

NC 0020096 4



T886

COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINÉ IS DEARTHA
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

FLOWERS & LEAVES

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

IN

CANDIDACY FOR THE

DIPLOMA IN ART AND DESIGN FOR TEACHERS

BY

MARIA GLEESON

JUNE, 1991.

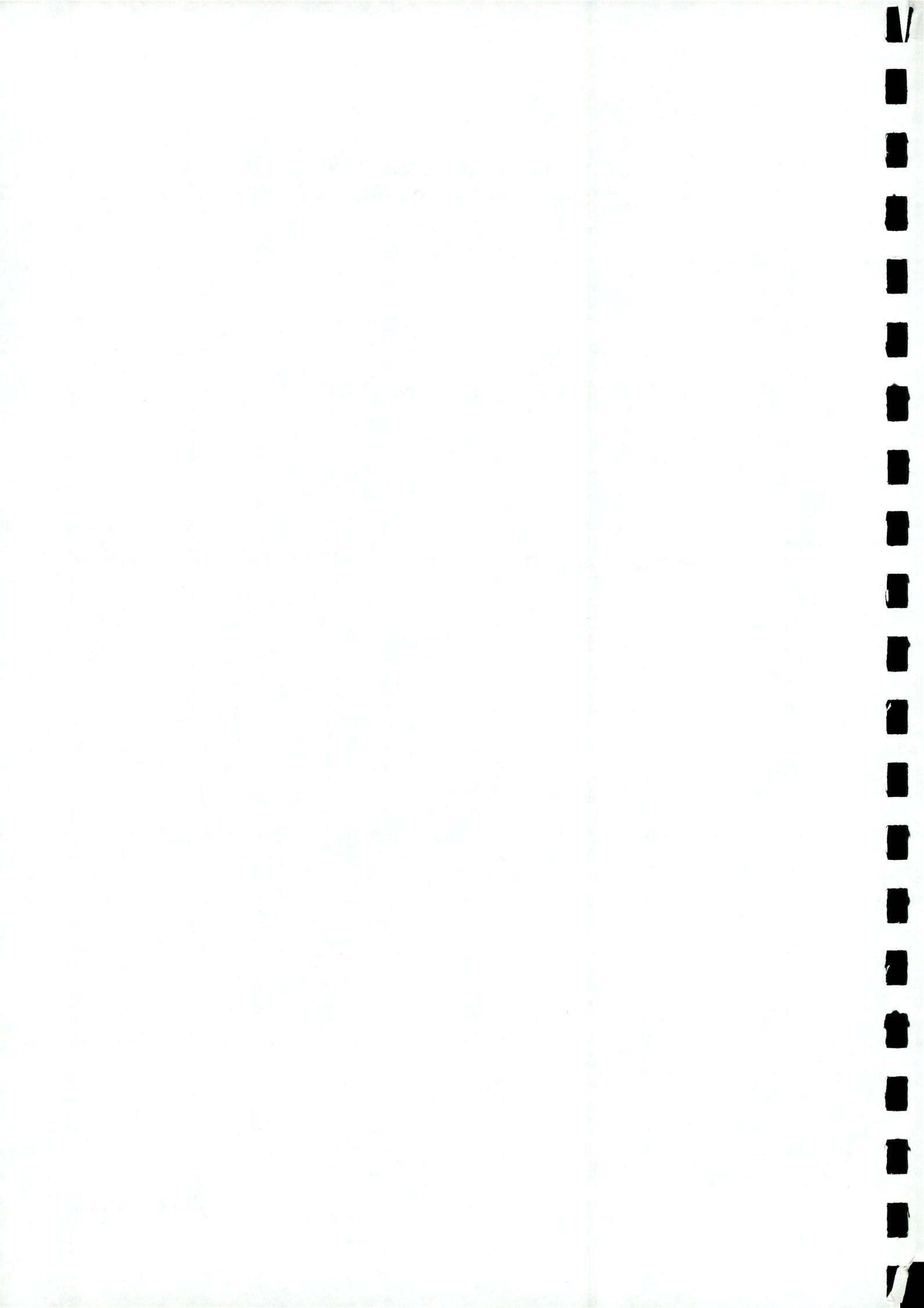


TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	PAGE NO.
Introduction	1
CHAPTER	
1 Personal Project, Flowers and Leaves	2
2 Historical Reference	13
3 Pupils' Project	24
4 Educational Relevance	36
5 Conclusion	40
6 Bibliography	41

