lippard 1971, Chapter 2, Pg 35.
  - (2). "Matisse Speaks" - interview with Teirade in Art News Annual, New York  
1952, No. 21. Quoted in Chapter 2, Pg. 19 of 'The Sculpture of  
Henri Matisse'. Thames & Hudson, Arts Council of Great Britain.
  - (3). Refers to copy of 'Baryes Jacquar devouring a Hare' by Matisse (1899-1901)
  - (4). Letter to A. Rouvroyre, 'concerning trees'. Fourade, Page 167.  
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  - (5). Matisse - Pierre Schnider - Thames & Hudson, London 1984
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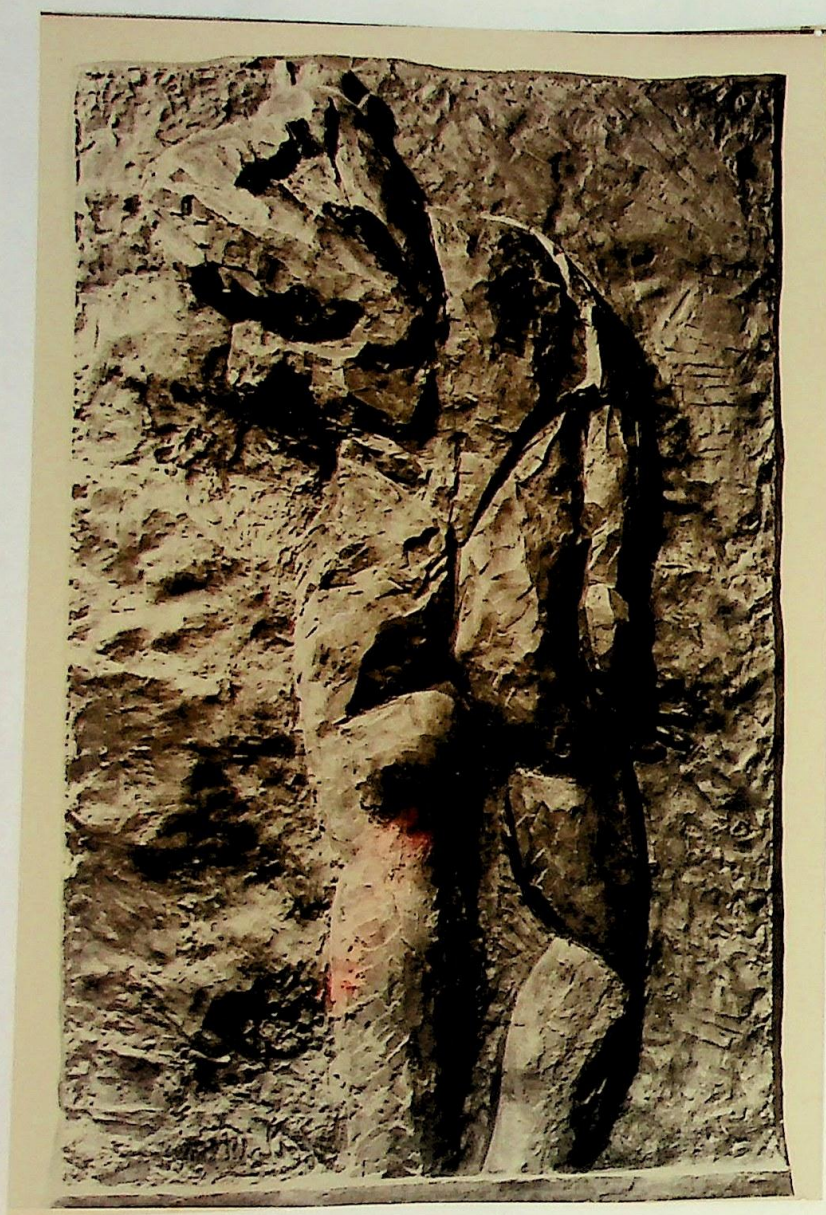
CHAPTER THREE - ILLUSTRATIONS





(13) MATISSE BACK 1 1909





(14) MATISSE BACK 11 1913





(15) MATISSE BACK 111 1916-17





(16) MATISSE BACK IV 1930



Each stage of the Four Backs (1909-30), has a sense of being a self-contained object. In Back 1, (1909), the figure's legs sink into the base of the supporting plate, while the left hand holds onto the top edge of the plate. This unites the figure and the plate into a self-contained object. In Back 11, the left side of the middle body (waist), is cut away and this area begins to merge with the background. Anatomical details are no longer important, leaving the texture of the figure beginning to resemble the texture of the plate. Also the areas of the left arm and hand, the head and the right shoulder all become less defined and begin to merge with the flat plate.

The move away from a detailed study of the anatomy encourages the viewer . to consider Back 11 as an object in itself, rather than something which depends on references to a source, as in Back 1.

In Back 111, the waist area is cut away more, making a stronger connection with the plate. The volumetric form of the hair gradually becomes part of the plate, emphasising the unity between the figure and the supporting plate. The legs now lack any anatomical references and are now simple volumetric forms, rising off the support plate. The head goes off the top of the plate, extending the whole object. The surface and texture of the figure is treated in the same manner as the plate, emphasising the unity between figure and plate. In Back 1V, (1930), the volumes are more defined and confident. The figure emerges from the plate and is part of the material of the plate. Again, the hair form gradually becomes part of the flat surface. The head rises above the edge of the plate as in Back 111, emphasising the unity of the object.

