



NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINÉ IS DEARTHÁ

INTUITION AND EXPRESSION
A RELATIONSHIP AND ARGUMENT

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education

in

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by

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INTRODUCTION

What I seek to achieve in my Written Project, is an understanding of my experience as an art and design student and as an education student. I intend to explore, through this Written Project, the major influences upon artist, educator and person, and examine how these have determined the values I have and the path I wish to follow, as artist and educator.

I have identified three areas of influence, the first, my personal project, explores the notion of an intuitive approach to personal expression, through the medium of Ceramics.

This has been enormously influenced by the second area I intend to examine, my cultural and historical influences.

Both my personal project, and the cultural and historical influences upon me, have determined my perspective and approach to my role as an educator. I propose to describe how I have come to the conclusion of approaching art education from a problem finding perspective. That is, to define my role as an educator, as someone who creates learning situations, provides guidance and reaction, and seeks primarily to create a mutual relationship of respect between himself and his students.

Before drawing the written project to a close, I will outline my school based project, which has been influenced by all three areas that I intend to discuss.

CHAPTER ONE
PERSONAL PROJECT

My personal project is about expression, personal expression. This kind of expression can be about anything that has an influence on the individual. The influence could be the desire to create a visual image. This influence could be the result of an external experience. By this, I mean the influence could be anger over a political scandal, for example, or a criminal act.

Alternatively the influence could be internal, the result of an experience that may have been initiated by the individual. This experience could be a doubt about oneself, or evaluation of oneself. It could be the exploration of a particular part of oneself.

So far I have briefly looked at what may be the cause of the desire or urge to express something about oneself. Now let me examine what might be the product of personal expression. The product might be a creative act, it might be involvement in a social or political movement. It might be a criminal act.

Regardless of whether it is internal or external, so far I have identified an experience or influence and some form of act or decision as its product. As Getzels and Csikzentmihalyi put it in The Creative Vision. New York Wiley Interscience 1976: p.138

"the artist experiences an inner state that he wishes to express in graphic terms, his problem is to establish an equation between his inner state and a visual object, the work of art."



Exploration of Clay Surface

Now let me relate this to my Personal Project. Although there are many external influences on my work, which I will deal with later, my personal project is based on the desire to create visual images and forms that are based on my internal experiences and influences. In other words, the products of this project stem from a process of personal expression.

To be specific, this project is based on internal experience that revolves around the notion of an intuitive approach to personal expression, and in a broader sense, to the creation of a visual form. As opposed to an external environment, I am dealing with an internal one.

How do I propose to explore and develop this project, through a particular medium? I propose to do this by making marks in clay. That is, into and onto clay.

Throughout the history of Ceramics, man has always made marks into and onto clay. However, I would argue that these marks have always been for a function or purpose, for example the ceramic tiles of Islam. These tiles were used for the decoration of architecture, and were often decorated with calligraphic inscriptions. Ninth Century tiles have been excavated from palaces in Samarra in Mesopotamia and the Great Mosque of Kairouan, in Tunisia. I propose to make marks for their own sake as an intuitive approach to personal expression.

Essentially, my personal project involves the exploration of surface. For example, I lay out a slab of clay on a flat surface. I look at it, examine its contours, its edges and its textural qualities. Then I begin to mark the clay using my hands and tools. I cut pieces of clay away,

I add pieces, I tear pieces I fold one piece on top of another. All these methods mark the clay in an intuitive and exploratory manner.

My project is a process of discovery and development. It is not something that has a predetermined goal or finish. As Getzels and Csikszentinchalyi point out "the function of thinking is not just solving an actual problem, but discovering, envisaging, going deeper into questions."

The Creative Vision p.82

This is an area where I must be careful, for two quite different reasons. Firstly, I must always seek to achieve new results. If I create a mark that is exciting and interesting, I must be careful to allow the mark to develop with each piece, instead of merely making a repetitive motif. If I am in a progressive frame of mind, that mark will reappear, mature and grow. As Mies van der Rohe puts it:

"It is not the result, but the point of departure of the creative process that we value" The Cantilever Chair Der Kragstuhl Berlin. Alexander 1986.

Secondly, I must be careful not to let the project turn into a mere series of experiments, with no visible development and no final conclusion. I must employ some control. Within this control I will proceed in a positive direction, otherwise I will get lost and muddled.

ORIGIN OF IDEA

Where did the idea for this project originate? In previous years I have considered this idea of an intuitive approach to personal expression through clay but have not had the courage to pursue it.



Developmental Markings in Clay

Carl Rogers deals with this feeling of insecurity in what he describes as "the anxiety of separateness".

"I am alone. No one has ever done just this before. I have ventured into territory where no-one has been. Perhaps I am foolish or wrong, or lost, or abnormal".

