ON MOTIVATING PEOPLE TOWARDS CREATIVITY

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ON MOTIVATING PEOPLE TOWARDS CREATIVITY

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IN

CANDIDACY FOR THE

B.A. DEGREE IN ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION

by

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INTRODUCTION

"Beauty is bought by judgement of the eye not utter'd by base sale of chapman's tongues."

- Shakespeare
LOVES LABOURS LOST

INTRODUCTION

This project is a combination of many of the things I consider to have influenced me and helped me develop in my studies of art and education.

I have tried in this project to develop a number of points that could lead to greater awareness of the values of art in society and which I have explored in my teaching in the class.

I have divided this project into different sections, dealing initially with my work on my Major Study and its development. I consider that this was important because a background knowledge of my interests and influences would be desirable in coming to terms with some of the ideas I will be introducing later.

The next section will deal with the historical background and concentrate more fully on the styles and artists that have contributed to my Major Study painting.

My third section will deal mainly with psychological issues concentrating on the concept of creativity. This section is the core of my project and contains many of the main arguments for the inclusion of art as a major curriculum subject. It will also take away some of the mystery shrouding the concept of creativity and show how the inclusion of art as a core curriculum subject can greatly improve the society we live in.

My fourth section will be based around the project I am working on in the second level class which I am teaching this year. It will explain what the pupils are doing and how and why it is linked with my own personal work. It will also show how reference to some of the ideas

expressed in my earlier chapter on "Motivating People towards Creativity" can be used to develop the following in my pupils:

(1) An understanding of the use of various media and the constructive creative articulation of this media to deal with the problems pupils encounter in the working of this project.

(2) A realisation that the process of development is as important and as interesting as the final result.

(3) The idea that media is not considered to be limited to what is available in the classroom. To be able to look at anything as a possibility for use as media.

(4) To foster a greater pride in the pupils and appreciation of both their own work and that of others.

(5) To enable pupils to deal with problems in an original manner and to solve them in a creative way using whatever media are available to them.

These are some of the qualities which by the end of my teaching project will become evident to some degree in my pupils. This section will also include some of the positive implications that could be identified in relation to the development of Art as a subject in a second level school. I will also attempt to discuss some of my teaching methods and strategies and how they are developing progressively as I am teaching the project with the class.

I will now look at the first of the sections I have identified and discuss my Major Study, its influences on me and how it helped provide me with information that I have found useful both for me in my work and development as a painter and for my teaching.

INFLUENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL WORK

"Art does not reproduce the visible,
but makes visible."

- KLEE

INFLUENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL WORK

I believe that my Major Study project, which is painting, has grown and developed with me over my four years in college. I consider that all of the subjects that I have covered have in some way, to a greater or lesser extent, expressed themselves in my work. I have naturally developed some aspects more than others, but I feel that the following are in evidence in my work presently:

(1) Psychological elements.

(2) Philosophical elements.

(3) Sociological elements.

(4) Historical elements.

In college, my interests lie within figurative work and the human factor and I am basing my project along these lines. Because my chosen area of study is painting, I have experienced considerable emphasis on life drawing which has, in turn, led to my interest in figurative work. This has helped me gain confidence in dealing with the notion of expression through the human figure and has given me a strong urge to deal with my ideas on a figurative level.

I have also looked to other influences outside of college, to my main social involvements. My influences have also come from the relationship I share with my friends. I generally have known these for all my life and feel they have had a good deal to contribute to me as a person and to the direction in life that I am presently taking. I have looked to what has constituted a relationship and a friendship. This, and how the power of

a relationship helps shape lives, as well as how the personality of a group will have an effect on the personality of the individual, all form a major part of my work.

I feel that my ideas had begun to develop when I looked at my life drawings and found that, for the most part, we have dealt with the figure in isolation. One figure in space existing on its own - in a void. If man is a social animal, why for the most part is he or she dealt with in isolation when concentrating on the figure? There are and have been many works that have dealt with the figure in groups throughout history, but for the main part in College, for one reason or another, the figure has been dealt with in isolation.

I wanted to deal with more than one figure and discuss through my Major Study painting how figures, or more properly people, react in groups in relation to their environment.

I began to concentrate on the faces of the models and became intrigued with the shape and form of the head. I began working with straightforward observational studies with the aim of achieving a representational likeness. This initial work spanned the period from October until Christmas. Occasionally I would work large, but for the main part, my work of this period was kept quite small.

Looking at my drawings at the time, I felt that the background was going to play an important part in my work. I feel that the environment in which a figure is placed is very important. People generally do not exist in isolation; as John Donne, the poet, has said, "No man is an island". Their personalities are evident by the way they position themselves in an environment. How comfortable they are, and how much and to what extent they feel they can fit in, can be shown through stance and posture, even direction of a gaze.

Fig. 1 *SELF PORTRAIT*

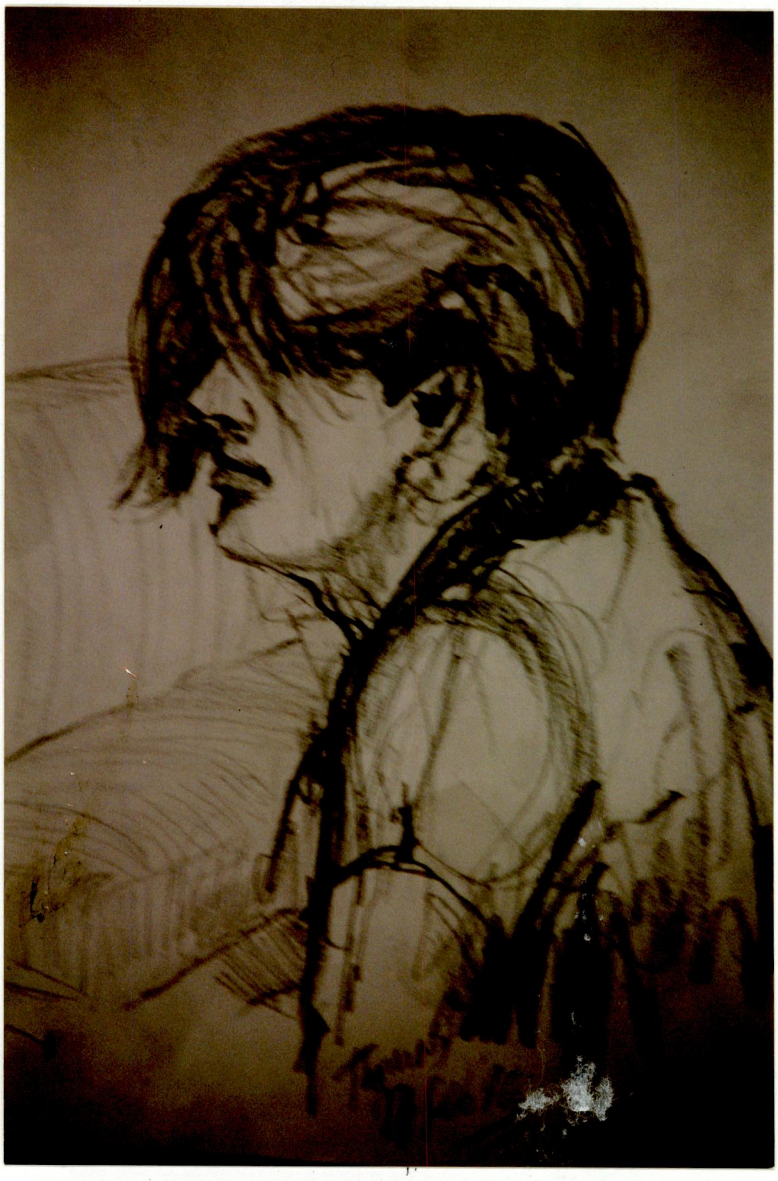


Fig. 2 *SKETCH OF GARY*

If a person exists in a void, what need would there be for a person to express a personality if there is nothing to react to it or nothing for it to react to? How would one react in a void?

Looking at these issues, I considered that if trying to describe the specific personality of someone to a stranger, there should be enough information in the work to help give the viewer an insight into the relationship that exists, and the extent of that relationship between the artist and the sitter. I felt that the information should include the environment in which the personality of the sitter would be most evident.

I began to look at how other artists have dealt with similar themes and looked at the work of

(1) Francis Bacon

(2) Lucian Freud

(3) Mick O'Dea

(4) David Hockney

(5) David Sylvian.

I want to look firstly at the works of Francis Bacon and his depiction of the human figure [illegible] the intense emotion achieved through his powerful work. His work deals also with violence, but this is "...violence of my life, the violence which I've lived amongst, I think it is different to the violence of painting."

Bacon is opposed to the narrative in a painting, but concentrates more on achieving a sensation. This he feels is more subtle as it "slowly leaks back into fact."

One of the major things that attracted me to Bacon was the way he destroys appearance in order to remake a likeness. He uses irrational marks that describe the form but themselves cannot be seen to do so

individually. Bacon's work, therefore, can be said to be divorced from direct representation but yet "conveys a presence beyond a likeness."

In his interview with David Sylvester, Bacon gives an insight into the way he achieves a likeness or more properly a presence of the sitter. For instance, he says

> ....the other day I painted a head of somebody, and what made the sockets of the eyes, the nose, the mouth, were when you analyzed them, just forms which had nothing to do with eyes, nose or mouth but the paint moving from one contour into another made a likeness of this person I was trying to paint.[1]

Looking at Bacon's work, there is a haunting intense personality capturing the image of a person without being obviously literal. I feel that by looking at this, I can achieve more, by working with paint directly onto canvas without using preparatory sketches. Judging by some of my past works, I would consider the use of preliminary sketches would cause the final work to lose some of the freshness that the initial works carry. This freshness has a much more lively, appealing quality than one which is slavishly or even remotely copied from a sketch. In my work, I have been trying to work on sketches for their own sake and then on paintings as paintings, working in a more direct way.

There are obvious differences when looking at my initial self-portraits, some of which were worked up looking at previous sketches for references and then my work on Gary, which was much more spontaneous and free. This comes across as the strongest example of direct spontaneous work in my drawings and paintings so far and currently I am engaged with following up this idea.

