



T861

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Theme of Project

"They have mouths, but they speak not; Eyes they have but they see not; They have ears but they hear not; They have hands, but they handle not; Feet they have, but they walk not; Neither speak they through their throat." (Psalm 113)

"Either we want to live or want to die, and while we are alive we surely want to live more abundantly to fulfil our potential to realise our capacities instead of living a death in life. We can't be fully alive if our feelings are dead. Our senses and our feelings are our very experience of aliveness. And as a sentient living creature it seems a shame to miss the experience of life. As living creatures it seems only common sense to be aware of ourselves and that means knowing how we feel and what we feel and why we feel." R. D. Laing ("How Does it Feel")

The above quotations encapsulate the theme of my project.

Through this project I have tried to develop:

- (1) The perceptual awareness of the students.
- (2) A creative awareness, appreciation and involvement between each student and his environment (the term environment being used in it's broadest sense encompassing the influences, interests and surroundings common to the pupil).
- (3) A control over their environment and an understanding of how their

environment is not just a blank canvas but is shaped by them and likewise their life is shaped by it.

- (4) To try to develop an art of life, to see the artistry in the most ordinary of experiences, to appreciate the aesthetics in everyday life. To become aware of the fundamental qualities which differentiate existing from living.

Parallel to this the project must offer opportunity for my growth as an artist and teacher by:

- (1) Developing a greater appreciation and awareness of aesthetics in everyday life and in the life of my pupils.
- (2) To develop and refine my skill through multi-media. To have greater skill in drawing and painting and to offer wider sources of experience through which to express my ideas.
- (3) To relate the work of my pupils to my own as it develops through the various stages from its conception to completion.

The environment (as defined in No. (3)) is the source of all experience that provides the inspiration for making and appreciating art. Students can be encouraged to use art as a way of encountering life. It is only by making sense of their environment and experience that students can gain personal fulfilment.

The main source in my project was the human figure. It is a source accessible to all and one with which all have had some experience whether on an exclusively social level or as a source of artistic inspiration.

The human figure challenges the ability of the student to perceive and to become aware of its intricate nature. It can also be a stimulus for inner expression. All the basic languages of visual art are embodied in one source: line, tone, shape, form etc. Each one of these elements can be taken and studied separately or as a whole. However it was necessary to explore the figure not just in isolation but in an actual environment (created or natural) and to study this figure environment relationship analysing how one is modified by the other. Looking back at artworks created by mankind, figurative art has assumed a dominant position in art. With a few exceptions, it has been dealt with by all the major artists leading to, in some cases, the exclusion of other sources of imagery. It was only in the modern tradition that figurative art declined and became threatened, repeating the trends of Arabic and Celtic art (which were largely abstract) up to Christian times.

In the 1960s the impact of the new figurative pop art image was instrumental in bringing figurative art to the fore again. The importance of figurative art can be summed up by the following quotation from David Hockney:

"All I did was draw from the nude model. Doing that makes you look very carefully and interpret in line or tone or colour. I think it is a very good education for anybody. It is being forced to look at something carefully that is good, not the finished drawing"

Not everybody will gain satisfaction in the production of images. Therefore the function of studying art may well be a search for opportunities of heightened perceptual awareness. Although to create art

perceptual skills are necessary, one need not produce art to enjoy one's power of perception. Perceptual awareness is not just the power of recognition of lines, shapes, colours and other visual elements together with the images which they signify, but it also embraces feelings and associations with our past and present experience. During the production of the art process children have time to dwell on their experiences. As individuals we all have different experiences of the environment. Art is about creating order from the elements which we perceive around us. We perceive through our senses to become more aware is to sharpen the senses and sensibilities. There are those who only perceive a fraction of all the sensory information around. One of the functions of the art teacher is to overcome this. The art teacher must help students to:

- (1) Perceive both obvious and subtle qualities.
- (2) Analyse their perceptions as sources of feeling and meaning.
- (3) Judge their experience astutely.

By careful observation children can become inspired by and learn from their constructed or natural environment whether it be the aesthetic standing of classical buildings or the dappled light effect on trees. Art can be an everyday experience. John Dewey in 'Art as Experience' felt that we should "build a sense of communion and communication among people by intensifying, prolonging and deepening the satisfaction we derive from ordinary events".

While Karl Marx viewed "art as a reflection of social realities". The perceptual challenge of an art work well conceived is a natural

introduction to the tasks of life and to the best ways of going about them.

"Art should reach out beyond the classroom into the community. The school has a duty to make the pupil more aware of his environment and to lead the pupil towards a critical appreciation of and creative involvement with it." There is no doubt that environment affects the individual and the individual affects the environment. Awareness of those facts is fundamental to education. Education reflects man's perception of himself and it changes as this perception changes. "The forms, feelings and anxieties of every culture and race are embodied in it's art. It is the embodiment of human experience. Art should become an everyday experience shared by all. It means man's sensibilities to the arts must be developed. The primary level of the art experience is that which awakens in each person the ability to see the aesthetics in his own environment which highlights his attention to the endless variety of forms, colours, forces rhythm of human interaction". (Rudolf Arnheim.)

I would like to begin to clarify this brief introduction by discussing my work and its starting point.



(A1) Influence on my work. Veruschka: 'Transfigurations'. Body painting.
Note: use of surface decoration to merge with headdress



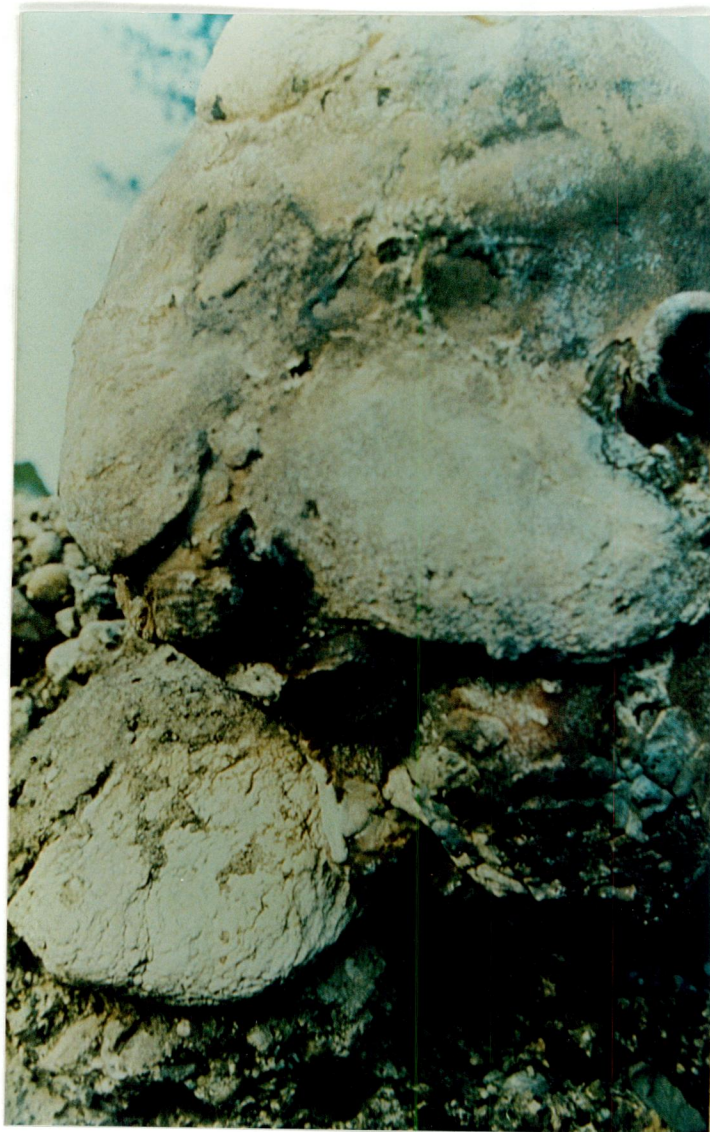
CHAPTER 2

Influence on and development of my personal work

The 'muse' that initially sowed the first seeds of the project came in the form of a book - "Veruschka - Transfigurations". This book contained a collection of collaborative works by Vera Lehdorff and Holger Trulzsch. In this book Trulzsch and Lehdorff use Lehdorff's body as a canvas. Using theatrical pain the body of Lehdorff is transformed. In some images Lehdorff mimics cinematic beauties like Marilyn Monroe and Rita Hayworth. In others she merges into the landscape and environment around her. Her body is consumed by its environment. Its surface acts as a mirror reflecting the characteristics of its surroundings whether they are of mossy undergrowth or of a derelict building. There are several reasons why I identify with this particular book. These are:

- (1) In her response to her art form she uses popular images and does not confine herself when choosing her sources. A created environment is as valid as a natural one.
- (2) She breaks away from tradition in her use of media and does not confine herself, yet ironically she chooses a surface that is older than painting itself - the human body.
- (3) There is a high level of skill in her work.

This whole concept of the body mirroring the environment was to be the source of my school project with the pupils and originally influenced my work. This will be studied in greater depth later on.



(B1) Veruschka: Oxydation:





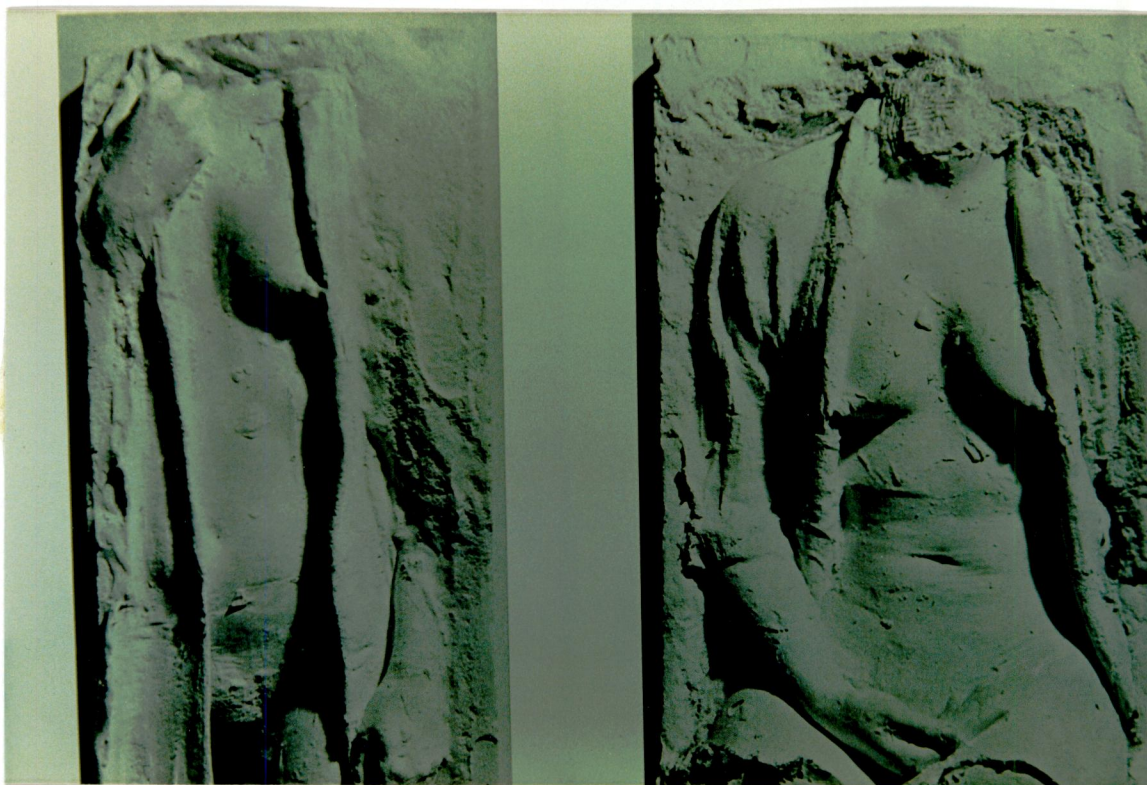
This concept of figure and environment relationship impassioned me. I felt it could extend into other areas and media. In this book the body harmonises with its background, in my own work I wanted the bodies to be full of energy, breaking out and emerging from the canvas - looking back to the vitality of Michelangelo's captives as they struggled to be free of the marble stone in which they were imprisoned.

Instead of having two-dimensional bodies emerging from a flat surface I wanted to make a three-dimensional body emerge from a canvas. I searched for a technique that I could employ to do this. This search led me to the works of George Segal whose use of figure moulded from plaster of paris seemed useful. I was most interested in his works from the early seventies. They consisted of fragmented and painted plasters. I preferred these partially emerging forms to his free-standing figures. I liked such works as: "Her Arm Crossing His", 1975 and "Lover II" although they lacked the energy of Michelangelo I was interested in the technique.

Leaving three-dimensional work temporarily aside and returning to painting specifically, I looked at the works of the Pre-Raphaelites, a group of English painters of the mid-nineteenth century whose aim was to combine the ideal and real.

In the works of such artists as Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Burno Jones I studied their use of symbolism and the ethereal mood which they created. Their paintings often consist of langourous figures against elaborate backgrounds from which they are isolated.

Here again the figure/background theme reoccurs. The artists however gave us visual clues or crutches to enable us to learn about the particular

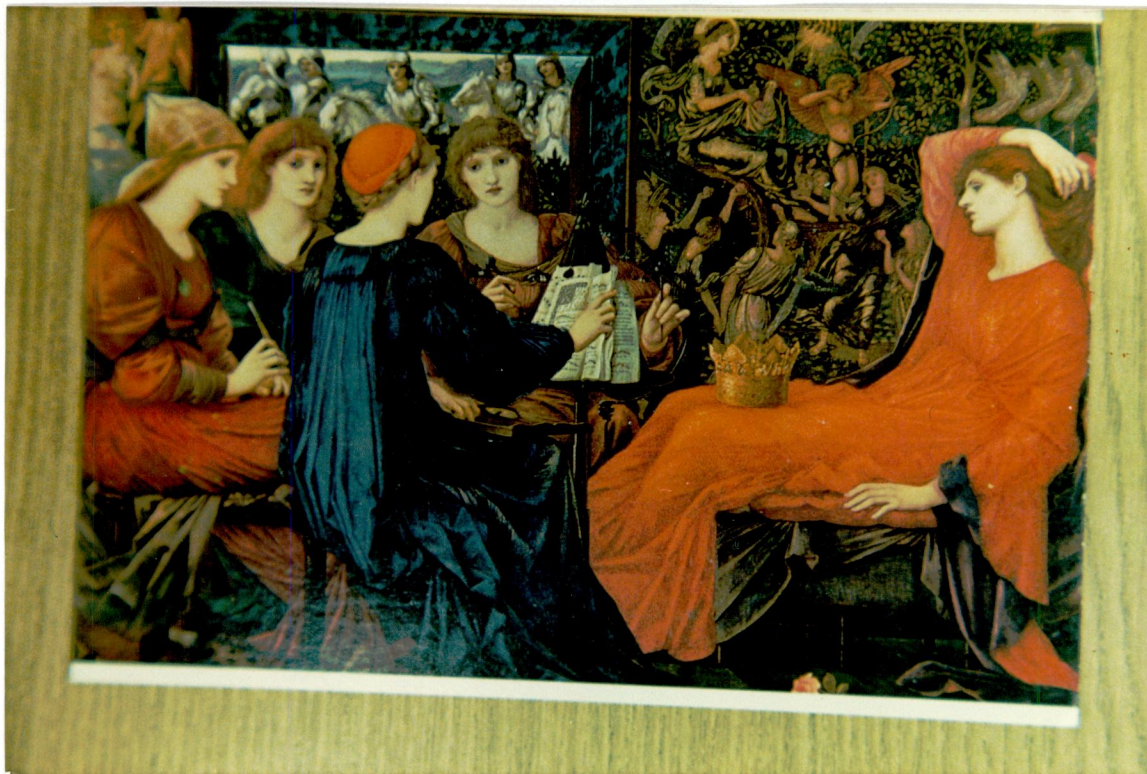


(D1) George Segal: Fragmented and painted plasters of the early seventies





(E1) Pre-Raphaelite: Dante G Rossetti -
Note: Symbolism in ivy, fruit, hands



(F1) 'La Ghirlandata'



sitter. Ivy and birds are some common images used; Ivy representing the passing of time and birds representing the spirit free to travel between heaven and earth.

When discussing my work I will return to this idea of using objects to convey meaning and how I used it in my work.

These particular artists had a major influence on my work, which I will discuss in greater detail later in this Chapter. There is however one other area which holds a great fascination for me and which has had an equally profound effect on my work and that is the pop culture.

Unique to western culture is its capacity in separating our minds from our bodies, our feelings from our actions. Separate divisions are made for analytical thought, emotional experience and physical expression. This separation leads to unbalanced personalities. Yet a balanced personality is what is desired to function in society.

There is one area in which these divisions are integrated and that is music. Contemporary music has an importance in our society that is often undervalued. By creating a popular art that can make you think, dance and feel, contemporary music has healed some of the divisions between our minds and bodies. There are few experiences which offer me the same excitement that I feel when listening to contemporary music. Cutting off all other sounds except the music. I perceive my surroundings in a new light.