Creativity edited by P.E. Vernon Harmandsworth, Middlesex Penguin 1970 p.146

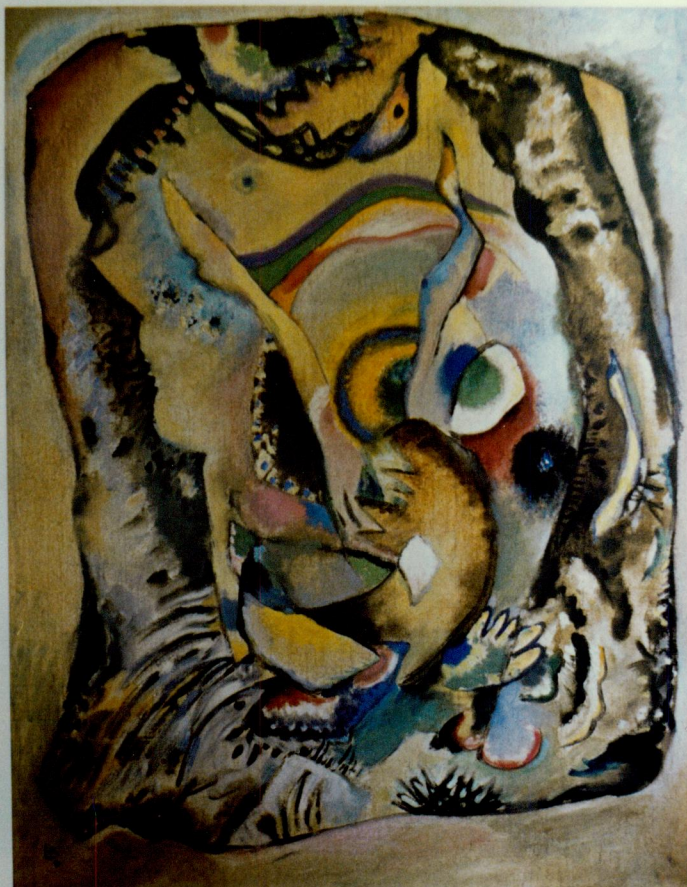
But I have given this project time and have decided to pursue it for my final year project after a substantial amount of time and consideration.

As Carl Rogers again points out, as the "internal laws of evaluation"

"Have I created something to satisfy me? Does it express part of me - my feeling or my thought, my pain or my ecstasy?" Rogers, Creativity, p.144

Rogers maintains that this is the most essential part of evaluation, does it "satisfy me?"

My personal project could have begun with the experience of chopping firewood. I find the marks where the axe hits the wood fascinating because they are the product of such energy. Chopping wood is a good example of how I define a mark. I define it as the influence that one thing, the axe, has on another, the wood. But it is the interaction between the two that produces the mark.



[597]
BILD AUF HELLEM GRUND, 1916
Painting on Light Ground
Tableau sur fond clair

585

Kandinsky
Bild Auf Grund 1916

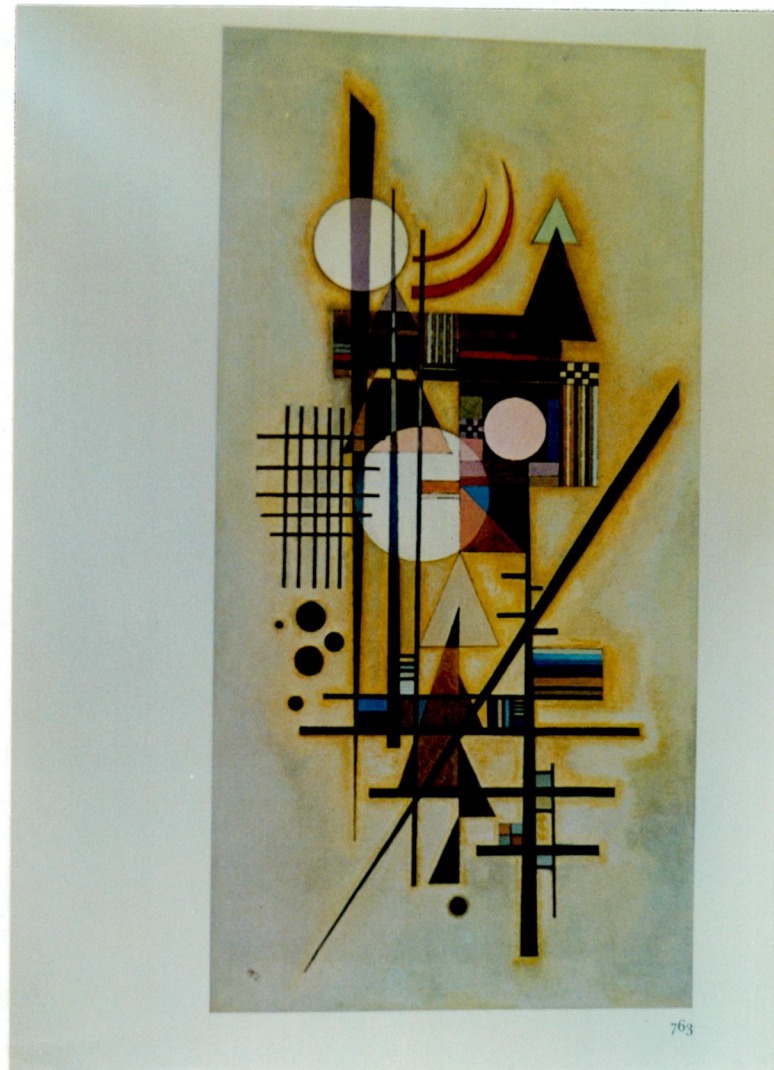
The origin of this project could be based on my experience of calligraphy at second level. I was dealing with very literal marks, but I would still consider them as marks. These marks communicate both as symbols representing something outside themselves and as marks with a visual impact all their own.

One of my strongest influences that has led me to this project is my experience of Ceramics. I have realised that I achieve most satisfaction in a personal and visual sense when I am in contact with clay. I suppose that this satisfaction is somewhat spiritual. This is a common experience of many artists at those moments when they feel they have achieved harmony with their material.

Before arriving at this project, in a less structured way, I used to consider what it might be like to create images that were totally intuitive, not relying on any visual source, coming from within. This concept, and the sense of spirituality that I have mentioned, has led me to consider the work of Wassily Kandinsky.

From 1896 to 1911 Kandinsky worked in Munich. His arrival in Munich coincided with the dawning of a new anti-materialist era in Europe. This notion, among others, led Kandinsky to look for ways to de-materialize his painting.

The notion of Theosophy has been linked with Kandinsky's theoretical development. The Oxford dictionary definition of Theosophy is:



Kandinsky's Bauhaus Period,
linking him to the notion of Theosophy

"essential truths of which historic religions are imperfect expressions".

