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NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINÉ IS DEARTHA

THE SEA AND IT'S ENVIRONMENT

A DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN IN COMPLIMENTARY STUDIES

AND

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BY

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This Thesis attempts to assert the educational value firstly of art on the school curriculum and secondly of the value of the project method on the art programme. It supports and clarifies the educational value of both my personal and pupil's project, both of which are based on 'the sea and it's environment'. I shall also document the influence of particular artists on both my own and the pupil's project.

Both projects are also based on Howth Harbour which is situated in the small village of Howth, which is approximately five miles north of Dublin city. As an active fishing port, Howth harbour possesses a large variety of boats and trawlers which are moored at the West Pier. The Marina and Howth Yacht Club are situated at the East Pier, (Fig. 1), the Marina having been created in recent years from reclaimed land.

Opposite Howth Harbour, and giving it an enclosed and protected feeling, is the highly improbable outline of Ireland's Eye, which suggests more a cardboard cutout of a pirate's island from a toy theatre than the refuge of an Early Christian settlement. The fabulous outline of the jagged rocks invites inquiry and the island is much visited by day trippers in the small boats which ply from the east pier during the summer. These rugged outlines appeal to my sense of the absurd, particularly after looking at the yacht marina which now occupies the east side of the harbour and possesses all the charm and grace of a carpark. Practical certainly, and efficient in the accommodating of the ever-increasing number of yachts, but the parallel with car parking is apparent and it begs a question, what next? Marinas, in the manner of all things concerned with either trade or leisure, tend to inexorably expand, and in this case the filling of the space available for expansion heralds the disappearance of the harbour as a place where one can take pleasure in the meeting of the elements of wind, sea and sky on an unencumbered breakwater. Few people find it satisfactory to take relaxation in a carpark, and a yachting marina occupying Howth harbour is hardly more appealing.

REPORT

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The surrounding cliff face, which must have in the past equally encouraged defenders and defeated developers, has left the peninsula with its sea coast substantially intact, and those in search of invigorating walks on the narrow paths which traverse much of the wild contours of the cliff line can find themselves on the only portion of the coastal area of Dublin Bay which shows no evidence of the improving or destructive hand of man, 1.

Thus one comes to the question, how does a study of Howth Harbour have educational relevance and promote artistic and creative learning in the pupil? We must look for an answer in the value of the project method together with an environmental project which shall be discussed at length in Chapter Four.

How does one cultivate a love and understanding of the arts in the classroom? Art is a very ambiguous subject to study and to try to understand. Therefore, it is important to introduce an artistic experience through a concrete and real starting point. It can be very effective to start with a source that is familiar and relevant to the pupils e.g. Howth Harbour. It is the role of the art teacher to use that source and the potential of the pupils to its fullest extent. By providing situations whereby the pupils look at something and perceive it in a way that they wouldn't have done, prior to the artistic experience, the pupils begin to understand the creative process, and become more aware. By starting with a familiar source and moving through several processes the pupils see at first hand how creative work evolves. Through personal involvement the pupils experience the creative process, in a very practical way. By including evaluation of the pupils work by the pupils themselves, they become more discerning towards what they see. The acquiring of a discerning eye changes what they see around them. Most pupils will not make a career out of art, so the emphasis should be on encouraging them to think about their environment. If this is achieved, things like posters, wallpaper etc will be more carefully chosen. For most people, this is where the real world of art exists. Too many people travel through the environment without consciously looking. Pupils should be encouraged to go outside, look and perceive what is in their environment, explore their relationship with it, and use their findings to create and perhaps change the environment.

1900

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1903

1904

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1906

The environment is a word used to describe the people, culture, natural and manmade surroundings of the individual. It works on various levels, from being very immediate (e.g. the home) to being very broad (e.g. the country). The purpose of environmental study is "to learn through every possible medium, about the earth and all that is on it, particularly, as it relates to our own surroundings and relationships" 2. If pupils leave school with some sense of knowledge about their environment and how they relate to it they will have the capability to take part in an active and creative way in society. The environment is so varied and can be looked at in so many ways, which makes it a starting point rich in creative sources. The most practical aspect of the environment to study is the physical environment, either man-made or natural. Children are curious about their environment from a very early age, so working out of doors exploring their surroundings is very natural for a second level pupil. The danger exists of the "art room", becoming a place "where one is creative". The combination of work outside the artroom, and inside, prevents this danger from becoming a reality.

The environmental project has many other values. From a practical point of view, it has many shapes and colours, lines and forms, patterns and textures which can be explored in many different ways. Rusty boats, fishing nets and expanses of sea may appear uninteresting at first, but can be used to create something visually stimulating and pleasing. By understanding how something positive can come from something that seems negative, one would hope that when pupils leave school, they would perceive the environment in a more positive way. Environmental study can aid the pupil's awareness of everything around them. The history of art can also be involved in projects based on the environment. By comparing their own work with artists who have dealt with the same topics, the pupils may understand and appreciate the work in a deeper and more relevant way (See Chapters 3 and 5). Because of the affinity which the pupils have with a particular artist, generated by a similar personal experience, they will feel more related to the history of art, and view it as a living thing, not just dates and facts. The concrete real experience of the pupils will enhance their understanding of a particular artist or number of artists.

1. G. Power, From Killiney to Howth, Dublin, Gill and MacMillan, 1987, p.38.

2. Peter Prosser, The World on your Doorstep, 1982, Berkshire, McGraw Hill ltd, p33 - 42.

1901-1902

1903-1904

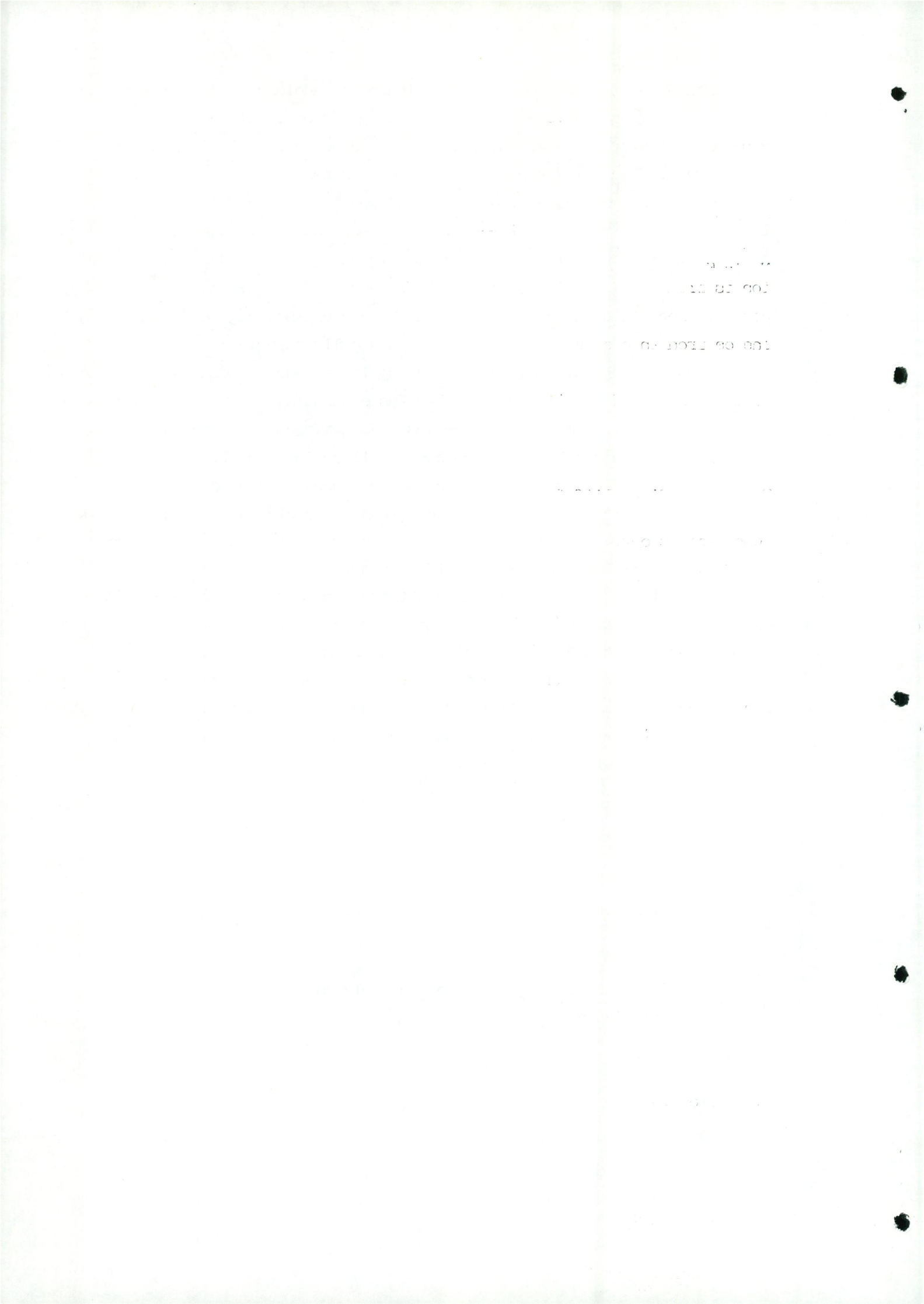
1905-1906

Maria Montessori in her book "From Childhood to Adolescence" discusses the value of bringing the learning outside the classroom. Although she discusses mainly a natural environment the values count for any kind of environment. She talks about how "instruction becomes a living thing" (3) and how "instead of being illustrated instruction is brought to life" (4). To expose pupils to the real world, and to use that world that makes up such a big part of the pupils life, makes the learning real, and in the eyes of the pupil, makes it valid. If the pupils observe the environment well, they can come back into the class-room with a store of knowledge and memory, that can be used to create and imagine. By physically experiencing the environment through all the senses the pupils add another dimension to their creative work. They will have a fuller understanding of the image they are trying to create. Each pupil perceives in a different way, so the creativity and imagination of each pupil will be individual.

Montessori also discusses the physical importance of being outside. She recognises the need for the pupils to "escape" the closed environment of the school classroom. Very often this act of going outside instills a vigour and fresh interest in what the pupil is doing. It is important though to ask the pupils to look for something different each time they go outside otherwise the freshness is lost and monotony sets in. "Going outside" also teaches the pupils the need for clarity and organisation. They learn how to compose the time that they have outside. They learn the necessity of having the correct materials, how to carry them, knowing what they need to look at and how to balance their time so that they return with maximum amount of information possible within the time given.

3. Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence, 1976, New York, Schocken Bookes Inc., p23 - p40

4. Ibid p.p.

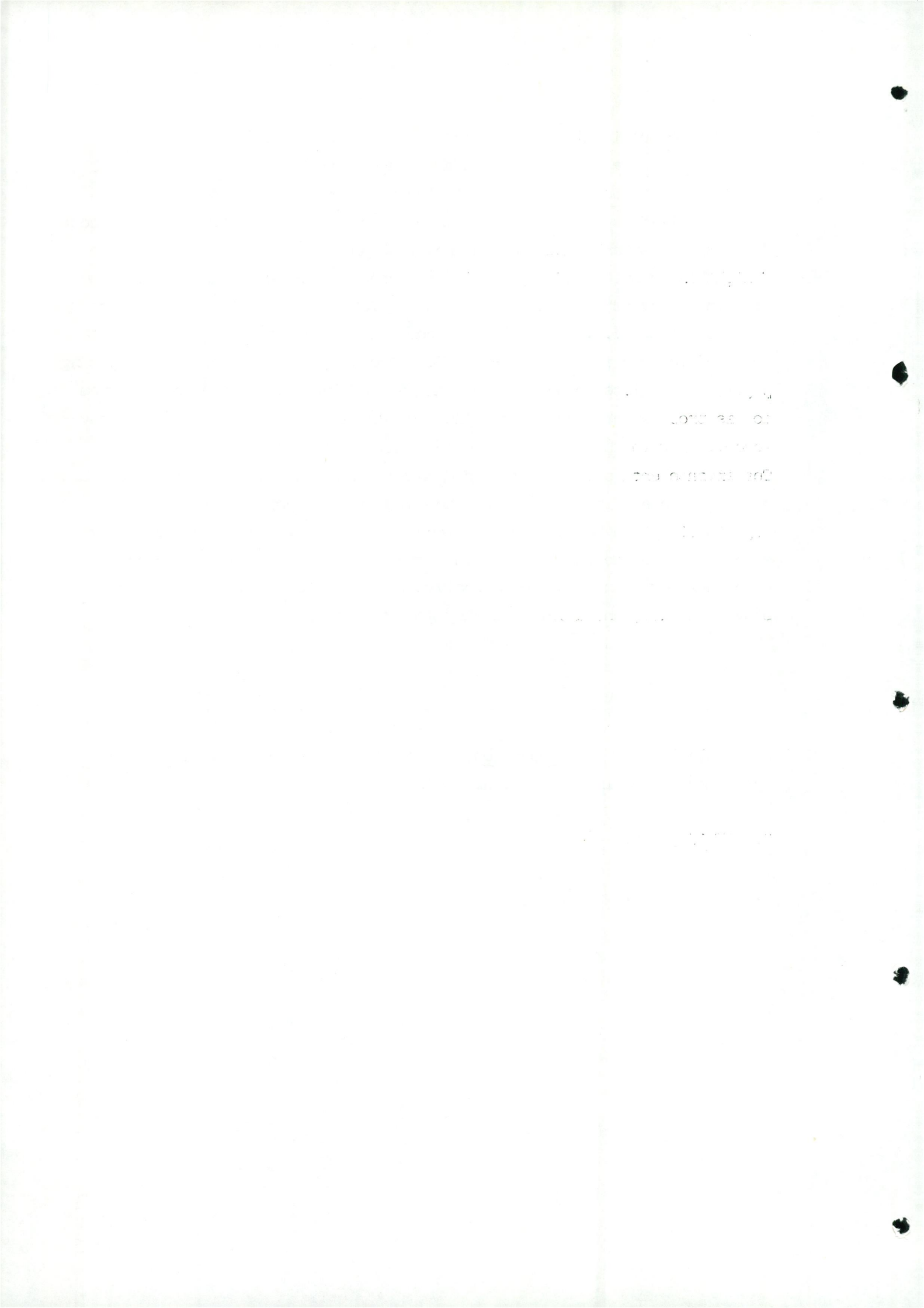


As today's educationalists are concerned about providing an all-round education for the young, it is interesting to read, that in 1926, educationalists were concerned with the same topic. The Hadow report, issued in 1926, states what the aims of education should be. It talks about "forming and strengthening of character" 5 and "the training of youths to delight in pursuits and rejoice in its accomplishments", 6 and finally "to work in music and art, in wood and in metals, in literature, and the record of human history.... which would become the recreations and ornaments of hours of leisure in maturer years, 7. In other words, we should be exposing pupils to a related experience of many aspects of study and educating them to use their experiences to continue to grow as individuals when they leave school. Within the context of the aims and objectives of the New Junior Certificate Programme detailed in Chapter Four. This would still be the aim of many teachers in 1991. Using the environmental project allows many aspects of art to be explored and incorporation of various areas of study, which will provide the pupils with a knowledge, a skill, a confidence, a discerning eye, and a way of perceiving what is around them which should stay with them, and develop as they grow and mature as individuals.

5. Malcolm Ross, Art Education, Towards 2000, Extract from the Harbour Report published in 1926 p.p. 31 - 37.

6. Ibid., p.p.

7. Ibid., p.p.



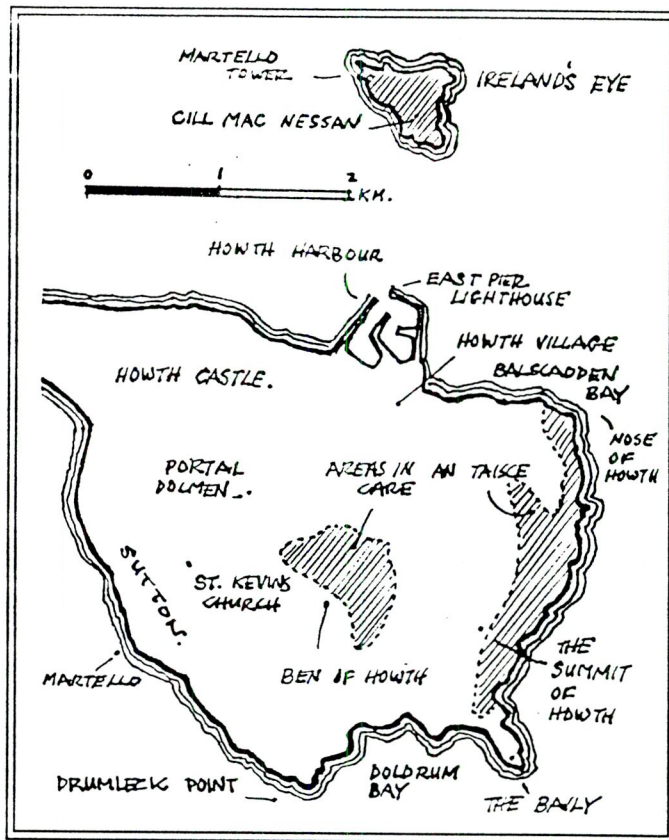


Fig. 1



CHAPTER TWO

THE PERSONAL PROJECT

I have always been interested in various aspects of the sea and its environment, and for this reason I have chosen to use it as the main point of reference for my personal project.

I live within easy reach of the beaches and harbours of North County Dublin. The estuary between Swords and Malahide is visible from my bedroom window, with Lambay Island and the vast expanse of the Irish Sea stretching beyond. I love to take my dogs for long walks along Portmarnock beach, with the wind blustering around me, the waves crashing onto the beach, and the sands of pale yellow stretching on and on to Howth Head looming on the horizon. I like to collect shells, driftwood, seaweed or pebbles on these occasions which I use as source material for my personal work. I seem to find creative inspiration in the colours and forms of these objects together with the actual emotions which just being in a natural environment seems to evoke in me.

One of my favourite places in Ireland is the Dingle Peninsula; I stay there for a couple of weeks each Summer. The sheer beauty and wonder of the sea and landscape is absolutely breathtaking - the moods of the elements ever changing. I treasure the days when I can sit on a cliff-top surrounded by grass and wild flowers, and look out to the ocean of unlikely colours. I close my eyes and hear the crash of waves tumbling onto the ochre sands and seagulls screaming around a trawler as it returns to harbour. The rocks and stones are glossy with the red and green seaweed, the cliffs purple with the hazy casms of the afternoon sun as it disappears suddenly behind a cloud creeping from behind a looming mountain of patchwork earthy tones (Fig. 1). I cherish these thoughtful days of freedom, of sensing and of being. These are the days when I truly explore my creativity and discover and develop ideas and inspirations of personal artistic expression (Fig. 2).

In our day to day existence we rarely take the time to look around at our environment, what we feel, smell, taste and hear when we hurry to and from our place of work or study. We are caught up with the anxieties of traffic jams, meetings, deadlines, long queues and time-keeping. Indeed, it is true to say that the general pressures of everyday life often result in our sensory appreciation being almost totally inhibited and deadened. It is indeed almost impossible for creativity and inner expression to flourish in such an environment.

STATE OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE
January 11, 1911
REPORT
OF THE
COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE
IN ANSWER TO A RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE SENATE
MAY 11, 1909

ALBANY:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY,
PRINTERS,
1911.

TO BE PRINTED BY THE STATE

Arnel W. Pattermore states:-

As the world becomes increasingly urbanised, nature seems to retreat accordingly. Technology has produced a quasi - artificial environment for nearly all of us in the span of a single lifetime, and that environment seems more 'real' than the natural world beyond. Having never known a life directly dependent on nature, children, (and many adults too) reasonably assume that life as they know it now is 'natural', self-sustaining and independent. Fl.

I have already stated that my own inner creativity is stimulated by the natural environment, in particular the sea and its environment. Therefore I have chosen to use this as the theme for my personal project. This in turn is directly related to my second-level pupil's project which I will describe in Chapter 5.

Intitally I drew much of my inspiration for the project from natural objects and forms found on the beaches near my home i.e. Malahide and Portmarnock. I recorded these natural objects i.e. shells, seaweed, driftwood etc using a variety of materials, concentrating on pattern, colour and texture. Through an exploration of the beaches in my locality, I was then drawn to various harbour environments, in particular that of Howth harbour (Fig. 4). I was fascinated with the variety of boats, trawlers and yachts in the harbour and marina, and how they related to the natural elements in the harbour environment, such as the sky and water (Fig. 5). I was intrigued by the patterns the various types of rigging made against the skyline; the patterns, shapes and colours of particular reflections in the water, and how certain man-made materials such as ropes and fishing nets also related to the sea environment.

Thus I chose to use the harbour environment of Howth as the main point of reference for my personal work. As my major Craft this year was Weaving, I also used the sea and its environment as source materials for my weaving samples - which were in turn a reference point for my finished woven piece. In this I was mainly concerned with the colours, patterns, shapes and textures which I explored in my research studies, along with particular qualities inherent in the craft of weaving. These included the use of a variety of fabrics and yarns to create particular colour and textured effects (Figs. 6, 7 and 8) together with certain weaving techniques such as weaving curved and double wefts to create movement and a three dimensional quality.

1. Arnel W. Pattermore, Art and Environment. An Art Resource for Teachers, London, Orford Press, 1982. P, 105.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1950

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

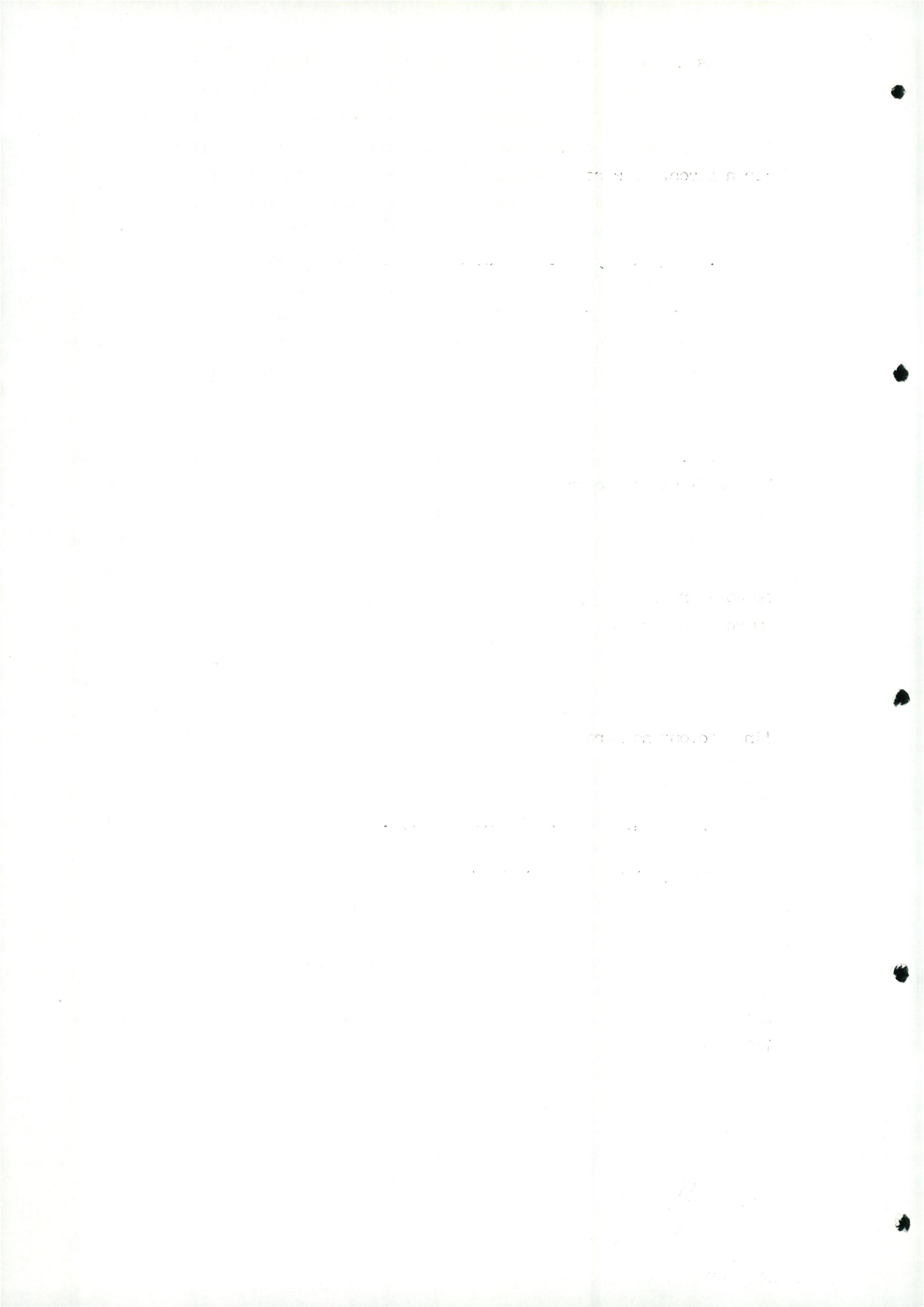
WASHINGTON, D. C.

As my major area for my Diploma in Art and Design in the College of Marketing and Design was Printmaking, I felt I had the knowledge and facility to execute a print based on some aspect of the sea and its environment. This finished piece, (a colour wood-cut) was used as a back-up to the completed woven piece. The wood-cut was related to the woven piece in that I concentrated on the forms, colours, textures and patterns found in rigging, masts and sails which is much in evidence in the harbour environment in Howth.

Throughout my artistic career I have always been influenced and inspired by colour, particularly in the natural environment. The colour in the sea environment ranges from the vibrant and luscious blues and turquoises of the water which constantly changes according to the elements, and the soft muted tones found in shells, rocks, seaweed and other natural forms, to the artificial and often gaudy colour schemes found on fishing trawlers, nets, ropes etc.

In my personal work, i.e. painting, drawing, print-making and weaving, I have endeavoured to echo the luxurious variety of colour which I discovered in my studies of Howth and it's environment. I have long been attracted to the work of certain Impressionist, Fauvist and Expressionist artists, which I will discuss in a later chapter. In relation to my personal work I have been notably influenced by these artists use and handling of colour, particularly in their seascapes. For example Monet's revolutionary use of purples, turquoises, and greens in seascapes such as "The Rocks of Belle Isle" (Fig. 9) has influenced the colour schemes in some of my weaving samples (Fig. 10). Dufy's simple but effective design sense, couple with his economic use of line, colour and treatment of form (Fig. 10), has also influenced my design studies (Fig. 11) and weaving samples. Some of Dufy's work was also used as designs for tapestries, and he also took much of his inspiration for ceramics, fabric printing, book illustrations etc, from particular motifs found in the sea ports of LeHavre and the French Rivier.

I would like to conclude this account of my personal project - The Sea and it's Environment, with a quotation from a letter which Emile Nolde wrote to his fiancée in 1901, reporting on the progress of his work in Lildstrand, a small fishing village on the coast of North Jutland. With my love of the natural environment, I feel a particular affinity and empathy with the emotions, images and aspirations which Nolde describes and expresses in his letter:-



I stood peacefully behind the dunes, painting two small houses, their outline growing indistinct in the dusk. The wind began to blow, the clouds grew wild and dark, a storm blew up, and the grey sand swirled high above the dunes and little houses. A raging storm then, suddenly, a powerful brush ripped through the canvas. The painter came back to himself and looked around. It was still the same quiet beautiful hour. Only he had been carried away and lived through the storm in his imagination. The image disappeared That is the kind of thing that happens to me 2.

In the following chapter I will discuss further the artists who have influenced my personal work. Along with Monet, Dufy and Nolde I will analyse the work of Marie Simonds-Gooding who lives and works in the Dingle area in the south-west of Ireland, a region where I have developed much of my own artistic inspiration.