On pursuing this idea with Francis Bacon in an interview with David Sylvester, a question was put to Bacon by him questioning that he never

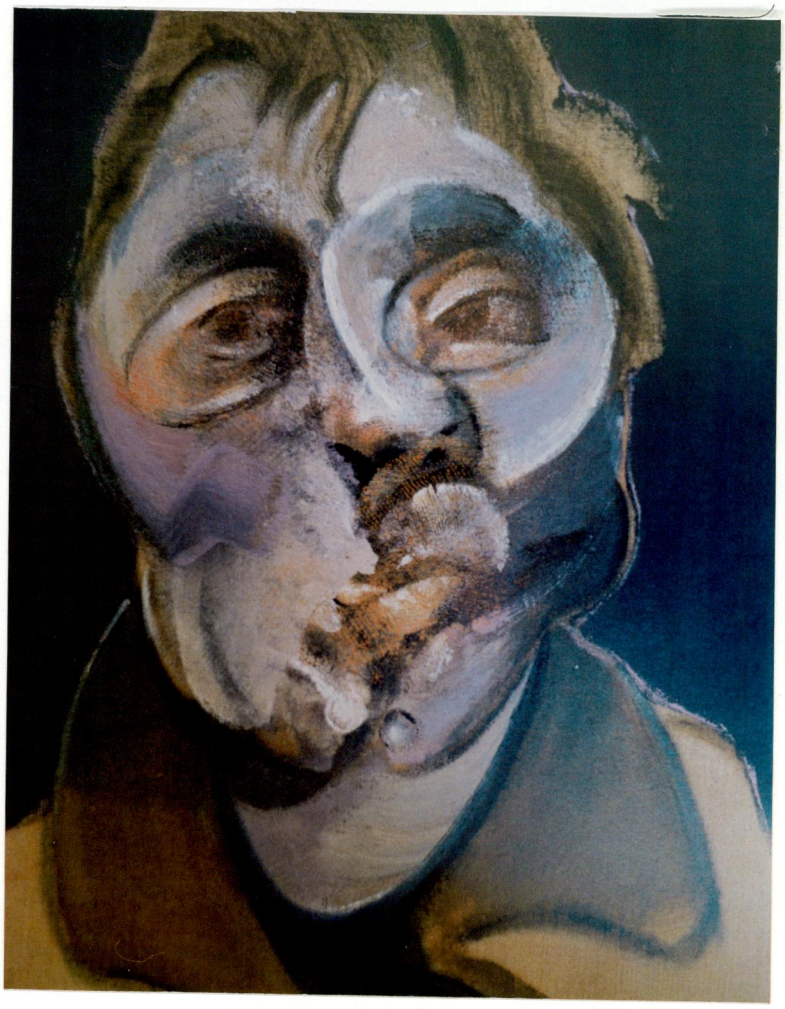


Fig.3 FRANCIS BACON (SELF PORTRAIT)

Fig.4 FRANCIS BACON (THREE STUDIES FOR A PORTRAIT OF PETER BEARD)

Fig.5 FRANCIS BACON (TRIPTYCH)

worked from sketches or drawings, he never did a rehearsal for the picture. To this, Bacon replied

> I often think I should, but I don't. It is not very helpful to my kind of painting. As the actual texture, colour, the whole way the paint moves, are so accidental, any sketches I did before only could give a kind of skeleton, possibly, of the way something might happen.[2]

This idea is one that I would like to pursue and, although I realise the value of working from sketches and preliminary drawings, I feel that through my many drawings I have built up the confidence to experiment with working directly as would Bacon.

Another aspect which I found fairly relevant was Bacon's way of dealing with a background or an environment. In many of his works, backgrounds and settings are either fairly abstract and sketchy, or not in evidence at all. Some of his works are devoid of a background and this in itself serves somewhat to isolate the figure. This notion of isolation seems to focus our attention wholly on the figure (or the subject in his painting) and does not intrude on our observation and contemplation of the work. In other words, Bacon uses the minimum necessary to describe a background. The eye seeks something concrete to latch onto and finds very little. His backgrounds are mainly flattened and abstracted, breaking up the picture plane into large areas of flat colour. These develop a tension between the flat uniformity of the background and the painterly contorted images of the heads and bodies.

Another artist who has dealt with similar ideas is David Hockney:

> Although I am a figurative artist, Hockney says, I am very conscious of all that has happened in art during the past seventy-five years. I don't ignore it, I feel that I have tried to assimilate it into my kind of art.[3]

Hockney cannot be identified with any particular style or mode or fash ion in art. He spans many and has been influenced by numerous artists from Picasso to contemporaries such as Peter Blake. He has, as the above quotation would suggest, assimilated many styles and absorbed these as his own. As a result, his work is an eclectic synthesis of many styles put forward in an original way.

He has worked in many different media which include paint, sculpture, photography, photocopies, etc.

Francis Bacon has had a considerable influence on David Hockney. Hockney spent much of his time in the 1960's working on Pop Art, recording images of urban and suburban life. His images have a graffiti-like approach, and much of his work has an abstract quality. He combines backgrounds that evoke abstraction with realistic representations of figures.

He works with much contemporary media and has recently completed a series of work using a photocopier. He has worked mainly in black and white and photocopies this. He is not interested in reproducing the image, but transforming it.

Hockney depicts his family and friends from life. On looking at these works, a great intimacy can be felt. He also uses many photographs for reference as well as combining this in collage-type works. His work on the photocopier has led towards a near abstract image. As he blows up each image, he changes elements and then continues on with the process. Each aspect of the process is completely different. As the image grows, the line changes from a clear definition to a fuzzy haze and the quality of this line actually changes the whole appearance of the work.

Presently I am working on a similar concept. My work is now at

a stage where photography is becoming evident. I feel that by the nature of my project, photographs will become an important part, in my painting. I have known the subjects of my painting and my work for the greater part of my life. Images of this going right back to when we were children together are only now in evidence in photographs. These are a valid source of recording information about the past, and form a catalogue of our lives together.

These I feel are much too valuable a source to let slip by. I also believe that they are all too literal for direct inclusion, in a painting.

On looking at the abstract nature of Hockney's photocopied work, I decided to attempt a montage consisting of fragmented images of photocopies of the photographs and even using fragmented photographs themselves. I combined these and used mainly my own face as a frame behind which I placed images of my friends. The image took on a more subtle look. I am at present still working on this.

Another person who has taken the idea of montage and developed it to a certain extent has been David Sylvian. He works mainly on polaroids; he feels they are an instant source, and readily available. Much of his work is built up by photographing individual parts of a body, taking up to 40 or 50 polaroids. The work is then assembled, building up the image as a jigsaw, some overlapping.

Each photograph may be seen individually as an abstract patterned image, or as a close-up portrait of, say, a chest. On standing back, the whole image can be seen as an image built up out of many photographs. His work is very simple and does not attempt to answer any deep questions. It is purely a visual image, possibly a bit cliched today, but I feel that my work in the past was influenced to a degree by his montages.

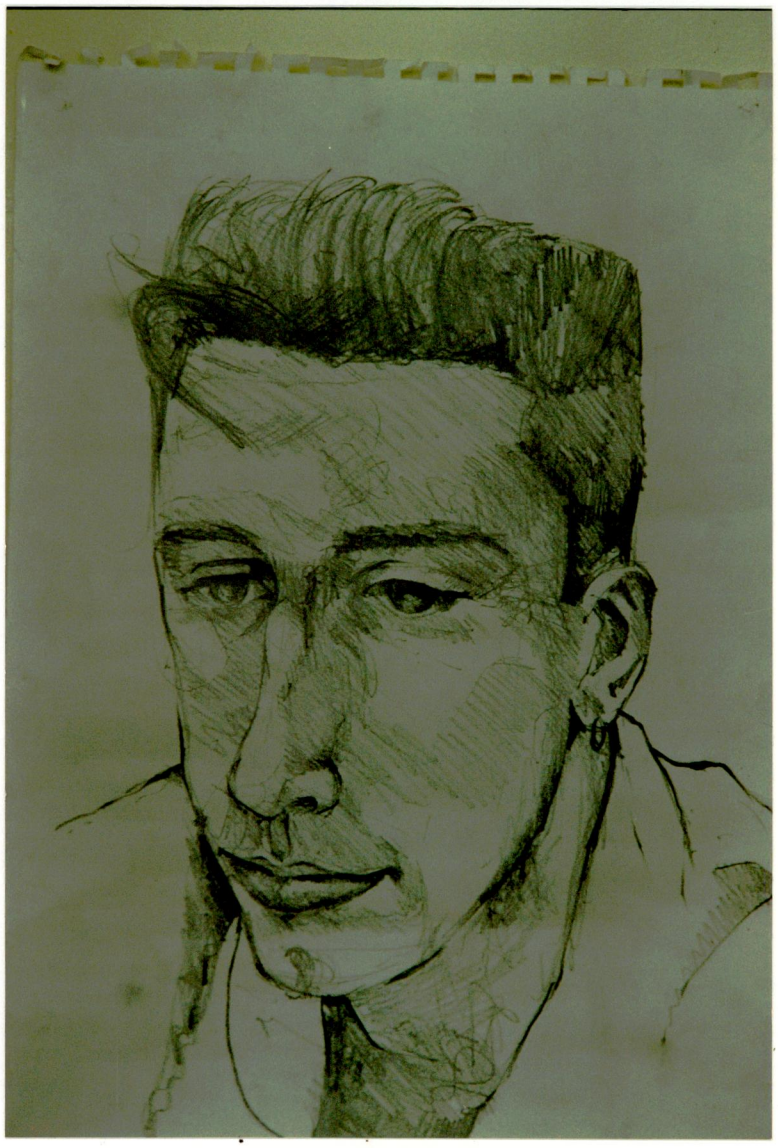


Fig. 6 PORTRAIT STUDY OF GARETH

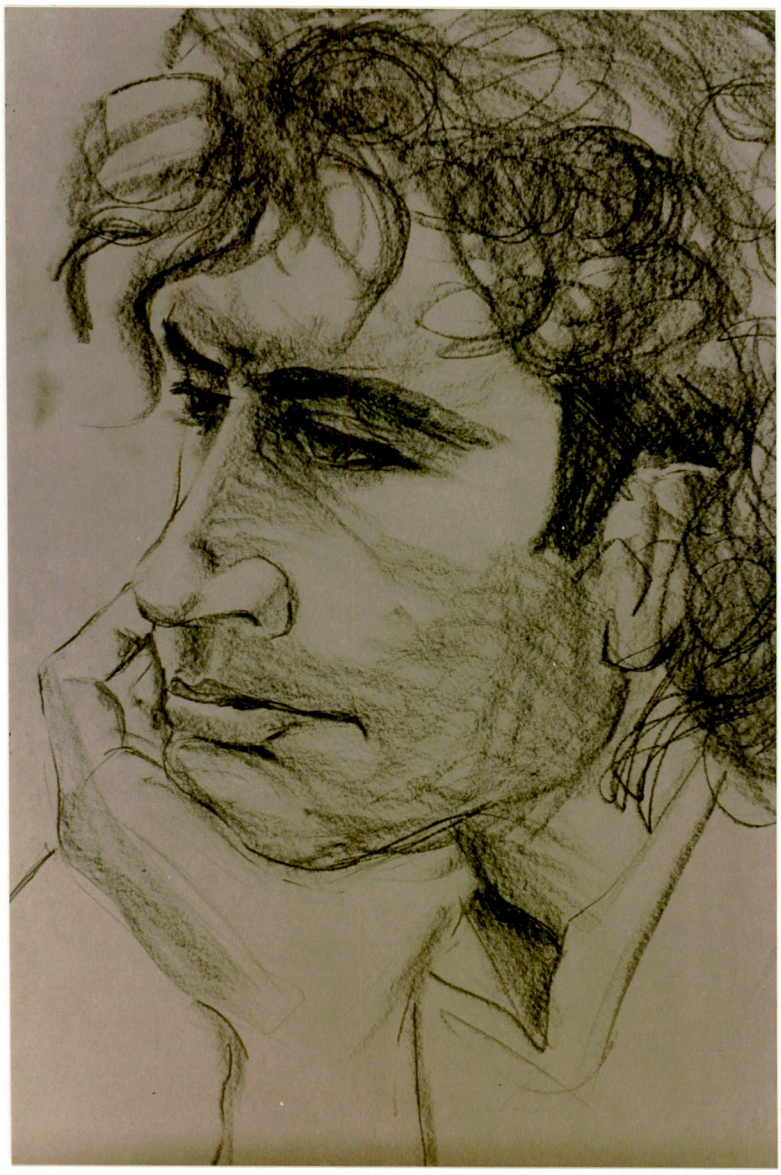


Fig.7 PORTRAIT STUDY OF KEVIN

Moving away from the photographic side, I would like to discuss another direction my work is taking at the present.