Theosophy proposes that a person's character and emotions transmit vibrations which surround that person. Theosophy also proposes that certain sensitive people can receive these vibrations. This surrounding power or aura is said to stem from a world of colour and form independent of the material world.

The concept of Theosophy can be linked to Kandinsky's theory of "inner sound." Kandinsky believed that the forms and colours of his abstract paintings communicate inner states of emotion to the viewer.

When I make marks in or onto clay I believe I am transmitting, onto the surface of the clay, a description or explanation of myself, that will tell the viewer something of the kind of person I am.

Kandinsky felt encumbered by his own feeling that he had to deal with nature. For a long time this feeling actually conflicted with what he really wanted to do:

"I was like a monkey in a net, the organic laws of construction entangled me in my desires, and only with great pain, did I break through these walls around art".

Kandinsky and Klee in Munich and the Bauhaus. Tower Beeke. Sell UMI Research Press c 1978/1981.

The fact that Kandinsky believed that his forms and colours communicate inner states of emotion to the viewer, led me to consider that the marks that I make into and onto clay, could do the same. This gave me a concrete basis from which to develop my own project.



Blue Jar
 Stoneware covered with enamel. Late 15th century. H. 33.3 cm.
 The David Foundation, London (518)
 A piece of *kuan* form, with a high shoulder and cylindrical neck; rim
 bound with copper-gilt. The enamel, finely crackled, is applied on the body.
 Four characters in relief: *nei fu kang kang* ('sent for use in the Palace').
 Unglazed base has been burnt brown.

As I have said, I am dealing with a concept that I have considered for some time. That I am at last dealing with it is very satisfying.

CONSIDERATION OF MATERIAL

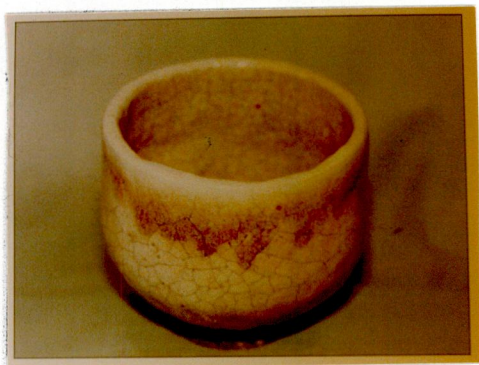
How suitable is clay as the material for this project? The material for this project must be exceptionally responsive to touch, and yet it must be sturdy and durable, in order to provide the flexibility for this sort of exploration.

Clay will respond to the slightest touch, whether it be a fingertip or a blades edge. It can be beaten into any shape or thrown into any form, yet it still survives.

There is a certain spirituality about clay that is timeless. This is the stuff of the Ming Vase - the centre of a culture of contemplative philosophy. One can bend clay, cut it, place it in a kiln and expose it to extreme temperatures.

Yet it has a life of its own. Clay cannot be totally dominated - a glaze will surprise, a form may refuse to follow direction. That is why one must have respect for this material. With this respect, clay can be an extension of self and a challenge to self. With clay one can never be guilty of Hubris.

It is the sense of timeless spirituality that has led me to consider the philosophy of Raku.



Raku forms are subjected to an ancient process based upon a philosophical stance that values discipline and cherishes spontaneity.

Fired in an outdoor kiln, glowing ceramic forms are removed with tongs and immediately nested in a container filled with combustible material: tree leaves, saw dust, pine cones. Ignited by the hot glowing ceramic forms, these materials burst into flames in the seconds before the container is sealed. Moments later the pieces are removed from their chamber and are plunged into cold water, freezing the glaze.

The perils and risks of this process - the series of thermal shocks each form sustains as it travels from fire to earth to water and finally to air, are crucial to the visual quality of every Raku form.

I believe that the qualities of discipline and spontaneity, so intrinsic to the philosophy of Raku, bear strong relevance to my personal project. I seek to explore my project in an intuitive manner. It is at the moment when intuition takes over from reason, or perhaps when spontaneity takes over from predictability, that the mark starts to communicate.

Christa-Maria Herrmann, in her work The Way of Raku Patten Press, 1988, believes that the artistic mind is intuitive, without being irrational. In the moment of the act of creation, she believes reason is suspended and intuition takes over. Herrmann describes the intuitive mind as the creative force that the artist must tap into, rather than merely to collect knowledge in order to achieve a higher level of creative and spiritual life.



Landscape Markings from
Roundwood, Co. Wicklow

Raku is based upon a series of decisive factors that involve the awareness of the maker or performer, and are not based upon prior calculation. For example, decisions have to be made regarding where a glaze is placed, where not, its density, its likelihood to flow or drip.

However I am not trying to separate experience and skill from intuition. I would argue that intuition comes from experience and skill. In relation to the axe and the wood, if one does not know how to use an axe, one could chop ones foot off. With experience one will learn how to handle the materials, so that the medium can truly become one of personal expression, in an intuitive and informed way.

WHERE MY SOURCE HAS DIRECTED ME

Using myself as source, in an internal way has led me to look out again at an environmental source. Broadly, this source is landscape. Specifically I am looking at marks in the landscape, tracks and roads, hedgerows dividing fields, rivers, broken walls. Anything where one element of nature has, sometimes helped by man, left its mark on another.

I do not feel the need to take observational drawings from this source. Photographs, or direct markings in clay are more suitable to gain an understanding of these visual traces.

Again, the influence of Kandinsky can be felt on my project, in relation to this external source. This influence is based on Kandinsky's work in 1926 mentioned in Kandinsky, Complete Writings on Art, volume II. London Faber and Faber 1970 pp.510-523.

Kandinsky was a great admirer of the German dancer Gret Palucca. Noted for her simple and expressive movements, Kandinsky sought to emphasise the precise structure of these individual movements, through photography. He translated Palucca's dance movements into line drawings stating that

"Complete mastery is impossible without precision" Ibid p.520.