In Back 1V the space of the flat plate is as important as the volumes of the figure in the overall composition. The top right side area, from the edge to the centre area of the head, is balanced on the left side by a shortening of the flat space available, when the left arm moves upwards to the top of the plate. The diagonal direction of the left arm is balanced on the right side by the section jutting out from the



volumetric form at the bottom of the arm. This creates a diagonal line which cuts across the strong vertical volumes of the legs and body. This diagonal is also evident in Back I and Back II where the figure leans to the left side. In Back II this is exaggerated where the right shoulder has been cut down with a strong curved diagonal line. In Back III the most conclusive volumes are the right arm, the left leg, and the central hair form. The diagonal line in Back I, Back II and Back IV is not as clear here, although it is under consideration. The direction of the left arm is continued in the right hip, which is still separate from the leg. The right leg is not fully resolved, and is only slightly off the supporting plate. The curved line of the neck and spine, seen in Back I, is gradually removed and made into a vertical form in Back III and Back IV giving the whole sculpture a vertical character. In Back IV the diagonal line of the left arm continuing to the right hand is what remains of the figure leaning to the left in Back I and Back II.

In Back I the figure is supported on the left leg, and is being pulled downwards towards the base. The legs disappear into the base of the supporting plaster which gives the whole sculpture a foundation. The figure seems top-heavy and visually contradicts the downwards pull of gravity. It is as if the figure needs to hold onto the top of the plate in order to support itself. In Back II the legs become stronger and more firmly set into the base. Also, areas of the top of the figure have been taken out, which reduces the feeling of it being top-heavy. The legs can now easily support the body. The left leg is the most resolved feature, giving an indication of the dominant vertical character of Back III and Back IV. It is rooted in the foundation, making the whole piece secure and in place. In Back I the figure lacks a secure foundation. In Back III (1916-1917) the figure is divided into separate areas, and becomes more closely linked to the supporting plate. The figure is divided at the waist, as if the top section is pulling away from the earth, to escape gravity. It does not depend on the legs for support. The upper section would remain in position if the legs were taken away. The left leg is still securely rooted in the base. However, it does not support the body, which is separated from it. The right leg is not formed enough to support the right arm and shoulder. The hair, right shoulder, and right arm are full heavy forms which are supported on the plate rather than on the legs.



Back IV is a massive heavy form, securely set in its foundations. All areas of the figure have the same weight. There is still a pulling upwards, away from gravity, in the left arm. This creates a contradiction in the sculpture. It is a massive heavy volumetric body sitting firmly on the ground, while at the same time it pulls upwards in a struggle with the forces of gravity. This suggestion of movement upwards gives a sense of lightness and balance to what is a massive heavy sculpture. Although the raised left arm is heavy, it also contains an ability for flexible movement.

Back I (1909) is based on study of the figure. The forms and lines are used to describe anatomical details. There is a hint of the development of volume which takes place in Back II, Back III and Back IV, in the treatment of the left shoulder in Back I. The neck and right arm also suggest an interest in volume, but are still based on anatomical study.

In Back II descriptive details are taken out, with the legs being treated as volumes in themselves. It is not descriptive volume referring to details of the figure, but rather a development towards an abstract volume, for its own sake.

This is developed further in Back III where the figure is divided into separate volumetric features. The raised left arm is a continuous mass joining with the shoulder and down to the waist. The hair or spine, is exaggerated down to the middle of the sculpture in one continuous volumetric mass. All the detail of skin, bone and muscle, evident in Back I has been removed. The right shoulder is an independent volume, separated from the right arm which is also a fully formed volume, similar to the central hair or spine form. The left leg is another volume separated from the rest of the figure. The right leg and hip are less formed, and seem indecisive, as if Matisse seemed unsure whether to make them full volumetric forms. Also the hip is divided from the leg in order to maintain the diagonal line from the raised left arm.

Matisse seems more decisive in Back IV, which he reduced to three vertical volumetric forms. The left side of the figure is one volume from the raised arm down to the base of the plate. The centre section is one volume going from the head down the spine, ending in an empty space.



The volume and the empty space have the same function of separating the left side from the right. The right side is again one continuous volume from the shoulder down to the base, with the only interruption being the section which juts out to continue the diagonal of the left arm. This continuous line acts as a link between the two sides of the figure.

In the four Backs, Matisse was not describing the anatomy of the figure in a literal or narrative manner. He sought to express the feelings and sensations he gained through study of the figure. Back I is a realistic study of the model in Back II and Back III - a process of reduction takes place, where Matisse begins to discard any unnecessary elements. In Back IV the figure is reduced to its essential minimum form, yet it remains recognisable as a female figure.

In Back I (1909) the viewer is given information of anatomical detail which helps to express the artists feelings. However, the details may confuse the work, because they could be interpreted as being an illustration of the figure. Back IV (1930) is more direct because it lacks the details of Back I (1909). It expresses a very accurate and precise sensation of a female figure. Each line and curve suggests something more, beyond what is actually there.

