



T868

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

THE FIGURE, ITS CONTEXT AND ITS POSSIBILITIES

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO:

THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

IN

CANDIDACY FOR THE

B.A. DEGREE IN ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION

BY

SHARON BEGGAN

MAY 1990

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page No.

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION	2
The Social Presence of Male and Female within Paintings	3
Woman - The Surveyor and the Surveyed	4
The Judgement of Paris - to judge, to own	6
Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder?	7
The Figure and Fashion	8
Nakedness to Nudity	11
The Exceptional Nude	12
The Construction of Femininity in Art	13
CHAPTER II - HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE FIGURE	20
The Origins of the Nude from Fifth Century B.C.	26
CHAPTER III - SCHOOL PROJECT	31
Scheme of Work	43
CHAPTER IV - EDUCATIONAL RELEVANCE	45
"Realness in the Facilitator"	50
Trust	51
Understanding	52
A Comparison of two Schools	53
Subject Provision	56
Subject Allocation	56
Subject Choice	57
CONCLUSION	65
BIBLIOGRAPHY	

TABLES

Page No.

Table 4:1	.....	58
Table 4:2	.....	58
Table 4:3	.....	59
Table 4:4	.....	61
Table 4:5	.....	62
Table 4:6	.....	62

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER I:

- Fig.1 Oedipus and the Sphinx by Ingres
Fig.2 Odalisque with a Slave by Ingres
Fig.3 Susannah and the Elders by Tintoretto
Fig.4 Lancome Model
Fig.5 Judgement of Paris by Rubens
Fig.6 Front cover of Elle
Fig.7 Ariane - French Art, Fifteenth Century
Fig.8 Birth of Venus Boticelli
Fig.9 Jean Harlow
Fig.10 Front Cover of Sunday Times Magazine
Fig.11 Venus Cupid Time and Love by Bronzino
Fig.12 Helene Fourment in a Fur Coat by Rubens
Fig.13 La Grande Odalisque by Ingres
Fig.14 Untitled Film Still by Sherman
Fig.15 Untitled Film Still by Sherman
Fig.16 Life Drawing - Authors Work
Fig.17 Life Drawing - Authors Work
Fig.18 Preliminary Sketch for Painting (Nude Pose) - Authors Work
Fig.19 Preliminary Sketch for Painting (Naked Pose) - Authors Work

CHAPTER II:

- Fig.20 Three Dancing Girls Egyptian Art (Fifteenth to Fourteenth Century B.C.)
Fig.21 The Pharaoh Tutankhamun and his Wife Egyptian Art 1350 B.C.
Fig.22 Achilles and Ajax playing Draughts by Exekias 540 B.C.
Fig.23 The Warrior's Leavetaking by Euthymides 500 B.C.
Fig.24 Landolina Aphrodite, Second Century B.C.
Fig.25 Cnidian Venus after Praxiteles
Fig.26 Detail of the Venus of Milo

CHAPTER III:

- Fig.27 Untitled Photograph by Sherman
Fig.28 Untitled Photograph by Sherman
Fig.29 5th Year Pupil - Life Drawing
Fig.30 5th Year Pupil - Life Drawing
Fig.31 Group Project 'The Bully' - in progress

CHAPTER IV:

- Fig.32 Colaiste Eanna Pupils 'Tidying'
Fig.33 Colaiste Eanne Pupils 'Paper Making'
Fig.34 Sancta Maria Pupil 'Puppetry'
Fig.35 Sancta Maria Pupil '3-D Drawing'

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The source I have chosen for my major study is the human form; the figure, including its context and its visual possibilities. The reason for using the figure as my source comes as a direct result of my own exposure to life drawings. During my major study in preparation for paintings, using the figure as my primary source, I hope life drawing will be a vehicle for the achievement of certain objectives. To highlight some of the objectives of the project I have listed and detailed them below:

1. To understand how the relationship between the figure and context can affect the perception of the viewer.
2. To be sensitive towards the artist's own purpose of choice of pose and placement of the nude within a certain environment or context.
3. To explore the awareness of certain artists of the issue of 'nudity' and 'nakedness' when they used the figure as a source.
4. To discover how much artists' attitudes towards 'The Figure' as a nude were related to the society they lived in, their patrons or just themselves.
5. To explore the power of the artist's decision to construct femininity in their paintings and to explore how the viewer constructs his or her own perception of a woman's femininity within her identity as separate from her identity as a woman.
6. To explore the possibility of the figure being a source for 'pattern' as an abstract element of composition.

All this will be expressed through my final painting. However in order to explore the theme of my project it was necessary to look back on the European tradition of nude paintings, choosing a number of artists from different periods and cultures whose work confronts similar questions and objectives to mine and making critical assessment of them.

From this visual research, the following have emerged as critical issues which will be expanded upon in the context of my own project.

- The social presence of male and female within paintings.
- Woman: the surveyor and the surveyed.
- The Judgement of Paris: to judge, to own.
- Is beauty in the eye of the beholder?
- The figure and fashion.
- Nakedness and nudity.
- The exceptional nude.

The proliferation of imagery, containing aspects of the unclothed female figure, in all contemporary media, has made this enquiry all the more important for me, as an artist, and for me as a teacher.

The Social Presence of Male and Female within Paintings

The question is raised as to whether the social presence of a man is different to that of a woman. The man's presence embodies the promise of power, power being defined as any of the following: moral, physical, temperamental, economic, social and sexual. The object of the power is



FIG. 1 Oedipus and the Sphinx by Ingres. The presence of the male figure suggests the external power; the power he has on others.



FIG. 2 Odalisque with a Slave by Ingres. In contrast the woman's presence is disclosed in her pose, gesture and surroundings.



always exterior to the man. Regarding this power, it is his presence that suggests to others what he is capable of, although he may not be capable of anything in reality. In order to explore this further, it is necessary to look at two paintings from the nineteenth century. One by Gericault (1791 - 1824) and the other by Trutat (1824 - 1848). In Gericault's Warrior with a Spear (1808), the presence of the male figure suggests the external power; the power he has on others. The promise of strength is amplified by the physical components of his body but the promise of fight and conquest is reinforced by the 'Spear' and the readiness of the figure to spring into action at any time.

What does the woman's presence express in the painting by Trutat? A woman's presence expresses her own attitude to herself and defines what can and cannot be done to her. Her presence is disclosed in her gesture, opinions, clothes and surroundings. Unlike the presence of man, presence for a woman is so intrinsic to her person that it can be confused with being an almost physical emanation. The contrast of pose is very noticeable in the two paintings: As she lies on animal furs her posed figure contains no strength.

WOMAN - The Surveyor and the Surveyed

Woman is alone with the surveyor and the surveyed. This statement manifests itself in images. Woman is constantly watching herself, everything she does and how she appears to others. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself. From childhood she has been conditioned to be aware of her appearance at all times. The way in which she appears to others, and essentially how she appears to man is

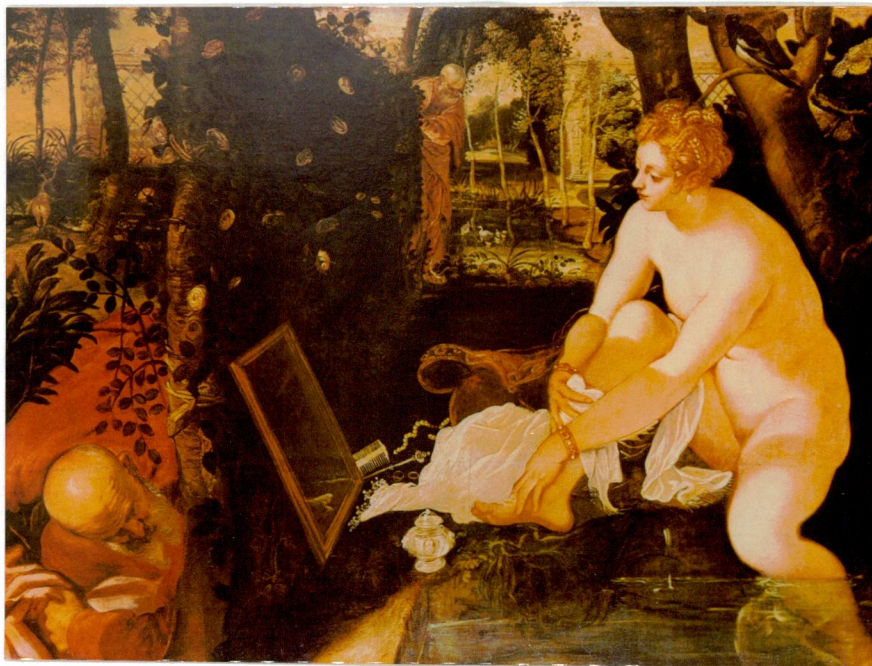
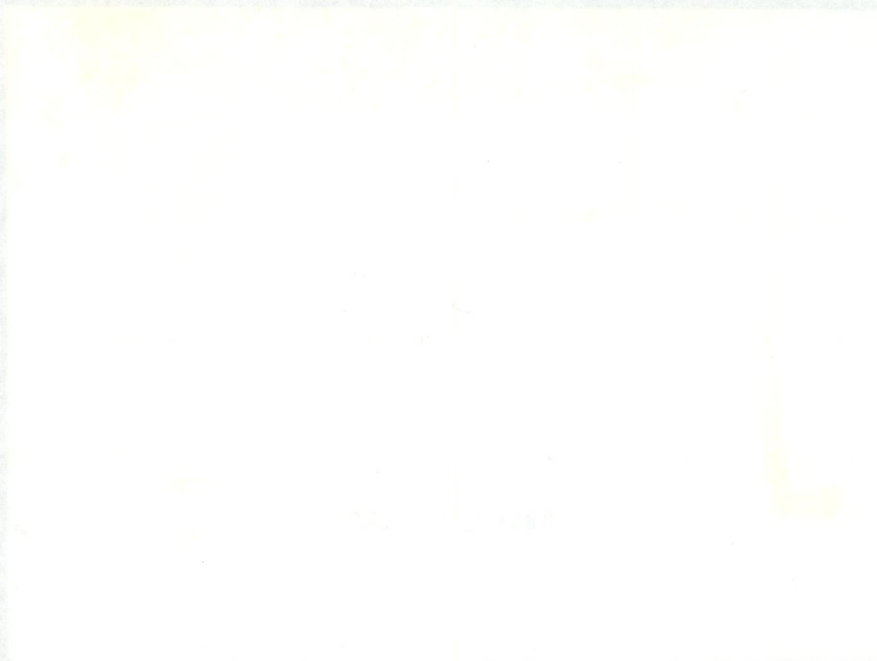


FIG. 3 Susannah and the Elders by Tintoretto. Woman; The Surveyor and the Surveyed.



FIG. 4 The Lancome Model. Large sales in cosmetics and other 'beauty products' shows that the pressure to appear well is as strong as ever.



of great importance and traditionally could even be seen as the real success of her life. "Even now, if less so than before we are raised to be aware that our faces and figures will affect our fortunes, and to mould these parts of ourselves, however insecure we may feel about them, into forms that will please the (male) audience". (Lucy R. Lippard.)¹

The pressure of this appearance is as strong as ever. This can be seen in the large sales each year in cosmetics and other 'beauty products'. Man surveys woman and she is continuously led to believe that her appearance will be what determines her treatment. This, of course, can be manipulated to the woman's advantage as she can control it by her surveying of herself. It could be said that the surveyor of woman in herself is male and the surveyed is female.

"It is essential to realise that the concepts of 'masculine' and 'feminine' whose meaning seems to be unambiguous to ordinary people, are among the most confused that occur in Science in human beings pure masculinity or femininity is not to be found either in the psychological or biological sense". (Sigmund Freud, 1915.)²

This theme has been explored by many European artists. In Tintoretto's Susannah and the Elders we join the Elders in spying on the naked Susannah as she takes her bath, and in turn she looks out at us looking at her. In another version by Tintoretto, Susannah is looking at the mirror while the Elders spy on her. She now becomes another spectator of herself. The mirror can symbolise the 'giving away' of a personal image allowing the receiver to have power over the giver. This belief has a long tradition,

1 E.P. Dutton From the Centre, P.124 New York, 1976.

2 Juliet Mitchell Women: The Longest Revolution P.266 Virago, London 1984.



FIG. 5 The Judgement of Paris by Rubens. To judge, to own.



especially among primitive people. The mirror also was often and is still used in painting as a symbol of vanity, as in Memling's painting from the fifteenth century, *Vanity*, in which there is both a woman who is naked and a mirror. Who should be condemned? The woman for being vain or the man who wanted this painting for his own pleasure. There is an ironic morality in this painting; the woman becomes an object when she is forced to constantly survey herself in order that others can, in turn, survey her:- an object to be bought or owned.

