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COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINE IS DEARTHA

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INTRODUCTION

In this written project I would like to deal with the following points,

(1) As a teacher I am concerned with freedom of expression in the classroom.

(2) This is, however to be a qualified freedom.

(3) That this freedom of expression depends on logical and sequential structured challenges set by the teacher rather than a systematic course of study.

(4) That the creative process demands the patience of repeated attempts at meeting the challenges.

(5) That the experience of certain approaches to "life drawing" can motivate these responses.

Some teachers want their studens to achieve a free style, but I want them to enjoy a freedom of spirit that goes beyond style. The teacher does not inspire this kind of freedom by saying "be free", any more than he can secure an expression of feeling by saying "be emotional". He has to set the example of freedom by giving value to what is freely expressed. Instead of trying to develop a systematic course of study, I have envisioned a kind of obstacle course in which my role is to define certain kinds of challenges that lie ahead, to distinguish one from the other and

to assist in whatever way presents itself as the particular point is reached. Through my own experiences in life drawing I am familiar with difficulties my pupils may have.
I would like to think that in doing my class project I developed qualities as a teacher which facilitate learning and that I put my pupils in touch with a more intuitive part of themselves, and that I do this step by step moving from the simple to the complex.

I would also like to discuss art education, its meaning for today and the role of the teacher in the classroom.

ART EDUCATION

Human growth is normally regarded as gradual physical enlargement, maturation accompanied by corresponding development of various mental faculties such as thinking and understanding; the intellect and the emotions. This is, in effect, a very complicated adjustment of the subjective feelings and emotions to the objective world. The quality of thought and understanding and of all the other aspects of personality and character depend to a large extent upon the success or precision of this adjustment.

Education should be concerned with this precision, this reorientation of the physical being to the objective world of reality. Education should lead to the harmonious unity of the

primitive-libidinal drives and the social objective aspirations.

This is a process of growth of human sensitivity to the organic and the inorganic order of the world around. This, in a way, is the education of the senses upon which the human conciousness and ultimately the intelligence and judgment of the individual depend. This is an education for the aesthetic sensibility. This is Art Education. The education of the senses would naturally involve the external perception as well as the internal, muscular and tactile; it would involve also the emotive and haptic. It would engulf the whole living being, conscious and unconscious.

Art Education I feel should have as its goals:

(1) preservation of the intensity of perceptions, sensations and emotions;
(2) co-ordination of the separateness of the sensations the seeing of the eye, the hearing of the ear, the touch of the hand and the feeling of the whole organism in relation to the environment;
(3) cultivation of the sensitivity to the changes in the organic patterns of the world, and to the need of the human being to be aware of these changes;

(4) expression of this feeling in communicable forms, the teaching of the handling of materials and media through which to translate these needs;

(5) expression of the mental experiences involving logical and intuitive patterning of thought together with and not divorced from the emotional nature of the human being.

I believe that this is the substance of Art Education.

Teachers Role:

Who is the teacher? What should be his main concern? In view of the above implications he assumes a status much more vital than that of an instructor in a subject or master of a technique, this job is not one of transferring a body of knowledge, nor is it the imparting of the skill of manipulating a medium into an ordered result, neither is it one of mere permissive guidance through the activities known as "Creative Activities". According to Herbert Read in Education through Art"

"Art is a living and concrete proof that man is capable of restoring consciously and meaningfully, the union of the senses, needs and impulses, thoughts and actions, characteristic of the live creature".

Each student is an unique personality and as such must be dealt with differently by the teacher. The teacher's role is of great significance as it is he who is the motivational force in the class. He is the key to success or failure of all efforts, since he must use his knowledge of the environment, his ability to plan a meaningful programme, and his knowledge of the students to plan motivational strategy. Each student should be treated fairly and should be recognized for uniqueness of personality.

The teacher, I believe, should evaluate each student only in terms of individual growth and should seek to stimulate toward new experiences.

The creative activity involves the students whole nature: his strengths and weaknesses are often displayed in his work (art product). It is the teacher who must find the good points and use them to motivate the student to overcome the weaker ones. One of the most important aspects I believe, is knowing just how much stimulation to provide, before allowing the student to proceed with his work. In the class, I have noticed that over-stimulation will seriously hamper creative involvment on the part of the student since it may leave little to his imagination. On the other hand too little stimulation will fail to arouse any real creative response. The teacher should not allow a situation where there is interference with the students originality of conception.

The teacher stimulates, directs and encourages. The students work should express his self, but only as that self grows in aesthetic awareness. There must be stimulation in progress - a continuing effort on the part of the teacher. No single element has a more lasting impression on the student than the insight and tolerance with which a teacher talks with him about his work. A strategy of motivating students involves the teacher's ability to use the source of the environment, the art programme and the desires of the students, to provide a meaningful stimulation. To a great extent, it is in finding the student where he is, perceiving the circumstances which his surroundings present, and through an effective programme, influencing artistic growth. The nature of the teacher-student relationship, though seemingly a mutual give and take, must in reality be more a one-way street. The teacher must understand the child, cater to his needs; yet this does not mean a complete identification with the childs needs. Since education is for me the selection of the world through the medium of another person, the relationship of the person through who this happens, to the person to whom it happens must be built upon mutual trust. This I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 4 in light of the work of Carl Rogers and Arthur Combs.

In the next chapter I wish to discuss the origins of the nude from Fifth Century B.C. as it is the origin of my personal work.

CHAPTER II:

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The Nude:

In this chapter my main concern will be in dealing with the origins of the nude from Fifth Century B.C.
Ever since man began to paint, the representation of the nude figure has held a special place in the world of art. It is always an exciting subject for spectator and artist alike, for a variety of reasons.

The artist can create a magical world related to his gods by representing ideal figures and ignoring all imperfections, so that, for example, the supreme female beauty becomes Venus, the goddess of love. The human body can also be seen as something loathsome, to be covered and hidden. When this happens the painting of nudes goes into abeyance and there has to be a revoluntionary change in taste before they become once again acceptable.

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

It is appropriate at this stage to look at the origin of the nude in the Greece of Fifth Century B.C. Plato, in his 'symposium'. makes the distinction between the two types of unclothed models whem he calls celestial and vulgar. These were later entitled 'Venus Coelestis' and 'Venus Maturealis' in Latin.

[1]Kenneth Clark, The Nude, Penguin Books, Norwich 1986. P.64

This became an axiom of Mediaeval and Renaissance philosphy in order to justify the female nude. Physcial need sought relief in images, since prehistoric times. A recurring aim of European art had been to give these images a form by which Venus may cease to be vulgar and become celestial. Venus being referred to as this 'Goddess'. This enabled the Venus to be one of the most sculpted figures at that time. In order for Venus to become celestial, symmetry, measurement and the principal of 'subordination' i.e., submissiveness, passiveness (as described in the first chapter) was applied to the sculpted form. This helped artists to sublimate their passions and present a socially acceptable work.

Prehistoric images of women were of two kinds; building statuettes from palaeolithic caves, which emphasised female breasts were symbols of fertility. However, at the other extreme marble dolls of the 'Cycladic Period' showed the human body which had undergone unruly geometrical discipline. These two types of women aptly called by Plato 'vegetable; and 'crystalline venus' never disappear. Botticelli's Venus is quite 'crystalline' whereas Ruben's could be seen as 'vegetable that is ripe and abundant'.

The earliest Greek sculptures of nude women date from the Sixth Centry and were still extremely rare in the Fifth Century. There are religious and social reasons for this lack of nudity. It was

all right for Apollo to be naked, as nakedness was part of his divinity, however, Aphrodite had to be covered in drapes.

Socially, the restrictions were equally strong. Men stripped naked for exercise, women went about heavily draped from head to foot. The Spartan women were exceptions.

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

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

discovered the plastic essentials of the feminine body, fuller breasts, waists were narrower, hips were arched. This architecture of the female body controlled the interpretations of observations of classically minded artists till the end of the Nineteenth Century.

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

In the Nike of Paionios who carved the figure of 'victory' in the museum of Olympia, nearly all traces of archaic emphasis had disappeared. Her limbs have a youthful fullness, this can be

found in early nudes of Titian or Poussin. The sculptor most likely modelled the nude first and then added the drapery to bring out, rather than conceal, its rotundities.
Towards the end of the Fifth Century B.C., this tradition of draped nudes produced a famous 'aphrodite' better known, quite misleadingly, as Venue Genetrix.

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

Polyclitus had by now perfected his ideal of equilibrium, the weight resting on the right leg, the left leg bent as if to move. This pose was invented for the male figure yet, quite by accident, it was found that is suited the female figure. In this disposition of balance, it has created a contrast between the arc of one hip as it approaches the sphere of the breast, and the relaxed side which is long, gentle and continuous; there is a beautiful balance of form. This swing of the hip, the French call 'de hanchement' becomes a vivid symbol of desire. This pose was soon to be used widely to express one of the most dominant

rhythms of humanist art; man as the centre of all things. The bronze statuette now in Munich, of a girl from about 400B.C., is a good example of such a pose. Due to the fact that the Greeks believe the beauty of Venus should not be uncovered, this, and the Esquiline Venus, are the only sculputural records of female nudity in the Fifth Century B.C.

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

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

FIG. I

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

This historical exploration has been vital in order to structure my own work; as it is the origin of my research into the female figure.

CHAPTER III

"Breaking the power of the Established"

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

(1) To be aware of typical proportions in the figure.
(2) To explore direction of movement in the figure through clay.
(3) To explore various media to create surface texture.

All this will be expressed in my final pieces. However, in order to explore the theme of my project it was necessary to look back at and choose a number of artists from different period and cultures who have influenced my work. Before I discuss these artists I feel it is important to discuss the value of the human figure itself as a source for my project

The importance of the human source in figurative art can be summed up by the following quotation from David Hockney:

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

But why deal with the figure at all, if we are learning techniques equally applicable to the drawing of any subject? The question brings us to the issue of the value of the figure itself as an unique and irreplaceable subject. Anyone who has mastered drawing the human figure is equipped to draw other subjects because the experience of interpreting the human figure is more complex. It is also more rewarding as a preparation for expression in landscape or still-life subjects or for abstract expressionism. The mobility of the human figure makes it a subject of great range of feeling: a slight shift of balance creates a whole new complex of structural tensions, and a new revelation of the engineering of the body. The sensuousness of the figure challenges us to match it with the sensuousness of materials. The individual who can express the changing and varied surfaces of the body in their wholeness and interrelationship is dealing with the most complex kind of 'landscape' possible.