I have already stated that my work was dealing with the figure in a group setting, pushing for the social context side of a relationship. More recently, my work has gone back on this and I am again looking at the portrait in isolation. My work has gone through gradual change and has evolved to a point where I am no longer dealing with a group portrait. I feel that my work could become illustrative rather than an attempt to discuss personality and the relationship and interaction between people through the image. This could develop from working totally from photographs. This could also flatten the work and take away from the narrative element somewhat.

I worked on some sketches of my friends on A3 and A4 pages. I had to limit them to this format, as I was working in a pub. We had arranged this session so I could attempt studies in an original environment. We spent much time laughing and talking, with the result that I achieved some successful work due to the relaxed atmosphere. These studies were individual portraits and included only vague reference to background. This focused attention totally on the face and, through lack of background, one was able to travel over and examine the face in more detail. I feel that there is enough scope in the face itself for an exploration into personality as well as into the relationship the sitter has with the artist.

On looking at work that I feel an affinity to, I must refer back to Mick O'Dea and his greatest influence, Lucian Freud. They deal primarily with the portrait and have taken a very psychological approach.

On attending a recent seminar given by Mick O'Dea in the National College of Art, I found the ideas in his work to be similar to my own

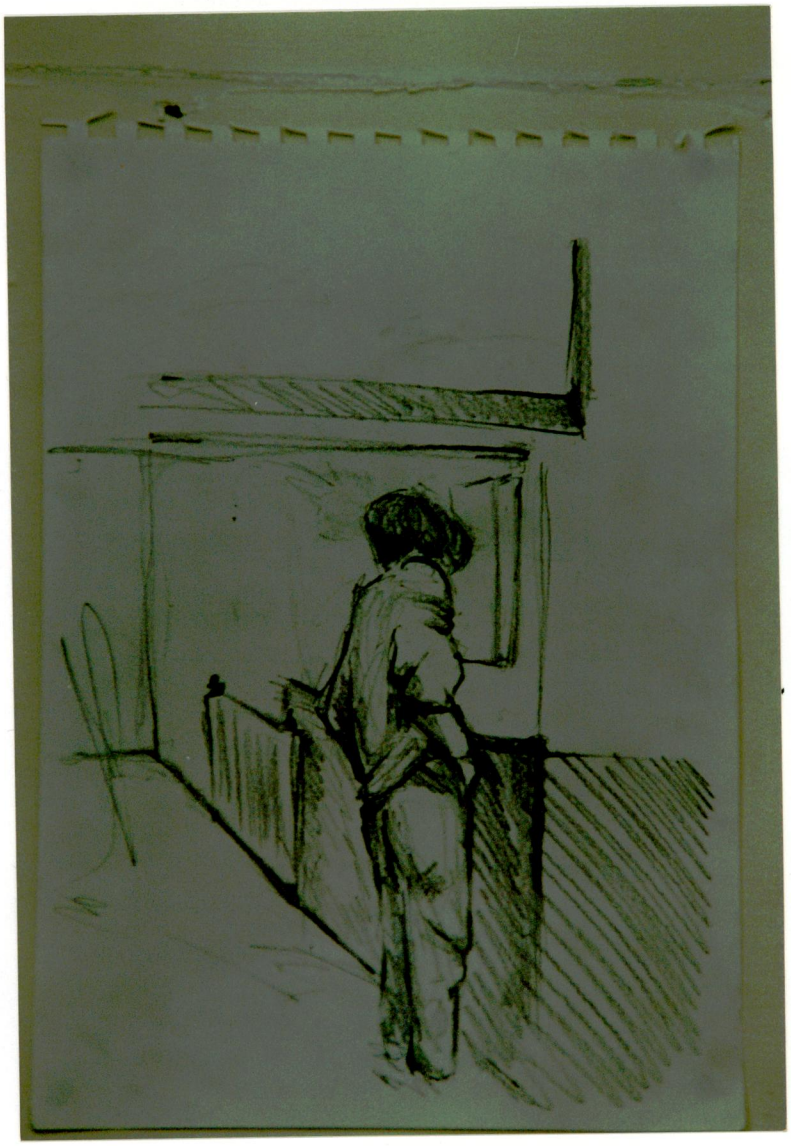


Fig. 8 STUDY OF GARY IN PUB

Fig. 9 LUCIAN FREUD (PORTRAIT)

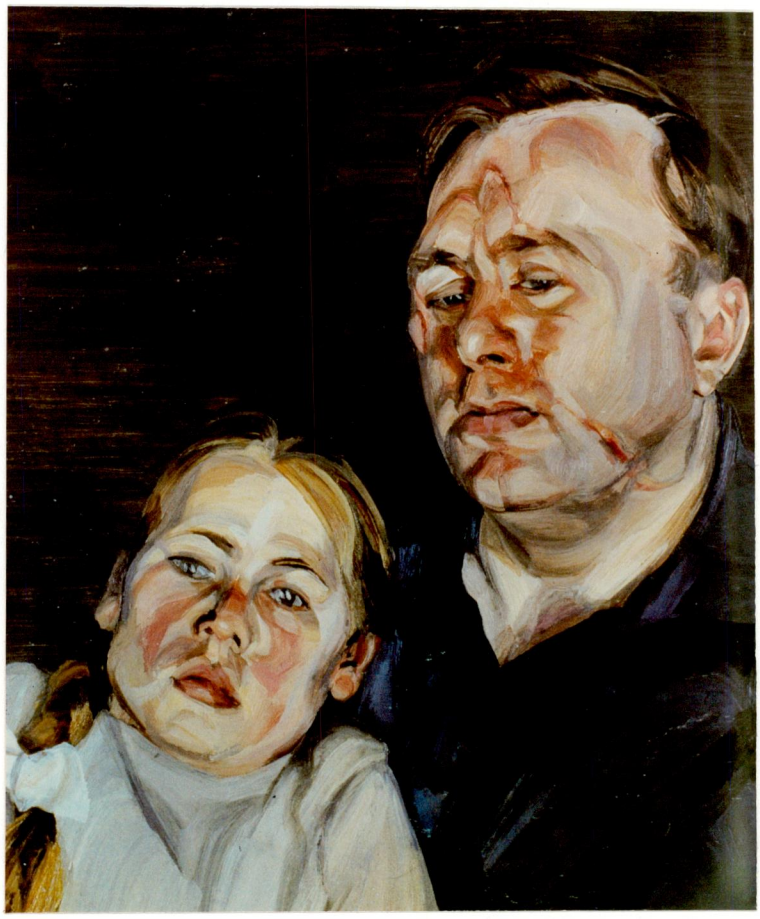


Fig. 10 LUCIAN FREUD (PORTRAITS)

ideas at present. His work also reflects the work of Lucian Freud.

Lucian Freud, from the age of twenty-four, turned to painting people. Influenced heavily by the classicist Ingres and also such contemporaries as Francis Bacon, Freud casts his own unique personality on portraiture. Freud is concerned with the human look of his subjects. He is not concerned with idealisation and simplification. Freud has become quite unique in the involvement he has with his sitters. Most of his subjects are personally known to him. There are few of Freud's sitters that have been identified by the artist but, as Freud claims about painting strangers or people unknown to him

> If you don't know them, it can only be like a travel book.[4]

On reading Lucian Freud by Lawrence Gowing, an insight can be gained into his way of working.

> The picture is bare, just the paint on the canvas; we are told nothing about it. The titles are unindicative; they no more than confirm what we can see. (Lucian Freud - Lawrence Gowing, p56)[5]

Gowing further explores the style of Freud on observing him sketching:

> I realised how deeply for him representation was still affected by the habit of gathering the things he liked. I was puzzled that he did not draw verifiably from a fixed position, which he could depend on returning to. He answered that for him it was more like aiming than copying. I had the impression of a process rather like echo sounding.
>
> Sight is not just one of the senses. It is the sense, the faculty with which a person construes his environment and other people.[6]

This quotation sums up one of the main philosophies behind the style of drawing and painting of Lucian Freud. His painting is not static.

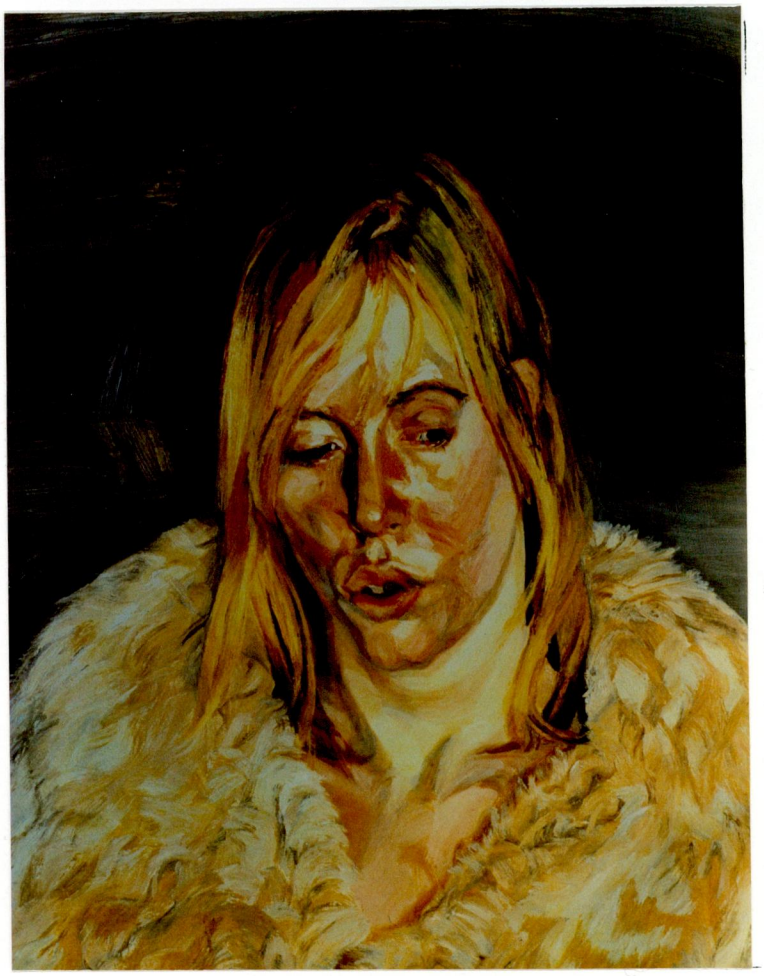


Fig. 11 LUCIAN FREUD (PORTRAIT)

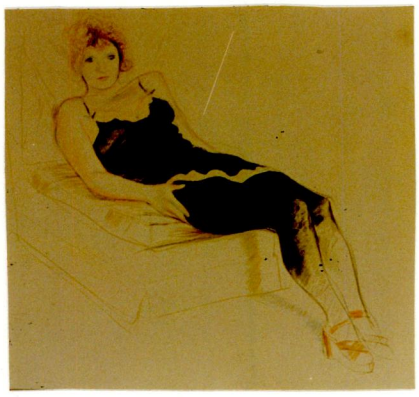


Fig. 12 *DAVID HOCKNEY (CELIA IN BLACK SLIP AND PLATFORM SHOES '73)*

Although working mainly from portrait, traditionally a fairly calm, still and static genre, Freud brings a tremendous life and tension to his work. His painting clearly excites the eye. If you look at the forms, it is clear that some of them want to be liberated. An energy and optimism is gained from the fluid plastic qualities of the paint.

Looking closer to home at one of Lucian Freud's greatest admirers, Mick O'Dea has also dealt with portraiture as the main aspect of his work. Like Freud, Mick O'Dea is not a flatterer or a show-off. In his work, the individual becomes his premier concern. Status portraits, when they are evident, become very personal. A unique insight is gained into the sitter and a side is shown that normally would not be evident to the public. Mick O'Dea differs from Freud by the fact that he paints much more widely and is open for commissions. Commercial success is an important part of his life, but he does not compromise his work.