Matisse was interested in reducing sculpture to its own essential elements, while at the same time he was reluctant to develop it to ultimate abstraction. In Back IV he held on to a recognisable reference to the figure, which seemed to suggest more than what is actually there. It suggests a strong familiar sensation of a female figure. Back IV (1930) does not contain any element which is unnecessary, in order to communicate the essential quality of the figure.

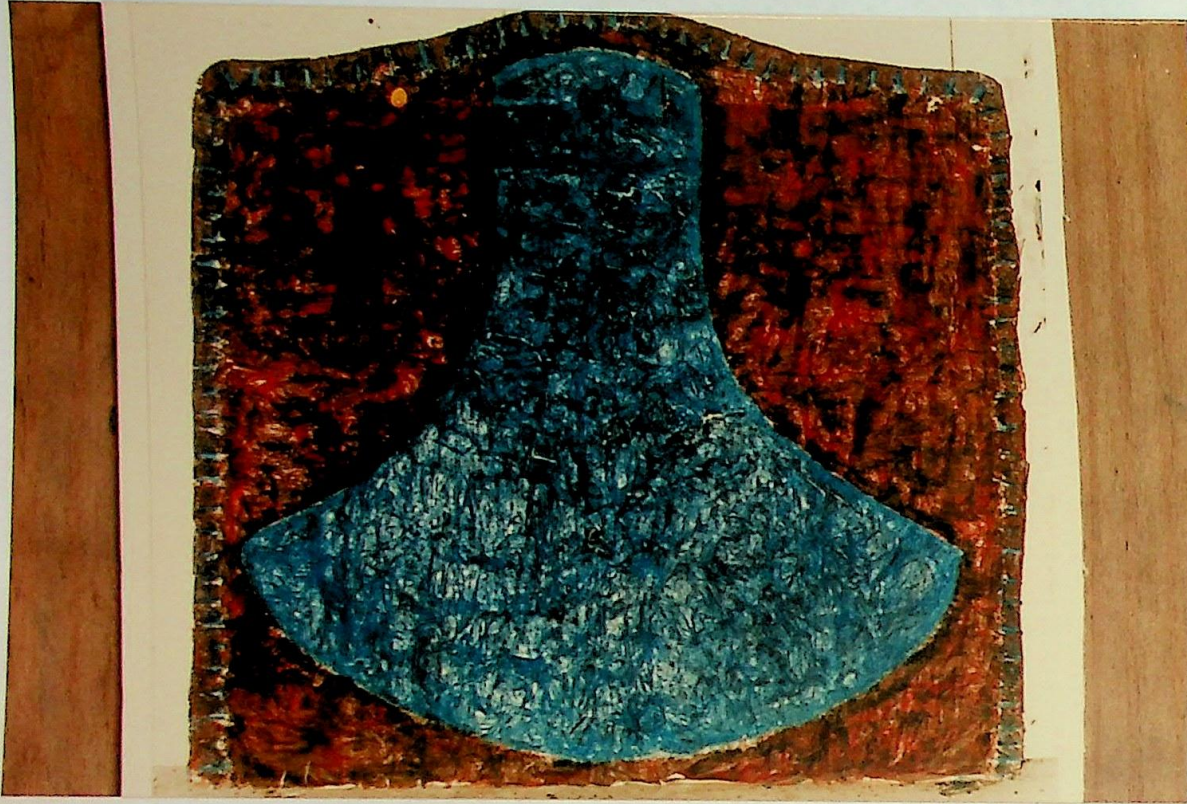
Because of its lack of analitical description it communicates directly with the viewer, avoiding the logical anatomical analysis found in response to Back I (1909). The use of the object to suggest an idea or emotion, demands that the viewer makes an effort to communicate with the work. Despite their monumental scale, the Four Backs are quiet sculpture. They do not scream for attention or overpower the viewer, but only reach their full potential with the contribution of the viewer.



#### CHAPTER FOUR - ILLUSTRATIONS

None of the examples of my work illustrated here are titled. In the text of chapter four, they are referred to as Figure One, Figure Two, etc., ... up as far as Figure Six.



