TRUTH OR ARTIFICE

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TRUTH OR ARTIFICE

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INTRODUCTION

Superficial decoration, the desire for both western and primitive
cultures to decorate the body has remained central to symbolic role
playing and understanding of both cultures. Sources for such decoration
differ   in both situations. Primitive cultures use primitive,
traditional and environmental sources to answer the need within to
express themselves, usually through the colour, decoration, and
vitality of ceremony and pageantry. Western sources of decoration
seem decided by fashions and desires to conform to the ideals
of beauty set down by a powerful network of media working alongside
industry for capital gain.

In essence, each culture uses masking devices in order to conform
with this new 'tradition' that has evolved over the last fifty
years or so. To breach the code is understood as going against
the norm, to become an outsider, a person speaking a different
language in a culture in which he or she has evolved.

The cultural importance of conforming to the system which masks
reality is central to the development of adolescents in their
formative years, especially with their performance in secondary
schools, with specific regard to art education. In western
society art education   is faced with the exciting challenge
of educating children in a visual world, a world in which powerful
media forces can sway a man's decision. It is all at once both
exciting and frightening, the promise of a visual future and
the presence of media and popular culture as a manipulative
force on young ideals.

The aim of this project is to trace the phenomena of body decoration and 'masking' in present day conditions, in both western and primitive cultures. I wish to look at the significance of media on the decorative forms and consider my practical development through my particular theme, and my adaptation of a modified version of my theme in the classroom.

I will develop the idea of the adolescent being educated in a world filled with secrets that he or she must decipher. The importance of the educator is in aiding the adolescent and the future of education in a visually manipulative world.

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Fig. 1. Truth or Artifice

MAJOR STUDY PROJECT

THEME: BODY DECORATION AND VISUAL ARTIFICE IN PRIMITIVE

      AND WESTERN SOCIETIES

Primitive body decoration has long remained a mystery and fascination

for many people. One imagines the motives for primitive decoration

to be a total contrast from western body decoration and artificiality,

but in fact, as I will discuss, they have much in common.

The primitive image has always appealed to me. On a superficial

level I respond to the primitive, immediate mark, the simplicity

of shape and form and the almost 'clumsy' use of colour which

culminates into objects which abound with mystic age old powers.

Through visual 'symbols' tribal art has dealt with the pressure

of nature in a simple powerful manner. Through a selection

of designs,reflecting the natural surroundings of the people,

the tribes sought to include all that is natural in ceremony,

which remains central to their culture. In the early twentieth

century artists discovered these very vital images in the form

of ceremonial masks, woodcarving, ceramics, jewellery and so

on. Artists discovered how, by means of simplifying their natural

surroundings, the animals, and the vegetation, primitive peoples

succeeded in both coming to terms with the natural through design

and in glorifying all that nature symbolises. Artists, including

    Picasso,looked at elements from these artifacts and developed

them in certain of their works.Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, one

of Picasso's works credited with being the first 'cubist' picture
is made up of a group of women greatly flattened by a break-up
of the picture plane. Three of the faces have a definite mask-
like quality about them. Picasso used this as a means of looking
deeper than the traditional means into the subject matter of
the work. The inclusion of mask-like features on the womens'
faces enhances the primitive quality of the work.

Decoration became a very important part of tribal language.
This language could be understood through visual 'symbols' which
had evolved within each separate tribe, thus making each tribe
unique in its own particular manner. The Dani tribe of Africa
chose minimalism as its mode of expression, the less decoration
on the body, the more power the person held in the particular
tribe. In this instance the members do not need to depend on
visual decoration as a status symbol. On the other hand,the
Hagan tribe from New Guinea choose to create this 'symbolic'
visual language through ornate decoration, largely concentrating
on the head. Central to tribal cultures, as well as western
culture,is the desire to celebrate major aspects of a person's
life, that is birth, coming of age, marriage and death.
From an early age children are taught to make such
celebrations special through reward and so on. These celebrations
become inbuilt in the child's experience and in many cases the
meaning is forgotten. Through visual education, the study of
ceremony, its evolution and the form that celebration takes
would enrich the child's somewhat starved mind. Such celebrations,
such as birthdays and so on,have become prime targets by 'capital'
involvement . By this I mean the powers involved in making financial

Fig. 3: Hagan Body Decoration

gain from the consumer. A child is not happy if he or she cannot

don an ornate mask for Halloween, the older a child gets the

more sophisticated the mask needs to be . Capital thus has the

ability ,through the media ,to manipulate the child into believing

that he or she needs the mask.

Malcolm Kirk in his photographic study of the Hagan Indians

tells of how this tribe "utilises nature's living woods grasses

... which impart warmth and vitality to tribal art, inspired by

rather than fearsome of nature". In western societies decoration

has been formed by the influence and availability of products

dictated by 'capital' for consumption.

It is interesting to consider how and why man, regardless

of cultural background ,has developed the use of the ritual of

ceremony. Edmund Heach sees ceremonies as having a double

function "proclaiming the change of status and magically bringing

it about". Thus the 'magic' comes in the form of symbols created

and evolved by each culture in order to exorcise the old and

welcome the new. It is common practice in tribal ritual to

celebrate the coming of age through an initiation ceremony.

Whatever form it takes be it scarring, circumcision, head shaving

or other such mutilations, this form creates symbols that can

be 'read' by the members of each community as holding a particular

significance. It is also important for visual symbolism where

the youth sheds dependance on the parents and now becomes an

adult. In western cultures,especially West European communities

and America,this initiation is reflected in the education system

where around the ages of 12 or 13 the youth changes to second

Fig. 4: Demoselles d'Avignon: The image that sparked off the
cubist style. Primitive styalisation is central to this
fragmented image by Picasso.

level education where he or she is expected to be more responsible.

Celebration of coming of age is held until the age of 18 in some

countries and 21 in others. In most western societies the youth

is no longer a child but he or she is not an adult. This

conflict causes great disruption in the lives of young

people. Through the nature of education, the teacher is

bound to experience such problems. Visual education serves

to connect practical understanding with the development

of a visual image. By studying the visual evidence of both

primitive and western manifestations of coming of age one can

make very vivid connections with the child's real experience.

This could be used to develop design work in the classroom or

imaginative composition. The motivation experienced by the

child would drive him or her towards a sense of critical self-

discovery, central to each child's development.

Communication has evolved in a complicated network with both

primitive and western cultures. John Dewey, the American education-

alist wrote about the complexities of communication around the

turn of the century. "Communication," Dewey says, "relies upon

the establishment of shared symbolic structures i.e. culture."

Visual decoration creates a language by which each person in

the separate communities can communicate. The post modernist

aesthetic in the visual art context depends on the development

of such a language where people understand the historic connotations

of visual images. The artist plays upon people's understanding

of past styles. After sixty or seventy years of 'high modernism'

in the form of the 'posts' and the 'neos', "all that is left

is to imitate dead styles to speak through 'masks' and with

the voice of styles in the imagery museum."

"To understand culture, one needs to understand its manifestations in art, and to understand art, one needs to understand how culture is expressed through its context and form."

Every community has developed its own form of language but each language is only understood to its fullest given the correct context. It is also true to say that experience manifests itself through a given, particular context. Experience that the adolescent incurs throws out differing understanding with differing contexts or situations. Beauty, for example is seen in the western world as a phenomena of even-featured, flawless, sylph-like bodies. In contrast to this, in the eyes of the Mongolian people beauty is present in the person that most resembles a horse because the horse symbolises the beauty in humanity, in this particular culture! In tribal cultures, the form decoration takes is fully understood to the people belonging to each tribe, this set of symbols will have evolved and have been handed down throughout the ages. Hisotry is thus central to the visual decoration of both primitive and western decoration and as such should not be forgotten in the classroom context.

The western symbol system has evolved quite dramatically in society and culture. In western society, a mainly capital orientated one, a new phenomenon occurred after World War Two taking the form of the financial reward and profit making capital system. This has manifested itself into the present hierarchy of media manipulation and the creation of popular culture for the masses. The masses have been reduced to the role of the consumer. It is at this stage that the major difference between the western system and

Fig. 5: The application of natural substances in order to symbolise an important aspect of everyday primitive life.

the primitive system occurs.

To make a comparison between western and primitive symbols,
one can consider body decoration which is common to both cultures.
In western societies, as in primitive societies, firstly we find
colour and exaggeration which serve to create a new identity
through which the wearer can communicate or speak to the viewer.
Secondly, body decoration, especially face decoration, exudes
symbolic properties understood by people in the given contextual
situation. Lastly, style and form of body decoration in both
cases have been handed down and adapted by each society to serve
their specific needs and purposes. The major contrast lies
in the fact that through media pressure on the consumer, decoration
has not only become a visual device for ceremony, but an everyday
necessity.

"More and more people are affected by fashion and that which
in its beginning was a matter for a few wealthy people in the
courts of monarchs has gradually become the concern of millions."

In western society products for body care and decoration have
become one of the greatest products for consumption.
"When capital chooses to profit from body care, there is no
way that the existing relationship of the individual to their
body can withstand this avaricious power."
The consumer becomes a pawn in a much bigger more complicated
game.

An interesting example of media manipulation through visual

Figure 6: Rugs of Tibet. The inclusion of animal markings used
         for textile design.

Figure 7: Queen Elizabeth: The influential monarch used make up
         as a means of propaganda and social status.

manipulation through visual imagery comes in the form of body

deodorants   In essence, the body exudes its own particular smell,

but in order to market the product successfully, the advertisers

have used images and visual texts where the consumer reads that

if the body smells of its natural odour it is dirty. The media

would prefer the consumer to smell nice and pretty like the

girl in the red dress or like the macho man as presented to

us through advertising. Through simple media studies in the

classroom, working perhaps with the Business Organisation teacher,

the pupils should be made aware of the power of the media and

of the importance of media manipulation and how it works. The

collection of the visual evidence for use in poster design,

design or imaginative composition would allow the pupils to

use images that they are used to seeing through the media and

use them in a totally different manner.

The fashion system is very volatile. Women are the major consumers.