2. Horst VHR, Masterpieces of German Expressionism, New York, Hudson Hills Press, 1982, p.174.

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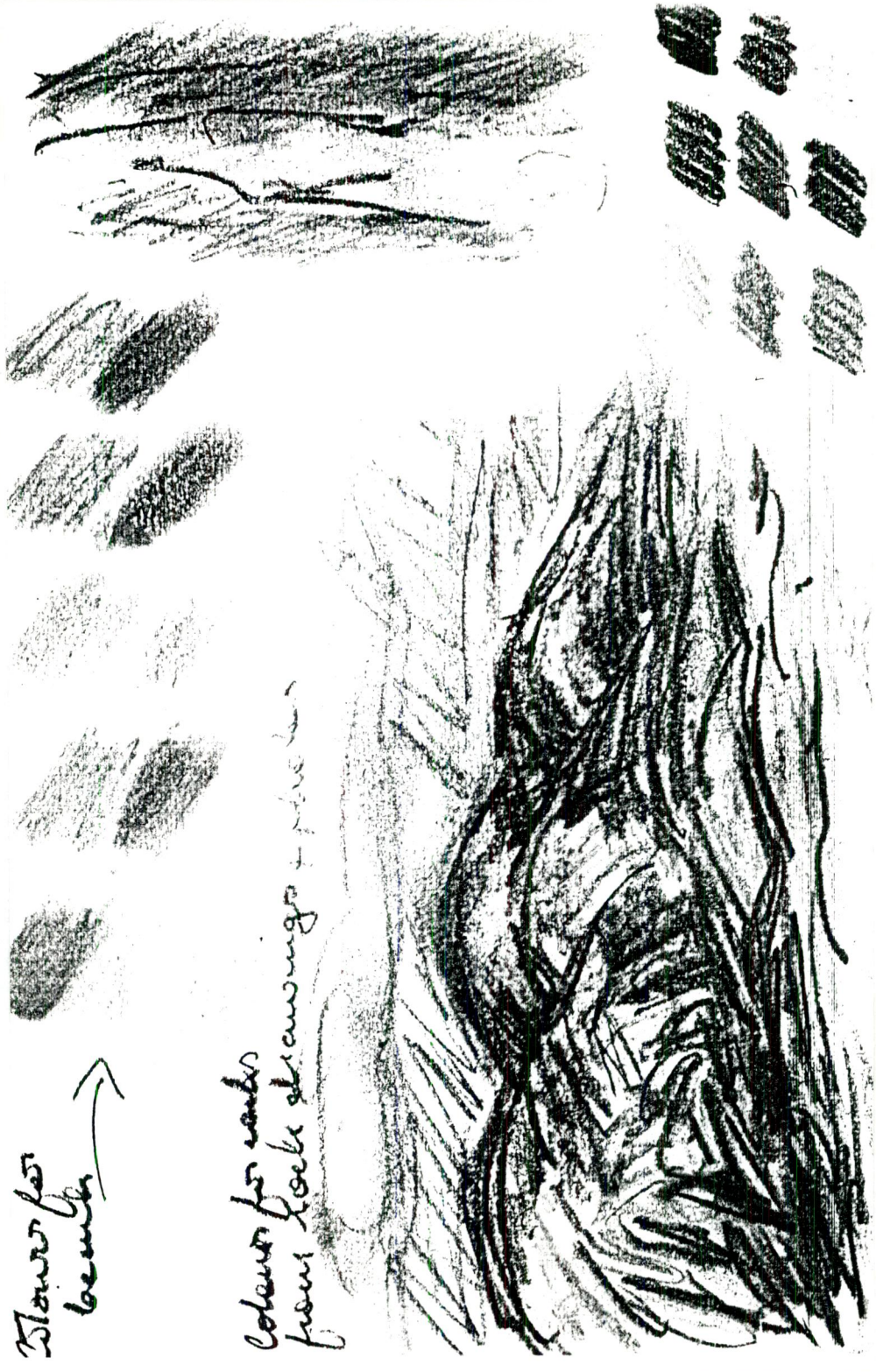
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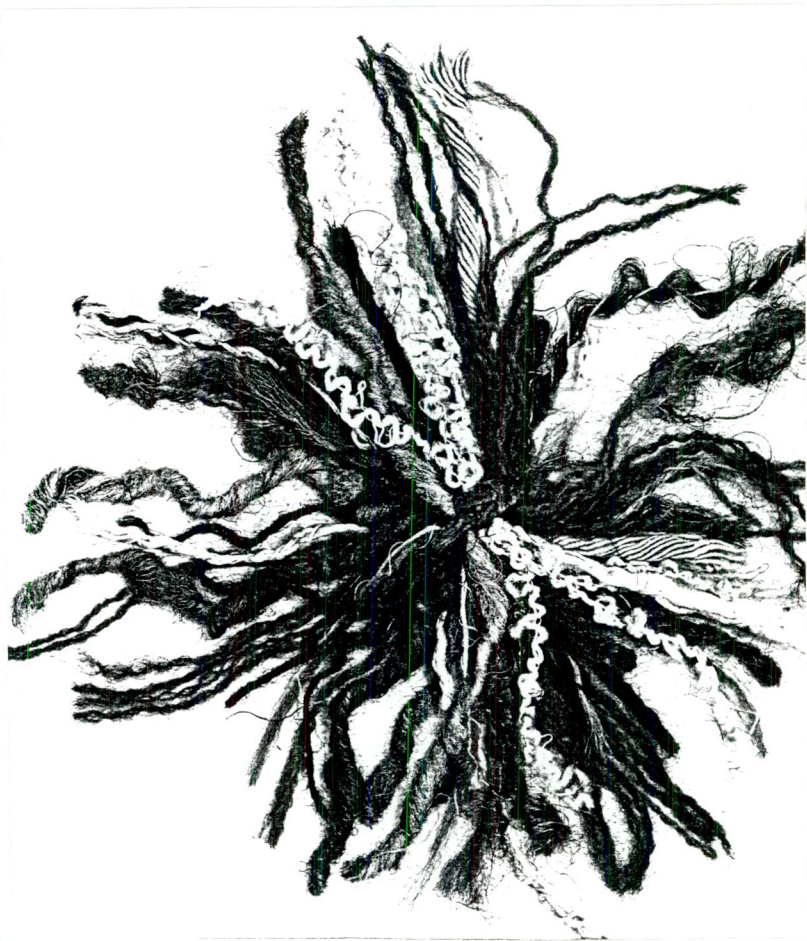




Blower for
branch →

Colors for water
from rock drawings + more

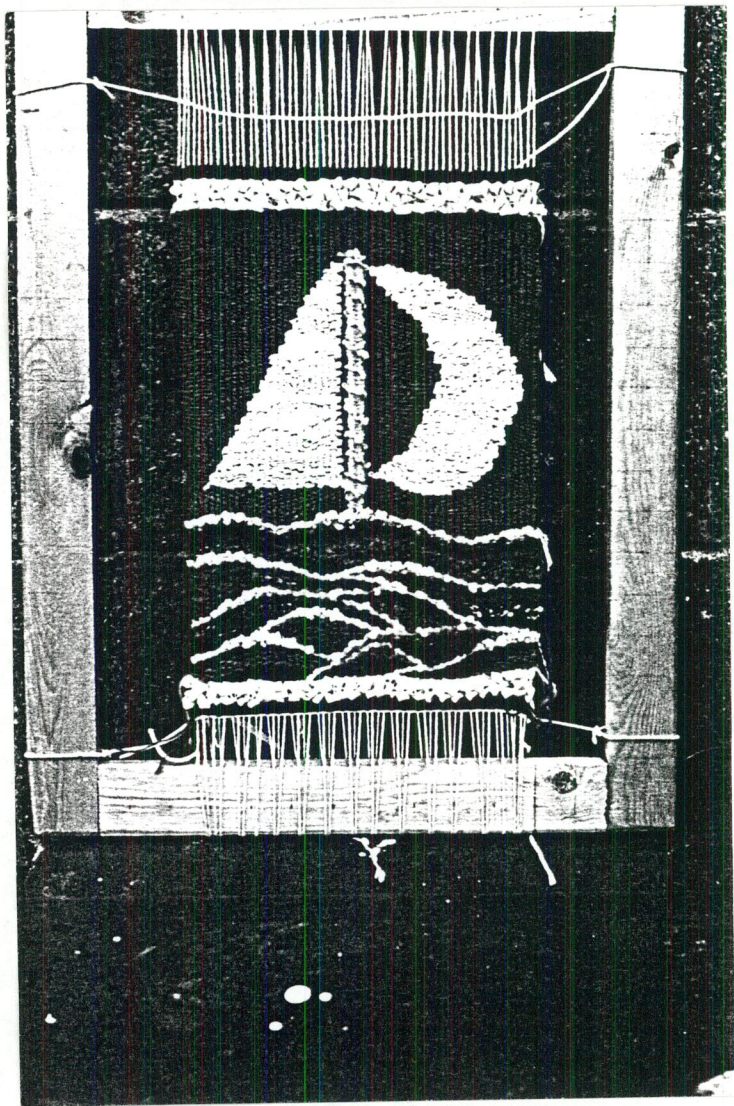




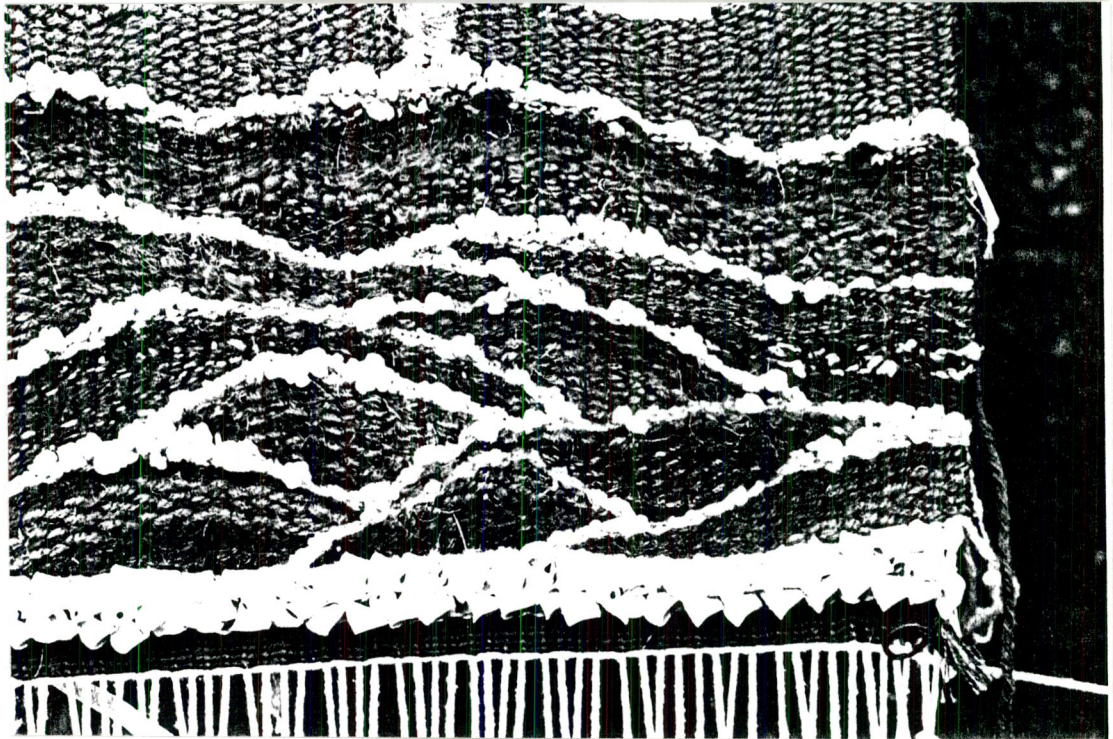




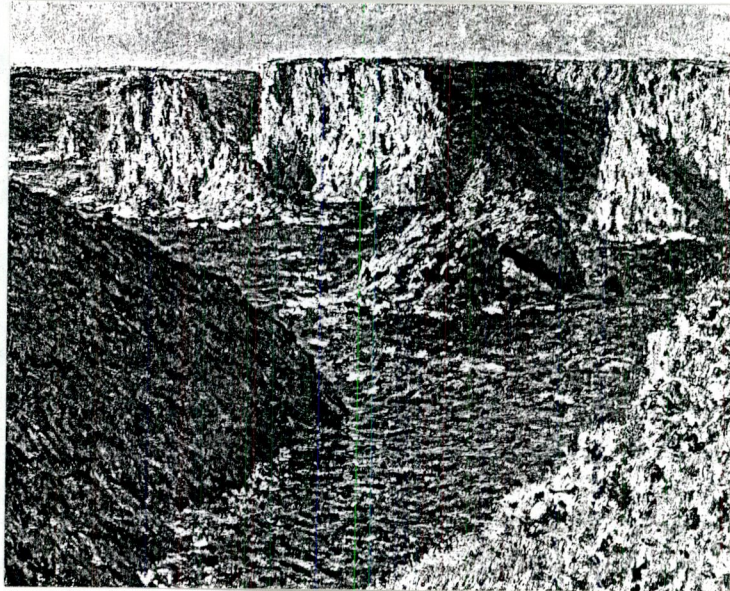




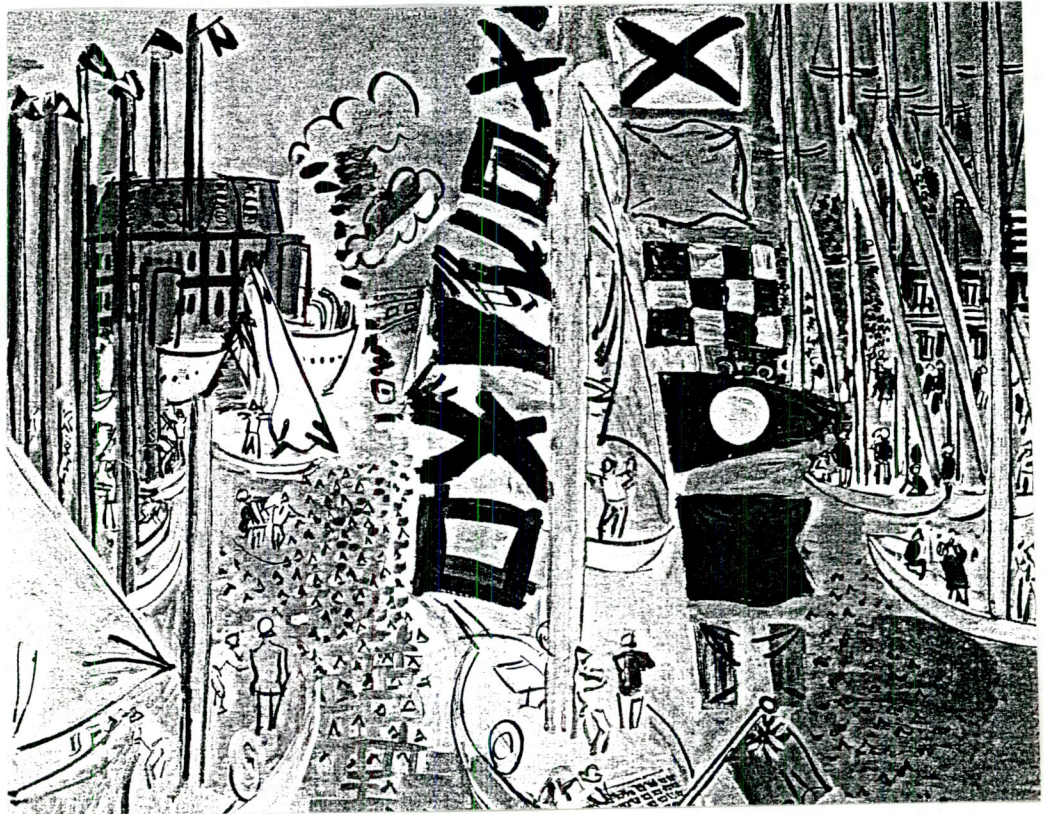




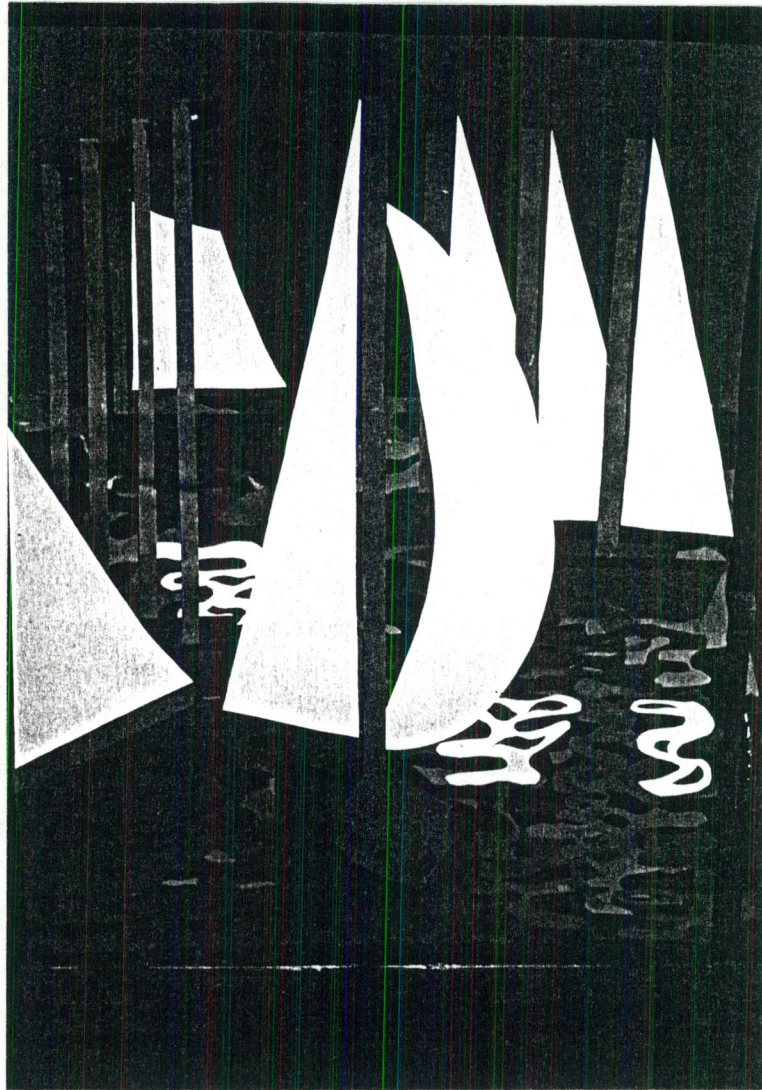




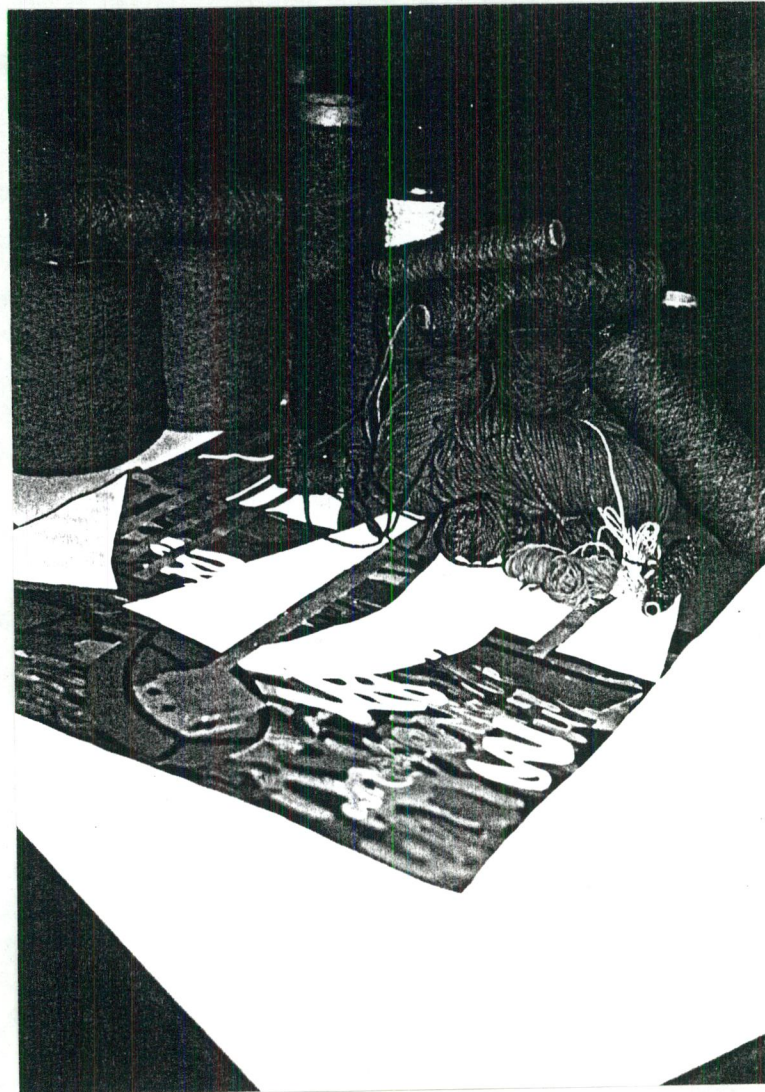








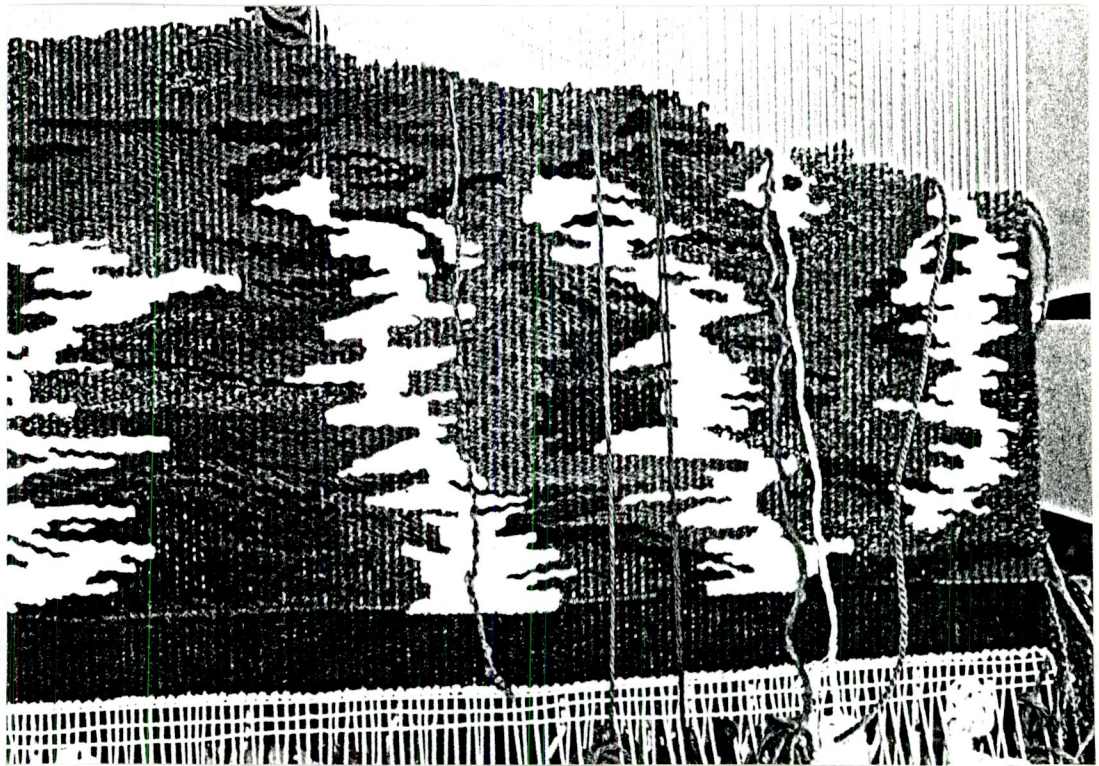




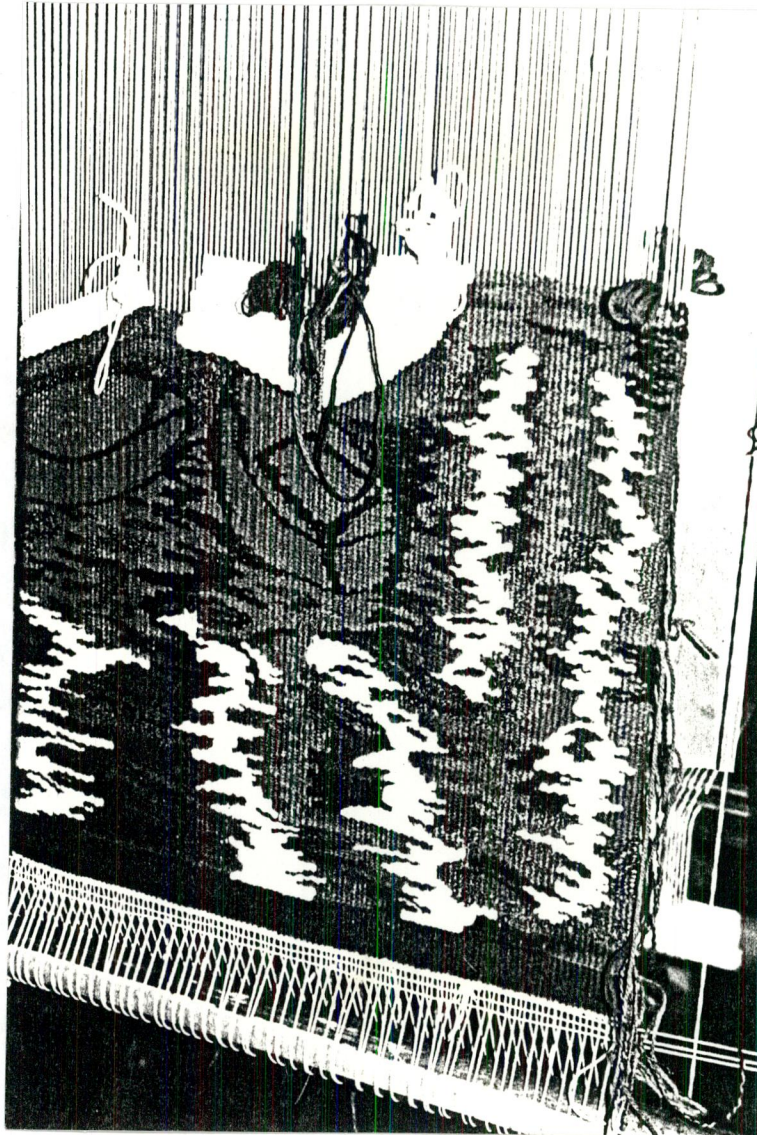














CHAPTER THREE

THE SEA AND IT'S ENVIRONMENT

HISTORICAL INFLUENCES

The artists which I have chosen to use in this documentation as being instrumental in influencing my personal work and whom I have also used during the initial stages of my class project are, Claude Monet, Raoul Dufy, Emil Nolde, and the contemporary Irish artist Marie Simonds-Gooding.