I wish to get away from the visual approach of research drawing, leading to a visualisation of a concept in clay. I feel that my work, before this project, was too structured and tight. I believe I am loosening up with this project, freeing myself and the clay, without losing sight of the discipline of the material.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SURFACE AND FORM

As I have said, my personal project is based around the exploration of surface. But this is not to say that my project is exclusive to this concept.

When I began this project, I worked on flat slabs of clay, to explore what was of primary importance to me then, the surface. Through the exploration of the surface qualities I began to consider the concept of form, on the encouragement of my tutor. I considered the concept of form from two perspectives.

The first approach was to allow the marks made into and onto the surface of the material, to suggest possible forms. Simply using line to suggest form.

The second approach that has influenced the forms I have made, is the notion of forms that suggest lightness. I have always preferred Ceramic forms that suggest an upward movement, away from a heavy base. Some ceramic forms which are wider at the base than the rest of the body, seem to me to be heavy and dead. This problem can be avoided by giving more volume to the upper portion of the form.

A consideration that has dictated both surface and form, for my work, is the movement of the viewer's eye over surface and form.

When I mark the surface of my forms, I consider how the marks I make, into and onto the surface, dictate where the viewer's eye travels. I feel it is important for there to be transitions and links between various marks, to allow the eye to move efficiently. If there is too much confusion, chaos, and abruptness on the surface, I fear the viewer's eye will simply give up, and look elsewhere.

This plainly defeats the purpose of visual communication, to hold the viewer's eye for a predetermined amount of time. This may be twenty seconds in relation to one of Andy Warhol's screenprints, or perhaps one hour for Courbet's The Funeral at Ornans.

This consideration has also had an influence on form. If the viewer's eye travels up the outline of a form and stops dead, where the line of the rim is perpendicular to the line of the body. I feel this can be too abrupt. For this reason I have chosen to make the rim of my forms irregular, by pinching. This allows for a flowing horizon line, around the outline of the form.

The forms that I have made for my personal project always turn inwards, towards the top of the form. I feel that if the outline of the form simply travels upwards and outwards, the viewer's eye will do the same. The problem is that there is nothing to guide the eye back in toward the rest of the form.

What I seek to achieve through my forms and their surface, is a harmonious journey for the eye, with the intention of providing enjoyment and interest for the viewer.



Giacometti's Portrait of Jean Genet 1955

CHAPTER TWO
HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

To examine the historical and cultural influences upon my development as an artist or educator I have identified four major sources.

1. ALBERTO GIACOMETTI

The reason Giacometti's work interests and influences me is because his work seems to involve a whole series of marks that build up an image. These marks go a long way to explain how Giacometti created his images. This is also an example of how an artist uses a mark for a purpose.

Looking at the work of Giacometti, I sense the artist spent a lot of time working and re-working the same image, perhaps dissatisfied with what he was achieving. I feel this is quite a brave thing for an artist to do, to put on show the process, rather than the product.

Very often it can be more interesting to see the developmental or research work of an artist or student, because the finished work may be tired and overworked. But with Giacometti I would argue that this does not happen because the product is the actual process. Again, as Mies van der Rohe says:
"It is not the result but the point of creative departure that we value". *ibid.*



Portrait of Maurice Lefebvre Foinet

In December 1947 Pierre Matisse was preparing an exhibition of Giacometti's work in New York, and asked the artist to send him a listing of the work submitted. Not satisfied with a simple listing, Giacometti wrote: "Here is a list of the sculptures I promised you, but I could only make the list by relating the works to each other with short comments at least otherwise it would be meaningless" p.283 Giacometti, Sculpture Paintings and Drawings. Thames & Hudson. p.283.

It would seem that the sculptures were all part of a process of understanding and visual thinking, rather than being a group of unrelated works, each piece related to the one before and one after.

Giacometti was awarded the Carnegie Prize for Sculpture at the International Painting and Sculpture Exhibition in Pittsburg, U.S.A. In his acceptance speech he said "Yet even if everything I've made up to now doesn't count at all, ... I have more desire than ever to work ... I see my sculptures before me, each a failure, ... but in each is something of what I want to create someday ... the sculpture I'm thinking of makes only a scattered and fragmentary appearance in other sculptures." *ibid.*

Giacometti's dissatisfaction with previous work tells us of the importance of striving forward to achieve, rather than relying on what was done in the past. This is especially relevant in terms of the work of ones students.



PORTAIT DE FEMME ÂGÉE
1965 - Huile sur toile, 88 x 65 cm
Collection particulière.

Giacometti creates a sense of
intensity and exploration with the marks he makes

There is a certain three dimensional quality about Giacometti's drawing that is spontaneous and expressive. Yet at the same time it is very controlled and precise as Kandinsky has referred to precision as: "an extremely important precondition of outstanding talent." Kandinsky Complete Writings on Art Vol. II Faber & Faber 1970. p.253.

Giacometti always seems to be searching for a solution. When one examines the work of Giacometti, it seems as if he is expending huge amounts of energy searching and searching. Then Giacometti simply stops, suspending the image, creating an uncomfortable tension. I would consider this as an example of the role of Intuition in relation to the artist. Giacometti has said that the second before he stops he is totally unaware that the work is drawing to an end. But once that second has passed, he knows it is time to stop.

Knowing when to stop is especially significant when using a material like clay, where one touch too many may lead to the destruction of hours of work. It is also worth emphasising in the classroom.



One of Kaneko's "Dangos"

2. JUN KANEKO Ceramics Monthly August 1988

As I have mentioned in the section on my Personal Project, I have often considered the notion of creating images and forms that rely on an intuitive approach to personal expression. The reason for not pursuing this concept until now was because I felt it was too far fetched and too abstract. I felt quite simply, that I would be laughed at. Or referring to Carl Rogers who describes it as "the anxiety of separateness". Creativity p.146.