Men on the other hand have an understated interest in the

beauty market. Older men, for example, live in constant fear

of losing their 'youthful masculinity'. In self and self decoration,

Marilyn Strather says that "the process of beautification ...

may actually detract from individuality ... the skin, the outer layer

is in this contextsuperficial, trivial in relation to personal

identity." The application thus of 'unnatural' substances to

the face creates a new, false language, thus masking the reality

behind the wearer. It is in fact a conscious decision by the

wearer to adopt a certain 'look' but the look is discovered

through the media. In Elizabethan times 'genteel' women wore

substances on their faces that created a sense of fragile and

15.

Fig. 8: Women are not the only people who suffer at the hands of a major cosmetic industry.

Fig. 9: Middle Class "Role Playing"

delicate beauty which was considered necessary for a lady. The peasants,

from their years of hard labour, had developed rough, textured, healthy

complexions. The use of artifice through cosmetics served to visually

separate the classes from each other. This is just one example from

a western history rife with examples of instances where visual decoration

served as a means of making social differentiations.

In contemporary western Europe, indeed western civilization, body

decoration has been used to visually separate minority groups. The

adolescent desires to adapt the appearance of a 'subcultural' group.

Dick Hebdige's fascinating report considers subculture to be a compromise

solution between two contradictory needs, the need to create and express

autonomy and difference from parents ... and the need to maintain

parent identification. In tribal cultures the young boy must metaphorically

'die' before he can be 'born' again into the adult world. In western

society the adolescent goes through an anti-establishment period.

This is vital to my central theme in the classroom as I will discuss

later. The pressuyres are great on each individual. Education should

serve as a means of allowing the young adult to open his eyes to reality.

It is interesting to note that body decoration paradoxically begins

as a symbolic challenge but ends up creating new sets of conventions.

However much the person is swayed by the media he or she still contains

an essence of creativity. Originality is difficult to find in its

traditional mode because, as the post-modernist critics

believe, there is virtually no

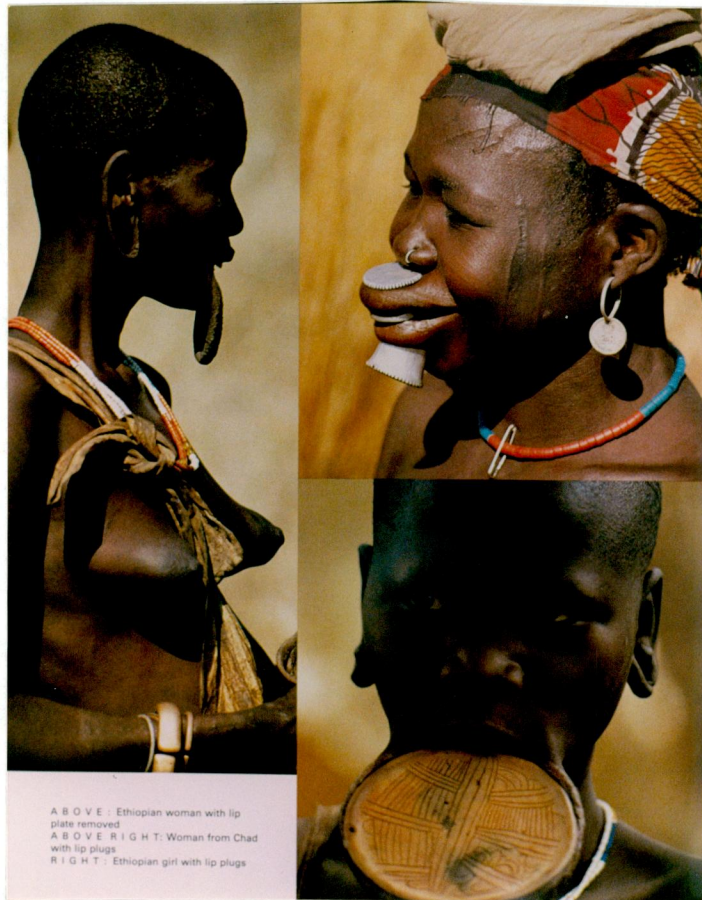Fig. 10: Street Culture. Anti fashion in the form of Punk style.

ABOVE: Ethiopian woman with lip
plate removed
ABOVE RIGHT: Woman from Chad
with lip plugs
RIGHT: Ethiopian girl with lip plugs

Fig. 11: The distortion of the face in order to achieve symbolic
and cultural appearance.

Fig. 12: The ambiguous image of the fashion photographer.

Fig. 13: Body distortion. Elongation of the need by both men and
women to achieve ideal of beauty.

original imagery that has developed in at least the last 20 years. Yet the creativity depends on the usage of historical imagery for the self development. "The more complicated our modes of being in the world are, the more intelligence is needed." This intelligence can be developed through education but the more complicated 'modes' come from self development. Education thus should serve to synthesise such complications for each individual and enable the individual to respond and to develop such complexities so as to experience and add to the development of inherent creativity.

What are the greatest dictates on the fashion consumer? The fashion magazine serves as one of the greatest mediums for informing the consumer. Shottenkirk, speaking about Robert Mapplethorpe the photographer, tells us "the pose remains frozen in a narrative purgatory. Free of confining specifics, it is lost in that dream world where reality is negotiable. The fashion photographer becomes the image of promises, through contextual ambiguities the viewer is seduced." By creating the narrative the scene is open to interpretation by a variety of consumers, the industry in question plays on this narrative for its own benefit. The ambiguous statement of the advertisements creates the desire for consumption.

VISUAL ARTIFICE AS APPLIED TO MY MAJOR STUDY AREA:

FABRIC PRINTING

In tribal decoration the impact is immediate. Because of the

absence of media manipulation the contextual changes come in

the form of decoration which symbolises important occasions

in the tribe's development through ceremonial imagery. History

and the natural environment determine the visual 'texts' which

is understood as part of growth and development by the young

members of the tribe. The decoration creates very few ambiguous

statements, the only ambiguities come in the form of primitive

tribes as a whole. The primitive culture, being made up of

different tribes depend on such ambiguities for individuality,

just as different fashions determine different social standing.

Western communities can also be broken down through differing

social, religious or cultural beliefs. The media, thus has

to use ambiguity of imagery in order to communicate to the varieties

of people. Such imagery will be understood accordingly in different

layers of meaning.

I have compared and contrasted the manifestations of visual

body decoration in both primitive and western societies. It

is necessary to look much deeper into the notion of decoration.

Primitive culture is a term which I am loth to use because

I am pre-supposing that our western culture is a much more satisfac-

tory form of existence than cultures usually termed third world

countries. I will use it for want of a better term. This culture

uses decoration as an artificial means of understanding different

cultural, ceremonial and social messages. In contrast the phenomenon

of western decoration is very complex indeed. The term western

is to be understood as a captialist society. Visual decoration

used in western societies has evolved from tradition but mainly

from the powerful cosmetic and fashion industry through media.

The media creates texts, which through ambiguous imagery are

understood, given the contextual differences to serve each person's

individual desires. It serves as a means of hiding behind the

artificial form in order to create an image satisfactory to

the media's dictate of how it is proper to look given a certain

context. The difference between the two cultures is thus clear:

one depends on history and their own interpretation, the other

depends on the latest fashion dictated by a capitalist industry.

It is important, though, to note that society moulds the person

but individual personality and experience forms the person.

If society and the consumer were to fall for all advertising

messages society would be passive and boring. Yet through all

our mundane habits we are capable of exciting and visually stimulat-

ing imagery, therefore the creative mind, if properly used,

can use experience to its optimum level.

Evolving from these ideas comes the source for my major study

area. By looking at the form the primitive visual decoration

takes I was able to discover shapes and contrasts of colour

and textures which developed from observation of the natural

surroundings. The primitive tribes used and adapted the idea

of natural camouflage and the survival of animals in the wild

as a form of decoration. Animal and nature thus becoming as

one. The bright colour used in their decoration was taken from

the flora of the tropical climate, hot pure colours which are

visually vital and exciting. The decorative forms are simple,

using strong shape in a theatrical device of getting the message

Fig. 14 & 15: Personal fabric print based on major theme
            "truth or artifice". Two colourways.

across. Primitive iconography, for example, always tries to represent nature rather than to copy it, this simplistic representation underlines the awe and respect that such people hold for natural environment.

In my textile print I have adopted this idea of juxtaposing camouflage markings with colour. This method provides for interesting contemporary designs. The environment in primitive cultures grows with its inhabitants, it is as if they become one, dependent on one another. Western societies have become so developed that they can harness what is natural to satisfy their own needs.

Thus evolves the design for my final length of printed fabric which encompasses these ideas, man, in mask form, representing man in awe of what is natural. Man is surrounded by shapes and symbols of his natural surrounding, animal shapes and animal marking. I have chosen to print a length for this particular design in keeping with the theme of body ornamentation. The piece is set to adorn the human body, thus the human must have the desire to use decoration to enhance his appearance on the one hand and to cover himself on the other. It is in this manner that design for fabric evolved. Central to my theme is the development of my own personal influences where I have looked at artists who through their particular medium have used the theme of unmasking the human identity to uncover the human, frail without his or her mask.

FOOTNOTES

1. Malcolm Kirk <u>Man as Art: New Guinea Body Decoration</u> Taco. 1987 p.16

2. John Dewey. Thomas M. Alexander <u>John Deweys Theory of Art, Experience and Nature</u>. The Horizons of Feelings. Albany. State University of New York. 1987. p. 250

3. Fredric Jameson <u>Anti Aesthetic</u>

4. Quentin Bell. <u>On Human Finery</u> Hogarth Press. 1986. p.166

6. Marilyn Strathan <u>Self and Self-Decoration</u>

7. Dick Hebdige <u>Subculture. The Meaning of Style</u> Methuen. 1979. p.85

8. John Dewey, Thomas M. Alexander. p.278

9. C. Evans and Minna Thornton <u>Women and Fashion, A New Look</u> London. Quartet. 1989. p.88

PERSONAL INFLUENCES:

ARTISTS' USE OF MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL, POLITICAL

AND CULTURAL UNVEILING

"The contemplation of things as they are without error or confusion,
without substitution or imposture is, in itself a nobler thing
than a whole harvest of invention." F. Bacon

If masks and camouflage work through distortion and stylisation
it follows that these notions in themselves are crucial to my
understanding and development of my personal work. Diane Arbus,
through her work has opened a door to a world filled with ordinary
people living with the physical and mental evidence of popular
cultural and media influence. Arbus chose to portray these
people without the artifice of many other photographers and
artists. John Szarkawski said of Diane Arbus that her work
betrays "sympathy - almost an affection for the imperfections
and the frailties of society. They, like the real world, in
spite of its neurosis, are the source of wonder and fascination
and value - no less precious for being irrational."