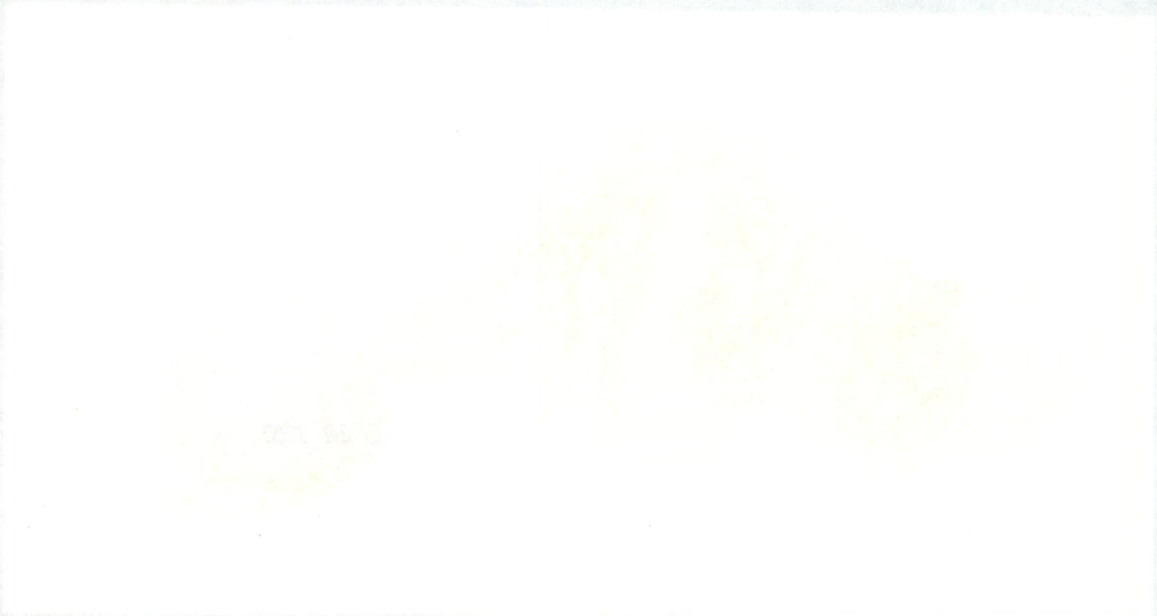
In the 1960s and 1970s electronic advances created sounds that were akin to the perceptual distortions induced by drugs. Music created a global village of aural sensations. All the dizzying social and symbolic



(H1) Example of visual imagery from contemporary music



(I1) Example of use of pop imagery in graphics project



aspirations of rock music reached their climax in a field in Bethel in New York in August 1969 when half a million people attended the first 'Aquarian Exposition of the Arts', the Woodstock Festival. The legend arose that here the musicians, the audience and their rural setting did come together and generate a more humane, more intuitive and more joyous society. Although Woodstock was perceived as an innovative event was this not what 'tribal' festivals had been always about. However as civilisation has developed we have lost this meaning - we are no longer participants as our ancestors were, in our own world. Finally, Joni Mitchell sums up the feeling of Woodstock in the following:

"We are stardust, we are golden, we are billion year old carbon, and we've got to get ourselves back to the garden." (Woodstock).

Few artists have combined both the visual and aural arts. To try and capture the experience of both could be exhilarating. Few artists have done it successfully. One such artist is Laurie Anderson. She is successful because she readily combines both sound and vision to create a 'performance' type of art which offers a deeper experience to the audience. It is not confined to one plane of sensation. There is a vitality in her work that is often missing in the works of other artists.

It is interesting to note the latest development in our contemporary culture, that of drug taking whilst dancing to certain types of music called "Acid House". Drugs heighten the sensations offered by the music. There is a strong visual element to this culture - and the use of strong fluorescent colours, and strobe lights help to create a visual experience similar to performance art. There is a power in this type of sound/vision combination that has the potential to be exploited by other artists.

Personally, I would like to combine sound with my own work or with the work of the pupils. However, due to the confines of the curriculum I have not yet come to terms with the possibility of using this medium to create a valuable and stimulating learning experience.

It is now necessary to give an account of my work and how the influences mentioned affected it.

Objectively speaking my work can be divided into a series of stages each influencing each other but not necessarily sequential.

These different stages often overlap and are indicators of particular external influences.

As discussed earlier the initial stimulus was provided by the book 'Transfigurations' by Veruschka. This book had a major influence on my earlier work and has remained to varying degrees throughout my work even now. My first encounter with the book had me transfigured for the many reasons I mentioned earlier.

This particular influence took many forms from the initial tentative stages to the final works. Having originally seen the book in April 1988 I began to take body casts (a technique using plaster impregnated bandages). However I did not complete any full work with these pieces.

The following September I was again interested in body casts and began preliminary sketches for canvases in which the figures would be emerging from a painted background. The theme would be based loosely on the theme of escape and captivity similar to the work of Michelangelo and Francis Bacon.



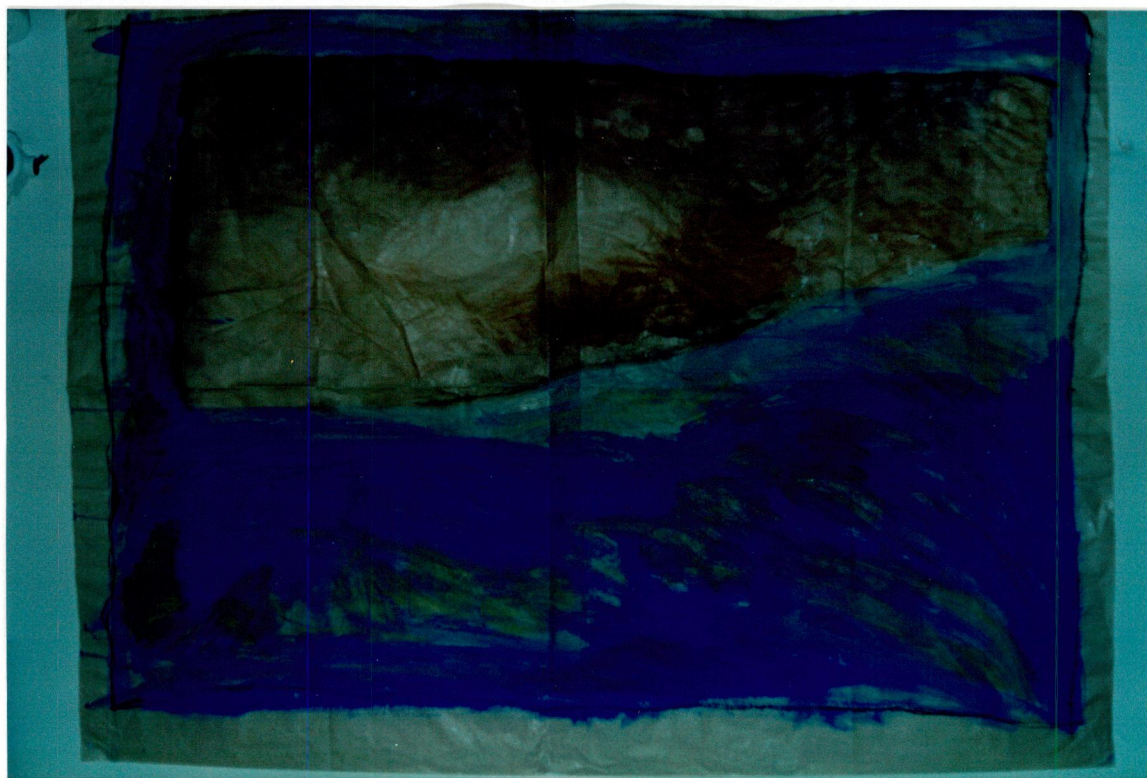
(J1) Initial Attempts - Examples of Early Body Casts using Plaster of Paris



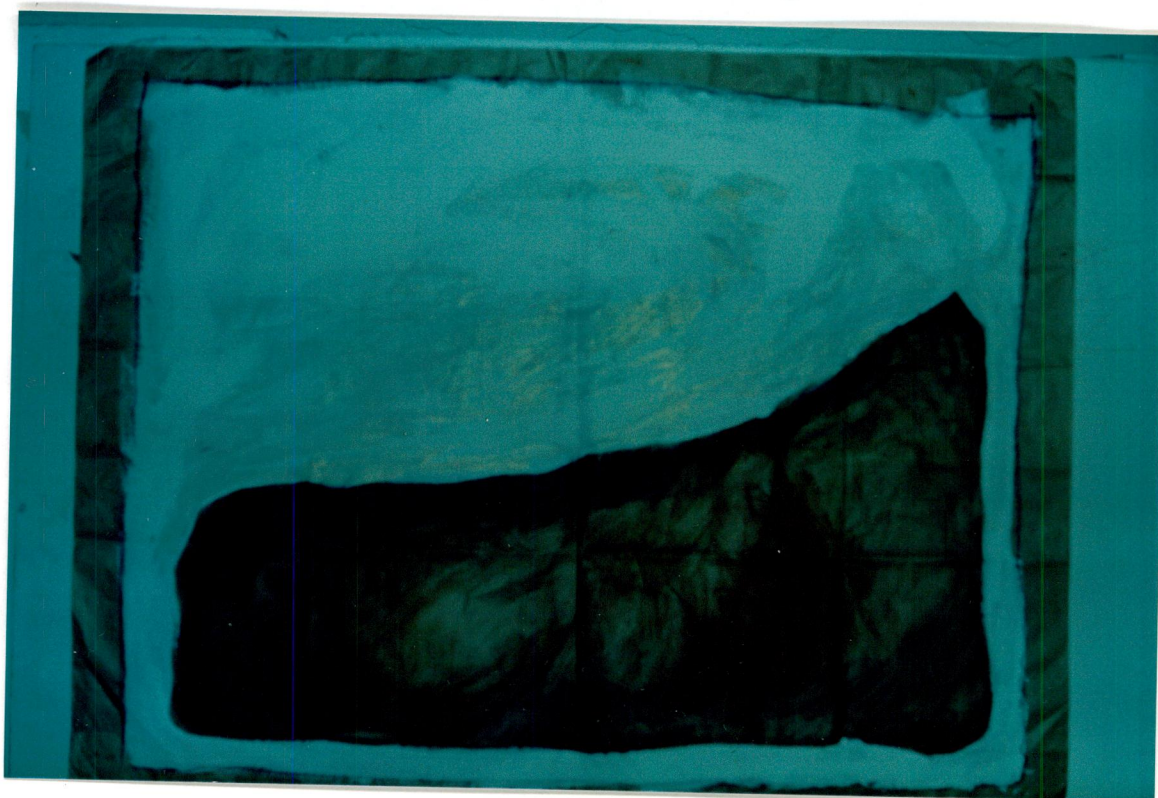


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(K1) Preliminary sketches for backgrounds



Note: Use of complimentary colours - floating shapes, textured backgrounds



The casts however needed backgrounds so I began experimenting with paint. I felt that the backgrounds should have a tension of their own. The method I used to make this tension was the relationship between complimentary colours. When placed together a certain visual tension occurs.

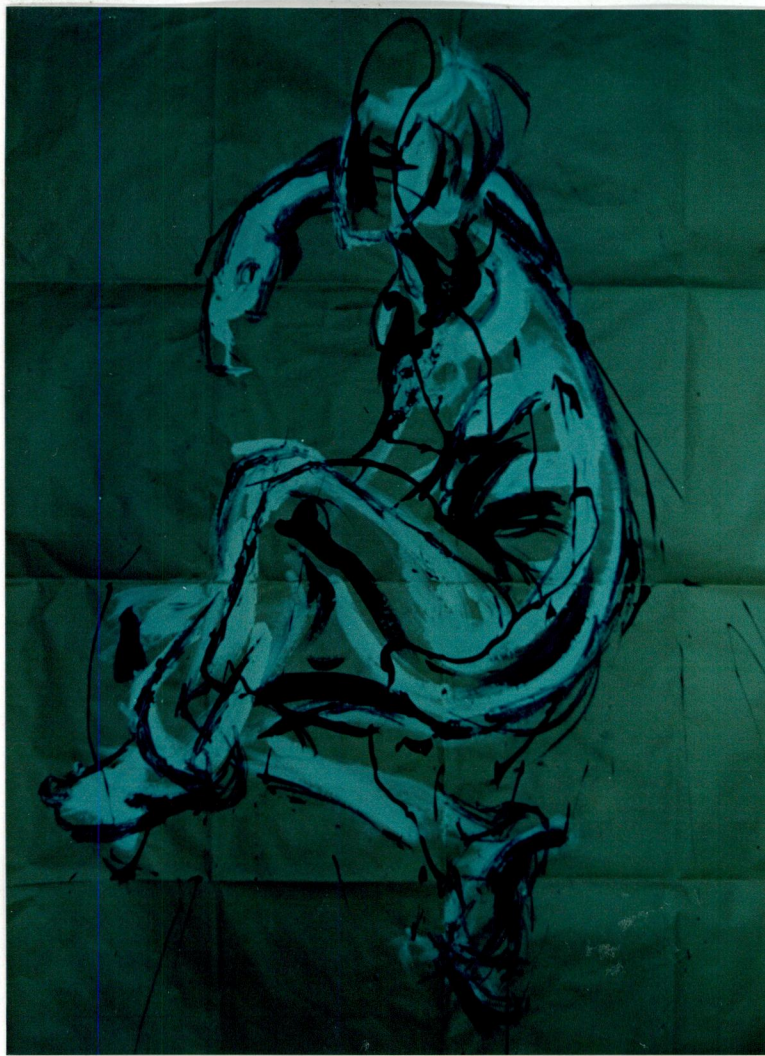
To echo the emerging bodies I investigated the idea of flat shapes emerging and one engulfing the other. The size of the shapes would relate to the amount of complimentary colour used.

At one time I became so interested in the background that I lost sight of the main idea and began to work on a larger scale creating vast shapes. My work had some similarity to the work of the abstract expressionist Mark Rothko.

Slowly I moved away from the complimentary colours and the palette became more subdued and earthier. There was a certain luminosity achieved by the use of brown paper.

While I was continuing life drawing the effect of the large scale paper backgrounds became evident. The life drawings became much freer. The figures contained a new energy and dynamism. The colours were confined to blacks, grey, and whites, and the paint application became very spontaneous.

Slowly my technique of life drawing began to change and the new drawings became the antithesis of what had preceded them. I moved from a very free non-representational style to a more delicate and skilled approach.



(N1) Life Drawing becomes more energetic and dynamic due to influence of background scale

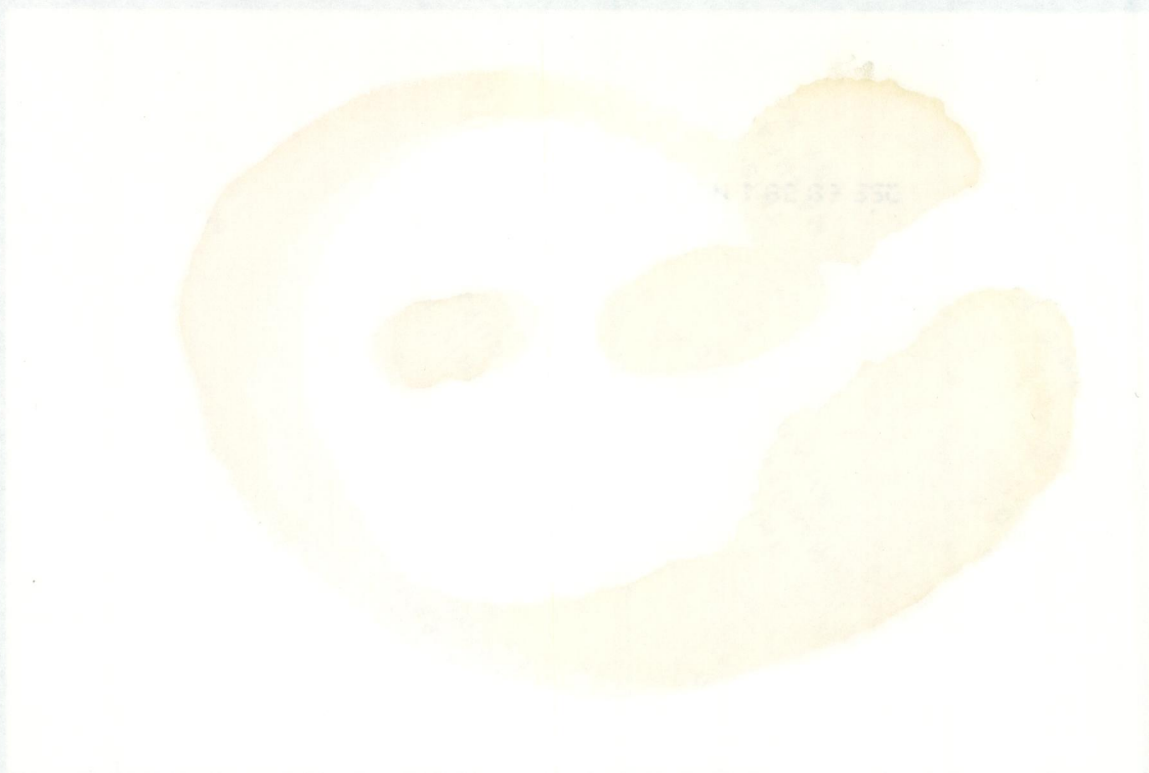






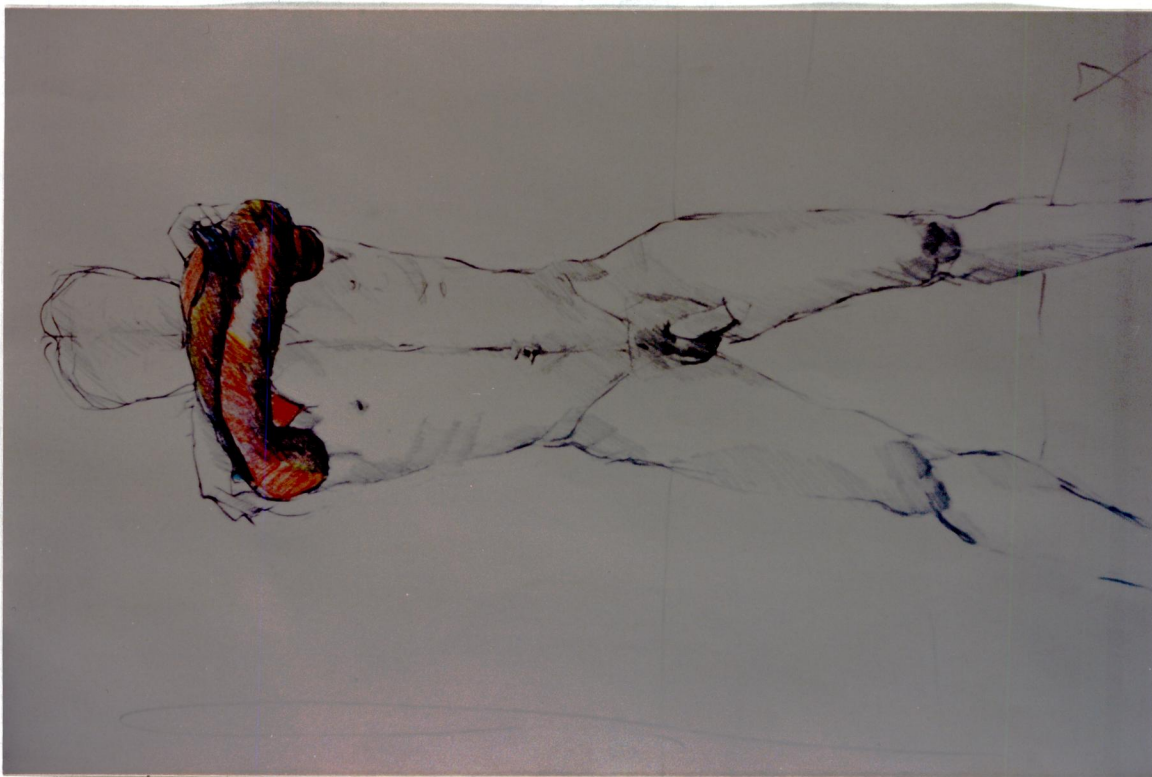
(01) Developing life drawing skills - Life Drawing - Medium: Pencil







(C2) Example of life drawing, representational





(2) Sample of life drawing, three-nail nail



This change also coincided with a change in the models.