At the beginning of this year, I read an article in Ceramics Monthly profiling the work of Jun Kaneko. It became clear that Kaneko was dealing with concepts that I could respond to and had already begun to consider. I suppose the fact that someone else had seriously considered these ideas, encouraged me to pursue the concept myself.

One of the first points Kaneko makes is that "making art is a chain reaction of intuitive sparks and decisions. The intuitive energy comes from the artists curiosity of self and whole. To respond to this situation in the most effective way, an artist must have a spontaneous attitude towards each moment, visual and non-visual." Ceramics Monthly Para II Col II. p.50. June, July, August, 1988.

This statement reaffirms my belief that one must look inwards as well as outwards for "intuitive energy." It was what Kaneko describes as "curiosity about self" that in many ways initiated my entire personal project.



Kaneko's intuitive approach to Surface Decoration

Kaneko expands on his notion of "creative energy" that suggests a snowball effect to creativity.

"I try to do things I am curious about. This creates new ideas, and thus brings more questions and more curiosity to the original idea". *ibid.*

It is worthwhile to bear this statement in mind when considering Lesson Schemes for Teaching. If one can tap in on what a group are "curious" about, one will achieve a very effective lesson scheme.

The point Kaneko makes that I can respond to most is about surface decoration - the initial concern of my personal project.

"Finally" he said, "I give up thinking and just sit in front of the piece, trying to catch what the piece is saying to me. When I can hear what a form has to say I start seeing marks and colours on the surface."

Kaneko looks to the form to allow it to dictate to him, how it should be decorated. I think what Kaneko is trying to do is suspend reason, and allow intuition make decisions for him. He approaches and explores creativity through his unconscious.

E. W. Sinnott, in his essay "The Creativeness of Life," Creativity, says: P.111

"The unconscious mind rejects certain combinations as unimportant or incompatible, but sees the significance of others ... Thus the unconscious mind is able to solve problems and to lay at least the foundation for the construction of a poem or a work of art."

If one can develop the ability to tap into ones unconscious, as Kaneko strives to do, and indeed as Kandinsky strove to do, the end result will be a highly personal result, that merits the same respect as any other approach to creation.

However Sinnott is careful to point out that the unconscious needs a stimulus before it can "solve problems" and lay foundations for creativeness. He suggests that the fuel for unconscious creativity is "a strong conscious desire for something." P.112 Para III. *ibid.*

Sinnott suggests that the unconscious mind sees the solution when "only hints or cloudy outlines are in the mind." P.112 Para III. *ibid.*

Referring back to Kaneko and his concept of allowing the form to speak to him, we must remember that it was he who created the form, initially. Kaneko has created a harmonious cycle from himself out to his creations and back to himself again.

I want the distance between myself and the material to be as short as possible. That is why I have chosen a project that is based on our intuitive approach to personal expression.

Instead of a one way direction from concept to visual research, to final creation, my personal project moves in a circular direction, both internally and externally from concept to material, perhaps back to concept, and then on to a completed form.



A selection of Aalto's furniture

3. ALVAR AALTO

If I was asked, what is most meaningful to me, when it comes to evaluating works of creation, whether they be my own, that of other designers and artists, or that of my students, I think I would answer, function and precision.

On any level, whether it be industrial, design, visual communication or perhaps craft, I feel that function is one of the top priorities. That function may be to sit comfortably, to communicate a message or emotion, or it may be to keep a person warm and dry from cold weather.

Whatever the function is, if the product fails to perform that function, we are no longer interested in that product. For example, if a person buys a very expensive watch that, to that person, is the most beautiful watch they have ever seen, how does that person feel if the watch stops? Will they still wear it? Will they still consider it as the most beautiful watch they have ever seen? I would argue that they would not. I feel the reason for this is that the watch has simply not performed its function. If a product claims to perform a certain function and then fails to do so, then I would suggest that we are no longer interested in that product.

How can one, as artist or designer, prevent such a thing from happening to what they create? I feel that one can prevent this from happening, by being precise at all times. This is not to say that one cannot be expressive or free, for I believe it is possible to be both expressive and precise.

If I bear in mind the concept of precision when I am making a coiled form or a lathe piece then I can feel safe in the knowledge that these pieces will survive the firing process.

If my concern is to create an image that has to communicate a message, through precision in terms of the relationship of colours, the application of, for example typeface, or the balance between word and image, I will create a product that performs its function.

Precision guarantees function in all pursuits.

Certainly the strongest influence on the formation of these personal opinions, is Alvar Aalto.

Aalto developed a method of bending wood that advanced further than the Bentwood process where wood was steamed and bent. Aalto achieved this by using several layers of thinly cut wood. These, he could bend in many directions. The result is a variety of furniture that is functional in terms of its use and its visual impact.

Aalto defined his furniture as accessories to architecture. He saw the chair as a unit belonging to a whole community. Aalto rarely did sketches, choosing to work directly with the material.

For this reason his creations remain refreshing, they have not been laboured over or reworked. This shows quite a different approach to that of Giacometti.

5. THE CERAMIC TILES OF ISLAM

Perhaps a meeting place between two of my developmental experiences as an artist, are the tiles of Islam. The reason that I say that this is a meeting point is because the tiles of Islam combine Ceramics and Calligraphy.

Often decorated with calligraphy, the tiles played a prominent part in the decoration of Islamic architecture.

In the eighth and ninth centuries an identifiable Islamic culture began to emerge, albeit under a prominent Chinese influence.

In the mid eighth century the Abbasids of Islam defeated the Chinese army in an occupied part of Persia. The consequence of this, in artistic terms, was that Chinese prisoners introduced many artistic techniques, including fine ceramics, to Mesopotamia.