The Judgement of Paris - to judge, to own

The Judgement of Paris by Rubens contains within its composition the same theme as Tintoretto's Susannah and the Elders; the woman being surveyed by men. Here yet again another element is added - judgement. Rubens mythological subject matter is the story of the Greek God 'Paris', who awards an apple to the woman he finds most beautiful above all others. Beauty becomes competitive, and this story of Paris and his judgement has been carried into our own contemporary culture in the form of 'Miss World' beauty contests. If beauty can be judged, those judged beautiful are given a prize. The prize is to be owned by a judge, available for him because beauty is an object. This will be explored later on in this chapter.

In the Fifteenth Century, King Charles II commissioned a painting from Lely. It was a typical image of the tradition but it was of his mistress Nell Gwynne. The painting shows her passively looking at the spectator, who is the viewer, staring at her naked body. This painting has captured both the availability of this woman's sexuality for the King and his ownership of her.

Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder?

What is beauty? Can it be judged, and if so, is beauty then in the eye of the beholder?

"Beauty essentially pleases our senses object has pleasurable qualities, it is innate capacities in us to identify them". (Thomas Aquinas.)³

If beauty is an object, does a woman become an object in the process of being beautiful? If a woman is both the surveyor and the surveyed can this influence the relationship between the woman and herself. Is she turning herself into an object - most particularly an object of vision - a sight? If beauty is a non-human thing are women who strive to be beautiful dehumanising themselves?

Beauty is the way we perceive the accepted standard, beauty becomes what is accepted, anything which deviates is ugly, be it a large nose or even a trifling imperfection. Beauty which is supposed to be special or exceptional becomes the common average expectations of these senses. Is the beholder of the beauty confined to the expectation of society? Subjectivity is a decision one is forced into. The beholder must, to a certain extent, be confined to the expectations of society. It is hard to escape the accepted form of beauty - especially when images of beautiful women are shown in womens magazines such as Cosmopolitan, Marie Claire, Elle and Vogue in advertising imagery. Standards are set and norms attained within such forms of popular culture. Beauty has become "fashionable" and is subjected to vigorous swings of fashion. What is

3 Translated by David A Dilworth (and) Valdo H. Viglielmo Art and Morality, Honolulu, University Press of Hanaii, 1973.



FIG. 6 Standards are set and norms attained for beauty in women's magazines such as Elle.



considered beautiful in one period of time will not be in another. This is true of different socio-economic groupings and of different cultures; beauty becomes a norm in a particular society.

How valid then are the results or judgements in the 'Miss World' contest? Beauty is not necessarily transcontinental or transcultural, beauty in this case is very closely associated with politics, at least initially. It is perhaps predictable that those countries finding themselves near enough to the finally selected group normally include Great Britain and the United States. Even if a South American country wins, the results will be justified if these and other powerful countries get to the final round. When has 'Miss Africa' from the depths of Zambia won this contest?

Beauty is abstract, political and almost subjective, but where does this leave the woman? If beauty is subjected to vigorous swings of fashion so must the woman be! The face being individual - the body becomes the common factor amongst and between women and must be open to change in response to every whim of social fashion.

The Figure and Fashion

'Flesh' - the very sound of this fulsome word embarrasses and mortifies us. Those extra bits - breasts, hips and layers of fat are all natural to the female. In trying to conform to the ideal shape this fact of the flesh is forgotten and we (women) battle against our bodies. Every woman I know, young or old, shy or confident is in some way worried about her figure and her weight. This can be associated with the idea of the woman being under constant examination and as a result continually watching herself; back to the old syndrome of the surveyor and the surveyed.

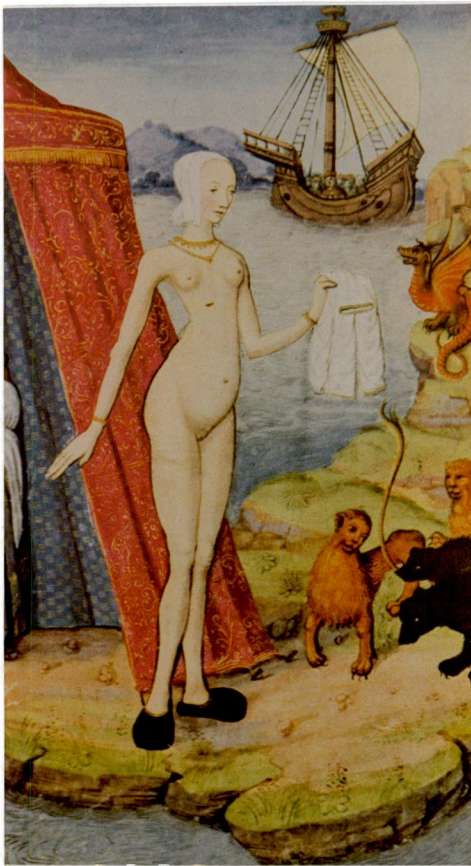


FIG. 7 Ariane - French Art,
Fifteenth Century.



FIG. 8 Birth of Venus by Botticelli.



Where does this body fascism come from? The ideal by which women judge their shapes has fluctuated enormously. This can be seen through the changing shape of women in European paintings. In the Middle Ages painting shows men and women as slender things, with small breasts and swollen bellies. The Renaissance saw the end of this asexual imagery, with the introduction of flesh which peaked with Ruben (1577 - 1640). Rubenesque is still used to describe voluptuous, fleshy, full-bodied women. "The triumph of thinness was slow in coming and not universally welcomed", says Valerie Steele and Claudia Brush in Men and Women: Dressing the Part.⁴ Although it may be thought that it started in the 20's, most of the big names were also big in size e.g. Clara Bow. In the 30's to the 50's, female stars were shapely e.g. Rita Hayworth, Lana Turner, Marilyn Monroe. The change to thin came in the 60's with models like Twiggy (appropriately named), Jean Shrimpton and Penelope Tree. This process of controlling our figures became internalised through diet and exercise. In the 70's thin or skinny was most definitely in, that is when Susie Orbach wrote 'Fat Is a Feminist Issue' and 'How to Lose Weight Without Dieting'. This was seen as a great breakthrough in the analysis of compulsive eating. However ten years later Orbach admitted that "obsession with the body has increased rather than abated".⁵

The 80's saw the exercise revolution with crowned queen's of health and fitness such as Jane Fonda and aerobics and later Callen Pickney and Callenetics, now a household word.

Outside the fashion world womens role models do not deviate too much from the ideal. Success is equated with thinness, "you can never be too rich or too thin" proclaimed the Duchess of Windsor. The Princess of Wales and, more recently, the changed shape of the Duchess of York are just two

4 Louise Chunn "Body Fascism", Elle, November 1989 P.18

5 Ibid

WIC 9 Jane Howell. Judge was still lovely.

examples of many who are victims of the social philosophy of 'small is beautiful'. Although we admire the actress Roseanne Barr we do not want to look like her, and though the American men's magazine Esquire preferred Oprah Winfrey fat, women applaud her now she has lost weight.

With all this diet and control in order to achieve the perfect body, comes the darker side, that of obsessions, for example, eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia. So strong is society's push towards slimness that often fat people are exposed to discrimination. This is taken up in Shelly Boveys book 'Being Fat is not a Sin'.⁶ These strict rules of society affect the average woman just as much - being 7lbs or a stone overweight can be just as much a burden on her mind as weight is to the obese or anorexic. In a survey conducted for the journal 'Psychology Today' in 1985, 57% of women who felt they were overweight were shown within normal weight standards. In a similar survey in 1972 one fifth of American women currently dieting were already below their ideal weight.⁷

This obsession with bodily shape is big business. In the US \$10million is spent annually on trying to get thin and stay that way. What is in store for the woman in the 90's? There is an increase in the use and depiction of larger and better endowed models in the fashion magazines. Could Rachel Hunter be the role model for the future? Perhaps in the post aids world, thin will not be attractive. The presence of the female in society is intrinsically intertwined with how she appears and how she surveys herself and with society's norm of beauty and the ideal shape of her figure. The effect of body image 'on nakedness and the nude' in paintings becomes a symbol of the lack of dissimulation in being a woman. It is also a symbol

6 Louise Chunn "Body Fascism", Elle, November 1989, P.18.

7 Ibid

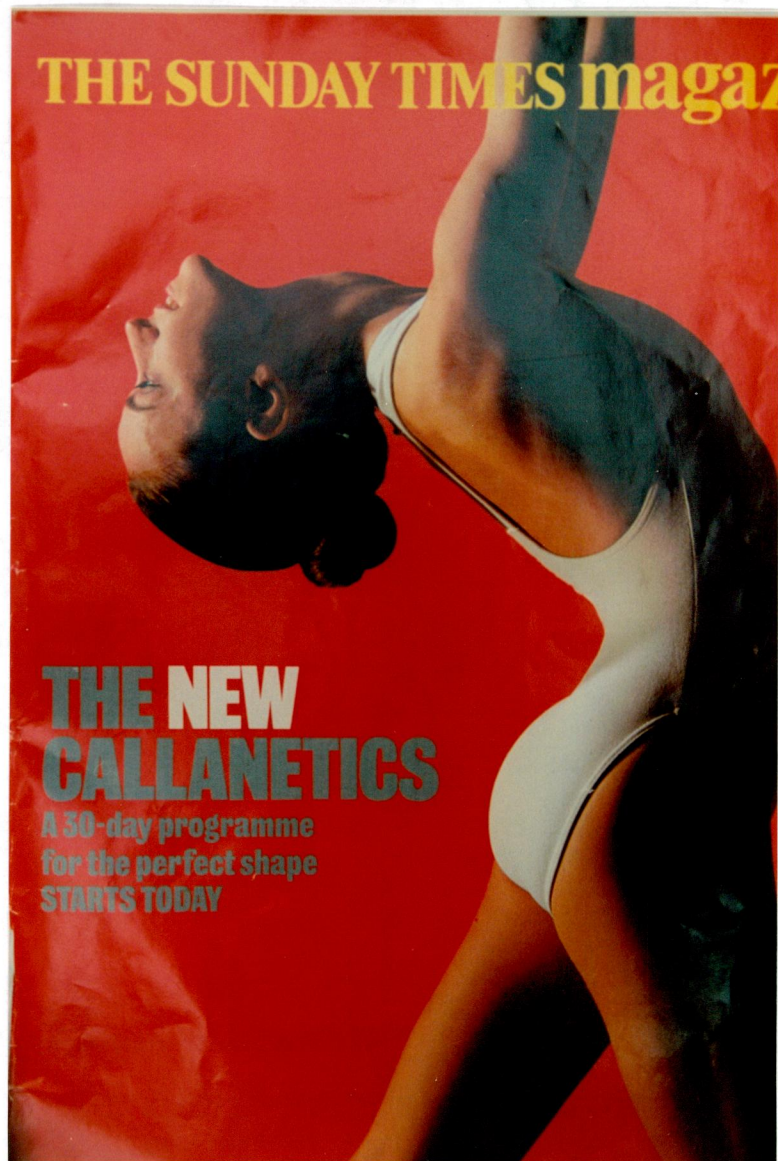


FIG. 10 Advertising Callan Pinckney's new book on Callanetics.



of how woman is a more or less viable and even pornographic commodity.

For my major study and as part of my research for my painting I felt it important to examine the perception of women by society and how this in turn influences her own perception of herself. As my source is the female figure I had to understand what its significance to the viewer was. Another important aspect of my research for my final piece is the issue of 'nakedness' as opposed to 'nudity' in the European tradition, how aware artists were of it, and how well do I need to understand this issue in order to express it in my final paintings.

Nakedness to Nudity

"To be naked is simply to be without clothes, whereas the nude is a form of art".⁸ The nude is not the starting point of a painting, according to Clarke, but a way of seeing which the painting achieves. To some degree this is true, but seeing a 'nude' is not necessarily confined to art - there is nude photography and poses. One thing which remains the same is that the nude is always conventionalised - this is derived from a certain tradition in art. The nude, however, does not always signify the art form but can be related to lived sexuality. "To be naked is to be oneself, to be nude is to be seen naked by others and yet not recognised for oneself. A naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become a nude".⁹

Berger argues further that "to be naked is to be without disguise nudity is a form of dress".¹⁰ The female figure becomes a disguise, bodily

8 Kenneth Clarke The Nude P.3, Penguin Books, Norwich 1985.

9 John Berger (and others) Ways of Seeing, P.54 London, British Broadcasting Corporation, Harmondsworth, Penguin 1972.

10 Ibid, P.54.



FIG. 11 Venus Cupid Time and Love,
by Bronzino.



hair and skin is hidden under the classical form. In the average European painting, the main spectator or the person to whom the object (nude) is aimed at, is never painted. This person is presumed to be in front of the painting, the viewer, everything is addressed to him; the stranger with his clothes on. This is why Manet's Dejeuner Sur L'Herbe shocks society - the viewers of the nudes were discovered. In Bronzino's Venus, Cupid, Time and Love of the sixteenth century, there is a third party involved i.e. there is a male lover present yet her body is still directed out towards the viewer. Bronzino's painting is meant to appeal to his sexuality. The exclusion of bodily hair on the woman helps towards the sexual domination of the female. Hair is associated with sexual power, with passion. This aspect of the woman's sexuality needs to be suppressed in order to allow the spectator total control over the situation.