The medium used generally was pencil. While doing them I wanted to develop a greater skill and understanding of figurative work.

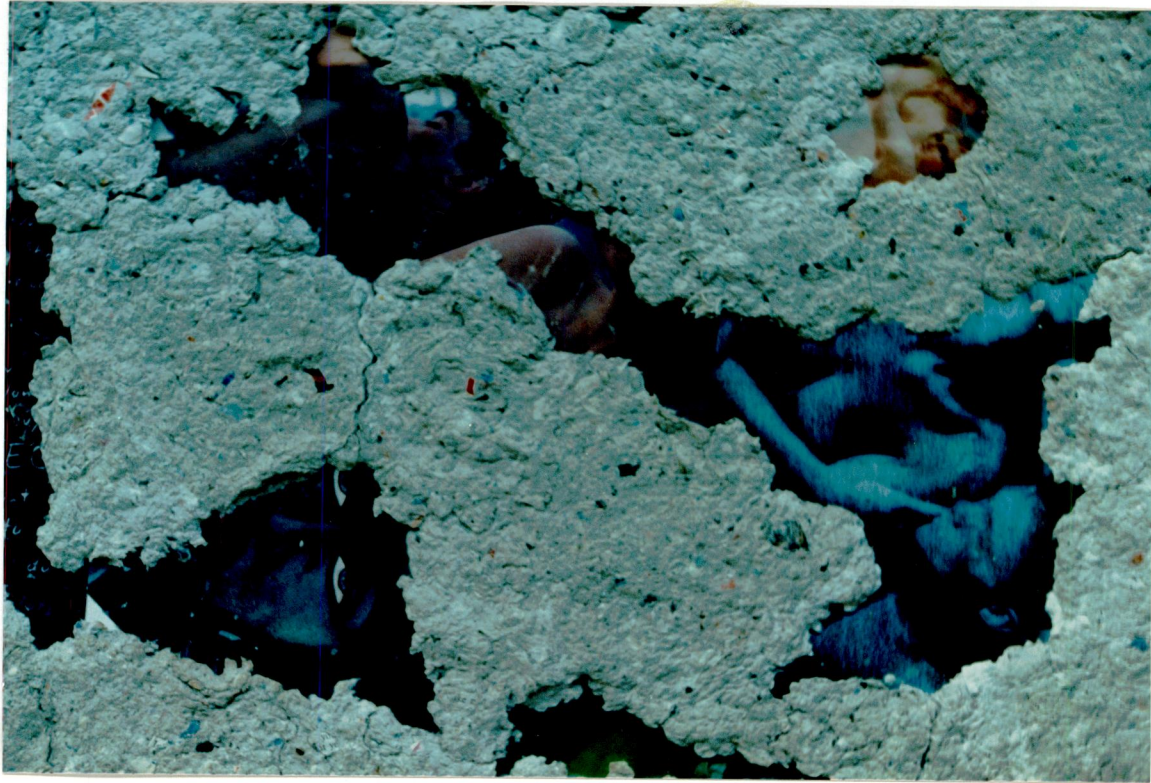
My love of life drawing clearly influenced my choice of project for the pupils. I felt comfortable with it and knew and valued its importance. I felt that the pupils themselves would benefit enormously from life drawing. While they worked on their life drawings I took in several examples of my own. This was important so that the pupils could see how the teacher functions as an artist as well as a teacher. The teacher serves as a model to the pupils, coping with the same visual problems as they.

My drawings were all completed on a very flat type of sugar paper. This paper lacks the textural qualities of heavier watercolour or more expensive hand made paper.

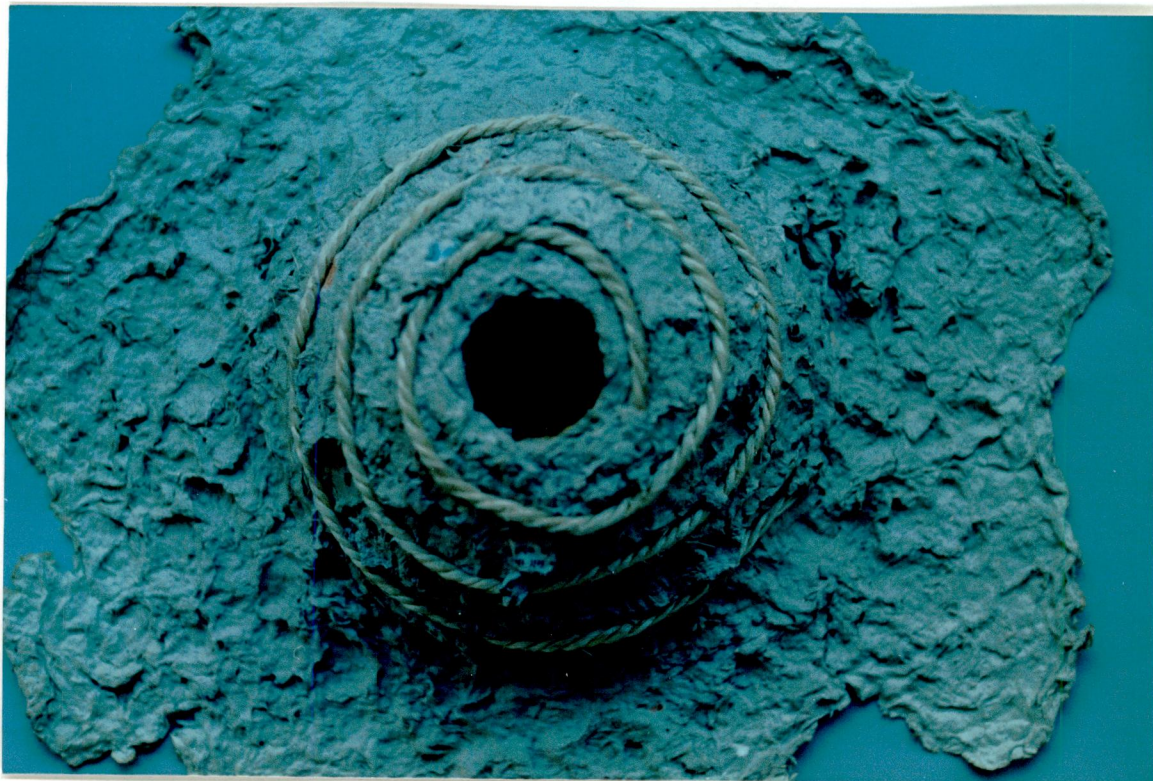
I decided to try and make some textured paper as I love the surface qualities of certain papers and fabrics. I began making home made paper which involves liquidising newspapers, magazines, old rags and other materials to a pulp. All the water is then forced out and a sheet of paper is left to dry.

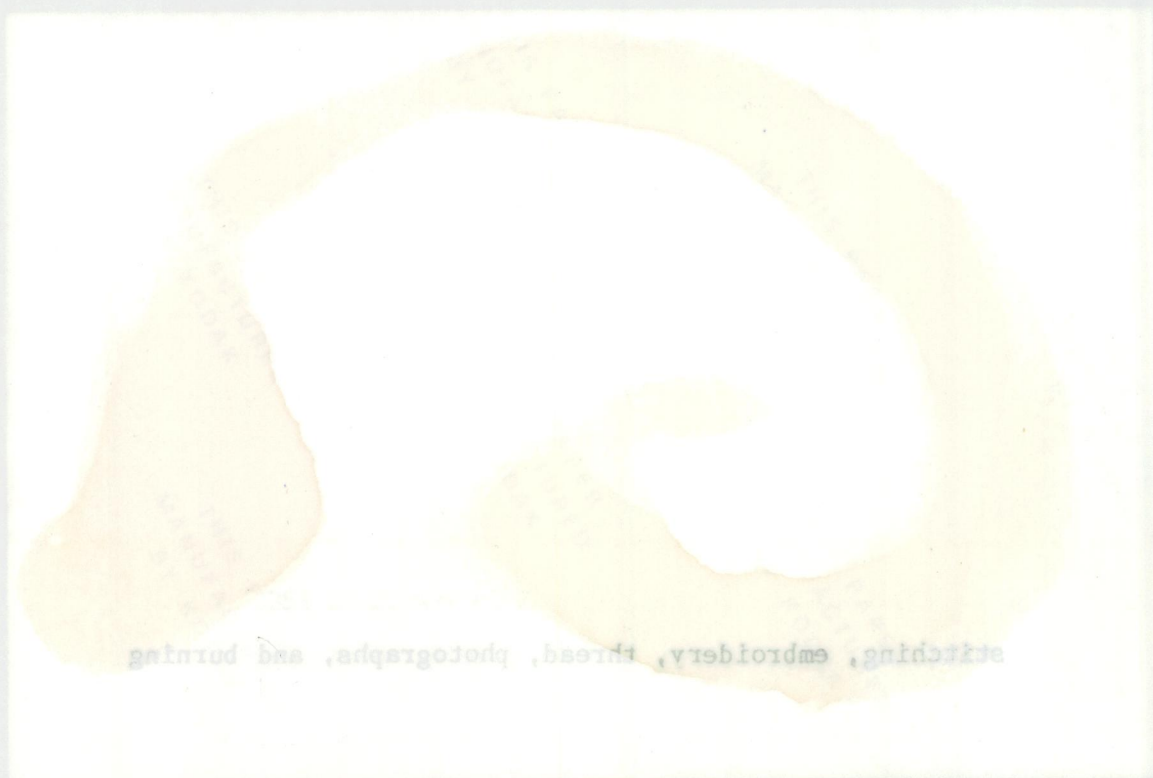
The advantage of homemade paper is that the surface can be impregnated with different particles. I tried carrots, which give the paper an orange flecked surface. I also used seeds and grasses which added a grainy quality to the paper. I did not stop at natural objects and soon began to impregnate twine, can top, and muslin. This technique would also be reflected in the surface decoration used by the pupils in their project.