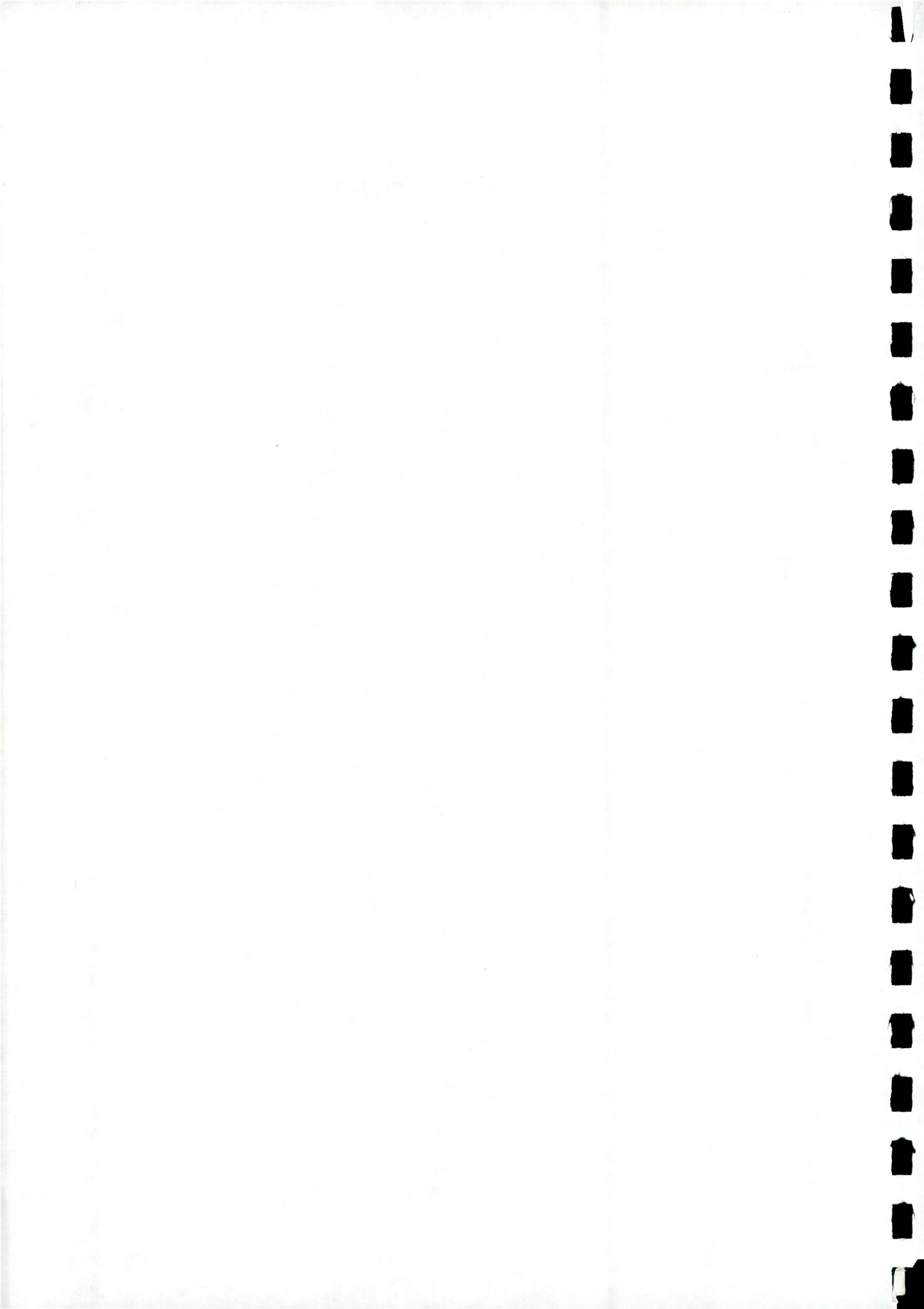
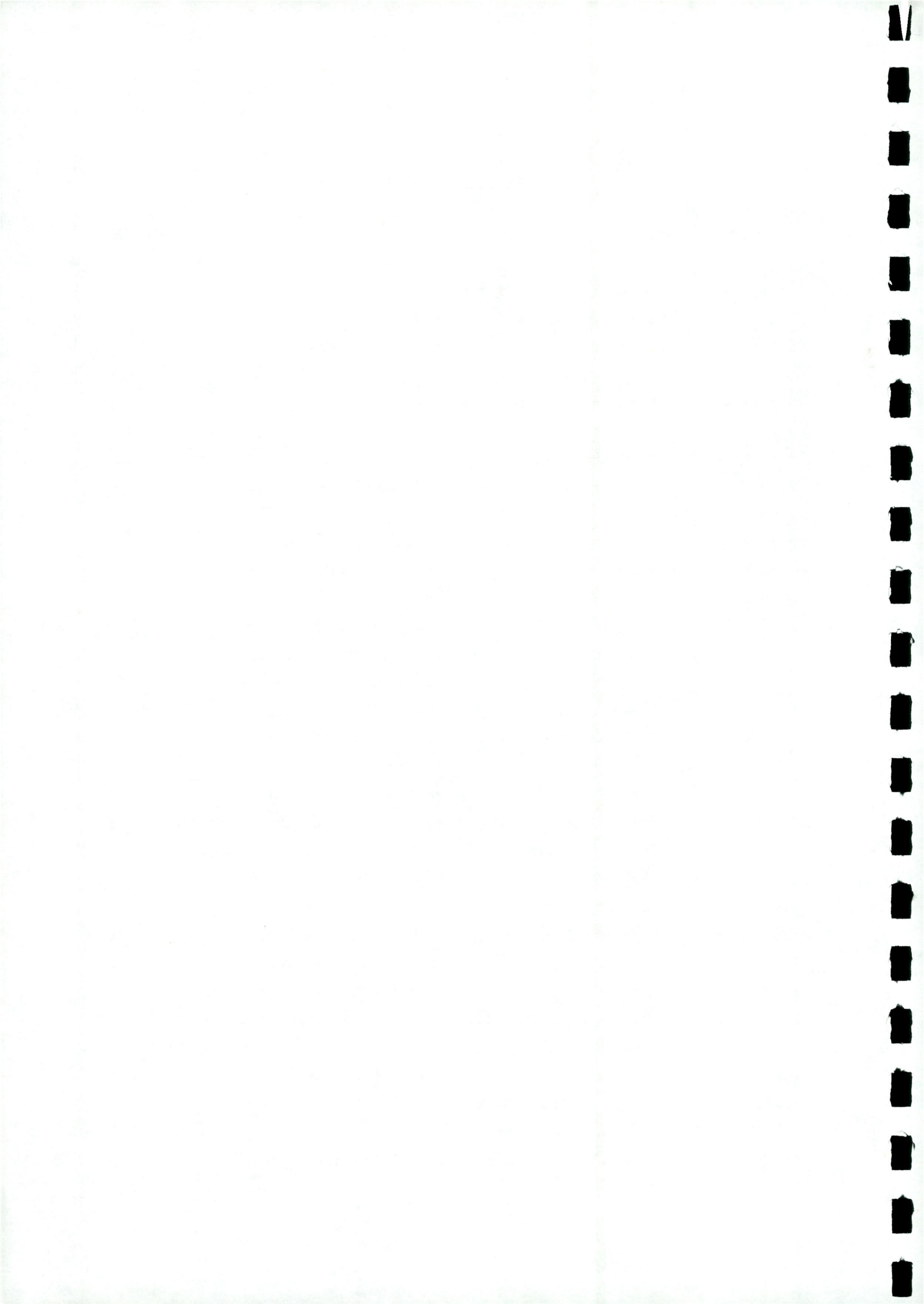