Her subjects included dwarfs, transvestites, down and outs and
so on. In order to remove their masks, which in many cases
derived from their performing professions, Arbus lived with
the people and got to know them intimately. The people that
she photographed were suffering deep psychological disturbances
given their situation in and dissatisfaction with the norm.
The desire to conform with 'norm' or media ideas, or to adopt
a persona that would lift people, bound for mediocrity to becoming

Fig. 16: "Uncle Sam"
         Through disguise, in the form of Uncle Sam, this ordinary
         man has achieved his sense of impotence.

Fig. 17: The pathos exhuded by these figures underline the influence
         of media and the great desire to conform with media images.

'stars', taking 'Uncle Sam' as an example.

In photographs such as the work from the teenagers weight loss
camp, where we are shown the girls' 'hope' at being given the
chance to conform to media ideals, the image, quite comical,
yet quite pathetic, Arbus is constantly creating subtle ambiguities,
such ambiguities work on behalf of the people in question rather
than for monetary end. In her piece from the home for mentally
retarded we observe people who could not possibly have developed
masks because of their being unaware of media norms. Yet their
portrayal exudes a great sense of pathos.

Frederico Fellini, in his film 'La Strada' deals again with
people who do not comply with the stereotypical image. The
main characters are Zampario and Gelsemina. Zampario is a seemingly
heartless man, Gelsemina a simple minded peasant. In the film
Gelsemina, for a time adopts the appearance of the fool, usually
aided by her 'clownish' make up. Simple things give her joy
and through the film we see her growing love for the brute Zampario.
Fellini chooses not to portray his characters in the 'Hollywood'
manner. His work is similar to that of Arbus where he uses
film to portray the subtleties of human emotions rather than
to disguise them to become a tiresome tragic love story. Jacob
Deschin said of Arbus, which could apply to Fellini's work,
"She looks frankly at nudity, audaciously and naively, as if
it were some novel phenomenon. At the same time there is occasionally
a subtle suggestion of pathos now and then diluted slightly
with a vague sense of humour."

Fig. 18: Blaze Starr. "A queen of burlesque and star of the
         2 O'Clock Club in Baltimore. Diane Arblis.

Fig. 19: Old People's Club. Diane Arblis

In Samuel Beckett's <u>Waiting for Godot</u> the subjects, the two

tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, similar to almost all of his

characters in the seventh stage of life, old age, are presented

in all their human frailties. He uses minimal language to banish

all trace of artifice and get to the core of human frailty.

Beckett reflects on the solitary existence of every human.

Man being human, benefits and obtains glee from those less fortunate

than himself. Pozzo, one of the characters, has changed from

a brutal master to being dependent on Lucky, his servant. Lucky,

in a social statement on western culture has not seen his chance

to escape. His pathos lies in the fact that he probably believes

that each person is born to serve a function in life, Lucky

(note the pun) was born forever the slave.

The two tramps see their chance to further humble Pozzo; Vladimir

says "let us do something while we have the chance! It is not

every day that we are needed. Not that we are personally needed...

but at this place, at this time, all mankind is us, whether

we like it or not. Let us make the most of it before it is

too late."

Vladimir speaks for all humans in a truthful, unartificial manner,

Beckett, through his characters, points to the unmasked human.

All three artists have chosen to portray humanity in all its

complex emotion and repression. Each artist has dealt with

themes that the viewer is compelled to react to in a very human

manner. Consider images from Diane Arbus, the humour, sadness

and pathos of the situations that she has illustrated. Fellini

Fig. 20:"La Strada" F. Fellim

is just one of the many directors who had chosen to exorcise

his own experience through his characters. He shows how you

only don a mask for so long, artificiality cannot continue forever.

In Beckett's works, the main characters express themselves,

not as characters hiding reality, but as reality expressed to

be understood universally. Each artist unmasks his or her characters

by using their medium, accessible to the people. In order to

understand why and how the artist removes the masks, through

education the adolescent must be educated to understand the

media and indeed all art forms as standing for various things

from manipulation to profound messages close to the artists

heart. It is through such development that I introduce my major

project for the classroom.

FOOTNOTES

1. Dorothea Lange <u>Dorothea Lange</u> Aperture. 1987. p.5

2. Thomas W. Southall <u>Diane Arbus Magazine Work</u> Aperture. 1984

3. Ibid p.96

4. Ibid p.171

5. Ibid p.165 John Szarkowski Introduction to New Documents Exhibition
1967

6. Samuel Beckett. <u>Waiting for Godot</u> Faber & Faber. 1956

MAJOR STUDY AS APPLIED IN CLASSROOM

THEATRICAL EXPRESSION THROUGH MASKS

"There is no work of art apart from human experience ... the actual
work of art is what the product does with, and in experience."
John Dewey.

Here, Dewey explains that art and the form art takes evolve from the
individual's direct experience. My project as applied to the classroom
relies on the development, and discussion, both visual and verbal,
on the experience of the pupils with regard to masks in life. Through
my experience with adolescents through art education, I have come
to have regard for the adolescents' perceptive qualities with regard
to the world around them. It is how these qualities are channelled
that the more abstract development of the young adult to adult is
formed. This channelling is to be found through many aspects of life,
but formal education serves as the major influence on the young adolescent's
life.

In order to begin I called for the development through discussion
and visual images about the concept of the wearing of masks and the
form that they take. Through homework and the collection of visual
images based on media display and personal reflection the pupils became
aware of the need for human camouflage in life, ranging from practical
masks for ceremonial wear, such as Halloween, to the more complex
idea of masking expression using just exaggerated facial features.
What was most important in the above process was the pupil's
self-discovery through

Fig. 21: Kabuhi Performer
         Achieving expression through theatrical make up

Fig. 22: Vogue Italia

CAPPA DI VELLUTO, ALAÏA, CAPPELLO YOHJI YAMAMOTO.

a loose structure based on questioning and inter-student rapport
that had been building up. It also allowed for me, as a 'new'
face to get to know the pupils on a less formal level.

"The value of the divergent question is that it requires the
student to look at a content area from a variety of viewpoints
and to participate in an imaginative way in answering the question."
The value of such self-discovery is central to the success of
my major study project as an educational process.

The next step was to turn the ideas into visual work. We began
by studying the reaction and exaggeration of the features through
expression. As a visual source I used slide images of face
paint and masks used for the theatre and we looked at the exaggeration
used by the artists through colour contrasts and simplification
of certain features. Through drawing the features, and indeed
through discussion, the pupils became aware of the symbol system,
the system wherein, a certain meaning is applied to the visual
execution of subject matter. A good example of this is the
work of one of the students, who is competent at her practical
work but tended not to question through discussion. She had
chosen the theme of age, she was drawing her friend who had
tried to use her features to obtain an 'aged' look. Instead
of drawing exactly what she saw, as the lesson was one of 'seeing',
as her hair she drew a bun reminiscent of the archetypal grandma!
Yet, the pupils understood that although this example was quite
obvious, in order to complete the project, it was necessary
to play on the symbol system so as to achieve a mask that would
allow the pupil adopt a new personality, a personality which