In European paintings "women are there to feed an appetite, not to have any of their own".¹¹ This sort of male 'flattery' reached its peak in the public art of the nineteenth century. Bouguereaus (1825 - 1905), "Les Oreacles" would have been hung up in board rooms and such like - in order to remind men they were men and in control. Comparing the expression of Ingre's La Grande Odalisque to that of a girlie magazines' model, it is quite easy to identify the similarity between the two. Woman is responding with calculated charm to the surveyor - the man. Is she offering up her femininity to the surveyor as the surveyed?

The Exceptional Nude

There are a few exceptions in the European tradition of oil painting, where

11 John Berger (and others) Ways of Seeing, P.55 London, British Broadcasting Corporation, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972.



FIG. 12 Helene Fourment in a Fur Coat,
by Rubens. The exceptional nude.



male flattery of the character in Bouguereau's paintings does not apply. Some artists' personal view of the woman is so strong that no allowance is made for the spectator. The spectator can only witness the relationship between artist and model. He is forced to realise that he is an outsider and that she is not naked for him. She is not an object, therefore she is not a nude. If we examine Rubens (1577 - 1640) Helene Fourment in a Fur Coat this becomes quite obvious. This is a painted image of nakedness as opposed to nudity. She is in the act of pulling on her fur coat, a moment ago she would have been totally naked. Her expression and appearance add to the sense of tenderness and familiarity between artist and model. What had happened between them a moment ago? Her husband, Rubens, has caught her in the moment between nakedness and clothedness. There is a displacement to the side, that is the top of the body and the legs can never physically meet. Her coat covers the sexual centre which is engulfed by the coat and the darkness around her. Her "Rubenesque" body makes her less ideal, the folds of flesh are tenderly painted all of which add to a sense of self. This nakedness can be seen in contemporary imagery also, as in Alice Neels' best known pictures of pregnant women see for example Maria (1964). Neel shows her daughter-in-law Maria as being quite visibly proud of her condition. The reality of pregnancy is not disguised in any way. The tiredness and weight is expressed in Neels painting of her daughter-in-law Nancy (1971).

"Representation of the world like the world itself is the work of men, they describe it from their point of view which they confuse with the absolute truth". (de Beauvoir.)¹²

Two points arise from this quotation which I would like to expand on in the

12 Simone de Beauvoir The Second Sex; translated and edited by H.M. Parshley, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984. c 1972, translation of Le Deuxieme Sexe.

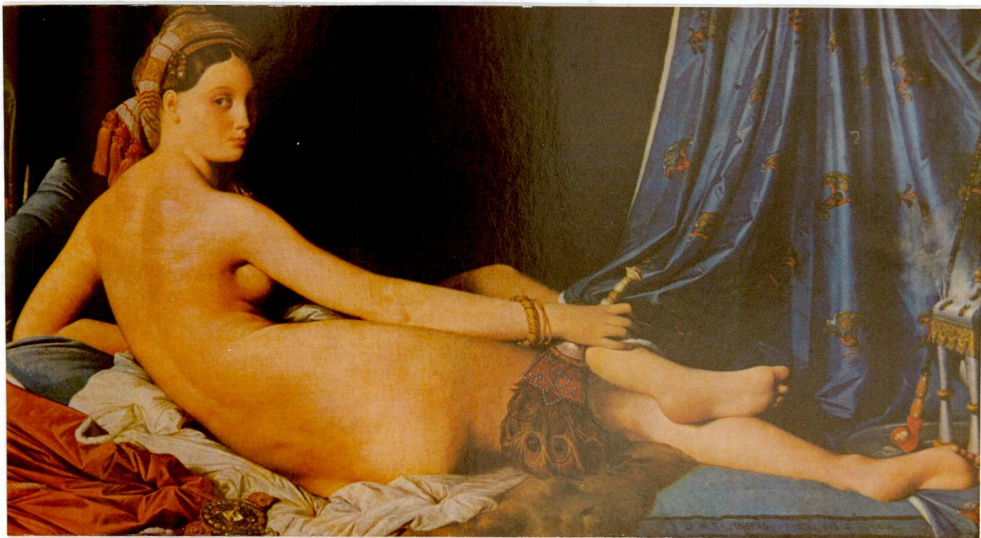


FIG. 13 La Grande Odalisque, by Ingres.



light of my previous research for my own personal project;

- A. Representation is a particular construction rather than a reflection of reality and
- B. The world which is represented to us can be seen in other ways.

Applying A. to Ingres Odalisque the woman's back is towards the viewer, although she is turned away from the viewer, the glimpse of her breasts and the expanse of her thighs emphasises her sexual availability. Ingres' treatment of the body is very sensual; boneless, smooth and fleshy, but in a different way to the reality of Rubens who is painting in a classical form. Is this a construction or a reflection of reality? The setting and theme has connotations of extreme sensuality represented by the rich materials and jewellery - the promise of the East. Woman's sexuality is constructed as exotic and at the same time firmly in male possession. As previously noted the expression of the model here is similar to any 'Page 3 models' expression of calculated charm who offers her femininity to the surveyor as the surveyed. This representation, and many like this painting, cannot be seen as reflections of reality but construction of what is desirable to both artist and patron. What is deemed to be or constructed to be reality? Female sexuality is, I believe, the construction. The kind of sexuality being constructed to represent reality is questionable.

Passiveness, submission, acceptance of inequality describe some of the values prized within the kind of European society, from which these paintings originated. This transfer of values is nearer the truth than the representation of femininity. What is female sexuality? "Sexuality today is a contested zone. It is more than a source of intense pleasure or acute anxiety; it has become a moral and political battlefield. Behind the

contending forces lie contrary beliefs and languages about the nature of sex: sex as pleasure, sex as sacrament, sex as source of fulfilment, sex as fear and loathing ... the subject of sex has moved to centre stage in contemporary political and moral discourse. Through it we are expected to express our subjectivity, our sense of intimate self, our 'identity'".¹³

A lot of what we call our identity is constructed and reconstructed through gender and through our sexual choices. We think of certain actions and preferences as 'female' and 'male', as 'feminine' or 'masculine'. The media supply a constant stream of images of how we should or could appear, how we might dress or behave. The effect of this has already been explored, the purpose of advertising today may be to sell products, but in many ways also moulds our ideas and beliefs.

History sees woman in the role of a passive possession and above all else, on display. This construction is also evident in the mass media: the desirable woman; the desirable shape; the desirable sexuality. From a media perspective woman needs to be admired; this feeds the whole ideal of the surveyor and the surveyed.

"Femininity is multiple" wrote Judith Williamson in her essay on 'Images of Women' in the photography of Cindy Sherman.¹⁴ In what way is femininity multiple and can we define femininity, or more appropriately, can we identify with it? As a woman, every morning I am involved in the ritual of dressing, a form of image building. Whenever I am faced with the choice of images, the difference between my 'John Rocha' and my 'dungarees' is not in fabric or style alone but in identity. If I dress in either of these I will be seen differently for the length of time the image remains. I

13 Jeffrey Weeks *Sexuality and its Discontents*, P. 4-5, Routledge and Keegan Paul, London, 1985.

14 Judith Williamson, *Consuming Passions: The Dynamics of Popular Culture*, P.12, London; New York; M. Boyars (New York) 1986.



FIG. 14 Untitled #93, 1981. Sherman's photography.





5 Untitled Film Still # 6, 1978

FIG. 15 Untitled #6, 1978, Sherman's
photography.



appear as a particular kind of woman in my 'John Rocha' with one particular identity. Sophistication, a woman who likes 'the good things of life', another choice of image would provoke a totally different perception.

'How dare you think any one of these is me' but also ' See I can be all of them'. This concept is achieved in Sherman's work through her film stills and later untitled photographs; (untitled film still #6 1978, untitled film still #21, 1978; untitled film still #4 1978).

"Some people look at a thing and see it as something very violent, whereas my intention was completely different. Another person can look at it and see something very sexual, and that's also very confusing".¹⁵

Sherman's constructed characters are not presented as specific women but as 'types' of women, a series of roles defined within specific but unknown narratives which we can only guess at. Each photograph contains the same person yet provokes a different recognition of the type of woman by the beholder. Sherman's pictures force upon the viewer the fusion of image and identity which women experience all the time. The sexy black dress may portray the woman as a 'femme fatale', whereas femme fatale is precisely an image that requires a viewer in order to function. This whole construction fascinates me, it is almost a maze of disguise, hence the figure and its relationship with its context can be constructed and the question might well be posed as to whether it is a representation of what is actually there.

This will be vital to my own work where the same model will be used in each

15 Schirmer/Mosel, Cindy Sherman, P.11, Munich; c 1982. In Dutch, English and German.

painting but depending on her pose and context will determine both the construction of her image and identity formed by the viewer. As both figures will be unclothed one will also be nude whereas the other will be naked.

De Beauvoir felt that the world which is represented to us can be seen in other ways. To be born a woman is to be born into an allotted and confined space in society. As I have explored earlier on in this chapter, woman's social presence is different to man's. She is both the surveyor and the surveyed, the victim of predetermined beauty and a fascist to her own body in the search for the ideal shape.

Women and men see the world from different points of view, determined by their social experience. "Everybody is brought up differently, so of course they can't see the same things I see in them. Hopefully they see different things and maybe more interesting things than I see. I'm gone once the painting is finished ... then it's up to the power that is between the viewer and the painting". (Alexis Hunter.)¹⁶

"But men and women are not simply given biologically; they are given in history and culture. In a social practice and representation that includes biological determinations, shaping and defining them in its process".¹⁷

This reinforces the falseness to be found in a lot of constructions in the composition of European paintings which were almost entirely the work of eminent male artists. Imagery cannot be a reflection of reality but mere constructions. This is equally true for paintings by female artists. I, as an artist using the medium of painting have taken this into

16 Sandy Nairne in collaboration with Geoff Dunlop. State of the Art: Ideas and Images in the 1980's, P.141, London Chattoe and Windus 1987.

17 Stephen Heath, The Sexual Fix, 1982.



FIG. 16 I found that concentrating on the sexual elements of the figure, the face became insignificant and appeared less. The essence of the woman was lost.

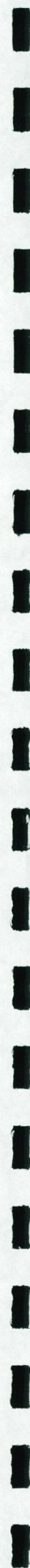




FIG. 17 In this self chosen pose I have tried to capture both the nakedness of and the woman in the model. The face and its expression becomes important.



consideration and will try not to reflect a reality or construct the true sexuality of a woman. My paintings will disclose in their dissimilarity the ability of the artist to bring together a number of elements which enable the viewer to construct a different image and identity from the same model. I hope to force upon the viewer the fusion of image and identity which women experience all the time. I also want to show a certain amount of nudity in one painting as opposed to nakedness in the other.

I feel at this point it is important to examine how I have constructed the nude and naked female in my own paintings.

The first painting of the same model is that of a nude female, here the woman becomes an object of vision, the fact she is unclothed is disguised. I have tried to achieve this by the pose of the figure and the lack of emphasis on the face or its expression. She is reclining, her body is limp and slightly turned, her gaze is not caught by the viewer. There is no personal contact reached or maintained in this painting between figure and viewer. Her body is being offered as a possession.

The context is ambiguous, however, the use of exotic colours and rich fabric conjures up a promise of the East. I felt that animal skins (Leopards) brought into the visual image connotations of sleazy motels.

By placing all these elements together I want the viewer to draw his/her own conclusion. All I merely want to do is suggest an identity that the viewer will construct in the image. Placing the mirror in the figure's hand introduces the theme of the surveyor and the surveyed, a direct reference to Tintoretto's Susannah and the Elders.



FIG. 18 Preliminary Sketch for Painting (Nude Pose).



FIG. 19 Preliminary Sketch for painting (Naked Pose).



My second painting of the same model will be that of a naked female. I wanted to portray the woman who was modelling. She is more than a body, she is not an object, but a human being with emotion, expression and spirit. The pose of the figure is confident, almost forceful. Her individuality is vital, this is achieved through her body, her expression and her eyes. Her stare is direct; she confronts the viewer, she is not a passive or submissive. Most importantly she is seen as having no clothes on, sitting on the edge of a bed. The viewer almost feels like an intruder, invading her private space.

Unlike the other paintings' context, in this painting I wanted to create an interior which was both simple and fresh. The different areas of the room are shown in a different colour i.e. the door is blue, the floor is purple, the sheets that are covering her bed are blue and white stripes.

It is only by placing these paintings together that the difference is evident and extremely noticeable. The fusion of image and identity will be fully understood by the astute viewer.

Thus we may understand that by the twentieth century attitudes to the unclothed female figure had become extremely complex. In order to examine how this came about, it is useful to enquire into some historical background.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE FIGURE

In this chapter I would like to examine the early history of the human figure as an image with particular emphasis on

- a/ the emergence of the figure particularly in paintings, and the development of the idea of illusion in the portrayal of the figure throughout the history of art, leading to a contemporary understanding of the function of the figure.
- b/ the origins of the nude in Fifth Century B.C. Greece.