Those portraits that have been done of people unknown to him initially show an intimate side that tells us of the lengths O'Dea goes to to become acquainted with his sitter. The painting is usually painted in one sitting but only after many meetings and much association and talking over coffee in cafes. Sketches are also done over the coffee, of the sitter, so a familiarity can be built up of expressions, mannerisms and gestures. His painting style is reminiscent of both Freud and Bacon, and he is currently working in Dublin.

Finally, I would like to conclude this chapter with a quotation from Lucian Freud. He sums up the ideas that I am engaged in pursuing in my Major Study painting:

> I would wish my portraits to be of the people not like them. Not having a look of the sitter, being them. I didn't want to get just a likeness like a mimic, but to portray them like an actor. As far as I am concerned, the paint is the person.[7]

INFLUENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF MY PERSONAL WORK

Footnotes

1. Sylvester, David: Interviews with Francis Bacon. Thames and Hudson, 1980, p.36
2. Ibid. p.37
3. Hockney, David: David Hockney on David Hockney. Thames and Hudson, p.129. (Figurative art and the new synthesis).
4. Gowing, Lawrence: Lucian Freud. Thames and Hudson, p.56
5. Ibid. p.56
6. Ibid. p.60
7. Ibid. pp.190-191.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MY PERSONAL PROJECT

THE HISTORY OF PORTRAITURE

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MY PERSONAL PROJECT

PORTRAITURE

Portraiture has existed for over two thousand years. The idea of recording one's image for posterity has been the pursuit of many civilizations throughout history. Portraiture has been seen to rise from a fairly low status to that of a major genre in the seventeenth century in Dutch Painting, and previous to this, in the Renaissance.

It offers one of the best insights into the character of a person. It has been used to discuss many things that affect humanity such as psychology, (Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon in the twentieth century dealt with an understanding of personality through paint), sociology (Frans Hals' paintings in the seventeenth century in Holland dealt with the difference in class between the peasants and the bourgeoisie through portraiture). The number and variety of portraits drawn and painted over the centuries provides a fascinating source of imagery and brings the past to life.

I will now briefly discuss the history of portraiture with reference to some of the major artists of the time. Not all civilizations will be discussed here, as the portrait was not very much in evidence in some.

Looking initially at Egypt, one of the earliest civilizations, the portrait can be seen only rarely. The Egyptians held the belief that, on burial, the preservation of the body was not enough. If the likeness of the King or Pharoh was also to be preserved, he would continue to live forever. Thus, portraiture, for the Egyptians, took the form of immense

Fig. 13 PORTRAIT HEAD OF LIMESTONE. FOUND IN A TOMB AT GIZA - MADE ABOUT 2700 BC (EGYPTIAN)

Fig.14 EGYPTIAN RELICS FOUND IN THE TOMB OF TUTENKAMUN

statues of their heads dedicated to their earthly remains. Initially, this ritual was reserved for the Pharoh alone, but gradually in the fourth Dynasty, nobles and eventually ordinary Egyptians made provision for their after-life in this way. From the paintings on tomb walls, we only ever get a profile view of a face. Many animal-headed gods were also depicted in profile. The painter or sculptor was only concerned with capturing the essential details of the face. All other distractions were left out. The portraits are neither primitive nor lifelike and naturalistic, but are intensely spiritual. Portraiture in Egypt was mainly religious, dealing with gods, or concerned with death and the after-life. Its primary function was to keep the likeness of the Pharoh or King on earth after death.

It was not until the Renaissancé that portraiture began to blossom again. Most portraits of this period were not to identify the character of the person, but to identify the person in his/her social, political or religious roles. In many paintings during this period, especially those of religious scenes, commissioned by either noblemen or clergy, the artist included the patron in the painting, usually fulfilling some minor role in the foreground. This developed into full portraiture later on when the posterity of the sitter and their social standing was captured.

The art of portraiture differed in Northern Europe, especially in Flanders, where a more painterly approach was applied to portraiture, than in Southern Italy, where mathematical perspective and accuracy were important elements. In Flanders, portraiture tended towards a greater naturalism. The emphasis was different also in Flanders; colour and light were important elements in Northern portraits. On looking at

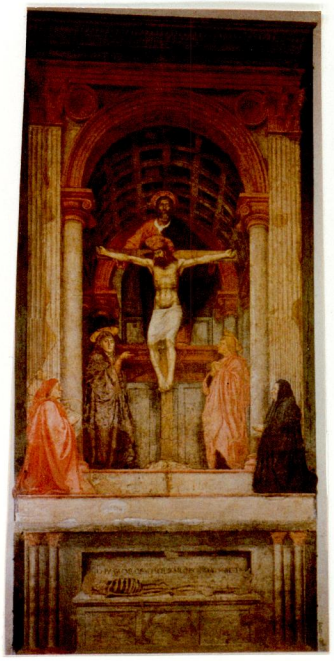


Fig. 15 *MASACCIO. (THE HOLY TRINITY, THE VIRGIN, ST.JOHN, AND DONORS) WALL PAINTING IN STA. MARIA NOVELLA, FLORENCE (1427)*

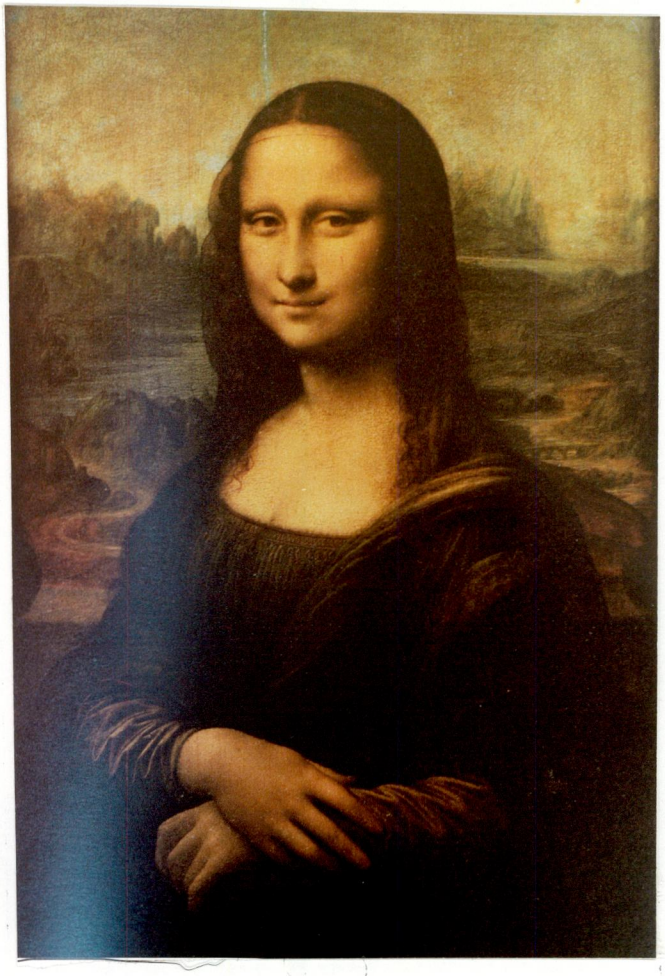


Fig. 16 LEONARDO DA VINCI (MONA LISA)
ABOUT 1502

Fig.17 RAPHAEL (POPE LEO X WITH TWO CARDINALS) 1518

Fig.18 *JAN VAN EYCK (THE ARNOLFINI WEDDING) 1434*

possibly one of the greatest paintings of this period "The Arnolfini Wedding" by Jan Van Eyck, and comparing this with work from the Italian Renaissance, the difference is obvious in both the composition and in the colouring and light.

Looking now at the Dutch seventeenth century paintings, another development can be seen. Portraiture up until now was reserved for those of a noble wealthy class. In Holland, artists began to paint for the people. Portraits were more affordable and were painted smaller to fit into people's houses. Paintings were much more fluid and free than ever before. Comparing Rembrandt with Leonardo, on style alone will help show this. In Rembrandt's work, the brush-strokes can be seen. There is no attempt to smooth them out as in Leonardo da Vinci's work. The emphasis also had changed. From society portraits of the wealthy, the Dutch artists looked towards peasantry for their source material. The peasant and his way of life were the main features in Dutch portraits of this period. One of the greatest exponents of this Genre painting was Frans Hals, whose unromanticized views of life in Holland among the poorer classes was looked on as being a very low status genre of art.

Portraiture everywhere else in Europe was still the subject matter for the rich. Artists such as Diego Velasquez, who was the court painter for Philip IV of Spain, also worked on similar subject matter to that of the Dutch seventeenth century artists. He painted ordinary people on the streets of Madrid in much the same way as Frans Hals. It was, in fact, the Dutch painters such as Frans Hals, who looked to Velasquez for influence.

Portraiture remained, for the most part, fairly inaccessible to everyone but the clergy, politicians and the rich up until the nineteenth