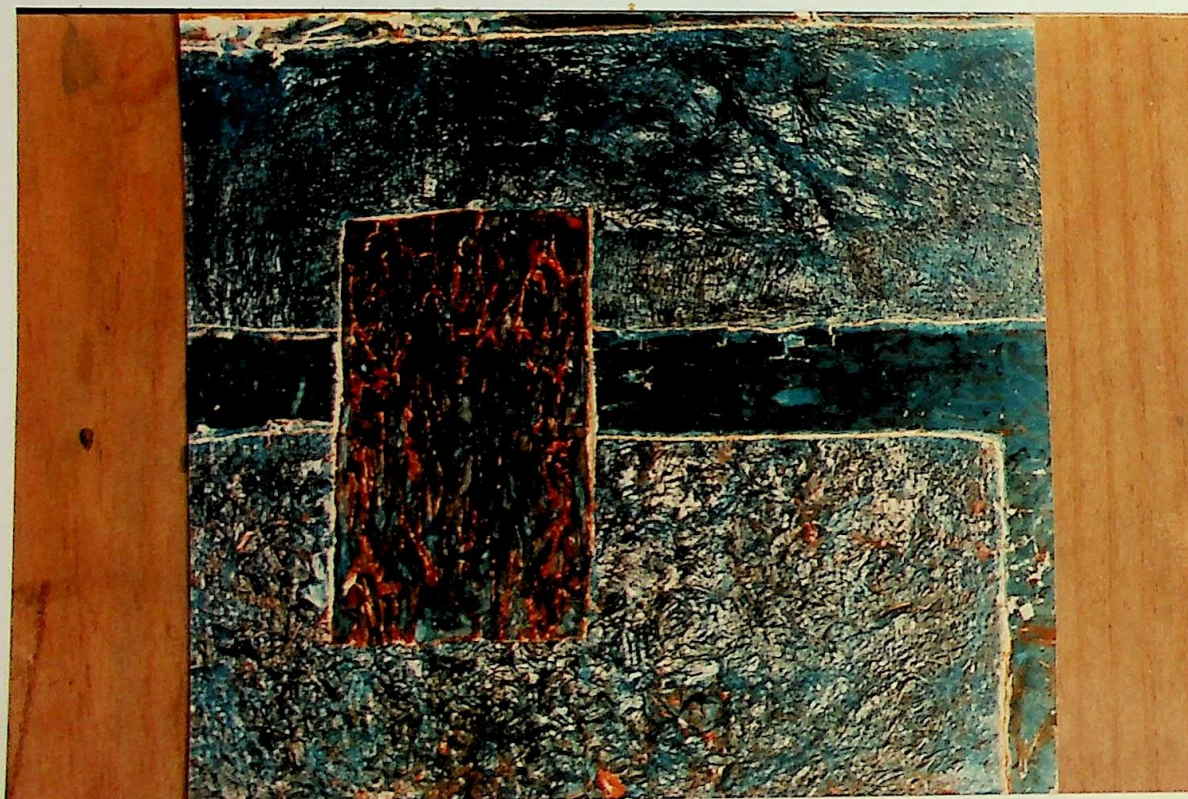


(17) J. McHugh Figure One 1985





18



19

(18) J. McHugh Figure Two 1985

(19) Detail - Figure Two





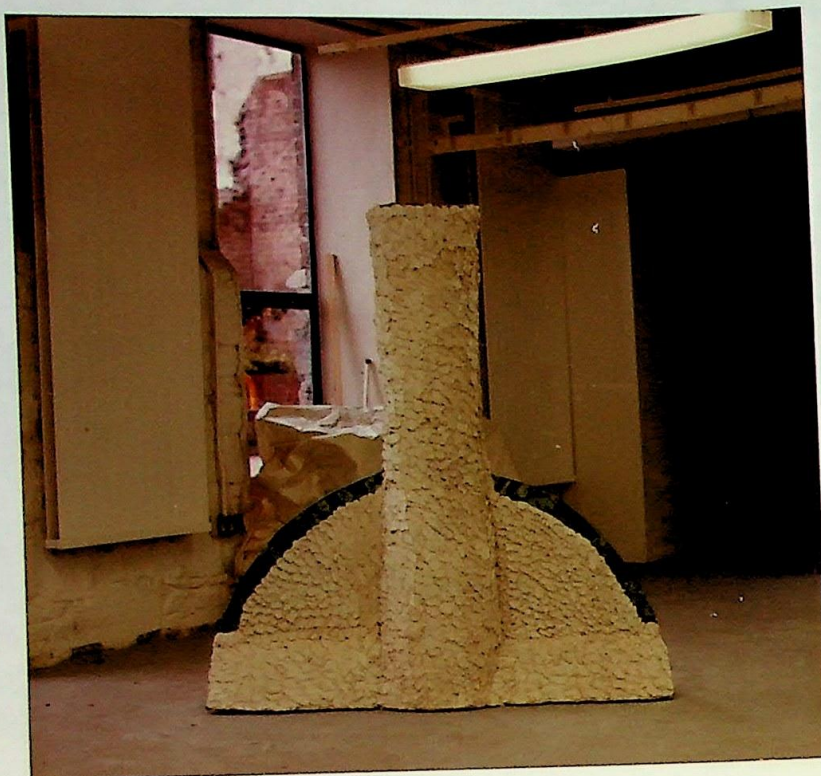
(20) J. McHugh Figure Three 1986





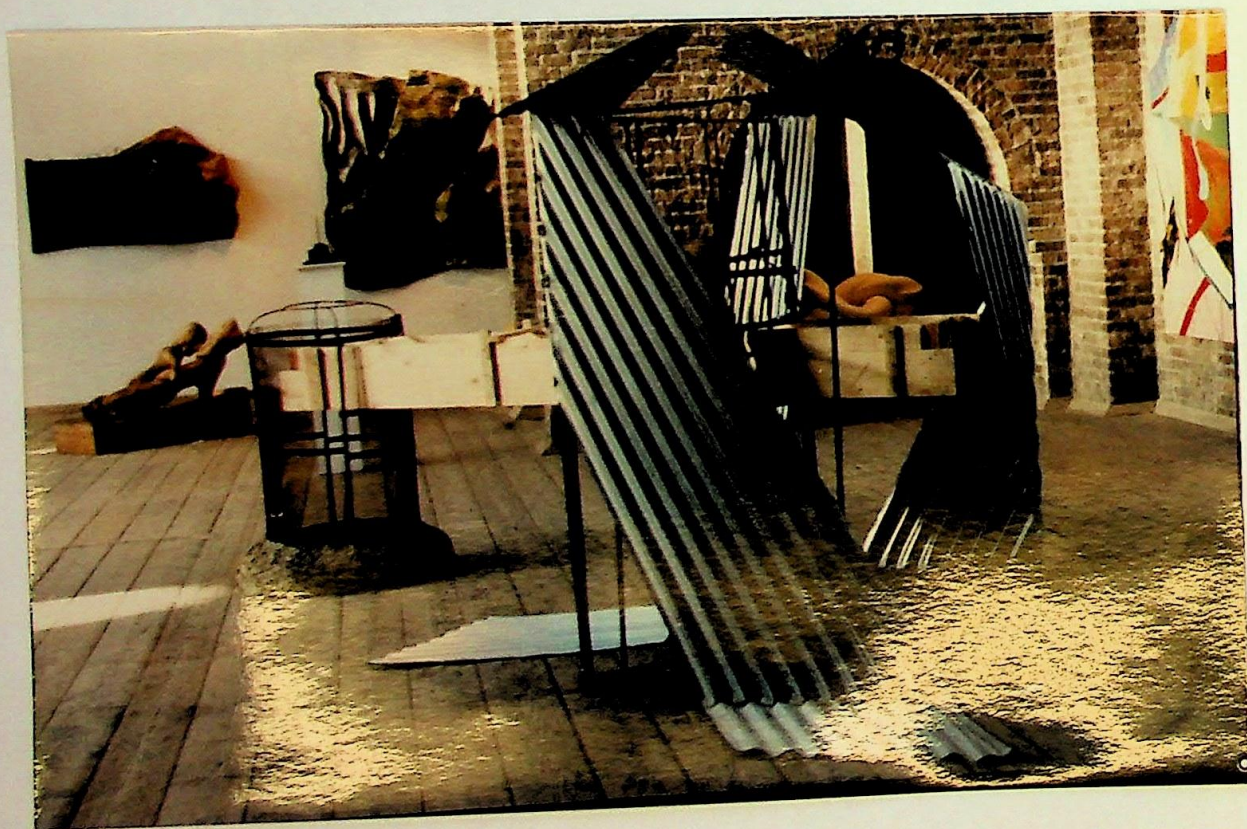
(21) J. McHugh Figure Four 1986





(22) J. McHugh Figure Five 1986





(23) J. McHugh Figure Six 1986



The process involved in making a drawing or a piece of sculpture, is comparable to asking a series of questions. Previous interests and work will influence to some extent, a starting point. Methods of working and choice of materials will be as a response to previous experience and work. The taking part in the process of making will lead to new questions and discoveries. Concerns and ideas will come to the foreground and be clarified during the process of making the work.

There is no pre-conceived idea at the beginning, but rather certain ideas and experiences which will be explored in an open-ended manner. by working through the materials in an honest and sensitive manner, themes and concerns will become visible. This working through the materials could be in a logical sequential method, or in an intuitive way.

It may take a certain amount of time after finishing the work, before it's themes and concerns become apparent. Sometimes, it may take later developments in the work to understand a previous piece. Each piece of work is part of one series. They are stages in a process of development.

There are two main themes running through this work. The first relates to monumental sculptural forms, found in modern cast architecture. These large structures impose a domineering presence on the space around them. They possess a clearly defined structure and form on a monumental scale, which allows them dominate their landscape and hence, makes them more impressive.

In figure one, the blue image directly refers to one specific building. The image is simplified and formal concerns dominate decision making in the drawing. The direct reference to the building has been down-graded, or put into the remote background. Other formal concerns have become more important in the drawing, like gravity, balance and atmosphere. The reference to architecture has been reduced to a suggestion or an impression of a domineering massive form isolated in space.