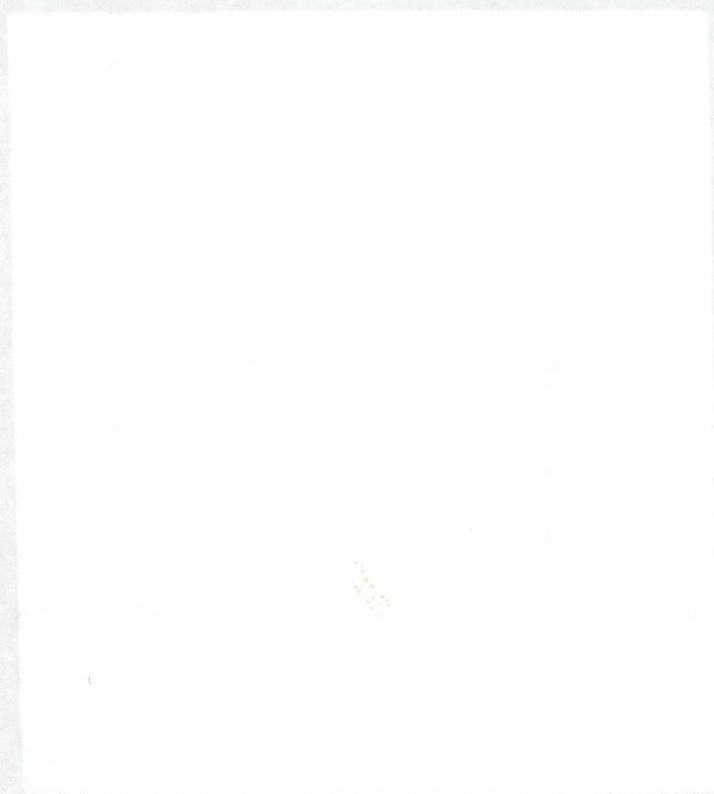
The emergence of the figure particularly in paintings, and the development of illusion in the portrayal of the figure throughout the history of art, leading to a contemporary understanding of the function of the figure.

The development of the image of the figure, as we know it today, can be traced as far back to the art of the Nile Valley, some five thousand years ago. Although there is "art" everywhere on the globe, and art which dates to pre-historic times, there is no direct tradition which links these earlier forms of art with what we regard as art in the present day. There is, however, a direct tradition handed down from the Egyptians which links their art to ours. The Greeks went to school with the Egyptian masters who in their turn influenced the Greek masters. It is these Greek masters whose knowledge of the human figure formed the basis for all European painting from the Renaissance on. Thus the art of Egypt is of great importance for us.

The pyramids and their contents have provided valuable information on life in Egypt; socially, economically and historically. The Pharaoh was buried



FIG. 20 The Three Dancing Girls, Egyptian Art,
(Fifteenth - Fourteenth Century B.C.).
Everything was represented from its
most characteristic angle.



with replicas of personal objects and relatives, servants and all the trappings of life before death. Art in Egypt replaced human sacrifice, in burial rituals. The Egyptian word for sculptor was 'he-who-keeps-alive'; he was only concerned with idealised and recognisable essentials, every lesser detail was left out, there was strict concentration on the basic forms of the head. Geometric regularity and keen observation of nature is characteristic of all Egyptian art. The Egyptians wanted to preserve everything as clearly and as plainly as possible. Everything had to be represented from its most characteristic angle. That is, a drawing of a garden with a pool would show the trees as seen from the side and the pool as seen from above, the birds and the fish on the pool would be seen in profile. The shape and character of everything would be drawn so as it would be both recognisable and clear.

How did this effect the human form? The head was seen in profile with a full faced eye. The chest and shoulders were drawn in the frontal position with arms and legs in movement seen from the side, the feet were always seen from the inside. A clear outline was of great importance and everything within the human form which was considered important could be included. This strict adherence to the rules of portrayal could be linked to the image's magic purposes. It must be remembered that these drawings were found on the inside of tombs and were to assist the dead body with his continuing life beyond the tomb. How could a foreshortened or cut-off arm bring offerings to the dead? There were many more rules such as: the scale of the figure showed importance: men were darker than women, the Gods were portrayed as set images. Horus, the Sun God, was represented as a falcon and Anubis, the God of Death as a jackal. For about three thousand years Egyptian art remained the same. Although new fashions and subjects appeared, the mode of representation remained essentially unaltered.



FIG. 21 The Pharaoh Tutankhamun and his Wife.
This image and others like it shocked
the conservative Egyptian.



However, during the eighteenth dynasty period, better known as the 'New Kingdom', there were some reforms. Pictures commissioned by King Amenophis IV were novel and probably shocked the Egyptian establishment. None of these images depicted the solemn and rigid dignity laid down by, or prescribed by, the earlier Pharaohs. He depicted himself lifting his daughter whilst walking in the garden. Portraits show him as an ugly man (which indeed he was) i.e. in all his human frailty. In the tomb discovered in 1922, Tutankhamun another ruler or Pharaoh in this period shows himself sitting casually on a chair. His wife is not smaller than him and she has her hand on his shoulder. This scandalised the strictly conservative Egyptians. The Egyptians could have been influenced by the artists on Crete and mainland Greece at Mycenae. The style of work found around this time in the palace of Mycenae is a free and graceful one. However, after the eighteenth dynasty there was a regression back towards the old values. New themes were introduced but there was little development in the representation of the human figure.

Mesopotamia lay between the two rivers Euphrates and Tigris. Most of this kingdom's art has disappeared as a result of the materials used. Sculpture in stone was relatively rare. It was due to religious beliefs that the human body and its likeness must be preserved if the soul is to continue. Their portrayal of the human figure is similar to that of the Egyptians but less rigid and tidy.

Following the development of the human form it is now necessary to look at the art of Greece between the Seventh and the Fifth Century B.C. In the early part of this period art looked harsh and primitive, pottery was decorated in simple geometric patterns. If there was a scene represented it formed part of the strict design. Every element of design has a function, a purpose with no additional extras.

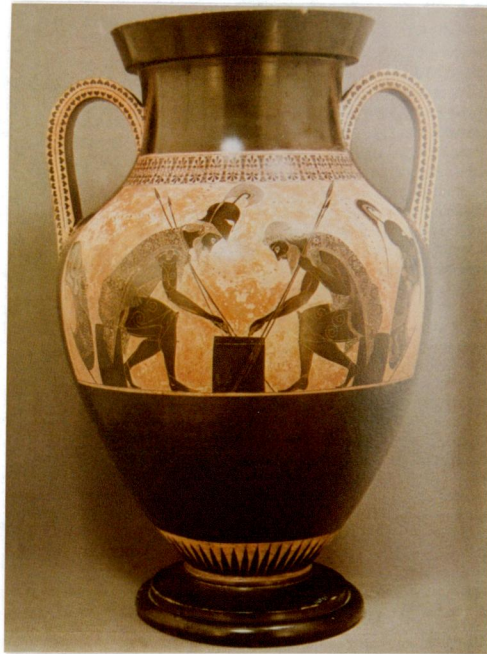


FIG. 22 Achilles and Ajax playing
Draughts by Exekias, 540 B.C.

FIG. 23 The Warrior's Leavetaking. Note the
foreshortening in the main figures
foot.





Athens was of great importance to the development of art. It was here that Greek artists started where Egyptians and Assyrians left off. Disregarding Egyptian models, the artists of Greece were no longer happy to imitate or follow any rules and began to experiment for themselves. Like the philosophers of the time they began a search into the nature of reality. The artist looked to himself through his own eyes even if his experiments and observations were not completely successful. To these artists there were no ready-made formulae for representing the human form. The Greek sculptor and artist wanted to know how he was to represent a particular body. Egyptians had based their art on knowledge rooted in a visual tradition. The Greeks used observation to acquire visual information. Greeks used their workshops to work out new ideas and new ways of representing the human figure. Each innovation was eagerly taken up by other artists. They found that by placing the feet apart, and bending the mouth, they could make the sculpture more alive. Parallel developments were taking place in painting. Though all Greek mural painting has been lost this can be seen through examining ceramic pot decoration of the period. A Greek vase in the 'black figured style', with Achilles and Ajax playing draughts, signed by Exekias about 540B.C., shows such developments.

Exekias was not afraid to show part of Achilles left hand hidden behind his body. It was not necessary to show and portray everything he knew was there. Once this ancient rule was broken, development accelerated.

The most important developmental discovery in relation to the figure was that of foreshortening. The Warrior's Leavetaking a vase of the 'red figured style', signed by Euthymides about 500 B.C., is an early example of this discovery. In this the artist dared to paint the foot as seen from the front. He started to take account of the angle from which he saw an object. However, Greek artists still wanted the outline to be clear and

include what they knew about the human body - without doing violence to its design. They stylised the human form. These discoveries were contemporaneous with the development of humanism in every field.

In order to show the structure of the body, they explored the anatomy of the bones and muscles so they could build up a convincing picture of the human body, even if it was covered by drapery. Greek artists used the drapery to mark these divisions of the body and also to increase the sense of form. In Greek art, there is a balance of adhering to the rules and a freedom within the rules, which has made Greek art so much admired. There is a wonderful simplicity and beauty of form in Greek art. This can be seen in a bronze statue of a charioteer found in Delphi about 470B.C.

The Discus Thrower a bronze statue originally by Myron of about 450B.C. (of which only a Roman copy survives), is proof of the perfect knowledge of the human body in motion in its capturing of muscles in motion. He is caught just in the moment before he spins around and lets the disc fly, supporting the throw with a turn of his body. His attitude looks so convincing that modern athletes have taken it for a model in order to learn from the Greeks. The sculptor achieved this sense of movement mainly through a new adaptation of ancient artistic methods. Like the Egyptian painters, Myron has given us a frontal view composed of the most characteristic viewpoints of this man's parts. Myron, however, did not fit these views into an unconvincing likeness in a rigid pose. Myron conquered the portrayal of movement in the figure through sculpture. The painters at the time were confronting problems of the illusions of space on their flat surfaces.

The philosopher Socrates said of artists that they should represent the 'workings of the soul' by accurately observing the way 'feelings affect the body in action'.¹ They also mastered the means of conveying something of

1 E.H. Gombrich, The Story of Art, P.61, Phaidon Press Limited Text c 1989.

the unspoken feelings set up between people through the pose of the figure. This form of construction in the image has been the subject of exploration throughout the history of art.

The ability to show and construct feelings and values through the pose, gesture and expression of the figure is central to both my major study and to the school project.

The Origins of the Nude from Fifth Century B.C.

It is appropriate at this stage in the development of the figure within our western tradition to look at the origin of the nude in the Greece of Fifth Century B.C. Plato, in his 'symposium', makes the distinction between the two types of unclothed models whom he calls celestial and vulgar. These were later titled 'Venus Coelestis' and 'Venus Naturealis' in Latin.² This became an axiom of Mediaeval and Renaissance philosophy in order to justify the female nude. Physical need sought relief in images, since prehistoric times. A recurring aim of European art has been to give these images a form by which Venus may cease to be vulgar and become celestial. Venus being referred to as this 'Goddess'. This enabled the Venus to be one of the most sculpted figures at that time. In order for Venus to become celestial, symmetry, measurement and the principal of 'subordination' i.e. submissiveness, passiveness (as described in the first chapter) was applied to the sculpted form. This helped artists to sublimate their passions and present a socially acceptable work.

Prehistoric images of women were of two kinds; building statuettes from palaeolithic caves, which emphasised female breasts were symbols of

2 Kenneth Clarke, The Nude, P.64, Penguin Books, Norwich 1985.

fertility. However, at the other extreme marble dolls of the 'Cycladic Period' showed the human body which had undergone unruly geometrical discipline. These two types of women aptly called by Plato 'vegetable' and 'crystallin venus' never disappear. Botticelli's Venus is quite 'crystalline' whereas Rubens's could be seen as 'vegetable that is ripe and abundant'.

The earliest Greek sculptures of nude women date from the Sixth Century and were still extremely rare in the Fifth Century. There are religious and social reasons for this lack of nudity. It was all right for Apollo to be naked, as nakedness was part of his divinity, however, Aphrodite had to be covered in drapes. Socially, the restrictions were equally strong. Men stripped naked for exercise, women went about heavily draped from head to foot. The Spartan women were exceptions.

The first drawings of the naked female were very much "non-ideal", as seen on the 'black figure vases'. By the middle of the Fifth Century B.C., representations of the female figure became more attractive, as a result of the wider recognition of woman's physical charms within Grecian society. The woman as surveyor and surveyed was a predicament that could not be escaped even by women of Fifth Century Greece.