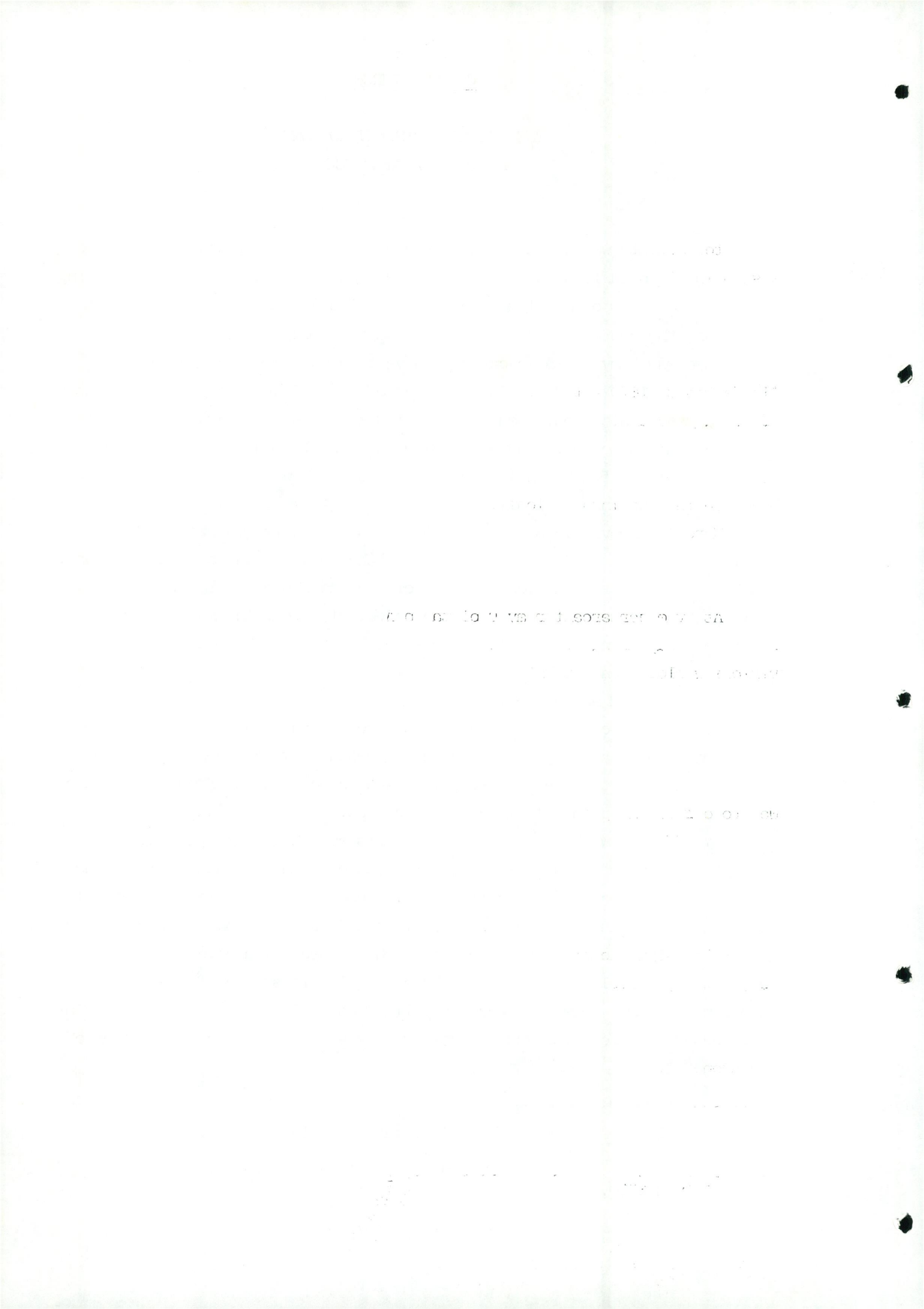
Throughout my artistic career I have been attracted to the work of Claude Monet (1840 - 1926). In September of 1990, I had the profound pleasure of seeing the exhibition, "Monet in the '90's, his series paintings", in the Royal Academy in London. The vibrancy of his revolutionary use of colour together with his fluid handling on paint and brush work was absolutely breathtaking and inspirational.

Monet's innovative style is arguably as profoundly important to the development of art in the 20th century, as the work of Van Gough and Cezanne. Monet's paintings are the very epitome of the Impressionist ideal - the play of light, the evanescent beauty of the object glimpsed, the apparently effortless capturing of that 'enveloppe' of atmosphere that enshrouds the visible world. Monet painted 'a plein air' with a speed and fervour no earlier artist and approached.

Monet was brought up on the Normandy coast, and the superb scenery of his Normandy home and the rapidly changing weather typical of coastal areas, provided him with the ideal material for landscape painting from nature which was to become the painter's life-long vocation.

My affinity with Monet is rooted in his empathy with nature and his declared aim to catch the passing impressions of light and atmosphere: 'the most fleeting effects' as he called them. Monet saw nature in terms of colour and light, and abandoned the traditional methods of tone and form. "When you go out to paint" he said, "try to forget what objects you have in front of you, a tree, a field. Just think, there is a little square of blue, there is an oblong of pink, here a stretch of yellow, and paint it just as it looks at you, the exact colour and shape, until it gives your own naive impression of the scene" 2.

-
1. The Great Artists, Fortnightly Publication, P.169, July 1987
 2. Judith Buntus, The Nature of Genuis, Royal Academy Magazine, P. 51, Autumn 1990.



Monet's paintings however were not without intricacies, for Monet felt that even the darkest shadows were composed of almost imperceptible gradations of colour and light.

Nowhere is this more evident than in Monet's treatment of water. In 'Regatta at Argenteuil' (1872), (Fig. 1) the reflections of boat-sails on the river Seine, Monet reveals his skill in painting water. He conveys the flickering movement of the ripples with just a few brush strokes so bold that when enlarged they seem almost abstract. Monet's love for water - first developed during his childhood by the sea - never left him. He once said jokingly that he would like to be buried in a buoy. 3

The play of light on water continued to influence Monet's work throughout his life. This is particularly evident in his "Waterlilies" series. The magnificent gardens which he created at Giverny were to provide endless subjects throughout the last years of his life. Monet became totally absorbed in the flower garden, footbridge and waterlily pond which became a recurrent theme of his painting. As he grew older he turned almost exclusively to his garden for ideas and right to the very end of his life he remained fascinated by the pool, with its beautiful, shimmering reflections (Fig. 2).

A few years ago, I was able to see some of the huge waterlily canvasses in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. One is almost mesmerized by the diffusion of purples, greens and blues of the water which reflects the abundant foliage on the banks of the pond. The lilies themselves are not immediately recognisable - they dissolve into a magical mix of delicate colours of yellows, creams and pinks. The brushwork is assured and confident, the compositions and forms almost abstract in their execution.

So much of Monet's painting has influenced my personal work over the years - his treatment of light and his unique use of colour, his handling of his medium and technical virtuosity, but over and above all of this perhaps it is his love of nature and total absorption with landscape which draws me to this master of Impressionism.

3. Discovering the Great Paintings, Fortnightly Publication, No 6. February, 1990, p.14.

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Monet's artistic innovations and influences on the artists of the modern epoch ranges from the fluidity of technique prevalent in the early work of Braque and Picasso, to the vast expansive canvasses of Jackson Pollock. But perhaps these influences are most pronounced when one looks at the work of certain early artists associated with the Fauvist group for example, Dufy's "The Beach at Saint-Adresse" 1902 (Fig 3.) Here we note Dufy's desire to capture the activity, atmosphere and colour of the bustling beach scene while painting a plein air, the mood and quality of paint echoing Monet's "Regatta at Argenteuil" and "The Frog Pond" 1869.

We know that during his early years in Paris (1901 - 1905), Dufy was greatly influenced by Manet and the Impressionists, Jong Kind, Renoir, Picasso and Monet (4).

Although certain qualities of Monet's artistic ethos are evident in the early work of Dufy and his contemporaries such as Matisse, Dufy was to develop into one of the most inventive and original artist of the 20th century.

"Raoul Dufy (1877 - 1953) means champagne, Raoul Dufy means joy. Always inventive, always wittingly inventive" 5. "There was something in him which was quintessentially French. A kind of civilised elegance which knows where to stop and is never forced. His originality was in that 'joie de vivre' which he tried to convey" 6. When asked "has life always smiled on you?", he answered, "Not always, but life always smiled on life" 7.

Although he is perhaps best known as a society painter - the witty recorder of the fashionable world of his time - Dufy's paintings were just part of his tremendous breadth of creative energy.

My particular interest in Dufy stems from his love of the sea and nature and his predominant use of motifs from nature in his complete oeuvre.

4. Dola-Perez-Tibi, 'Dufy' p18.

5. Raoul Duffly, Painter and Decorator, Channel 4 Television June 1990.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

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"Life, joy, beauty, air, sea - everything is beautiful", said Dufy, "there is nothing ugly in nature, only people make it ugly" 8. Dufy saw everything as being beautiful. If you look at his seascapes, everybody is looking out to sea, they are not looking at you, they look at a regatta or bathers or a line on the horizon e.g. Nautical Festival at LeHavre 1925 (Fig. 4).

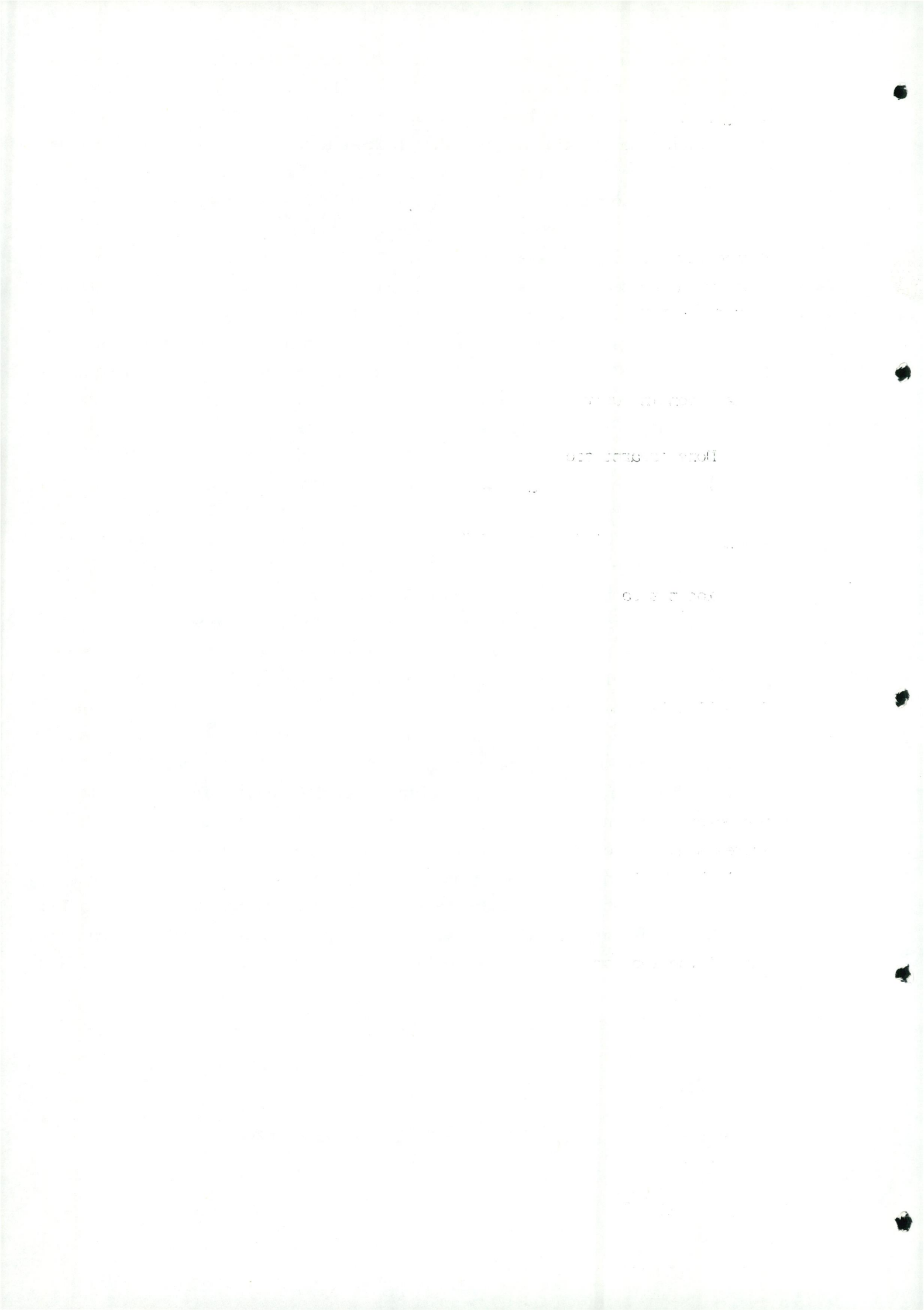
Dufy was born in the port of LeHavre in 1877. Although his life, his work has images of the sea. In his later years he moved to the South of France after some years spent in Paris. The Mediterranean and promenade at Nice, with the sea on one side and land on the other were just as enthralling to Dufy as LeHavre. There were bathers again, boats and sails, festivals and promenades, flags, balconies and swimmers, everything that he needed and loved. He wrote "Painters are only born in maritime climates, a painter needs to have continuously before his eyes a certain quality of light, sparkling and quivering in the air which breathes everything he sees" 9

Dufy brought equal enthusiasm and joie-de-vivre to all his work, from his colourful views of regattas and chic race courses to the joyful celebrations of Paris that he introduced into his tapestry designs. He changed the face of fashion and fabric-design with his work for Paul Poiret and Bianchini-Feriet; he was one of the finest book illustrators of his time, producing numerous exquisite woodcuts for Apollinaires 'Bestaire'; his stage and costume designs for Cocteau's 'Le Boeuf sur le Troit' were inspired, amusing and rapturously received; in 1937 he painted his large and immensely popular epic to electricity, the fresco 'La Fee Electricite', for the Exposition Internationale.

Dufy has influenced my work by his economic but effective use of colour and form, together with his unique design sense. In 'Harbour at Deauville', 1935 (Fig. 5), for example, he merely abstracts from the scene a few essential characteristic forms, arranging them into strikingly beautiful design that suggests much more than it actually defines. We note the interplay of verticals, horizontals, and diagonals in the forest of masts and the quick broad strokes that serve to indicate water and sky. Though the artist handles the subject in a highly informal way, the bustle of organised activity on the part of the sportsmen can never-the-less be clearly felt.

8. Ibid

9. Alfred Weiner, The Library of Great Painters, pg.42.



This atmosphere of purposeful activity and movement is communicated entirely by the artist's brushwork. Dufy, from all appearances, has literally attacked his canvas with a barrage of bold, vigorous strokes that instill vitality where every they fall.

It is particularly Dufy's dramatic use of colour and simplification of form which attracts me to his work, and which in turn influences the colour and design of my craftwork; notably weaving. Dufy's flat white sails against an ultramarine sky, shimmering shapes reflected in an energetic handling of colour in his paintings of water, are all inspirational in my choice of materials and colours in my craftwork.

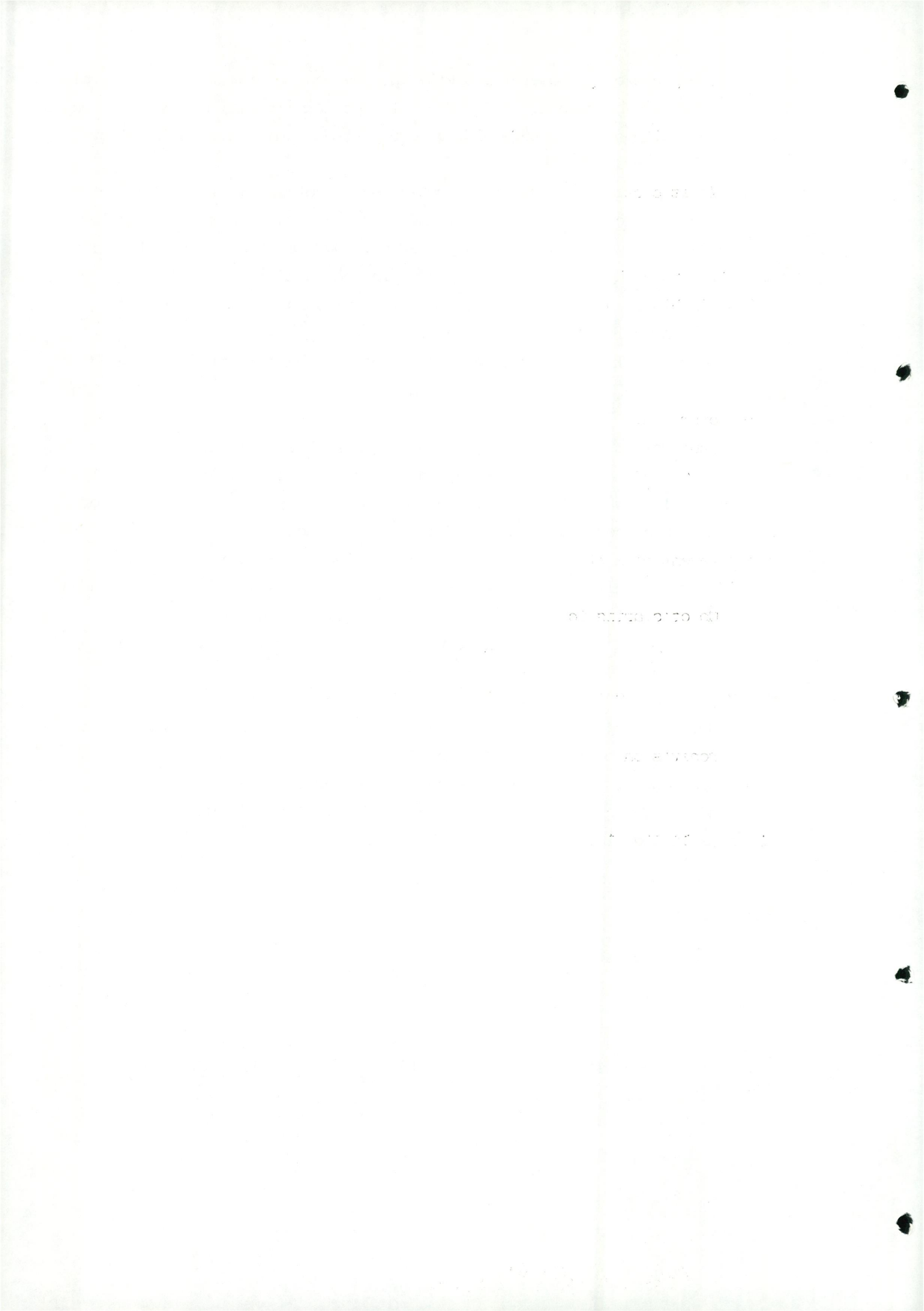
Dufy himself became interested in tapestry when he was commissioned by the French State in 1925 to design furnishing tapestries featuring Paris and it's monuments.

Paul Poiret also commissioned Dufy to design fabrics in 1910. Dufy frequently used motifs from the sea environments as motifs for these designs, such as shells, waves and sails. However, he also explored the variety of materials which could be used for fabric design such as woven brocades. With the movement of a cloke or dress, the colours could be made to change completely especially when Dufy used shot effects with silver and gold thread.

On concluding this analysis of my personal empathy with the work of Dufy, it is perhaps interesting to note some of his innovative theories on colour and form;

One day in the 1920's I saw a young girl in a red dress running along a pier at Fleur. It was to prove a significant occasion for me. I observed that the eye perceives the colour of an object faster than it's shape and retains the sensation longer. I realised that colour and form are consequently quite independent of each other and a painter need never again enclose them within the same limits" 10.

10. Bryan Robertson, Exhibition Catalogue, Hayward Gallery London 1983 - 1985, p6.



My area of specialisation for many years in Art & Design has been printmaking, through which I have developed a deep appreciation for block printing, in particular woodcut. As my knowledge and facility in this medium developed, I was gradually drawn firstly to the graphic work of the German Expressionists, and then to the paintings of this period, indeed my Thesis in my final year in the College of Marketing and Design in Dublin documented the relationship between these mediums during the twentieth century.

An artist from the Expressionist period who I particularly admire is Emil Nolde (1867 - 1956). The work of no other painter illustrates the intuitive character of German Expressionism as fully as that of Emil Nolde. Solitary, introspective, and steeped in the simple piety of his Protestant forebears, he keenly identified with nature and throughout his life took refuge in daydreams that gave rise to a world of phantoms and primordial beings. His art encompasses a vast range of prints. But it was above all through colour that Nolde gave tangible expression to his feelings - colour that heightens his evocative landscapes and flower pictures, his fervid religious paintings, and splendid figure compositions. His remarkable water colours in particular, are landmarks in the history of German Expressionism.

Nolde, who rejected the term 'expressionist' as far too narrow a classification, preferred to think of himself as a 'German' painter. Indeed, his art cannot be separated from the land his ancestors tilled for generations. The vast, windswept meadows and marshlands of the North German plain between the Baltic and the North sea lie at the heart of his pictures: nearly all of them were painted there.

After his return from the South Pacific, Nolde in 1913 relied increasingly on emotional expressions intensified by his feeling for colour. He set out to paint a scene as it must feel from inside it. His response to the ocean was particularly acute. He was born on the edge of the sea and all his life he chose to live close to it. His brief stay in Hamburg in 1910 brought about not only a group of superb drawings, woodcuts and etchings, but generated also a series of splendid oil paintings of tug boats and steamships in which the colour itself communicates the life of the harbour, it's feel and smell, and it's atmosphere of water, clouds and diffused light.

It is particularly Nolde's emotional response to the sea environment and his intensified use of colour which stimulates my empathy for his entire oeuvre. He tells of a vibrant crossing of the Kattegat (a stretch of water off the German coast) which took place at about this time. The small boat was tossed angrily with each wave. "This day" he says, "has remained so fixed in

THE STATE OF TEXAS,
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Know all men by these presents, that [] of the County of [] State of Texas, for and in consideration of the sum of [] Dollars, to [] in hand paid by [] the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, have granted, sold and conveyed, and by these presents do grant, sell and convey unto the said [] of the County of [] State of Texas, all that certain []

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD unto the said [] heirs, assigns and assigns forever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said [] has hereunto set his hand and seal of office, this [] day of [] A.D. 19[]

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of office, this [] day of [] A.D. 19[]

my memory, that for years afterwards all my paintings of the sea consisted of wildly heaving green waves and only a little edge of yellow sky on the upper frindge".

In his efforts to discover a pictorial language with which to express his innermost feelings, Nolde's watercolours played an important role. "The Steamer" for example, probably dating from the 1910 period in Hamburg, illustrates to what extent he freed himself in this more fluid medium from the descriptive, Impressionist method exemplified by his prints of Hamburg harbour done in the same year e.g. "Hamburg: Landing Pier" (Fig. 6) In the "Steamer" (Fif. 7) I particularly admire Nolde's technique of saturating the fibrous Japanese paper with green and blue washes, permitting the individual colours to flow into each other and to collect in random pools of varying hues. Once the paper had dried, the image of the churning tug-boat, omitting thick fumes of smoke, was rapidly executed by dragging a brush dipped in black across the evocative ground. A final dab of reddish-brown served to add definition to the hull of the vessel. Light and atmosphere are no longer the results of observation. Natural light has been replaced by pictorial light. Light has become a function of colour.

Nolde's watercolours belong - if not to the world of fantasy - to that realm in which things remembered are sublimated in vivid images that transcend verifiable fact. Moreover, Nolde's imagination is known to have been especially receptive to the elemental forces in nature inspective of the conditions of his surroundings.

I immediately relate to Nolde's seascapes, with their surging bottle green waves and sparkling, heavy white caps, the dark valleys between the crests, the low horizons and sometimes strange sweeping colour formations are more than depictions of the sea. They are visual equivalentents of a physical experience. It is as if the painter were saying: "this is what it feels like to be tossed about in the sea"¹¹ Usually the pictures of autumnal seas such as 'Dark Sea' (Fig. 8) are close-up views, limited to waves and sky. Occasionally boats appear, as in the recollections of the China Sea of 1915 or in a painting, such as "Fishing Boat" one year earlier. But no safe shoreline is indicated.

For Nolde the sea was the embodiment of a regenerative primordial force, always changing and never tame - an element of ominous powers.

11. Von Werner Haftmann, Emil Nolde, p49.

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He continued painting the ocean until the very end of his life, but over the years his seascapes became less tempestuous, more quiet, and a soft light becomes an increasingly important element in them. In 'Luminous Sea' 1948, one of his last paintings, a diffuse light dematerialises the seascape in a manner reminiscent of the later work of Turner, it's still mood and fusion of sea and sky suggesting infinity.

In Chapter Two which deals with my Personal Project, I discuss the sea environment around the Dingle area in the South West of Ireland and how it has influenced my work in recent years.

Although born in India in 1939, the contemporary Irish artist Marie Simonds-Gooding lives and works in the remote village of Dunquin in the Dingle Peninsula. Her work is profoundly influenced by the natural environment of the Peninsula.

Marie Simonds-Gooding rarely portrays people in her work. Their implied presence however, is central to the minimal landscapes which she describes in paint, print and plaster. The universal nature of these images is another basic concern.

"The subject matter, whether it is derived from Ireland, India or other remote parts of the world consists of symbols man has carved out of the land. The unwritten record, the marks and signs, the unerased history that farmers, monks and sheperds have left behind, such as the field formations and boundaries of ancient times" 12. Early signs of habitation, such as a clochan (ancient stone dwelling) on the Dingle Peninsula or a monks enclosure on Mount Sinai, are recorded with fine grey lines of fresco pigment on large white plaster blocks. However, she uses more colour in the oil paintings which feature large green and hay-stacked fields. F9.

12. Sarah Finlay, The National Self Portrait Collection of Ireland, Limerick, University of Limerick Press, 1989, p238.

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In recent years Marie Simonds-Gooding's artistic oeuvre also encompasses the medium of etching through which she interprets and develops the various images and emotions of the natural environment which influence her work.

My own interest in printmaking together with my affinity with the sea environment in the South West of Ireland has gradually drawn me to the work of Maria Simonds-Gooding, notably her printmaking. The dominant image of her work is the enclosed field of her self-portrait "Self Image" (Fig. 10), a safe intimate place, protected by a wall from the threat of the elements and the surrounding land and sea. In this and other black and white etchings, the textured field shapes are those of the Great Blasket island, with which the artist closely identifies, having lived beside it for more than 20 years. There is, she finds, a 'very female' womb-like quality to it's interior and exterior shapes. 13. Here the artist places herself in the context of her work, using the photo-etch technique to superimpose her own image on to an earlier etching.

Recently Marie Simonds-Gooding's work has been primarily influenced by the arrival in Dingle Bay some years ago of a dolphin, who was popularly named 'Fungie the Dingle Dolphin', by the local people. Marie Simonds-Gooding was particularly intrigued by the dolphin's natural relationship with the fishermen, swimmers and divers who use the waters around Dingle and also with the sea environment. She herself has developed a profound rapport with 'Fungie' by frequently swimming with him.

The artist explores this relationship in works such as 'The Day I met the Dingle Dolphin' Fig. 11 'The Day the Dingle Dolphin came to Dun Chaoín' Fig 12, 'The Day the Boats were looking for the Dingle Dolphin' Fig 13. and 'The Day the Dingle Dolphin started to sing' Fig 14. Simonds-Gooding has used mixed media on paper for these works. The immediacy of her handling of paint, pastel and pencil lends itself to her primitive interpretation of the dolphin's relationship with the sea environment. She captures the dolphin's playful and intelligent nature by manipulating a simple but effective use of line and colour. In these works we again see the Blasket Islands, the rugged coastline and enclosed fields which predominate throughout the artist's oeuvre.