Chinese ware became popular and T'ang porcelaine came to Mesopotamia via silk and sea routes. Demand was greater than supply and Islamic patrons encouraged native craftsmen to produce copies of white Chinese earthenware and porcelaine.



Ceramic tiles of Islam

Mesopotamian craftsmen produced imitations by covering earthenware with an opaque white tin glaze, and soon began to develop their own style using white and transparent glazes.

The most important development of the ninth century was that of Lustre Painting. This involved painting fired and glazed surfaces with silver and copper oxides and fixing them by a second firing. Decoration incorporated chevron patterns, dots, cross-hatching and palmettes.

In the twelfth century in North West Persia, a new pottery ware developed, decorated with incised lines in coloured slips. This type of ware became known as Garrusware, after the district of origin.

The method used, involved the ground being cut back. The light coloured slip applied, produced a low relief pattern against a dark background. Covered in transparent green glaze Garrusware was decorated with scrolling patterns. Many had Kieffic inscriptions, an angular form of Arabic script.

One of the strongest influences on Islamic Pottery in both Mesopotamia and Persia during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the Ting Porcelaine of the Sung Dynasty.

The technique of underglazing was developed in Persia in the early thirteenth century. Before the development of this technique, painting onto tin glaze led to blurring and slip decoration was considered limited. Coloured pigments such as cobalt manganese, stayed stable under alkaline glazes. This was developed further by painting



13th Century Kashan Lustre tile

overglazes in enamel colours, fixed by a second firing. This technique became known as "Mina'i".

During the thirteenth century, successive Mongol invasions on Persia halted pottery production in many areas. One of the only areas unaffected was Kashan, whose main pottery production were tiles. These tiles were used to adorn the outside brickwork of Mosques. Later these tiles were used to adorn the inside Miharb, or prayer niche.

The exterior Kashan tiles were decorated by lustre painting, relief moulding and colours were used in under- and over-glazes. Tile shapes were square, rectangular, star and cross. The composition of these Kashan tiles were often made up of several links, for example, alternating star and cross patterns. The size of these Kashan tiles ranged from 20cm. to 76 cm.

The decoration of Kashan tiles included swirling arabesques, scrolling plants, flowers, leaves, birds, animals and human figures. Also included were inscriptions from the Koran using Kufic and Nashki characters.

The type of coloured ware associated with Kashan was known as Lajvardi. Using a simplified form of "mina'i", Lajvardi ware was decorated with relief moulded designs, printed in red, white and black enamel and gold leaf. This was placed over a turquoise or cobalt glaze.

The only other pottery producing area to continue to produce pottery ware during the thirteenth century Mongol invasions was Samarkand, Capital of the Timurid Empire, 1378-1506. Many kinds of buildings, not just Mosques, were faced with brilliantly relief carved tiles.

Overall the Islamic pottery industry was in decline during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The best examples of seventeenth century tiled buildings are in Isfahan, capital of the Safavid dynasty from 1506-1722. It is here, for the first time that we see the dry cord technique being used. It was used in the Isfahan imperial mosque.

The dry cord technique involved the outline of the design being drawn in a manganese and grease mixture, that resisted glaze. Glaze was applied to the uncoated areas, the result being that the glazed colours appeared within unglazed outlines.

The dry cord technique also appeared in Damascus in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In the Western end of Islam - Asia Minor, tiles were produced for architectural purposes since the twelfth century. Made in a variety of shapes, inscriptions were both in Kufic and Nashki script. The tiles produced in this area are thought to have been made by Persian potters fleeing Mongol invasion. Persians continued to work in Asia Minor for several centuries, and were responsible for many fifteenth and sixteenth century tiled buildings such as the Great Mosque 1419-24 in Bursa and also buildings in Ankara and Istanbul.



Iznik tiles

The next great revival in pottery came during the sixteenth century in Iznik, West Anatolia, under the patronage of the Ottoman Court. This movement lasted from 1490-1700, within which time span there are three distinctive groups:-

1. 1490-1525 - The tiles produced were decorated with blue painted flowers, arabesques and inscriptions on white ground.
2. 1525-1555 - Turquoise blue and green tiles produced. Designs were more naturalistic including recognizable plants such as tulips, vines and carnations.
3. 1555-1700 - Vast quantities of tiles were produced to decorate palaces and mosques, in what is considered the greatest period of Iznick tile production.

Examples of Iznick tiled buildings include the Mosque of Rustem Pasha c.1500 and the Bhec Mosque 1609.

The great era of Islamic tile production drew to a close as artistic standards declined during the seventeenth century and demand fell.



Palmerstown Community School

CHAPTER THREE
MY ROLE AS ART EDUCATOR

Introduction and Problem Finding approach to Education.

"Often in great discoveries, the most important thing is that a certain question is found." Creative Vision, Wiley Interscience P.82

In terms of my Personal Project the major objective was to find the question. Anything that proceeded this was a direct result of finding the problem.

Then I asked myself could this procedure work as effectively in the classroom. And if it were to do so, in what way would I approach the planning of each lesson. What I must consider is how the student would approach "finding the problem," as opposed to solving a presented problem.

In the "Creative Vision", Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi suggest that creativity in the fine arts requires a questioning approach quite different from the usual problem solving stages, measured by intelligence tests..

Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi defined three main elements to the Creative process.

- (i) Formulation of a Problem.
- (ii) Adoption of a Method of Solution.
- (iii) Reaching Solution.

It is said that Creativity consists neither of inspiration nor of hard work. It is a combination of both. E. Paul Torrance describes the creative process as a sequential problem solving operation.

Problem Seeking, Problem Finding, Solution testing, Modifying, Communication of Results.