FIG.2&3

FIG. 4

FIG. 5

FIG. 6

The need for me personally to attain a better standard of life drawing, to experiment more with various media and in general to be more creative in my drawing has made this inquiry all the more important for me, as an artist, and for me as a teacher.

My work in clay is my main means of self expression. As Joan Miro states "..... the need to mould with my hands - to pick up a ball of wet clay like a child, and squeeze it. From this I get a physical satisfaction I cannot get from drawings or painting".

My work became very exciting to me this year and I had a much freer control over the medium, I feel that when Francis Bacon said of painting holds true whether working in paint, clay, textiles or whatever in that "one should paint with everything". By experimenting with various media I slowly identified the technique that I felt worked best for me in clay. There was a more personal dimension to my work than that of previous years. Yet within this freedom was control - a structured freedom that I would like my pupils to enjoy during the class project. From my first experimentations with clay, I have tended the organic, the assymetrical and for the most part my response to these stimuli took the form of non-functional pieces; non-functional in that they were neither vessels nor containers. As I gained selective in the forms I chose to make. It is from working through various problems and making decisions that one's

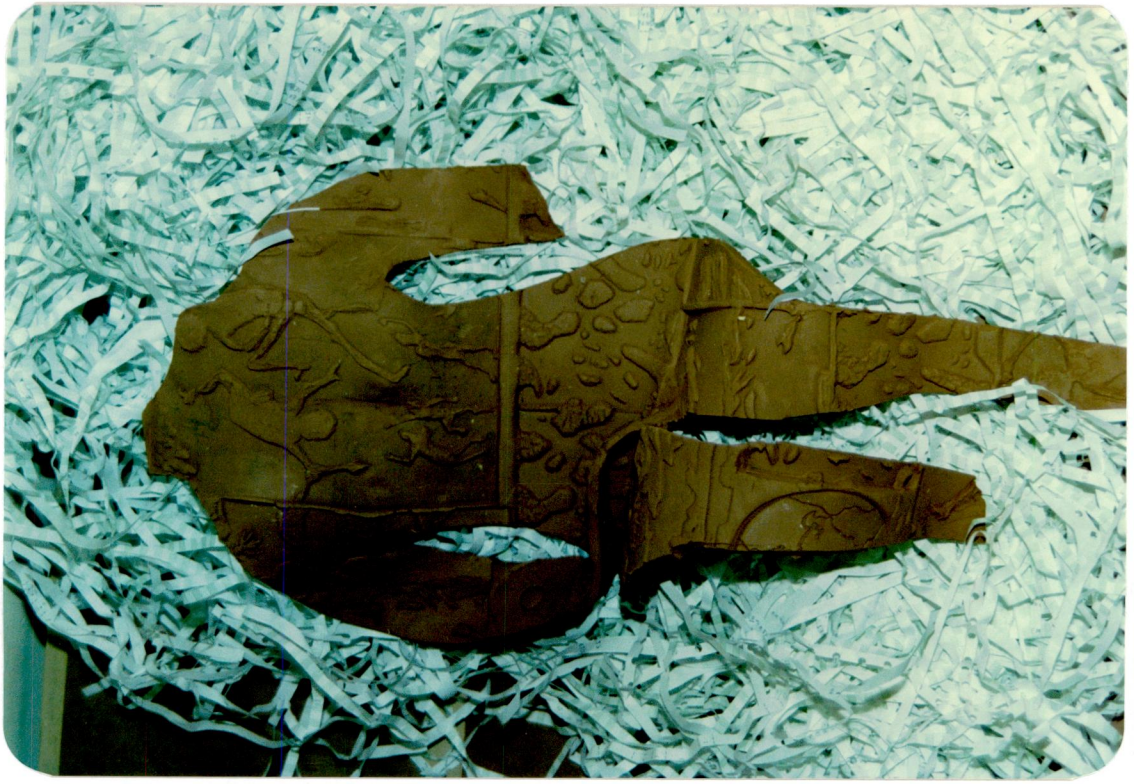

FIG. 7&8

individual creative identity is manifested. This is just the discovery my pupils made in the class project.

In clay I can invent from as I go along whereas if I was working in wood I would have to decide in advance what image I wanted to carve out of the block. "Clay", Mary Frank says, " is very spontaneous. It's direct, like drawing ..... clay is gravity - seeking. There are moments when it seems analogous to flesh"[1]. Using clay, problems and decisions would include choices such as clay and glaze types; which tools to use, which techniques to employ. With experience of the material and mastery within the discipline each person then will find a personal solution and thus a personal identity in their work.

My early work was an exploration of the medium of clay - which brough with it a certain naivete. This stage of my creative development with clay consisted of:

(1) Knowledge of the craft being attained.

(2) Limitations and qualities of clay being comprehended.

The following objectives have been explored also in my work:

(1) Providing a broad introduction to materials and basic techniques.

[1]Bill Marrel "A Modern Way with Clay", Horizon (September 1978) P. 45

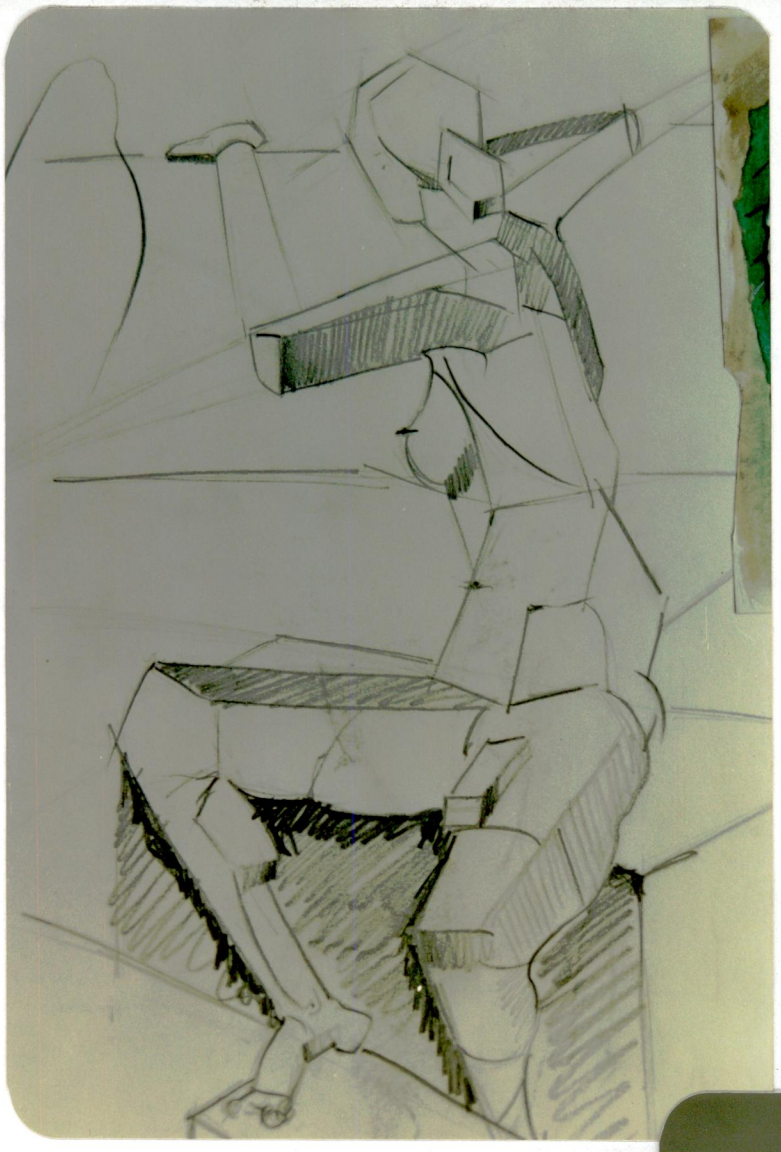

FIG. 9&10

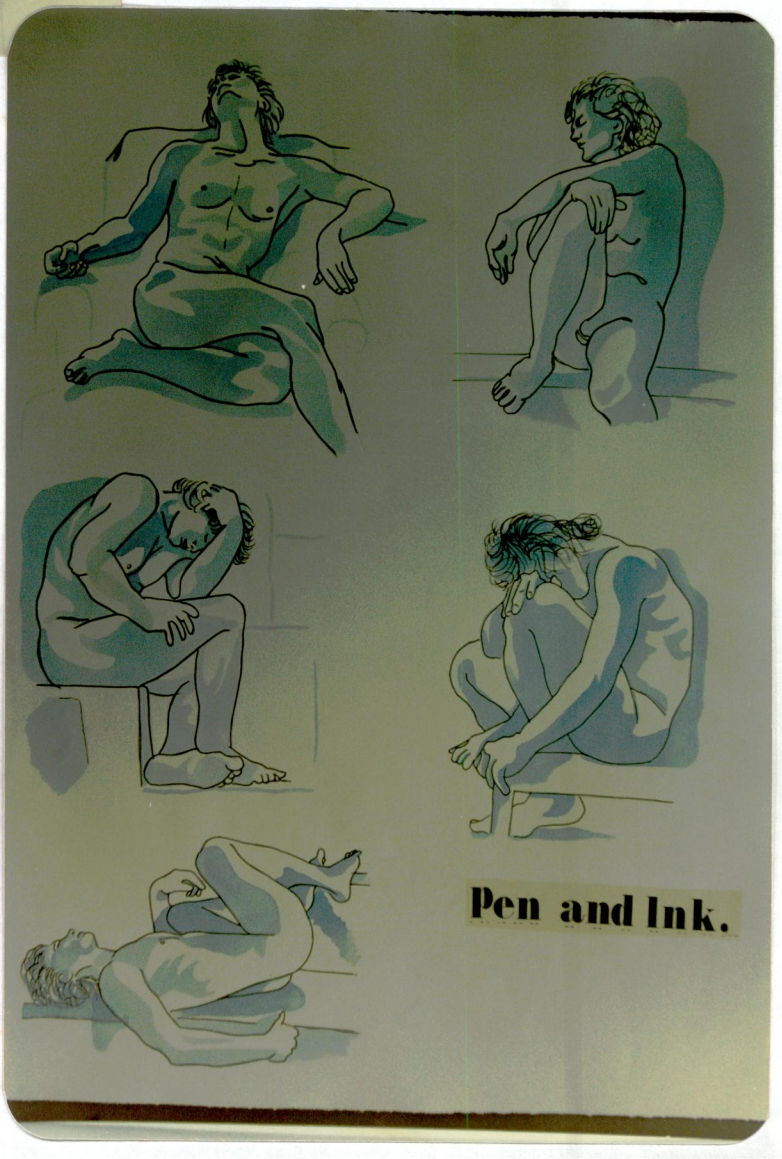

FIG. 11&12

(2) Exploring and determining materials characteristics and defining their creative and technical qualities and limitations.