An unclothed terracotta doll at the Louvre from this period shows us, at once, the skill of the sculptor and his excellent observation. However, he has made no attempt to remove any of the imperfections and irregularities of nature, which is in direct contrast with a bronze figure of a nude girl binding her hair, from the same period. On the basis of current evidence it can be said that the work of this individual artist must be reckoned as the creator of the nude. A replica survives today, better known as the Esquiline Venus. She does not represent an evolved notion of feminine

beauty. Her form has been calculated on a simple mathematical scale. This sculptor discovered the plastic essentials of the feminine body, fuller breasts, waists were narrower, hips were arced. This architecture of the female body controlled the interpretations of observations of classically minded artists till the end of the Nineteenth Century.

In order to follow the evolution of the nude before Praxiteles, it is necessary to look not for absolute nudity, but include carvings of the body covered with a light garment which the French call 'draperie mouille'. The Greek artist or sculptor recognised the power drapery had to render a form both mysterious and comprehensible. It could emphasise or leave to the imagination areas of the body it concealed. Awkward areas could be made smooth by the flow of line. In the Ionian Venus on Ludovisi Throne, the artist discovered that the modelling of the breasts and the thorax is one of the most satisfying areas the eye can rest upon. This may be connected to our earliest physical needs. The skilfully used pleats of her garment outline her shoulders, the garment vanishes under the pressure of her breasts. The delicate curves on the plane of her chest make for a continuous and harmonious beauty.

In the Nike of Paionios who carved the figure of 'victory' in the museum of Olympia, nearly all traces of archaic emphasis had disappeared. Her limbs have a youthful fullness, this can be found in early nudes of Titian or Poussin. The sculptor most likely modelled the nude first and then added the drapery to bring out, rather than conceal, its rotundities.

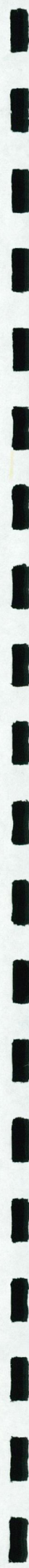
Towards the end of the Fifth Century B.C., this tradition of draped nudes produced a famous 'aphrodite' better known, quite misleadingly, as Venus Genetrix.



FIG. 24 This swing of the hip the French call 'de-hanchement' becomes a vivid symbol of desire.



FIG. 25 Cnidian Venus
after Praxiteles.



Her garment has slipped off her shoulders, it is tied in a knot on her arm. The folds of drapery flow round the body, drawn tight over the breasts and stomach, whereas in Paionious's Nike her physical beauty was incidental, in this Venus it is essential. It is the first time that the beauty which arouses physical passion was celebrated and given such religious status. Around the same time as this, Athenian women acquired a new importance.

Polyclitus had by now perfected his ideal of equilibrium, the weight resting on the right leg, the left leg bent as if to move. This pose was invented for the male figure yet, quite by accident, it was found that it suited the female figure. In this disposition of balance, it has created a contrast between the arc of one hip as it approaches the sphere of the breast, and the relaxed side which is long, gentle and continuous; there is a beautiful balance of form. This swing of the hip, the French call 'de'hanchement' becomes a vivid symbol of desire. This pose was soon to be used widely to express one of the most dominant rhythms of humanist art; man as the centre of all things. The bronze statuette now in Munich, of a girl from about 400B.C., is a good example of such a pose. Due to the fact that the Greeks believed the beauty of Venus should not be uncovered, this, and the Esquiline Venus, are the only sculptural records of female nudity in the Fifth Century B.C.

The Cnidian Venus of Praxiteles executed in about 350B.C., is one of the last Greek statues I will examine in the development of the nude. Pliny tells of the rejection of his statue by the people of Cos, because of her nudity. The people of Crudos, where she later rested, became obsessed by this famous statue. This statue became the embodiment of physical desire. Was this a triumph for beauty? Praxiteles and other Greek artists achieved this beauty through knowledge. There is no living body as symmetrical, well built and beautiful as these Greek statues. The Greek sculptor

carefully copied the appearance of a real man, beautified it, omitting any irregularities or individual traits. The Greek artists 'idealised' nature.

This form of idealised beauty, with the unattainable goal of reaching it could be seen as the beginnings of body fashion. In the process of idealising the figure the sculptor could have depicted it as lacking character and vigour. However, their main concern was to infuse more and more life into the ancient forms.

Among the famous classical statues of Venus, the Venus of Milo, First Century B.C., is perhaps the best known. Discovered in 1820, she has held her place in popular imagery as a symbol or trademark of beauty. Hundreds of products have used the image of the Venus of Milo in their advertisements - which imply a standard of ideal perfection. She was the most fruitful and robust compared with all other nude Venuses of antiquity. There is irony in the association of this Venus with naturalism as she is, of all works of antiquity one of the most complex and idealised. The sculptor did not just use the inventions of his own time, but consciously attempted to give the effect of Fifth Century work. The proportions demonstrate this. This work restores the old equality of length between the breasts, navel and middle. The planes on her body are large and calm, this sculpture remains as the most splendid physical ideal of humanity.

This historical exploration has been vital in order to understand and structure my own work; it is the origin of my research into the female figure. I also feel that the problems explored and resolved by the Greeks are the basis for my classroom project. Similar concepts such as proportion, scale and form of the figure are central to the work of my pupils during the "project's" scheme of work.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL PROJECT

In my final year I have been placed in two schools for my teaching practice; Colaiste Eanna, Ballyroan and Sancta Maria College, Ballyroan. The latter is a Mercy Convent school and is an all-girls college. Colaiste Eanna is a Christian Brothers' school and is an all-boys college. It is with the fifth year boys of Colaiste Eanna that I am doing this school project. The class is of mixed ability where some pupils are strong and others very weak. It is interesting to note that in comparing the art departments in these two schools, considerable differences appear. I shall explore these differences further in my next chapter.

"The interdependence of art, craft and design is vital to the development of visual thinking at post-primary level and any attempt to separate them would reduce the value of the total educational experience. Nor indeed can artistic and aesthetic experience be separated since the making of art must be fully integrated with appreciation and enjoyment of visual art in all its forms".¹ This statement in the Curriculum and Examinations Boards' report emphasises the importance of drawing. Without drawing, none of the three elements (art, craft and design) in art education are strong enough on their own. Drawing is what could be termed the 'spinal cord', the backing structure to these elements in visual education. Without drawing in the classroom art, (art, craft and design) would be nothing but an impractical concept, an objective that would never be achieved. What is drawing? In brief it is the ability to observe and describe, to record; the ability to compose a drawing and the ability to use a medium. Observational drawing should develop in a pupil the ability to observe, analyse, describe and record using a variety of drawing media and, through an understanding of art and design elements, to communicate the whole experience.

1 Curriculum and Exam Board, The Arts in Education, P.12, Dublin 1985.

"..... I learn that what I have not drawn I have never really seen and it is when I start drawing an ordinary thing, I realise how extraordinary it is. All that is, is worthy of being seen and being drawn".²

According to Franz everything is worthy of being observed and drawn. In observational drawings the ordinary object becomes exceptional because in making the drawing the observer is also making a unique personal statement about the object. In both my own project and the project with Colaiste Eanna's Fifth Year students, the human figure is a central source. There are two reasons why I feel the figure is an important source to work with in a classroom:

- a. The figure contains elements of design such as shape, outline, form, structure, scale, proportion, light and tone. I have already discussed how the exploration of these elements in design by the Egyptians and Greeks has led to contemporary understanding of the function of the figure.
- b. I feel that through the figure the pupils can increase their capacity to experience aesthetic qualities in man-made and natural objects and events in their own environment.

To do this the teacher has to pay attention to the psychological and individual development of a pupil as a member of society.

The Report of the Board of Studies for the Arts published by the Irish Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1987 reflects this idea of art education. It puts forward several general aims but the aims that affect my work with the class the most are ...³

² Frederick Franz, *The Zen of Seeing*, Wildwood House, G.B., 1973.

³ Curriculum and Exam Board, Report of the Board of Studies for the Arts, P.23 - 25, Dublin, 1987.

- 1/ 8.2.2 To help 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 each pupil a wide range of visual arts experiences with an appropriate balance 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 through encouraging the making of art individually, in pairs and in collaborative group projects.
- 6/ 8.2.7 To engage pupils in the creation of problems which must be perceived and solved and which are inherently ambiguous and have no single correct solution.
- 7/ 8.2.8 To place value on the individual visual expression of each pupil and so to foster a sense of purpose and achievement in each one and a mutual respect for the work of others.
- 8/ 8.2.9 To provide pupils with experience in a wide range of media so as to develop their awareness and understanding of the range and quality of ideas, meanings and feelings that can be created and expressed.
- 9/ 8.2.11 To introduce pupils to the history and traditions of art and to develop a particular understanding of the work of contemporary artists.
- 10/ 8.4.2 To provide adolescent pupils with an important personal resource during the transition from childhood to adulthood.
- 11/ 8.4.3 To develop pupils abilities in making art in a variety of media.
- 12/ 8.4.5 To extend pupils knowledge and understanding of the history and traditions of art so as to foster their capacity to make developed critical judgements and authentic personal choices.
- 13/ 8.4.6 To develop pupils critical awareness and understanding of the visual elements of popular culture including film, video, fashion and the mass media.

I have tried to realise some of these aims through my classroom project. It is now essential to look at the aims of the classroom project which are similar to those of my own personal project, that is:

1. To develop a greater understanding of the structure and form of the human figure.
2. To discover that advertisements construct certain beliefs, values and stereotypes alongside the product being promoted through the visual image.
3. To discover that works of painting and sculpture throughout the history of art are constructions by the artist. Thus the artist has the ability to promote certain values, beliefs or stereotypes through his/her art forms.
4. To explore the narrative element within the figure and how this can be highlighted through the handling of the relationship between figure and context.
5. To enable the pupils to become aware of their school environment, not just in physical terms but in how this influences the way they relate to each other and of the roles they play in their school life.
6. To discover that by constructing certain elements in a composition as for instance the pose and expression and context of the figure, that an image can have a definite story or narrative content.

"When I was in school I was getting disgusted with the attitude of art



FIG. 27 and FIG. 28 Sherman constructs stereotypes and situations that the viewer can easily understand and relate to in her photography.

Handwritten text on a yellowed piece of paper, possibly a receipt or ledger entry. The text is faint and mostly illegible due to fading and bleed-through. A large, stylized number "55" is visible in the center.

Handwritten text on a yellowed piece of paper, possibly a receipt or ledger entry. The text is faint and mostly illegible due to fading and bleed-through. A large, stylized number "55" is visible in the center.

being so religious or sacred, so I wanted to make something that people could relate to without having to read a book about it first. So that anybody off the street could appreciate it, even if they couldn't fully understand it, they could still get something out of it. That's the reason why I wanted to imitate something out of the culture and also make fun of the culture as I was doing it". (Cindy Sherman.)⁴

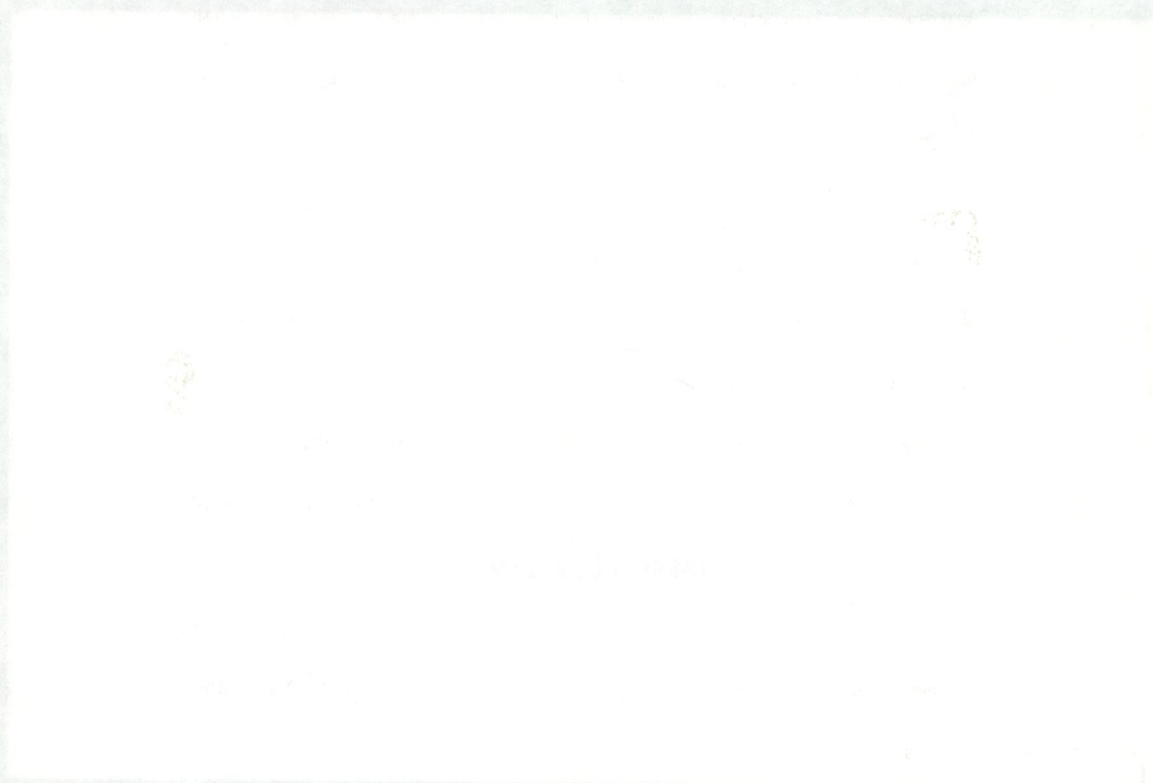
Being able to relate to art, or more importantly, to relate to the values, beliefs and situations being represented through the visual image, is the essential link between my own major study project and my pupils in the schools. Looking inward towards our own personal experiences and outward towards our immediate environments proves to be a valid source for art education.