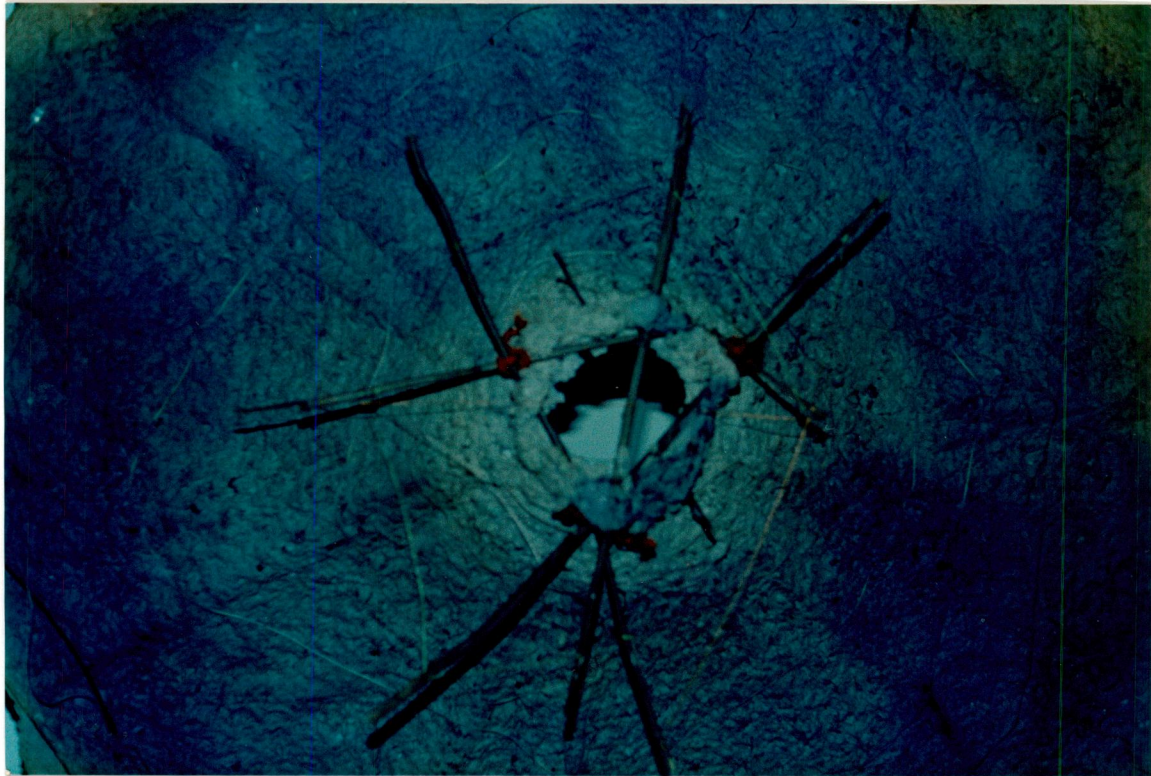
Detail of Personal Work



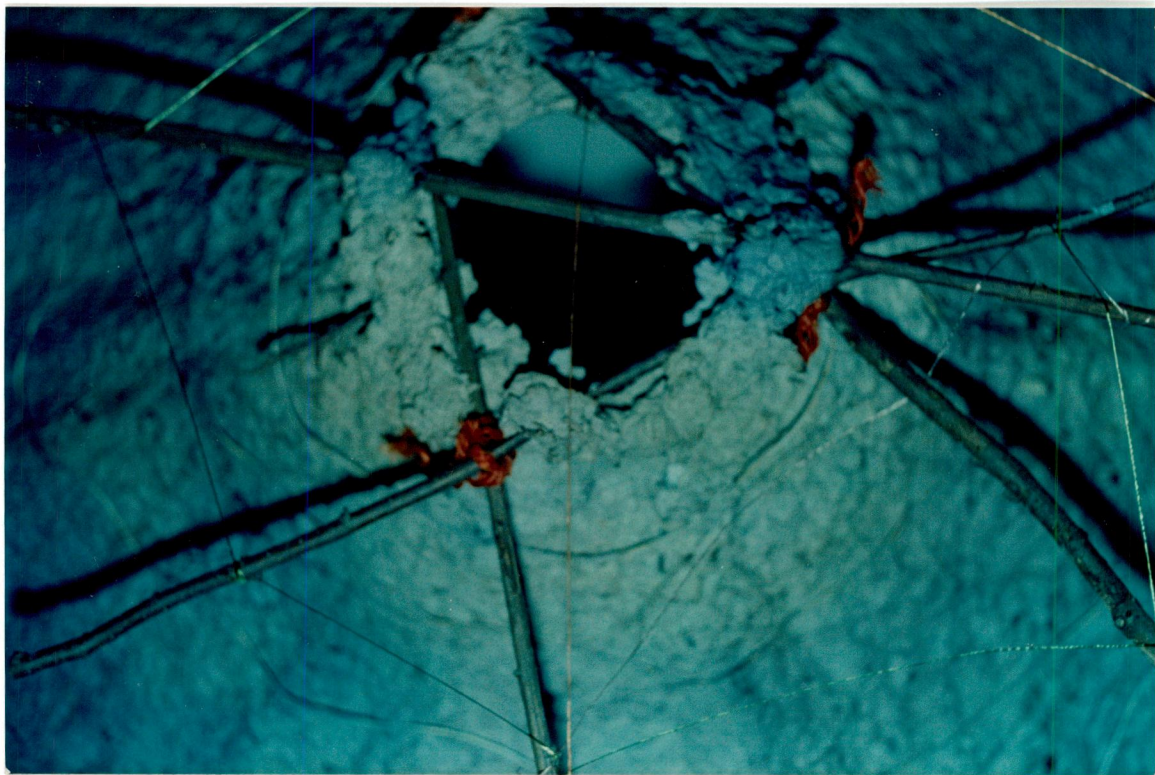
(Y1)Use of homemade paper, newspapers,







(S1) Using paper pulp to create form

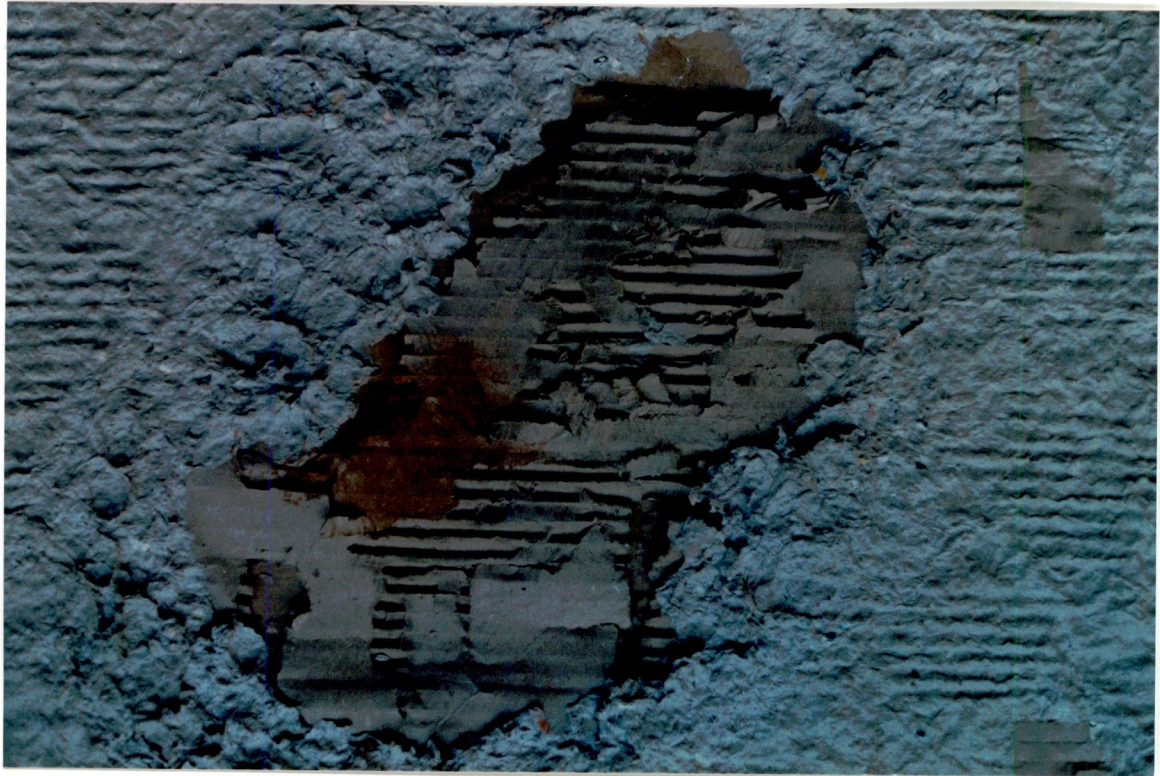


Pulp dyed using fabric dyes





(P1) Example of homemade paper impregnated with twine and magazines



(Q1) Homemade paper after burning, also using embroidery thread



Letters and phrases from newspapers and magazines were also used. This was also discussed by the pupils while doing their project.

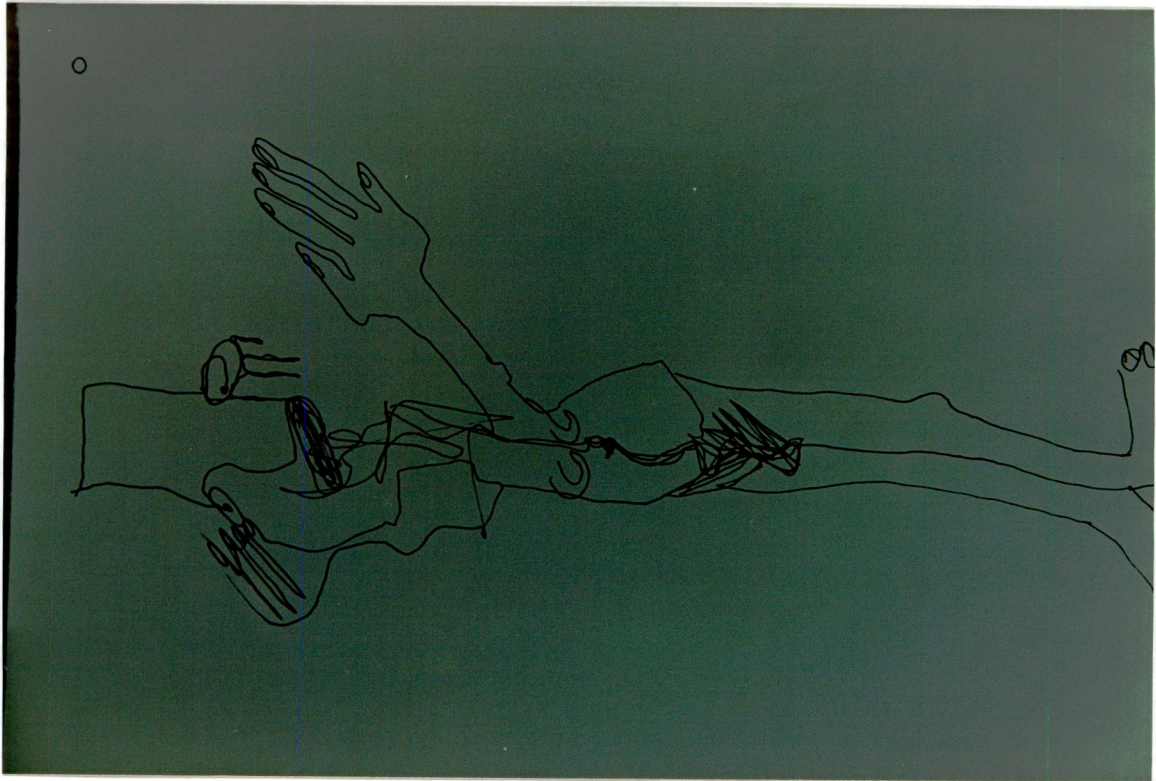
There are many ways of using the paper pulp - one need not necessarily make flat sheets of paper. Originally I had planned to have forms emerging from the canvas so I attempted to translate this idea by moulding forms out of the paper pulp so I began to mould forms out of it. I wrapped this shape in twine and impregnated the surface of it with twigs. The twine and twigs evoke for me a notion of natural society. Gradually the process of paper making lost its importance.

Life drawing began to re-assert itself. In conjunction with the detailed life drawings, I began a series of very linear non-representational ink drawings of black outline figures on stark white backgrounds. I liked the hard contrast of white against black. The figures were non-representational but were very powerful images. They had a strong significance for me. Because they were in a non-realistic vein they complimented the more representational line drawings. They could only have been produced as a result of these realistic line drawings.

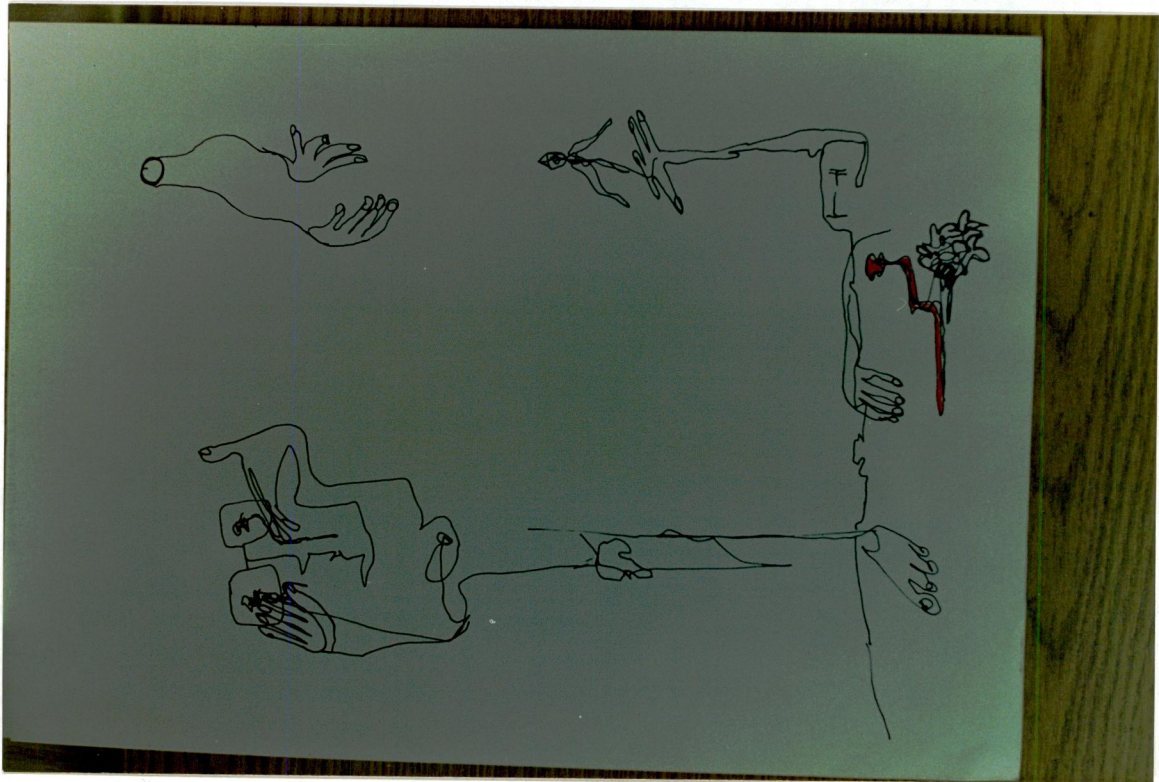
I required a suitable medium for these drawings and tried direct printing.

This process involves inking out an area of colour on glass. (A) The paper is then placed face down on the glass. Using a variety of pointed objects, the image is applied, resulting in the final image appearing on the facing page.

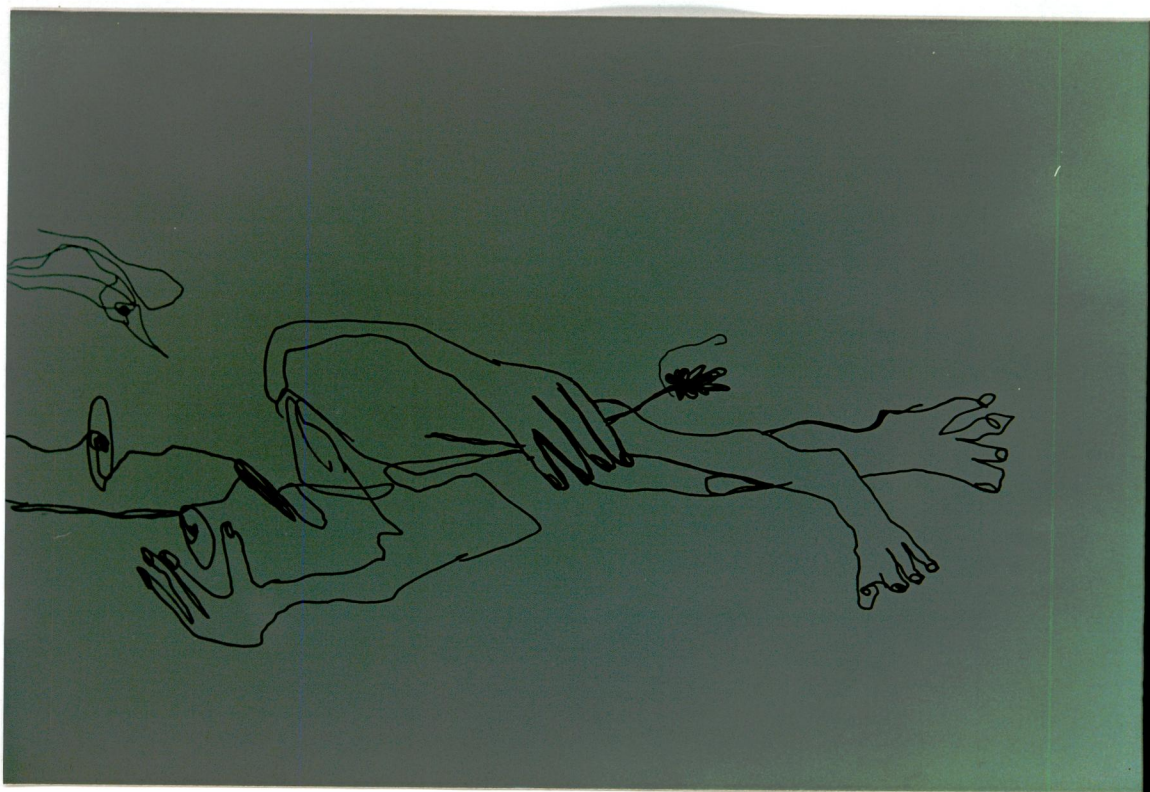
This medium was very conducive to the linear drawings and is characterised by a fuzzy line. I began to work with one colour but then moved into a



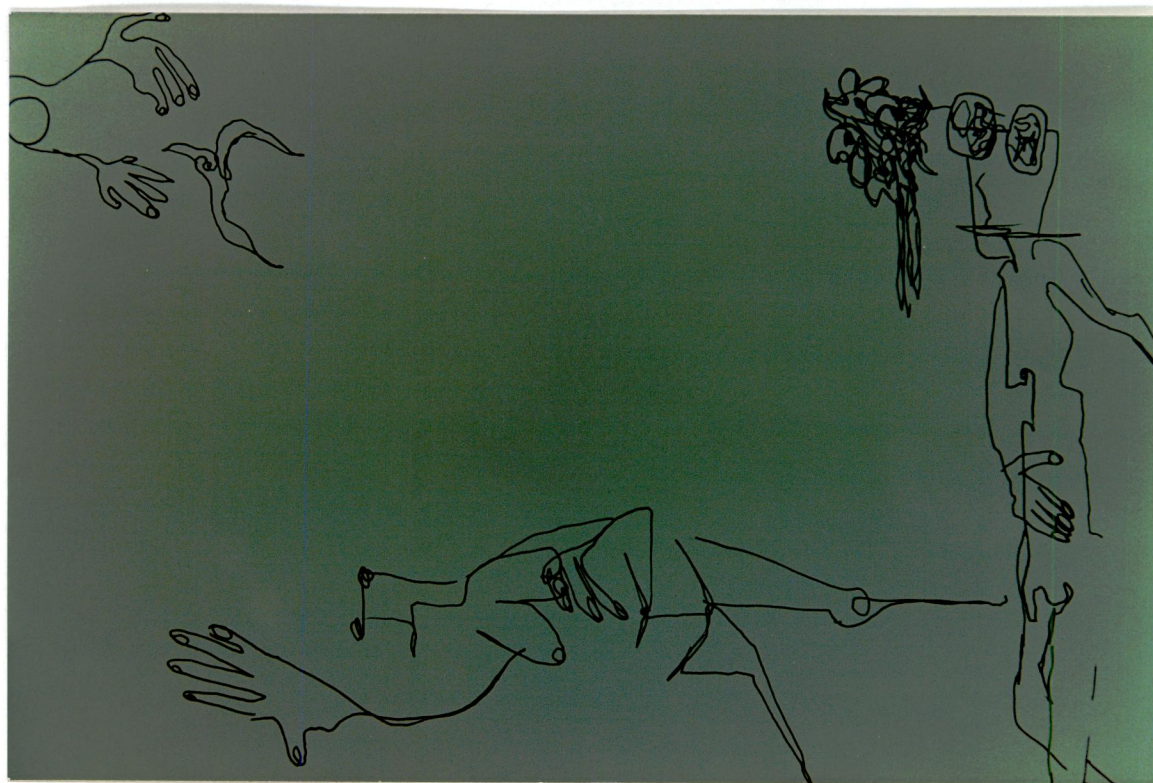
(T1) Non representation linear drawings - pen and ink on white cartridge







(T1) Non representation linear drawings - pen and ink on white cartridge





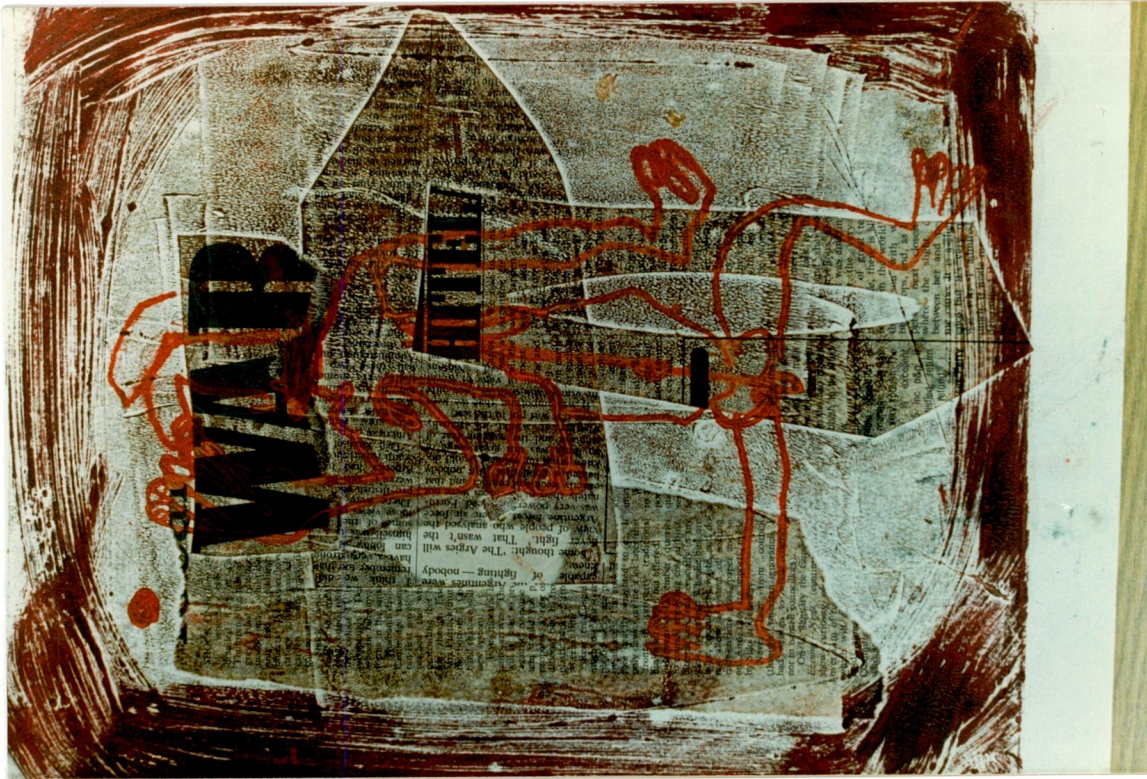


(U1) Note: Use of direct printing - use of frame within



(V1) Recalling earlier backgrounds - a frame and verbal imagery





(W1) Introduction of newspaper



and print to make backgrounds



Detail of Personal work use of



(X1) Homemade paper, stitching, paint burning, newspapers





combination of colour.