To encourage the student to find the problem and go through the above creative process seems an exciting approach for the art educator, but in Psychology Applied to Teaching Biehler and Snowman are critical of this kind of approach. They say that an approach to education that is open to problem finding is not as effective as conventional instruction in producing measured achievement. Also, they say original discovery is rare, and that any kind of discovery is time consuming. Psychology Applied to Teaching Biehler and Snowman, Houghton and Mifflin 1986.

They suggest that when students are asked to make their own discoveries, the best students enjoy learning, the less capable students feel discouraged and lose interest.

However, I believe that if the art educator encourages him or her to find their own personal question, this question has been created by them and is therefore within the scope of their ability to solve that question.

This whole concept may seem loose and vague, but it need not be. Problem finding can be well structured and organised. A possible example may be the design and making of a musical orchestra - each student being asked to imagine what type of musical instrument would suit them or their kind of person. The student would have to construct both the musical instrument and the musician. This would encourage students to think about themselves and find which

musical instrument best suits their personality.

Another example might be environmentally based. Taking for example an architectural environment that surrounds an open courtyard, the students could be asked how they would fill that space with an object that expresses something about a theme that concerns them. Perhaps that theme could be poverty or racism, relationships or friendship.

A problem finding approach to art education is open to criticism because there is a strong possibility that some students will come up with very weak problems that require solving.

I believe that the solution to this potential problem is experience. Experience in terms of becoming familiar with an approach like problem finding. I believe the student will come up with more interesting and exciting problems, within an organized structure, on the second time around, rather than the first. Experience also in terms of materials - if a student is well versed in handling a material such as clay or metal, they will be able to approach more abstract challenges. The reason for this is that the student will have an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of a particular material. This understanding will be of use to the student when trying to find the problem (problem finding). I think the most suitable time to introduce a Lesson Scheme would be after an introduction to a particular material. "How can we use this material to show that we have a good understanding of what it can do?"

An understanding of material will lead to a creative approach to problem finding and an exciting and individual product. As Carl Rogers put it: Creativity P.139 Para I.

"Creativity always has the stamp of the individual upon its product, but the product is not the individual, nor his materials, but partakes of the relationship between the two."

Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi make a distinction between "Presented Problem Situations" and "Discovered Problem Situations." The distinction being that in "Presented Problem Situations" the student need only follow an organized process, to achieve specific results. In the Discovered Problem Situation, the problem does not have a known structure or formulation, or a recognised solution. That is to be determined by the student, in consultation with the teacher.

Jerome Bruner proposes confronting students with problems and helping them seek solutions, rather than learning of verbal or numerical statements or formulae that "the student can reproduce on cue, but is unable to reproduce outside experience." "Psychology Applied to Teaching". Biehler & Snowman P.353 Para I. Bruner argues that solutions students arrive at themselves are more meaningful than a predetermined solution. Arriving at the solution is reward in itself if students become practised at problem finding and solving they acquire confidence in their own abilities.

As educators "which do we want? Students who can answer questions presented by others or students who are capable of asking themselves questions and seeking their own answers?" "Psychology Applied to Teaching". P.358 Para IV.

Normally problem finding is reserved for final year students at third level, but I believe that any age group can find problems that are compatible with their level of maturation.

I would argue the case for a problem finding approach to art education because the basis for this approach is understanding. It is my belief that it is only when one understands that one is truly learning.

I seek to gain an understanding of myself through my Personal Project. I seek to encourage my students to gain an understanding of what they are doing in my classes. If what they are doing has been proposed by themselves, it follows that the student is beginning to understand him or herself. Perhaps this is a good definition of one of the most important objectives of education.

In many ways art education has to be open-ended, otherwise there would only be a single solution to, for example, a given design problem. One solution may be better than another, but not right or wrong.

If that question and solution have been proposed by the student, then it may be wrong to compare it against others, because the question may be proposed by a student less educationally advanced than another.

On a practical basis this may be where problem finding by the student can be criticised. But if the student becomes practised at problem finding, I would argue that the problems would become more challenging and creative.

So far I have identified two factors that are important to the success of a problem finding approach to education. But these are factors that have been initiated by the educator.

Now I want to examine in what way the educator can create the best educational environment for the student. The educator must establish a highly creative environment for his or her students, for a problem finding approach to succeed. How can the educator foster Creativity?

In "Creativity" Carl Rogers examines this problem. Rogers states that the fundamental condition of creativity is internal, established by self: "Have I created something to satisfy me?" Without disregarding the judgement and opinion of others Rogers identifies this concept as the most important question for the creative person. Rogers, Creativity ed. Vernon p.144

To ensure the emergence and development of creativity in the individual Rogers states that psychological conditions of safety and freedom must be established.

Rogers identifies three processes that will create an atmosphere of psychological safety for the individual:

- (i) Accepting the unconditional worth of the individual. If the individual senses a climate of safety he or she can begin to discover themselves.
- (ii) Creating a climate where external evaluation is absent.
Rogers states that evaluation is a threat which leads to defensiveness. If external evaluations are not being made the individual can be more open to their own experience and recognize their ability to evaluate themselves.

- (iii) Rogers is careful to point out that to cease evaluation is not to cause reaction. If the individual is told that what they are doing is good or bad, this exposes the individual to external evaluation. However, if the individual is told that for example, their teacher likes or dislikes their idea, this still allows for individual evaluation. *ibid.* p.148.

Rogers states that empathic understanding provides the ultimate environment of psychological safety for the student. If the educator understands what their student is doing from their point of view, and still accepts the student, Rogers suggests that this is true psychological safety, and the basis for fostering creativity.

If I apply this to a problem finding approach to education, and I accept the unconditional worth of the problems my students propose, allow the student to evaluate their own work, as well as react to it myself, and accept what they are doing from their point of view, I believe that I will be encouraging an atmosphere of psychological safety and freedom that will inevitably foster creativity.