TABLE OF CONTENTS

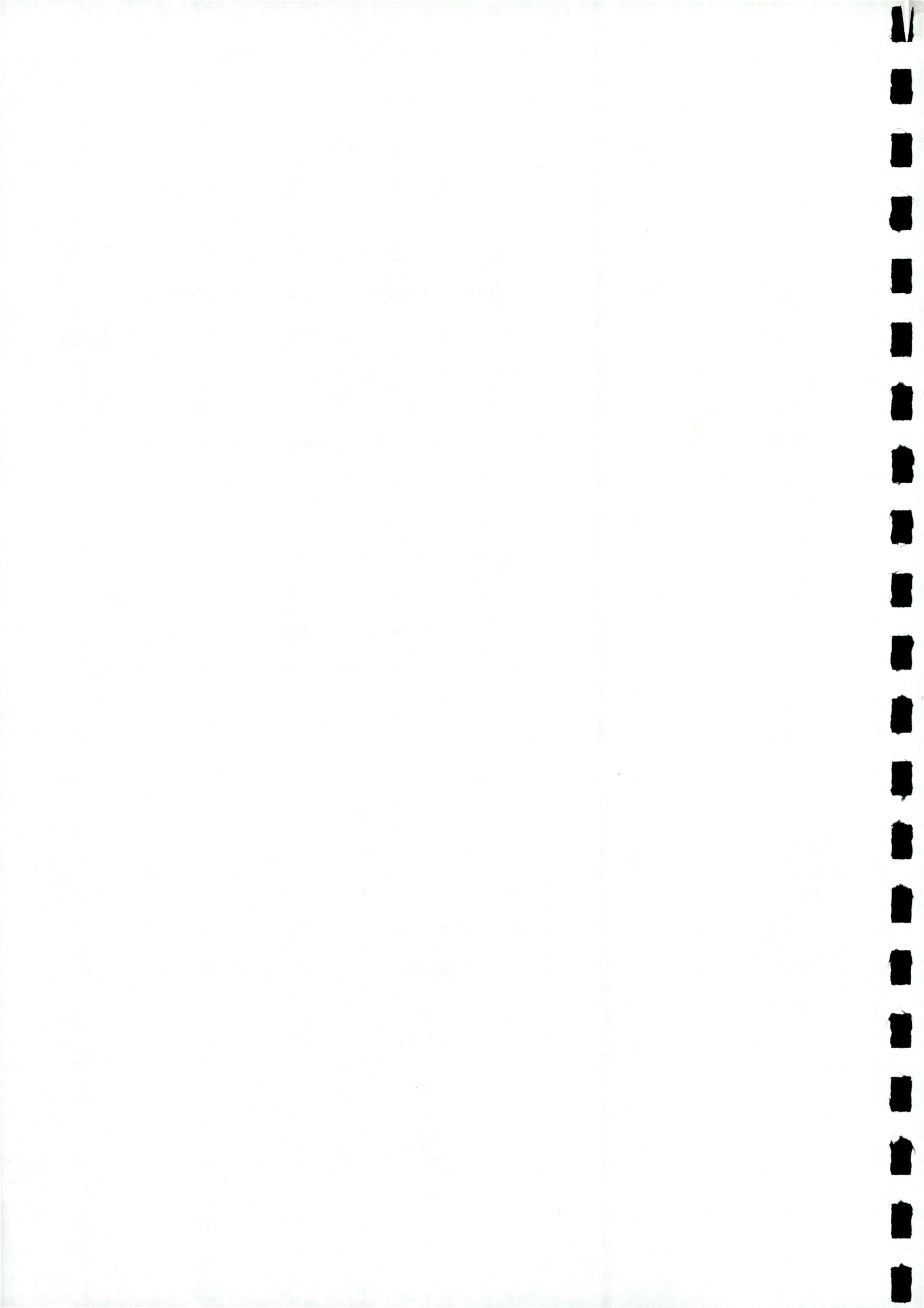
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	PAGE NO.
Figure 1 : Dried flowers and pot-pourri	3
Figure 2 : Dried flowers and pot-pourri	4
Figure 3 : Dried flowers and pot-pourri arranged on a coloured scarf	6
Figure 4 : Pot-pourri, Watercolour and Gouache	6
Figure 5 : Enlarged painting of dried leaves and pot-pourri in mixed media	8
Figure 6 : Enlarged painting of dried leaves and pot-pourri in mixed media	8
Figure 7 : Photo of weave in context with the source	10
Figure 8 : Summer painting, composition of picked flowers	12
Figure 9 : Summer painting, two irises	12
Figure 10 : Camille Pissarro, "Trees at Bazincourt", 1887	14
Figure 11 : Paul Cezanne, "Roses in a Green Vase" c. 1880	17
Figure 12 : Vincent Van Gogh, "Twelve Sunflowers in a Vase", 1880	20
Figure 13 : Vincent Van Gogh, "Fitillarias in a Copper Vase", 1887	20
Figure 14 : Michelle O'Donoghue, Final Designs for wall-hanging May, 1991	27
Figure 15 : Ross Gosker, Final Design for wall-hanging 1991	27
Figure 16 : Evanna Craig, Two designs for wall-hangings, 1991	28
Figure 17 : Cronan and David working on their silk wall-hangings, 1991	30
Figure 18 : June Hogan, Design and silk wall-hanging, 1991	32
Figure 19 : Sophie Bedell, Design and silk wall-hanging, 1991	32
Figure 20 : Mark Cunningham, Design and silk wall-hanging, 1991	33
Figure 21 : Susan Farrelly, Design and silk wall-hanging, 1991	33
Figure 22 : Evanna, Helen, Philip and Barry working on their designs, 1991	34
Figure 23 : 2nd Years completing their designs, 1991	34
Figure 24 : Helen, Philip, Barry, Cronan and David completing their silk designs, 1991	35
Figure 25 : Finished silk designs, by Philip, Helen and Ross	35



INTRODUCTION

As a graduate of printed textiles in the National College of Art & Design I was engaged in work which progressed from one theme to another from month to month. I worked mainly on designs for surface decoration such as interior soft and hard furnishings and fabrics for use as fashion garments. While working on a theme, I tried as much possible to exhaust the theme's possibilities, distorting, enhancing and refining the images all the time. This was very satisfying from a design point of view and produced a wide range of different and interesting solutions. Each project invariably was set by tutors or confined to the constraints of a competition. Therefore, each project and theme of the project was a discrete exercise not chosen by myself however much I enjoyed working on the various projects. My current project in comparison is more in the form of a seamless garment. It is the result of both a desire to satisfy a personal need to express myself and also a consequence of inspiration by many fine artists, some of whom I discuss in Chapter 2.