(3) Introducing good workshop practice.

(4) Exploring surface quality and decoration.

(5) Recording and developing ideas through drawing.

(6) Encouraging a personal interest and direction within the work in relation to techniques and imagery.

(7) Further developing a personal approach to the identification of sources and how ideas are recorded and developed.

(8) Understanding the reaction of heat on ceramic materials.

(9) Understanding the properties and potential of each as a glaze material.

As time went on each little decision I made became essential in the control of the clay and affected the eventual form of the subject. Decisions starting from the basic line of the form progressed to questions such as whether the addition of detail enhances or detracts from the form.

There is, I feel, a fine line between giving in to the medium so that clay is nothing but clay and letting the medium have its own life. I want to let clay look like clay while at the same time to transform it.

FIG. 13&14

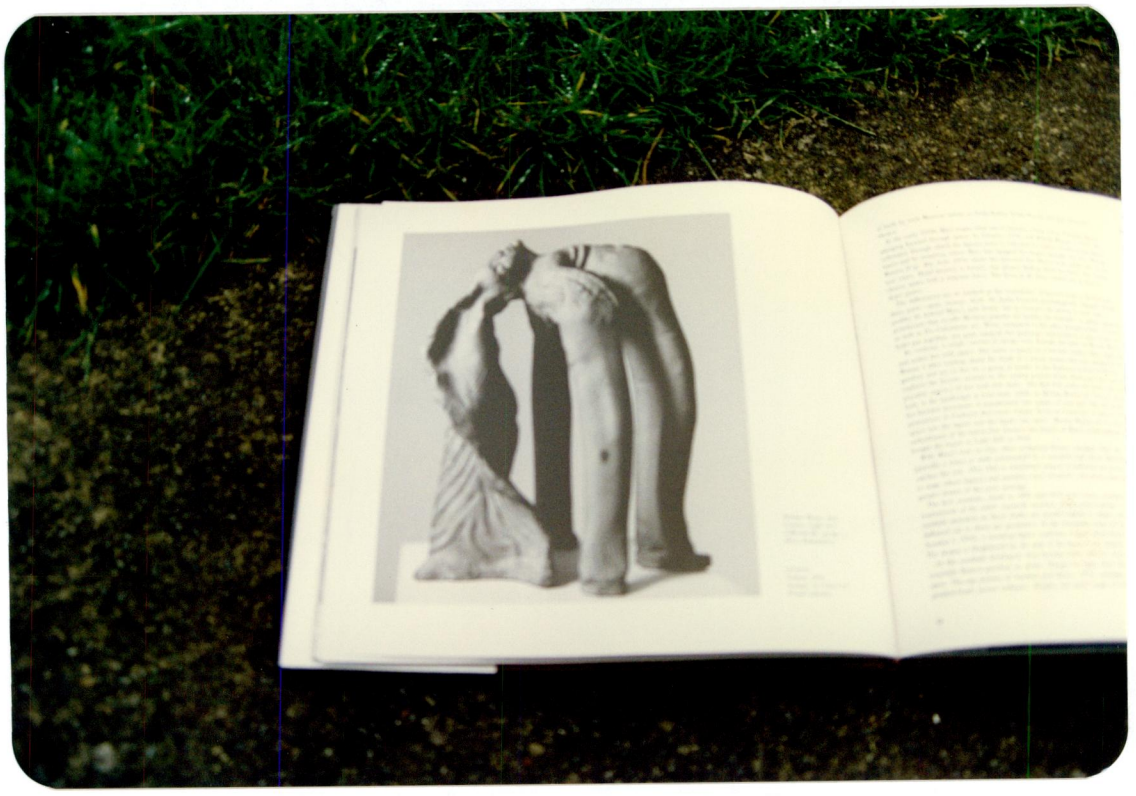

FIG_15

FIG_16

FIG_17

FIG_18

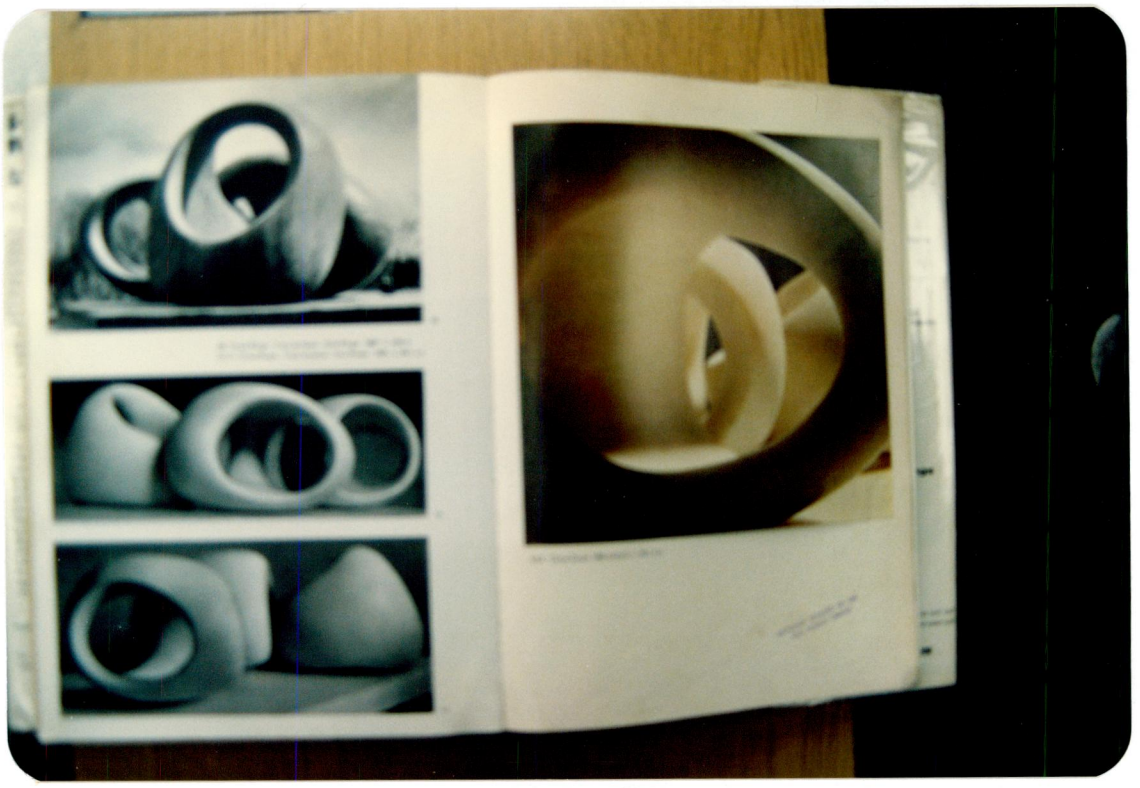

FIG.19

FIG.20

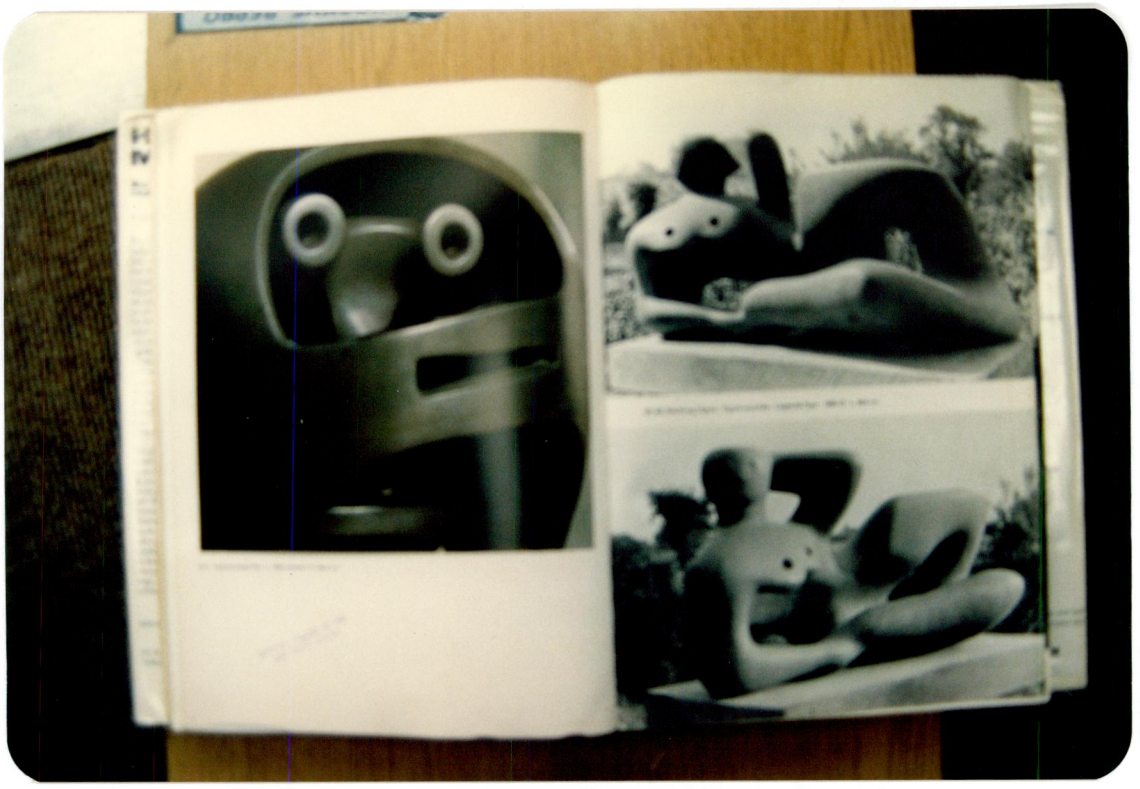

FIG.21

FIG.22

Thus, handling my materials with a humility and authority, I want to mould the human figure in the image of clay rather than clay in the image of the human figure.