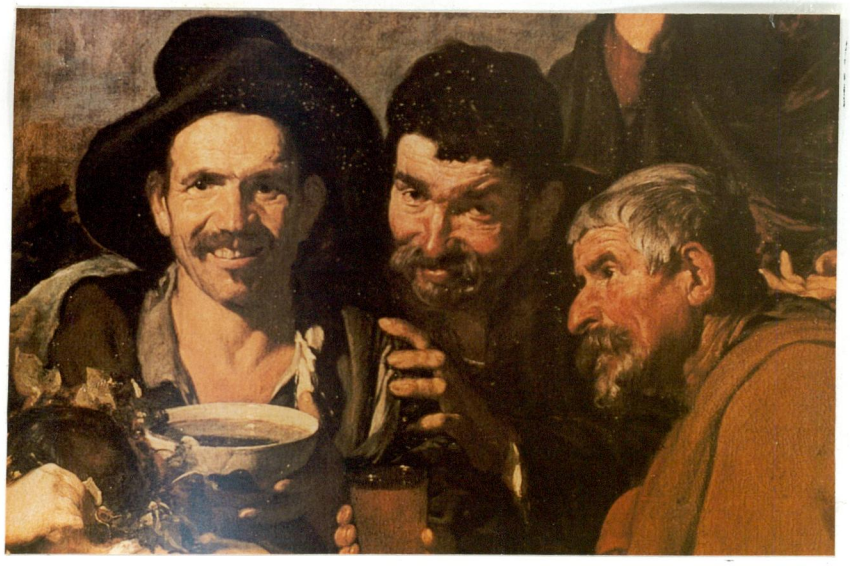


Fig.19 DIEGO VALESQUEZ (THE TOPPERS) 1629

Fig.20 FRANS HALS (A YOUNG FISHERMAN OF SCHEVENINGEN) 1640

Fig.21 JAN VERMEER (THE KITCHEN MAID) 1660

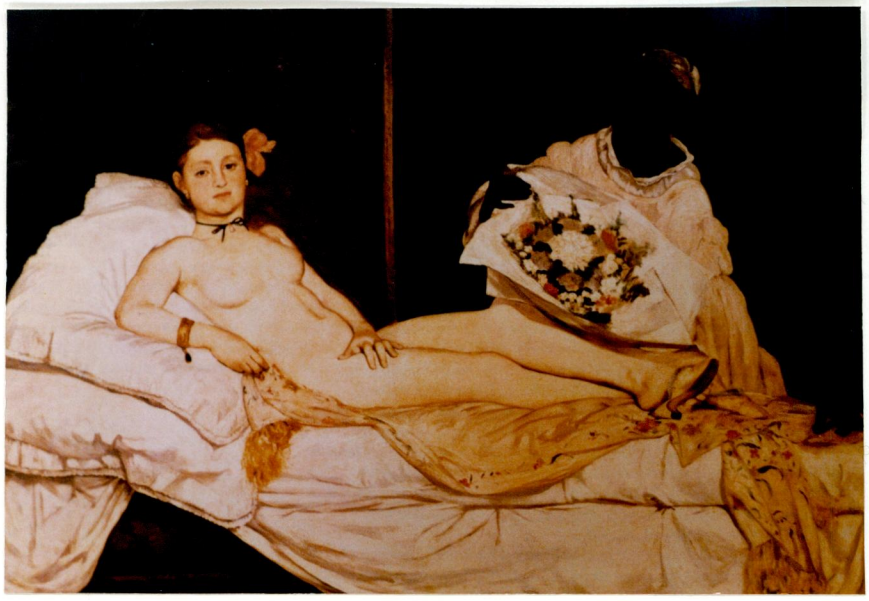


Fig.22 EDWARD MANET (OLYMPIA) 1865

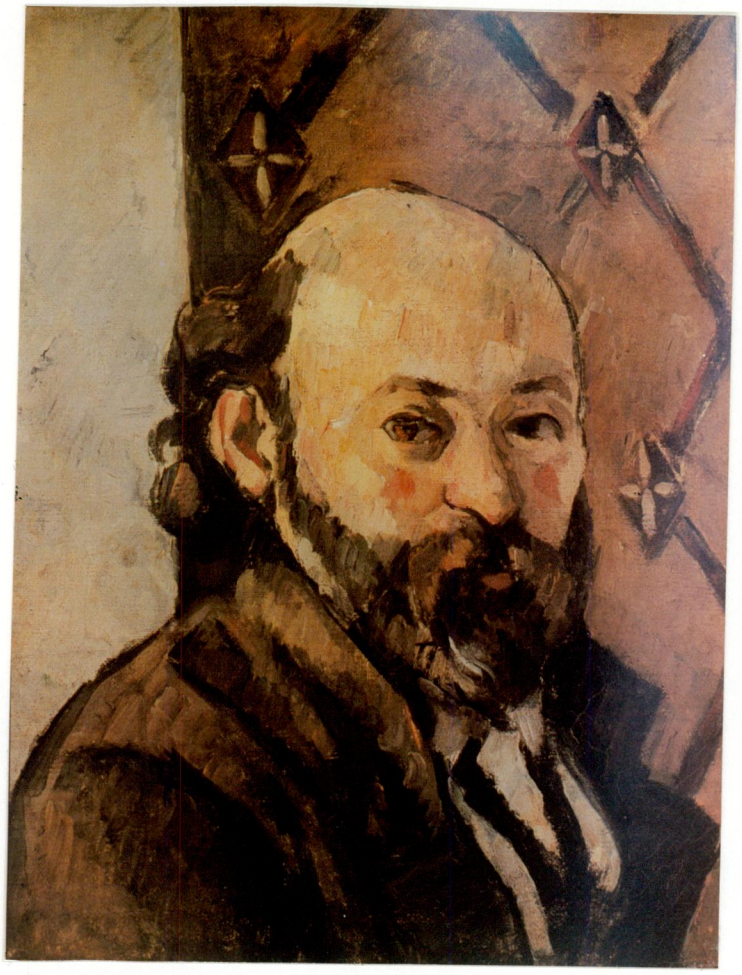


Fig.23 PAUL CÉZANNE (SELF PORTRAIT) 1880

century, in France. Impressionism paved the way for modern twentieth century art as we know it. It was a rebellious style that both shocked and outraged the salon in France towards the end of the nineteenth century. Painters such as Edgar Degas were quick to take advantage of the camera which was newly invented around this time. Portraiture took a new turn around this period. Manet's "Olympia", a nude portrait of a famous prostitute in Paris, shocked the art critics in the salons, as it was designed to do. This type of portraiture, designed to undermine society and show its corruption, was a new element, and one that would be taken up in the twentieth century.

Through the influence of the camera, portraiture changed. Fixed staring portraits became nearly obsolete. Instead, portraits that showed a certain informality were becoming much more widespread. There were new challenges for the artists to surmount. The capturing of personality became important.

On looking at work from the twentieth century, art in general became much more subtle. There were many movements from cubism to photo-realism, all of which had a great deal to contribute to the way we paint today. The portrait in this century has been abstracted through both colour (Fauvism) and shape (Cubism). Movements such as the German Expressionism used the portrait very successfully to cry out and protest against the society in which they were living, with their gruesome images of humanity. Naturalistic representations became pointless, as the camera could now photograph and capture a greater likness more efficiently than a painter. Artists began to concentrate their efforts on trying to change attitudes and trying to change society in ways that were never before attempted.

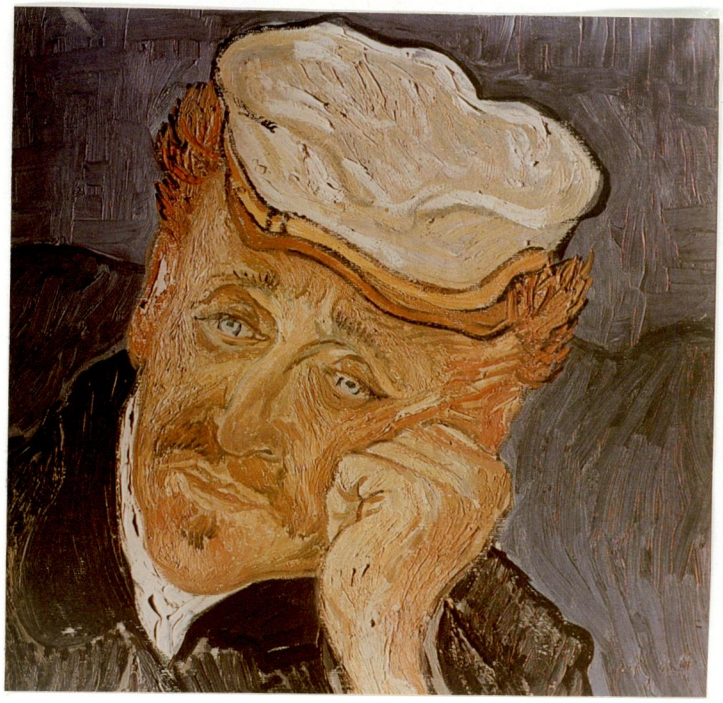


Fig.24 VINCENT VAN GOGH (DOCTOR GACHET)

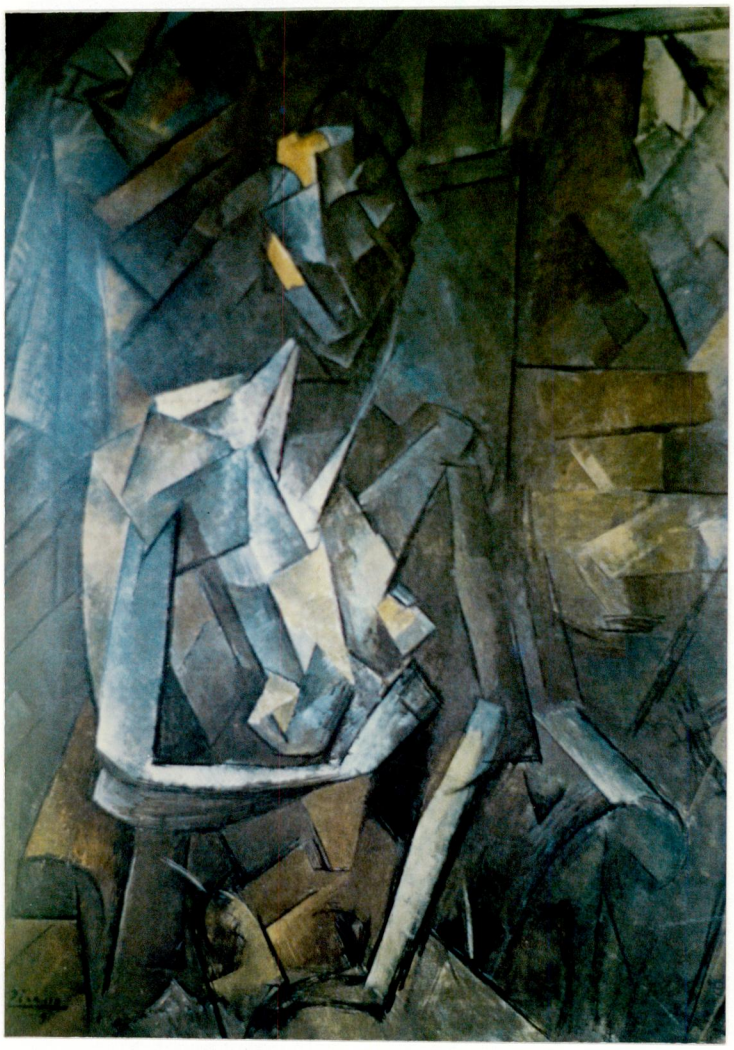


Fig.25 PABLO PICASSO (SEATED WOMAN) 1909-10

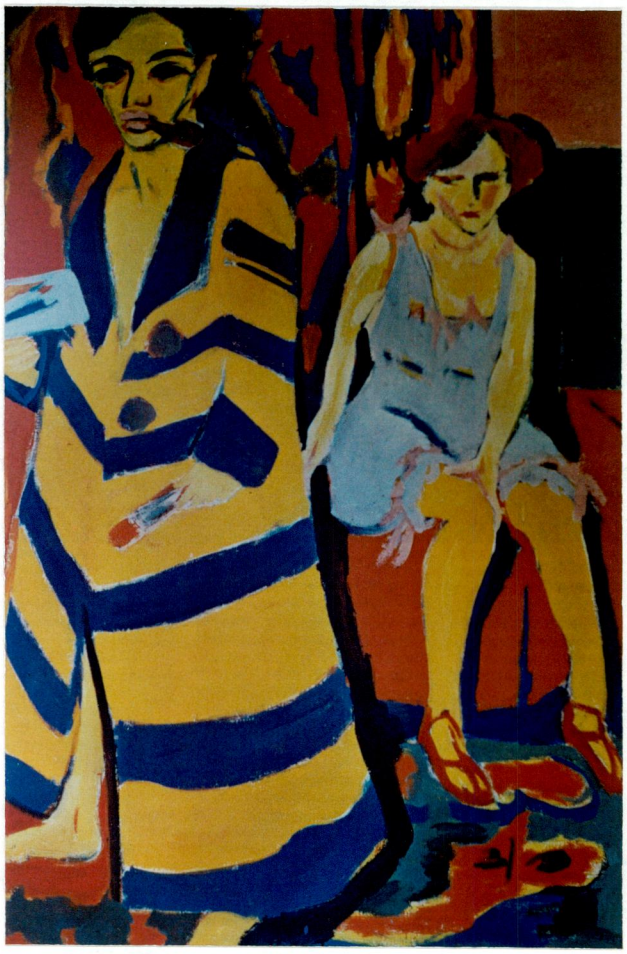


Fig. 26 ERNST KIRCHNER (THE ARTIST AND MODEL) 1907

In the next chapter I will look at and discuss what motivates people towards creativity.

ON MOTIVATING PEOPLE TOWARDS CREATIVITY

"There is desperate social need for the creative behaviour of creative individuals. It is this which justifies the setting forth of a tentative theory of creativity - the nature of the creative act, the conditions under which it occurs, and the manner in which it may constructively be fostered."