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In figure two, there is no reference to a particular building, however, the rectangular forms are reminiscence of monumental architectural features. In the composition of the forms in relation to each other and to the whole image, there is an impression of monumental forms or structures placed in a wide space and dominating that space. There is also the feeling of a plan view of two buildings, linked by a connecting structure.

It is the formal sculptural qualities of this architecture that is of interest in the work. This is a very limited and narrow aspect of this architecture and many questions can be asked regarding it's functions and it's social consequences. These questions are not tackled directly here, however, as the work develops they are becoming more important.

Figure three, is a three-dimensional version of figure one giving volume to the form. The circular upright form has connotations of a factory chimney. It introduces the question of an inside and outside space for the first time. It dominates a physical space, unlike the drawings of figures one and two which refers to a pictorial space, or a feeling of a flat open space other than what's physically in the drawing.

This piece is not directly related to the initial building which was a source in figure one. This form is developing figure one further, making it more distant from the initial reference to a building. Although it is three-dimensional like the building, it is an entirely different form. There is an attempt to retain the feeling of a monumental sculptural form, dominating it's space, which was retained in the drawing of figure one and which led to the initial interest in the building.

In figure four, there is a slightly different type of reference to architecture. The curve in the upright section is based on a specific feature in the building. It is an attempt to re-create the sensation of walking past a curved high wall. It is necessary to walk close to the piece to appreciate the sensation.