I want my figures to be alive with many different kinds of movement: there are the movements of walking, running, dancing, there are the slow unfolding, curling rhythms inherent to clay itself, plus the sweep of space in and out of form itself. In addition, traces of my own gestures are left clearly visible such as edges swiftly torn or gently folded.

Through my present work I attempt to challenge the viewer, to question him. I want the spectator to have an intimate encounter with my sculptures. They are to be looked at up close and from a distance as well. My work demands that the viewer walks slowly around it and looks carefully at it. A sculpture, I feel, should not be predicted at a first glance. I want my pieces to have mystery and feeling in them and for the spectator to enter in and be with the piece. As Mary Frank puts it:

> I rarely like things to be pinned down to one thing. I like the openness of being able to see it, if the light changes or you move a quarter of an inch, as having a different feeling. That seems to me like life.[2]

[2]Hayden Herrera, Mary Frank, New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1990, P.11

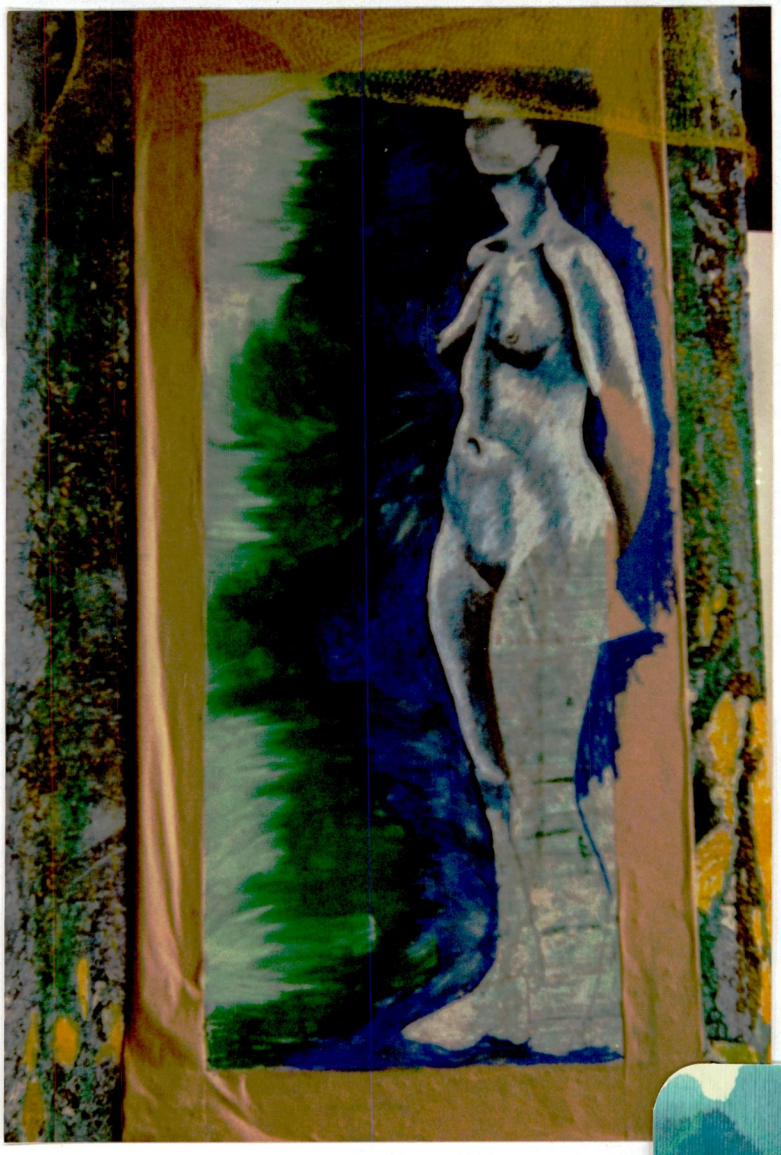

FIG. 23

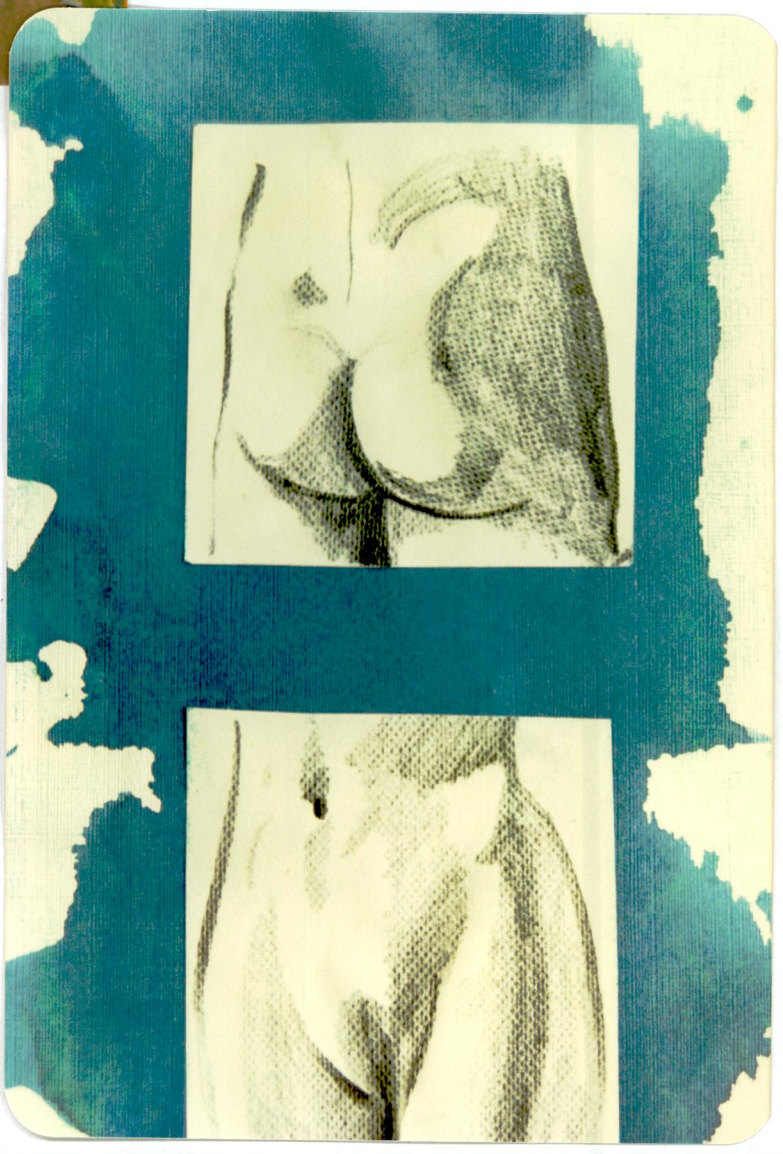

FIG. 24

FIG. 25

FIG. 26

I began my work this year by collecting textures in clay. I then began to make my own textures and patterns by carving into plaster and wood, but it was in my experiments with lino-cut that I discovered the greatest potential, for through Pt I became excited and inspired. I pressed the clay into these cut "Lino plates" and a relief engraving emerged. I then moved on to bigger slabs of clay, at one stage I moved away from using the figure as my main source and began to look at shells and plants and the folds in materials but through my own life drawing experiments I discovered that the human form has as many interesting folds and creases and textures and it was not long before I began to use the figure as my source once again. It was while evaluating my drawings that I noticed that I was beginning more and more to use contour lines to describe form. I asked myself why then could I not use clay and coils as contour lines and combine them with wrapped and folded slabs to accenturate the form of objects. I also incorporated wire and pipe cleaners into the pieces I made as variations of linear elements. But I was still dissatisfied with the forms I was making. I began to fold life-size slabs of clay, to twist, crease and tear the clay to show the female form.

It was during this time that I began to feel frustrated by the limits in scale imposed by clay, but I figured out a way of making life-size figures by assembling them out of separately fired sections.