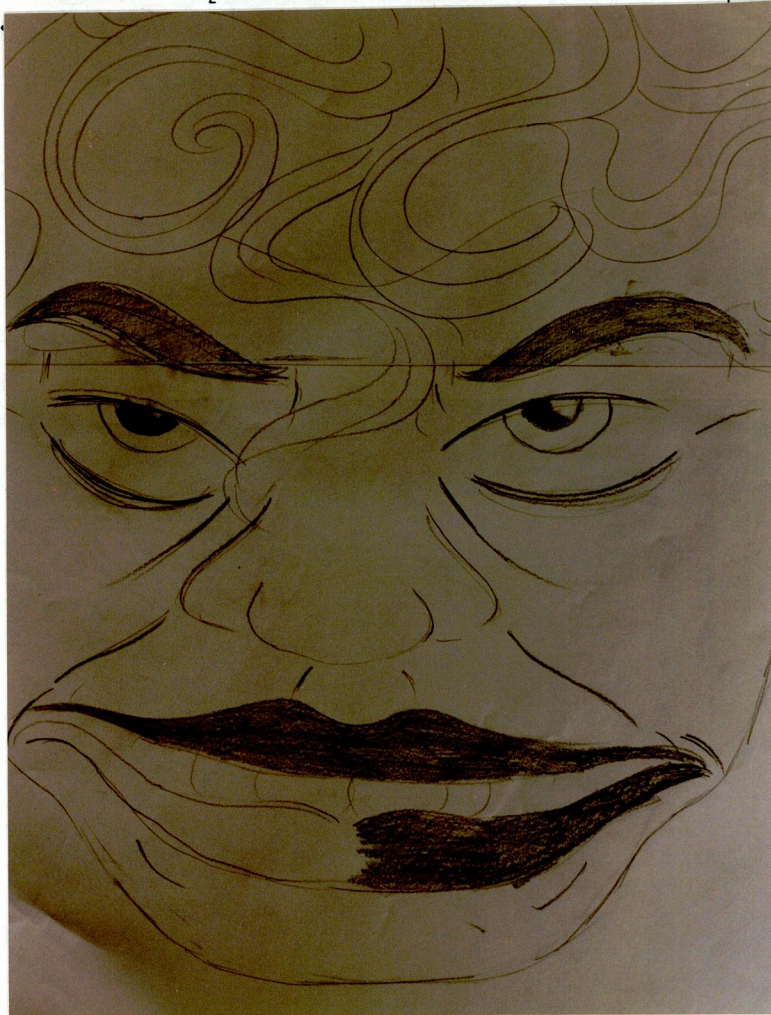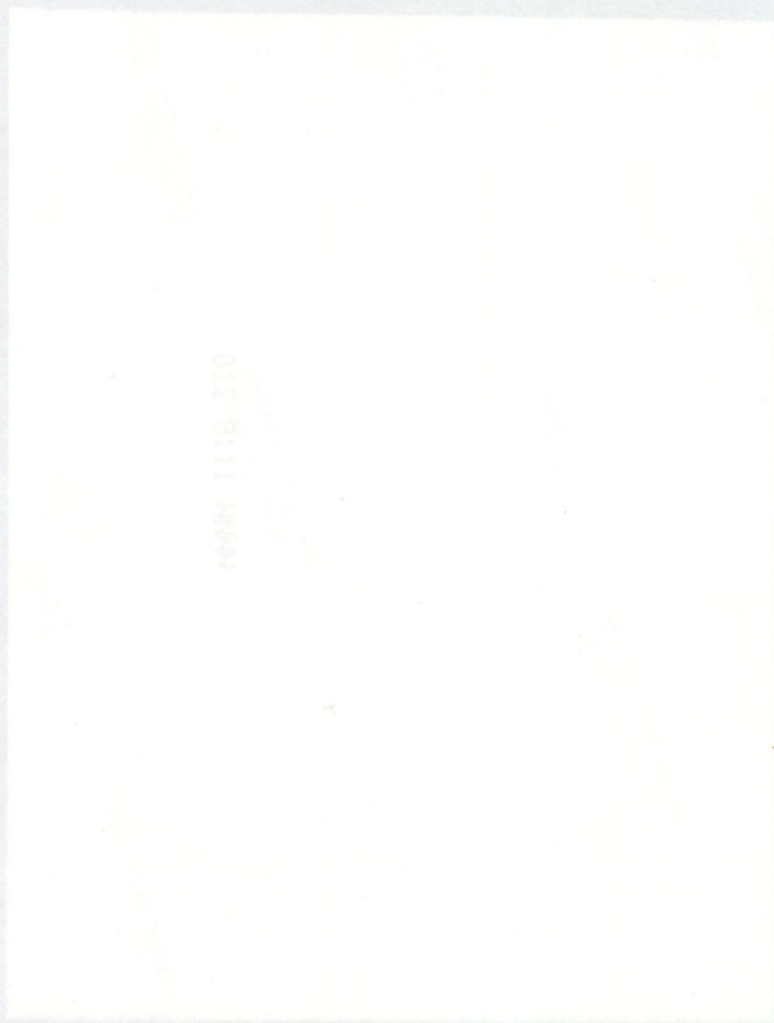Fig. 23: The mime artist depends on dramatic facial expression to perform.

Fig. 24: Exaggeration of reality to achieve designs for final masks.

would be placed under a certain heading in each particular context. "Human meaning is created and embodied in symbols, and it is the agreed social use of symbol systems that leads to shared meaning."

At this particular point the pupils were using, unknown to them, cross-curricular knowledge to build on the imagery. Their knowledge of Geography and History enabled them to have a greater understanding of the reasoning behind tribal decoration, it also provided them with a mental store of examples in which to search for examples of facial exaggeration association, looking at Hitler and other historic personalities that held particular thematic associations. The study of English and Biology was also used to develop the idea of exaggeration. This cross-curricular reference is important in opening up the validity of self-expression from scholastic or life experience.

"Self expression is giving vent in constructive forms to feelings, emotions and thoughts at one's own level of development."

The final part of the project was for the pupils to create a mask, from manipulating chicken wire into a form, through which a particular theme or emotion could be read. Indeed the project has allowed for the pupils to develop an "ability to make a wide range of symbols, images and forms appropriate to their developmental level, cultural background and personal disposition." It also related directly to point 8.2.90 of the Report of the Board of Studies for the Arts where the pupils are able to develop an "understanding of the continuity between art, craft and design and other curricular
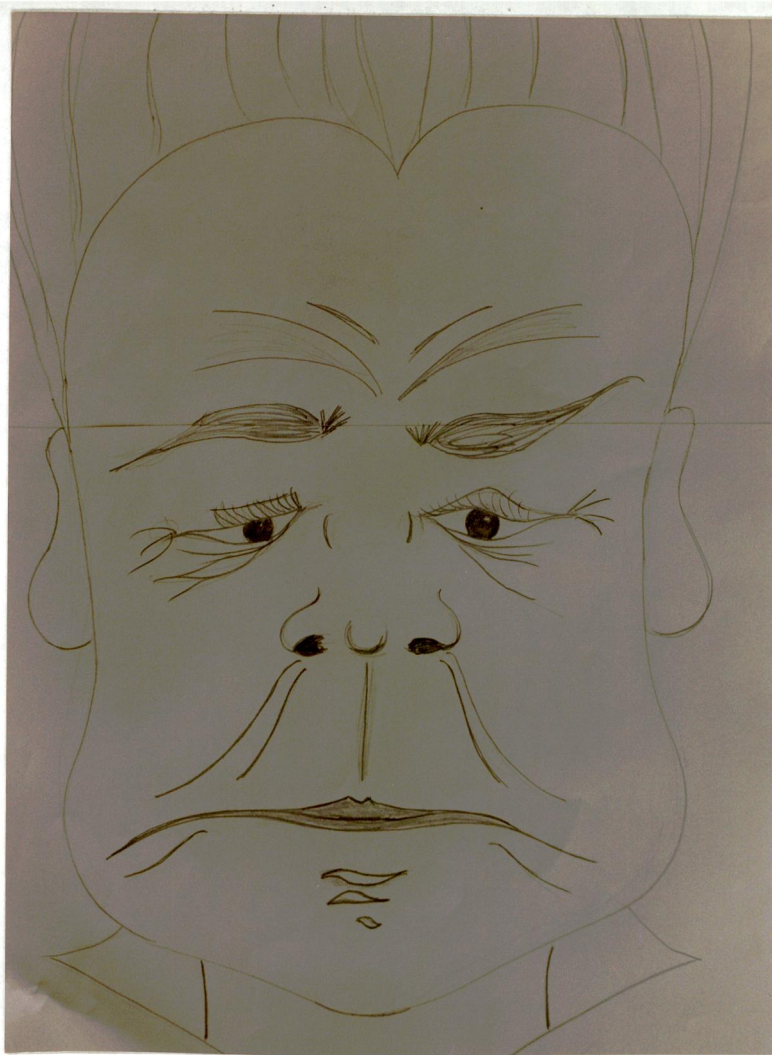
Fig. 25:

areas and between art/craft/design and the world outside the classroom."

Through the development from environmental activities through to two-dimensional drawings and studies and development into the construction of three-dimensional pieces the pupils have seen the wide scope that art in its most general term encompasses. Another vital aspect of the project was to enable the pupils to create a piece which was made up of a series of symbols, through which they could express themselves to their contemporaries. In an environment that is very concerned with popular cultural practice introduced through the media, the pupils were able to 'wear' a mask created consciously by themselves, to be understood by their schoolmates.

The simplified major study project will have, as well as satisfying many of the general aims of the Report of the Board of Studies for the Arts, satisfies aim 8.4.6 where art education seeks to "develop pupils' critical awareness and understanding of the visual elements of popular culture, including film, video, fashion and the mass media." This aim I believe is central to contemporary understanding of popular cultural forms. The present education situation called for an increased development in education and understanding of the popular culture phenomenon which is being directed very strongly at the young adolescent consumer. Taking the simple example of the popular music phenomenon where capital is making millions through merchandise and records, selling the style that one is told to adopt if one is truly interested in the band. The Report of the Board of Studies has defined media education as education "to create a critical awareness of mass
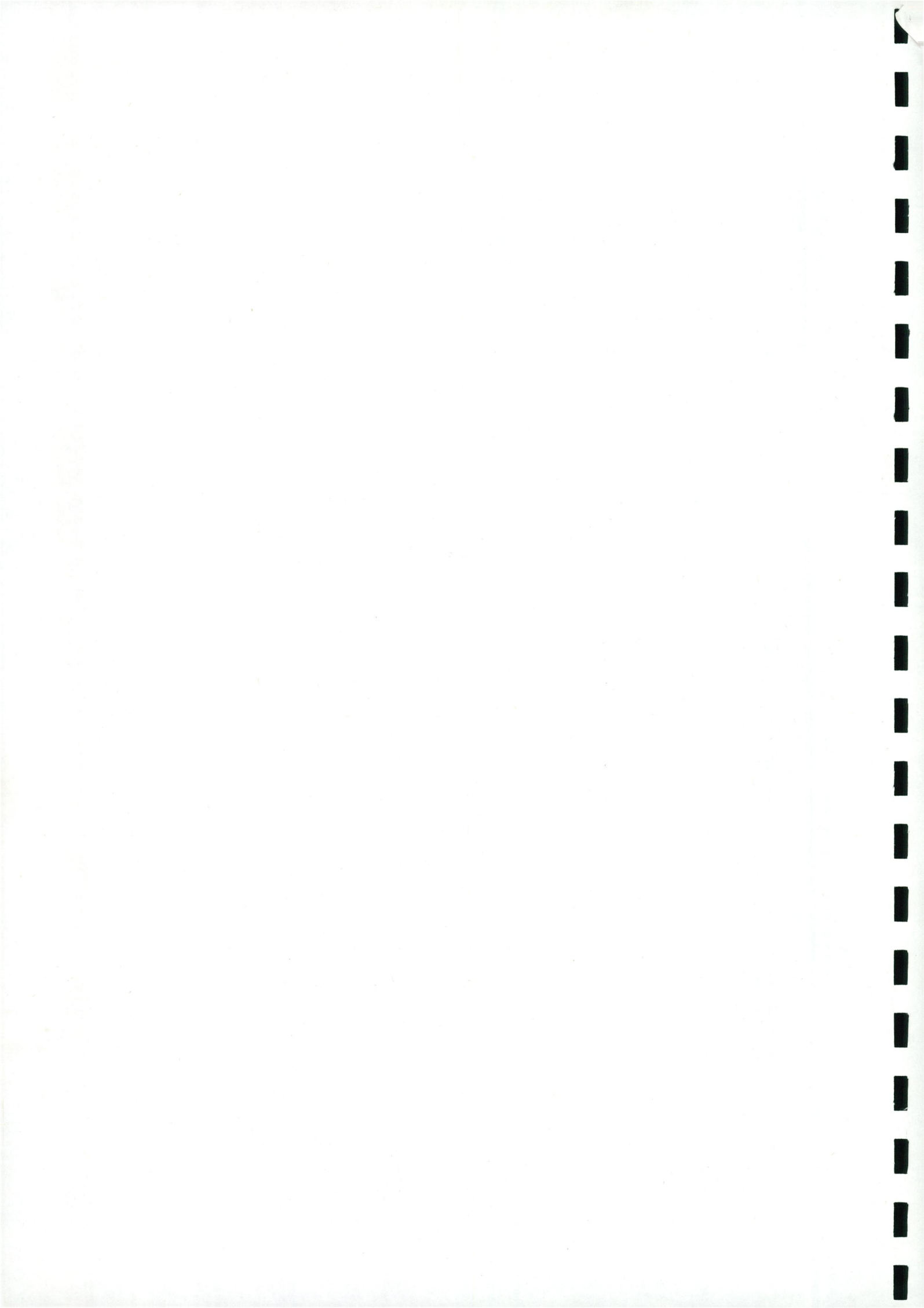
Fig. 26: Example of Primative ceremonial masks.