CHAPTER FOUR

SCHOOL BASED PROJECT

The basis for my teaching practice school project is taken from my personal project using terracotta clay as the medium. The class I have chosen to work with are 2nd Year Students. The second year students have always had an enthusiasm for clay, and have some experience of the material, from last year's teaching practice.

For the school based project I propose, again to use mark making in clay. The only distinction between the school based project and my personal project is that the school based project will use a more direct source.

To begin the project, the class will begin by exploring and experimenting with the material, from the point of view of exploring the notion of texture. This will be achieved by marking into the clay by reduction and building onto the clay by addition.

To follow from this I will introduce a direct source, such as a still life, which contains various textures. The students will observe the still life, but instead of paper and pencil, they will have clay and modelling tools. Again the emphasis is on gaining an understanding of the material, but this time in a more challenging manner, using a direct source.

The lesson will then progress to include mark making using Slip, a watered down form of clay that can be applied with a brush. Slip comes in many colours. The project is now incorporating not just manipulative and tactile skills, but also critical skills, such as dealing with concepts such as observation, colour and texture.



Portrait of Shane

As the lesson progresses, it will also move from low relief to high relief and finally to three dimensions. This progression will lead well into the notion of three dimensions.

I will also link this to my research of the ceramic tiles of Islam, where what are essentially flat two dimensional tiles, take on a three dimensional quality when applied to the exterior of buildings.

The school based project will coincide with a technical lesson scheme that will introduce various skills to the students. These skills will include, preparation of clay, the use of tools, including the hand as tool, achieving various textures in clay, making plaster moulds for press moulding, slab building and coiling and finally the loading and firing of a kiln.

CONCLUSION

I could not conclude this Written Project without consideration of the history of Ceramics and its influence on me as an artist and educator.

The very essence of the civilisation of man is symbolised by his need to create containers and vessels to store and preserve his food stuffs. When made, these containers and vessels took on far more than a mere functional value. Throughout the ages, ceramic forms have remained an essential part of everyday living and yet have taken on a wider dimension, becoming works of art, that signify man's transition from the primitive to the civilized.

The earliest ceramics were found in Dolne Vestonice in Czechoslovakia about 24,000 years ago. About 10,000 years ago ceramic forms were first produced in the Near East.

By 6400 B.C. Pottery developed as a craft. In Mesopotamia from 5500 B.C. to 5000 B.C. ceramic ware was fired to form a glossy clay surface. From 4000 - 3000 B.C. this polychrome ware became more sophisticated and was perfected from 700 - 300 B.C. in Attic.

The potter's wheel first went into use in the Near East during 400 B.C. using earthenware clay. Press moulds were also developed during this time. Now quantity production of clay ware had begun.

Egyptian paste or faience evolved in Egypt and Mesopotamia c.4500 B.C., where a paste was made by crushing quartz pebbles, and mixing the powder with sodium and calcium. Shapes were created in moulds and by hand.

Frit came into existence in the Near East, combining quartz and pre-melted glass powder, and was used in Kashan, Persia.

The large quantity of China stone deposits led to stoneware production during the Shang Dynasty in China 1027 B.C. - 771 B.C. The first Chinese glazes also appeared during the Shang Dynasty.

Throughout the Song Dynasty ceramic ware was made from quartz, clay, feldspar, and China stone.

Overglaze painting developed during the 9th Century in Islam symbolised by the Kashan tiles, that I have already referred to. Underglaze decoration developed in the Iznick tiles of Islam.

Large quantities of Chinese ware came into Europe via the sea routes during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and this led to increasing pressure on European production. The first successful European porcelaine production is said to be at St. Cloud, near Paris, France.

By the 18th Century, Chinese China Clay ware, Near Eastern frit clay porcelaine and Islamic tinglaze ware were all being produced in Europe. Ceramic developments became part of the industrial revolution.

Porcelaine first came to England during the sixteenth century. It is here that we begin to see the work of Josiah Wedgwood circa seventeenth century.

Wedgwood developed the engine turning lathe into a device to turn ceramic forms for moulding. But by the end of the eighteenth century, European ceramic development had run its course.

Many of the skills and materials developed throughout the history of ceramics have remained unchanged today. However their application differs greatly. The world of ceramics extends from precision industrial components to functional craftware.

A respect and understanding of the history of ceramics is essential for every student of the subject. It is through this respect and understanding of the material and its history, that one can begin to develop with the material and use it as a medium to express something of oneself.

Within this Written Project I have examined and explored my personal project, the cultural and historical influences and experiences that have played a major part in my development as an artist and educator, and the path I wish to pursue in terms of my role as a teacher.

On reflection, it is through expression that I find the motivation and inspiration to create, to teach. I am making a statement about myself, expressing who and what I am, through my personal project and my teaching.

My personal project explores and documents an intuitive approach to personal expression. This has led me to consider the painting and writing of Kandinsky, a major influence on the development of an internal and expressive approach to art.

Exploring my cultural and historical influences emphasise again that personal expression, in whatever manner, is what I cherish and enjoy. Whether that may be the precise design of Aalto or the reworked and energetic drawing of Giacometti. They are both making statements about themselves, they are expressing something of their person.

The approach to the education of problem finding and problem solving cannot but be a vehicle, a vehicle to encourage the students I work with, to express something about themselves. I believe the essence of problem finding is personal expression because it involves reaching within oneself to find not only the solution to a problem, but the problem itself.

I have looked at some approaches to nurturing creativity in the classroom. Again the intention is to encourage the student to look inside and draw something out, to express something about themselves.

I believe the most essential role of the art educator is to create an environment of freedom and safety for his or her students.

Within this environment the students will learn about themselves and others, and have the confidence and ability to develop as independent, creative and open minded people. This is what my role as educator will be.

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