FIG. 27

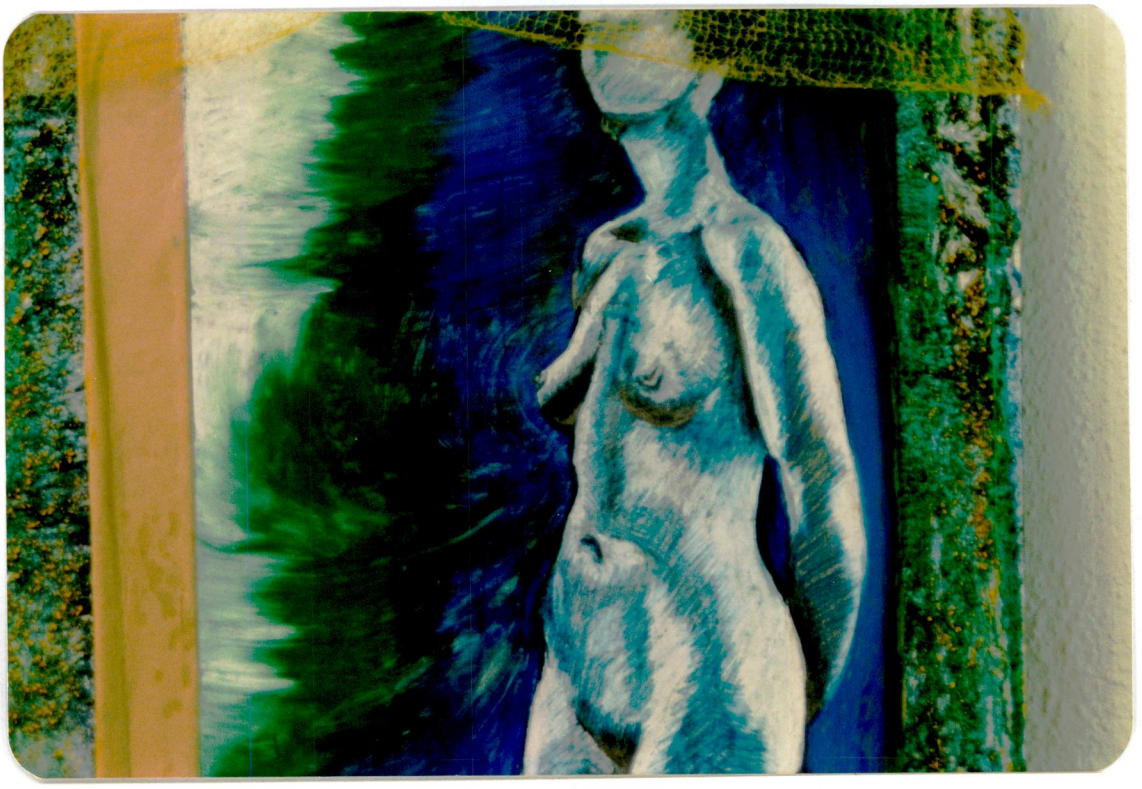

FIG. 28

The large figure's separately fired sections form a continuous image, but parts are not necessarily contigious as limbs can be moved around. Just like the shifting planes that make up a Cubist figure, the sections of my clay pieces demand that the viewer put the figure together in his or her own mind. The breaks between sections usually occur at the joints, giving the figure a natural coherence and the viewer can imaginatively complete the image. The undepicted parts can also be imagined as merged with their surroundings - buried perhaps in sand or autumn leaves. In my work, I want space to move in and fill the emptiness so that, joined by light and shadow it flows inside and outside the form.

It was while making these clay pieces that I became engaged in monoprints. Degas, who pioneered the technique, called it,

> Drawing made with greasy ink and put through a press.[3]

To make a monoprint, an image painted on a metal, glass, or plastic plate is transferred to paper through a press or by pressing paper on top of the plate by hand. Either way, an unique image is produced. The prints I made were touched up with pencil oil, and ink after they had been pulled from the press. Because ink dries so quickly there is a strong time element.

[3]Lawrence Campbell, "The Monotype". ART News, (January 1972).

What I like about this medium is the fact that even though I have a lot of preparation and planning done and often have a very definite idea in mind, I can change things in response to what I see happening on the plate.

Like clay, the monoprint process can accomodate change and I love the ease with which I can alter, wipe out, and add shapes and colours to the monoprint plate. I painted on glass with block printing ink and oil paint and my tools are fingers, rags, rollers, both ends of paint brushes, and stencils of figures which are cut or torn out of paper and card. These I place on the glass, roll with colour, and remove. Sometimes I shifted the stencils so that the same image appeared in reverse or in another position in the same print. The way in which I assembled and re-assembled anatomy is analogous to the way I sculpt figures out of movable and interchangeable parts.

Various artists have given me inspiration while exploring clay. Among these are Cathy Carman, Grace Wier, Janet Mullarney and Henry Moore but it is Mary Frank's sculptures that most inspire my work in clay. Seen for the first time, Mary Frank's sculptures look ancient, as if they had been unearthed in an archaeological dig. Her figures evoke moulds or fossils taken from long-departed beings. Spare, ceremonial spaces recall excavated temples.


applied to
paper
and bleach
away white
area.

FIG. 29&30


models
gesture tell you
seated on the edge of
thing with
just barely
the grea
ch
ed onto
e paper.

Often the sculptures are intentionally fragmented, but they appear to have been fractured by the earth's subtle shifts. Their variety of colour and texture - mostly warm tan brushed with reddish browns, sometimes imprinted with leaves and seals - suggest the patina of age. This aura of the archaic is enhanced by the fact that although Mary Frank works in a variety of media - she has used plaster, glass, sticks, wax, bronze, papier-mache, just about anything she can lay her hands on to make sculpture - her chosen medium is clay.

What I find inspiring about her sculptures is the fact that nothing is static in her work. As cheek flows into shoulder, arm into wing, foot into water or air, there is always the feeling that her clay pieces are just coming into being. Just taking form in clay. She sees an equivalance between motion and emotion.

> The impulse to work comes from being moved, a word I take literally. Maybe that's why I draw moving animals or people. Their movement gives an image to my own. I mean, when we say we are moved, something is actually changing in us.[4]

Just as I leave traces of my gestures in the clay pieces I make, fingers dragged through wet clay can be seen in Frank's work also.

[4]Hayden Herrara, Mary Frank, New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1990, P.10

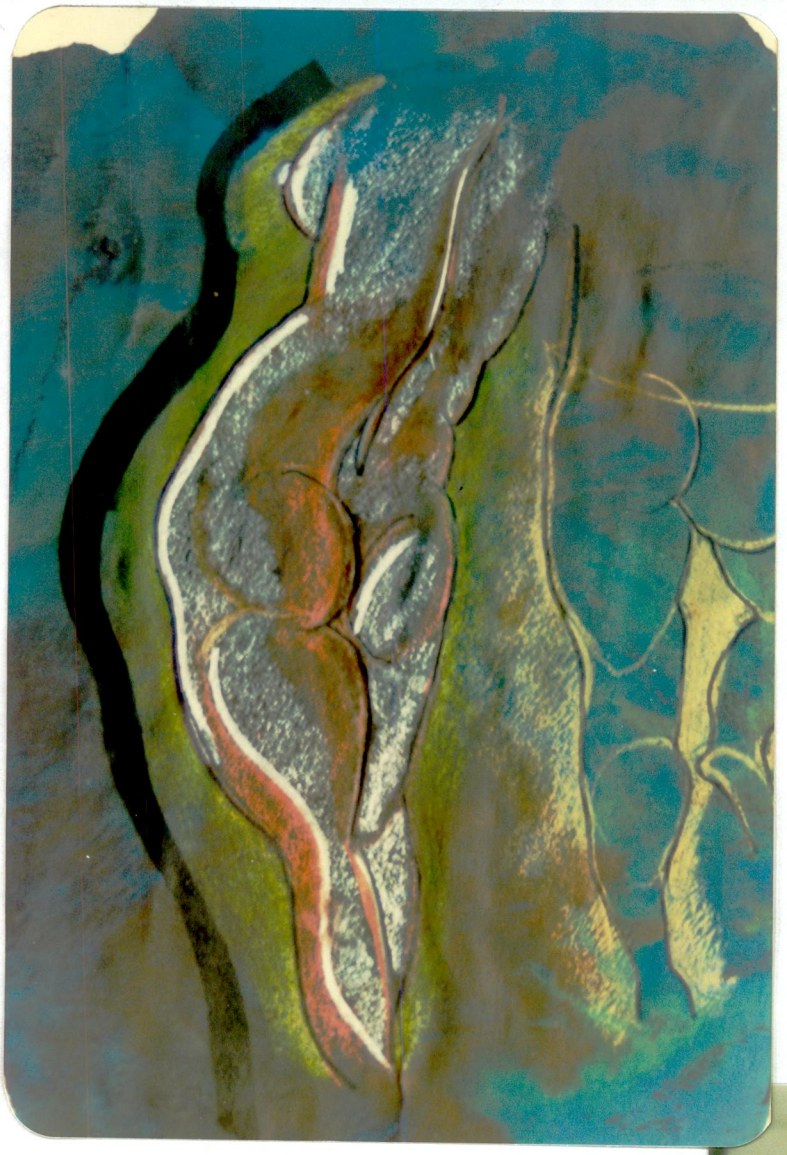

FIG. 31&32


Balsa wood is great for finding
up the contours. Strong, fast
movements capture the
totality of the figure.

I enjoy the way in which her sculptures change radically when viewed from different angles. The back of a walking woman, for example, may turn out to be a sheared-off surface upon which a nude is profiled in iron oxide. Or if you walk around a ceramic head you may find a horse and a rider in a mountain landscape on the other side.

Her work expresses to me the ideal of a figure being born out of the earth and evokes the notion of clay becoming flesh, a body becoming landscape, landscape becoming clay. I have myself explored this theme and the theme in the above paragraph in my four years of college.

Grace Wier is another artist whose work I greatly admire. Her approach to cast metal makes us look again at that medium. By her openness to the play of chance, and the use of fast direct casting in styrofoam, she undermines the established qualities of permanence and control that seemed almost inherent in the metals themselves. This openness to the play of chance is similar to the monoprint process I think. Found objects and debris are combined with various metals and formally arranged as wall pieces. This too is similar to the way in which Mary Frank imprints leaves into the clay and the way I myself use 'lino cut' plates in my work. Grace Wier's wallpieces deal with the inter-relationship between plane and space, highlighting this tension

with textural emphasis and lines of electric colour.

In some ways her work looks weathered and old but at the same time they also look like something yet to come. They take on a futuristic quality in their merging of the technological within the organic.

The works may draw us close, like the detailed structures revealed by an electron microscope; or then again they may set us at a distance, like a satellite's mapping of the earth's crust. This interaction between viewer and object is exactly what I want my work to do.

I love also the strong tactile attraction of the work and the way in which the original function or 'life' of the objects are abstracted and stylized by the force of the overall composition.

The final artist I will look at is Henry Moore. I love the stoniness of his work and the way in which he insists upon the truth to the materials. It was to the different varieties of shapes, patterns, and rhythms in nature that Henry Moore looked for ideas. He did not merely copy nature, but transforned it by giving expression to personal feelings and vision, as he says:

> I would like my work to be thought of as a celebration of life and nature[5]

The English sculptor's conception of women as landscape, together with his insistence on forms mythic and metamorphic potential, impress me greatly. I also admire the way in which he invents forms with such tremendous power and yet manages to keep a rare sensitivity to the formal essence of the human figure wherever he uses it.