12. Sarah Finlay, The National Self Portrait Collection of Ireland, Limerick, University of Limerick Press, 1989, p.238.

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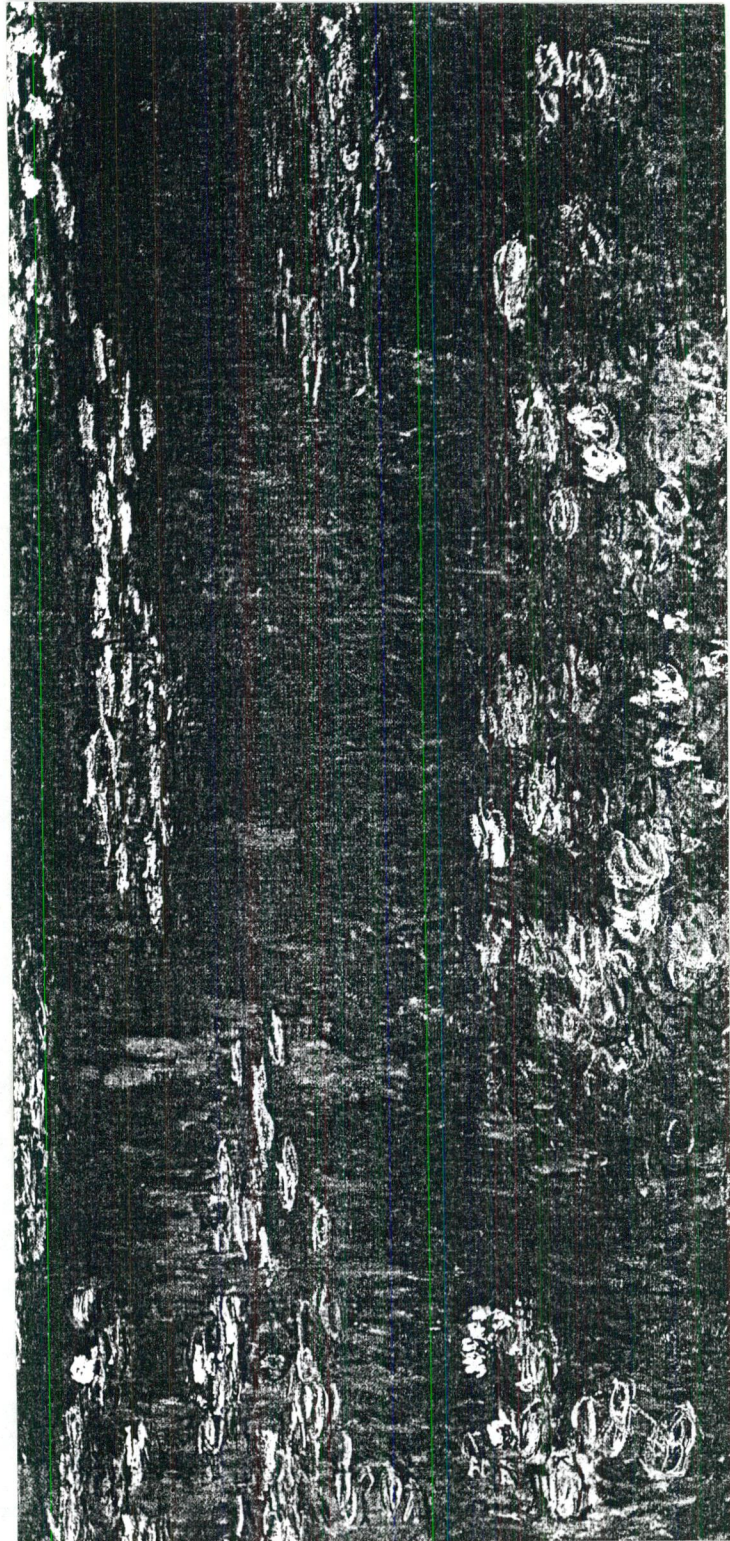
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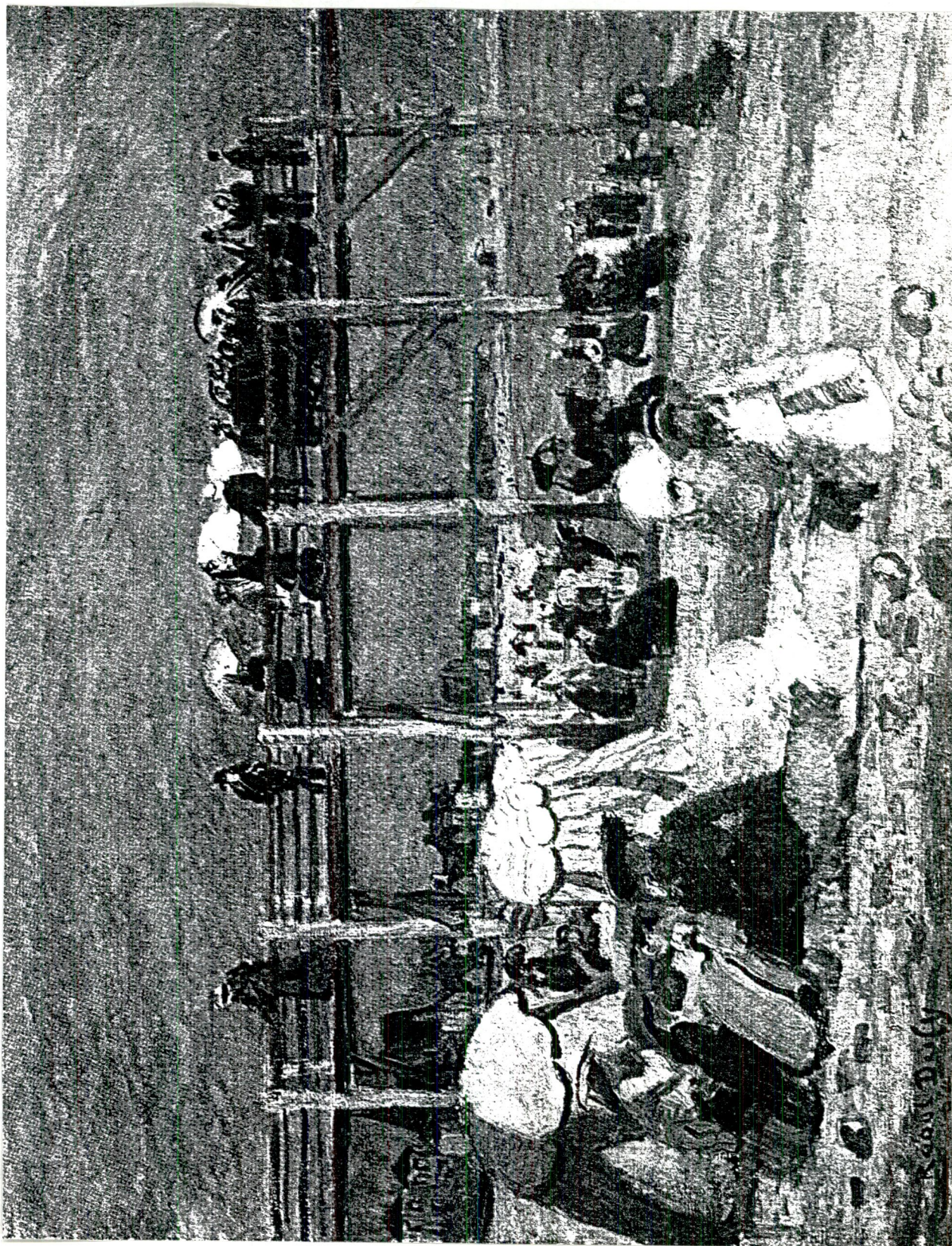
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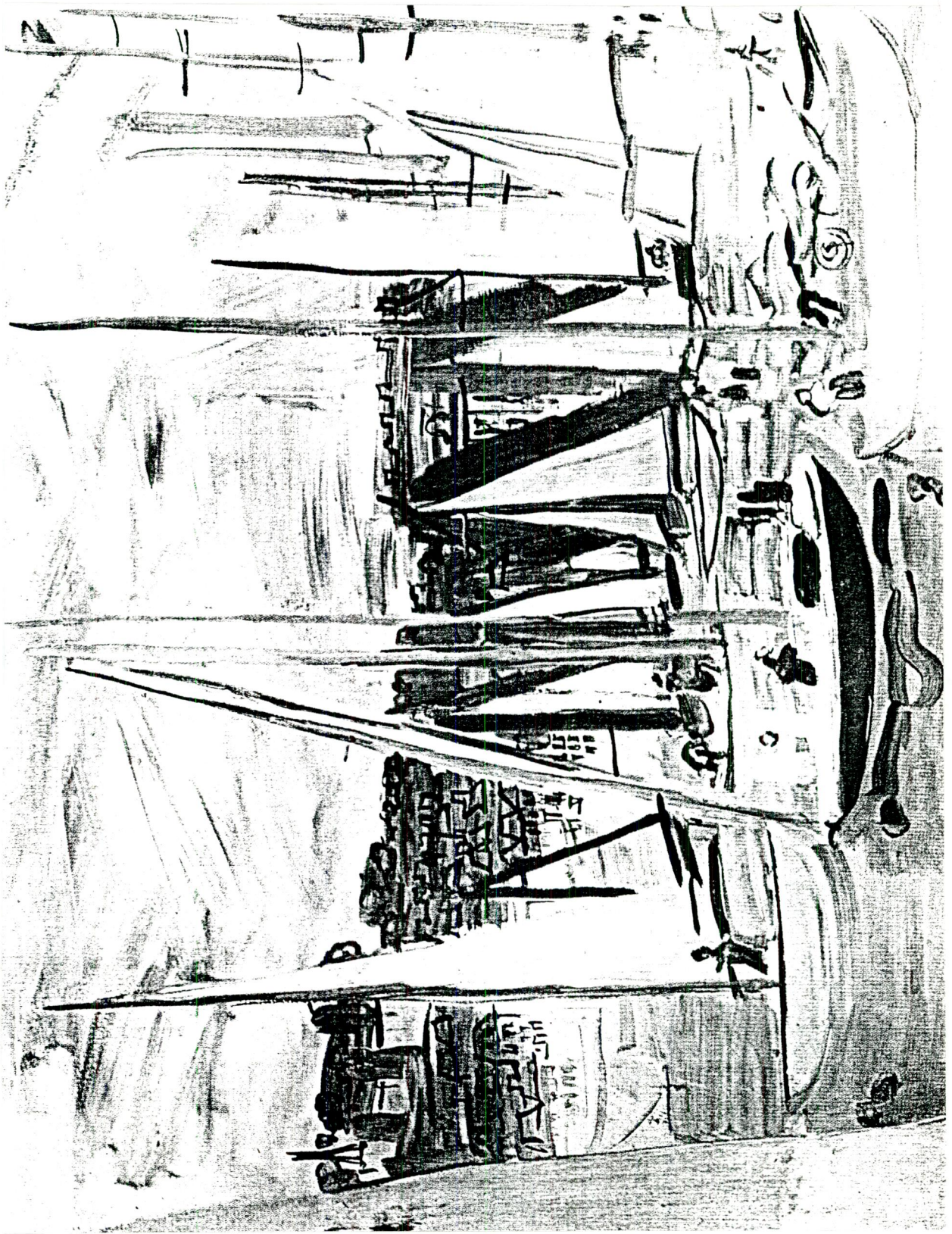