This introduces a different relationship to architecture than seen previously in pieces one, two and three. It develops the idea of an inside and outside, which was first seen in figure three. The red section on the floor suggests an inside space and an outside one. It is possible to walk into this space as one would walk into a building. It is getting away from the detached monumental form as seen in figures one, two and three.

In figure six, there is yet another approach to dealing with architecture. The choice of materials and their manipulation is directly influenced by methods of building construction. The methods of making the wooden connecting section is similar to industrial use. Also the use of corrugated steel sheeting suggests a rural or vernacular style of architecture.

This rural feeling is also evident in the previous works, especially in the manner of handling the textures and surfaces. The cement material in pieces three, four, five and six, all suggest a rural or hand-craft feeling, rather than a modern industrial finish.

These three different approaches to architecture as a source for the work, going from remote monumental sculptural forms to a more direct physical relationship to a building, both inside and out and finally ending with a suggestion or feeling of a rural or vernacular style of architecture, fit in with the second main theme which makes itself evident throughout the work.

This is a reference to a strong personal sense of identity, shaped by deep rooted ties with a rural culture. This is a strong sense of place or sense of belonging, which is evident in this work.

Figures one and two refer to this sense of belonging in a place. The textured surfaces in figure one has a rural or organic feel to it. The blue image fits comfortably into it's surrounding area, as if it belonged there.



In figure two, there is a stronger feeling for a wide open landscape or seascape. The surface colour and texture has a direct connection with land or seascape. It is as if figure two shows a small section of a much larger area of landscape or seascape. The rectangular forms feel as though they comfortably belong in the space. In figures one and two, there is a sensation of being within a space, a sense of something recognisable and familiar, a sense of belonging.

In figures three, four and five, architectural references become more important. However, in all of these pieces, there is a slight hint of this theme. The quality of texture in the material suggests a rural or hand crafted feeling. However, in figures three and four, the synthetic colour counteracts any suggestion of rural structure.

In figure six, there is a strong re-appearance of this theme, which is emphasised in the choice and manipulation of the materials. The materials reflects methods and techniques found in building construction. Consideration is given to the effects of colour and daylight on the materials. The colour and quality of the materials is representative of the colour and lighting of a particular place. This was intended as a means of conveying feelings and sensations of a place.

In figure one, the reference to a particular building is not an illustration, as in a photograph or an architect's drawing. It is an attempt to represent a feeling or an atmosphere. The direct reference to the building is now remote and the form of the drawing can be considered separate from the building. There is no literal or narrative references in the work, as might be present in a logical written text. There is an attempt to give a sense of an indication or suggestion, a sense of feeling.

In figure six, the use of galvanised sheeting acts as a suggestion or an indication of an architectural feature. It is not an illustration or a model of a particular building.



The angle at which the metal bends at the top suggests roofing, also when it ends in mid-air, there is enough to suggest a complete covering. It is not necessary to cover the whole plane in order to suggest the idea of it being covered. Also the sides of the rectangle are not fully covered in. To cover only a section of the planes is adequate to indicate the whole plane being completed.

In figure two, the reference to a coastal land-seascape is not of a literal or narrative nature. It is not an illustration of a particular landscape. It is an attempt to communicate a feeling or an atmosphere of the land. It is a feeling of a personal relationship to a particular area of land, a suggestion of the atmosphere of the land.

There is also another symbolic meaning evident in the work. In figure one, there is a single unit, self-contained and isolated in space suggesting a feeling of isolation. This may be interpreted as symbolising a feeling of being displaced or isolated.

In figure two, there is a reaction to this, a move in the opposite direction and the idea of communication or a connection between the units replaces the idea of isolation. This theme of a link or a connection is prominent in figure four, where the red floor section rises up to connect with the upright section. Also in figure six, where two separate elements, a cylinder and a rectangular cube are connected by a third section. This symbolic interpretation suggesting isolation or a communication between two separate units is not of primary importance. It is one of many concerns which surface through the work and has not been developed further in a deliberate manner.

For the maker of the work, there is a link back to an experience or to nature, but the references are put in the background or down-graded during the process of making the work. The work develops an identity of its own and reduces the need for associations or references to concerns outside of the work.



The viewer can relate to each piece without the need for background information about the work.

Each piece including the drawings of figures one and two, are self-contained objects with a sense of presence of their own. In figure one, the border around the edge encourages this idea of a self-contained object. The border acts to separate the image from it's surroundings, while at the same time, it remains a part of the image. The drawing sits on the floor and leans against the wall, giving it more of an object quality than if it hung on the wall as a painting. There is a strong visual link between the image and the floor, because there is no border at the bottom, which enables the image as a self-contained object to sit comfortably on the floor. The red area surrounding the blue image is not a background area. There is an attempt to unite the two areas of colour into one, by use of texture.

This is easier seen in figure two, where one colour covers the whole area. There is a strong feeling of one unit, although there are separate rectangles placed inside a wider area. Each rectangle is at once separate and part of the overall image. This sense of unity composed of several elements, adds to the feeling of an object.

The scale of the piece (16ftX10ft approx.) encourages the viewer to stand back and look at the whole image as one. At the same time, the details in texture and colouring suggests a closer inspection which gives the piece the quality or presence of a self-contained object.