media products, an understanding of the language of the image
and sound and some insight into the structures of the mass media,
as well as the ability to create simple media products."
Therefore through my class project "Art" concerns will be seen
as integral to a general understanding of many educational values
in the present class curriculum and opens up the way for development
of a future curriculum. Through sound educational bases the
project has allowed the pupils to create an object, a mask which
will hold certain properties and values for the pupils. On
a superficial level it will be a decorative three dimensional piece, yet on
a more fundamental level through the development of ideas and
forms the pupils have come to understand more about their personal
interpretation of a capitalist world run for monetary ends.
Central to the development of future projects, such as the above
one must consider the creative development of the adolescent
within a formal school environment. Yet it is also vital to
this project to understand that school is not the only major
force in the forming of the young adult, the media has a very
strong influence through these formative years.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Dewey. Tomas M. Alexander <u>John Dewey's Theory of Art,</u>
<u>Experience and Nature: The Horizon of Feelings</u> Albany. State
University of New York. 1987

2. Lowenfeld & Brittain <u>Creative and Mental Growth</u> Collier Macmillan.
London. 1982. p.73

3.

4. Lowenfeld & Brittain. <u>Creative and Mental Growth</u> Collier Macmillan.
London. 1982

5.

6. <u>Report of the Board of Studies for the Arts</u> Curriculum and
Examinations Board. 1987. p.24. Point 8.2.9. (General Aims of the
Visual Arts)

7. Ibid. Aims of Visual Art at Post-Primary Level. Point 8.4.6

8. Ibid <u>Media Education</u> p.17. 6.1

Fig. 26: Javanese Batili from 1900
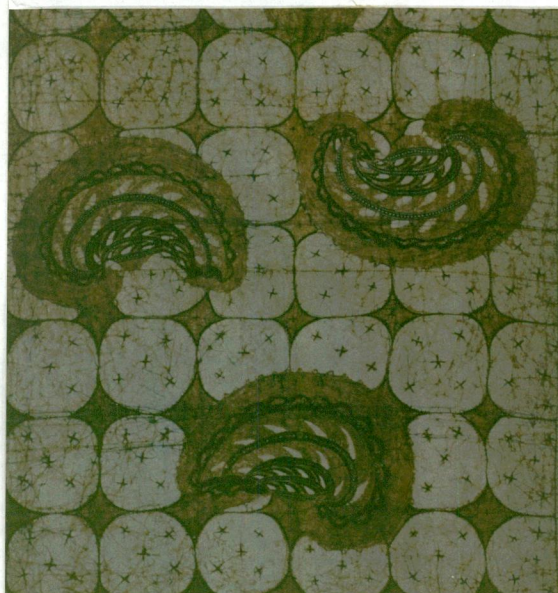   Resist-dyed process

Fig. 27: Simple floral print from the 19th Century

Fig. 28: Russian furnishing fabrics.

The evolution of printed textiles began from the desire for
the 'classes' to make visual distinctions between the high and
low rung of the social ladder, similar to the motives behind
body decoration. Fashions come and go in western societies
and fabric design for fashion and furniture reflect the present
fashions. It can be said too of the art periods. During the
Roccoco style, the frivolous courtly ranging from images of
pink cherubs to subtle erotica was not only reflected through
painting but also through the various forms of decoration. In
the present day, the consumer demands a certain level of design
for objects on the market. It is interesting to see the type
of printing that people desired before the twentieth century.

"Design depends on the need plus the material plus the technology
plus the inherited tradition of that particular craft."

Earlier examples of printed textiles have evolved through traditions
handed down from parent to child. Such was the way with prints
from India and other Asian and African countries. The design
of the fabric reflected the environment in which they lived
and the choice of fabric on the most commonly found materials
the most common material in India ,for example ,was cotton. Body
decoration ,too ,evolved in a similar fashion, using the environment
common to each culture as a source. The natives were happy
to display the designs in their own particular fashion ,from the
tie dyed sarong of the African tribes to the beautiful Javanese
batiked cloths. The earliest examples of textile print date

45.

Fig. 29: The introduction of the decorative art and craft style
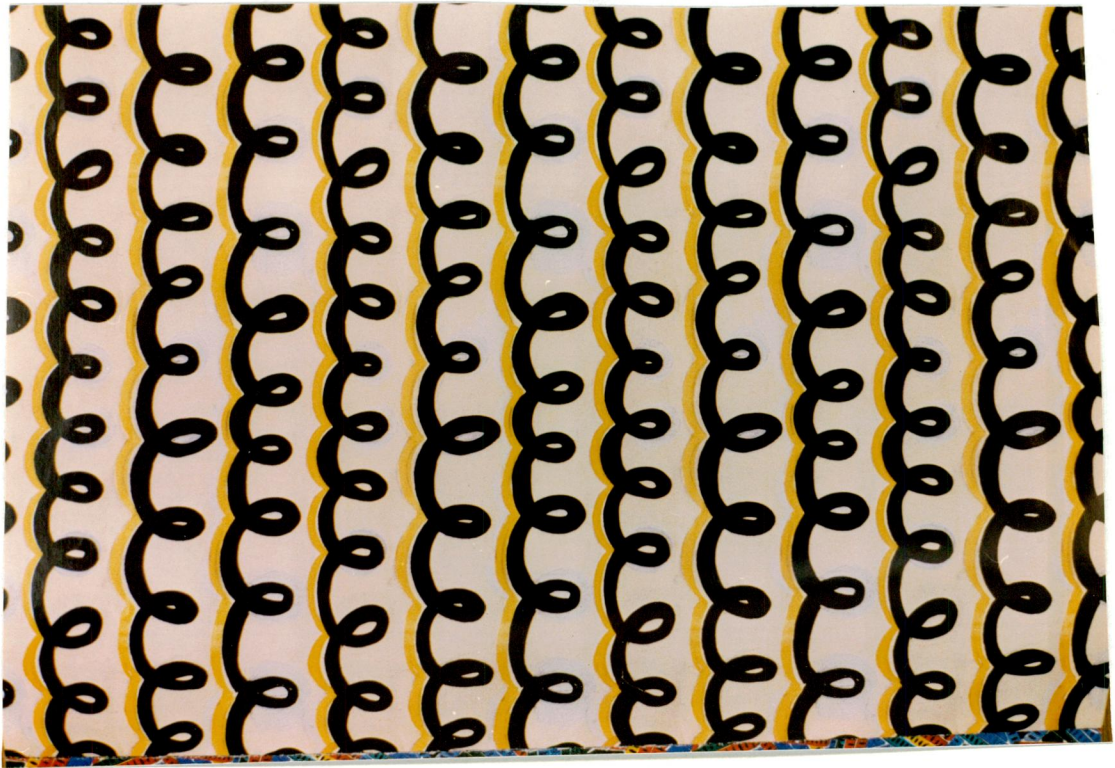of William Morris

Fig. 30: Roul Duffy. The coming together of fine artists and
textile design.

back to the 5th and 6th century Coptic period in Egypt. Design

was at this stage used exclusively as a means of social identity.

As   time progressed the eastern prints were discovered in

western Europe through the great trade routes that had evolved.

Up to then design and print had been traditional, answering

a need within each community. Suddenly print began on

the steady road to the sophisticated methods that exist today.

Printed textiles from the 1700s on in western Europe had become

a fashionable necessity, one only has to consider the report

from 1719 where the writer claims that

"in spite of the import ban ... first class were clothed in

the outlawed Indian chintz, the second with English and Dutch

printed cottons and the rest in plain calicos." Such was the

fervour that print caused in society. People became like

mannequins where their dress and decoration reflected the lives

of a privileged few and the aspirations of the not so privileged.

Central to the understanding of the development of design one

must consider the importance of giving the people what they

desire at that particular moment, fast production thus increasing

income and of course the ability to respond to an ever changing

demand. To study the development of the practical design process

one must begin at the start. The methods used in the earliest

examples of printed fabric were block printing, tye-dye and

batik. These methods, as I mentioned before, were handed down

through generations. The method of dying and colour range depended

on the natural dyes available to each community. The prints

or batiks from Java were created by the use of wax to build

up layers of resist thus building onto the colour range. The

Fig. 31: Transfer print, a contemporary method of fabric printing that gives a free and exciting design.