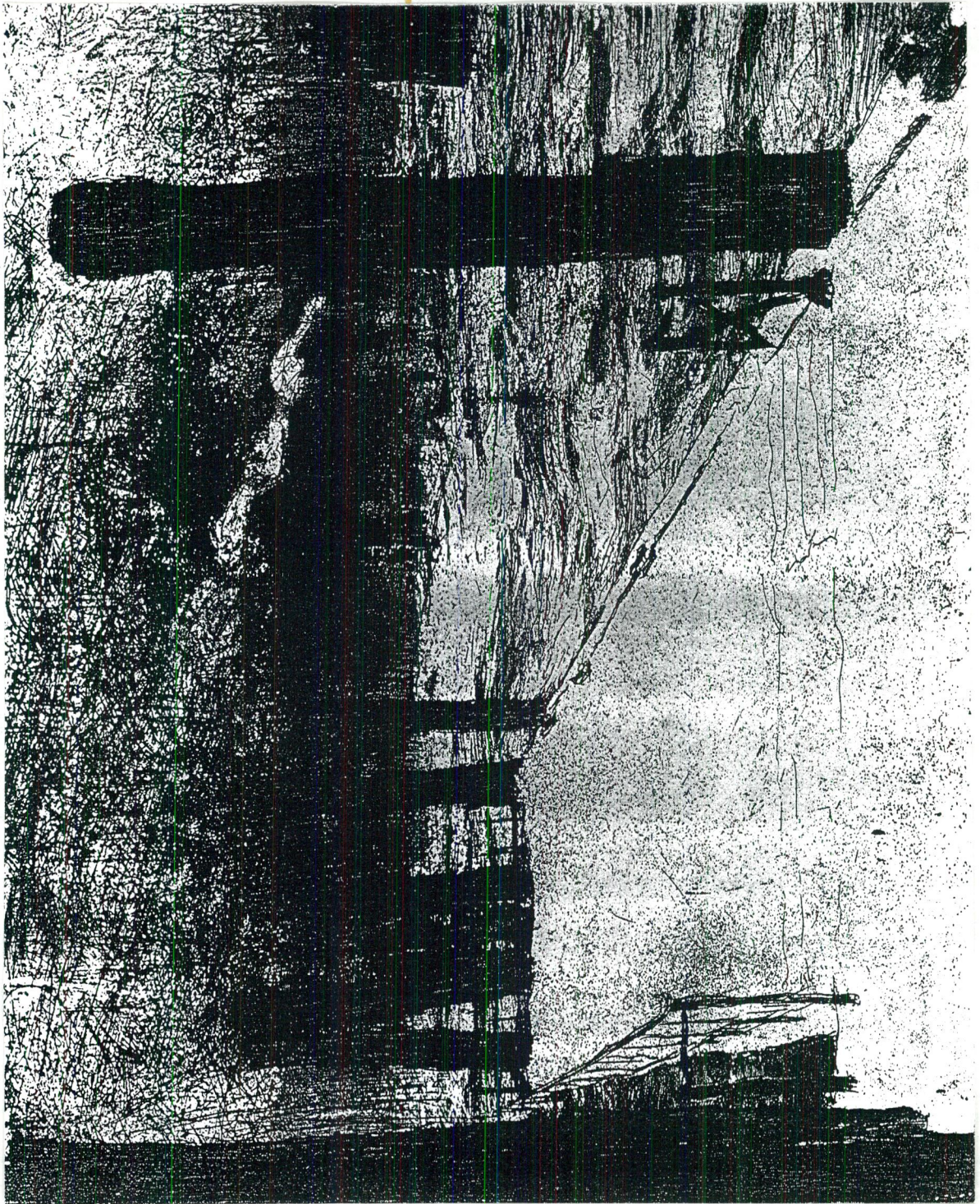




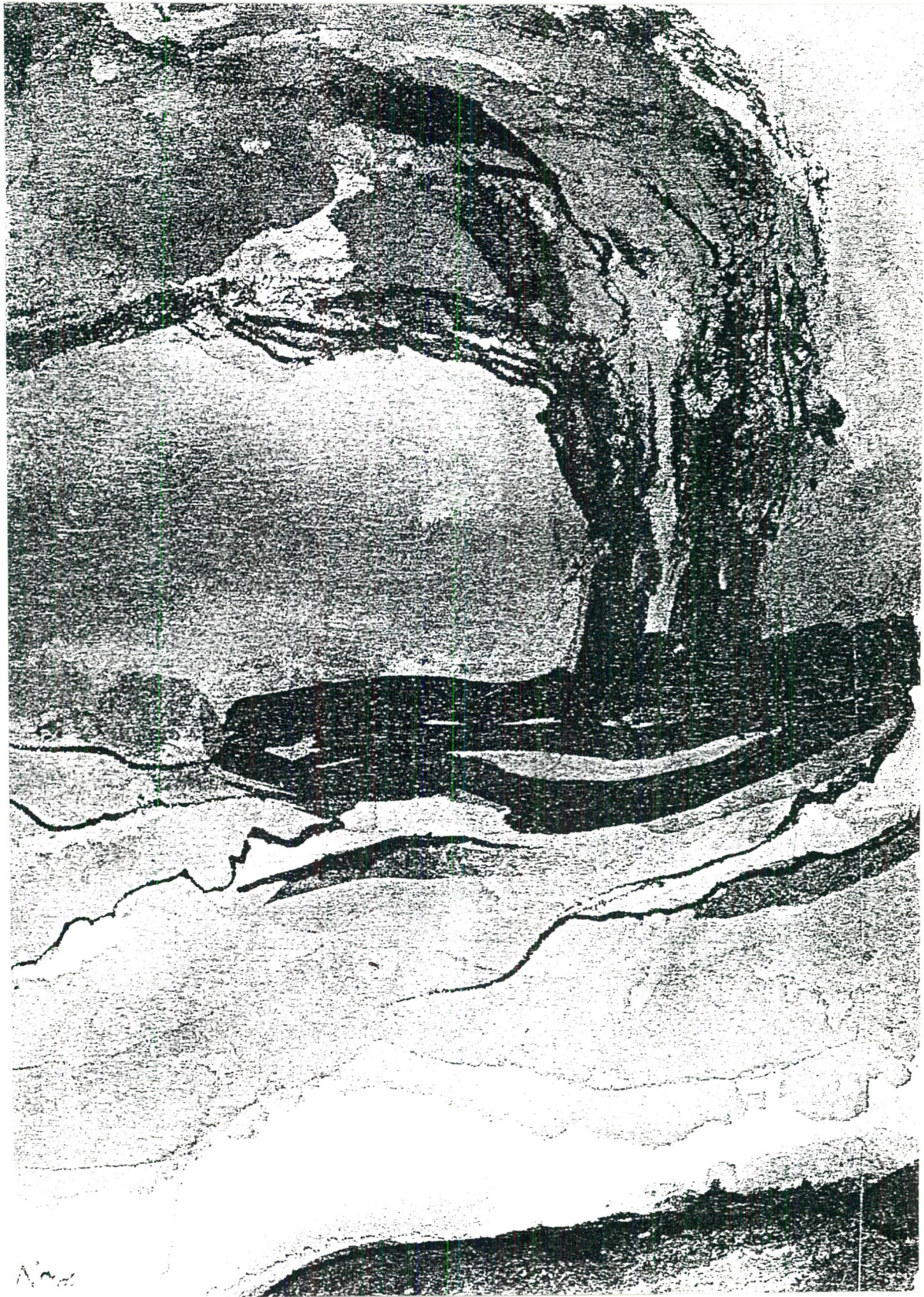








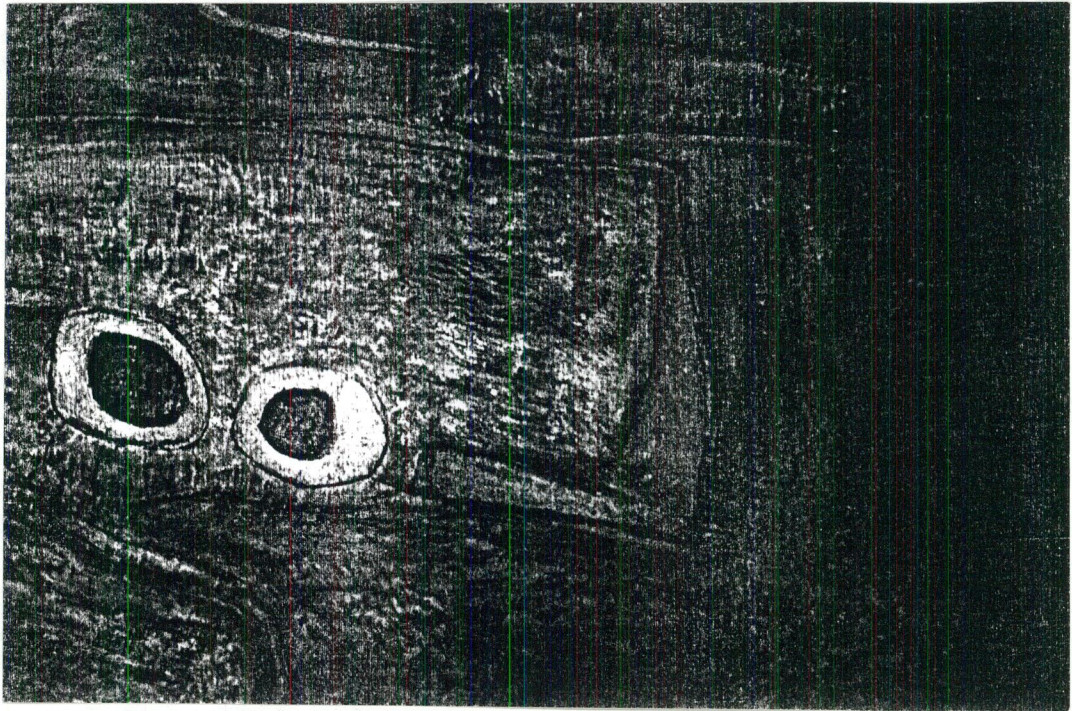




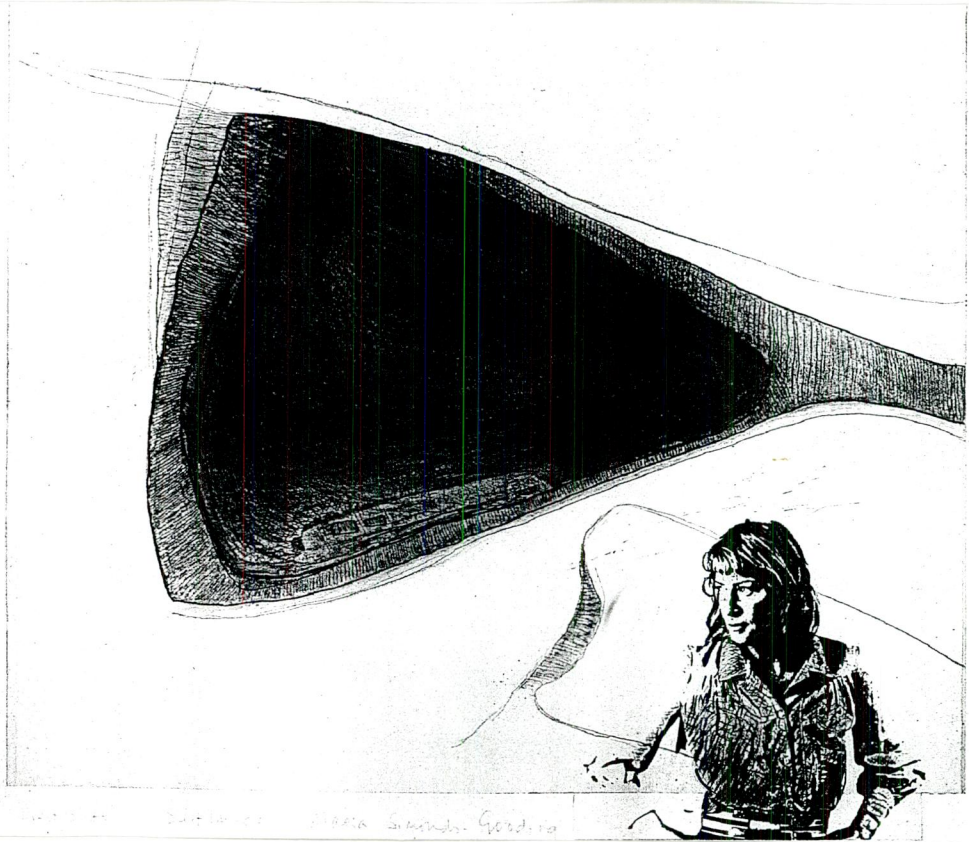




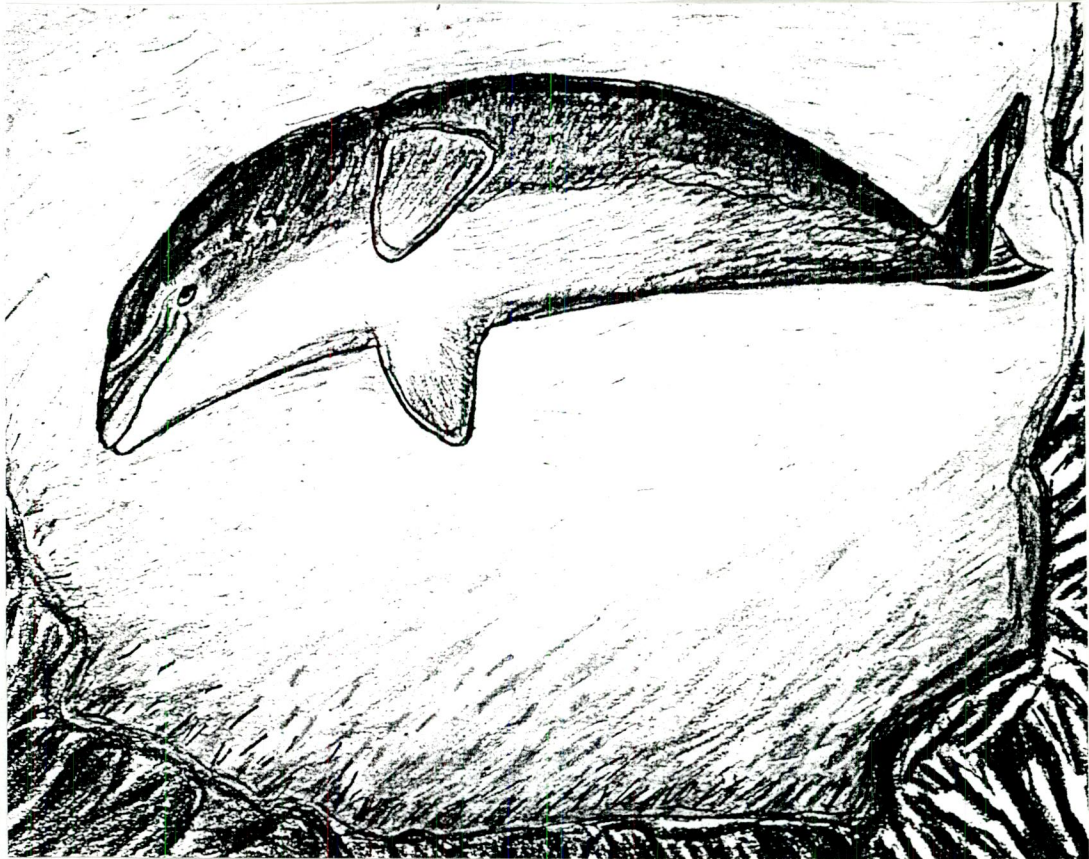




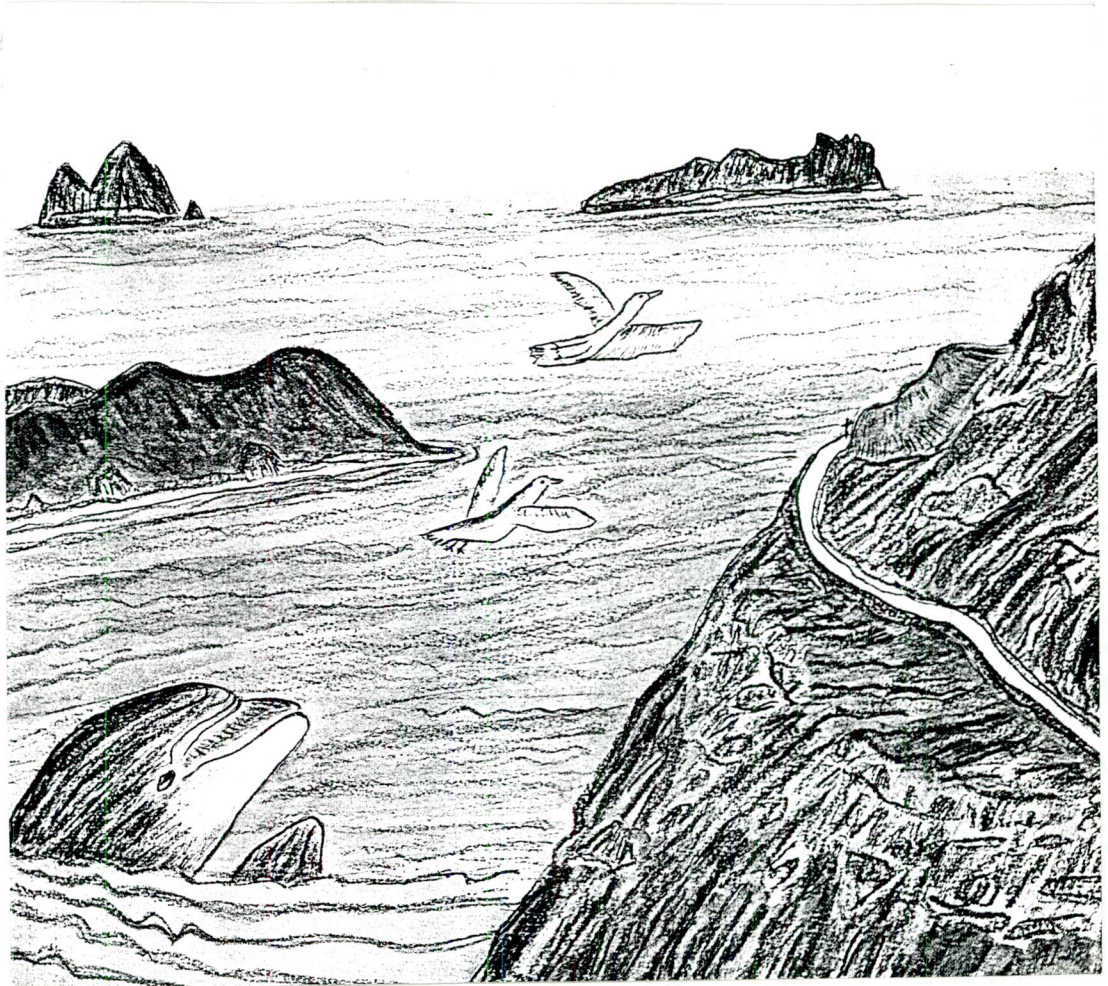




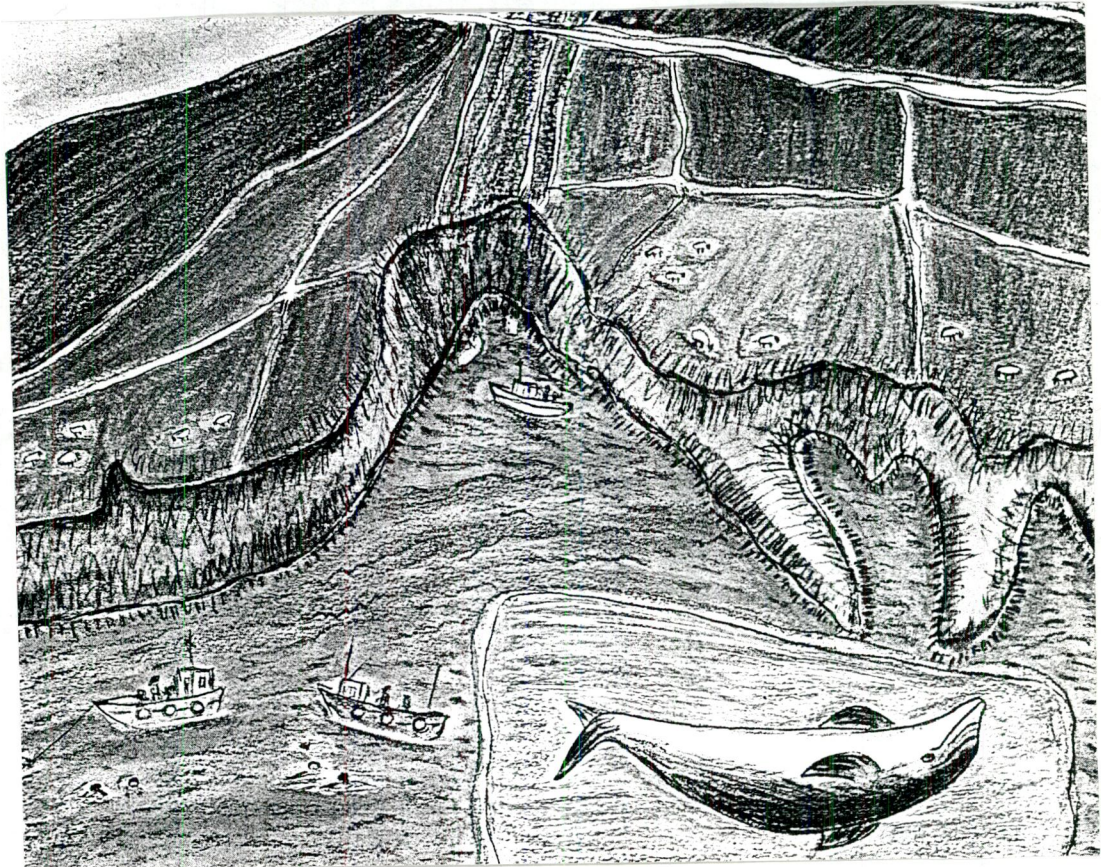




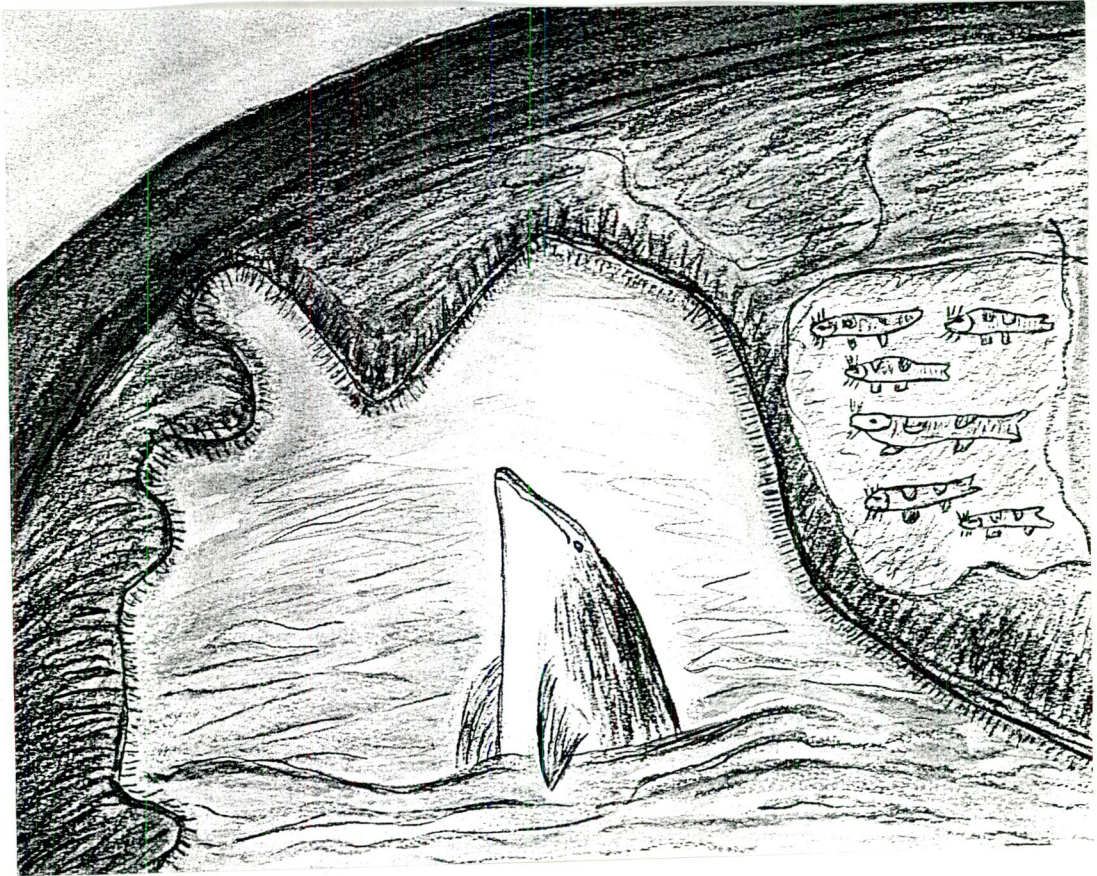














A SLIDE PRESENTATION OF
AN ARTISTS RESPONSE TO THE SEA AND IT'S ENVIRONMENT
IN ART HISTORY

MOIRA E. FOSTER
Dip. A.D.T.

THE TEXT

INTRODUCTION

In this slide show concerning the sea and it's environment, we shall explore the variety of responses which particular artists have had to the sea. We shall take a trip to the sea, to the beach and the promenade. We shall see the rocks and cliffs around the sea environment and the boats, ships and steamers which travel across the sea.

We should note however that prior to the 17th Century, artists only painted the sea as a backdrop to particular scenes in their paintings. Thus the sea had an insignificant importance in art. Indeed it wasn't until the late 19th Century that artists began to paint the actual environment 'a plein air', or out of doors.

Botticelli was a master of the Italian Renaissance. He lived during the fifteenth century or 'quattrocento'. One of his most famous paintings is 'The Birth of Venus' painted in 1485. here Botticelli has used the sea as a backdrop in this mythological scene depicting the birth of the goddess of love Venus, who, the Greeks believed, was born from the foam of the sea. We see her standing aloof and wistful in the center of the painting, poised on her perfectly fluted shell.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

DATE: 1/15/54

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

Reference is made to the report of the Special Agent in Charge, New York, dated 1/10/54, captioned as above.

The report contains information regarding the activities of the [Illegible] in New York City.

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The sea is significant in this painting in that it directs our attention to the goddess's origins. The painting is dominated by the figure of Venus. The Goddess of flowers 'Flora' to the right is depicted standing on the island of Cyprus, where Venus is said to have landed, preparing to cover her body with a richly patterned robe. Venus is blown ashore by Zephyr, the west wind, whose sweet breath begets flowers.

'The Birth of Venus' may have been painted for Botticelli's patron, Lorenzo de Medici. In humanist thought which was fashionable at the time during the Italian 'quattrocento', Venus was not an erotic symbol, but an embodiment of beauty who could be the inspiration for noble thoughts. To Plato - the Greek philosopher, most revered in Lorenzo's circle - beauty was identical with truth.

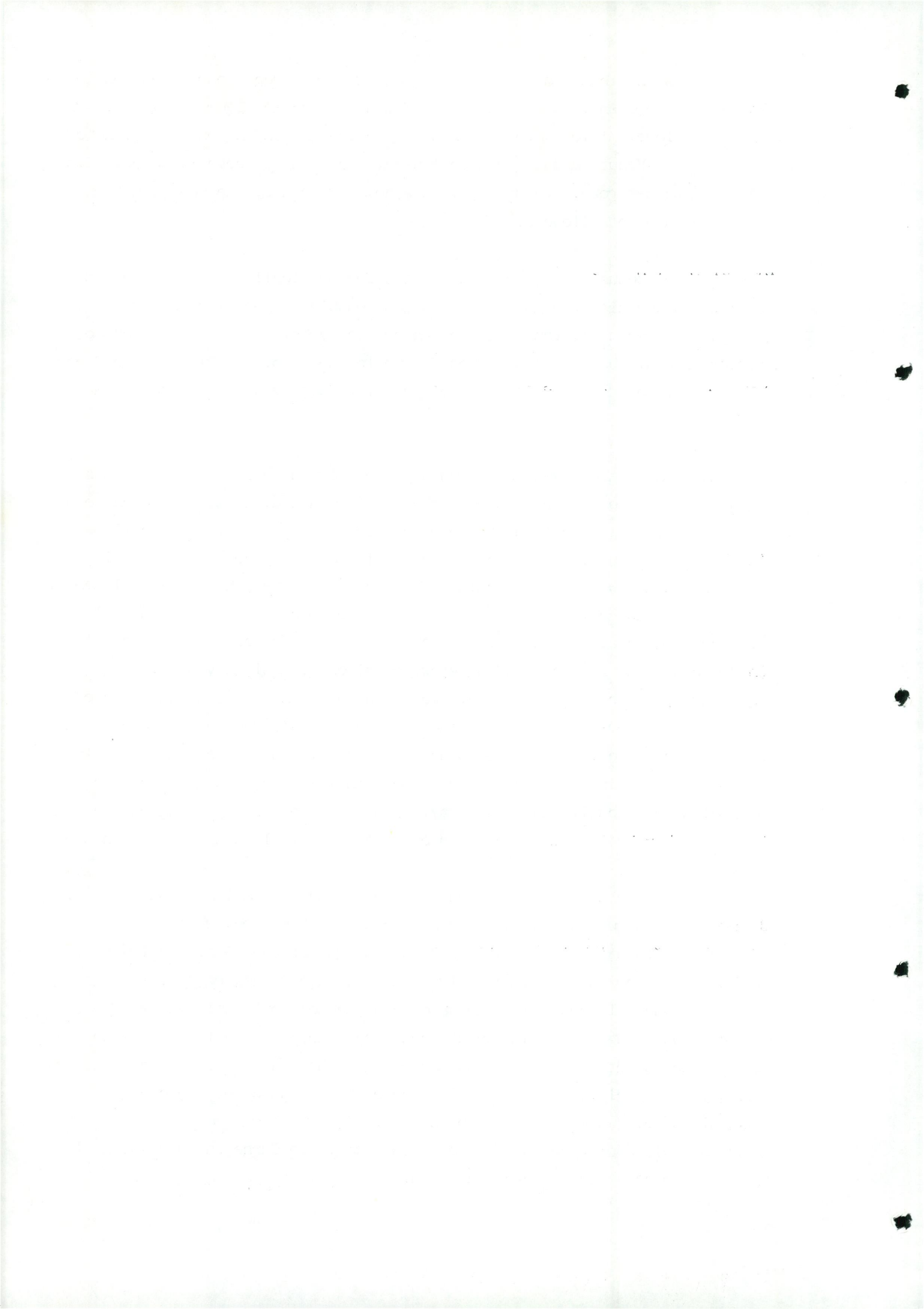
It was not until the seventeenth century, notably in Holland, when artists began to paint the sea for its own sake, rather than using it as a background to religious, allegorical and mythological scenes for example Botticelli's 'The Birth of Venus'. The Dutch master of landscape, Jacob Van Ruisdael, displayed in his works a particular affinity with the earth and its elements. His range of subject matter extended to types of picture that were usually the province of specialists, notably seascapes such as 'Vessels in the Breeze', winter scenes and vast commanding views of almost limitless vistas.

About thirty seascapes by Ruisdael are known today and it is symptomatic of his preference for showing the dramatic aspects of nature that not one of them features a calm sea. Usually - as here in 'Vessels in a Breeze' painted in the 1650's the paintings are sombre in mood and capture with great conviction the feeling of a chilly and gusty day, with waves roughly breaking on the shore or a breakwater, and the masts of small vessels leaning steeply in the wind.

Joseph Turner, born in 1773, was one of the greatest of all British artists. Although brought up in London, he was fascinated by nature, which was extremely influential in romantic art and thought of the time. He lived by the Thames; water and ships were always his strongest inspiration.

Turner is generally considered to have been the most original genius of landscape painting of the nineteenth century, though it would be true to say that by the end of his life, he had become a painter not of land, sea, and sky but of light itself. He used a brilliance of light and colour to create powerful and overwhelming images of nature.

Turner notably applauded the sea for its power. To Turner nature is an all-consuming force - greater even than man.



Let us look at Turner's masterpiece 'The Fighting Temeraire'. From the day of its first exhibition, this has been one of Turner's most popular paintings, as much for its patriotic sentiment - the warship had fought heroically in the Battle of Trafalgar as for its blazing pictorial splendour. The ship in full sail in the background recalls the Temeraire's own days of glory, and the black buoy in the foreground suggests the finality of this last melancholy journey.

The silvery white of the doomed Temeraire endows the ship with a ghostly majesty. But the black tug, belching flame and soot appears evil, almost demonic. The choice of colour contrasts the declining days of sail with the new era of steam.

To the right of the painting we see a blood-red sunset. The glorious colours of Turner's painting are carefully contrived to heighten the emotional impact.

The blazing sunset is symbolic not just of an era coming to an end, but of bloodshed - a death by sacrifice.

Turner's belief in the insignificance of man faced with the overpowering and destructive force of nature can again be seen in 'Peace: Burial at Sea' painted in 1842. The midnight scene Turner has imagined was the burial at sea (off Gibraltar) of the painter David Wilkie, an artist much admired by Turner, who died returning from Palestine.

The unremitting black of the ship's sails is seen as a tribute to Wilkie. Wilkie's death is treated in a heroic vein, and Turner dramatizes by using the sea and the elements to emphasize the tragedy. Turner places the torchlit ceremony at the very center of the composition, a position of formal solemnity. The deep gash of light cutting through the sombre silhouette of the ships is one of his most original and dramatic inventions. The highlights are echoed in the reflections in the water below.

John Constable, a late contemporary of Turners, never closed his eyes to the reality of nature and it is easy to contrast his factual English landscapes with Turner's aerial and exotic views. Unlike Turner, Constable had no popular success, never left England and restricted his pictures chiefly to scenes where he is emotionally involved - his native Suffolk above all.

The grandest effect he paints is an impending storm. In 'Chain Pier Brighton' painted in 1827, almost two thirds of the canvas is taken up by the darkening clouds of the coming storm. Like Turner, Constable saw nature as an overwhelming force. The figures in his work are only significant in their reaction to the overpowering elements, such as the people on the beach battling against the strong winds in the center of the painting. The figures are painted red which also draws our eye to the center of the composition and to the sailing boats on the horizon tilted at acute angles against the force of the sea and wind.

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Darkening clouds and a grey storm driven sea cast an air of gloom over fashionable Brighton where Constable took his wife to convalesce during the Summers of 1824 and 1825. 'Chain Pier Brighton' is one of Constable's few seascapes and might also be an emotive response to his wife's illness; the dark sombre depiction of the force of the sea being a response to her ill-health.

We also see a similarity with the Dutch seascapes of the 17th century such as Ruisdael's 'Vessles in the Breeze'.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a group of artists in France came to view the sea and nature as a motif for their responses to the fleeting impression of light and colour. One of these artists was Claude Monet. Throughout his life Monet responded to the challenge of the elements. It was his paintings of light, especially on water, that made him a leader of French painters, who came to be called the Impressionists.

In 'Regatta at Argenteuil' 1872, Monet has painted out of doors, not simply the views of Argenteuil, but the atmosphere, the sensation of the view. The sunlight filters through the leaves and boat-sails, dancing on the water, and is captured on the canvas by the myriad of dots and strokes and flecks of paint which are like light itself. Light is the screen through which everything is seen, and detail breaks up under its impact.

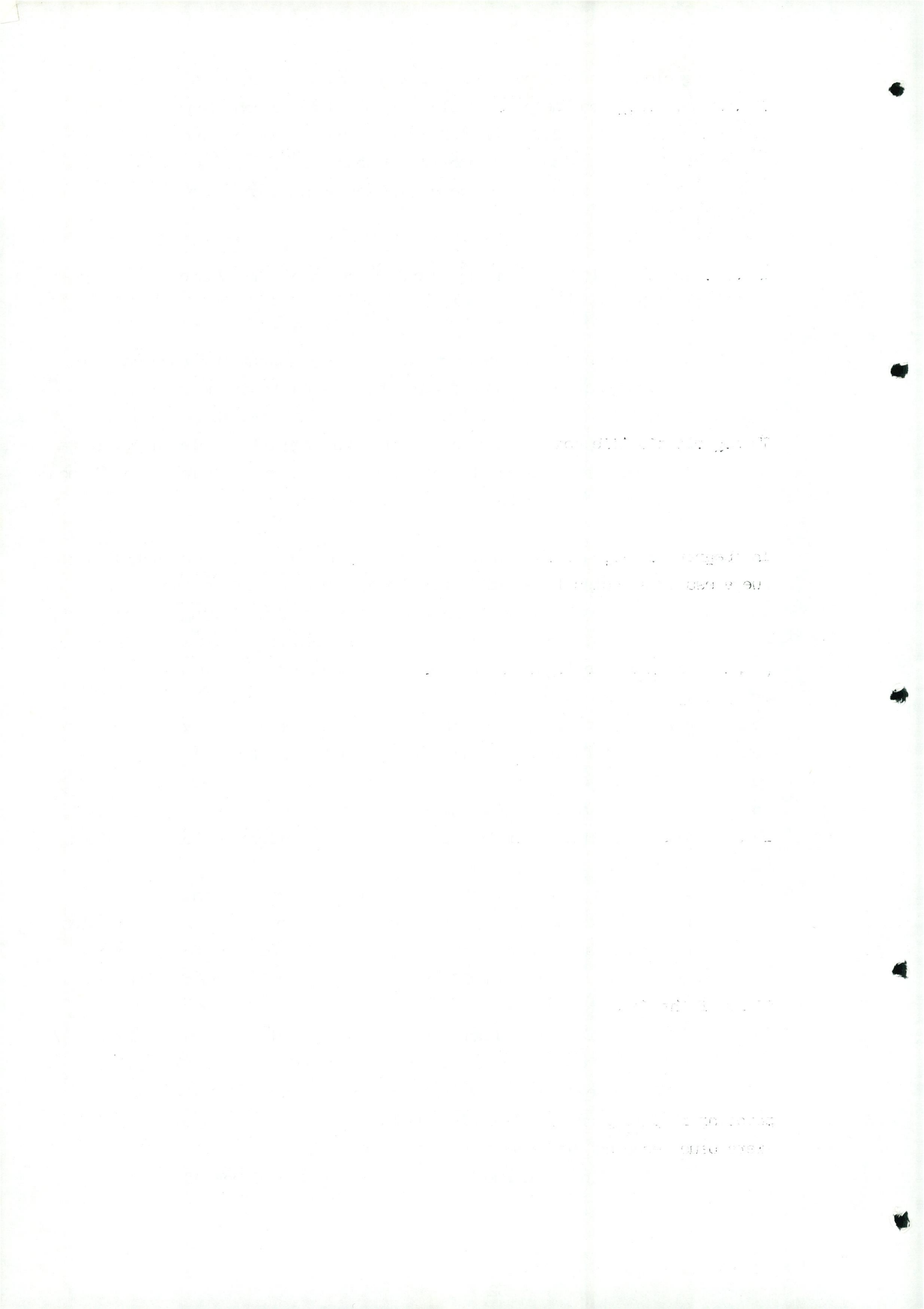
Monet's love for water, first developed during his childhood by the sea in Normandy - never left him. He once said jokingly that he would like to be buried in a buoy.

In his fascination with the effects of light on water, we see a relationship between Monet and Turner, in for example Turner's reflections of the setting sun in the painting 'The Fighting Tamerair'.

Monet also noted that light is always varying in intensity, and an object varies in its appearance under such fluctuation. So Monet, in his passion for truth to what is seen, was led to paint a series of pictures in which a hatstack or a cathedral or a cliff top by the sea are painted at different times of the day.

For example, the effulgent light in 'Val-Saint Nicolas' (Morning) 1896 - 97 has a totally different effect on the colour of the painting, than in the painting of the same name painted on an overcast day. The sea in the former painting is pale green and lavender, while in the latter painting it is a misty blue, echoing the heavy overcast purple sky.

Another artist at this time who was influenced by the effect of light on water was 'John Singer Sargent'.



'In a Leventine Port' 1905 is executed in watercolour which is particularly suited to capturing the effects of light. Because they are transparent, the washes allow the artist to reproduce the subtle variations in tone and colour of objects seen under different lights. Watercolour thus had a special appeal for Sargent who was particularly interested in the effects, in landscape, of both direct and reflected light.

Sargent adds to the light effects by a judicious use of white. The furled sails of the boat, which are in full sunlight, have the pure white of untouched paper. In the lower part of the boat, Sargent uses tiny strokes of more transparent white to suggest flashes of sunlight reflected in the water. Irish artists during the early part of the twentieth century were also influenced by the sea such as Roderick O'Connor in for example his painting of the red rocks on the Brittany coast 'Sur la Cote, Finistere' 1898, and William John Leech in 'Seaweed' painted around the time of the First World War. In the painting 'Seaweed' we note Leech's use of bright yellows and oranges where the sun hits the rocks, while areas in shadow are painted in deep blues and violets. The peacock blue sea is barely visible at the high horizon line near the top of the painting, a device also used by O'Connor.

Monet had a profound influence on much of the art of the early twentieth century, for example, the Irish artists O'Connor and Leech. But perhaps these influences are most pronounced when one looks at the work of certain early artists associated with the Fauvist group for example, Raoul Dufy's 'The Beach at Saint Adresse' 1902. Here we note Dufy's desire to capture the activity, atmosphere and colour of the bustling beach scene while painting 'a plein air', or out of doors, the mood and quality of paint echoing Monet's 'Regatta at Argenteuil'.

One major difference between Dufy and Monet and indeed with earlier artists such as Turner and Constable in the predominance of human activity on or by the sea i.e. people at work or indulging in leisure activities in the sea environment e.g. 'Harbour at Deauville' 1935.

'Life, joy, beauty, air, sea - everything is beautiful' said Dufy. 'There is nothing ugly in nature, only people make it ugly. Dufy saw everything as being beautiful. If you look at his seascapes, everybody is looking out to sea, they are not looking at you, they look at a regatta, or bathers, or a liner on the horizon e.g. 'Nautical Festival at Le Havre' 1925.

Dufy was born in Le Havre in 1877. Although his life, his work has images of the sea. In his later years he moved to the south of France after some years spent in Paris. The mediterranean and promenade at Nice with the sea on one side and land on the other were just as enthralling to Dufy as LeHavre. These were bathers again, boats and sails, festivals and promenades, flags, balconies and swimmers, everything that he needed and loved.

[The page contains extremely faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the document. The text is arranged in several paragraphs and is difficult to decipher due to its low contrast and blurriness.]

He wrote 'Painters are only born in maritime climates, a painter needs to have continuously before his eyes a certain quality of light, sparkling and quivering in the air which breathes everything he sees'.

In his response to the sea we particularly note Dufy's dramatic use of colour and simplification of form. Dufy's love for the sea, and enthusiasm and joie-de-vivre which he brought to his work is particularly noted in 'Nautical Festival at Le Havre'. We see flat white sails against an ultramarine sky, shimmering shapes reflected in his energetic handling of colour, and a bustling joyful scene both on the water and on the promendae in the foreground.

The German artist Emil Nolde's response to the sea contrasts profoundly with that of Dufy's.

Solitary, introspective, and steeped in the simple piety of his Protestant forebearers he keenly identified with nature and throughout his life took refuge in daydreams that gave rise to a world of phantoms and primordial beings.

It was above all through colour that Nolde gave tangible expression to his feelings.

After his return from the South Pacific in 1913 while he painted 'Tropical Sun', Nolde relied increasingly on emotional expressions, intensified by his feeling for colour. He set out to paint a scene as it must feel from inside it. In his efforts to discover a pictorial language, Nolde's watercolours played an important role.

In his choice of medium we see a similarity with Sargent.

In 'The Steamer' Nolde has saturated the Japanese paper with green and blue washes, permitting the individual colours to flow into each other, and to collect in random pools of varying hues. Light and atmosphere are no longer the results of observation. Natural light has been replaced by pictorial light - light has become a function of colour.

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Moreover, Nolde's imagination is known to have been especially receptive to the elemental forces in nature irrespective of the conditions of his surroundings.

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The sea was for Nolde the embodiment of a regenerative primordial force, always changing and never tame - an element of ominous power. And to this end we note a definite relationship with the romantic visions of Turner and Constable.

In conclusion, let us look at the work of the contemporary Irish artist, Marie Simonds-Gooding, who lives and works on the Dingle Peninsula. Her work is profoundly influenced by the natural environment of the Peninsula. Marie Simonds-Gooding rarely portrays people in her work. Their implied presence however is essential to the minimal landscapes which she describes in paint, print and plaster.

Recently, Marie Simonds-Gooding's work has been primarily influenced by the arrival in Dingle Bay some years ago of a dolphin, who was popularly named 'Fungie', by the local people. Marie Simonds-Gooding was particularly intrigued by the dolphin's natural relationship with the fishermen, swimmers and divers who use the waters around Dingle and also with the sea environment.

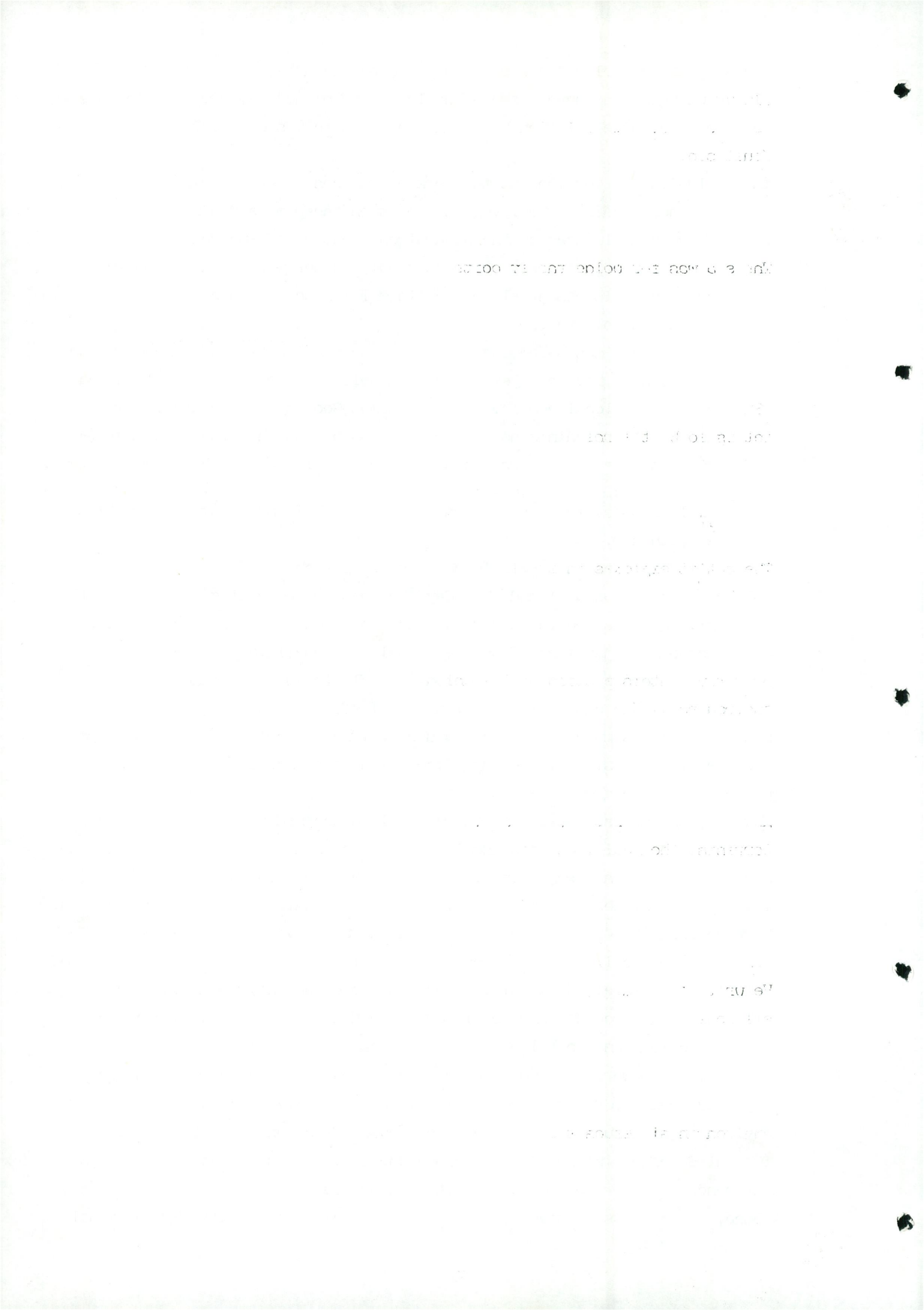
She herself has developed a profound rapport with 'Fungie' by frequently swimming with him.