For many years I have admired certain fine artists and designers who have eloquently depicted natural forms; especially flowers in paintings and designs. I admire three artists particularly in this respect. They are Van Gogh, Pissaro and Cezanne who have very different styles, methods and techniques of working.



Chapter One
Personal Project
Flowers and Leaves

My personal project this year is based on study of natural forms particularly flowers and leaves and the differences in colour and texture from season to season. As visual sources, I have used collected leaves and twigs from various parks, collected pot-pourri and various plants in the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin.

To date I have made a series of small, medium and large scale drawings/paintings. These were carried out in mixed media, mainly gouache and water colour combined with black ink for definition. Together with these I have also designed and made a series of small sample weaves which are based on my theme "Flowers and Leaves". The drawings paintings and woven pieces were inspired by first-hand observation of nature. For the Winter category of my project I used pot-pourri as the principal source of observation. I find these fascinating in terms of colour which is very rich, in texture and form. Some of the forms are highly unusual and differ quite distinctly from fresh flowers and leaves. That is not to say that I prefer the dried to the fresh or vice versa for in fact I appreciate and enjoy them both equally.

The nature of the difference between the textures of Winter pot-pourri and flowers and leaves in Spring and Summer was a primary factor in influencing me to take a seasonal approach to the theme. I really find it fascinating that one source can differ so dramatically as a result of the passage of time, and I find the changes that occur within the seasons and their consequences on the natural forms inspiring to observe. The following photographs (see Figure 1 and 2) are of some of the dried flowers that I worked from in the Winter section of my project.

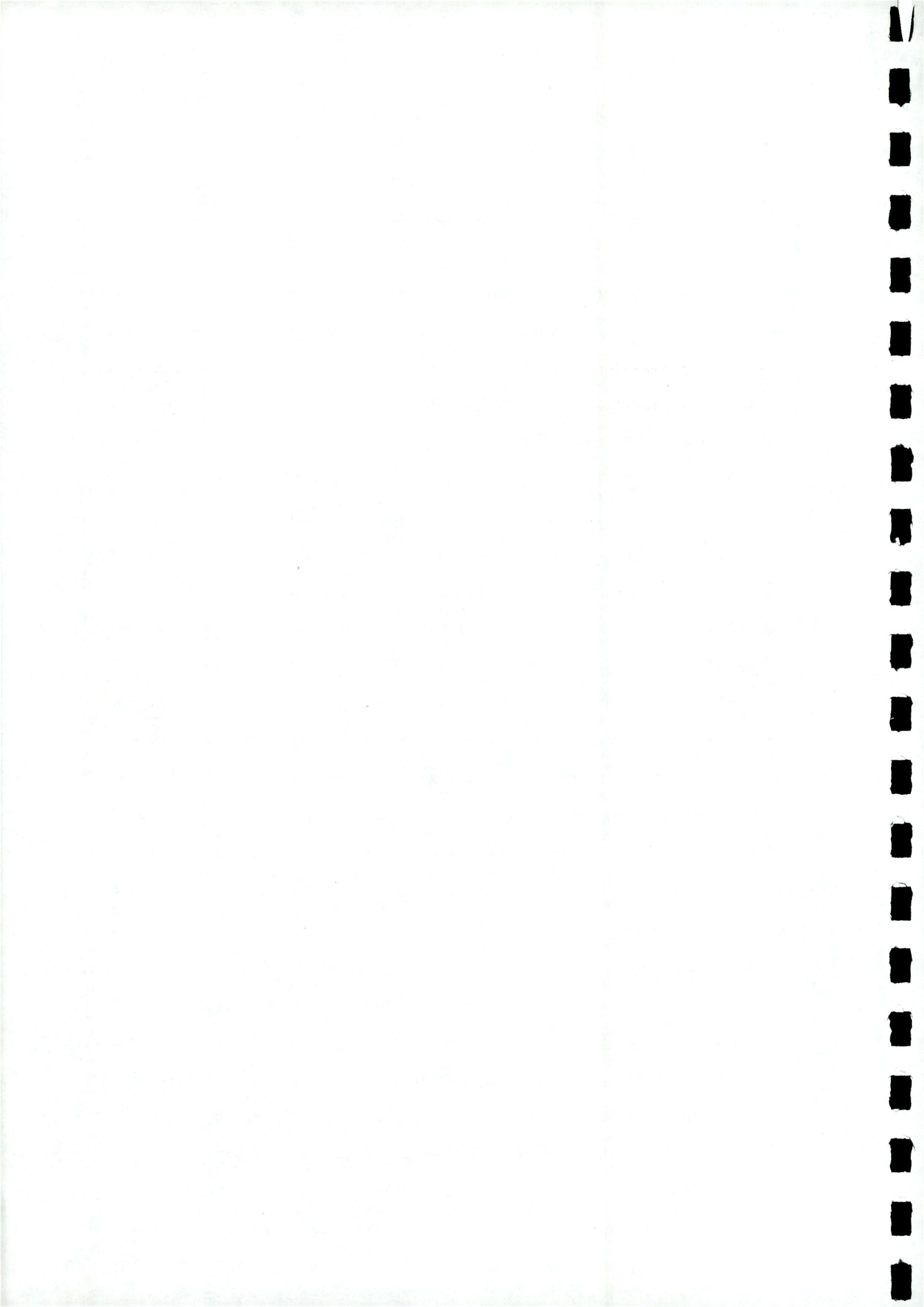




Figure 1 : Dried flowers and pot-pourri.