Sherman uses the photograph which is a popular medium to express feminine values like doubt and vulnerability. Her photographs do not indulge the viewer in the hopeful fantasy of a happy ending, her display of such values read as being quite negative. However, Sherman has been able to construct such stereotypes of women in her work, e.g. the housewife, the femme fatale. Similarly, the pupils have tried to construct stereotypes within their own immediate environment. Both my pupils, and Sherman do this by using the narrative in the image to portray a value or character familiar to each of them. It is precisely this sort of construction which forms the basis of my own research for my paintings. The relationship between figure and context will help the pupil tell a story about the figure and will inevitably help the viewer construct an identity for that person, who is created by the pupil.

4 Sandy Nairne in Collaboration with Geoff Dunlop. State of the Art: Ideas and Images in the 1980's, P.132, London, Chattoe and Windus, 1987.



FIG. 29 Fifth Year Pupil - Two 2 minute poses. He uses directional line to define the structure of the figure and builds the volume up in contour line.



As an introduction to the project, I began life drawing with my class in January.

" since each material sets different limits for an artists' work then each material requires a different set of technical skills".⁵

Both my pupils and I needed to develop our own skills in figure drawing in order to give expression of our ideas. I felt it important to have some degree of familiarity with the technical skills required for this project in order to combat frustration and loss of concentration. ".... children need to develop tehcnical skills in order to achieve expression through a visual form".⁶

Classes in life drawing dealing with structure, volume and form were to be the basis for further work. I considered it important to relate the lessons to the interests of the pupils. We discussed certain situations in which the pupils may have found themselves throughout their daily school experiences. I got the pupils to illustrate how the figure would react, for example one pose had the figure swinging a hurley stick towards a ball in flight. The pupils were discovering that the figure has a narrative content and they continued to explore and develop this concept throughout the entire project.

During the initial classes of life drawing, no mention of the project was made. Through this period the class worked through various design problems. The structure and volume of the figure was explored through directional and contour line. This lead to an exploration of form through tone. Distorting the figure in order to discover the scale relations in the figure proved to be a relevant learning experience.

5 Eisner, Elliot, Mac Millian, Educating Artistic Vision, New York, 1972.

6 Eisner, Elliot, Mac Millian, Educating Artistic Vision, New York, 1972.



FIG. 30 Fifth Year Pupil. 20 minute pose. The pupil had to explore how he could make his figure look cramped with little space around him and using the classroom to emphasise this.



As the weeks progressed, the pupils, while drawing the figure had to relate it to the background. Various choices of space were presented to the pupils; how could they make the figure appear small and with a lot of space around him? How could they make the figure look cramped and large? The pupils also had to use the classroom as an aid to resolve these spatial and scale problems. This added extra complexity to the learning experience.

The project was introduced in a Media Studies class and was developed further the next week with slides of various artists throughout the history of art. Media Studies provided an important focus, through which the pupils became aware of construction. The form of media explored with the class was television advertisements and soap operas.

Firstly we watched a video with a selection of contemporary advertisements that the pupils would be familiar with. We discussed advertisements in general using such questions as: when do we see them (advertisements)? How many advertisements could be shown at one particular interval? Which advertisement is your favourite at this moment in time and why? What is the purpose of advertising? Why do some people buy 'Radion' instead of 'Persil'?

It was important to emphasise that advertisements are not just selling us a product alone but they are selling us certain beliefs and values also. This is achieved through the construction of the visual image. The pupils were able to relate to this form of popular imagery and as we worked through the video they became much more aware of the constructions within a particular advertisement.

For example: 'Easipale Butter' was not the only thing being promoted in this advertisement. Although it was short it was able to tell the viewer

that monogamous relationships are a thing of the 90's. Now that the male 'Yuppie' has found another of his type to settle down with the emphasis is on the 'Dinky' (dual income no kids yet) couple. This is reinforced by the age of the couple shown, the band on her finger that has just raised the lid of the butter and the key words at the end - 'designer, health, living'. In thirty seconds a number of values had been constructed about marriage and material wealth.

The pupils became increasingly aware of the type of person being constructed within the advertisements. As a class we looked at the various male stereotypes being created in different advertisements. The male pupils found this both amusing and revealing. I felt this form of media demonstrated the power of construction and increased the pupils understanding of popular culture.

Regarding these aims, 8.4.6 and 8.2.11 of the 'Report of the Board of Studies':

'To develop pupils' critical awareness and understanding of the visual elements of popular culture including film, video, fashion and the mass media'.⁷

'To introduce pupils to the history and traditions of art and to develop a particular understanding of the work of contemporary artists'.⁸

I tried to realise these through the Media Studies class and the slide show which followed the week after. The theme for the project was introduced at this stage through another form of the media the 'soap opera' Grange Hill.

7 Curriculum and Exam Board, Report of the Board of Studies for the Arts, P. 23 - 25, Dublin 1987.

8 Ibid.

"Glenroe star Geraldine Plunkett is used to strangers stopping her in the street and telling her that her husband is having an affair' "they mention it very tentatively as if I don't know and they think I should be told!" Of course the well-intentioned strangers are having trouble separating fantasy from reality'.⁹

This article from the Sunday World highlights the difficulty many people have in being able to separate 'soap opera' fantasy from reality.

That is why I used a clip from the series Grange Hill (a BBC production) as a spring board for discussion on stereotypes to be found in the school. This series is another form of media construction and the class were able to see objectively the stereotypes being created. A number of typecasts to be found in their own school environment were listed and given out to various groups formed within the class. Included in this list was; 'the bully', 'the victim', 'the lad', 'the cool dude', 'the swot' and 'the average bloke'.

"To provide adolescent pupils with an important personal resource during the transition from childhood to adulthood".¹⁰

"To foster personal and social development through encouraging the making of art individually in pairs and collaborative group subjects".¹¹

I have deliberately given certain typecasts to certain pupils with whom I have become familiar through my teaching practice. In the course of the project, the pupils became aware that it was through their own experiences in dealing with, or identifying with, one of these stereotypes that they have been able to construct the elements of composition needed to narrate

9 Sunday World, (Dublin) Vol. 17, No. 8, February 25th 1990.

10 Curriculum and Exam Board, Report of the Board of Studies for the Art, P. 23 - 25, Dublin 1987.

11 Ibid



FIG. 31 Fifth Year Pupil. Mixed Media Study (in progress), 'The Bully'.



such a story successfully.

It was during the next few classes that the pupils explored how by using the figure, its pose and its context, one could create the type-cast in order to communicate the required construction to the viewer. The pupils worked through worksheets and explored different poses that would help narrate the story. The pupils were very responsive and some rich material was gained.

There was a great sense of co-operation and team work during the project as each group worked hard to solve their specific problem. This was very similar to the aims 8.2.8 and 8.2.7 of the Board of Studies Report.

In order to help strengthen the visual connection between the pupils and the context being explored, the pupils sketched the figure in its chosen environment. I felt the solutions were both personal and varied from group to group. The feedback from my pupils was very positive, they felt they could relate to the problems of construction posed and found the search for resolution rewarding and challenging.

All the information and knowledge collected during the weeks of preparation for the project was brought together in their final piece. This was worked up in mixed media and the form of the figure and context was explored through various tonal scales.

I witnessed a sort of mutual respect and understanding between each group, it was as if their own typecasts were uncovered, exposed and realised. The atmosphere in the class had become less tense and much more open and friendly. Bullying is a major concern in schools especially boy's schools where there is a great deal of explicitly aggressive behaviour among the

pupils. Apart from bullying there is a great deal of verbal abuse which becomes so common that it almost becomes part of normal speech. I have witnessed this sort of verbal abuse and occasionally physical tension in my own class. Olweus (1978) found that the bullying is two to three times more common among boys than girls. In the ILEA study more than 22% of boys reported were affected by bullying at school.¹²

I suppose it was my own awareness of the dynamic within my class at Colaiste Eanna that motivated me towards structuring such a project. Perhaps if I had not been teaching in Sancta Maria (an all girls school) as well, I would not have been so aware of the differences between the dynamic of an all-boys class to that of an all-girls class.

"It seems to me that boys create an inferior or outside group and level the abuse at them that they would otherwise direct at girls, the least 'manly' boys become the target and are used as substitute girls". (Invisible Woman, Spender 1982.)¹³

"It is perhaps possible to theorise not that boys schools construct masculinity more strongly than that it is reinforced in different ways. In mixed schools boys confirm their masculinity to each other through behaviour towards girls but in the absence of girls they may resort to physical violence to achieve their position in the male hierarchy that the boys are so violently homophobic perhaps bears witness to the fact that they see each other as masculine if their sexuality is being practised on girls". (Schools for Boys by P. Mahoney, Hutchinson, 1985.)¹⁴

12 Sue Asken/Carol Ross Boy's Don't Cry P.39, University Press, 1988.

13 Sue Asken/Carol Ross Boy's Don't Cry, P.32, University Press, 1988.

14 Ibid, P.33.

SCHEME OF WORK: CLASSROOM PROJECT

THEME: LIFE DRAWING - "GRANGE HILL"

FIFTH YEAR PUPILS/9.00AM - 10.30AM

ABILITY: MIXED

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>IDEA/CONCEPT</u>	<u>SKILLS/PROCESS</u>
Unit 1	Figure	To explore the structure of human figure through directional lines. To explore volume through contour lines.	Life drawing
Unit 2	Figure	Explore structure through directional line. Explore volume through contour line. Explore form of figure through tone.	Life drawing
Unit 3	Figure	To explore form of figure through tonal scale. To discover the scale relations in the figure through distortion.	Life drawing
Unit 4	Figure/ Classroom	Explore form of figure through tone. To explore the choice of scale and space through comparison of figure in different visual contexts.	Life drawing; figure and its context
Unit 5	Figure/ Face	To explore the scale relations in human head.	Life drawing; portraiture
	Media Studies/ Video	Discover that advertisements construct certain beliefs, values and stereotypes alongside the product being promoted through the visual image.	Critical analysis
Unit 6	Slides	To discover that painting and sculpture through the history of art are constructions by the artist. The artist is representing certain values, beliefs and stereotypes through the visual image.	Critical analysis
	Figure/ partner in project	Explore structure and volume of figure through contour and directional line.	Constructing their given stereotype/ situation by working through a worksheet and thumbnail sketches.

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>IDEA/CONCEPT</u>	<u>SKILLS/PROCESS</u>
Unit 7	Figure/ partner in project	Explore narrative content of figure. Explore structure and volume through contour and directional line. Explore form of figure through tonal studies.	Studies for final piece life drawing working with various media
Unit 8	School Environment Toilets, classroom, yard, figure	To explore how the conscious construction of the context describes the content of the image. To explore form using a tonal scale through density of line. To achieve a logical scale relation to narrative between figure and its context.	Observational drawings. Study for their final piece
Unit 9	Figure/ studies of figure Observat- ional drawings	To achieve a logical scale relation to narrative between the figure and context. To explore the variety of tonal scale - through different media. To explore form using a tonal scale - through a variety of media.	Transferring enlarging life drawing. Observational drawing.
Unit 10	Final pieces studies figure	Explore form through various tonal scales in a variety of media. To achieve a logical scale relation to narrative between the figure and context.	Mixed media work observational drawing. Life drawing.

EXPANSION

EMBROIDERY using figure as a source.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATIONAL RELEVANCE

The word education comes from the Latin word educare which means to lead out of, to manifest, to disclose, enlighten what is already there. It is an attempt to allow people to take control and command of themselves; a process of self-discovery. If education is evocation it follows that teaching is an attempt to allow a person to discover, take account of themselves in the context of some idiom. Teachers are not strictly limited to the syllabus of their subject. Through interpersonal encounters they transmit and communicate a whole set of acquired ideals and attitudes to their pupils. The teacher does so in order to help the child not only to understand art or any other subject, but to look inwards and grow in understanding of him or herself. It is precisely this that I have tried to achieve within the classroom project. Within this concept of education the teacher is the means by which the personal growth in understanding of the pupil can be achieved or can stagnate.

"Education thus becomes an act of depositing in which the students are the depositaries and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and 'makes deposits' which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat".¹

This form of teacher-pupil relationship could be seen as the 'banking concept' of education according to Freire. The action allowed to the students extending only as far as receiving, filing and storing the deposits. This sort of education lacks creativity, transformation and understanding which is brought about through the invention and the restless and continuing inquiry which people pursue in and with the world and with each other.