The artist explores this relationship in works such as 'The Day the Dingle Dolphin came to Dunquin' and 'The day the boats were looking for the Dingle Dolphin'. Simonds-Gooding has used mixed media on paper for these works. The immediacy of her handling of paint, pastel and pencil lends itself to her primitive interpretation of the dolphin's relationship with the sea environment. She captures the dolphin's playful and intelligent nature by manipulating a simple but effective use of line and colour. In these works we see the Blasket Islands, the rugged coastline and enclosed fields which predominate throughout the artist's oeuvre.

However, the artist has become increasingly concerned by the effect which tourists, the media, and continual sea traffic is having on the dolphin, who has become quiet and restrained. She believes the dolphin must be allowed to live freely in the sea around Dingle and not be inhibited and misused by man. We have looked at a number of artists who have had various responses to the sea, from Botticelli who has used it primarily as a backdrop in 'The Birth of Venus', to Ruisdael, Constable, Turner and Nolde who have been inspired by its all-consuming force and emotional power, to Monet and Dufy who are concerned with the colour and joyful beauty of the sea,

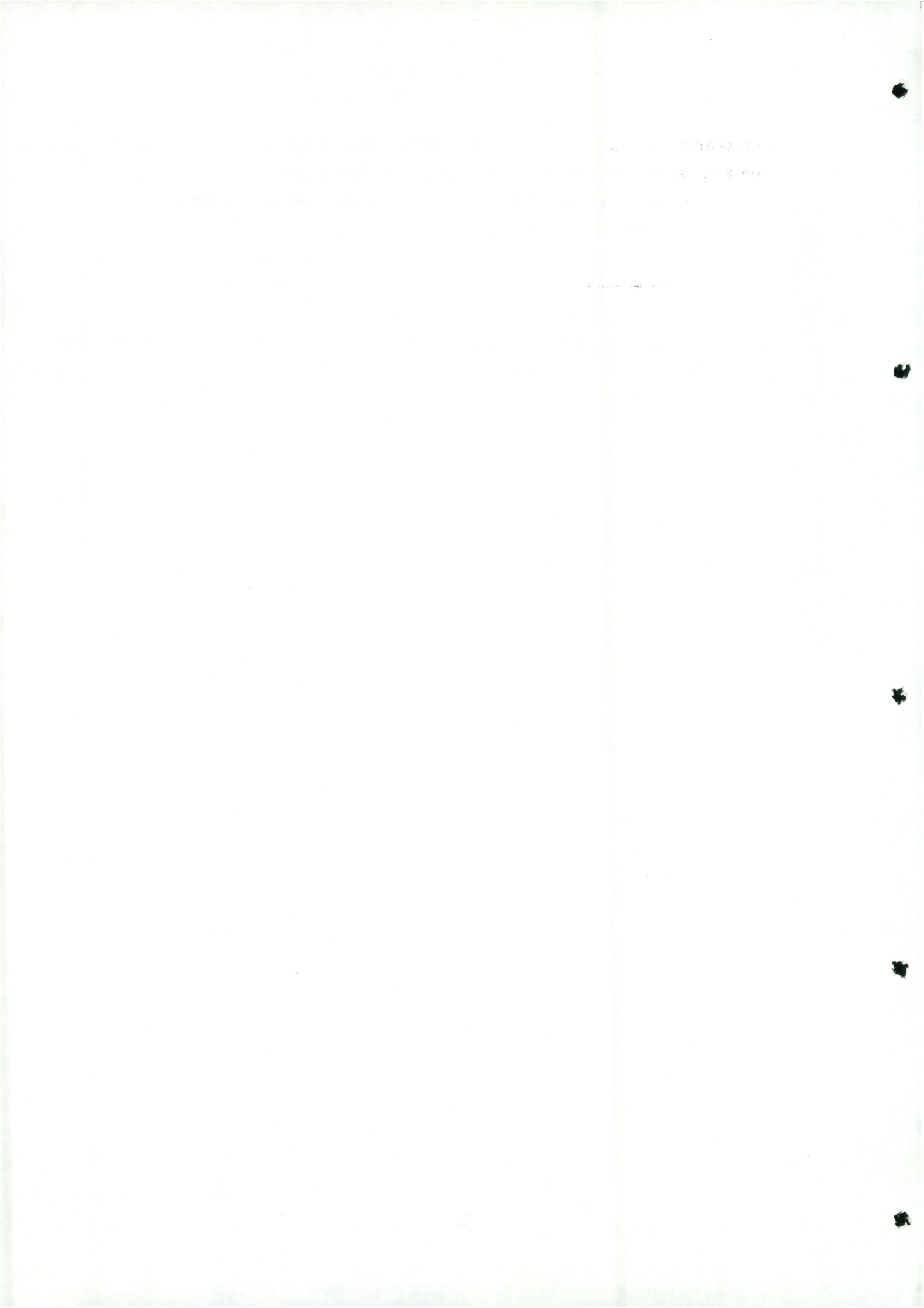
However, it is worthy to note Marie Simonds-Gooding's response to the sea and its environment, today when we are all so supposedly concerned with environmental issues such as the Green-House effect and Animal Rights.

Two thirds of our planet is covered by the sea. It is no wonder that it has influenced the work of so many artists throughout art history, and as we have noted, the artists we have looked at have conveyed to us their own personal



response to the sea - for example, Turner who was almost possessed by the sea. The sea is part of the natural world. We should see it as an asset, something to be proud of, and we should treat it with untarnished respect. The sea is necessary for life.

The music you have been listening during this slide presentation is Debussy's 'La Mer'.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE EDUCATIONAL RATIONALE THE VALUE OF ART EDUCATION

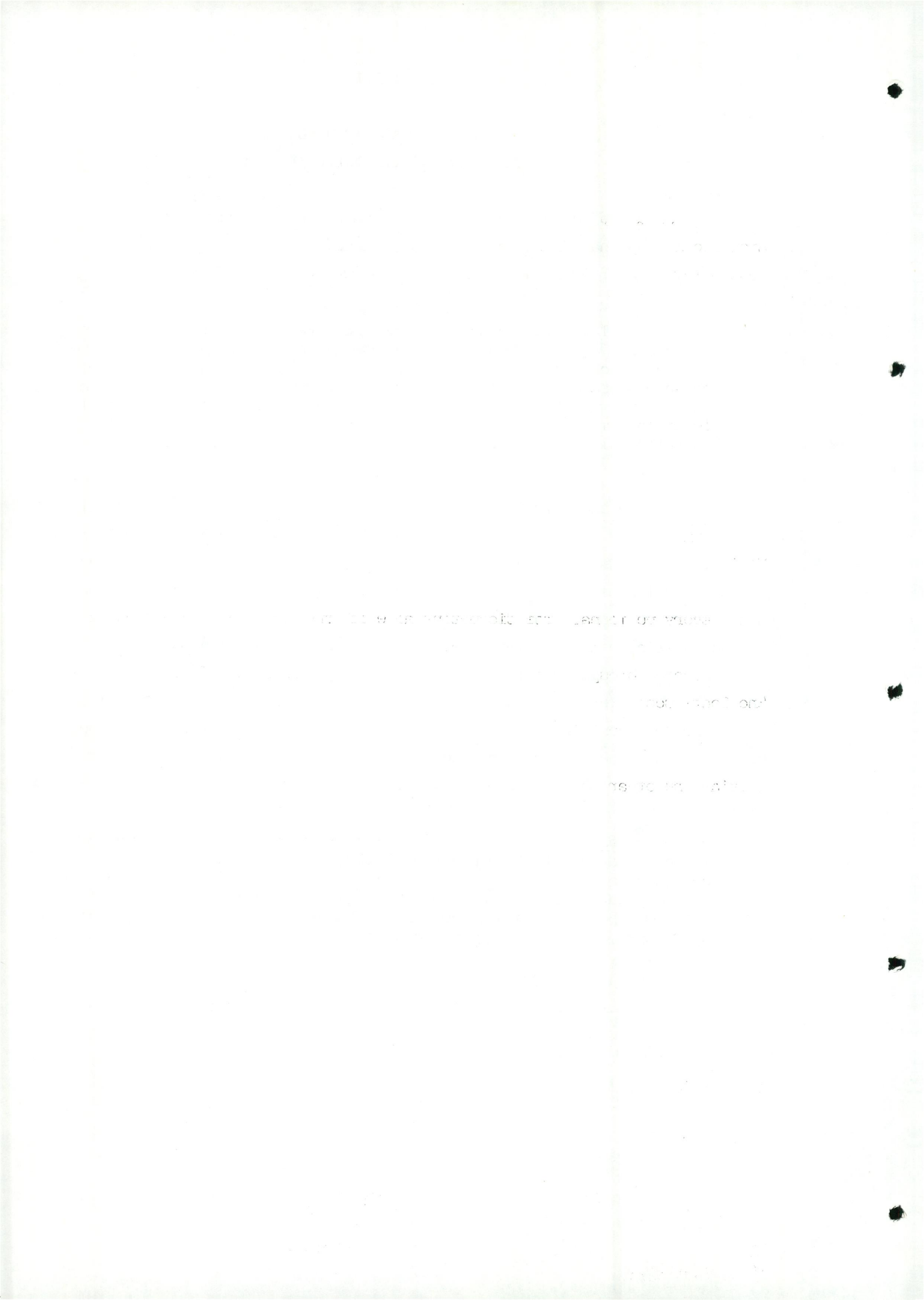
Art as a subject on the school curriculum has as much value and significance as that of any other subject such as Maths or English. John Dewey argues regarding the nature of art:-

Art is the living and concrete proof that man is capable of restoring consciously, and thus on the plane of meaning, the union of sense, need and action characteristic of the live creature. The intervention of consciousness adds regulation, power of selection and predisposition. Thus it varies the arts in ways without end but it's intervention also leads in time to the idea of art as a conscious idea - the greatest intellectual achievement in the history of humanity 1.

The unique and valuable character of art is argued even more strongly by Suzanne Langer who is quoted in Elliott Eisner's book Educating Artistic Vision. She holds that there are two major modes of knowing through which an individual comes to understand the world. These are the discursive and non-discursive modes. The discursive mode of knowing is characterized by the scientific method, by logic (e.g. Maths) and by those fields of inquiry they proceed through verbal and written language (e.g. English). The knowledge such fields provide is systematic, rational, and propositional and makes enormous contributions to our understanding of the world. This mode, however is not the only way in which man achieves understanding. The arts provide the other major mode of knowing. Langer writes:-

Whatever resists projection into the discursive form of language is indeed hard to hold in conception, and perhaps impossible to communicate, in the proper and strict sense of the word 'communicate' but fortunately our logical intuition, or form-perception, is really much more powerful than we commonly believe, and our knowledge - genuine knowledge, understanding - is considerably wider than our discourse 2.

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1. Elliott W. Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, p5.
 2. Ibid, p5



She Continues:-

'A work of art presents feeling for our contemplation, making it visible or audible or in some way perceivable through a symptom. Artistic form is congruent with the dynamic forms of our direct sensuous, mental and emotional life; works of art are projections of 'felt life', as Henry James called it, into spatial, temporal and poetic structures. They are images of feeling, that formulate it for our cognition. What is artistically good is whatever articulates and presents feeling to our understanding'³.

Thus the justification for teaching art lies not only in the promotion of the creative ability of the pupil, but also in the fostering of emotional intellectual and practical skills. Therefore art is among the most effective subjects in promoting the personal, mental and emotional development of the pupils character.

In this context, it is beneficial to note the work of Barclay Russell in his essay, "Education through Art", in which he deals with some of the factors relevant to achieving social change by means of education through Art.

'The beliefs of S.E.A. (Society of Education through Art) rest in the first place on the truth that every man is an artist and on the inferences which stem directly from that fact. Such inferences are as revolutionary for society as they are for education. If education fulfills its purpose, then each person will be able to make use of his creative facility in some dynamic way, and so enrich his whole being for the good of society as a whole'⁴.

Russell continues:

'It is often forgotten that before even it is considered as a means of communication, art is a process of realisation and revelation for the artist himself; it provides means of forging essential unities, for assimilating new experiences, and in this function alone it has a complete justification and a purpose. That must become a part of the whole educational process, used consistently and comprehensibly in our schools'⁵.

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3. Elliot W. Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, p6
 4. Barclay Russell, Education Through Art, p1
 5. Ibid,

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Every pupil has artistic potential which may be further developed through motivation and tuition. Art enables pupils to acquire a sense of identity which in turn enables them to use their knowledge and experience in given and new situations. Few subjects foster the mental and personal development of the pupil in the way that Art can through concrete experiences with objects, materials and various environments, pupils come into contact within the world around them.

Development of visual perception helps students view their world with greater clarity through discovering and exploring the various art elements, such as line, shape, and composition, together with experiencing and acquiring skills such as drawing, painting, modelling etc. Students' perceptual development is also achieved through the development of their critical faculties in art appreciation and aesthetics.

On assessing the role of art in education, it is perhaps beneficial to note some of the aims and values of the new Junior Certificate Programme in Ireland.

The introduction to the new Junior Certificate syllabus guidelines set down by the Department of Education and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment state the general aim of education as 'contributing towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development, for personal and family life, for working life, for living in the community, and for leisure' 6.

The Department of Education Guidelines continue in further detailing the aims of the new Junior Certificate, which are mainly concerned with the 're-inforcement and development of the young person's knowledge, understanding, and skills acquired at primary level, and to extend and deepen the range and quality of the young person's educational experience in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies'. The Junior Certificate programme, also aims to 'develop the young person's personal and social confidence, initiative, and competence through a broad, well-balanced, general education, to prepare the young person for the requirements of further programmes of study, of employment, or of life outside full-time education, and also to contribute to the moral and spiritual development of the young person, and to develop a tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of others' 7.

6. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and The Department of Education.

The Junior Certificate, Art, Craft and Design, Guidelines for Teachers
1988, p1.

7. Ibid,

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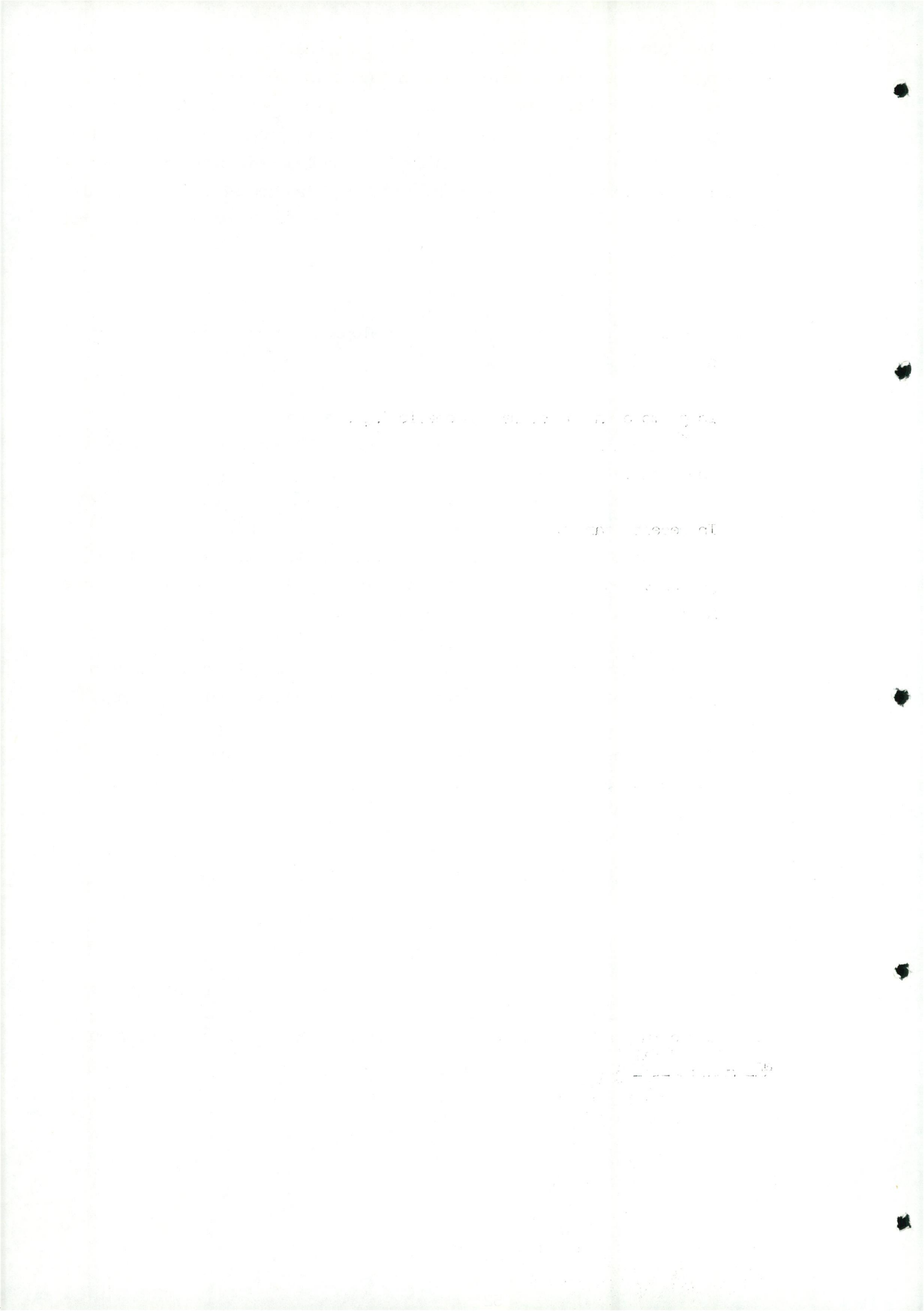
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The role of the arts in Ireland is traditionally undervalued, generally enjoying a somewhat low-profile, this in turn being reflected in social attributes towards all elements of the arts within education, 8. It is hoped that the introduction of the new Junior Certificate programme to second-level education will be beneficial in transforming the low status attached to artistic education and aesthetic values within Irish society. My personal interpretation of the aims of the Junior Certificate Programme for Art, Craft and Design are:-

1. To promote the students personal development through the experience and learning of Art, Craft and Design.
2. To promote in the student a developing awareness of and a discriminating attitude to the environment by means of the visual, the tactile and the spatial.
3. To develop the students understanding and critical awareness of Art, Craft and Design, in the historical, cultural, economic, social and personal contexts. (This must include the pupil's ability to evaluate his/her own work and the work of others).
4. To bring the student to a familiarisation with, and a competence in the bases of visual and constructional design and problem solving.
5. To focus the students knowledge, understanding, and competence in 2D and 3D work, by developing his/her self-confidence in exploring imagination and creativity.

8. Curriculum and Examinations Board, The Arts in Education: A Curriculum and Examinations Board Discussion Paper, p5.



The eminent educationalist Elliot W. Eisner questions at length the justification for teaching art in his book "Education Artistic Vision". Eisner writes:-

There are two major types of justification for the teaching of art. The first type emphasises the instrumental consequences of art in work and utilizes the particular needs of the students or the society as a major basis for forming it's objectives. This type of justification is referred to as 'contextualist' justification. The second type of justification emphasizes the kinds of contributions to human experience that only art can provide; it emphasizes what is indigenous and unique to art. This type of justification is referred to as 'essential justification, 9.

Eisner elaborates on the particular place which art holds in education. On studying Eisner, we note certain similarities between his theories and those of Russell's which we have already looked at. Eisner writes:-

The prime value of the arts in education lies in the unique contributions it makes to the individual's experience with and understanding of the world. The visual arts deal with an aspect of human consciousness that no other field touches on; the aesthetic contemplation of visual form. The visual arts provide for our perception of form that vivifies life and that often makes an appraisal of it. In short we can learn of the justification of art in education by examining the function of art in human experience, 10.

We are primarily concerned in this analysis with the value of art within education. Intrinsically linked to this justification of teaching art, and indeed the function of art itself is the role of the art teacher within education, more particularly Art, Craft and Design Education within Irish education as a whole.

9. Elliot W. Eisner, 'Educating Artistic Vision', p2.

10. Ibid, p9.

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The primary role of the art teacher is rooted in stimulating, communicating and guiding the student through effective teaching practice and in fostering the development of a perception, creativity and a variety of skills in their pupils enabling them to produce visual forms that will have social and personal importance, communicating unique ideas and feelings. The contribution of the arts in general, but in particular the visual arts, to society and life is a unique and enriching experience for all.

Barclay Russell states in Education Through Art that 'all works of art are translations of experience in a symbolic form. It is the symbolic quality and that act of summary in a work of art which is illuminating, inspiring and potent and which constitutes its message as an act of communication' 10. Russell believes that one of the primary roles of the art teacher is "to create an atmosphere for the common discovery of the conceptions that are current and significant for contemporary life, and then to 'pass on this habit of active association to a wider society beyond the school'"11.

Another basic role of the art teacher is to have empathy with the human priorities and needs of his/her pupils, and to stimulate and develop in them the beliefs, emotions and conceptions which are relevant to them personally within the context of contemporary society.

A truly competent teacher, i.e. professionally, artistically and aesthetically, must therefore understand the nature and role of education (more specifically Art, Craft and Design Education) in the context of the school, the educational system and society as a whole.

The art teacher must understand the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of young people if the personal, social, artistic and aesthetic education of the student is to flourish and develop through the complex nature of Art, Craft and Design.

10. Barclay Russell, Education Through Art, p2.

11. Ibid, p6.

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Having mentioned the freedom of expression inherent in art which is uniquely beneficial to the natural development of the child both in education and society, Lowenfeld and Brittain in their book Creative and Mental Growth believe that the art teacher holds an important position in enabling this freedom to grow and flourish.

Certainly the freedom of the individual student in the classroom must in some cases be limited by the physical environment and by the limits of behaviour the society imposes. However, the symbolic expression of these feelings need not be limited: the opportunity to put concerns, real or imagined, into constructive art forms should never be minimized, 12.

Within the context of the role of the art teacher in education, particularly with regard to the new Junior Certificate programme for Art, Craft and Design, it is beneficial to note Lowenfeld's and Brittain's concluding paragraphs on the role of the art teacher in secondary schools.

At a time when there is an increasing concern for individual freedom and discontent with existing social conditions, we, (as art teachers), must find ways to use the power of the mind creatively and to unlock the potential of every secondary school youngster. Theories differ as to why students paint and draw as they do, but art must play a major role in the school setting; to produce a means for a constructive outlet of emotions, for the development of creative thinking, and for the enrichment and cultivation of aesthetic awareness, 13.

Thus in conclusion, while noting the aims and values of the Junior Certificate Programme for Art, Craft and Design, the essence of the value of art education lies in the promotion of freedom of thought and expression of the individual student. Art Education also contributes to the aesthetic, moral and spiritual development of the young person through the creative and expressive processes and also helps in promoting a tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of others.

12. Viktor Lowenfeld, W. Lambert Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth p349.

13. Ibid, p351.

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THE AIMS AND VALUE OF THE
PROJECT METHOD IN ART EDUCATION

A group of children around a conference table setting up goals, making plans, assuming responsibilities or evaluating achievements represents an essential prelude to intelligent responsible citizenship. Children learn from one another through sharing ideas. Group action is more effective when several individuals have shared in the planning. Individuals find a place in group projects for making contributions in line with special talents, and morale is higher when children work together co-operating on group projects. This is not meant to imply that there is no place in the modern classroom for the individual effort; there should be a time for both individual and group activity' 14.

The aims of the project method in art education include promoting the pupils powers of communication and social skills. The project method also develops the pupils ability to intellectually and verbally respond to his other environment.

Lowenfeld and Brittain, on discussing the value of the project method, particularly with regard to the creative and intellectual development of sixth grade pupils in the United States of America, write:-

'The ability of children to participate in group activities can readily be seen when children work together on murals. Children of this age usually have the urge to work together in group activities, but it may be the child who withdraws from such activities who needs the social experience most. To a great extent democracy is based on social action' 15.

Lowenfeld and Brittain elaborate on the benefits of group projects within Art Education by noting the importance of the role of the art teacher in stimulating group activity.

'A child who avoids the group and who is unable to relate to his own experiences in his drawings may need some support from the teacher in order to develop greater social awareness. Experiences such as being in charge of a section of a mural may be of value. Certainly the individual's contribution to the group should be recognised and a sensitive teacher can ensure that each child is able to participate' 16.

14. Ragan B. Williams - Modern Elementary Curriculum, New York, Abbeville Press, p192.

15. Lowenfeld and Brittain, 'Creative and Mental Growth', p297.

16. Ibid, p298.

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Any given project particularly with regard to Art, Craft and Design Education should provide a concrete learning experience for the pupil. It may involve an environmental study (The value of which I will discuss at a later stage) or it may be kept of the confines of the school or art room. The latter type of project could be linked to another discipline such as English, history or Geography.

With regard to the Second Year pupils in the Mercy College in Howth and their group project based on the sea and it's environment i.e. Howth Harbour as a source (which will be discussed at length in Chapter 5), it should be noted that the actual process of the project in Art, Craft and Design Education, should promote the pupils drawing skills and confidence in handling materials. The art teacher must also create a situation that will motivate the pupil's emotional, intellectual and perceptual powers in a creative way.

Motivation is intrinsically linked to effective teaching and hence learning experience and is of paramount importance when considering the
... of any project such as the source and how it will stimulate a creative response in the pupil/pupils.

Motivation consists of internal processes which spur us on to satisfy some need.

Sufficient motivation to learn must be present if satisfactory school learning is to take place, 17.

There are numerous psychologists who have theorised on human motivation including Freud (The Psychoanalytic View), Skinner (The Behavioural View) which includes Bandura's Social Learning Theory, Maslow (The Humanistic View) and Bruner (The Cognitive View which stems from Piaget's theories of Educational Psychology), 18.

Within the context of the group project with Art, Craft and Design Education, it is perhaps beneficial to note in particular Jerome Bruner's cognitive view of motivation 19.

17. Joseph D. Novak, A Theory of Education, London, p97

18. Ibid, Chapters 3 and 4

19. Ibid, p46 - 108

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Human behaviour is influenced by the way individuals perceive things. People are pushed and pulled in a variety of directions by various forces. The direction behaviour takes is explained by assuming that individuals experience some kind of 'disequilibrium' which they feel compelled to overcome. The technique recommended by Bruner (and Bigge) for structuring discovery learning sessions are intended to cause students to want to find out more about some topic or to heighten their perceptions.

For example, the art teacher might develop and instigate a 'sensory trail' based on an aspect of the environment 20 (see Chapter 5 and the Year Group Project based on the Sea - Howth Harbour). The 'trail' would encourage pupils to utilize all of their senses and to observe, investigate, analyse and record the sights, sounds and smells of that environment, using the observational studies and recorded information as a bases for a group project in a particular craft e.g. weaving.

Bruner's theory in short is concerned with fostering in students the desire to find out more for themselves. A 'sensory trail' stimulates self-motivation and learning in the pupil in that the 'lesson' takes place in an environment other than the classroom. It encourages the pupil to investiage and record an environment which he/she may not be familiar with, or perhaps takes for granted, to work as a group or team, and to record information as the basis for further creative investigation and expression.