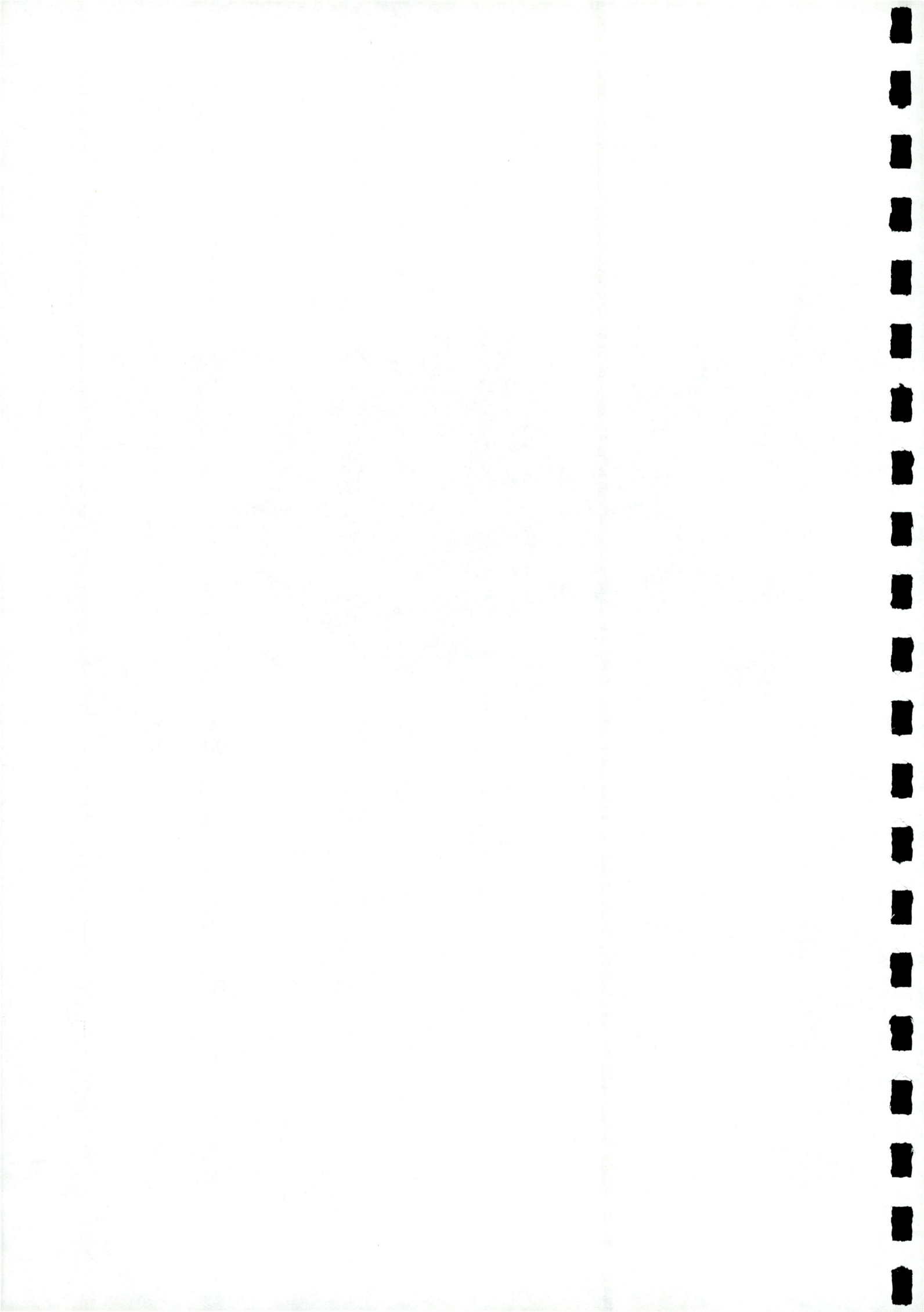
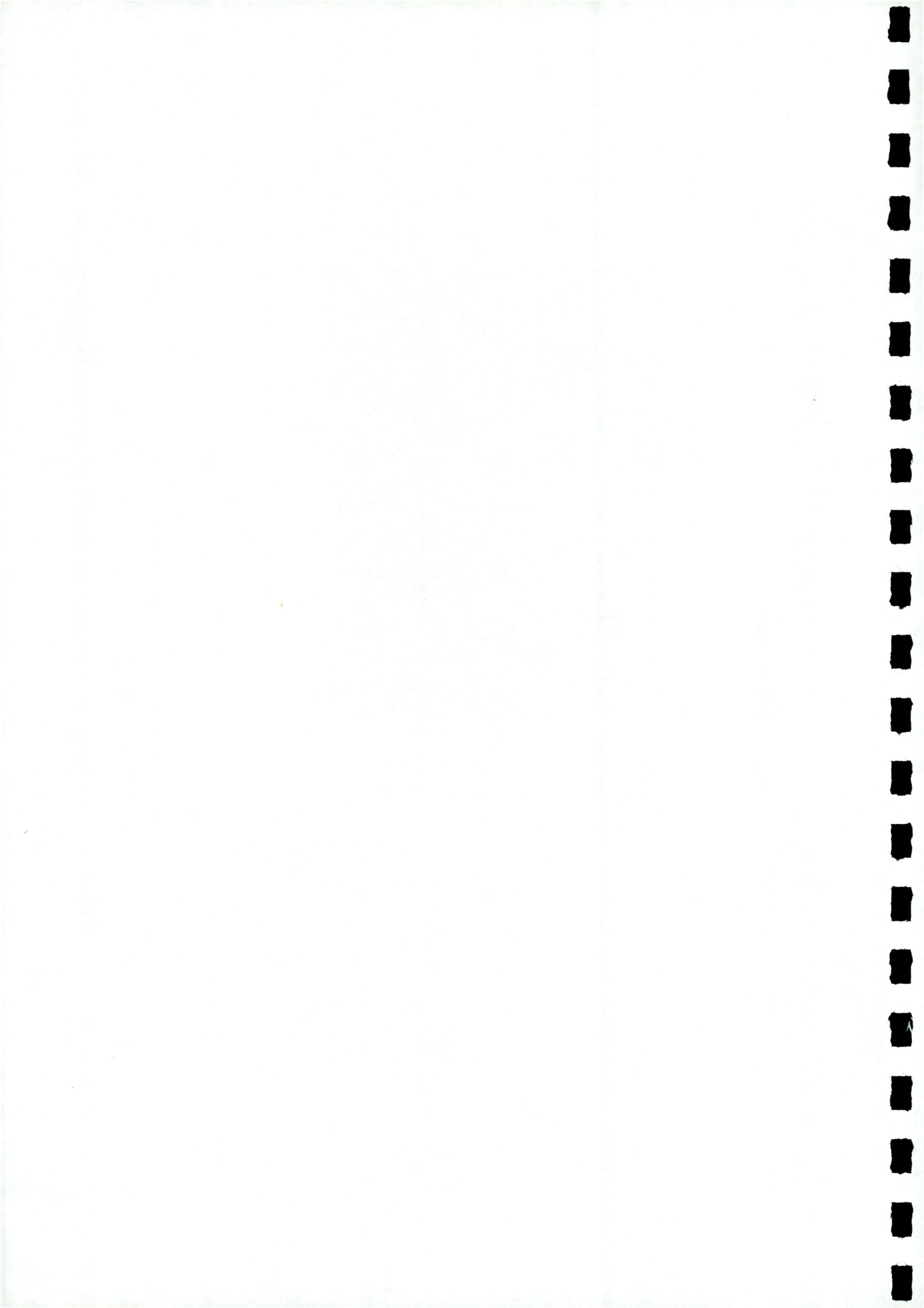