- *Carl R. Rogers*
  TOWARDS A THEORY OF CREATIVITY

ON MOTIVATING PEOPLE TOWARDS CREATIVITY

"The experience of fine art is an essential element in the education of the person; it is the hallmark of non-instrumental cognitive development."

- Perry

This quotation has significant implications for all art teachers. For the most part, this aspect of education is sorely neglected both in schools and in society in general. The idea that art should be considered one of the major subjects on the curriculum is one that arises at some time or another in the minds of all teachers of art and all who are interested in the teaching of art. On looking at the Report of the Board of Studies on the Arts, the aims put forward (especially those at post-primary level) promote the inclusion of Art as a core curriculum subject:

8.4 Aims: post primary level

8.4.1 To extend the range and quality of pupils' experience in art/craft/design by continuing, deepening and broadening the visual arts education begun in the primary school.

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

8.4.3 To develop pupils' skills and abilities in making art in a variety of media.

8.4.4 Through active involvement, to further the understanding and appreciation of design in all its forms.

8.4.5 To extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the history and traditions of art so as to foster their capacity to make developed critical judgements and authentic personal choices.

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

8.4.7 To develop a practical understanding of the continuum between art and the environment, and consequently a sense of responsibility for the natural and built environment.[1]

For Perry also, it is impossible to conceive of education in any real sense without the inclusion of Art. Students of Art education are faced with the necessity to come to terms with the elusive and shifting nature of their field of study.

The view of Carl Rogers is also significant. He points out that:

1. Education tends to turn out conformists; individuals whose education is "completed" rather than free thinkers.

2. Leisure time is passive entertainment, creative activities are less evident.

3. In industry, creation is reserved for managers, designers etc.

4. Many are devóid of creativity in their working lives.

5. Clothing, music, books, ideas, even food, are all stereotyped and conformed.[2]

On looking at The Creative Person: An Approach Towards Understanding the Nature of Creativity by Iseult McCarthy, an insight may be gained of the concept of creativity -

> Most people use the word creativity as a rather vague, generic term embracing a range of abilities from originality and spontaneity to inventiveness and productivity. The hypothesis of Brewster Ghiselin is, however, far more specific: '...that an invention or discovery is truly creative insofar as its coming into being is really production of insight, rather than reproduction or copying of insight in any degree whatever'.
>
> Originality, therefore, would appear to be the true and common criterion in all studies of creativity.[3]

According to Carl Rogers, to be thought of as being original is to

be thought of as being dangerous. This view is true in our society today.

On looking at the above, it is natural for the student teacher of art to take a pessimistic view on the careers they are going to inherit. However, it is only by beginning to question why art has the position it currently holds on the curriculum, and studying the implications of this, that we can begin to understand that our role will be to promote art and to push art to the extent where it can be seen to have a very positive role to play in the development of the lives of the pupils we teach.

In this chapter I would like to address the following questions and, through this, develop a greater understanding of the importance of art and the whole creative process for the individual pupil and the implications of this in their future lives.

1. What do we mean by creativity and the creative process?
2. How is creativity expressed?
3. Where does art fit into this?
4. Why does Art education have a low status in the classroom?
5. What is there that I can do to promote Art in the classroom and to try to change the status of Art?
6. What would be the implications of this change?

On looking towards the notion of creativity and the creative process, I will first look at E.W. Sinnott. To want to gain knowledge is one of the major differences between ourselves and the other organisms that share our planet. We have generally achieved the primary social needs as a species. This is according to Maslow's hierarchy of social needs, which include food, shelter etc, and also bodily functions.

What is now available to man is the ability to use his mind.

Man can think and develop logical ideas for self-actualisation. His main aim in life is to develop himself fully as a human being according to his varying needs. McCarthy describes the desire to create, at one level or another, as being basic to human fulfilment.

> The humanistic approach to the study of personality views creativity as a means of self-actualisation.[4]

This ties in very closely with Maslow's views. To develop himself fully, as a human being, man needs to be able to think both logically and abstractly.

To think is to reason, to be able to rationalize. It is also to use our imagination, to recall our gathered information and to use this selectively in an appropriate situation to fulfil our needs. The main reason man has progressed as far as he has, especially in this century, is due to the new and better ways we have, to use our selected information to fulfil our needs and desires.

To do this, a new idea has to be used. A new idea is an original idea. An original idea and the thought behind this is the basis of creativity. People will be most creative when they feel motivated primarily by interest, enjoyment, satisfaction and challenge of the work itself.

According to Carl Rogers, creativity exists in every individual and awaits only the proper conditions to be released and expressed. It is up to us as teachers of art to foster the development of creativity in our pupils and help them realise their potential in this respect.

Torrance describes creative thinking as -

> ...a process of recognising gaps and missing elements, formulating hypotheses, revising and retesting the hypotheses and finally communicating the results.[5]

This theory helped form the basis for his tests of creativity. These test such skills as fluency, flexibility, originality and spontaneity.

> E. Paul Torrance, Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking: Directions Manual and Scoring Guide Lexington, Mass.,Personnel Press, 1966

Gruber sees the development of creativity as a slowly evolving process of reflection and discovery, rather than a sudden burst of enlightenment.

The understanding of creativity can be seen from at least four different perspectives. These are:

1. Creative process.
2. Creative product. (must be observable and tangible).
3. Creative person.
4. Creative situation.

At the present time, there is much confusion over the actual measurement of creativity. Tests are available that measure the creative performance (judged by originality, uniqueness in the use of materials and thoughts). There do not seem to be any tests available that measure the other three elements, found to exist as part of the notion of creativity, other than those intended to identify the creative personality. Theorists view creativity as being:

> both an intervening variable, not directly observable, but used to explain relations between stimuli and responses and a trait, 'something that a person possesses,' that varies from person to person.

Psychological research on creativity has existed throughout the twentieth century, considering whether creativity is:

(a) An aspect of intelligence.

(b) A largely unconscious process.

(c) An aspect of problem solving.

(d) An associative process.

At the present time, no definitive answer can be found from any of these on the question of creativity, with the result that creativity is probably a combination of all of these elements - although it may well involve other, as yet, unspecified aspects.

The second issue I would like to address is the question about how creativity can be and is expressed.

According to Carl Rogers, creativity can be expressed when an individual is 'open' to all experiences. When this occurs, then his behaviour will be creative and his creativity may be trusted to be essentially constructive.

Non-defensiveness and openness (extensionality) are two qualities found to be of great advantage to promote the creative process. The ability to look at things with an open mind, not to generalize, to keep one's mind open to every possibility appears to be one of the key factors in realising creative ability.

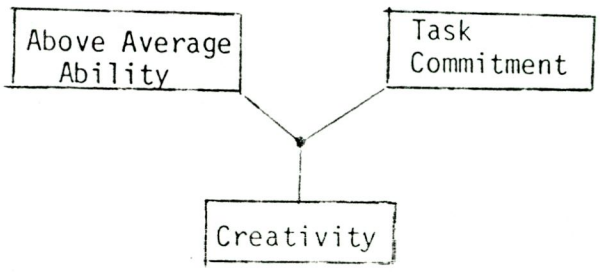
People generally think of creativity in terms of art, and art orientated subjects. When we look at creativity, it involves a lot of abstract thinking and reasoning and working out ideas in new and original ways. This concept can be applied to anything. To think well, involves dealing with, or the ability to deal with abstraction. Creation of imagery, leads to problem solving, invention, analytical and abstract reasoning and the making of aesthetic decisions. Anthing that exploits

the use of these factors can be said to be creative. Being highly intelligent in dealing with the science of colour theory and applying this in practice, dealing with the abstract notions of tone, volume and the illusion of space and showing and exploiting a logical intellect to solve a mathematical problem, are all equally valid forms of intelligence. What makes them different is that the former uses many of the elements discussed above, while the second one is devoid of creative input. I am not saying that there is no creativity involved in mathematics or physics; this is just an example. There is more scope, I believe, to be creative in areas such as art, music, languages, or "the Arts" as they are known.

This brings me on to the third question I would like to address. Where does art fit into the concept of creativity? On looking at The Conditions of Creativity by Beth A. Hennessey and Teresa A.Amabile -

> People will be most creative when they feel motivated primarily by the interest, enjoyment, satisfaction and challenge of the work itself - not by external pressures.[6]

Looking towards Joseph S. Renzulli and his research on creative/productive people shows the ingredients of giftedness. These consist of three interlocking clusters of traits



The interaction among the three clusters has been shown to be the necessary ingredient for creative/productive accomplishment. Each

cluster contributes equally.

The love people feel for their work also has a great deal to do with the creativity of their performance. Where people can all achieve, where they can all be successful to some degree or another is in art. If they feel they can achieve, they can become motivated by ideas and challenges set by the very nature of their work. When they have broken down these barriers, the creative process can begin to take place, to a greater or lesser extent. Other factors that may have an effect on the degree of creativity of the individual are the varying importance one places on the natural urge to develop, extend and mature. These urges to expand to full capacity are either dormant or very active, depending on exposure to life and the type of lifestyle that one may lead.

Creativity contains many elements, as was discussed earlier. One's outlook on life and the world around us is dependent on the play of perception. For the artistic person, this embodies a pictorial or visual, tangible image. For the literary scholar, it comes through the creative composition of words, for the musician, lyrics and musical sounds are his sources; and so on. This is a major ingredient in the way we view creative and artistic people. They are normally seen to have "heightened senses of perception." The imagination brings into play the internal representation of the results of our perception. These can then be expressed as an observable visual synthesis of both one's perceptive and imaginative reasoning.

> The highest forms of creativity emerge under conditions when we are free from control, when our minds can regress to unconscious, preverbal, playful levels of thoughts.
>
> (Act of Creation , Arthur Koestler)[7]

It is only in art that these abstract "playful levels of thought" can have both meaning and validity due to the nature of the subject as in, for example, ceramics where moulding the clay to help discover its tactile qualities, can lead to the "happy accident" syndrome whereby these "playful levels of thought" can become the seed from which ideas can sprout.

Freedom of control can play a big part in the development of a creative work and can be used to great advantage in aspects of life that promote creativity, yet there is the essential aspect of positive "tension" between the discipline of strict artistic technique and the freedom of thought.

I want now to consider some of the reasons why art has been accorded such a low status on the curriculum.

"Art is something you do with your hands and not your head."

"Art is only ornamental, and serves no other function."

These comments are typical of many people who, through ignorance, have helped demote one of the most valuable subjects we have to the lower levels of the school curriculum, in terms of the value ascribed to it. Art in schools carries less weight in examinations than maths or science, which would be deemed respectable subjects worthy of study. Thus, art is deemed to be less practical and useful to us in our educational development.

It is the popular belief that Art is a class used for stress relief from the other more serious subjects. Art has long been seen to be a gift or a talent given only to a few. One either demonstrates a "flair" for art or one is "bad" at art; a hopeless case. If one is good at art, then it must be "in the family", the outcome of genetic disposition. This view relies strongly on the theory that art is genetically inherited, a view not proposed in relation to other subjects on the curriculum. Education, it would seem, plays little or no part in promoting art; if one is good, it

seems that education only serves to enhance this, with little real guidance. If one is bad, one is considered a hopeless case. This view is a very pessimistic one and contributes to many seeing art as a subject of little relevance and value.

> The task of education is not one of standing by and letting nature take its course, but one that will empower the young to shape their own development after leaving school.

Teachers have a responsibility to give their pupils the full potential to shape their development.