I began to print backgrounds similar to the shape backgrounds of my earlier work and superimposed the linear images on them. I also used cut-out newsprint for surface quality. Still having the home made paper, I began to print on it. Then I started making backgrounds on it using paint and cut-out paper and photographs. I then tried other methods and burned the paper at different areas giving beautiful burned edges and surface decoration. Using thread I began to sew and stitch the paper.

At this stage I felt my work was getting very exciting. All the areas I had started were now being used. All the different areas I had experimented with were now combining together.

Parallel to this I was looking at the Pre-Raphaelites and decided to try and recreate a Pre-Raphaelite style of painting yet fully modern and my own. As mentioned earlier, the Pre-Raphaelites were masters at using symbolism. These symbols served as visual clues to the viewer (see earlier). I wanted to update this idea and looked around to my environment to see what objects could be used. One theme which was often used by the Pre-Raphaelites was that of "The Lady of Shalot". The Lady of Shalot could only view the outside world through a mirror. In some aspects the television has become the equivalent of the mirror although we do not actually see a true reality, but a selective one. The television is usually on regardless of viewers.

I worked out several compositions for the final painting and finally chose one.

The uneven line of vision was directed to the space in between the two male

figures, one sitting the other standing.

The television was placed on a different line of vision in the left-hand corner of the canvas. Neither of the figures was looking at each other or at the television. I wanted to have a certain isolation and tension between the figures with the television existing in a reality of its own. I used other images to convey different meanings such as a book and a painting, objects which have had some influence on my work.

By confining myself to this medium I felt I could learn more about the whole process of painting while using different techniques in different areas. I wanted the interior to be cool so I used a tile flooring of cool colours.

My work, although primarily figurative, has moved into many areas using different techniques and media. This clearly indicates how adaptable the figure is and how it can be used to express many different feelings and emotions.

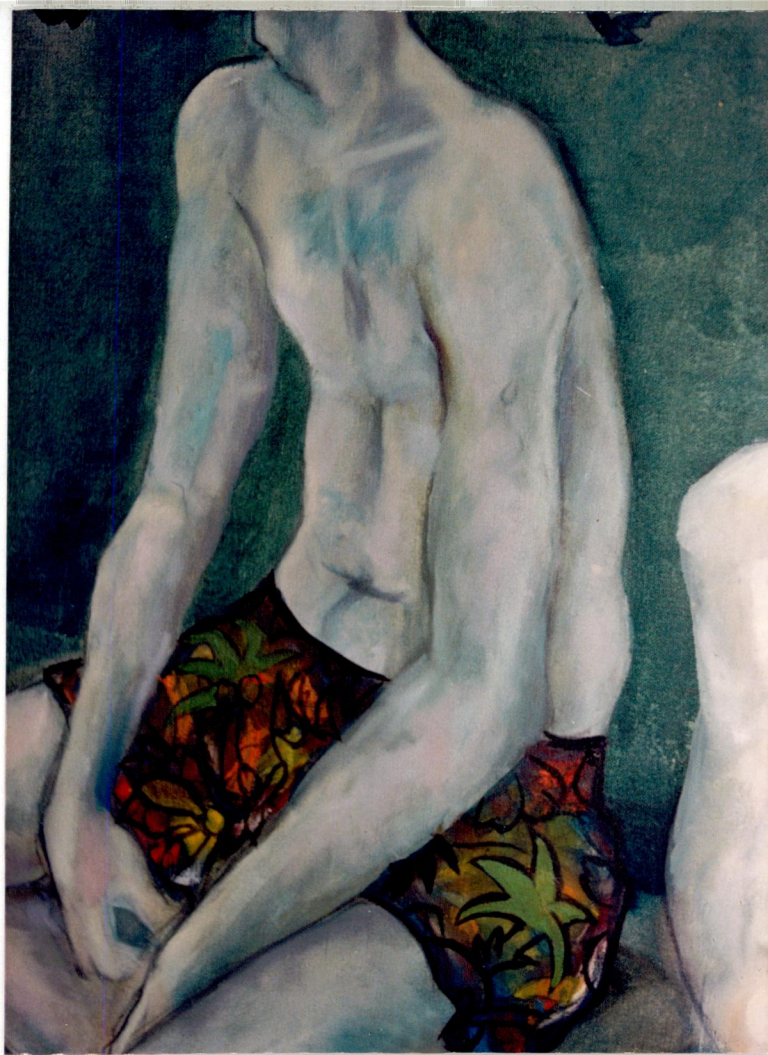
It is now necessary to look at some instances in history which have similar qualities and modes of expression as my work.



(B2) Use of symbolism in my painting - television - see text







(A2) Details of painting - use of washes, of colour - cool atmosphere



Choice of background colour, emphasise isolation of figures.



CHAPTER 3

Historical Context of Project

It is now necessary to look to instances in history which have used the same means of communication as suggested in my work and also to show how the project can be used as a starting point from which to handle art history in general.

As my project is based primarily on: (i) figurative sources, and (ii) the use of popular imagery and culture in art, it is to artists who have dealt with these sources that I will turn.

I will begin with a less obvious source, the use of popular imagery and culture in art. The obvious period to study would be the pop art movement of the 1950s and 1960s. However, there are other examples which are less obvious. I will look at two historical examples: certain works by Gustave Courbet (1819-77) and Vincent Van Gogh (1853-90).

Courbet came from the upper class of French peasantry. He was proud of his class and was strongly influenced by the 1848 revolution and by anarchist/socialist ideas of his day. His paintings sometimes contain a deliberate political comment designed to upset the bourgeoisie. One such work 'The Stone Breakers' shows two peasants engaged in the most back-breaking labour. The Stone Breakers was hailed as the first successful socialist painting. Courbet chose ordinary things as subjects and raised ordinary people to heroic levels worthy of history painting. He wished to record the morals of the exploited classes. During the nineteenth century in France, intellectuals studied and glorified the working people. The

(E2) Gustave Goubet 'Still life with Apples'



THE
NATIONAL
GALLERY
LONDON
1854-1954
150 YEARS

Jean-Denis Gatteau (1777-1857)
Still Life with Apples and
Carrots 44.5 cm x 81 cm
© National Gallery, London

Card No. 120
J27 Vincent Van Gogh
Printed in Great Britain for the Trustees
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fact that Courbet was influenced by popular culture can be confirmed by his painting "The Meeting" (1854), a painting which shows Courbet being greeted on the road by two men. The theme and general composition of the work was lifted from a detail of a popular engraving by Pierre Le Loup of Le Mans. T J Clark, a Courbet scholar, states that Courbet:

"Stayed close to the pictorial form and types of comedy which were basic to popular tradition, ... its sources but only in order to enforce their supremacy. He made an art which claimed by its scale and its proud title 'History Painting' a kind of hegemony over the culture of the dominant classes."

The use by Van Gogh of the popular culture is also worth noting. He loved the wood engravings which appeared in English magazines such as "Illustrated London News" and the "Graphic". In the 1860s and 1890s there was a popular socialist trend in these illustrations (images of workhouses, poverty etc.). One important influence was a work by Luke Fields. The illustration showed an empty chair in Dickens study after he died. Van Gogh realised the significance of the chair and its capacity for symbolism.

Before discussing how one could implement this approach, it is necessary to look at the other movement mentioned earlier, that is the movement known as "Pop Art". This movement is the art tradition that most clearly manifests a positive response towards mass culture. The expression "Pop Art" encompasses works of fine art paintings, sculptures, collages and prints produced by professional artists who used popular culture and mass media material as techniques and conventions of representation. Pop artists did not use the environment of 'nature' in the sense of trees and fields as the Impressionists did. Instead they used the urban environment that of buildings, interiors, road, traffic signs, newspapers, radio and television

broadcasts. Our environment has become media saturated. This whole idea of using the environment is very important but is however often neglected by educationalists.

It was in England in the 1950s that the term Pop Art came into popular usage. It quickly spread to the major consumer countries of the west. The major centres were New York and London. In Britain the key pop artists were Hamilton, Paolozzi, David Hockney and R. B. Kitaj.

In America pop artists included Roy Lichenstein, Andy Warhol, Claus Oldenburg and Robert Indiana.

The distinctive features of Pop Art was the sheer number of artists working in a similar manner simultaneously and the interest they demonstrated in the content of popular and mass culture.

Roy Lichenstein, an American pop artist, used mass media as a source for his subject matter. He also turned to earlier styles of painting and exploited them in a humorous way. In "Little Big Painting" (1965) his subject matter is a detail of brush stroke taken from an action painting. Lichenstein is parodying one of their main stylistic mannerisms lines, patterns, dots and areas of colour all derived from flat images are employed in his three-dimensional work. Lichenstein is interested in the form of the comic strip rather than its content.

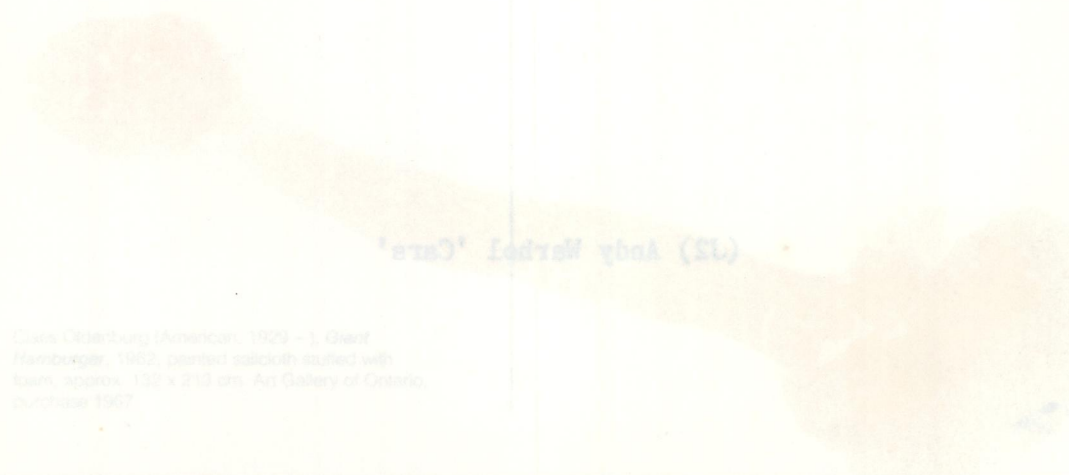
It was the pop tradition that first highlighted the huge culture division. Pop art was a positive response to the consumer societies of Europe and America.

Pop Art
(I2) Claes Oldenburg 'Giant Hamburger'



Art Gallery of Ontario

Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario



Clara Oldenburg (American, 1929 -), Giant
Hamburger, 1962, painted sculpture suited with
faux, approx. 130 x 210 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario,
purchase 1967

"I consume therefore I am" clearly sums up the new ethos of living. ("The Age of Mass Media and Culture").

Perhaps one of the best known artists of this movement was Andy Warhol. He confronted and became personally involved in the mass culture. His philosophy of "business art" clearly indicates his belief.

"Business art is the step that comes after art. I started as a commercial artist and I want to finish as a business artist Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art ... making money is art and making art and good business is the best art."

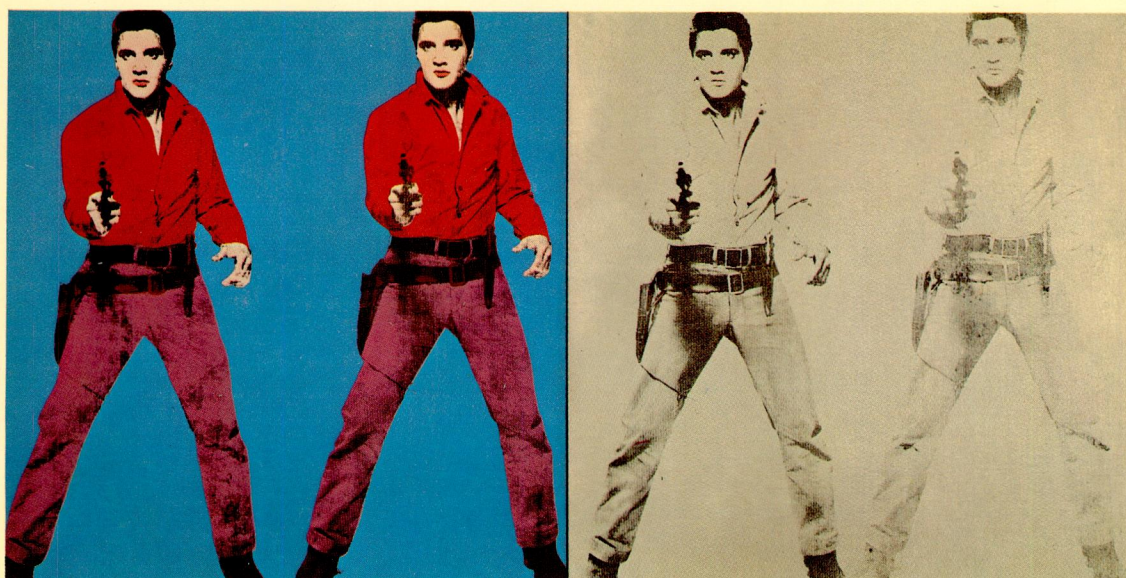
By using contemporary idols and icons as images, he was able to set himself apart from his contemporary artists, e.g. "Marilyn Monroe" (1962).

Warhol embraced all types of media. He was indeed a consumer child.

The use of mass culture by fine artists is a valid starting point of study. There are also other areas of study, for instance how mass culture uses art. Study of this question leads to an awareness of the influence of the artistic heritage in our society.

Many paintings by famous artists have been borrowed wholesale and used on magazine covers, advertising billboards, L.P. covers and other areas in the business world.

As well as man made environments, artists have turned to the natural environment as a source of inspiration. Henry Moore, the English sculptor, highlights this in the following quotation:



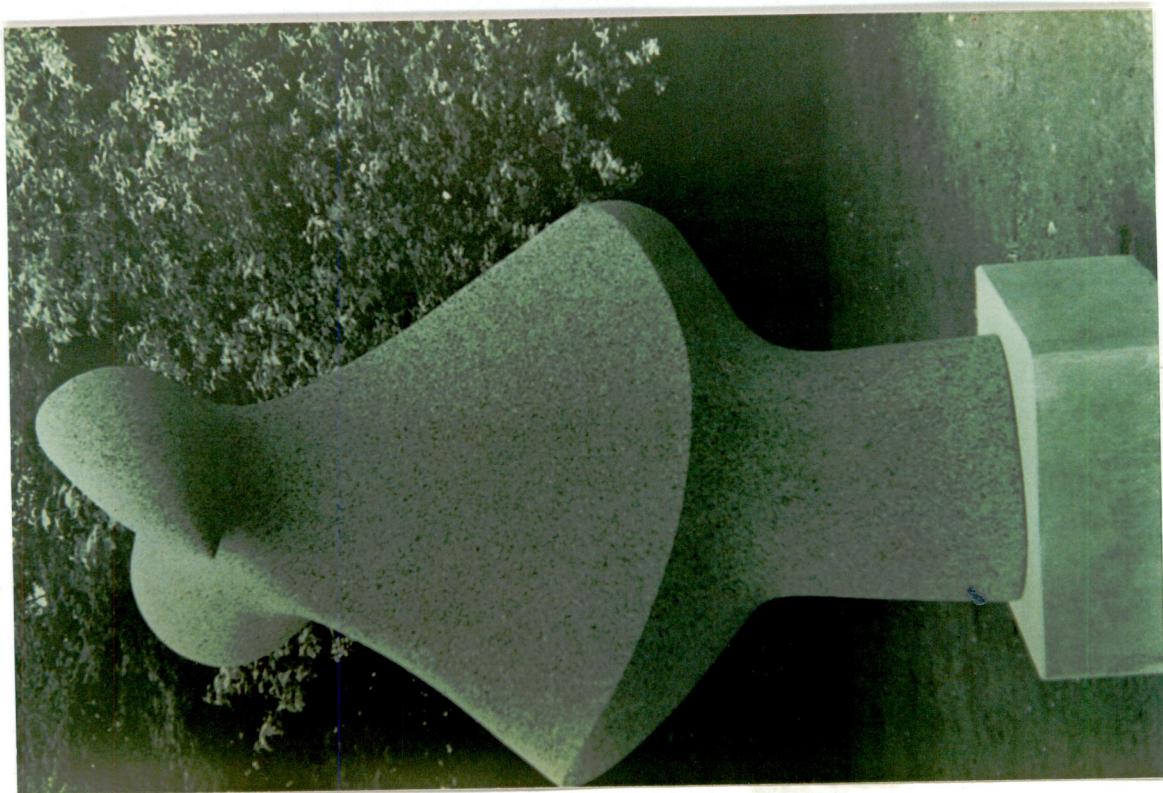
(K2) Andy Warhol 'Elvis I and II' 1964. Note: use of popular icons

AGO
Art Gallery of Ontario

Audrey Wright (American, 1930–), *Two Faces II*, 1994, left panel:
oilscreen on acrylic, right panel: oilscreen on aluminum,
2-panel painting, each 206.3 x 305.3 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario,
gift from the Woman + Committee Fund, 1995.