Figure 2 : Dried flowers and pot-pourri.



The aim of my personal project was to express the appreciation I have for natural phenomena through the study of Winter, Spring and Summer flowers and leaves.

I began working from leaves and berries that I had collected from the grounds of Trinity College in the Autumn/Winter of 1990/91. The colours struck me as I walked through the grounds and it was then that I decided to make a series of studies of these leaves and pot-pourri as the seasons changed.

From October to January I made detailed studies of the flowers, leaves and pieces of pot-pourri that I considered to be symbolic of Winter. I decided to use my collection of Winter bouquet pot-pourri, which I had collected from New York in the Summer of 1989. The reason that I used this pot-pourri in conjunction with my own found leaves, twigs and berries was that it provided an interesting source of variety in terms of colour, form and scale. I observed that some of the forms of the pot-pourri were exciting in their composition or structure. On the subject of scale, the smallness of some of the 'precious' pourris worked well with the larger scale of the natural forms i.e. leaves, twigs and berries that I had collected from Trinity College. I arranged these resources into interesting still-life compositions and proceeded to try to render or capture something of their essence.

Some of the constituents of the pot-pourri collection are amazingly formed. One deep purple one, the name of which I do not know, is hard in texture with petals that curve around each other at random. See Figure 3 and 4.

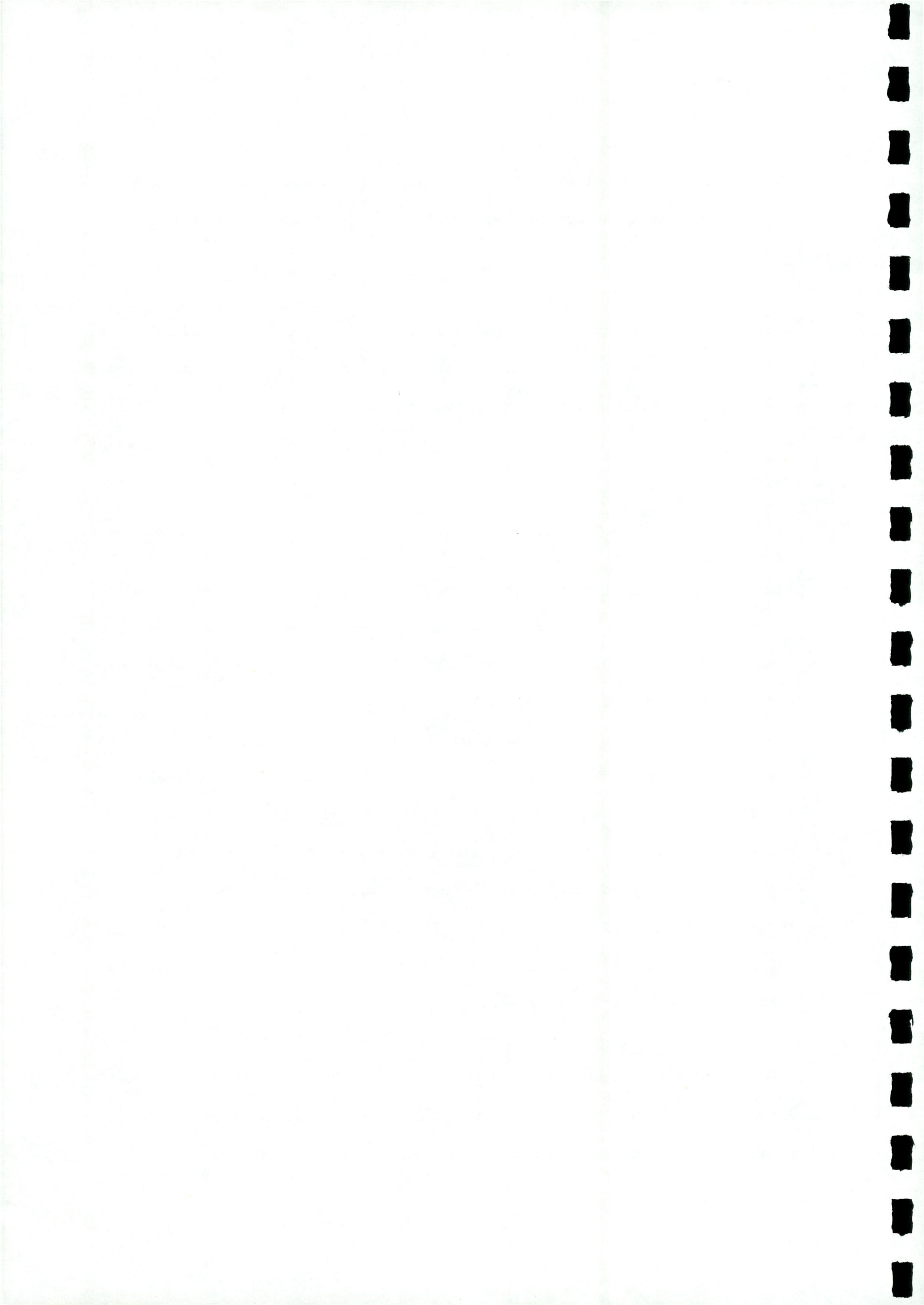
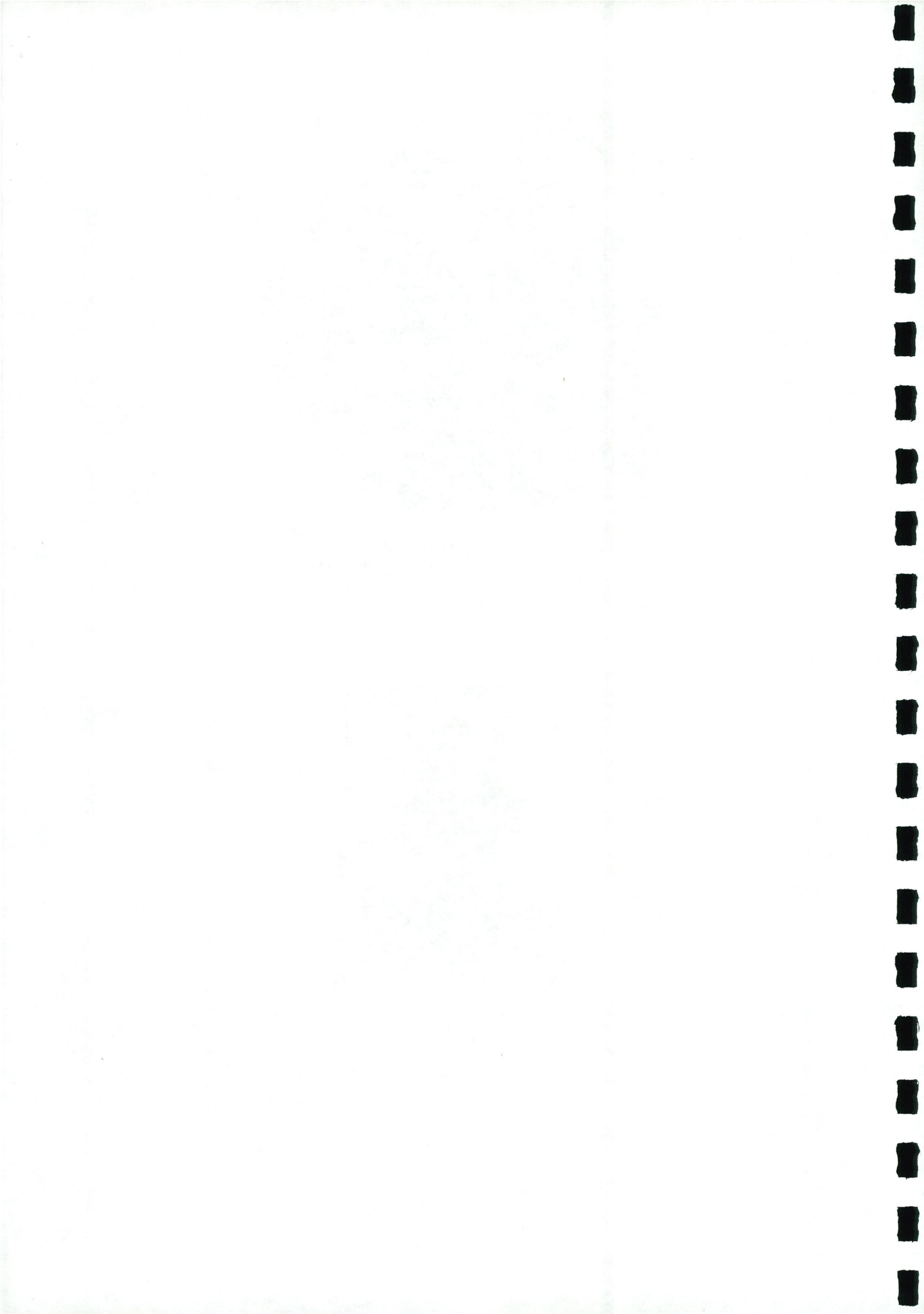




Figure 3 : Dried leaves and pot-pourri
arranged on a colourful scarf.



Figure 4 : Pot-pourri, watercolour and gouache.