I feel that giving my pupils the freedom to construct stereotypes found in their own school would help towards making them much more aware of their

1 Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, P.45, Pelican Books, Suffolk, 1986.

own roles within their school life. Perhaps this awareness could lead to a greater understanding and acceptance of other 'types' of person to be found in the school and later in society in general. In the 'banking' concept of education the teacher presents herself as a necessary opposite, one who will eventually fill the empty heads of her students, who will deposit knowledge to replace their ignorance and by doing so justify their teachers professional existence. The more this process continues; storing deposits, the less the pupils develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world.

In The Pedagogy of the Oppressed Paulo Freire talks about this concept of 'banking education' as a hindrance to the type of education I believe is necessary in order for a human being to realise his/her full potential. His vision of true education is very relevant to my own conception; that is, if education is to be a liberation of oneself:

"... authentic liberation - the process of humanisation - is not another 'deposit' to be made in men. Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it".

"The truly committed must reject the 'banking' concept in its entirety adopting instead a concept of men as conscious beings and consciousness as consciousness directed towards the world".

"Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information". (Paulo Freire.)²

The teacher is no longer the depositor or the person-who-teaches, the relationship changes from being a one-way to being a two-way process. The teacher and pupil become jointly responsible for a process in which they must both grow. This in fact undermines the whole role of the teacher within the classroom, authority must be on the side of freedom and not against freedom.

2 Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, P.52 - 53, Pelican Books, Suffolk, 1986.

"Freedom - I love its flashing face"³; exclaims Martin Buber in his essay on education. His use of the word 'flashing' leaves us wondering at the very nature of freedom. Martin Buber's explanation of freedom unfolds further with his words - "it is the flash of a significance comprising all meanings, of a possibility comprising all potentiality".⁴ Hence freedom illuminates a range of possibilities and knowledge. Yet freedom is not being impeded and means being let alone to do what one wants to do, true freedom would be where man was not hindered or constrained by others. Yet there are restraints: physical, mental, financial and social. Education could be seen as a process which enables us to acquire abilities which help us overcome these restraints and become a much freer person.

In his essay Buber points out that not all freedoms are good and that true freedom must have a goal or objective which will stabilise false freedom. It must aim towards the positive and the good. Therefore there must be a structure or discipline in order to achieve a full freedom. Buber sees freedom as a liberator, it allows people to discover their own possibilities. A misapplication of freedom would be that of controlling it rather than structuring it. Control automatically brings relevance, relevance locks people into the social framework, it is an imprisonment of sensibility.

Control is the desire to keep things the same way and true freedom within education, i.e. disclosure of different ways of being alive, in order to break away or be aware of present situations, would not be desirable to a control-orientated society.

3 Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, P.118, London, Fontana, 1961.

4 Ibid, P.118.

How is this relevant to art education? Can I implement this sort of learning, this sort of giving and taking, the sharing and demystifying of knowledge in my classes? Art evokes Bubers and Freires philosophy of education, it decreases restraints which hinder personal development and freedom.

"Every art form uses its own particular materials, from which emerges a distinctive realm of meaning. The ideas of painters are ideas in paint. A poet does not have an idea and then translate it into poetry. The idea is intrinsically poetic. The arts are not just ways of expressing ideas or of self-expression. They are ways of having and making ideas, and of making the self".⁵

It is through art that certain values within our society can be revealed and the possibilities of self can be discovered. This has always been so hence the fear of the arts reflected in their suppression by totalitarian states. If teaching is an attempt to probe the abilities of a person and help that person discover the full extent of self, then art can be used as a means to do just that.

"Art does not imitate the visible, but makes visible".⁶ (Paul Klee.)

Primarily art is a form of communication, it has the power to make the intangible visible. The philosophical, spiritual and the social elements of life can be expressed through art. The German expressionists used this power of art to uncover the brutality and oppression of their society during the rule of the Third Reich in Germany. This can be seen in Birds Hell by Max Beckman (1937).

5 Curriculum and Examinations Board, *The Arts in Education*, 2-3-1, Dublin, 1985.

6 Paul Klee, Pedagogical Sketchbook, introduced and translated by Sibyl Nagy, New York, F.A. Prager, c 1953.

So far I have argued that: -

- A. I see education as a liberator of sensibilities, allowing people to discover their own possibilities.

In order for this sort of education to come about, the role of the teacher must be questioned; that is from authoritarian to facilitator.

It is necessary at this point to identify the qualities that facilitate learning. Carl Rogers in his work Freedom to Learn for the Eighties has identified these qualities as: "realness in the facilitator of learning, prizing acceptance, trust and empathic understanding".⁷

As a student teacher, I have been very conscious of needing to develop those qualities which facilitate learning. I have tried to integrate them in my teaching methods and in the relationships I have formed with my classes in order to create a classroom climate more conducive to the learning process.

"Realness in the Facilitator" (Carl Rogers)

The teacher must appear real, genuine to his or her pupils; to bring a front or facade into the class blocks the formation of relationships and masks the teachers real feelings. In terms of the 'realnesss', Rogers identifies that there is a directness in the encounter with the learner, which at times can leave the teacher vulnerable. This is apparant at times of confrontation between teacher and pupil. I am myself in my classes and I do not try to suppress my personality. I hope that by behaving in this

7 Carl Rogers, Freedom to Learn for the 80's, P.119 - 125, Merrill Publishing Co., 1983.

way I can be seen as a real person, I do not wish to conform to a stereotype, to refer to the pupils as 'them' and the teachers as 'us'. During my different years of teaching practice, I have witnessed this type of relationship between pupils and staff members. This gives me the freedom to be enthusiastic, interested, angry, sensitive or bored.

"Thus, she is a person to her students, not a faceless embodiment of a curricular requirement nor a sterile tube through which knowledge is passed from one generation to the next".⁸

Through being myself as a teacher, I feel that both my pupils and I can grow together. During my school project, I have used my own life drawings as visual aids adding that 'I am a student also, learning from all of you'. I have in addition tried to refer to problems the pupils encounter which are similar to my own in my personal project at College. Discussing these problems is a way in which we all can resolve them at our own level. I felt that exposing myself as a student to my fifth year pupils was a risk. This is a good example of how vulnerable you can be in trying to be real. It could have undermined their respect for me as a teacher however it had the opposite effect. It increased both the level of respect they held me in and communication within the class.

Trust

Another important quality which I feel must be worked on is that of trust within the class. This involved acceptance of the other person as a unique individual together with a belief that this other person is fundamentally trustworthy. The teacher accepts the fear and hesitation of the class when

8 Carl Rogers, Freedom to Learn for the 80's, P.122, Merrill Publishing Co., 1983.

approaching a new problem, as well as welcoming their satisfaction in achievement. This sort of teacher can accept occasional apathy and the desire of the pupil to push a problem further or in another direction. I feel in my own classes it is important that I realise that my pupils have many feelings and varying potentialities. During the classroom project, I have come face to face with frustration and a determination to go another way from my pupils. Although I had my scheme of work prepared, I felt it equally important not to restrict any development of ideas my pupils might have. I had to accept their determination as I wanted a structured freedom.

Understanding

Another element which encourages a climate of experimental learning is absolute understanding: the ability to empathise, or as Rogers and Buber would put it, to become them and to see each situation through the student's eyes. This type of empathic understanding is the most difficult quality that facilitates learning, it is the quality on which I feel that I must work hardest in order to attain. But I am convinced that pupils are appreciative when they are understood.

So my personal philosophy of education is based on the theories of such educationalists as Buber, Freire and Rogers. I try to facilitate learning and so have discussed the qualities needed to become such a facilitator. In doing this school project with my pupils, I hope to help them towards a greater understanding of themselves and their roles within school life, as well as preparing them for the future.

A Comparison of two Schools

The opportunity to work simultaneously in both an 'all-girls' school and an 'all-boys' school during my teaching practice has been both frustrating and rewarding. In comparing the art departments in Sancta Maria and Colaiste Eanna, considerable differences become apparent. Because my major study project and the school project both deal with the construction of stereotypes, it is interesting to find that such stereotypes appear to be reinforced within our educational system. In order to be able to discuss sex differentiation I feel that it is important to understand it first:

".... we need a new standard of psychological health for the sexes, one that removes the burden of stereotype and allows people feel free to express the best traits of men and women freeing people from rigid sex roles and allowing them to be androgynous (from 'andreo', male and 'gyne' female) should make them more flexible in meeting new situations and less restricted in what they can do and how they can express themselves".⁹

It is necessary at this point to define sex and gender. In the literature the term sex refers to the biological aspects of a person, whereas gender, an achieved status, refers to our psychological, social and cultural characteristics.

"People learn what behaviours and attitudes they should have according to their label i.e. male or female. Further, when a male is acting in a culturally condoned gender - appropriate ways, he is viewed as 'masculine' and when a female is acting in gender - appropriate ways, she is seen as feminine".¹⁰ These gender roles are more confusingly called sex roles and

⁹ Georgia Collins and Renee Sandell, Women, Art and Education, P.163, National Art Education Association, 1984.

¹⁰ Sue Asken/Carol Ross, Boy's Don't Cry, University Press, 1988.

can often inhibit the opportunity of individuals (male or female) to develop to their full potential.

Sex stereotypes, that is the 'woman's role' or the 'man's role,' ignore the individual's personal talent and capabilities. Adjectives describing the stereotyped characteristics of the male include: independent, objective, active, competitive, logical, worldly, self-confident; a 'leader'. On the other hand, female stereotypes cover; dependent, passive, submissive, non-competitive and illogical, a 'follower'. These characteristics are called stereotypes as they are not derived from a particular sex. These stereotypes are largely the result of conditioning. The male learns to be aggressive through his daily life experience and from role models. I found that there was a marked difference in the behaviour patterns of the pupils in each school.

"Almost all the soldiers in the world are men. So are most of the police, most of the prison warders and almost all the generals, admirals politicians who control the apparatuses of coercion and collective violence".¹¹

Although there has been major progress towards the attainment of sex equity, schools indirectly create gender roles in boys and girls which are similar to the roles operating in wider society. An obvious difference between girls education and that of boys is that they are physically in different types of schools. In 1980-1981, 79% of girls in post primary education were in secondary single sex schools, only 13% were in co-educational vocational or co-ed comprehensive schools.¹²

11 Sue Asken/Carol Ross, *Boy's Don't Cry*, P. 9, University Press, 1988.

12 Department of Education Statistical Report, 1980 - 1981, P.42.

Girls are more likely to stay on in school to the senior cycle. It was estimated by the Hannan et al Report¹³ that two thirds of the female population entering post-primary education in 1981 went on to do the Leaving Certificate; only half of the male population entering the same year did the Leaving Certificate. Vocational education and the inclination to leave school after the Intermediate Certificate are direct routes into manual forms of labour: an area much more widely available to males than females.

During my teaching practice, I became increasingly aware of the differences between both the schools I was in and with the help of the Vice Principals of each school, Mr. Raleigh and Mr. O'Donnell, I was able to compile some interesting facts and figures about the two schools and where they differed. What follows is an account of my findings and how the differences between my final years' teaching practice schools, reflects the sex differences in Irish education.

Both Sancta Maria and Colaiste Eanna are secondary schools with a good percentage of the cohort staying on till senior cycle level. From my observations in both schools I found that the clearest index of the way in which girls post primary education differs from that of boys lies in the differences to be found in the provision, allocation and choice of subjects. This reflects the findings of Hannan Et Al.

In the year 1989/90 one hundred and nineteen pupils in Colaiste Eanna continued on to the senior cycle. In Sancta Maria one hundred and seventy pupils went on to do the senior cycle. In each school there was about a 10% dropout rate, most of these pupils who left went on to do

13 Hannan and Breen Et Al, Dublin, 1983.

apprenticeships in each case. Between the two schools, Sancta Maria has fifty one pupils extra, a factor that needs to be taken into account when comparing number differences.

Subject Provision

Both schools offer similar subjects to the pupils; there is a wide provision within the curriculum of each school. However Technical Drawing is not offered to Leaving Certificate students in Sancta Maria. This is due to the absence of Mechanical Drawing up to the Intermediate Certificate. Economics is not provided for in Sancta Maria whereas Colaiste Eanna has provided for both Technical Drawing and Economics. General Home Economics and Social and Scientific are on offer to the girls but not the boys. Provision has been made in Colaiste Eanna to accommodate pupils wishing to do Home Economics as an extra subject. Twenty boys in total are presently doing this subject in Sancta Maria after school hours. I did ask the Vice-Principal had they considered making a similar arrangement in relation to the provision of teaching facilities and skills for Economics and Technical Drawing for the girls of Sancta Maria in Colaiste Eanna. The reply was not encouraging. Money and lack of space was given as the reason. I noticed a considerable difference in the curriculum of the two schools in compulsory subjects. In Sancta Maria, Religion, Singing, Drama, 'Civics' (study time), P.E., a Computer Class and French were all compulsory. In comparison, in Colaiste Eanna the only compulsory subjects were Religion and P.E.