The three-dimensional pieces of figures three, four, five and six have a stronger sense of being self-contained objects. Each stands isolated, taking up it's own space. Each object has it's own composition, with each aspect relating to every other section of the piece, with nothing superfluous included and nothing which is necessary left out adding up to a full self-contained architectural piece.



In figure six within the self-contained object, there are two components, a rectangular form and a cylinder connected by a third section, all three going to make up the compositions on the whole object.

There is a strong sense of balance in each piece. In figure one, the blue image is central, leaving equal areas of red on either side. It fits in place in the overall image. In figures three and five, there is a similar idea of balance, with an upright central column, broadening out towards the base. In figures two and six there is a feeling for balance in the arrangement of the separate elements with relation to each other within a piece. Although, the three rectangular forms in figure two are to the left of centre, they still form a balanced composition within the overall image.

In figure six, the proportions and arrangements of the different elements are controlled in a balanced way, each section fits in with the others. None of them are too small or too large in relation to any other. These relationships between various elements are decided in an intuitive way by responding to developments within the work. A strong sense of balance makes itself felt through all the work, helping to establish a feeling of presence or unity in each piece. Only perhaps in figure four is there an awkwardness in the relationship of the upright section to the red section on the floor. The red floor section was introduced to counteract the tall piece which is visually top heavy. The red section puts the emphasis below the centre area of the upright and pulls it downward to the floor, anchoring it in place. The red section, by running along the floor balances the tall upright and makes the whole piece fit into the floor.

Weight is another factor, which is important in each piece. In figure one, weight pulls down the floor counteracting the upward direction of the central column. In figures three and five, this may be more apparent where the wide base is pulled down to the floor, giving the objects a feeling of immobility. The force pulling downwards is obvious and exaggerated in figure three and counteracting the upward movement in the central column creates a contradiction and a tension with the piece.



In figure six, there is an effort made to have the object fit or sit comfortably on the floor. The galvanised sheeting bends and runs along the floor, creating a plane reflecting features in the object. This bridges the gap between the object and the floor, giving the object a visual foundation on the floor.

Also in the cylindrical element in this piece, there is a layer of cement at the base acting as a foundation. The soundness this gives the cylindrical form, the secure sense of being in place affects the whole object adding to it's link or connection with the rectangular form. There is an awareness of the pull of gravity common to both sections of the piece, giving them a common characteristic.

This pull of gravity is a common factor between the piece of sculpture and the viewer, each being subject to the same laws and forces. The viewer can relate to or gain access to a piece of sculpture through an understanding of this common experience

In figure six, the galvanised sheeting moves upwards away from the gravitational pull, extending the rectangular form upwards. Also the angle at which the corrugated lines are set in relationship to the floor adds a dynamic suggestion or evocation of movement. This suggested movement is contradictory to the stable well placed objects and is in resistance to the downward pull of gravity. It can be understood as such by the viewers, because of their own experience of movement and resistance to gravitational pull.

In figure four, the upright section rises away from the floor, opposing the pull downwards. The red section acts to anchor it on the floor. In figure three, the upward movement of the central column pulls away from gravity. The object is firmly placed on the floor, yet it aspires to move upwards, creating a struggle within the piece.

There is a strong awareness of space in the work. In figure two, there is a suggestion of a wide flat open space, as if the drawing is only a fragment of a wider larger space.



In figure one, the space is limited and controlled by borders. In figure three, this space becomes volumetric, taking up a physical area. Although figures one and two had a physical space as objects, they also suggested another space, other than their own. Now in figure three, the emphasis is a physical space with no suggestion of another space, other than what it physically occupies. The structure separates the inside space or volume from the outside space.

In figure four, a short curve as if a section of a circle is adequate to suggest a volumetric space. The upright section is in the shape of a curve, while the red flat section on the floor creates a border, forming an inside and outside. This suggests another volumetric space indicated by the curving line on the floor.

The relationship between the inside and the outside is more complex in figure six. The inside of both forms are visible. The wooden section can be seen going from the inside of one form to the inside of the other. The planes made by the corrugated metal, are enough to show the outer limits of the rectangular form. The viewer can easily compare the inside form with the outside planes of the galvanised metal. Each side of the rectangle is indicated by sections of the metal. In figure two, the central connecting element rises off the surface only a few inches. In figure six however, the connecting element comes out into space to meet the second form. This can be seen as a logical progression from figure two, a move from two-dimensional to three-dimensional volumetric space.

In figure five, where there is a volume beside a flat surface, it can also be seen as a transition between the drawings of figures one and two and the three-dimensional forms in figure six. Perhaps where a volume can be seen beside a flat surface, the contrast can help to illustrate the essential quality of volume.



In figures one and two, texture and colour are used to suggest an atmospheric quality. Materials such as clay, wood and coal are built into the surface to achieve the desired effect. In figure two, where the reference to a land or seascape is strongest, there is an attempt to achieve a colour close to nature.

Figures five and six also contain a direct reference to nature in their use of colour. In figure five, the white cement and green copper relates directly to architectural references and there is a better awareness of the effects of natural lighting on the materials.

In figure six, the materials were chosen with colour and lighting in mind, referring directly to the quality of light in a particular place. The materials are close to those used in architecture and building construction, underlining the sources and ideas in the work.