(N2) David Hockney 'Nicky Rae'



(02) Henry Moore



"I would like my work to be thought of as a celebration of life and nature."

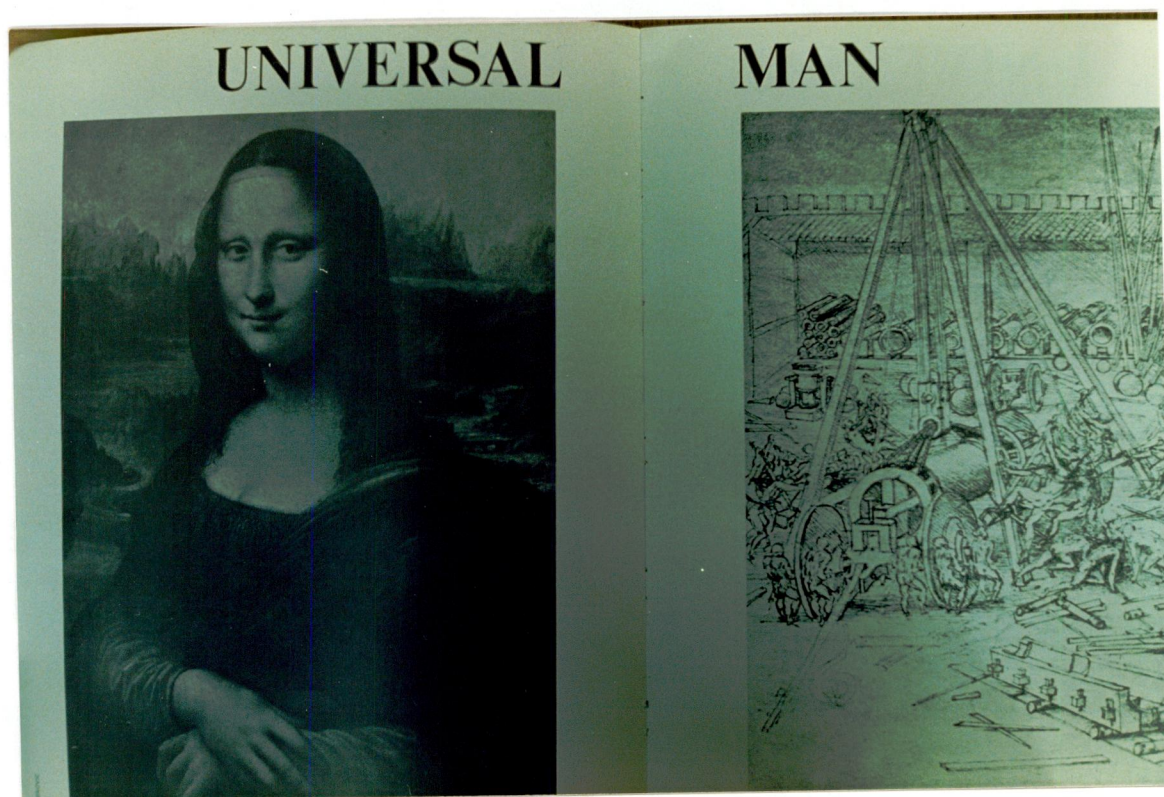
It was to the different varieties of shapes, patterns and rhythms in nature that Henry Moore looked for ideas. He did not merely copy nature, but transformed it by giving expression to personal feelings and vision. The effect of environmental factors on nature and the resultant growth was of particular interest to Moore. Moore wanted to nurture peoples understanding of nature and life to make them sensitive to it and to unblindfold their eyes. Moore lived through his eyes. Moore wished to capture the vitality of nature in his work. The artists he admired were those who had a life giving power in their works. He wanted to put a point of view about life across to us, which he, by his own sensitivity to it, had determined as out of the ordinary. The other great source of his work was the human figure, especially the female nude. The energy form and inner truth of the figure fascinated him. After the face, the hands were the most expressive form of the body to him.

The three areas discussed in this section: (a) Use of pop imagery in the works of Courbet and Van Gogh; (2) Pop Art; and (3) The work of Henry Moore, touch on the three main directions which could be taken to introduce art history to the pupils.

While teaching art history to the pupils, I tried to make it more immediate showing how it plays a valid role in shaping our society. I did this by illustrating how people have drawn on the past either by transforming it or using it directly in advertising, design etc.

I looked at different areas and tried to relate it to their interest and

(Q2) The use of art in advertisement





culture. While teaching revolution and the romantic movement, I questioned the pupils on the cover of the "Pogues" album, "Rum, Sodomy and Lash" getting them to describe it and questioning them on the subject matter. This provided a relationship between the lesson and their interests. I then discussed problems such as where did they think the image came from? Could they date it? - how? Who designed it? Finally, I showed them "The Raft of the Medusa" (1818-19) by Theodore Gericault asking them where they had seen it before. It was of course used on the album cover.

By highlighting this link the pupils can see the influence art has even on their interests. Again, while studying Edouard Manet, I showed the copy of a "Bow Wow Wow" album. I questioned them on whether they found it (1) unusual or (2) shocking. By looking at it, questions arose as to its origins, finally the original was shown. The original being Edouard Manet's "Le Dejeuner Sur l'Herbe" (1863).

The difference between both was shown and this led to a talk on techniques and how modern machinery was used to substitute different people in the same poses. The fact that the painting when first exhibited created an outcry was debated. Have we become immune to it and why?

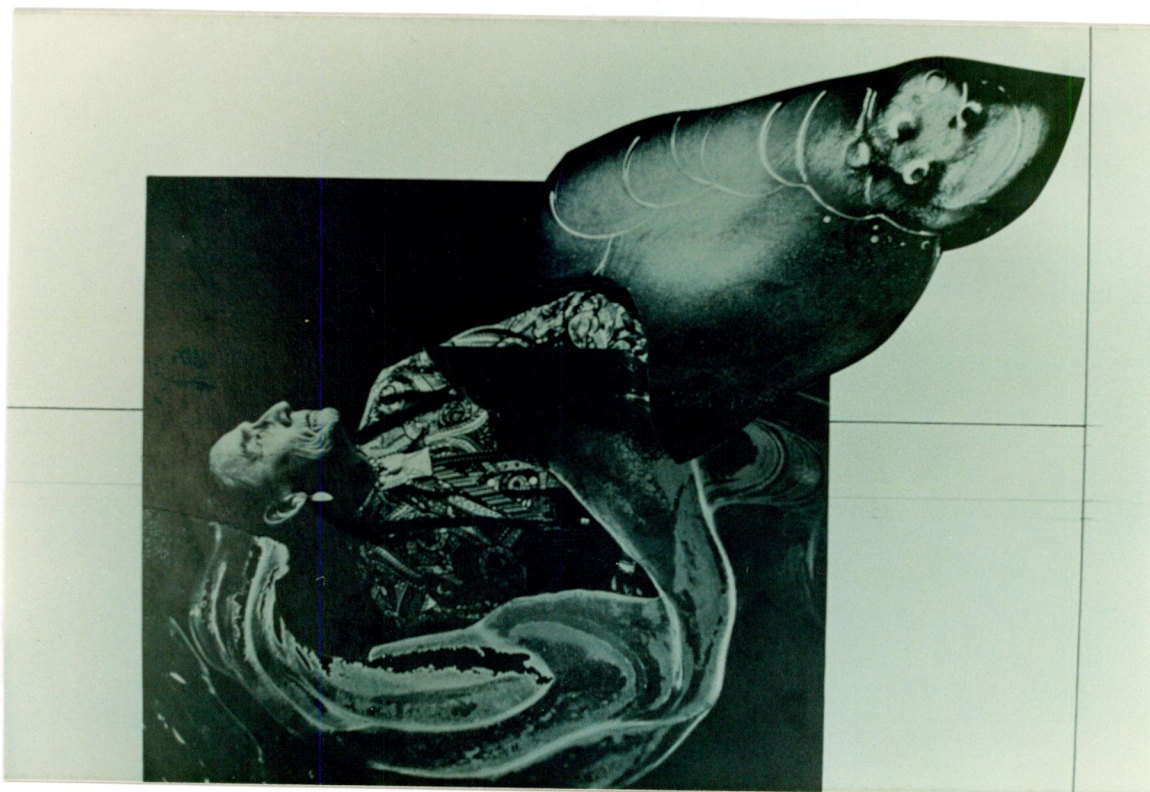
When looking at the spreading influence of styles of art from one country to another, I drew parallels between that and how today's 'fads' in fashion and music spread today, e.g. from London to Dublin through the press and television.

As I introduced new artists to the pupils I tried to create live identities for them. When discussing Van Gogh I talked about his illness and the kind of life he had. Likewise when discussing Pissarro I told of how he

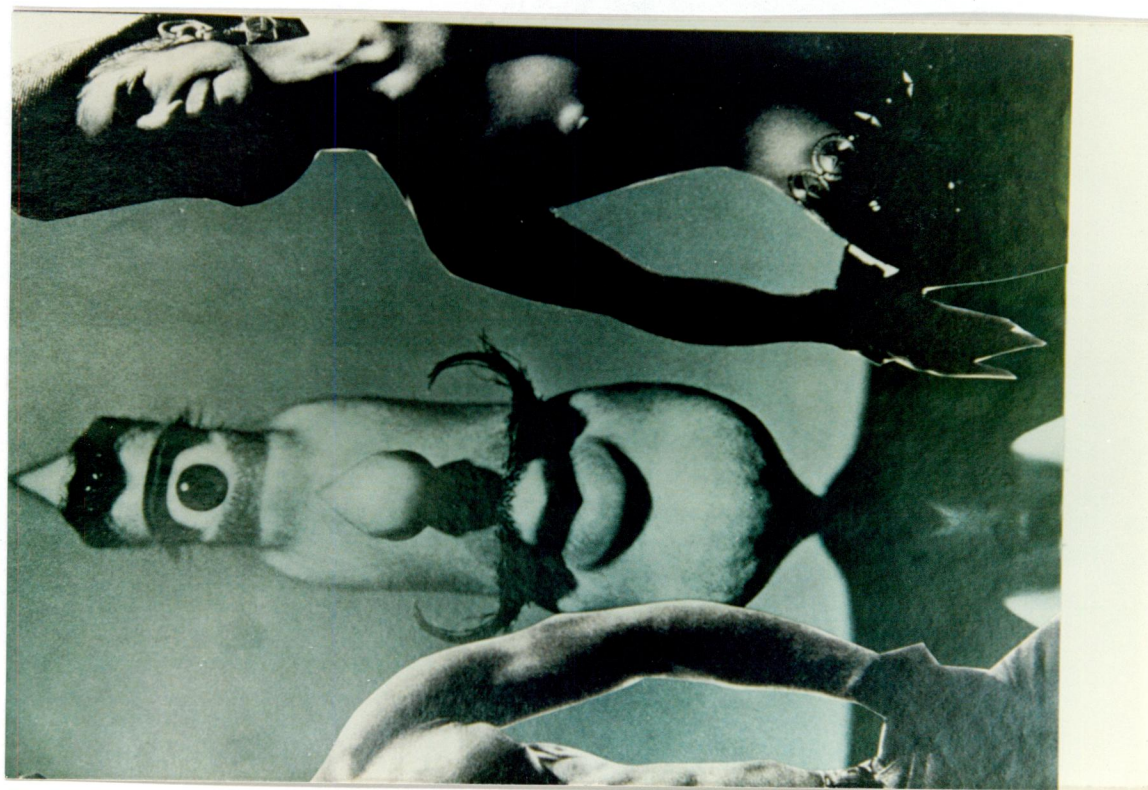
(M2) Images from the pop culture



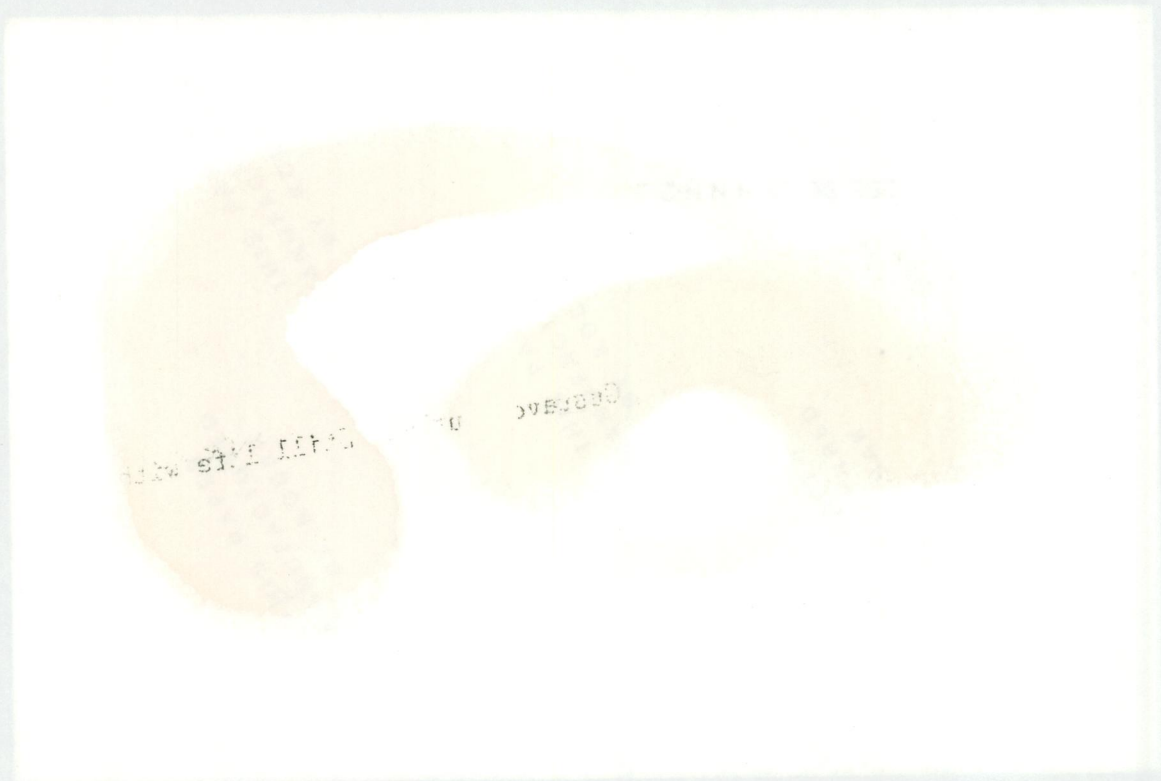




(R2) Influence of Surrealism



On Fashion crossover



ran away to sea at fourteen. These short narrations bring the artists alive to the pupils. By showing that they suffered from the same problems and worries as the pupils, they and their work becomes demystified.

As the project (which I will discuss in greater detail later) is concerned with figure, the way other artists dealt with the figure was highlighted, both the pupil and artists have the same problem but different solutions.

This whole process is the key, I believe, to teaching art history. By relating it to the experiences and lives of the pupils it is no longer stuffy but alive with vitality. This experience will be explored fully in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

(1) Experience - A defence of the empirical approach in art education

The idea of experience and perceptual awareness being the cornerstone of art education is not new and has been advocated by a number of people such as Jean Jaques Rousseau and John Dewey throughout the years. For instance John Dewey says:

"The child comes to the traditional school with a healthy body and a more or less unwilling mind though in fact he does not bring both his mind and body with him; he has to leave his mind behind him because there is no way to use it in school. If he had a purely abstract mind he could bring it to the school with him but his is a concrete one interested in concrete things and unless these things get over into school life he cannot take his mind with him." (John Dewey).

Dewey himself was an admirer of Jean Jaques Rousseau, an important thinker of the seventeenth century. His theory has had a profound effect on education, although his practical endeavours were not altogether successful.

Through his writings Rousseau developed ideas for a universal system of education. In his novel "La Nouvelle He-Loise" we have a plea for the dominance of environment over hereditary methods. The general aim of education was "liberty and happiness as a whole". Rousseau distinguished various developmental stages for the child, each having its own educational characteristics:

- (i) The first stage 'infancy' which is characterised by habit and the training of the emotions.
- (ii) The second stage 'childhood', characterised by necessity and the training of the senses.
- (iii) The third stage 'boyhood', characterised by 'utility' and the training of the intellect. (It is interesting to note that the senses are 'trained' before the intellect.)
- (iv) Adolescence, the stage of morality and of moral, aesthetic and social education.