Fig. 32: The use of the new developments in art as a source for print and interiors.

dyes used, soga brown from an Indonesian plant being common, created a
dark bule to rich brown colouring which distinguished the Javanese
cloth from anywhere else. Most cultures developed their own popular
usage of colours.

The Indians printed in a similar manner as the Javanese. Having a
great tradition in the finest cotton the hand painted design served
to enhance the beauty of the fabric. Chintz as the Indian designs
were known, caught on in Europe through trade and immediately the
European companies set about trying to manufacture similar prints
for public consumption. The chintz thus form the basis of design
work in 17th and 18th century Europe, their hallmark being the simple
floral designs on a plain white ground.

With the development in and desire for printed textiles, the old methods
of block-printing and block batik were modified as were the discoveries
in the dyes used. Up until 1865 the colouring was achieved through
a natural dying process in a resist manner. Another printing method,
used mainly in block printing, was the use of a mordent onto the fabric.
The mordent, which consisted of a gum paste, when mixed with the dye
stayed fast on the fabric, thus allowing for a greater contrast of
colours because of the absence of colour build-up. It also allowed
for delicate work to be achieved. It is interesting to note that
an Irishman, Francis Nolan from Drumcondra, was foremost in the development
of this process.

As time progressed, the block printing method, which dates back

to early Chinese letterpress, and appeared again in Germany much later, was exploited for quicker, faster results with the development of industry, especially the textile industry in the 19th century. Wood blocks were replaced by cylindrical rollers acting similarly to early blocks which allowed for the fabric to run through the inked roller for greater speed and precision. The early block allowed for fine line work to be done. This process has been developed considerably and is used for present day manufacture in highly sophisticated industry. What began in Germany as simple designs of single or paired animals enclosed in circular floral shapes has now developed to printing all types of designs, thus giving the designer much greater scope.

Screen printing was introduced later than the other forms and evolved due to the introduction of more sophisticated dyes. In the 1920s and 1930s the development of screen printing was encouraged due to the desire for print on more exotic fabrics such as silks or   manmade fabrics such as rayon. The screen method allowed the designer greater scope than ever. The process, which works on a positive and negative principle, blocking the negative area on the screen so that the dye will reach the open positive area through stenciling has enabled the designer to manufacture any mark onto fabric. The development of the photographic process which uses a photographic paper from which the painted positives are transferred onto the screen by means of a photographic process has enabled the printer to achieve a sophisticated build - up of colours onto the fabric. The huge developments in the textile print   industry changed the face and design of prints

from the simple chintz to complicated colourful design. This
has appealed as a medium to major fine artists of the early
20th century avant garde movement thus pushing the whole concept
of printing onto fabric from purely a craft to having fine art
possibilities. This development has been of major significance
and should be underlined through education.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, Oberlampf in France was designing
genre images, "toiles de ouey". These consisted of environmental
images such as the country, nature and were developed into bilibcal
and mythological imagery, creating a tromp l'oeil effect.
Such was the order of the day with painting and sculpture where
in keeping with the principle of the hierarchy of subject matter
biblical and mythological themes were on the top rung of the
ladder.

In the late 19th century, a young designer William Morris, responding
to the great industrial revolution, set up his own firm along
with Marshall and Faulkener. The desire was to return to a
more decorative, quality product. "We should be masters of
our machines and not their slaves ... it is not this or that
tangible steel or brass machines which we want to get rid of
but the great intangible machine of commercial tyranny." William
Morris.

Morris was interested in developing quality products as opposed
to poor quality quantity which the revolution allowed for.
In order to maintain the decorative tradition, Morris 'flattened'
the visual interpretation of his subject matter so returning

the design to harmonise with the character of the 'support material'.
Morris' designs were very tight but the interplay of foreground
and background allowed for highly sophisticated 'modern' imagery.

Alongside the great design input, artists were using quite painterly
images for printed textile. Print could be used as another
colourful medium and it was also answering the desire of high
fashion which looked for very free painterly prints for their
cloth. From the 1930's to the 1950's couturier houses made great
use of such prints. Matisse developed his simple 'paper cut
out' theme in his designs which were suitable for the flat process
of print, as were the works of Sonia Delaunay, whole flat shape
interpretations depended on the colour story of the design.
Henry Moore on the other hand designed in a way similar to his
own work, a sketchy textural manner describing form which would
be printed successfullyby Ascher, opening up the possibilities
of print. The Russian avant garde artists such as Goncharova
also used print as a medium for self-expression.

Today almost anything can be succesfully printed from photo-realistic
imagery to highly abstract images, certainly a development from
the simple but beautiful eastern designs. Design is now central
to fashion and style designers who answer a need in society.
In its application in schools, design and print serves as a
great educational experience. It is important in one sense
to stress the importance of design as a craft, but also to underline
the fine art possibilities of design and print. The methods
available for use in the school are the traditional batik (resist)
and tye-dying but block printing with lino and simple screen

printing are used extensively. Through the development of design
in schools it is important for the pupils, returning to my central
theme of this project, to understand why the need is there for design,
and textile printing. This aspect can be developed similarly to that
of body decoration. In many instances the use of printed cloth is
used to adapt a specific appearance. Thus it has a specific 'role'
in each particular culture. The development of printed textiles to
how it is today is mainly due to this great desire.

Traditional design is still popular today, one only has to consider
the designs by Laura Ashley. Yet responding to the influence of popular
culture the design can take any form from tight traditional theme
to wild free colour images. Youth culture desires such imagery to
enable them to hide behind style. It is interesting thus to consider
the effect of popular attire on the youth and how it will affect him/her
through education.

FOOTNOTES

1. Eliot Eisner. "Child Centered and Discipline Based Art Education.

Metaphors and Meanings." Art Education. vol. 43. No. 2. p.17

2. John Maphem Subculture, the Unnatural Break 1972. p.40

Jean Arp The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology Cambridge, Mass.

Bellinap Press of Harvard University Press. 1984

EDUCATION OF THE ADOLESCENT IN A VISUALLY MANIPULATIVE WORLD

"Art does not emerge in the proverbial vacuum. All art is part
of culture. All cultures give direction to art, sometimes by
rejecting what artists have made and at other times rewarding
them for it. To understand culture, one needs to understand
its manifestations in art, and to understand art, one needs
to understand how culture is expressed through its context and
its form." E. Eisner

In order to begin discussing the present situation of art in
second level education one must first look at other important
forces that serve to form the minds of today's youth.
rt, as Eisner says, is part of a culture. Today's culture
is high powered and dynamic and ever changing according to fads
and fashions that evolve. The adolescent is caught in the web
of media and capital deceits. Along the path of education the
child is encouraged to react to situations, images and so on
in a particular manner, this manner is part and parcel of the
culture which has evolved around us.
"Distinctions and identities may be so deeply embedded in our
discourse and thought about the world, whether this be because
of their role in our practical lives, or because they are cognitively
powerful and are an important aspect of the way in which we
appear to make sense." John Maphem (1972)

Adolescents, in general, are struggling to make sense of our
complex culture and this battle manifests itself through the
rejection of parents and parental figures who are seen to impose

Fig. 33: The appeal of such insignia is central to the desire for
self expression of the young adolescent.
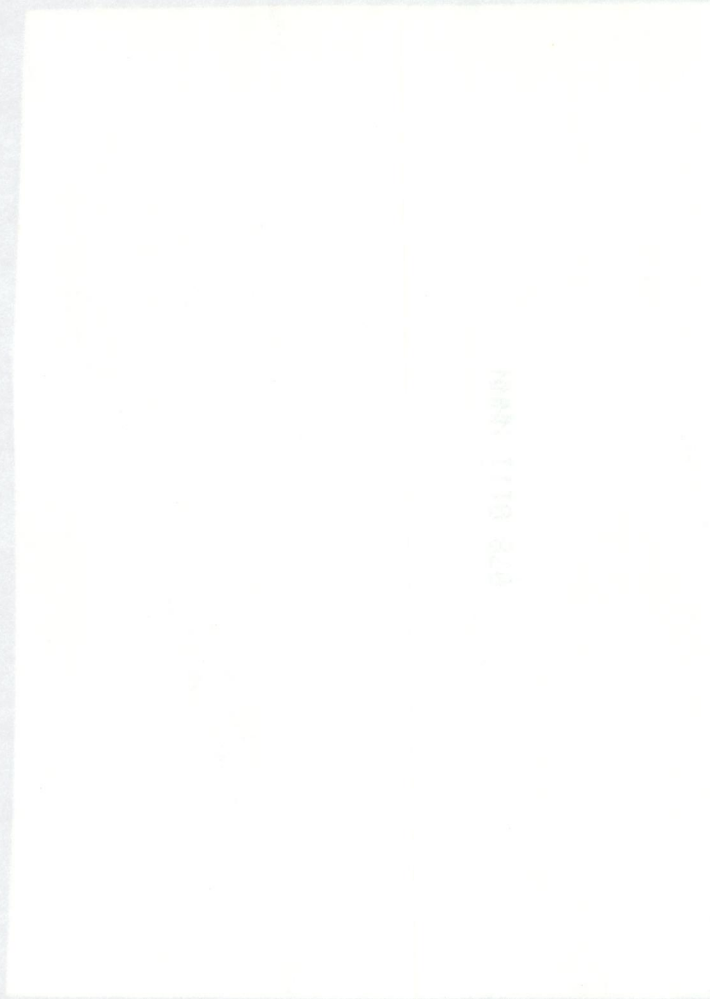
cultural rules. This 'angst' manifests itself visually through

dress, speech and music. It becomes amusing to travel through

the centres of our major cities because of the presence, especially

on a Saturday of darkly clad, brightly painted youths as they

'hang out' around town. The decoration serves as a masking

agent against the youth's own inabilities to come to terms with

his/her development from boy to man, from girl to woman. It

also serves as an anti-fashion which in essence is a paradox

because has not high street anti-fashion now become the basis

on which youths build their similar 'style'. This development

is central to the understanding of the youth through second

level education.