[5]Alan Bownes, Henry Moore; Volume 6, complete sculputre 1981 - '86, (hund Horiphries, Bradford). 1988. P.22

Through my personal project I feel that my skill as a draughtsman and explorer has developed. Dealing with, and looking at, the human figure in more free and creative ways has helped me to observe the figure as a totality and as a result my work took on more risk, more edge. Because making art for me is synonymous with being alive, its processes have become more important to me than its products. I do see the limits of my work and of my teaching but I believe as one grows, one gains experience, and the ability to extend those limits.

CHAPTER IV:

CLASSROOM PROJECT

In my final year I am teaching in St. Michael's, Holy Faith, Finglas, and it is with first year girls that I am doing this school project. The school is located beside a large housing estate quite near to Finglas village itself.

Art has a very high profile within the school and you feel and see this as soon as you walk in the door. The Art Department has two full-time teachers - one male, one female. The artroom itself is very spacious with pottery facilities also. The class are a top-banding class with a very high standard.

The Curriculum and Examinations Board Discussion paper for the Arts in Education tells us that:

> The interdependence of art, craft and design is vital to the developments of visual thinking. ..... at post-primary level and any attempt to separate them would reduce the value of the total educational experience. Nor indeed can aesthetic experience be separated since the making of art must be fully integrated with appreciation and enjoyment of visual art in all its forms.[1]

Throughout my four years teaching practice I have noticed and become convinced that drawing is the weakest part of the Art, Craft and Design curriculum. The above statement in the Curriculum and Examinations Boards' report emphasises the importance of drawing.

Without drawing none of the three elements (art, craft, and design) in art education are possible at all.

One could see drawing as the 'spinal cord' - the backbone - the backing structure to these elements in visual education. Without drawing in the classroom the art in Art Education would be nothing but an impractical concept, an objective that would never be achieved. What is drawing? In brief it is the ability to observe and describe, to record visually; the ability to compose a drawing in a material and the ability to use a tool and medium. Observational drawing should develop in a pupil the ability to observe, analyse, describe and record this experience using a variety of drawing media and, further, through an understanding of art and design elements, to communicate the whole experience. Franz says:

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

According to Franz, everything is worthy of being observed and drawn.

Curriculum and Examinations Board Discussion paper: The Arts in Education. Dublin, 1985, P.12

[1]Frederick Franz, The Zen of Seeing, Wildwood House,
[2]London, 1973.

In observational drawings the ordinary object becomes exceptional because in making the drawing the observer is also making an unique personal statement about the object. In both my own project and the class project, the human figure is a central source. In the chapter on my personal project I have already dealt with the issue of the value of the figure itself. But there are also reasons why I feel the figure is an important source to work from in a classroom.

(1) The figure contains elements of design such as shape, line, form, structure, scale, proporation, tone, texture and colour.

(2) I feel that through understanding the character of the figure the pupils can increase their capacity to experience visual aesthetic qualities in both man-made and natural objects and phenomona in their own environment.

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

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

1. 8.2.2 To help pupils to know themselves and the world in visual terms through a structured integration of the dynamic between perceiving, thinking, feeling and expressing.

2. 8.2.3 To offer each pupil a wide range of visual arts experiences with an appropriate balance between artistic education (the pupil making art) and aesthetic education (the pupil receiving art).

3. 8.2.4 To develop pupils' ability to make a wide range of symbols, images and forms appropriate to their developmental level, cultural background and personal disposition.

4. 8.2.5 To develop the ability and confidence of pupils to make and understand visual symbols and so think visually.

5. 8.2.6 To foster personal and social development through encouraging the making of art individually, in pairs and in collaborative group projects.

6. 8.2.7 To engage pupils in the creation of problems which must be perceived and solved and which are inherently ambiguous and have no single correct solution.

7. 8.2.8 To place value on the individual visual expression of each pupil and so to foster a sense of purpose and achievement in each one and a mutual respect for the work of others.

8. 8.2.9 To provide pupils with experience in a wide range of media so as to develop their awareness and understanding of the range and quality of ideas, meanings and feelings that can be created and expressed.

9. 8.2.11 To introduce pupils to the history and traditions of art and to develop a particular understanding of the work of contemporary artists.

10. 8.4.2 To provide adolescent pupils with an important personal resource during the transition from childhood to adulthood.

11. 8.4.3 To develop pupils' abilities in making art in a variety of media.

12. 8.4.5 To extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the history and traditions of art so as to foster their capacity to make developed critical judgements and authentic personal choices.

13. 8.4.6 To develop pupils' critical awareness and understanding of the visual elements of popular culture including film, video, fashion, and the mass media.[3]

In the 1950's the human figure in art and illustration was mostly used in simplified or sylized form, while abstract artists ignored it entirely. From the sixties to the mid eighties the figure "disappeared" from paintings. Now in the '90's, art galleries, books, and magazines are full of works showing experimental approaches to the figure, some similar to the experimental life drawing classes of Calvin Albert, an internationally known sculputre and draftsman.

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

I intended that the experimental life drawing classes I did with this first year class should be more creative in contrast to the anatomical emphasis traditionally acceptable. I intended also that the pupils should learn new ways of observing, not only the surface appearances of the figure, but also its underlying structure through these experiments. Simply stated, I wanted the pupils to enjoy a freedom that goes beyond style.

Throughout this project I discussed the work of masters such as Rembrandt, Goya, Van Gogh, Picasso, Matisse and others whose methods of drawing and composition and whose use of materials correspond to the concepts discussed in this chapter. I have given my experiments three headings, linking gesture to observed content.

(1) Scribble the Figure
(2) Handwriting the Figure
(3) Material and Method

Scribble the Figure:

When I talk of "Scribbling" the figure, I refer to certain types of lines we can draw only at an accelerated pace; certain responses that occur only under pressure. A gestural mark, (crayon on pad large enough to accomodate large arm movements) tends to produce a total unit on the page.