Societies differ in their opinions on the value of art in the classroom and in the development of pupils' lives. In Ireland, art has been valuable in promoting our country to other nations, both economically (e.g. tourism), and culturally. There is no doubt that art and the Arts have played a major part in the development of Ireland as a country. However, when we look at the status of Art in Irish educational institutions, it is clearly and evidently neglected. This has been linked to the ebb of interest in Irish artistic history, as well as the skills necessary to communicate this. The attitude prevalent in this country - and we are by no means alone - is that art is generally seen to be an appropriate subject for girls. It is seen to benefit lower graded classes more than higher grades. It is seen as a hobby, or a pastime and in few schools is regarded as being of similar validity to subjects such as mathematics and science.

The main emphasis in secondary schooling is to provide a constant stream of suitable candidates for third level courses mainly in universities. The curriculum in Ireland, although it might aim to be considered child-centred, is in reality, subject centred. Institutions are permitted

to dictate their requirements to the child rather than allowing each child to develop his or her full and unique potential. Due to the constant pressure for pupils to do well in exams, and the current stress placed on academic achievement, art is seen as being of lesser value for success in third level or in the pursuit of careers, since it merits fewer points. Thus, it receives less emphasis. "Higher status" subjects such as mathematics and sciences, receive greater emphasis and preference due to the academic requirements for third level. Art is not seen in the same light and consequently receives less emphasis.

Education, it would seem, has become merely a process for transferring a pupil through the various levels of education. Surely though, the whole idea of what education actually is, has become lost amongst all of this?

There is superficially a great interest placed in the promotion of Art in this country. We have institutions to house art, we have museums, galleries and a great many other national important archives. There is a great status placed on these by society as being part of our culture, but the majority of people cannot share in this rich source of imagery, since in general, we are ignorant of the qualities and ideas being expressed by these artists. We can only regard these works superficially as either "good" or "bad", value judgements which are simply not relevant to the enjoyment of art or the understanding of it. Thus, our judgement value diminishes and we are left desolate and starved of the ability to appreciate our cultural heritage on an intellectual basis. This does us no credit as a nation who are highly regarded and noted for our artistic and literary genius.

Earning a living is only one aspect of education. There are other more subtle ways of using the system of education whereby one can be catered for educationally and can also have the ability to earn a living. Self-motivation and the notion that students will become responsible for their own educational development are a criterion that is much more desirable than providing a student with information and skills to get into a third level institution. Most people have a low opinion of art in the classroom. Many need tangible proof of the validity of including art as a major curriculum subject. This attitude is shared by many who have gone through the Irish system and have been moulded by the educational system into this way of thinking.

> Up to now a simply and pupil based approach to 'appreciation' of works of art has been absent at all levels of education. However, with the introduction of 'appreciation' at primary level, this may change.
> (Irish Times/Department of Education)[8]

I would now like to address the fifth and sixth questions I identified earlier in this chapter: What is there that I can do to promote art in the classroom? What are the implications of improving the status of art in the curriculum?

On beginning to promote art in the school, radical changes in the way people think of art have been implemented. On this point, I will begin to look at some of the main arguments that may be used for the development of a new attitude in relation to the promotion of Art education in all second-level schools.

What should a sound Art education provide? It should promote the culture in our society, in a way that could help the understanding of the structures that help shape our lives in a more relevant way than any

other subject. Art deals also with modern civic issues in a creative way and helps interpret society in a new light.

Motivation in Art education today has a wider range of choices as to educational materials than there ever has been before. (Slides and videos etc. are readily available).

A sound education should also develop critical abilities.

> Emphasis should be placed on the development of perception, intellect, inventiveness, judgement and manipulation in ways which can be expressive, communicative and functional.
>
> (Summary of the Junior Certificate Syllabus in ART, CRAFT, AND DESIGN)

A major aim of Art education is to promote

> both making art (artistic education) and receiving art (aesthetic education). These are two complementary processes.
>
> (The Arts in Education - A Curriculum and Examinations Board Discussion Paper, p.8-2.4.3)[9]

Artistic education also develops a different mode of thinking. This is not the logical, straightforward thinking in evidence in other subjects, but abstract thinking - an ability to "conceptualise" which, once arrived at can be applied to diverse situations. For education itself, art can play a part. A creative person can use an imaginative way to develop a class aesthetically, which in turn can help motivate pupils and add a certain character to the subject. For example, a teacher can combine a number of subjects together in one project with a class. Through this, a much larger and wider learning experience can be gained when the pupils can see the inter-relationship of the subjects.

A sound artistic education should also encourage more integration between the different subjects on the curriculum. The implications of this are obvious. Among its advantages are the linking up in the pupils' mind,

of all the subjects from split unrelated loose ends to a more whole and more widely based outlook to life. There is more scope for Art to take up this integrational role than most other subjects on the curriculum. precisely because it promotes individual problem solving and mental agility.

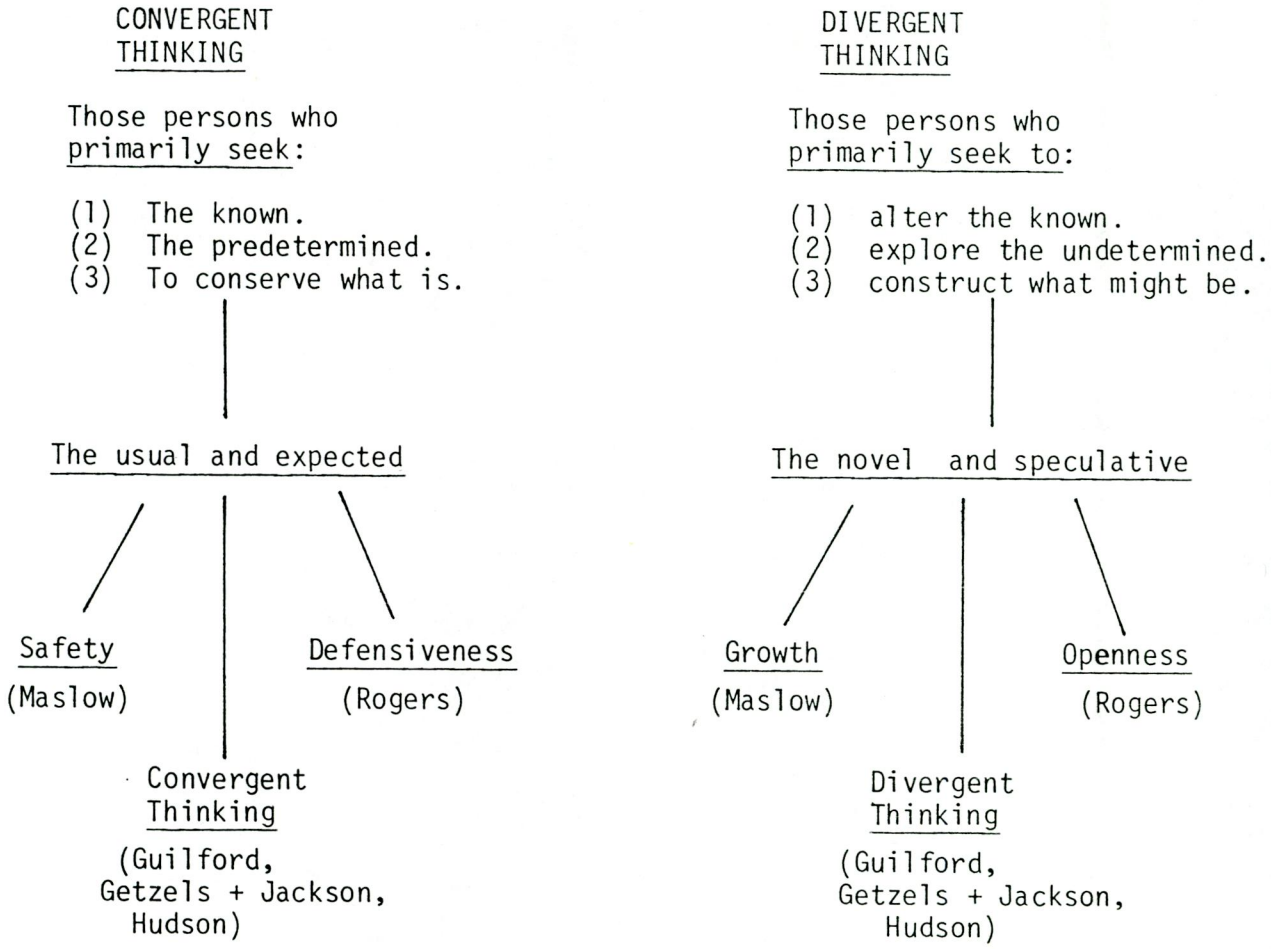
A sound artistic education should also develop a way of exploiting what we have and using this to develop society further. This can be done by using the other points to their best potential. For example, looking at newspapers and television for current affairs, and interpreting this through art. This would develop social awareness and also artistic understanding and ability.

> We need a greater vision and commitment to the developing of our creative abilities and our aesthetic, so we can deal with the problems of life with more understanding of what is needed to develop our society to its full potential.

Art can develop these qualities in a person much more readily than other curriculum subjects. There is

> ...emphasis on the artistic and aesthetic faculties of the student, on practical skills and achievement in a wide range of media, on problem solving and design and on environmental and cultural awareness.
>
> (Summary of the Junior Certificate Syllabus in ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN)[10]

When we look at some of the modes of cognitive operation based on the models of Getzels and Jackson, I think that it will provide one of the strongest arguments for giving a more important role for art in the classroom. An examination of modes of thinking and their relationship to the processes of Art will reinforce my argument.



The convergent mode of thinking is the one preferred and most often fostered in the classroom.

> One focuses on knowing what is already discovered, and the other focuses on discovering what is yet to be known.

The above model does not define creativity. It is, however, a different mode of thinking. The divergent thinking model backs up many of the arguments put forward in this chapter. The convergent preferred way of thinking is safe and defensive.

The divergent way of thinking is more in evidence in the creative person. This, many art teachers would like to promote in the classroom. To develop creativity is to develop growth, openness, to explore the undetermined, to alter the known, to construct what might be.

I would finally like to add to this piece a quotation based on education making a claim to universality-

> ...the fruitful engagement of energy, of imagination, and of sensibility in bringing some light on the question of what it means to be human in an increasingly complex world.

The only subject which fully exploits the enterprise of education at the present time is art.

In the next chapter, I would like to discuss the implementation of my project in the classroom. I will also explain how this is linked to my personal Major Study painting.

ON MOTIVATING PEOPLE TOWARDS CREATIVITY

Footnotes

1. Report of the Board of Studies: The Arts: The Curriculum and Examinations Board, 1987, p.25
2. Vernon, E.P.: Creativity. Penguin Books, 1982, p.137
3. Murphy, J Daniel and Rice, Valentine: The Arts and the Gifted Child.(Conference Proceedings and Occasional Papers). Department of Higher Education and Research, p.29
4. Ibid. p.29
5. Torrance, E.Paul: Tests of lreative Thinking: Directions Manual and Scoring Guide. Lexington, Mass., Personnel Press, 1966, p.73
6. Hennessey, A.Beth and Amabile, A.Teresa: The Conditions of Creativity
7. Koestler, Arthur: Act of Creation
8. Irish Times/Dept. of Education (Information received from photocopied source)
9. Report of the Board of Studies: The Arts in Education - A Curriculum and Examinations Board Discussion Paper: Department of Higher Education and Research, p.8-2-4-3 and Summary of the Junior Certificate Syllabus in Art, Craft and Design.
10. Ibid.