Many advertising drives are directed at the adolescent

due to the fact that they are easily manipulated. Bright colours,

strong, bold designs that shout of non-conformity on the one

hand and on the other the black costume that creates stark contrasts

are being consumed by adolescents. Youth culture is presented

to youths as being bright, exciting and daring by the media,

the young pop idol is every youth's team. The reality is that

if the youth is not living such a lifestyle, which most youths

do not, rebellion occurs, all conformist ideals and institutions

serve as a curse to the adolescent thus making the job of the

educator more difficult.

Fashion and style take the form of misplacing and re-contextualising

visual form so as understanding and 'experience' will change

according to the viewer's situation. Such was the idea central

to the Dada phenomenon of the early 20th century. Marcel Duchamp

placed his urinal in a gallery setting, by doing so he was changing

the context that the form was seen in, thus challenging traditional

symbols and 'texts', 'unmasking' in fact. Dada was "acting

to divert the object from its ends by coupling it to a new name

and signing it." Andre Breton.

The phenomeron of youth style is fascinating and is very important

with regard to art education. Youths adopt abnormal dress

so that the social boundaries can be seen to exist. Thereafter,

in the course of the proceedings the initiates who are undergoing

change of status, take off or put on costumes to mark their

change of status. It is easy to understand the vulnerability

of the adolescent, I am quite certain that every person experienced

their own 'angst' to a greater or lesser degree. The media

serves through visual ambiguities and attractive imagery to

ease the emptiness experienced by the adolescent. It is vital

though to consider whether or not the system is exploitative

of the adolescent and if so how through education can the youths

become objective participants in the system. If not how can

media manipulation and mass culture be turned into a positive

learning experience through formal education. I now consider how

and why popular culture influences the adolescent and its effect

on the creative output of the child.

Fig. 34: By allowing the media to tell us what is beautiful
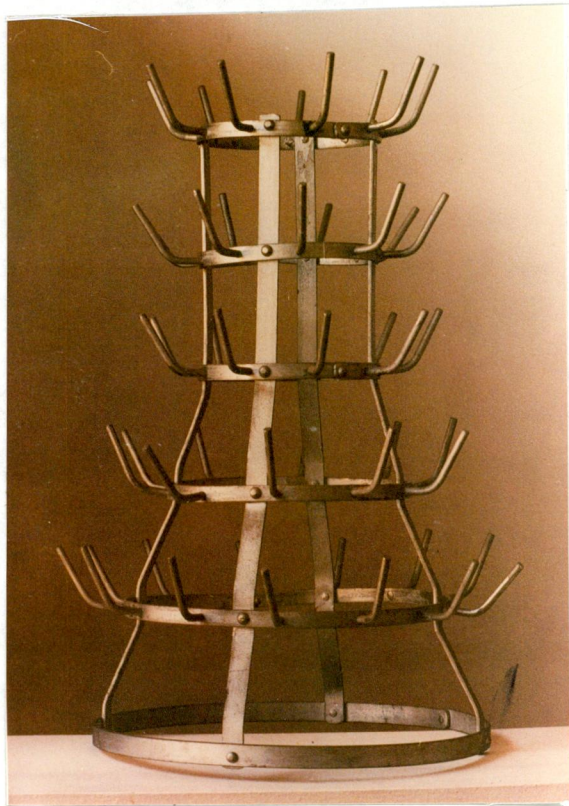we have developed a false sense of what is beautiful.

Fig. 35: Duchamp. The contextual change of ordinary objects
raises the question of what is high cut?

INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL MANIPULATIVE FORCES ON THE CHILD

THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR

I now turn to the development of the child through education
and the importance of the role of the art educator as facilitator
of creative growth. Education as a formal institution serves
as a central focus to the development of the child in both mind
and body. The development of the child depends wholly on experience
and constructive development through education depends on how
that experience is harnessed with the help of the educator.

"The act of creation does not emanate from a vacuum."

The child is formed by experience which includes all the codes
and conventions of that culture. "Experience is something that
is both private and public,... something simultaneously inside
and outside the person," therefore it is important to look much
deeper than surface level to try and understand the way the
child's mind works. John Dewey, the American educationalist,
sees the combination of meaning, habit, emotion and impulsion
as the foundation for experience. All of the above being common
to each cultural situation.

"Every act is tensive and coordinating having thereby emotional
tone or depth as well as structure in action. Experience embodies
this intrinsically dramatic and rhythmic quality and art arises
from the conscious exploitation of these features." J. Dewey
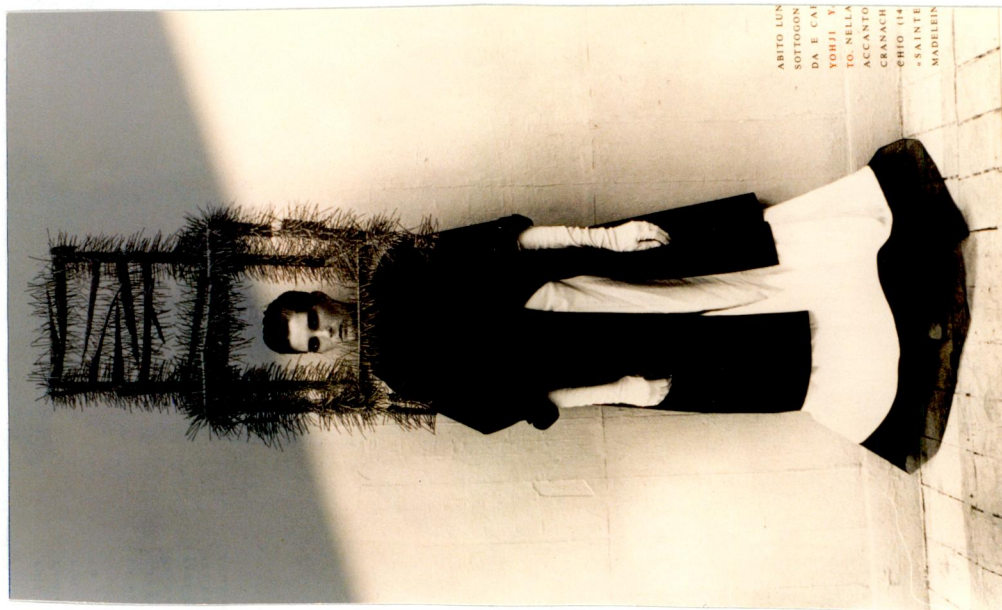
Fig. 36: High fashion as illustrated by the fashion magazine.

Fig. 37: The use of Neon a phenomena of the plastic age used
as an art form.

Central thus to the notion of the child's creative development is the understanding of the above concepts and how they can be used to optimum level through formal education.

Meaning, habit, emotion and impulsion are understood at different levels depending on a person's particular social and cultural situation. An example of this is the experience each child or adolescent incurs in a museum. His or her experience relies on past knowledge of the objects being displayed. A Chinese child will respond differently to an Irish child in the Irish National Museum and vice versa.

"The art experience should impress upon the student that the uniqueness of each person is exceptionally important, since an individual's perception, subject matter selection and distinct response to the materials are singular to that person."

Thus in the classroom, the creative visual result depends upon the child's ability to use visual language as a means of personal self-expression as opposed to making visual marks to satisfy traditional codes and conventions.

In their book <u>Creative and Mental Growth</u>, Lowenfeld and Brittain study the stages of the child's visual development up to the age of seventeen years. It is interesting to understand how the children's visual development is similar at specific ages. In the adolescent age, fourteen to seventeen years, which Lowenfeld and Brittain call the 'Period of Decision', the period that I am most interested in, one can trace the desire for naturalism through the visual arts. "The

development of a critical attitude has made 'the child' aware
of the world that surrounds him, sometimes painfully aware."
Education, especially visual education, must foster this critical
growth in the right manner so that rather than conforming to
a norm, the child can use the visual arts as a means of self
expression.

"No art expression is possible without self-identification."

Self discovery is immensely possible through the visual arts.
The adolescent depends on very visual objects as a means of
self expression and through understanding of why they depend
on such imagery and how they come to depend on them the art
experience takes on a new light. Taking something as simple
as using the theme 'your favourite band' as a source for screen
printing, motivation is immediately sparked because the child
can directly identify with the theme .The process or craft suddenly
becomes less unconnected. It is my experience that children
are far more capable and aware than the education system allows
for and they are thus held back.

"Art education can provide the opportunity for increasing the
capacity for action, experience, redefinition and stability
needed in a society filled with changes, tensions and uncertainties."

The creative development depends on the ability to evaluate
past experience towards the future.
"Students need to be able to evaluate the change and be curious
about the unfamiliar."

This 'evaluation' can only come through 'communication', with
peer groups, parents, evaluation of the media, popular culture
and, of course, through education.

Joshua Reynolds says that "invention is one of the greatest marks
of genius, but if we consult experience we shall find that it
is by being conversant with the invention of others that we learn
to invent, as by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think."

Thus in simple terms learning does not occur in isolation, it
depends on both external and internal forces. It is thus vital
in the classroom situation for children to be encouraged to learn
from one another, whilst being directed by the teacher. We are
all familiar with the student who is considered the 'best' by
his or her contemporaries, he or she may in fact be the most
visually developed child due to circumstances that others may
not experience. What is important here is that the teacher makes
the pupils aware of what makes her better than others through
positive education and reiteration, yet while also not singling
out the particular student.