Bruner's view is similar to Maslow's Humanistic Theory of Motivation 21 in that he believes that individuals engage in higher level activities when all their basic needs are satisfied.

He argues that individuals have another kind of need. Many of the things people do, he says, are motivated by curiosity, an urge to explore, or simply an impulse to try something for the fun of it. These factors are known as 'intrinsic forces of motivation' i.e. the core from within the individual which stimulates the students natural curiosity drive. Intrinsic motivation is influenced by the response of others to this drive, another key factor being the degree of interest the child derives from the learning experience. 'Extrinsic forces' of motivation include marks, grades, school reports, teacher approval, success/failure and achievement motivation. However, it is essential to note the importance of the role of the teacher in stimulating both intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation in the pupil.

20. Lowenfeld and Brittain, 'Creative and Mental Growth'
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21. Ibid, p79.

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Bruner believes that human motivation in the learning experience involves the teacher activating the students desire to know i.e. to solve problems through experiencing disequilibrium.

However, it should be noted that the art teacher when preparing the art programme should take into consideration the pupil's ability, environmental and socio-economic background. Different environments make different demands on individuals, and individuals respond differently to the same environment. Therefore a set curriculum cannot possibly suit every individual.

Elliot W. Eisner writes:-

'Children differ not only with respect to developmental level, they differ with respect to the cultural background in which they live and which affects their view of the world. These differences deal with economic conditions, with social status, with geographic locale, in short, with all factors other than those that are developmental.

'The recognition' that cultural factors affect how a particular educational environment will be regarded by a child or group of children underscores the need to consider if not only with respect to the formation of goals for the teaching of art but for deciding on content and method as well' 22.

A child's world is very much influenced by his immediate surroundings and experiences. The project in Art, Craft and Design education should initially, at least, relate to the pupil's concrete experience which will provide a solid base for the art teacher to build and expand on. Eisner expands on this concept:-

A child living in an urban ghetto might work in an art programme with goals, content, and method quite different from a child of the same age but living in a well-to-do suburb, 23.

It should be noted that prior to group projects, pupils should work on an individual basis, solving problems themselves. For example, the second year project which is discussed in Chapter Five is basically concerned with using observational studies and designs based on the group trail around Howth Harbour as a source for tapestry. The pupils final woven pieces are then secured together to form a group wall-hanging based on the pupils observations and sensory experiences on that visit to Howth.

22. Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, p61

23. Ibid, p61

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However, prior to the group visit to Howth, pupils were introduced to the basic skills, techniques and processes of weaving together with experimenting with a variety of materials such as yarns, fabrics, waste materials etc. Pupils were also introduced to basic design processes such as decision making concepts, composition and arrangement. Therefore pupils were familiar with the processes and skills necessary in carrying out the project over a period of time i.e. observational studies through to design for craft through to the execution and completion of the tapestry pieces.

The value of the project method may also be seen in the development of pupils powers of communication and social skills as it creates a situation where by pupils have to communicate and work together to solve particular problems before achieving an overall aim, therefore co-operation and group effort is essential.

The pupils learn from direct experience (e.g. observing and recording the sea environment in Howth), from observing and listening to the teacher, and from each other (intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation). The group project method provides an opportunity for peer teaching which in turn instills self awareness and confidence in the pupil's intellectual and communicative ability.

Eisner discusses the value of group interaction, teaching and learning in his assessment of the importance of the evaluation of art work:-

'A useful technique for reevaluation in art education is the group critique. This method consists of having students display one or more pieces of their work, describing the work and then soliciting reactions from their classmates such a procedure has several potential benefits. First, it allows each student to discuss what he did and, thus, to have some practice in the critical realm of the art curriculum. Second, it allows students to systematically learn how other students have fared with the problems they undertook. The critique makes public not only their successes but their failures as well and provides students with the invaluable realisation that art demands and risks, by definition, yields some results that fail to meet the mark. Third, it provides the teacher with an opportunity to use student comments diagnostically. To what do students respond in the work of their peers: its technical quality, its ingenuity, its aesthetic character, its subject matter? By noticing what students see and react to first, the teacher is in a better position to understand what students miss seeing. Obviously such information has implications for curriculum and instruction, 24.

24. Elliot W. Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, p61.

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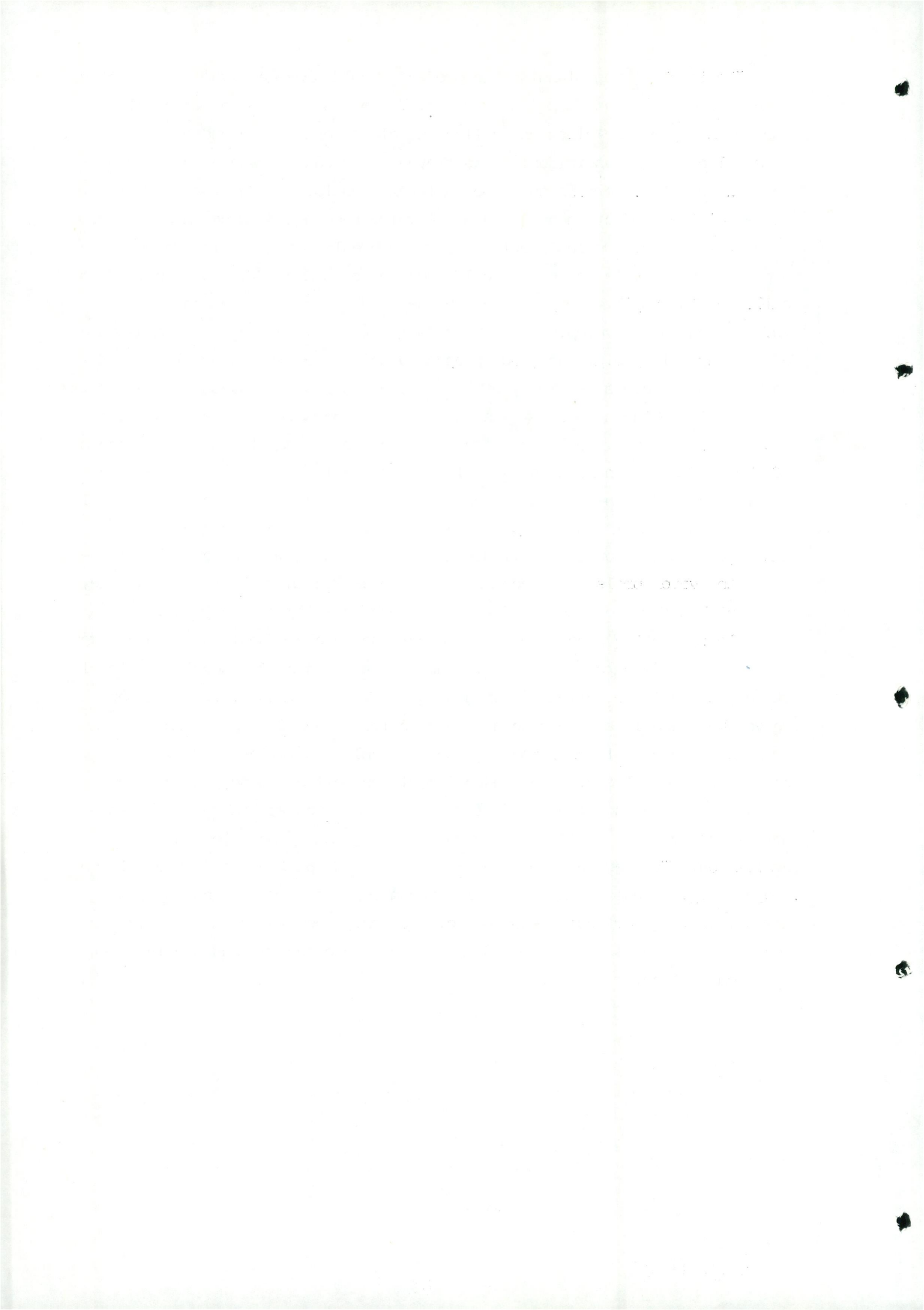
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The teacher when planning the project should provide a variety of tasks which are distributed among the group e.g. the distribution of materials at the beginning of the class and collecting class work at the end of the lesson.

The allocation of individual tasks prevents a situation where the bulk of work is left to a certain number of diligent pupils. During the initial stages of the project these tasks may involve reading, drawing, map-making, interviewing etc. Duties should be divided evenly among pupils, so that each pupil is responsible for a particular section or stage of the project. This calls for the pupil to report back to the group with her research and information thus developing her individual powers of communication and sense of responsibility e.g. the group project based on Howth with pupils writing and reading in class a summary of their observations and investigations during their visit to the harbour within the pupil himself and the class as a whole. The teacher should reinforce the fact to the pupils that the success of the project depends on individual input as well as group input i.e. each pupil to consider the necessary techniques, processes and choice of materials in their individual tapestry pieces as it will be part of the group wall hanging. Duties should be well divided between the group but care should be taken to avoid pupils from becoming too absorbed in individual tasks as they will not benefit from the advantages of group activity and learning.

To ensure the success of the project the teacher should have undertaken the necessary research beforehand. The aims and objectives should be clearly stated in the introduction and in subsequent lesson plans e.g. design for weave where pupils are to concentrate on colour, shape, composition, arrangement etc whilst remembering the particular qualities of weaving the choice of material etc. The project should be well organised in terms of break-up of time and allocation of various areas such as, introduction and motivation, visual and literary research, designing, discussion and evaluation. Teacher demonstration is an important part of any lesson plan or project e.g. demonstrating particular techniques in weaving such as setting up a warp, weaving particular shapes etc. Not only does it act as a motivating factor but it helps to clarify and reinforce the objective and problems set for each particular lesson.



Discussion and evaluation should be an integral part of the project, instigated by the teacher, calling for the pupils intellectual and discriminating responses. Evaluation questions should call upon pupils to make judgements which do not depend on personal likes or dislikes but on the qualitative informed opinions. Finally, the teacher should ensure that the original aims and objectives of the project are kept in mind i.e. that the pupils are to develop their personal responses, to the sea and its environment through observational studies and analysis, through to designs for a group wall hanging executed through tapestry/weaving, while developing particular techniques and processes associated with design and the craft of weaving. Lastly the teacher should encourage the development of communicative and social skills during the group project.

THE VALUE AND AIMS OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT

An environmental project aims at developing the pupils perceptual awareness of the social and visual qualities of the environment, be it rural or urban. It aims to promote the pupils ability to make quantitative and qualitative judgements about his environment and to verbalise his responses to the environment. It offers an approach for discovering and understanding the aesthetic and design aspects of a given environment.

The pupils we teach, live in a world of ready made goods and structures. Thus it is easy for pupils and adults to forget that our environment is not simply given to us but is created by human effort and can be changed, altered and improved by human effort. When pupils understand why people create object and images they can see their environment not just as a physical entity but as a large scale expression of human needs, 25.

An environmental project enables the teacher to broaden the pupils experience of art by taking it beyond the confines of the art room. It may involve drawing and painting on the street, discovering and collecting scrap materials for three-dimensional work, or an investigation of the natural environment, all of which enables the pupil to explore and experience art on a much broader scale.

Information and research drawings are then taken back to the art room, where the pupils critical abilities are developed and tested. Their powers of selecting, combining, arranging and designing are developed as the project is carried from its initial stage to the design stage.

The actual finished product be it aesthetically functional or aesthetically non-functional, instills in the pupils a sense of achievement and accomplishment.

Generally pupils leave the art class after an eighty minue period of drawing or painting. Many view art as a thing that is totally isolated from their life in general. The environmental project is a meaningful and valuable way of taking art out of the art room. It enables the pupils to relate to something concrete, that touches their everyday experiences, whether it is simply drawing a given environment e.g. the sea and it's environment, with an emphasis on for example colour and shape, or whether it is drawing people, observing how they chape their environment.

26. Laura Chapman - Approaches to Art in Education,
New York, Harcourt Bruce, Jovanovich, 1978, p92.

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CHAPTER FIVE
THE CLASS PROJECT

From my own personal project my class project was devised, which was carried out by my second year class in the Mercy College, Coolock.

Coolock is a residential area approximately five miles to the north of Dublin city centre. The community is generally of a low to low/middle socio-economic status. The school which is run by Roman Catholic Mercy Order of Nuns caters exclusively for the education of six hundred girls from Coolock and immediate catchment area in North Dublin. The Mercy Order have had a convent in Coolock since the 1950's but today there are only three nuns on the teaching staff including the Principal - Sr. Moira.

The promotion of the arts including Art, Craft and Design within the education school system enjoys a high profile incorporating both time-tabled lessons and numerous extra-curricular activities such as open days, exhibitions, cultural events, and competitions designed to promote aesthetic and creative development both on a local and national level. They auction off craftwork to raise money for school equipment such as audio/video equipment, together with frequent visits to relevant exhibitions, galleries, museums and places of historical and cultural interest.

Mercy College has two large and well equipped art rooms with one full-time (Ms. Angela Kearns) and two part-time teachers, and more than two-thirds of the students are involved in Art, Craft and Design Education during their schooling in the College. Along with a wide range of observational, recording and design skills, importance is placed on the manipulation of skills and techniques in a number of craft areas such as ceramics, fabric printing, lino and screen printing, mixed media and soft sculpture, weaving, graphic design etc, together with linking particular design and craft areas with other subjects such as English, Business Studies, History and Home Economics. Indeed the fifth year pupils have recently completed a mural in the music room which depicts the history of music. At a recent open day the parents of the students were invited to attend the opening of the music room by the local Bank Manager and T.D. The school places great importance in involving the parents of the students and local business and political community in the promotion of certain school activities, particularly with regard to specific projects involving the visual and performing arts.

The second year students with whom I devised and undertook the group project based on the sea and it's environment ranged from between thirteen and fourteen years of age, and generally had a low to medium level of artistic

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ability. That is to say my twenty six second year pupils were of a mixed ability in relation to Art, Craft and Design. However, they were highly motivated with regard to their interest in and appreciation of the subject, and this was one of the deciding factors in my initial choice of this particular class group for my class project. However, it is true to say that I no longer have the right to claim the project as my own; it now is our class project.

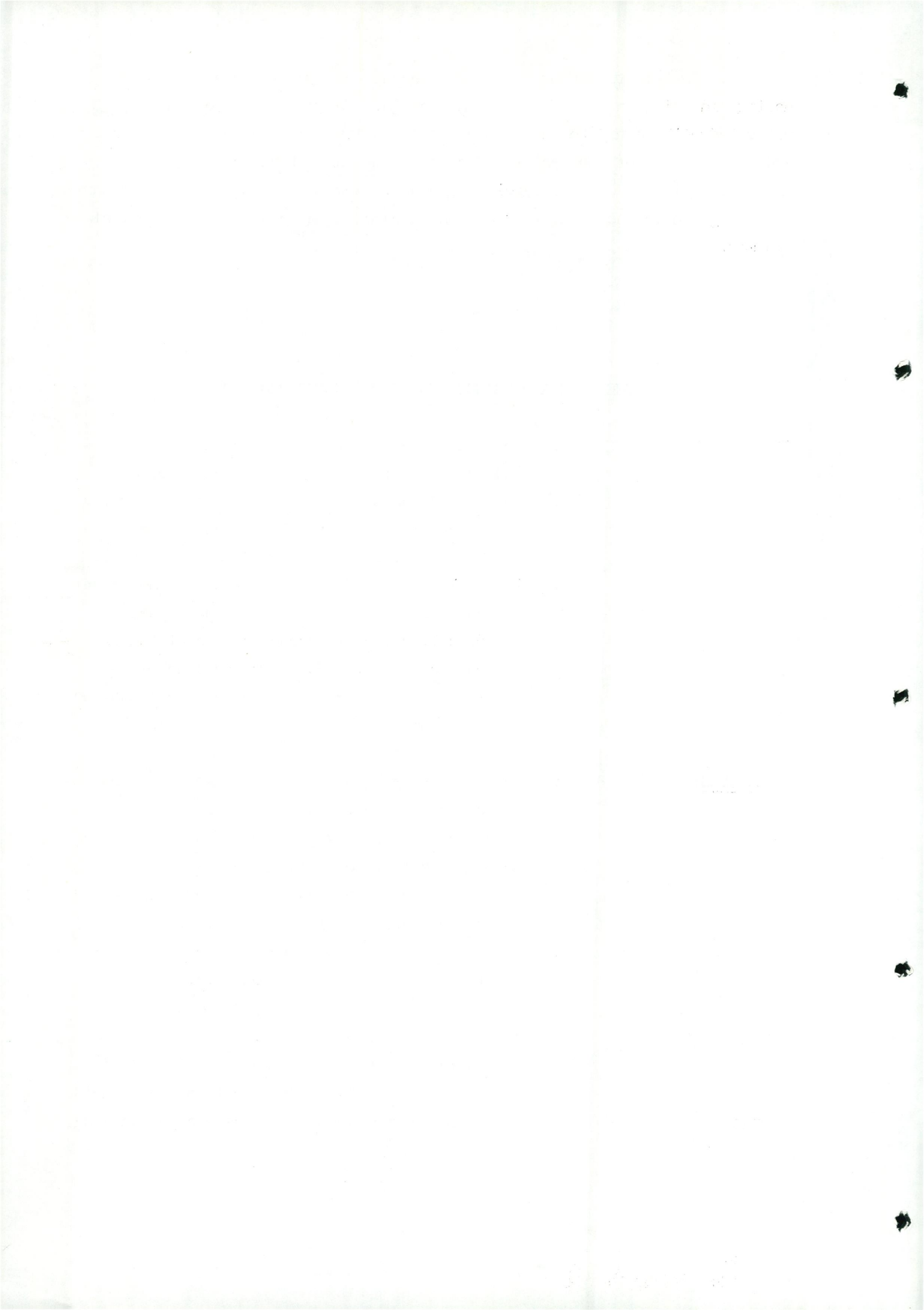
THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CLASS PROJECT

AIMS:

- a. To promote the development of communicative and social skills through the group project.
- b. To develop the student's ability to creatively, intellectually and verbally respond to her environment i.e. the sea and it's environment.
- c. To develop the students understanding and actual awareness of Art, Craft and Design in the historical, cultural, economic, social and personal contexts. (This included the pupil's ability to evaluate her own work and the work of others).

OBJECTIVES:

- a. To develop the student's ability to work from direct observation. This included the interpretation of a variety of visual experiences more particularly observing, recording and analysing the harbour environment of Howth as a direct source for design for weaving.
- b. The students were taught to analyse design problems involving 2D solutions i.e. weaving - colour, line, shape, texture, pattern, composition, arrangement etc.
- c. To enable the student to become familiar with a variety of materials, media, tools and equipment e.g. a variety of yarns, fabrics etc for weaving



- d. To familiarise the student with the vocabulary relevant in Art, Craft and Design e.g. weaving, tapestry, the warp and the weft.
- e. To begin to develop an aesthetic language through the exploration of relevant supporting artwork, both historical and contemporary in context e.g. Dufy and Marie Simonds-Gooling.
- f. To develop in the students their powers of appraisal, criticism and evaluation of work whilst in progress and upon completion.

PROCESS:

Drawing, painting, designing and then weaving tapestry panels based on the sea, which will be part of a final group wall hanging.

The class group were to develop particular skills and creative concepts in weaving, together with the development of colour, shape, texture and design ideas and processes through the use of relevant techniques and materials.

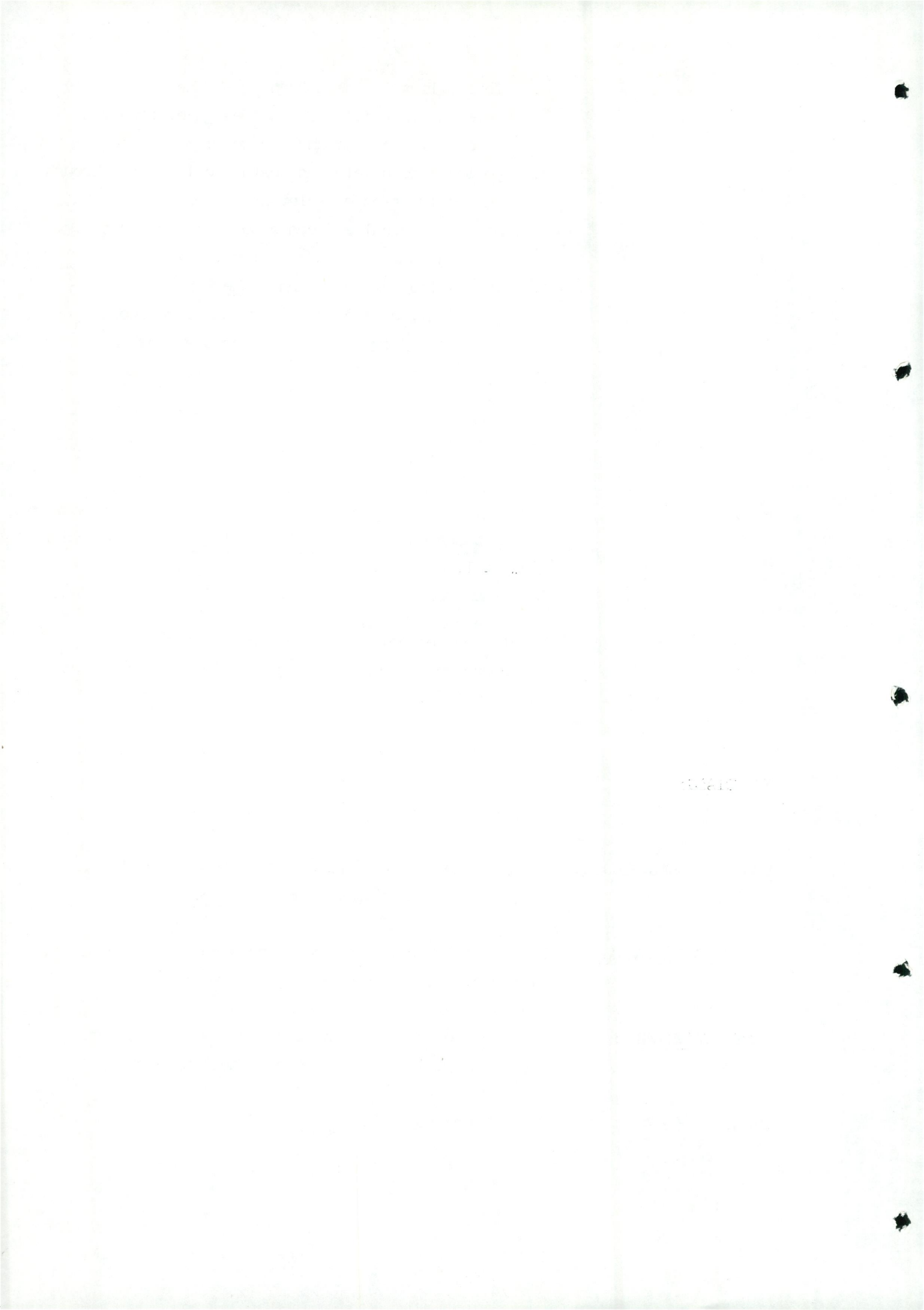
MATERIALS:

OBSERVATIONAL STUDIES: A variety of drawing materials such as pencils, charcoal, chalk, crayons, markers etc.

DESIGN FOR WEAVING: Materials for collage - coloured paper/card, scissors, glue etc.

TAPESTRY/WEAVING: A variety of coloured and textured yarns, fabrics, found materials, beads, buttons, netting etc.

TIME: 8 - 10 weeks approx.



ORGANISATION AND PLANNING OF THE PROJECT

When making preliminary drafts of the scheme of lesson plans for the project, I took into account the age and past experience of the pupils involved, so that the lessons set out were relevant and built and extended upon the pupils previous experiences.

A series of lesson plans were specifically set prior to the project to lay a solid foundation and to act as a spring board for the major project (see lesson note book). This series of lessons helped to promote the pupils design skills together with an introduction to weaving.

It should also be noted that Howth Harbour is within easy reach of Mercy College, Coolock. The Harbour is situated on a peninsula five miles to the north of Dublin City center and is approximately four miles from the school. The Second Year pupils were also familiar with the area, and the visit to Howth while promoting their observational skills, also developed their awareness and appreciation of their local environment.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The introduction is an important part of the project for the class group. Aims and objectives should be clearly stated along with practical demonstrations and discussions. The project 'Howth Harbour and it's environment began with a slide show which depicted the various elements of the environment, i.e. the different types of boats (Figs. 1 and 2), riggings, masts, sails, various types of ropes, fishing nets, (Fig. 3), chains, anchors etc which are found on the quay in Howth, together with the patterns and shapes revealed in the reflections in the water (Fig. 4). A discussion developed on the various patters, shapes, colours and textures evident in the various forms. The slide show acted not only as a motivating factor, but helped to emphasize the features one might concentrate on, when drawing in the environment.

The windows in the art room of Mercy College, have no blinds or any other means of blocking out natural light, therefore one really needs to use another room for the purpose of showing slides. I decided therefore, that the pupils would carry their learning experience into an aesthetic and functional end product, that is a hanging which could be placed on the art room windows when necessary. As the hanging is to be fixed to wooden poles, it can be moved and hung either on a wall or door in the art room, or elsewhere in the school such as the entrance hall.

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SENSORY TRAIL AROUND HOWTH HARBOUR

From the introduction and slide discussion on Howth Harbour, the pupils divided the area into three headings:-

1. The fishing trawlers and materials found at the West Pier
2. The Yachts in the Marina
3. Ireland's Eye - the lighthouse and the actual sea itself

The class was then evenly divided into groups of five pupils, with each group taking a specific area of Howth harbour to research and draw. From these drawings each member of the group would create a design for a tapestry which would become part of a final group hanging. Individual pupils were also selected to make maps of the area and write brief summaries of their experiences in Howth Harbour. This initial stage in the project promoted the pupil's powers in problem solving, planning, organising, co-operating, articulation and discussion and social interaction.

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PUPILS RESEARCH AND DRAWINGS

The pupils were allowed one morning to follow a previously devised trail of Howth Harbour, recording information and drawing various aspects of the environment (Figs. 5 and 6). Each pupil was also given a worksheet based on the harbour environment in Howth.

Each pupil brought with them a sketch book and the work was carried out using pencils, markers, chalks, crayons etc. The pupils visual perception and drawing skills developed while at the same time they were gaining knowledge about their local environment. As well as developing a visual means of communication, the pupils were encouraged to explain and comment on their experiences, to discuss and describe the various stages and developments in the project.

DESIGN STAGE

Recording the environment with its direct experience is a valuable, exciting and rewarding stage of the project. However, the lesson immediately following the environmental recording session is an important stage, determining the future development of the project.

From their drawings the pupils selected a number of interesting sections with an emphasis on creating positive and negative shapes and combining them into a balanced and harmonious composition. The pupils measured the wooden frames which they used for the woven tapestries, and using the collage process, and working on the same scale as the wooden frames, the pupils created a suitable design for weaving, remembering the particular techniques involved in weaving, i.e. weaving in blocks of colour, weaving diagonals, curves etc.

At this stage the pupils critical faculties were called upon for the purpose of identifying, selecting and combining relevant drawings. Their sense of composition and design was also taken into consideration at this stage.

Pupils then decided an overall colour scheme for the finished weave and decided on harmonious and complimentary colours which complimented this, thus promoting the pupils sense of colour, harmony and powers of selectiveness. The completed designs were executed through cutting and arranging coloured paper (Figs 7 & 8).

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Pupils were also introduced to the work of several artists who had responded to the sea and its environment in their respected artistic oeuvres. These artists included Monet, Nolde, Dufy and Marie Simmonds-Gooding (see Chapter Three). Pupils were encouraged to compare and contrast particular works, notably concentrating on colour, pattern, shape, compositions etc. This discussion also acted as a motivating factor in encouraging the pupils to develop their design skills when executing their own designs for weave.

Once the designs were completed the pupils selected and arranged the designs which they felt worked best for the final woven hanging. This evaluative stage encouraged pupils to verbalise their thoughts and feelings about the environment and its relationship to the project. By having to choose the most successful compositions, their sense of design and powers of critical selection were also put to the test.