FIG.33

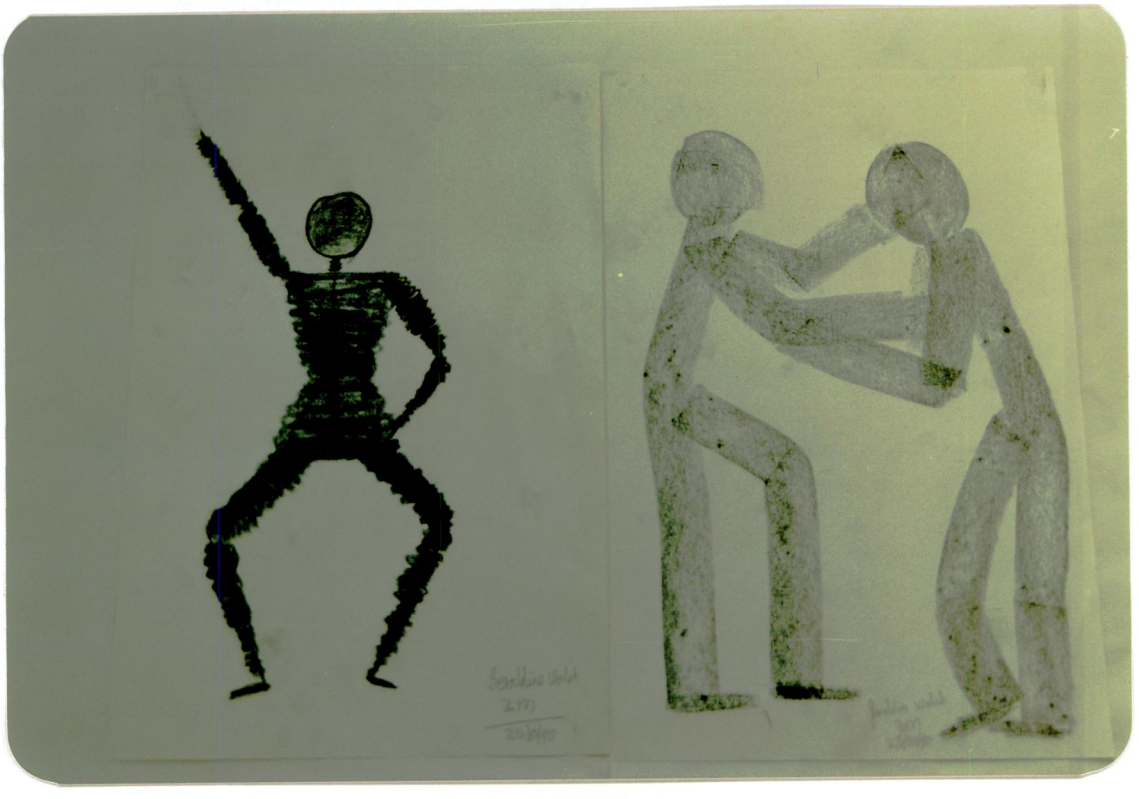

FIG-34

FIG_34

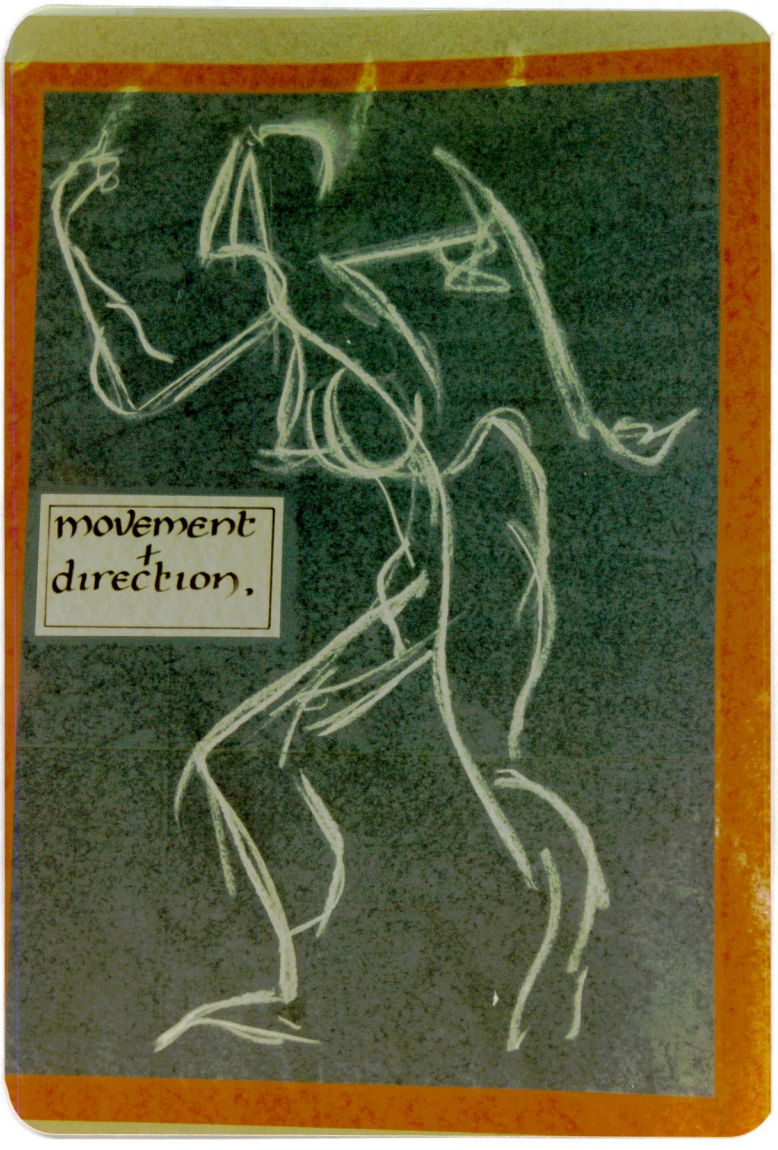

FIG_35

What the pupils set down on paper in a fifteen to twenty second pose was not a description of contours or details but of the main masses and directional movement of the model. I feel that the value of this exercise introduces the pupils to a previously untapped capacity for grasping form as a totality.

Handwriting the Figure:

When I refer to "Handwriting" the Figure I refer to the method of spinning the volumes of the figure with a continuous line. In the drawings and prints of masters like Albrecht Durer we find circling lines used very differently - not in the flat manner of the calligraphers, but defining the solid volumes of the figure. Here the lines are not carried completely around the figure but a mesh of curving lines is constantly intercepted by another series tilted at another angle, to describe a change of surface and plane.

> Penmanship drawings are carried out with speed and intensity. The artist follows no system but varies the units as he senses the expressive action of the model.[4]

[4]Calvin Alberts Figure Drawing Comes to Life, Second ed. Calvin Alberts, Dorothy Gees Sechler, Martha Neff Albert New York, Prentice Hall Press, P.79

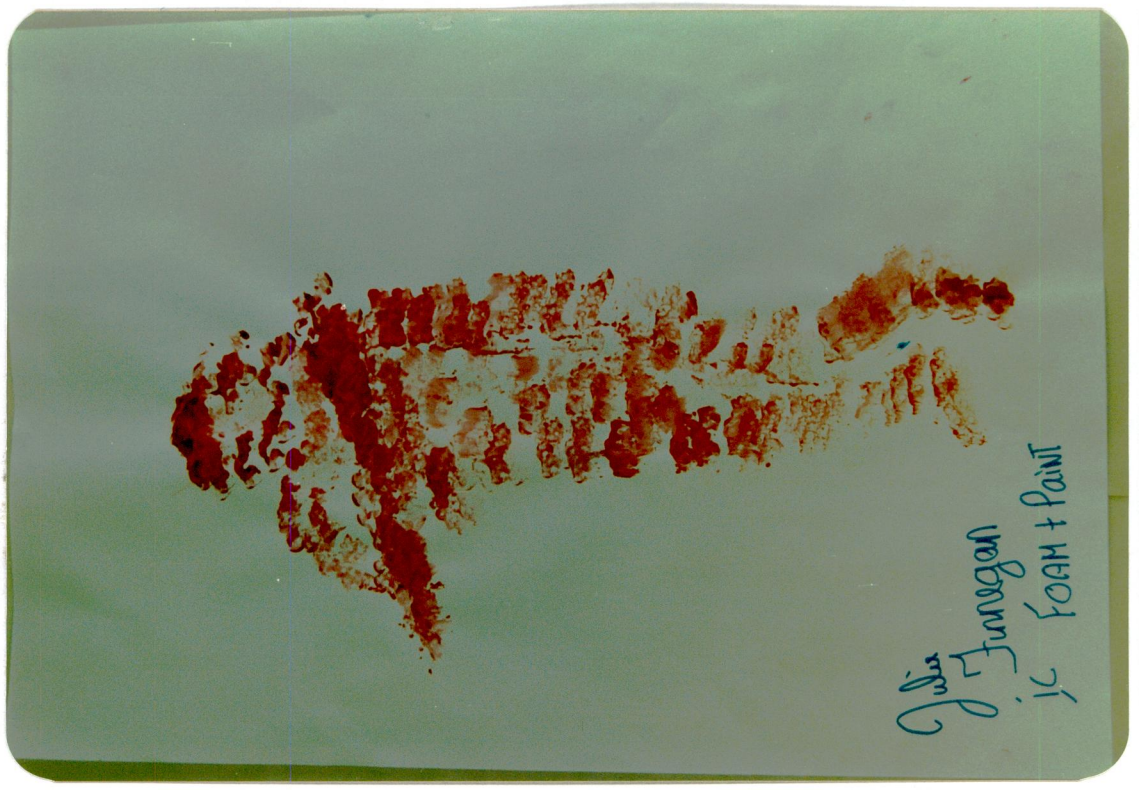

FIG.36

FIG.37

FIG.38&39

FIG-40

FIG-41

Material and Method:

Paul Klee, Georges Rouault and Henry Moore have shown what special power is available to the artist who lets the material speak. In their work the particular character of the material, the flow of paint, the furrows of the knife, the chemical reactions of resistant media - is very apparent and plays a leading role in the expression. I feel that it is through a loose as opposed to a precise control of materials that these artists were able to remain perfectly in command of the over-all mood of the picture.

Thus in GEorges Rouaults' "Clown", the roughness of oil paint scrubbed over paper eloquently expresses the tragic quality of the old performer's face. Similarly the blistered appearance of certain drawings by Henry Moore, made by the imperfect blending of materials he deliberately combined, is exactly appropriate to the eroded characted of the subject. Calvin Albert says that:

> A Van Gogh makes a violent attack of his materials, whereas Paul Klee handles them with attentive interest, alert to what they will reveal.[5]

[5] Ibid P.133

FIG.42

FIG.43

FIG.44

FIG.45

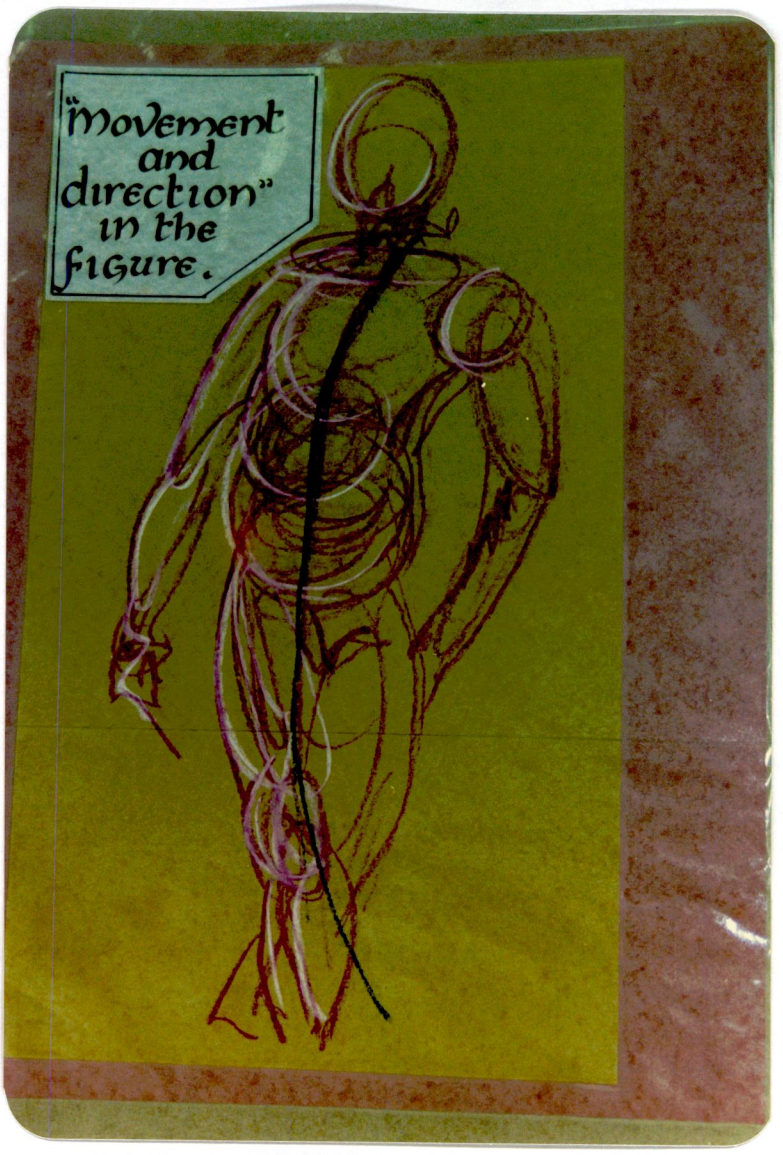

FIG. 46

In the beginning of this experiment I think that the students began with an initial experimentation but then realized the descriptive possibilities and discovered in the materials a way of saying something. For example one student working with a sponge discovered the way in which contours of the figure can appear diffused in light; another student, experimenting with wet washes over charcoal, pursued the dramatic quality revealed by streaking and blurring.

The experience made each student aware of the range of possibilities in that direction. As Calvin Albert puts it:

> The way an artist handles material and tools - whether slashing with the palettle knife or caressing the surface with the softest of brushes, whether strokes are abrupt or delicate, whether paint goes on in broad strokes or precise touches - is an expression of the kind of person the artist is.[6]

Both I and the students in the course of handling a great many materials, discovered not only what range of expression is possible for each kind of tool and material, but we found out also which way of working corresponds to our emotional bent and the descriptive objective we intended.