Subject Allocation

Allocation is the way in which the subjects provided in the school are presented to the pupils. In Colaiste Eanna the boys are asked to list the

subjects they would like to choose. From this gathering of information the subjects are blocked in order to try and accommodate the pupils choice. The subjects are already blocked in Sancta Maria; it is not possible to do as Colaiste Eanna has done because of the schools' large numbers. The allocation of subjects in Sancta Maria has been carefully worked out in order to give maximum choice. It is quite interesting to see which subjects art has been placed with in each school:

Colasite Eanna: Fifth Choice - Art/Accounting/Chemistry/
Technical Drawing/History

Sixth Choice - Art/Accounting/Technical
Drawing/Geography

Sancta Maria: Art/Chemistry/Business Organisation/
Home Economics.

Subject Choice

It is with the pupil that the final choice belongs. Regarding Art, out of one hundred and twenty pupils who could have chosen it in Sancta Maria only sixty two pupils have taken it up as a Leaving Certificate subject (51.6%). In Colasite Eanna out of sixty two pupils only fourteen chose it in their subject choice (22.5%). There are two large classes in Sancta Maria in comparison to Colaiste Eanna's small class of boys. I feel the numbers choosing Art in Sancta Maria is directly linked to the strength of its Art departments and the professionalism of its two teachers.

The other subjects taken up in each school are listed below:

TABLE 4:1

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Number in Sancta Maria</u>	<u>Number in Colaiste Eanna</u>
French	157 (92.3%)	77 (64.7%)
Accounting	80 (47.0%)	49 (41.2%)
Business Organisation	60 (35.3%)	52 (43.7%)
Economics	-	34 (28.5%)
Physics	20 (11.7%)	63* (52.9%)
Chemistry	20 (11.7%)	23 (19.3%)
Biology	110 (64.7%)	26* (21.8%)
Geography	45 (26.5%)	33 (27.7%)
Home Economics	40 (23.5%)	20 (16.8%)
Art	62 (36.5%)	14* (11.7%)

It is interesting to note the subjects which have the greatest differences in numbers; Physics, Biology, and Art.

My observations do in fact reflect sex differences in subjects taken up throughout Ireland. The Department of Education Statistical Report (1985 - 1986) provides the following:¹⁴

TABLE 4:2

Leaving Certificate 1986

Total number of candidates sitting exam: 47,857.

	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
Maths (Higher)	12,570	7,943
Physics	16,086	5,078
Art & Crafts	5,991	12,263
Music	534	2,980

¹⁴ See Department of Education Statistical Report, (1985 - 1986), and Hannon ET AL, 1983.

Allowing for sex differences in subject provision and allocation, boys and girls also make different choices of subjects:¹⁵

TABLE 4:3

Table 3: Those pupils choosing the subject as a percentage of those who may choose it (i.e. 'true rate of choice')

Subject	Boys	Girls	Ratio boys/girls
Higher Maths	48.7	17.2	2.8
Physics	52.9	16.6	3.2
Chemistry	43.5	27.5	1.6
Biology	49.7	55.6	0.9
History	37.6	33.4	1.1
Technical Drawing	56.3	8.9	6.3
Home Economics	6.5	44.5	0.1

Boys are more likely to choose Physics, Higher Maths and Chemistry whereas girls will choose Biology, Home Economics and History. This is seen to be the case in my comparisons between both my schools. According to Damien Hannan and Richard Breen in Girls Don't Do Honours there are a number of influences at work which explain the dramatic sex differences in choice of subject:¹⁶

1. "Differential, occupation and career expectations amongst boys and girls". This reflects the gender segregated labour market.
2. "Differential patterns of self and subject attitudes"; girls have lower educational self images; they have less confidence in themselves to achieve educational goals. Girls also develop more negative attitudes to Maths and Science subjects.
3. "The school ethos and teacher support"; two major influences, girls will react more positively towards support shown for unconventional choices.

¹⁵ Hannan and Breen Et Al, 1983, P.134, Table 5:10

¹⁶ Mary Cullen, Girls Don't Do Honours, Irish Women in Education in the 19th and 20th Centuries, P.111, Womens Educational Bureau, 1987.

The labour market is in itself highly gender differentiated - a lot of schools will have adjusted their own subject allocation and provision according to this. However, there is a decline in clerical, nursing and teaching jobs which have mainly been female orientated. This, I believe, will affect our schools in the future.

"Art teachers need to be especially skilful and assertive in enlightening parents about the values of the art experience for their children, since parents are either ignorant of the values of such experiences or regard art as a pleasant but unimportant adjunct to the schools 'more important' business of preparing their children to compete and succeed (i.e. make more money) in society". (Bette Acuff 1979.)¹⁷

But despite the fact that candidtates in art examinations are mainly girls, there are very few who succeed as artists and designers. There are fewer successful sex role models available for the woman. In the past history of artistic achievement for the woman, to succeed she had to have an artist as a father or close relative, come from a rich family or have the support of parents. However, there have been women who have received an unusual degree of encouragement and opportunity; for example Artemisia Gentileschi and Angelica Kauffman.¹⁸

Lack of accessibility to the academies of Art in the Sixteenth Century was a major disadvantage, women could not take part in the highest form of Genre; history painting. Women were not allowed to study the nude. This was due to the presence of male models, but it continued due to the Victorian principles when female models were introduced.

17 Georgia Collins and Renee Sandell, Women, Art and Education, P.21, National Art Education Assocaition, 1984.

18 Italian Artist, Artemisia Gentileschi (1552 - 1614) Swiss Artist, Angelica Kauffman, (1741 - 1807).

"To be deprived of this ultimate state of training meant to be deprived of the possibility of creating major art". (Nochlin 1971.)¹⁹

Today, sex equity in art is narrowing. Yet not enough women are becoming successful artists. Women artists are still categorised as 'female artists'. They have separate female exhibitions and are constantly referred to both by their christian and their surnames by art historians and critics thus distinguishing them from their male colleagues referred to by surname only. Very few women have occupied positions of power in the art world, and a lot of women in such positions confirm stereotypical expectations and fears. There are more women in art education but men hold the majority of leadership and power positions in the field. This may be due to the fact that in Ireland by tradition and practice the woman's place is perceived as being in the home. She was the homemaker and the childbearer. Marriage has not declined numerically as shown in the following table yet the value of woman and the home is changing. More women are working while caring for the family, as shown in the following tables.

TABLE 4:4²⁰

Table 3.1: *Percentage of females ever married in four age groups in 1961, 1966, 1971 and 1979*

Age Groups	1961	1966	1971	1979
20 - 24	21.8	25.2	31.1	33.7
25 - 29	54.9	62.2	68.8	72.1
30 - 34	70.4	75.9	80.6	85.5
35 - 44	77.3	79.6	82.5	87.7

Sources: *Census of Population of Ireland*, Volume II; 1961, 1966, 1971, 1979.
Table 7A in 1961, 1966 and 1971 and Table 6B in 1979.

19 Georgia Collins and Renee Sandell, *Women, Art and Education*, N.A.E.A., 1984.

20 Hannon and Breen Et Al, P.50, 1983.

TABLE 4:5²¹

Table 3.2: *Percentage of all married women, aged 15 and over, who were "gainfully occupied" in Ireland: 1961, 1966, 1971, 1977, and 1979*

	1961	1966	1971	1977	1979
Married women in the Irish labour force as percentage of all married women:	5.2	5.3	7.5	14.2	15.2

Source: *Census of Population of Ireland*, 1961, 1966, 1971; *Labour Force Survey*, 1977, 1979.

TABLE 4:6²²

Table 3.16: *Sex differences in marriage expectations, and in aspirations to combine work with marriage and childrearing (Leaving Cert. Sample, 1981)*

	Percentage expecting to marry	Expected median age of marriage	Expectations about combining work, marriage and childrearing roles, on marriage and birth of child			Perceptions of future spouse's expectations
			(i) Would give up job to mind children on a full time basis	(ii) Would combine part-time working with minding children while spouse worked full time	(iii) Would continue to work full time while spouse would give up work to mind children full time	
Girls (N=2015)	per cent 97.0	Years 25.0	per cent 50.1	per cent 40.0	per cent 0.2	per cent 92.0
Boys (N=1715)	96.0	25.9	2.9	5.9	63.6	12.0

21 Hannon and Breen Et Al, P.50, 1983.

22 Ibid, P.73.



FIG. 32 and FIG. 33 Breaking down stereotypes in the arts. Pupils dying material and making paper which will be used in their embroideries.





Sex differences in school lead to sex differences in life after school as well. This is seen clearly in Table 4:6 - differences in marriage expectations and in aspirations to combine work with marriage and childbearing have, as I would see it, a great influence on career choice and ambition. If a girl views her career as being just a period after education and before childbearing, her motivation will decrease and so will her opportunity for promotion.

I have argued that my observations between my two schools do, in fact, reflect what is happening in the wider sense in Irish education. As a teacher over the past year, I have become very aware of sex roles and stereotypes being created and carried out in Irish schools.

In my classroom project, we have looked at and have tried to reconstruct various male stereotypes to be found in an 'all-male' school. In order to try and reverse the situation I have followed the classroom project with creative embroidery. The fifth Year boys will use the figure as a source. The pupils will, in the course of the Scheme of Work explore dyeing, paper making, applique and stitchery. As for my First Year class with girls in Sancta Maria, I thought it very important to do some sort of three dimensional work. This is one area which has been badly neglected in the art department of Sancta Maria. No allowance for clay or modelling has been made. In doing puppetry I hope to increase the girls spatial experiences and give them first hand experience of three dimensional form.

I believe it is up to the teacher to try and change sex differences with Irish schools; to be aware of the sex roles set up within the system and to be unafraid of going against them. I must admit I was afraid to introduce embroidery into my class of Fifth Year Lads. However, in due course I



and FIG. 35 Drawing 3-D form in paper machie. Through modelling their puppet heads the pupils have learnt about the structure and scale relations of the head.



FIG. 31

100

100

learnt that my fear to do embrodiery came from my own acquired gender behaviour. 'Boys don't sew and girls don't build' is most definitely a dying myth, especially in my own classroom!!

CONCLUSION

Throughout my thesis I have referred to the figure, its context and its many possibilities. The relationship between the figure and context does affect how the viewer will perceive the image. This I have explored through my research for my major study and also with my pupils in the school project. It has been both a revealing and rich learning experience for both my pupils and myself. It also has made us much more aware of type-casts and stereotypes to be found in us and among us.

As a teacher I feel I have grown towards being a better facilitator of learning and will continue to develop the qualities needed to facilitate better. I have become a lot more sensitive through my year of teaching practice towards sex differences in my own schools and in the educational system as a whole. In my own way I have tried and will continue to contribute towards sex equity in Art Education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Asken Sue/Ross Carol - Boy's Don't Cry, University Press, 1988.
- Berger John (and others) - Ways of Seeing, London, BBC, Harmondsworth, Penguin 1972.
- Buber Martin - Between Man and Man, London, Fontana, 1961.
- Chunn Louise - "Body Fascism", Elle, November, 1989.
- Clarke Kenneth - The Nude, Penguin Books, Norwich, 1985.
- Collins Georgia and Renee Sandell - Women, Art and Education, National Art Education Association, 1984.
- Curriculum and Examinations Board - The Arts in Education, Dublin, 1985.
- Curriculum and Examinations Board - Report of the Board of Studies for the Arts, Dublin, 1987.
- de Beauvoir Simone - The Secound Sex; translated and edited by H.M. Parshely, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984, c 1972.
- Dilworth Adavida/Viglielmo Valdoh - Art and Morality, University Press of Hawaii, 1973.
- Dutton E.P. - From the Centre, New York, 1976.
- Eisner, Elliot, Mac Millian - Educating Artistic Vision, New York, 1972.
- Franz Frederick - The Zen of Seeing, Wildwood House, G.B., 1973.
- Freire Paulo - Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Pelican Books, Suffolk, 1986.
- Gombrich E.H. - The Story of Art, Phaidon Press Limited Text c 1989.
- Hannan and Breen Et Al - Schooling and Sex Roles: Sex Differences in Subject Provision and Student Choice in Irish Post-Primary Schools, Dublin, E.S.R.I., 1983.
- Klee Paul - Pedagogical Sketchbook, introduced and translated by Sibyl Nagy, New York, F.A. Praeger, c 1953.

Mitchell Julier - Women: The Longest Revolution, Virago, London, 1984.

Nairne Sandy in collaboration with Geoff Dunlop - State of the Art: Ideas and Images in the 1980's, London, Chattoe and Windus, 1987.

Rogers Carl - Freedom to Learn in the 80's, Merrill Publishing Co., 1983.

Schirmer/Mosel - Cindy Sherman, Munich; c 1982 (in Dutch, English and German).

Sunday World (Dublin), Vol. 17, No. 8, February 25th 1990.

Weeks Jeffrey - Sexuality and its Discontents, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1985.

Williamson Judith - Consuming Passions: The Dynamics of Popular Culture, London, New York, M. Boyars (New York), 1986.