In figures three and four, the colour is synthetic. This colour was used without reference to any source in nature or without an awareness of the effects of natural daylight on the material. In these examples, the texture is more important than the colour. It gives each piece a feeling of the time involved in the process of making the object. It suggests an enjoyment in handling the material and gives each piece it's own history. This also applies to figure five, where the feeling of enjoyment is at it's strongest.

In figures three and five, the texture also contributes to an organic quality, giving each piece a resemblance to a living plant structure.



### CONCLUSION

There are areas where comparisons can be made between both sets of work discussed. There is an interest in the fundamental elements of weight, balance, volume and a strong sense of each piece being an object.

Weight is important in the relationship between the object and the floor. An object has to fit in place, be made to belong comfortably on the floor. There is a constant gravitational pull downwards on the object, which has to be accommodated within it. An object can contain movement or potential movement in the opposite direction away from gravity, but it has to be related in some manner with the floor.

In figure four of my own work, the red section on the floor was introduced to counteract the awkward relationship between the yellow upright section and the floor. The red section connects with the yellow upright, below its mid point, so it lowers its centre of gravity, and anchors the whole piece in position on the floor. Also, in figure six, the corrugated metal goes from being attached to the floor, rising upwards in the air, as if to escape the effect of gravity.

The female figure in Matisses' Back I (1909) makes an effort to resist the pull of gravity in Back II, Back III and Back IV, it is gradually supported and made more firm and secure. The upward movement of the left arm, seen in each stage of The Backs contains a resistance to the pull of gravity, while the legs of the figure are securely rooted in the base on the floor. Weight and the effects of gravity must be considered and dealt with as a basic integral part of an object.

The space an object occupies has to be considered during the period of making. In figure six there is a questioning of the relationship between the inside and the outside of the object. It explores the space which is contained by the object, and its relationship to the space which the object occupies. The space in figure six does not refer or suggest any space, other than what is physically there. In figure four the curved red line on the floor indicates or suggests a volumetric space, a divide between an inside and an outside.



In Matisse's Four Backs the volumes are used to suggest characteristics of the female figure. They contain the minimum essential forms and lines necessary to suggest the essence of the female figure. In Back IV (1930) volume itself is fully considered as a part of the object, and is used to express qualities of the figure.

A sense of unity and composition is also important within an object. Each aspect must be considered as part of a larger object. In figure six there are three separate elements, which come together to form a self-contained united object. The scale of each section, and its position in space are considered in terms of the whole object.

In Matisse's Back IV the flat spaces of the plate combine with the volumetric forms to make a self-contained object. The proportion and position of the flat space is as important as the volumes in the overall composition. In Back III, where the volumes are separated from each other, their proportions and positioning in relation to each other creates a unity within the whole sculpture.

Figure one of my own work, contains a strong sense of balance, another area for consideration within the object. It can also be seen in figure five where the semi-circular wing structure gives stability to the upright section. In Back IV the vertical volumes are curtailed by the diagonal line of the raised left arm which continues to the right hand. This relationship between the diagonal and the vertical, express the sense of balance evident in the leaning figure in Back I, and gives the vertical volumes their sense of proportions.

Although Matisse referred to the female figure in the Four Backs, during the process of making the works, he investigated and developed basic fundamental elements to do with the essential makeup of sculpture. In a sense these elements, weight, balance and volume are the real subject matter of the work, in that they are fully developed and explored so that they can be employed to express the artists feelings and sensations towards the female figure. The reference to the female figure in the Four Backs is not on a literal or narrative level, it does not illustrate the anatomy



of the figure. It works on the level of suggestion, where the object is used to suggest the feelings and sensations which the artist gained from contemplation and study of the model.

At each stage the Four Backs contain a recognisable reference to the female figure, allowing the viewer access to the sculptural arrangement of mass and volume which suggests the feelings and emotions within the work. This gives Back IV (1930) its accuracy and preciseness, and allows it to communicate in an honest, emotional and direct manner, without recourse to any literal or narrative techniques.

The same elements are questioned in my own work, which refers to architectural features rather than the female figure. Weight, balance and volume are the main subject matter in figures three and four, where references to architecture are not emphasised. These pieces explore and develop formal sculptural elements as part of a learning process. They relate to other works, in that information gained in the process of making them can be used in subsequent works.

In order to achieve a similar level of accuracy, as seen in Matisse's Four Backs, within my own work, it is necessary to put more emphasis on references to source material, other than the basic formal sculptural elements.

In figure six, two themes, architectural references and a personal awareness of a sense belonging in a place, are re-emphasised. The choice and manipulation of the material refer to specific architectural features in a particular landscape. These references are worked in with the formal elements of weight, balance and volume, making the work more precise and accurate. A familiar reference in the work, the female figure in Back IV, or the choice and manipulation of materials in figure six, can provide an entry point to the work, making it more accessible to the viewer.

However, these references in figure six are not of a literal or narrative nature, but function only as an indicator or pointer which suggests the feelings and emotions contained within the work. Recognisable references allows the viewer access to feelings and emotions which are expressed in volumetric forms, arranged and organised, giving consideration to space, balance and the pull of gravity, which contribute to make a self-contained sculptural object.



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