In this work Rousseau has stressed the importance of 'emotion', 'senses', intellect and social education. Later in "Emile" Rousseau instructs us to live according to nature. Therefore education in his view follows the order of nature. Rousseau does not however define his use of 'nature'.

"When I want to train a natural man I do not want to make him a savage and to send him back to the woods but that living in the whirl of social life it is not enough that he should not let himself be carried away by the passions and prejudices of man, let him see with his eyes and feel with his heart and let him owe no law but that of reason." ("Emile", p. 212).

Rousseau had a negative view of society. The purpose of education therefore was to prepare the individual for the dangers which society could pose rather than the positive exploitation of the opportunities which would arise.

Rousseau wished to develop in Emile an 'ethical constancy' which is similar

to what I see as one of the functions of art education today, i.e. to develop a deeper critical judgement by the pupils of their ownlives.

At the beginning of "Emile" Rousseau states that education stems from objects in nature and from man himself and that the problem of education is the relationship of man to his physical and social environment. The boy must be brought up socially yet not be corrupted by society but rather to be in Kants terms: 'morally autonomous'.

'Mans proper study' Rousseau explained, is that of his relationship to his environment ("Emile" p. 175). Again 'we are working in agreement with nature and while shape is shaping the physical man we are striving to shape his moral being'. ("Emile" p. 278).

In this view the teacher is perceived as a guide giving 'guidance' to the pupil. The art of teaching, Rousseau further explains, consists in making the pupils wish to learn. ("Emile" p. 210). 'We learn nothing from a lesson we detest.'

Mans first teachers are, in Rousseaus opinions, our feet, hands and eyes etc. It is through these means that we make concrete the situations encountered in life. He felt that teachers laid too much stress upon words.

"Give your scholar no verbal lessons, they should be taught by experience alone." ("Emile" p. 56). Emile was to be educated entirely through first hand experience.

"Teach by doing whatever you can and only fall back upon words when doing



(S2) Aesthetic in 'Everyday Life'





is out of the question." ("Emile", p. 44).

Rousseau had in effect sown the seeds of change in art education. Issues raised in his works are still influencing us today.

In relation to my project, Rousseau's important points are:

- (i) The need to develop 'ethical constancy' in pupils.
- (ii) Recognition that education comes from nature, things and man.
- (iii) The problem of education is the relationship between man and his physical and social environment.
- (iv) Man's primary area of study should be that of his relationship with the environment.
- (v) The idea that one should teach at a level which suits the pupils age. This also echoes the work of Piaget and his stages of learning.
- (vi) That the teacher should avoid over-reliance on words.
- (vii) The vital importance of experience.

More directly influential on school systems was Pestalozzi since he actually tried out Rousseaus ideas in a real school situation and recorded the experience in published works. He also set up teacher training under the Swiss state.

In "Letters to Greaves" (p. 85), Pestalozzi states that the aim of education is not perfection in school accomplishments but in fitness for life. In his "Ansichlen Und Ertahrungen" (Neuhof 1774), Pestalozzi wished to develop the minds of the pupils through self instruction and to awaken their inner dignity and worth. In his book "The Evening Hours of Hermit" (1780), he warns parents not to hurry children into working at things remote from the realities of life and their immediate interests. This is similar to Rousseau's view and stresses what I wish to achieve by trying to relate art to the experience of my pupils.

Montessori was one of the first to apply a psychological method in education. This implied for the first time that the educative process should be adapted to the stage of mental development of the child and his or her interests, very similar to Pestalozzi and Rousseau.

In "Montessori Method" (p. 356), speaking of the child, Montessori says that:

"his own self development is his true and almost only pleasure, he works for the enjoyment of working."

Montessori advocated that the environment should likewise be adjusted to "give the child an environment in which everything is so constructed in proportion to himself and let him live therein." ("The Absorbent Mind" p. 140).

She further advocated:

(i) Exercises of practical life.



(T2) The Aesthetic in 'Everyday Life'





(T2) The Aesthetic in 'Everyday Life'



(ii) Exercises in sensory training and didactic exercise.

Montessori believed, like Aristotle, that:

"There is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses". She says in "Montessori Methods", p. 221, stressing the importance of sensory experience and learning.

"And that if we multiply the sensations and develop the capacity for appreciating five differences in stimuli, we refine the sensibility and multiply man's pleasures."

In her treatise on teacher training she felt that the training of the teacher should teach her/him when to refrain from intervention in the child's activities, and perhaps less importantly, when to intervene.

Montessori also showed great insight when stressing the importance of work (as fun) instead of disorganised play and a respect for the environment in an age of pollution.

In the same tradition, John Dewey proposed that life itself should provide the basic experience for the education of the child. He wished in his "Dewey School" to bring education more in line with the activities of daily life. He looked to society as the environment in which it would take place. Man's interaction with his environment constituted experience for Dewey. In the following quotation Dewey discussed what he believed was the problem of education:

"The serious matter is that philosophers have derived that common

experience is capable of developing from within itself ... and will create inherent standards of judgement and value [They have failed] to realise the value that intelligent search could reveal ... among the things of ordinary experience." (Experience and Nature, p. 38).

This notion of experience and the development of deeper perceptual awareness is not new and underlays many famous treatise of education. It is important to try to clarify the meaning of experience in the context of this paper. This is what I shall attempt to do in the next chapter, 'Theoretical Support for the Empirical Approach'.

(2) Theoretical Support for the Empirical Approach

In the previous section I have touched on some of the ideas of writers exploring the notion of education as an area for experience. Now I wish to turn briefly to areas within education, particularly those relevant to the art teacher. The next section is divided into three main areas. These are:

- (1) The aims of education with particular reference to art education.
- (2) The nature of experience.
- (3) The educational relevance of aesthetic experience and what type of environment is conducive to its production.

By the end of these four chapters the educational relevance of my project will be substantiated through reference to the works of a selection of philosophers, educationalists and teachers.

- (1) The aim of education, with particular reference to art education:

Socrates described his teaching as a form of 'midwifery' in which "many fair things" are brought 'forth giving birth to worthwhile thoughts as a result of rigorous discussion with Socrates'. This notion of bringing 'forth' from within is also echoed in the following quotation from Martin Heidegger:

"True learning only occurs where the taking of what one already has is a self giving and is experienced as such The most difficult learning is

to come to know all the way what we already know." ("What is a Thing", p. 73). Again, William Godwin states "Education like that of every other moral process is the generation of happiness." ("The Enquirer", 1977).

Plato stated "that the aim of education should be to associate feelings of pleasure with what is good and feeling of pain with what is evil." ("The Laws of Plato", BK II).

More recently in 1985 the Curriculum and Examinations Board published 'The Arts in Education', dealing specifically with the arts in Irish education, in which it proposed three general aims of arts education, these were:

- (i) To develop a love of, interest in and value for the arts.
- (ii) To achieve a balance between artistic education (making art) and aesthetic education (receiving art).
- (iii) To acquaint the student with the traditions of art.

This paper will be referred to again in the following sections.

I have dealt with quotations from several writers on the aims of education. There are many more, some agreeing, others disagreeing with the views expressed by them. What is the relationship between art and education? Are they mutually exclusive or are they interdependent? Can, or should, one exist without the other? What is the importance of art education, if any?

These are the types of questions which I have had to contend with while

doing this project. In this next section I will try to deal with these issues.

For in the words of Rudolf Arnheim (1966, 12): "Art is the most powerful reminder that man cannot live by bread alone." Rosemary Gordon claims that through the arts man "has discovered a language which least distorts the original message." ("A Very Private World" 1972.) William Godwin states that we have in "Art an instrument of education and not merely a subject to be taught".

In "Art and Art Education", Dick Field raises such questions as "what do we mean when we talk of art education? Is art education teaching art?" It would be inadequate to assume this, as the only function of art education. Again he asks "does teaching art mean teaching about art? or does it mean teaching how to make art? Teaching principles? or teaching techniques?". Clearly these questions are very complicated and do not offer any simple answers.

As we discuss these questions we have to decide what we mean by art education; and this leads us to the question of the relationship stated earlier in what sense is art education dependent upon art? or art upon art education?

In the "Report of the Board of Studies" (p.23), visual education is defined as "an active process through which the student learns to see and think visually". It also states that this process "involves both the artistic and the aesthetic experience" emphasising a interdependent relationship between making and receiving art.

In "Art and Art Education" (p. 138), Dick Field believes that at "our

present period art education seems to be moving into a period of greater concern, offering its own singular contribution to human experience, rather than considering it merely in an instrumental way". I support this view.

Herbert Reads conception of art education is that everyone is an artist in his own area whatever his profession. It may be surprising to find that in several primitive tribes work on this very principle. In certain aboriginal tribes each tribe member is an artist at some point of time in their life.

It is a particularly western notion which assumes that aesthetic experience is endemic to a special kind of elitist education, rather than a phenomena which is essential to the fabric of culture. ("The study of Education and Art".)

I strongly believe that the experience of art is naturally available to all human beings. It should not be elitist. This is what I wish to express in my teaching.

It is to the nature of this experience I will now turn.

CHAPTER 5

The Nature of Experience:

In this project I have proposed to nurture a greater potential for deeper experience and awareness in the lives of the pupils. It is at this point necessary to clarify the meaning of experience and assess how a classroom environment can be built that is most conducive to this experience.

When discussing experience and a deepening of it I am talking about "the aesthetics to be found in ordinary conditions of experience which are not usually recognised as being aesthetic". "It is a natural experience yet is sometimes undervalued. It is available to all yet is not necessary availed of. It is always potent yet its potential can remain unexplored." "The degree of significance of the experience of art will vary from one individual to another hence the need for reoccurring opportunities to encounter the experience." (Bannister, 1966.)

John Dewey comes to terms with the aesthetic in the following (Art as Experience, p. 6):

"In order to understand the aesthetic in the approved forms of art one must begin to understand it in its raw state in the common scenes and happenings that captures the senses of man stimulating his interest and arousing interest as he looks and listens ... the sights that hold the world ... the fire engine rushing by ... the sources of art in human experience will be learned by him who sees ... of the spectator in poking the sticks of burning wood ... nonetheless fascinated by the colourful drama of change enacted before his eyes."

This is similar to Elliot Eisners process or goal values.

The importance of the everyday environment of the pupils and its contents has been grossly understated. These offer a great source of aesthetic experience but are often overlooked. Artifacts reflect the society that produces them,

The following from Dewey's 'Art as Experience' p. 6 raises important notions. "So persuasive are the notions that set art upon a remote pedestal that many a person would be shocked if told that he enjoyed his casual recreations in part at least because of their aesthetic quality. The arts which today have the most life for the average person are things not regarded as being 'High Art' - if such a thing really exists, e.g. pop music, television, the comic strip. Our understanding and knowledge of art is relegated to the museum and gallery. The unconquerable impulse towards experiences enjoyable in themselves finds such outlets as the daily environment provides." This is due to the 'false separation' of art from the objects and scenes of ordinary experience. When, because of their inaccessibility, objects deemed works of fine art seem bloodless to the mass of people, aesthetic hunger is undoubtedly likely to seek the cheap and vulgar". This confronts the controversial though essential place of Kitsch in society as a catharsis for emotions that are difficult to confront in a particular society or context. People look on the Kitsch as an approachable forum of recognised experiences. It is through this forum that they let out deep emotional feelings having not learned the language of so called 'high art'.

Dewey again highlights the fact that we do not have to travel thousands of miles to find peoples for whom everything that embodies the sense of



(U2) Use of feathers and jewels



In bodily ornamentation - Art in everyday life



immediate living is an object of intense admiration. "Bodily scarifications, waving feathers ... form the content of aesthetic arts and presumably without the vulgarity of class exhibitionism that attend their analogues today ... domestic utensils ... pots, bowls ... with such delighted care that today we hunt them out and give them places of honor in our art museums. Yet in their own time, such things were enhancements of the processes of everyday life." (The Live Creature, p. 7). Dewey here again highlights an important point. In these tribal societies we find both utilitarian and ceremonial tools such as axes each having a specific meaning and identity. In every society there are ceremonial and utilitarian objects.

Later Dewey discusses the arts as an integral part in the celebrations and rituals of life. Dancing and pantomime were predecessors to our contemporary theatre. Even cave paintings had scenes which were closely bound up with our experiences of life.

Drama, music, painting and architecture had no connection with theatre, galleries or museums but were used in the expression of community life.

Dewey finds more evidence of this in Athenian society where athletic sports, as well as drama, celebrated and enforced the traditions of race and group, teaching the people, commemorating glories and intensifying their civic pride. That the close interaction of art and life is evident is shown even in the writings of Plato who suggests the necessity of censorship of poets and dramatists and musicians in preservation of the morality of the state. He even suggested that a change from the Doric to the Lydian mode in music would be the catalyst for civic destruction.

We could pick the Renaissance as the start of "Art for Arts Sake" and so alienating art from the needs of daily life. The result is the adoption of the art of an alien culture.

Evidently the separation of art from common experience is a recent one. Objects that were in the past valid and significant because of their place in the life of a community now function in isolation from the condition of their origin. By the same token they are separated from common experiences and serve as insignia of taste and indicators of special culture.

A divide has also been created by ordinary and aesthetic experience. This effects the whole practice of living, driving away aesthetic perceptions that are necessary ingredients of happiness or reducing them to the level of 'compensating transient pleasurable excitations'. It is this separation that I wish to address, the nature of the problem being the reuniting of aesthetic experience with normal living.

Even a basic experience if authentically experienced as Dewey says (p. 11 'Art as Experience') more qualified to give insight to the intrinsic nature of aesthetic experience than is an object already set apart from any other mode of experience. He continues by saying that if works of art were placed directly in a human context of popular esteem, they would have a much wider appeal than when pigeon-holed. Dewey raises important questions such as:

"How is it that the everyday making of things grows into the form of making which is genuinely artistic?"

and

"How is it that our everyday enjoyment of scenes and situations develops into the peculiar satisfaction that attends the experience which is emphatically aesthetic?"

and

"How can teachers affect experience?"

He tries to answer these questions by looking at the nature of experience and the factors that contribute to it. According to Dewey the nature of experience is determined by the essential condition of life. Life however goes on in an environment not merely in it but because of it through interplay with it. The destiny of a living being is bound up with its interchange with the environment. Through a relationship of change breaking away from and then uniting with the environment, an organism grows never returning to its original state. For it is changed by the separation through which it has passed. If the divide between organism and environment is too great then the organism dies. Life grows when through disparity new beneficial change occurs. These biological happenings are more than just that they reach to the roots of the aesthetic in experience.

Dewey states further that direct experience comes from nature and men interacting with each other.

There are however situations in which aesthetic experience could not exist. A situation of 'mere flux, change, would not be culmative'. There would not be a movement toward an end. Stability and rest would have no being.

Where everything is at an end there is no challenge, no fulfilment.

Continuing, Dewey states that because we live in a world of movement the experience of a living creature is capable of aesthetic quality.

By its nature, individual experience varies from one extreme to another. The process of grasping and defining the nature of the experience may therefore be longer for some of us and shorter for others. The experience of art is reinforced by becoming sensitive to its nature.

Concluding Dewey states that:

"To grasp the sources of aesthetic experience it is, therefore necessary to have recourse to animal life below the human scale."

It is ignorance that validates the idea that the connection of art and aesthetic perception with experience signifies a lowering of their significance and dignity. "Because experience is the fulfilment of an organism in the struggles Even in its rudimentary forms it contains richness to what Santayana Well calls 'hushed reverberations.'"* (John Dewey 'Art as Experience', p. 19).

*"These familiar flowers, those well remembered bird notes, this sky with its fitful brightness, these furrowed and grassy fields each with a sort of personality given to it by the capricious hedge such things as these are the mother tongue of our imagination the language that is inextricable Our delight in the sunshine of the deep blades of grass ... faint perception of weaned souls ... and grass of far off years which shall live in us and transform our perception into love." (George Elliott in 'The

Mill on the Floss'.)

In the next chapter I will discuss how to implement these philosophies of Dewey in the classroom situation.

CHAPTER 6

Fostering the Aesthetic Domain in the Classroom

In the previous section the meaning and value of experience, according to John Dewey, was discussed. It is now necessary to discuss how to implement this approach in the classroom.

In his book "Meaning in the Arts" (p. 301 - 304), Louis Arnaud Reid states that the function of art education in liberal education is to develop "discriminating apprehension and understanding of the arts". He later substitutes aesthetic for the arts stating that the aesthetic is wider than the arts.

According to A. Reid, nature offers a limitless source of aesthetic attention. He felt that aesthetic education should develop increased awareness of the aesthetic everywhere. He felt that aesthetic experience takes us beyond our ordinary perception of things, it forces us deeper into ourselves in an attempt to gain a fuller view of the world.

He later defines the words 'art', 'aesthetic' and aesthetic experience. According to Reid, if there is an 'aesthetic experience' there must be objects which generate such experience. These he calls aesthetic objects. Art and the aesthetic overlap, sharing a common area, the aesthetic in art.

The aesthetic has relevance, according to Reid, in areas far outside the arts. The flight of a bird, the form of a shell, these also have aesthetic value.

There are differences between natural and man-made objects and artefacts. Both natural and manmade have certain aesthetic qualities. It is these qualities that I am concerned with. One must differentiate between the aesthetic experience of the natural or even of the 'haphazard' and that of the consciously made which after all is what art is concerned with. The difference is essentially social and personal. You read meaning into the haphazard but don't change it, the aesthetic object is not just lying about like a pile of stones or a picture, but a phenomenon related to a perceiving organism.