ON DEVELOPING A PROJECT IN THE CLASSROOM

ON DEVELOPING A PROJECT IN THE CLASSROOM

In this chapter I would like to discuss the development of my project with my pupils in the classroom.

To meet the requirements of the course, a project was to be developed which related in some way to the chosen Major Study project. Through implementation of this project, an understanding of a wide variety of artistic concepts should be developed. The development of creativity in the classroom, as was discussed in the previous chapter, is of great relevance to the promotion of art to the status of a core curriculum subject.

Through this project I would like to develop some of the ideas expressed by Torrance, in the classroom:

(1) Ability to improvise with commonplace materials.

(2) Enjoyment of and ability in visual art.

(3) Fluency and flexibility in non-verbal media.

(4) Enjoyment of and skills in small-group activities and problem solving

(5) Expressiveness of gestures, body language and the ability to interpret body language.

(6) Richness of imagery in informal language

(7) Originality of ideas in problem solving.

(8) Problem centredness and persistence in problem solving.

These above ideas tie in quite well with some of the aims put forward by the Board of Studies for the Arts in their Report:

> The Art, Craft and Design syllabus provides students with an opportunity to arrive at a greater personal awareness of visual, spatial and tactile phenomena. Emphasis is placed on the development of perception, intellect, inventiveness, judgement and manipulation, in ways which can be expressive, communicative and functional.

I will now attempt to discuss my classroom project, with a brief introduction to the school I am teaching in.

I am presently teaching in St Finian's Community College in Swords. It caters for the Swords area mainly but also has many pupils who travel from areas as far as Portrane. The school holds between seven and eight hundred pupils and classes are streamed from high to low ability groups. The school grounds are large and well landscaped. I have a double period class with a Third Year group, and two single classes, one with a Fourth Year art history group, and one with a First Year group. I also have another double period class with a Second Year group and this is the group which is working on the project.

It developed as a consequence of my Major Study. I was dealing with the portrait and the environment in my own Major Study work, as was discussed in an earlier chapter. For my classroom project, I replaced the portrait with the whole figure. The whole figure can fit in more readily with the present curriculum and life drawing represents one whole question on the Inter Cert Examination. I also envisaged the final piece as being three-dimensional - a sculpture of the figure in the environment. Pupils are generally more motivated by people than things and like to invent situations. The pupils would concentrate on the figure in the environment, while I, in my Major Study would emphasise one particular aspect of this, which would be the portrait. It was this link which kept my work in nearly direct touch with their own.

The whole project was based around life drawing. As this had been the basis of my work in Major Study for the past three years, I feel that I had sufficient confidence to deal with it and develop it as a project for the whole year.

When I introduced the project in October, work immediately began on life drawing.

We worked for the most part on drawing until Christmas. This gave a sufficient time for progress to be observable in their work. They also began to gain a familiarity with the figure; this was very desirable for the work they would be doing after Christmas. I gave them progressively more complex problems to solve to maintain interest and challenge.

As most of their initial drawing was done in line, a great understanding was developed of the structure of the figure. An understanding in relating where each part of the body was in relation to another was fostered to develop further the observational skills of the pupils. This idea, I felt, was vital, and was the major emphasis during the first block of drawings.

Every child has the ability to draw or make marks to a greater or lesser extent. As this skill is developed naturally, and is inherent in the child even before speech, this says a lot about the value of sight. In my view, it is the primary sense. The visual image plays a most important part in the child's development of knowledge. Drawing is the most normal and least cryptic way of recording visual knowledge.

By Christmas, nearly all of the pupils were relating their drawings to the actual pose of the model with continuous eye contact. Assisting the pupils in this to some extent, and also bringing another element into their work, sometime before Christmas I introduced the background

into their work. This gave them another element to relate the position of their pose to, and also began to get them to look at the background as a part of the composition, and to think about the effect of space on the narrative of the image. Pupils who, up until then, had found difficulties in comprehending the figure, now found something to help them anchor their figure in space.

After Christmas, the work continued on, on a figurative level, but with the introduction of a new dimension. Colour began now to take a part in their work.

Up until now, they worked on warm up sketches; recording information about the pose quickly; and the poses were normally held for between two to five minutes.

Now we began to discuss new and more sophisticated ways of representing the pose. A choice of media was made available for work in colour. Most chose paint. Working on quick accurate sketches of the pose, also including the background, the pupils were encouraged to use paint. The paint was of poor quality, but the results were of a high standard. These paintings were worked on for a number of weeks. Visual references were used of artists throughout history, which also included many from the 20th Century. The pupils found these stimulating and were eager to discuss their work in relation to certain artists whose paintings we had discussed.

The paintings were worked concentrating on technique and also on colour. This painting block was to provide the final preparation for the introduction of the actual three-dimensional work.

The three-dimensional work began with a discussion on materials and also a talk on artists who had used the figure in sculptural works

of various kinds. They had become very eager to work in three dimensions.

They began work on the sculptures by initially making drawings of the poses they wanted to express. Dance, sport, music were among the relevant topics they wanted to discuss in wire.

The wire itself presented a whole variety of new problems to be tackled. Through discussion and demonstration, ways were worked out of achieving both volume and structure. Referring back to drawings done earlier in the year, on structure, they began to see a link in the drawings done earlier and the wire work being attempted now.

The wire was extremely rough on the hands, so pliers and cutters were used. These in themselves had become the new media. The pliers and the cutters being the pencil, the wire itself being the paper. They now had to translate the drawings from two dimensions into drawings in three dimensions. This introduced a new area of discovery. They now had to deal with space and structure in a new and much more technical way.

Design concepts also came into play. Showing the pupils examples of work from George Segal and other modern sculptors of similar style gave them many ideas. I discussed with them the possibility of watching programmes that had something to do with their chosen theme. Since many of them chose sport, they began to watch sports programmes for ideas on poses that would show action and movement. These programmes encouraged them to think more about their project outside of the classroom environment. Many pupils worked on ideas developed from programmes such as these. They took popular themes (e.g. the defeat of Mike Tyson by James 'Buster' Douglas) and worked on depicting Douglas' victory.

When the wire figures were finished, work began on the application of papier maché. Shellac varnish which was used to coat sheets of tissue

Fig.27 PUPIL AT WORK ON APPLICATION OF PAPIER MACHE

paper was used by some in preference to the papier maché. This was applied to the surface of the chicken-wire to form a skin-like coating over which paint could be applied. This application had a dual purpose: one of applying a suitable surface for paint application, and also to help the pupils become more involved with the discovery of a new tactile mediu. It helped in their understanding of form and furthered their understanding of structure.

Some pupils, as I have said, used shellac and others used papier maché. These media had different properties and required different approaches. Shellac was sticky and difficult to work with and apply. However, the results, when applied, were lighter in structure than papier maché and it achieved a certain luminosity through which the wire could be seen. This helped the pupils appreciate both the form and the structure of their figures. The papier maché as a contrast was an opaque slimy method which was easier to apply. It was more readily available and also more durable than the shellac method. Nothing of the structure could be seen when it was applied, but it was easier to apply paint to the papier maché than to the shellac. Both methods had advantages and disadvantages. To find out which medium each pupil liked and worked best with, I allowed them to work with both initially. Then, after they had had experience with both media, I questioned them about each and what they had found out about them, and also what the advantages and disadvantages of each were. After establishing the reasons why they preferred one medium over the other, I let them continue with either the shellac or the papier maché.

When this stage was completed, I introduced to them the idea of using paint,both to enhance the form of the figure by developing shadows and

Fig.28 & Fig.29 PUPILS APPLYING PAINT MIXED WITH P.V.A. GLUE AND 'POLLYFILLA' TO THE CHICKEN-WIRE FIGURES

Fig.30 *PUPIL APPLYING TISSUE PAPER COATED WITH SHELLAC VARNISH ONTO THE CHICKEN-WIRE FIGURE*

Fig.31 GEORGE SEGAL (SEATED FIGURE). PLASTER OF PARIS DIPPED IN MUSLIN AND APPLIED TO THE BODY. THIS HARDENS AND CAN THEN BE REMOVED.

Fig. 32 GEORGE SEGAL (SEATED FIGURE AT BAR). SHOWS FIGURE IN AN ENVIRONMENT.

lighter toned areas on the body, and also to make a tough hardwearing coating for the figures. The way the tough coating was made was by mixing both "Copy-dex" vinyl glue and "Poly-filla" into the paint, so when it dried it would form a hard protective covering. The pupils are currently engaged in applying this. Their work will take possibly two to three weeks more to reach completion from this stage, where it is envisaged that there will be a group of free-standing figures.

To conclude this piece, I would briefly like to comment on the experience the pupils have gained and also how this project has helped my own development as both an artist and a teacher.

When the project began, the pupils had a poor understanding of many of the concepts of art such as shape, form, structure, the use of line, etc. After three months of work on life drawing, they began to improve in all areas, especially direct observation.

The initial classes contained numerous exercises to increase their observation. This was necessary, as most of the pupils had preconceived ideas of what the figure actually looked like. They would take one look at the pose and then proceed to draw from memory. Consequently, the drawings appeared stylized and incorrect. Some of the exercises to increase their observation consisted of the following:

Taking a pencil or charcoal and drawing the figure without looking at what they were drawing on the page, but keeping their eyes on the pose only. This exercise had the dual function of increasing their co-ordination from the eye to the hand and so increasing their direct observation.

Another exercise was to look at the figure and to draw it without lifting the charcoal from the page. This helped the pupils understand how different parts of the body relate to each other.

Fig.33 *EXAMPLE OF HOW PUPILS APPLIED PAINT TO THE FACE TO ENHANCE FORM. SHADOWS FORMED BY DARKER PAINT.*

When the pupils' observational skills developed, their work improved noticeably. Concepts such as shape, form and line began to be understood as their eye constantly related their own work to the actual pose.

Work on the chicken-wire developed both the concepts of form and that of structure in the minds of the pupils. They worked from their two-dimensional drawings and with reference to a model, they began to work in three dimensions. They saw how the drawings related to, and were useful as a source for the chicken-wire sculptures.

The next stage was the application of the papier maché which covered the chicken-wire sculptures. This helped their understanding of form and helped clarify the difference between the structure of the chicken wire sculptures and the form that the skin-like covering gave to the sculptures when it was applied.

As was discussed earlier, media research was used to an extent, to encourage the pupils to relate the events happening in the world around them to their work. They mainly worked on sports, which was satisfactory for their level (Second Year pupils). This concept could be carried further as they develop the ability to use the various media such as television, world events recorded in newspapers, etc. as sources for them to use in the art class. This has the function of developing their awareness of what is happening in the world around them. They also become more aware of visual imagery and the possibilities of art in discussing certain issues.

The final stage of the project was the painting of the figures. This gave them access to another concept in art, which was colour.

I would now like to briefly talk about the experience I consider I

have gained this year through application of this project in the classroom, and through teaching art in general. Before I began teaching in October, I had only a brief section of nine to ten weeks teaching experience in any one year. This obviously is not enough to get to know either the pupils or the way in which the school is operated.

This year I feel that I have developed confidence in both myself and in my teaching ability through experience. I have also developed communication skills in dealing with pupils and in relating art to the other teachers on the staff. I have also acquired the ability to judge the pupils' development in all aspects of art. Teaching calls for:

> A multiplicity of high level skills and understandings - planning, organisation, diagnosing, selecting, communicating, evaluating, demonstrating, and so on.
>
> (The Changing Context for the Exercise of Professionalism in Teaching - John Coolahan, p.32)

I would consider that by the end of my teaching practice some of these qualities will become evident through my experience and also through application of my project in the classroom.

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