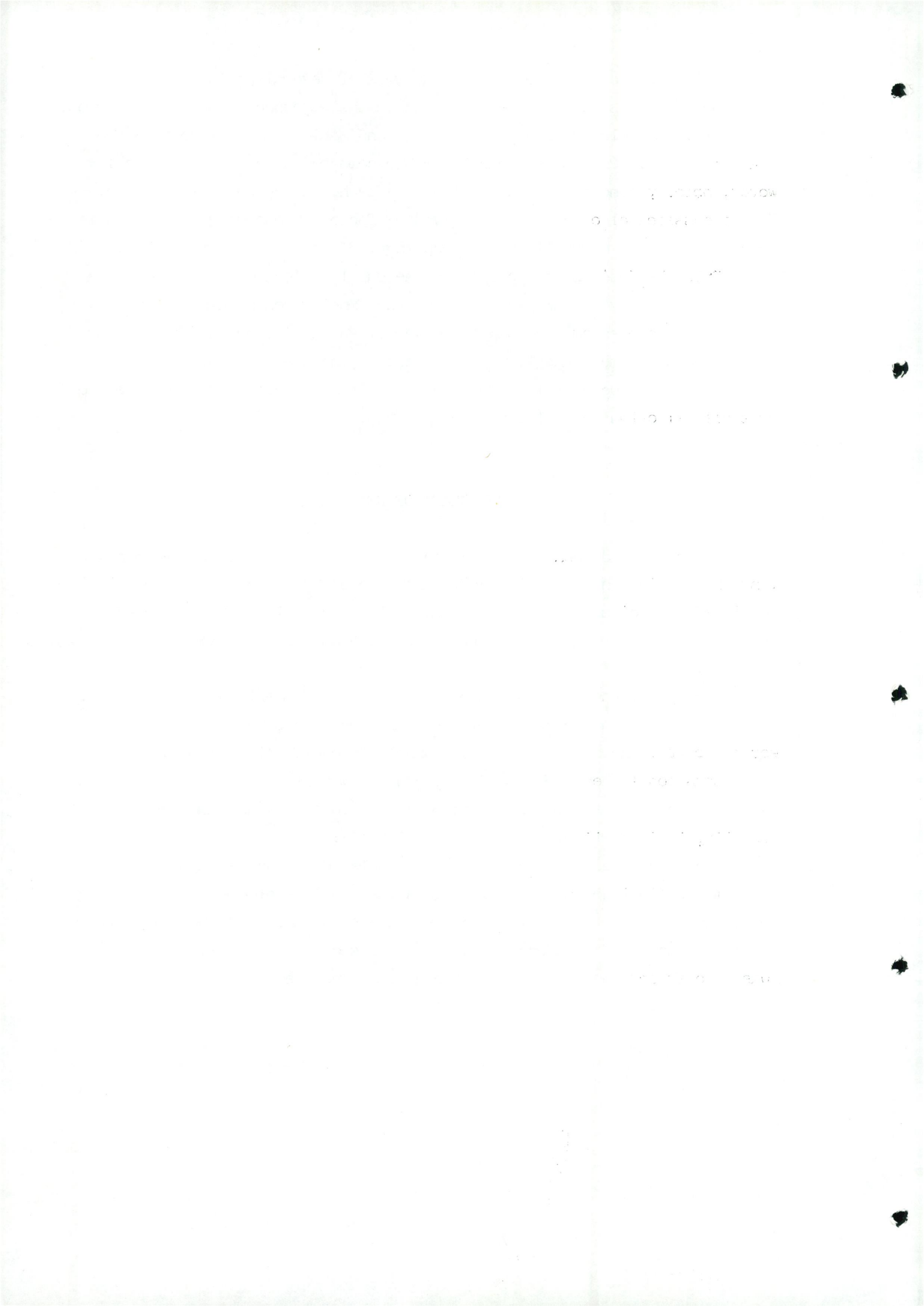
THE CRAFT OF WEAVING

The class had been introduced to the craft of weaving in previous lessons (see lesson plan notebook). Once the design process had been completed, the class group took responsibility for collecting and selecting materials, considering the overall composition and colour scheme of the design mock-ups.

Each pupil then set up a warp on the wooden frame/loom (Figs 9 & 10). It was important that each warp was exactly the same size as this made it easier to make the finished tapestry panels into a final woven hanging.

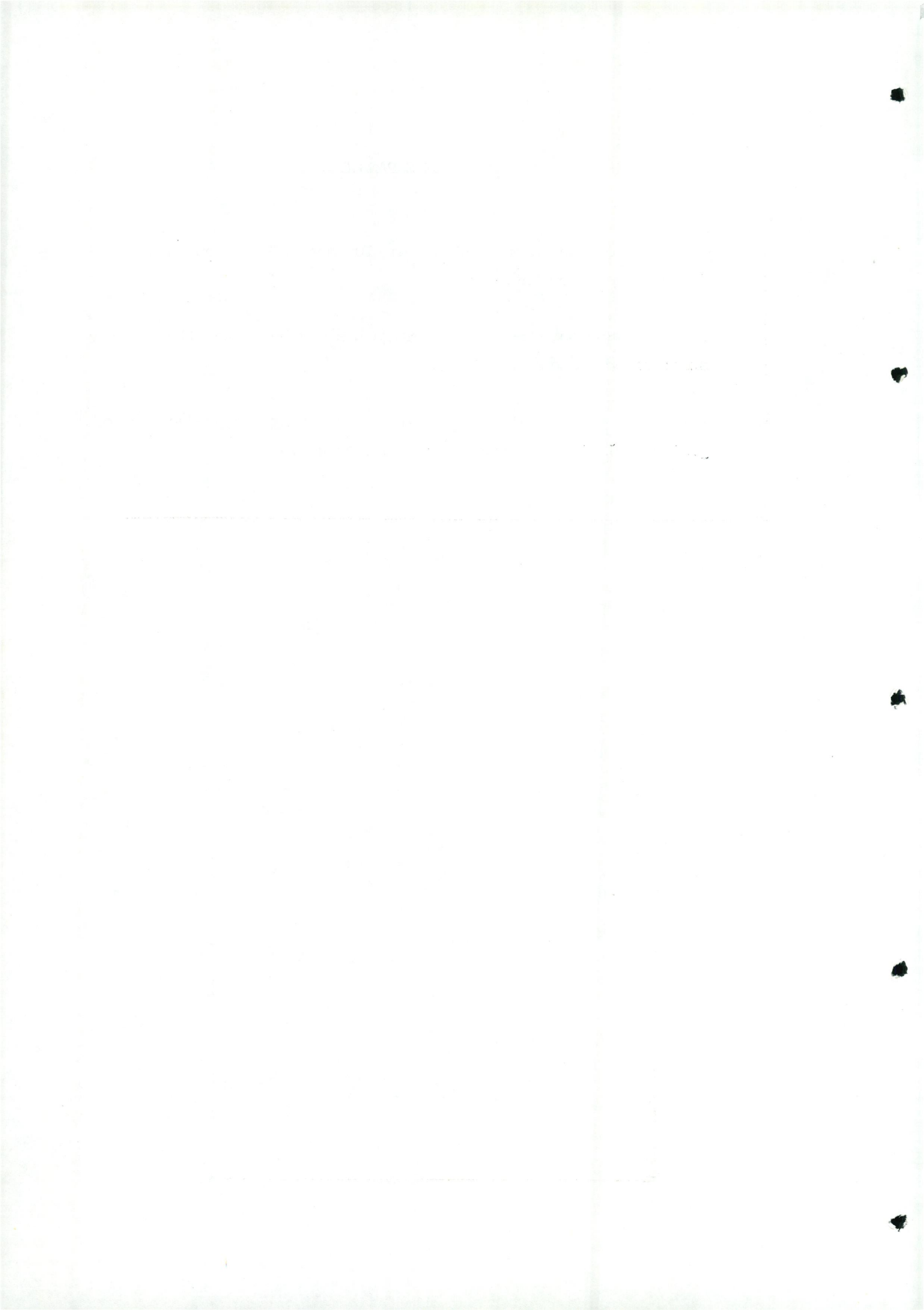
Each pupil then worked on their own individual tapestry pieces, taking into consideration the various techniques and materials necessary when executing their particular piece (Figs 11 & 12).

Once the tapestry pieces were are completed, these were secured together to form the final woven tapestry. Again the pupils evaluated the finished work, and arranged the completed pieces into a suitable and pleasing wall hanging. Once this was done the hanging was secured to wooden poles which made it easy for the hanging to be moved from one area to another.



POSSIBLE EXPANSIONS

- a. Worksheets for the purpose of seeking further information on Howth and the sea environment.
- b. Pupils could be set the task to design a story board to illustrate a historical or present day event.
- c. Pupils could paint a mural based on the sea using the project method to organise, select and execute ideas and designs.





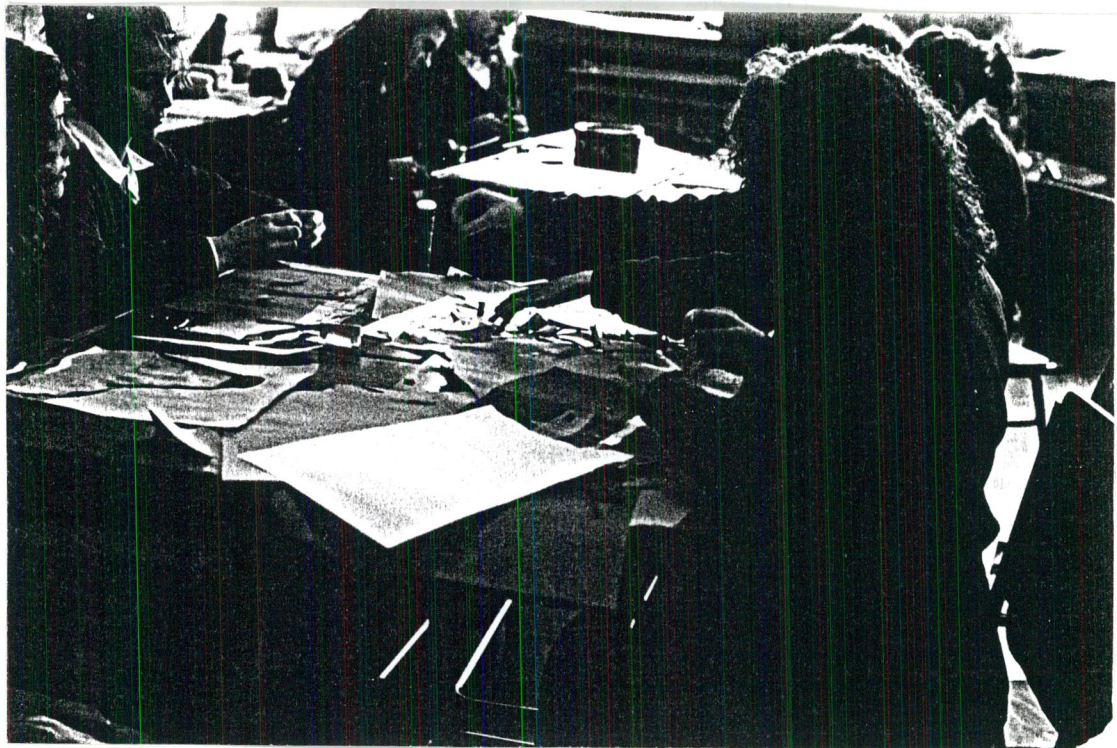
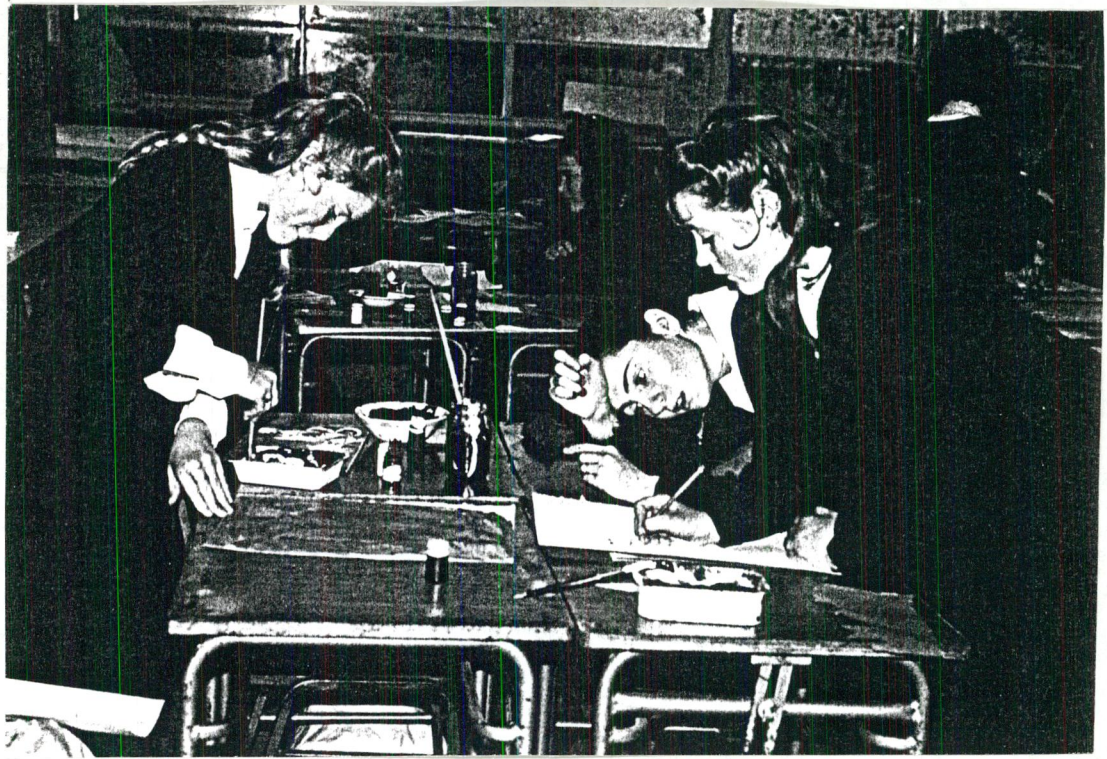








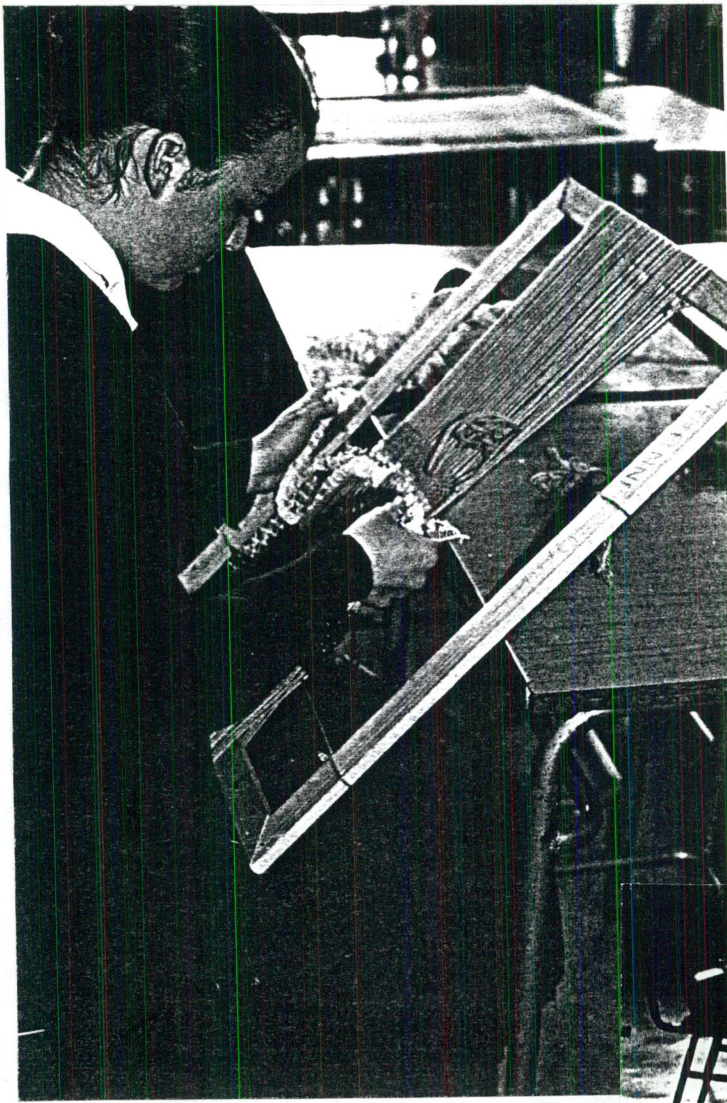












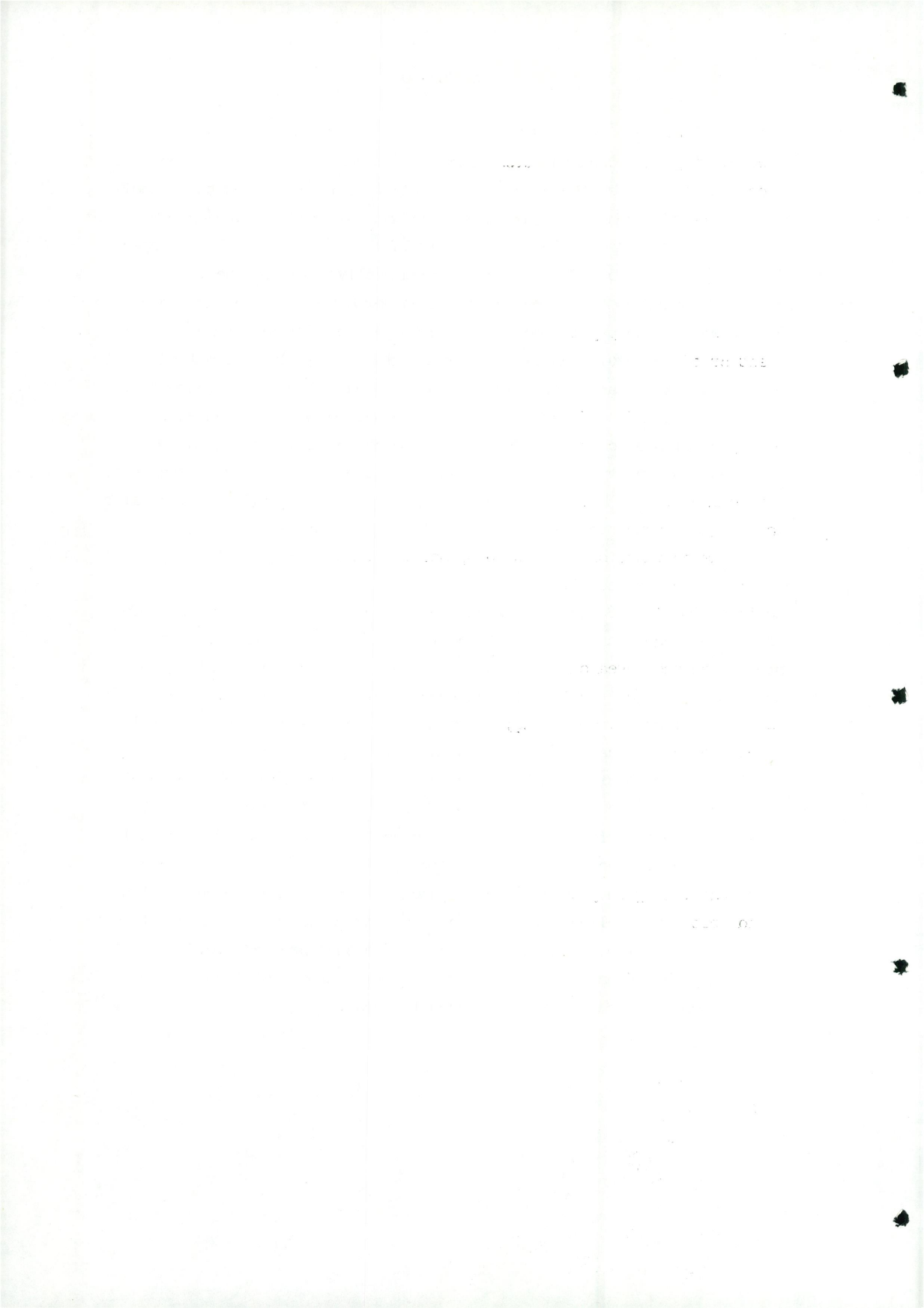


CONCLUSION

On concluding this documentation concerning the sea and it's environment, in which I have asserted the educational value firstly of art on the school curriculum and secondly of the importance and value of the project method on the art programme, it is worthy to note, in relation to the class project, the importance and benefits of an environmentally based project.

Through the environmental project based on Howth Harbour, we have noted the development of the pupil's perceptual awareness of the social and visual qualities of the enviroment. The project also promoted the pupil's ability to make quantative and qualitive judgements about a given environment i.e. Howth Harbour, and to discuss his/her responses to that environment. The environmental project also offerred an approach for discovering and understanding the aesthetic and design aspects of a given environment i.e. Howth harbour. It should also be noted that an environmental project also enables the teacher to broaden the pupil's experience of art by taking it beyond the confines of the art room, and provides a meaningful and valuable experience for the pupil.

The investigation of the natural environment of Howth Harbour allowed for the pupil's recording and observational skills to be developed. The information and research drawings were then taken back to the classroom where the pupils critical abilities were developed and tested. The pupil's powers of selecting, combining, arranging and designing were also developed as the project was carried from it's initial stage to the design stage. The pupil's sense of design and powers of critical selection were also developed through choosing the most successful compositions. The class group also took responsibility for collecting and selecting materials for the final tapestry pieces. Once this stage of the project was completed, discussion and evaluation again proved to be an integral part of the project calling for the pupil's intellectual and discriminating responses to the completed pieces. It was also noted that the actual finished product i.e. the wall-hanging based on the initial visit to Howth also instilled in the pupils a sense of achievement and accomplishment.



Having undertaken the environmental project based on the sea and its environment and using a group visit to Howth Harbour as a source it should also be noted that the value of the project may also be seen in the development of pupil's powers of communication and social skills as it created a situation where by the pupils had to communicate and work together to solve particular problems before achieving an overall aim. Therefore co-operation and group effort was essential.

The pupils learnt from direct experience (i.e. observing and recording the sea environment in Howth), from observing and listening to the teacher, and also, most importantly, from each other. The group project provided an opportunity for peer teaching which in turn instilled self awareness and confidence in the pupil's intellectual and communicative ability.

In conclusion, my own ability as an art teacher benefited from the project based on Howth Harbour in that I discovered the importance of researching and planning a sequence of lessons based on observations by the pupils in Howth, working towards a final group piece. I also noted the benefits of introducing relevant art history to the pupils prior to executing their designs for weave in that this encouraged them to explore and develop particular design concepts related to the sea i.e. colour, composition, arrangement etc. Looking at certain artists who have responded to the sea such as Dufy and Nolde, also promoted the pupil's evaluative and discursive powers, together with encouraging their appreciation and understanding of art history. As the pupils themselves had observed and responded to the sea and its environment, they were immediately able to relate to the works of particular artists which had also been influenced by the sea.

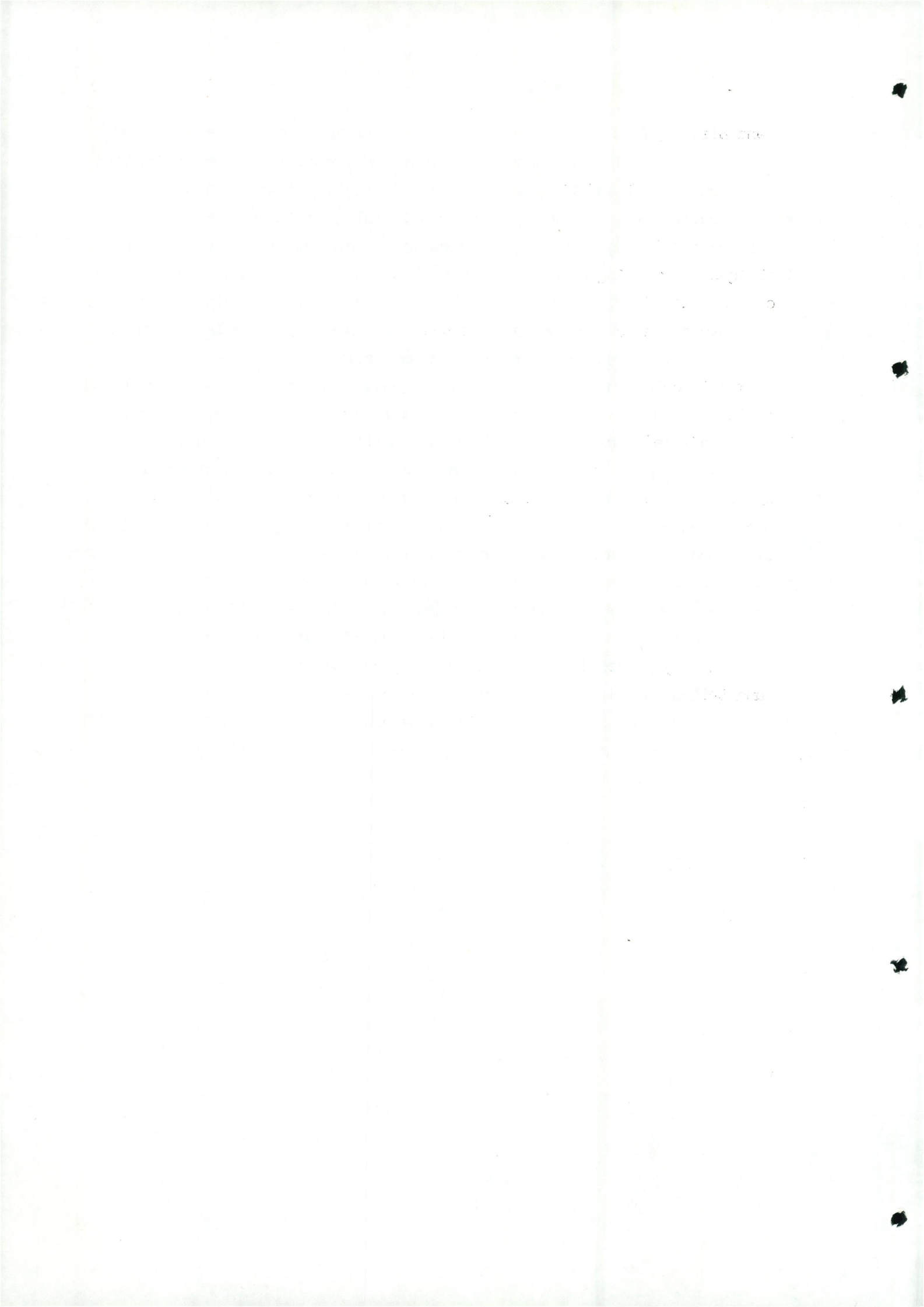
I also noted the importance of reinforcing to the pupils that the success of the project depended as much on individual input as well as group input i.e. each pupil considering the necessary techniques, processes and choice of materials in their individual tapestry pieces as these were to become part of the group wall-hanging. It was also important that duties were well divided between the group, but care was also taken to avoid pupils from becoming too absorbed in individual tasks as they would not benefit from the advantages of group activity and learning.

Suitable preparation for each class was also extremely important such as the aims and objectives being clearly stated in the introduction to the project and in subsequent lesson plans e.g. design for weave where pupils were to concentrate on colour, shape, composition, arrangement etc, whilst remembering the particular qualities of weaving. The choice of materials etc.

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It was also important that the project was well organised in terms of the break-up of time and allocation of various areas such as, introduction and motivation, visual and literary research, designing, discussion and evaluation. In my role as an art teacher, I also noted that demonstration was an extremely important part of each lesson e.g. demonstrating particular techniques in weaving such as setting-up the warp, weaving particular shapes etc. Not only did this act as a motivating factor, but it helped to clarify and reinforce the objectives and problems set in each particular lesson. In conclusion, my own personal work, in particular weaving, benefited from the experience of undertaking the environmental project based on the sea and it's environment, with the second year pupils of Mercy College, Coolock. I was immediately able to respond to the pupil's problems and questions notably with regard to certain weaving techniques. As my own personal project was also based on the sea and it's environment my knowledge and appreciation of the natural environment was also developed through an exploration of Howth harbour with my pupils, together with investigating the work of particular artists, both historical and contemporary in context, who have also had unique and enriching responses to the sea environment. Lastly, I believe that through an exploration of teaching methods, art history and my personal project, which has been analysed in this documentation in relation to my class project, my knowledge and ability as an art teacher together as an artist in my own right has been stimulated and developed through the various evocative moods and wonders of the sea and it's environment.



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