Reid states that aesthetic experience is an experience that is valued for its own sake intrinsically, whether it be listening, looking, performing etc., involvement in an aesthetic experience carries the desire to sustain and feel the full importance of the moment for its own sake. He stresses that in an aesthetic experience one perceives the integral relationships between the form and content of the experiences. Such perception is what makes aesthetic experience different from other but extrinsically valued, experiences in everyday life.

Having discussed the nature and importance of aesthetic experience, questions arise such as (1) what relevance does it have for the teacher? and (2) how can the teacher stimulate these experiences in the classroom situation? It is necessary to provide answers to these two questions.

In the following quotation Arnaud Reid (p. 302 "Meaning in the Arts") states that:

"Art education must as a first principle initiate people into what it feels like to live in music, move over and about in a painting ... the masses of

a sculpture dwell in a poem ... aesthetic insight feeling from the inside what art is ... this is the central starting point ..."

Manuel Barkan (1970) in "Guidelines Curriculum Development for Aesthetic Education" proposes as the goal for aesthetic education "to increase the students capacities to experience aesthetic qualities (values) in manmade and natural objects and events in his environment ..."

This quotation contains the essence of what I see as the goal of my project. To do this the teacher has to pay attention to the psychological and individual development of a pupil as a member of society.

This idea for art education is echoed in "The Report of the Board of Studies", issued by the Irish Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1987. It gives several general aims but the aims that affect my work the most are:

- (1) "8.2.2.: To help the pupils to know themselves and the world in visual terms through a structured integration of the dynamic between perceiving, thinking, feeling and expressing."
- (2) "8.2.3.: To offer ... range of visual experiences ... between artistic education (the pupil making art) and aesthetic education (the pupil receiving art)."
- (3) "8.2.4.: To develop pupils ability to make a wide range of symbols, images and forms appropriate to their developmental level, cultural background and personal disposition."
- (4) "8.2.5.: To develop the ability and confidence of pupils to make

and understand visual symbols and so to think visually."

- (5) "8.2.6.: To foster personal and social development ... making of art in pairs and in collaborative group subjects."
- (6) "8.2.8.: To place value on the individual expression ... sense of purpose ... mutual respect for the work of others."
- (7) "8.2.9.: ... wide variety of media to develop awareness and understanding of the range and quality of ideas, meaning, feelings that can be created and expressed."
- (8) "8.2.1.: ... history and traditions of art ... contemporary artists."
- (9) "8.4.2.: To provide adolescent pupils with an important personal resource during the transition from childhood to adulthood."
- (10) "8.4.6.: To develop pupils critical awareness and understanding of the visual elements of popular culture including film, video, fashion and the mass."

It was through my classroom project that I tried to realise some of these aims. The project was based on the figure, which would eventually lead to three-dimensional work, and began accordingly.

To introduce the pupils to the project I initially began life drawing in January. No mention was made however of the project. Classes in life drawing concerning outline, movement etc. were the cornerstone for further work.

(V2) Images from the pupils interests







(L2) The Pop Culture



Comic



I tried to relate the lesson to the interests of the pupils. When describing the poses, I got the pupils to illustrate how the figure would react, for example one pose had the figure trying to catch a bus leaving a bus stop. The poses were related to occurrences in everyday situations so that the pupils had a deeper involvement with the pose. This goes back to the work of Dewey who advocates the use of the experience of the pupils in art education.

The pupils worked on their own drawings of single figures, beginning with one figure and progressing to two. This was bringing a new problem to the pupils, i.e. how to compose the two figures within the boundaries of the page. This added extra complexity to the learning process.

The two-dimensional drawings were used as an introduction to the figure which would provide the basis upon which the three-dimensional work would build.

While drawing the figure, the pupils had to relate it to the background, drawing in some cases what was actually behind it and in other cases making a new background suiting the pose. This meant that the pupils would have to tackle the notion of scale and proportion.

Initially I decided on a 'natural' environment, in which to place the three-dimensional figures when finished, that environment being the grounds of the school. It consisted of a small area of trees and shrubs enclosed in one area by a building.

The students needed to gain some experience of the particular area, so for one period of the class they went out with drawing boards, paper and

pencils to the area. Worksheets had also been made and the students had to answer these. What I tried to do through this worksheet was to relate the students previous experience to the present, thereby incorporating the theories of Dewey and Montessori discussed earlier.

Regarding the aims 8.3.5. and 8.4.7. of the 'Report of the Board of Studies':

"8.3.5. To provide meaningful connections between the environment of the pupils and their artwork and so to develop appreciation and understanding the relationship between the art and the environment."

I tried to realise these by getting the pupils to create a bond with the particular environment both verbally and visually through sketches. We questioned the effect that man has on the environment.

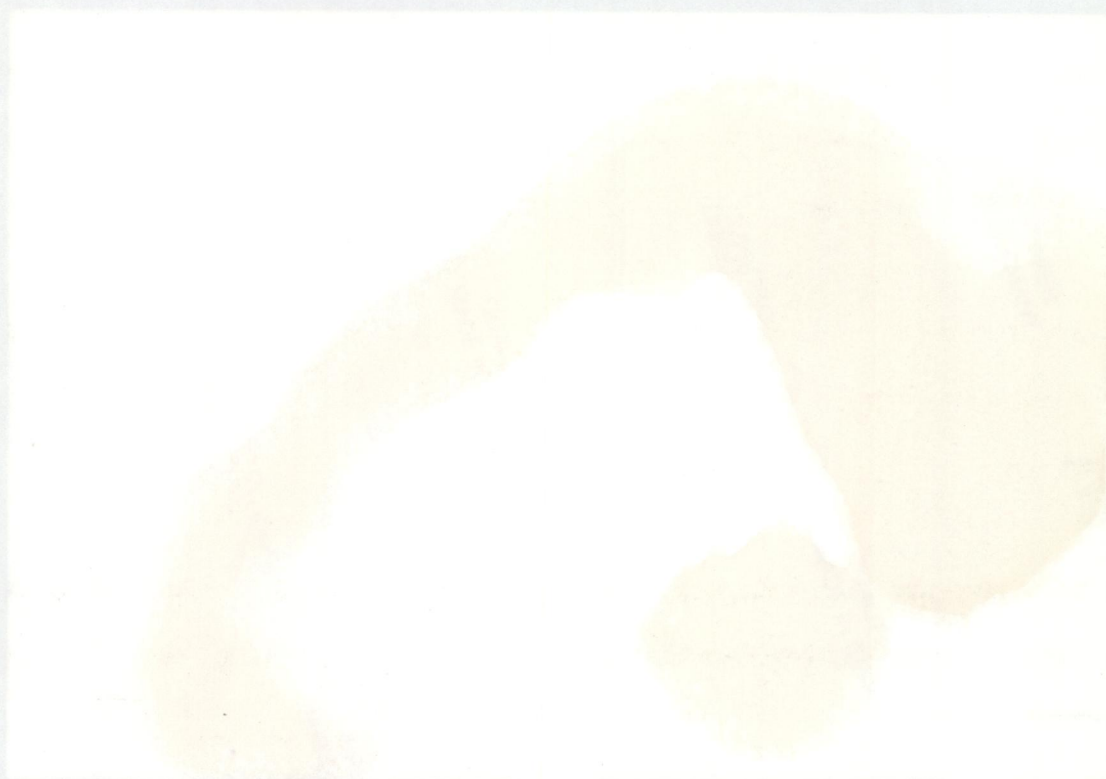
While out in the chosen environment, we discussed how a figure would be influenced by his surroundings particularly here. The pupils were very observant and some rich material was gained. Here are some of the pupils answers to the questions:

Q1 What affect has the environment on you. For example, do you feel like running through it? - "I feel small beneath the trees that are big"; "The building cramps it"; "The building makes the area looked lived in"; "I feel small against the big trees but big compared to the flowers and small shrubs. The ground is softish and wet. There is a lot of space about me"; "I feel as small or as tiny as a mouse against the height of buildings and trees"; "The air is crisp and carries a lot of sounds"; "The building cramps the environment and makes it unnatural"; "The air is cool and fresh, the grounds feels as if you could sink through it"; "I



(Y2) Mount Temple Comprehensive - The School Environment





feel like I could lie down and sleep for a week looking at the big trees and little plants. I feel empty in this place. The ground and grass are so soft you could use it for your bed".

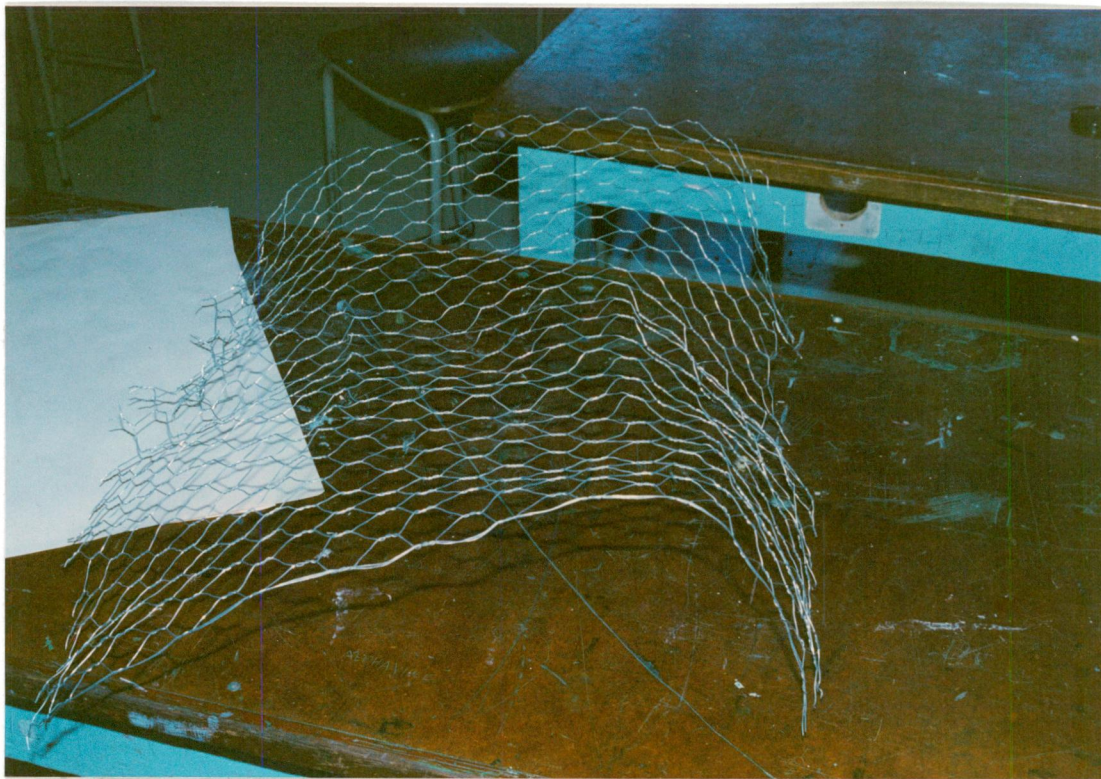
The next question was how a human figure would fit into the environment. This was to get the pupils involved in thinking about what pose their figures would eventually take. Some answers were: "You could probably be climbing up it, dressing up cold ... swing out of the tree"; "try to blend into the trees by taking a shape like a tree"; "you could stand looking at something in the distance with your hands in your pocket leaning on the tree".

Question: What type of surface would reflect the environment?: "Parts of burnt sienna brown to resemble dead leaves, grass and leafy patterns"; "shape of bendy, long twigs and branches, cracks and texture of the bark"; "reds, green, and browns, yellow, orange"; "sprays, spots and stripes".

As well as verbal reasoning, the pupils had to sketch the figure in the environment. This helped to strengthen the visual connection between the pupil and environment.

It was necessary to combine both verbal and visual learning. All the information that was collected from the environment was brought back to the classroom.

From the drawings the pupils decided on a suitable pose. The pupils were then divided into groups so that four pupils would work on each figure. By working in groups, the pupils would gain valuable experience of co-operation and peer group interaction, which will be for many the realities



(Z2) Making and modelling the initial chicken wire armature





of working life.

This co-operation became very evident when the pupils were cleaning up. Each pupil had their own duties without having to be told or reminded. They knew where to put the figures and transported them safely and successfully. This was very similar to the aim 8.2.8. where the Curriculum and Examinations Board stressed "a sense of purpose and achievement in each one and a mutual respect for the work of others".

The final figures were to be made from chicken wire and papier mache. This meant that the pupils had to use a new medium. By using one that was hard and coarse, like chicken wire, the pupils learned the skill needed to work with it. Before attempting the basic figure structure, the pupils were given a small piece of wire and clippers. By a process of discovery, they learned the most favourable methods for 'working' with the wire, how to join it, cut it etc.

This method was an extension of Dewey's theories. He stressed the importance of introducing methods that satisfy particular needs at certain times.

Having made the basic shapes of the figure using the chicken wire, the pupils then coated it in papier mache. This change of medium offered a new experience for the pupils.

I wanted the pupils to create the identity for their figures so I devised a type of discussion class which was videoed. I had an introduction tune which the pupils had to guess. It was from 'Neighbours', a particular soap opera which was very popular among their age group. It was through this introductory theme that the whole concept of the pop culture, film and



Applying papier mache to the wire armature.







(B3) Different poses from different angles







(A3) Applying plaster of paris to papier mache covering.





television began to enter the class.

We discussed theme tunes and how they could be used to evoke certain emotions and how this could be translated into visual terms.

The fact that the class was being videoed introduced a new technological dimension. This is very important especially in an age of development such as ours. The pupils need to be relaxed with new technology and become familiar with it.

During the time of the project, there was a major oil spill in Alaska. As this was quite an environmental issue, it seemed appropriate to introduce this to the class. I brought a front page photograph showing a solitary oil covered bird. We discussed the implications of the oil spill and its effects on the animal and human life there. I also questioned the strength of the image, why and how was it a powerful image? Why and how did the photographer pick this particular image? This type of questioning raises the level of understanding of the pupils. Through it they begin to recognise how and why certain images are chosen in the popular culture. How certain affects are achieved through editing and compositional devices. Even the use of verbal imagery is deliberate and intensifies the experience of the viewer.

Slowly the identity of the figures began to emerge. Group One decided on a pregnant woman and were good at describing the symbolic meaning of the figure, that is life and why they chose this particular theme. They felt that it echoed the growth in nature.



(C3) Different group figures





Group Two had a relaxed figure. The message here was one telling us how we live in a particular environment and how certain environments have a certain affect on us.

Group Three - this was an astronaut. Through this they wanted to represent the advancement of civilisation, conquering space through science. We discussed how we recognise the astronaut and what features we associate with him.

Group Four - this was a heavy metal fan who was in contrast to nature. He was to represent alienation. The heavy metal fan would wear badges, jeans and have a guitar.

Group Five - this particular group chose to have a figure who would get into the environment, merging with it.

Group Six decided on a figure dressed in summer clothes, yet in a winter climate, emphasising the hypocrisy of our lives.

Each group had an original approach and were, as is evident, able to substantiate their choice of figure. By investing their figures with symbolic meaning, they created visual bridges between themselves and their environment.

As the figures developed, the personality of the pupils began to be expressed through their work.

Having completed the figures the surface relating to each individual group had to be applied. The choice of surface decoration was left up to the pupils. Whether they used paint, collage or clothes, they had to make the



(D3) Various figures from different groups





final decision. It was at this stage that the use of mixed media in my own work was reflected in the work of the pupils.

The pupils were encouraged to bring in scraps of material, magazines and other media.

When the surfaces were finished, the figures were placed in the environment. We studied how they looked and whether they realised the aims of the pupils. The figures were then photographed and sketched which was a fitting end to the project.

CONCLUSION

Having discussed the project and its implications for the pupils, it is now necessary to evaluate both it and my own work.

This project, hoped to introduce many varied influences and experiences to the pupils. I wished to show how daily living offers many visual experiences, bringing art beyond the confines of the class, bringing a new vitality, yet providing valuable learning experience for the pupil.

In such a short time, one must be realistic and look at ones attempt as a catalyst or stimulus which would hopefully continue working with the pupils.

As the project progressed, I noticed a new interest and enjoyment in the pupil's work. They loved coming to and learning in the class. The fact that pupils wished to work late on their project is an indicator of this. The concept of working together in groups was beneficial to all as a sense of responsibility and organisation grew.

As a student teacher, I gained valuable insight. I developed a better relationship with the pupils and enjoyed teaching them. The fact that we were all working on the same theme helped ideas grow. Things that I started within the class 'crept' into my own work and viva versa. It is not just a matter of teaching art appreciation, but of communicating involvement with artists and learning from their ideas and messages.

I wanted to show the pupils that art could exist anywhere and in any form and that it just had to be found out. The best creative and technical advice is not useful if the pupils don't know how to use it.

My own work became very exciting this year and I had a much freer control over the media I used. This was very important as I feel, to quote Francis Bacon, 'that one should paint with everything'. By touching on various media I slowly evolved a process finally amalgamating all the small units.

There was a more personal dimension to my work than that of previous years. Yet within this freedom was control. My skill as a draughtsman and painter developed. I do see the limits of my project and teaching, but I believe as one grows, one gains experience. There are things I would change if I did the project again and there are areas that could be developed more. To make some difference however small to the lives of the pupils would be desirable.

To conclude I leave you with a quote from Oscar Wilde:

"I look forward to the time when aesthetics will take the place of ethics, when the sense of beauty will be the dominant law of life . . . it will never be so and I look forward to it." (Dorian Gray.)

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