[6]Calvin Albert, Figure Drawing Comes to Life. Calvin Albert, Dorothy Gees Sechler, Maratha Neff Albert, New York, Prentice Hall Press. P. 133

Cardboard strips, balsa wood, sponges, and sticks were among the unconventional means used to interpret the model which I gave to the students in this experiment. Some materials required a pounding rhythm as the tool was pressed first into ink, then onto the paper; another medium produced a flow, so that the tool barely touched the paper. Each invokes a different mood and is suitable for a particular kind of person.

Through these experiments I intended to facilitate learning and to help my students towards a greater understanding of their own ability to discover and describe the visual world around them. This will be discussed more fully in the light of the theories of educationalists such as Buber, Freire, and Rogers which are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V:

EDUCATIONAL RELEVANCE

The word education derives from the Latin word educare which means to led out, to manifest, to disclose, to enlighten what is already there. Those who saw this as the source of our word 'eduction' were anxious to appeal to teachers, so that if they were truly educating, they should seek to bring out or lead out what was innate in the child, rather than impose various pre-selected attitudes on him or attribute pre-conceived characteristics to him and simply fill him up with facts. From early civilisation the teacher was to regard himself as a gardner tending a plant, rather than a craftsman making a product.

> The first approach may be compared to that of the gardener who fertilizes the soil, prunes and props the young plants, and removes the rank weeds from around it. But after he has done all this, if the weather is propitious, he trusts to the national growth of that which is inherent in the seed.[1]

In this chapter I wish to discuss:-

1. The theories of Martin Buber and Paulo Freire.
2. Carol Rogers "Realiness in the Facilitator".

   "Trust"

   "Empathic Understanding".

[1] Daniel Murphy, Martin Bubers' Philosophy of Education. Worchester Irish Academic prem, 1988, P.90

It is this precisely that I have tried to achieve through the classroom project. Within this concept of education the teacher is the means by which the personal growth in understanding of the pupil can be achieved or can stagnate. As Freire puts it:

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

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

In the 'banking' concept of education the teacher presents himself as a necessary opposite, one who will eventually fill the empty heads of her students who will deposit knowledge to replace their ignorance and by doing so justify their teacher's professional existence.

The more this process of storing deposits continues, the less the pupils are likely to develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world.

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

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

Further on he says:

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

He continues:

> Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information.[3]

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

"Freedom - I love its flashing face"[4], exclaims Martin Buber in his essay on education "it is the flash of a significance comprising all meanings of a possibility comprising all pontentiality".[5]

Hence freedom brings forth and illuminates a vast range of possibilities and knowledge. Education should be seen as a process which enables us to acquire abilities which help us overcome physical, mental, financial and social restraints and become much freer people.

[3] Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Suffolk, Pelican Books, 1986.

[4] Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, London: Fontana, 1961. P.118

[5] Ibid p118

Bubers aesthetic theories are highly relevant to the contemporary debate on the nature of creativity and the methods that should be employed for its fostering in school classrooms.

I believe freedom must aim towards the positive and the good, and therefore there must be a structure in order to achieve a full freedom. In this essay Buber points out that not all freedoms are good and that true freedom must have a goal or objective which will stabilize false freedom. He sees freedom as a liberator, it allows people to discover their own possibilities. One misapplication of freedom would be that of controlling it rather than structing it.

If our intention is to promote creativity then clearly we have to meet the following requirements:

(1) We have to avoid instilling in children the idea that everything is known and determined, and they must observe the acknowledged experts in any field and cannot follow their own distinctive way of looking at things.

(2) We have to promote ingenuity and imagination so that individuals are capable of making the imaginative leaps necessary for breaking new ground in any sphere.

(3) We have to produce skills and understanding in any given sphere, for without these how, except by chance, is the individual going to be a good scientist, artist or whatever; how is he going to have the excellence that is part of creativity[6]

[6]Robin Barrow and Ronald Woods, An Introduction to Philosophy of Education, Second Ed, Methuen, London, 1975, P. 151

What are we to say in respect of artistic creativity when, for example, Anderson remarks that:

> the creative environment must provide freedom for each person to respond truthfully with his whole person as he sees and understands the truth.[7]

Clearly the reply must be that this is indeed one thing that the creative environment must provide, but it is not all that it must provide. If students are simply given access to materials for painting and left to respond truthfully with their whole person they are not necessarily being creative.

How is this relevant to art education? Can I implement this sort of learning, this sort of giving and taking in my classes? Art evokes Buber's and Freire's philosophy of education. It decreases restraints which hinder personal development and freedom.

> Every art form uses its own particular materials, from which emerges a distinctive realm of meaning. The ideas of painters are ideas in paint. A Poet does not have an idea and then translte it into poetry. The idea is intrinsically poetic. The arts are not just ways of expressing ideas or of self-expression. They are ways of having and making ideas, and of making the self.[8]

[7]Anderson, H.H, 'Creativity in Perspective' in Anderson, H.H (ed). Creativity and its Cultivation (Harper, New York, 1959 P. 253

[8]Curriculum and Examination Board, Arts in Education, 2-3-1 Dublin 1985.

It is through Art that certain values within our society can be revealed and the possibilties of self can be discovered.

> If teaching is an attempt to probe the abilities of a person and help that person discover the full extent of self, then art can be used as a means to do just that.

According to Paul Klee:

> Art does not imitate the visible, but makes visible.[9]

Not only is art primarily a form of communication and as such has the power to make the intangible, tangible but the philosophical, spirtual and social elements of life can equally be expressed through art. One only has to turn to art history, to the German expressionists who used this power of art to uncover the brutality and oppression of their society during the rule of the Third Reich in Germany. This can be seen in "Birds Hell" by Max Beckman (1937).

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

"Realness in the Facilitor"

Carl Rogers in his work Freedom to learn for the Eighties has identified qualities that facilitate learning. These are "Realness in the Facilitator of learning, prizind acceptance, trust and empathic understanding.[10]

As a student teacher, I have been very conscious of needing to develop those qualities which facilitate learning.

It was with "Realness in the Facilitator" that I related straight away. During my different years of teaching practise, through being myself as a teacher, I feel that both my pupils and I were able to grow together. During my school project I used my own life drawing as visual aids and in addition my personal project in College enable me to refer to problems the pupils encountered which are similar to my own. The teacher must appear real and genuine to his or her pupils, to being a "front" into a class blocks the formation of relationships and masks the teacher's real feelings. As Rogers puts it;

> Thus, sher is a person to her students, not a faceless embodiment of a curricular requirement nor a sterile tube through which knowledge is passed from one generation to the next![11]

[10] Carl Rogers, Freedom to Learn for the Eighties, Mervill Publishing 1983, P.122

[11] IBID P118

I feel that I am myself in my classes and I not try to suppress my personality. By behaving in this way I hope that I can be seen as a real person. During my years of teaching practice, I have witnessed a type of relationship between pupils and staff members. I do not want to conform to a stereotype, to refer to the pupils as 'them' and the teachers as 'us'.

Trust

Another important quality which I feel must be worked on is that of trust within the class. The teacher should accept the other person as an unique individual and believe that this other person is fundamentally trustworthy. Roger sums up this quality of a teacher:

> One of the requisites for the teacher who would facilitate this type of learning is a profound trust in the human organism ..... if we trust the capacity of the human individual for developing his own potentiality, then we can permit him the opportunity to choose his own way in his learning![12]

[12] Ibid -, P.59 -60

The teacher accepts the fear and hesistation of the class when approaching a new problem, as well as welcoming their satisfaction in achievement. During my classroom project, I have come face to face with frustration and the determination of my pupils to go another way and even though I had my scheme of work prepared, I felt it important not to restrict any development of ideas my pupils might have. I had to accept and examine the reasons and value of their determination in order to achieve the 'Structured freedom' that I sought.

Empathic Understanding:

The quality of "Empathic Understanding" is the quality on which I feel I must work hardest in order to attain - the ability as Rogers and Buber would put it, to become them and to see each situation through the students eyes - the ability to empathise. This type of empathic understanding is the most difficult quality needed to facilitate learning but I am convinced that pupils appreciate when they are understood and respond positively as a result. Rogers says that;

> Still another element in the teacher's attitdue is his ability to understand the students reactions from the inside, an ampathic awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems to the student.[13]

[13] Ibid, P. 59 - 60

The Techer as Facilitator:

Arthur Combs became an enthusiastic advocate of the humanistic view of Education after having experiences similar to those of Maslow and Rogers.

Combs believed that how a person perceives himself is of paramount importance and that a basic purpose of teaching is to help each student develop a positive self-concept.

He observed:

> The task of the teacher is not one of prescribing, making, coercing, coaxing, or cajoiling: it is one of ministering to a process already in being. The role required of the teacher is that of facilitator, encourager, helper, assister, colleague and friend to his students.[14]

According to Combs, affective teachers;

> (1) are well informed about their subject.
> (2) are sensitive to the feelings of students and colleagues.
> (3) believe that students can learn.
> (4) have a positive self-concept.
> (5) believe in helping all students to do their best.
> (6) and use many different methods of instruction.[15]

[14] Combs, A.W. The Professional Education of Teachers P.16, Boston, Allwyn and Bacon 1965.

[15] Ibid, P.20 - 23

Taken together, the observation of Rogers and Combs seem to me to lead to a conception of education which stresses that teachers should trust pupils enough to permit them to take many choices about their own learning. At the same time they seem to agree, that teachers should be sensitive to the social and emotional needs of students, empathise with them and respond positively to them. Finally, teachers should be sincere, willing to show that they also have needs, and edxperience positive feelings about themselves and what they are doing.

So my personal philosophy of education is based on the theories of such educationalists as Buber, Freire, Combs and Rogers. I try to facilitate learning and in doing this school project with my pupils, I hope to help them towards a greater understanding of themselves, of their inherited culture, and the world around them and so to prepare them for the future.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

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

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

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

As a student techer, I gained valuable insight. I developed a relationship with the pupils and enjoyed teaching them. Things that I started within the class crept into my work and vice versa.

My own work became very exciting to me this year and there was a more personal dimension to my work than that of previous years. Yet within this freedom was control - a structured freedom that I hoped my pupils would enjoy during the class project.

Because making art for me is synonymous with being alive, its processes have become more important to me than its products. I do see the limits of my work and of my teaching but I believe as one grows, one gains experience, and the ability to extend those limits.

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