"What we make of a situation we encounter depends in large measure
not only on the objective characteristics of the situation but
on what we bring to the situation in the form of immediate needs
and our general past life history."
Past histories depend on the social body within the culture to
which the adolescent belongs. One really does not have to point
out the differences between the visual work of a child

Fig. 36: Examples of students work, Rockford Manor, Blackrock.
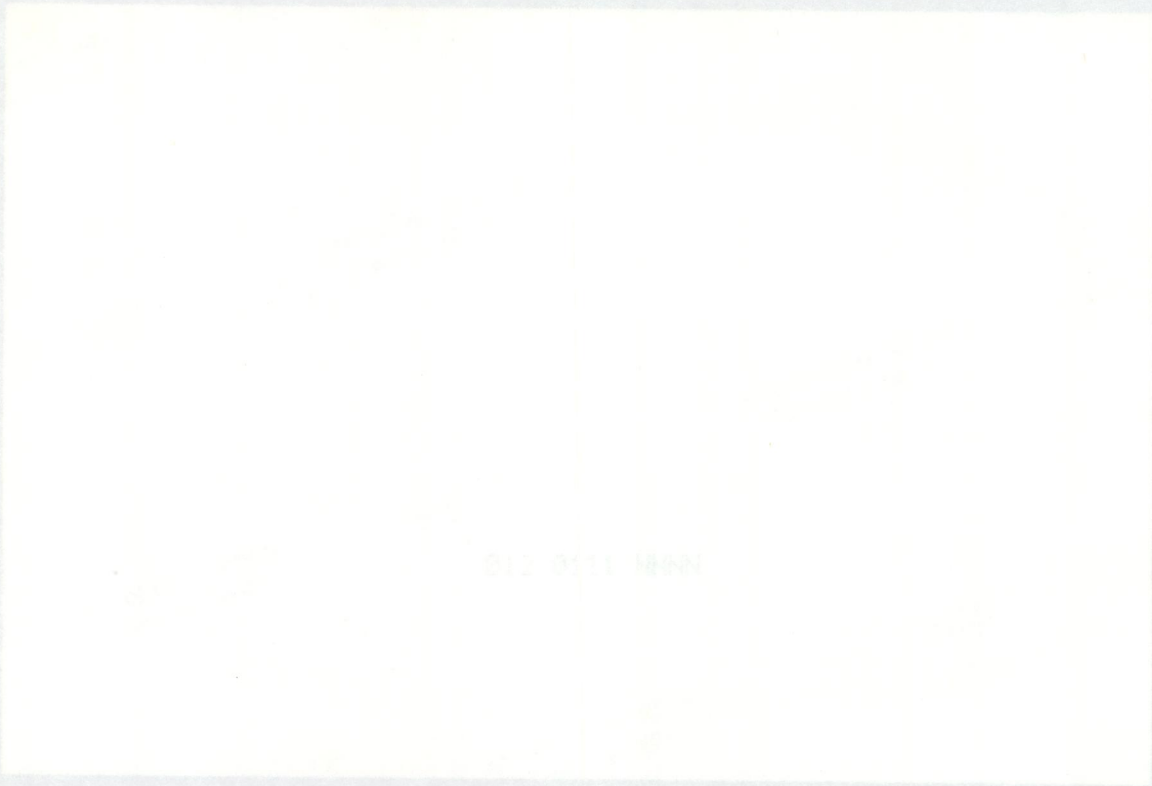
from a low S.E.S. background as opposed to the child from the
high S.E.S. but what is crucial is that the visual work does
not really illustrate the visual ability, every child is able
to perceive things and the ability to record depends on practice
and motivation, thus on a basic level all children have the ability
to be creative in the basic sense of creativity. The adolescent
has a lot of influences to contend with, making perception on
the one hand quite difficult because of the ambiguity of imagery
and situaion, but on a more positive note, the child should be
above the wealth of imagery which surrounds it.

The primitive or third world cultures are based on the understanding
and acceptance of natural environment and man as a part of the
environment grows as it grows. Formal education in such societies
was introduced by the desire for the western world to refine
the 'savages'. The visual imagery from surroundings which is
present through the crafts of such people as print, ceramics
and woodcarving to name but a few, developed from the ability
to perceive the beatury and richness in their surrounding environment.
The western society too is rich in imagery, both natural and
man made. It is a situation that we must come to terms with
and harness in a positive manner through our education system.
While some may see the neon signs and shop fronts of the city
as being disturbing, one cannot fail to see their potential in
the art experience for the child who has grown up amidst these
images. One has to approach criticism of such images in a manner
that is not straight forward. It calls for divergent questioning
leading to discussion with the pupils.

In the art class, in contrast to many other subjects, the teacher does not really have to contend with great traditions that have built up around the subjects in question. In Dead Poet's Society Peter Weir, the director, chooses the theme of contrasting stuffy tradition as opposed to creative education where the students develop from within through self-expression on the pupil's experience. We empathise with the creative method but we are always aware that tradition is so firmly established that the creative education cannot ever win. Yet the final scene shows us that even though traditional education may equip us for the traditional workplace, the creative approach through self-expression will stay deep in our souls. In my personal expreience I encountered two English teachers, one who encouraged rote learning of the poems and short stories and the other who developed through discussion a critical appreaciation of the poems and stories on the curriculum. In the exams those who had studied with the first teacher came out with very good marks, the others, myself included, did less well in results but I left second level education with a deep-rooted love of English literature which has enabled me to appreciate art on a much more subtle level.

The art teacher is able to develop creativity without such traditions to hinder it. Allowances must be made for internal disputes common to the adolescent. It is true to say that the art teacher has the ability to come close to the students on quite a personal level. this enables the teacher to understand the pupils and

why certain imagery occurs. A trust must be built up between
the educator and pupils before the pupil feels that he/she can
respond personally to stimuli. This trust, like the trust of
the young child is very tentative and must be nurtured in the
proper way. The teacher must thus use this freedom to its optimum
level.

As humans we are constantly learning and experiencing and will
be until the day we die therefore with every experience we will
develop and change for the future. We must be open to change
if we must develop and the educational system has to allow for
such change.

"The individual who should be free to reject or accept, to formulate
opinions, and to evolve new directions, but who should not be
free to be a passive bystander in our society" is the individual
who has profited from life experience and who will have a creative
ability in all aspects of life.

The media and popular cultural system influences mankind as
consumers greatly. This influence is not just a happy accident,
it is planned and carefully plotted before introduction. To
say we were passive would be to rule out all creativity that
has occured as mundane acts by   passive people. Every
child has a spark that is lit when very young and grows until
it is a consuming flame but it keeps going, to a greater or lesser
degree depending on the strength of the influence on the person's
  ability to be critical. Visual education is vital for self-development
and self-actualisation. "Art experiences can bring new realizations

of this environment, evaluation based on reasons other than
economic."

The education system can hide us or mask us from reality through
the lack of relating educational experience with life experience.
Just like a parent hiding a child from world truths that he
or she will certainly find out, maybe in a much harder way the
parent or educator must allow for realism. To be aware and
critical of the environment is to grow with the environment,
to be passive and uninformed is to adopt a mundane stance in
a world full of visual promise.

"Awareness of the new thing that has happened ... the break
down of the object ... the rupture of ... communication ..
 and ... the space which intervenes between the artist and
the world of objects."

the closer the space between the artist and the 'world of objects',
the more subtle understanding that can evolve, such is the responsi-
bility of the visual education.

FOOTNOTES

1. Eliot Eisner <u>Educating Artistic Vision</u> New York. Macmillan. 1972

2. John Dewey. Thomas M. Alexander <u>John Dewey's Theory of Art,</u>

<u>Experience and Nature. The Horizons of Feelings</u> Albany State University.

1987

3. Ibid. No intervening reference.

4. Ibid. No interevening reference.

5. Lowenfeld & Brittain. <u>Creative and Mental Growth</u> Collier Macmillan.

London. 1982

6. Ibid. p.391

7. Ibid. No intervening reference.

8. Ibid. No intervening reference.

9. Ibid.

10. Joshua Reynolds. <u>Discourse lV</u> Lines 167-171

11. Eliot Eisner <u>Educating Artistic Vision</u>

12. Lowenfeld & Britain <u>Creative and Mental Growth</u>

13. Ibid.

14. Samuel Beckett <u>Waiting for Godot</u> Faber & Faber. London 1956

CONCLUSION

Art, craft and design education is the basic visual and creative
foundation for a child. for the child who is able to challenge
his/her practical and cognitive skills and to develop and exploit
them, today's society is full of 'untruths' manufactured by a
few with profit-making, with political, social and monetary development.

"life ... if you take it literally, if you try to figure it out,
it is a mass of confusion, a pack of lies signifying nothing."

Environment can be quite hostile to development especially to
creative development. Young children even adults are involved
in these 'untruths' and adopt roles in order to get along in
such a society. By doing so they are adopting and putting on
masks to hide the real self. This negates personality and damages
the chances of fulfilling one's self creativity and so on.

"Youths must be confident with their situation in the environment."

The role of the educator is simple, it is to enable the adolescent
with his/her insecurities to face reality head on and frankly.
Through education one is able to use the subject to question
society and to appraise it critically. Through my major study
project I will hope that the pupils along with a sound educational
experience will also become aware of the presence of artificiality
in the world and the symbol manipulation of the media. By doing
this the pupils will have used their 'experience' in order to
understand the future which will enable

them to further understand and analyse their everyday environment.

I have considered the role of education in a world of 'plastic'
imagery and media ambiguities. Primitive cultures, we see have
remained true to traditions and the necessity to live with
the natural environment in harmony. We see that in today's
society even the 'green' issue has had a major media drive.
One must accept its presence and learn how to use it to one's
advantage.

By developing 'conscientization', a term Paulo Freire uses to
describe "the awakening of critical consciousness ... to the
expression of social discontents.". In the adolescent the educator
educates to the future. To use art to enable the child to understand
the work is necessary not just for practical purposes but also
for intellectual development and world understanding.

By doing this project I myself have developed an increased awareness
of the manipulative forces that surround us. In working with
the pupils I could share my experience and learn from their particular,
and, I must add, very astute observations. Even after just
a short absence from second level education, teaching in such
a situation comes as a very positive situation where abstract
ideologies are put to the test so that firm actualities begin
to form. Education in essence is the communion of both student
and teacher in developing an understanding of the work so as
to live in a better world.

FOOTNOTES

1. William Mack "Sage of the Wilderness". <u>Diane Arbus, Magazine</u>

<u>Work</u> Aperture. p.15

2. Lowenfeld & Brittain <u>Creative and Mental Growth</u> Collier Macmillan.

London 1982

3. Paolo Freire <u>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</u> Pelican Books. 1972

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