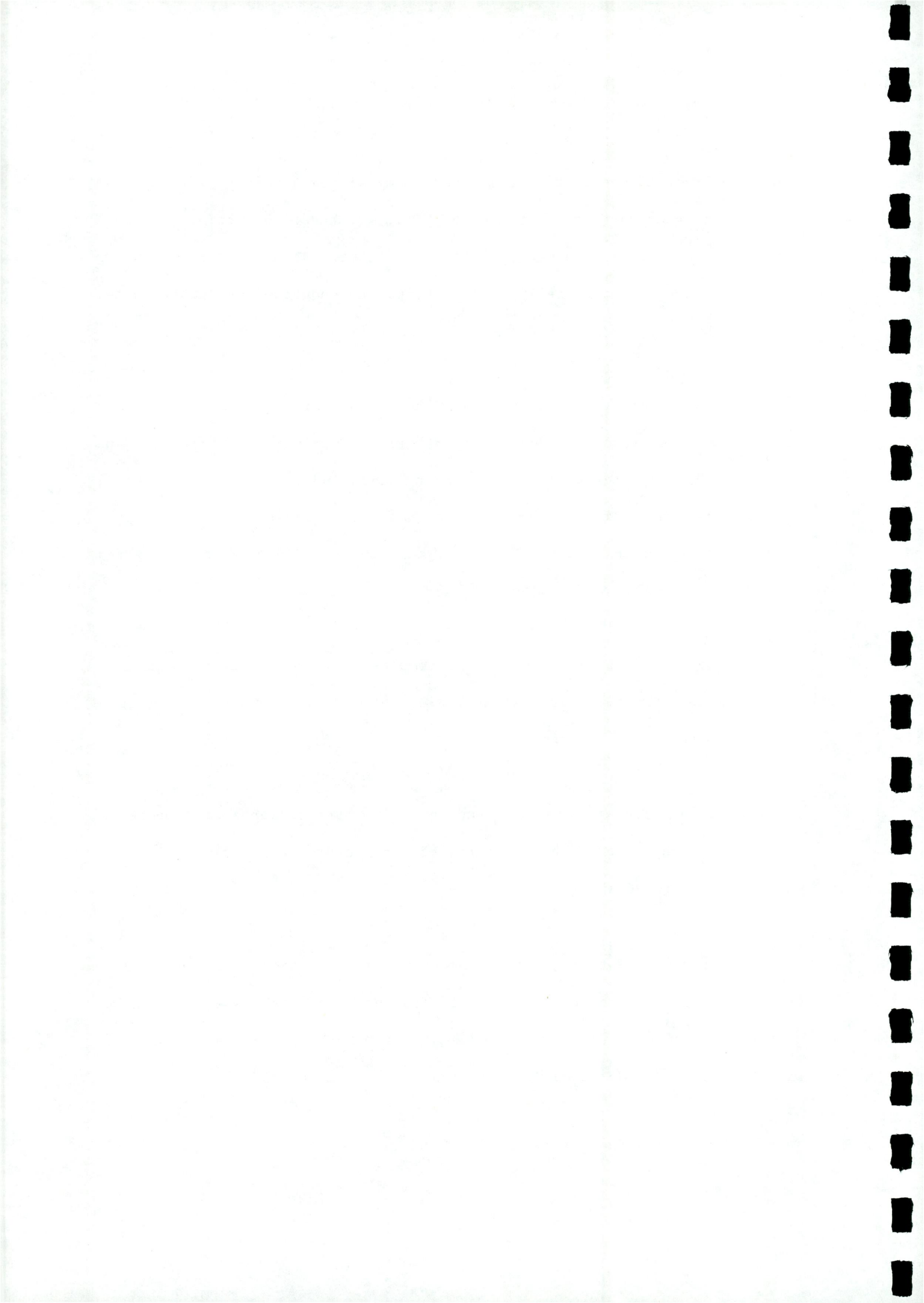
This flower motif occurs time and again in my Winter studies. I find this flower very interesting in terms of form, richness of colour, linear qualities and solid features. I also like the scent of these which admittedly may be artificially administered but, nonetheless, contributes to their beauty.

The way in which I worked for the Winter category was to first make representational studies of my source material in lifesize proportions and then as I became more familiar with their forms, and my rendering of them, I increased the scale to about three times its original size. I paid particular attention to the colour as I am greatly influenced and inspired by colour. See Figures 4, 5 and 6.

I also made sure that I arranged the components in much the same way as they would be arranged naturally. I did not wish at this point to make studies of individual components.

I found it interesting to observe and record how the elements or components related to each other. They contrasted and co-ordinated beautifully in terms of colour and shape.

For the large scale studies it was necessary to enlarge the scale of the motifs in order for them to relate well to the size of the sheet. In one of these paintings I used a coloured scarf as a backdrop to the components with, I believe, some success. See Figure 3.



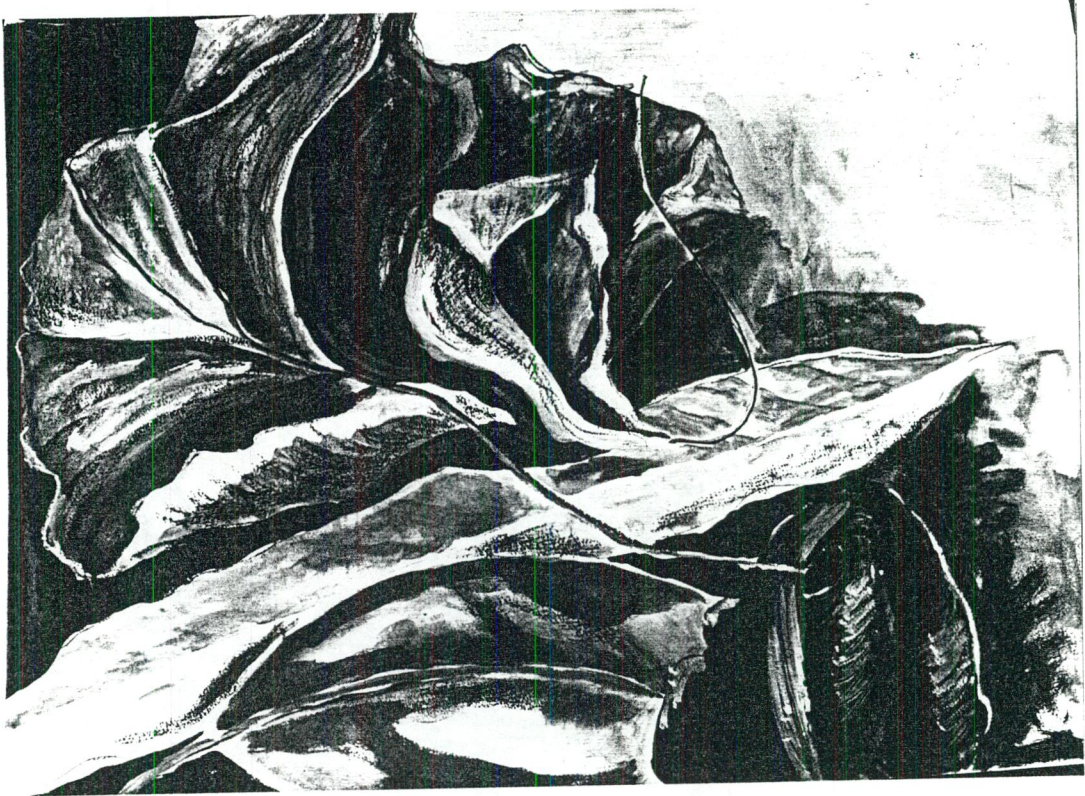


Figure 5 : Enlarged painting of dried leaves and pot-pourri in mixed media.

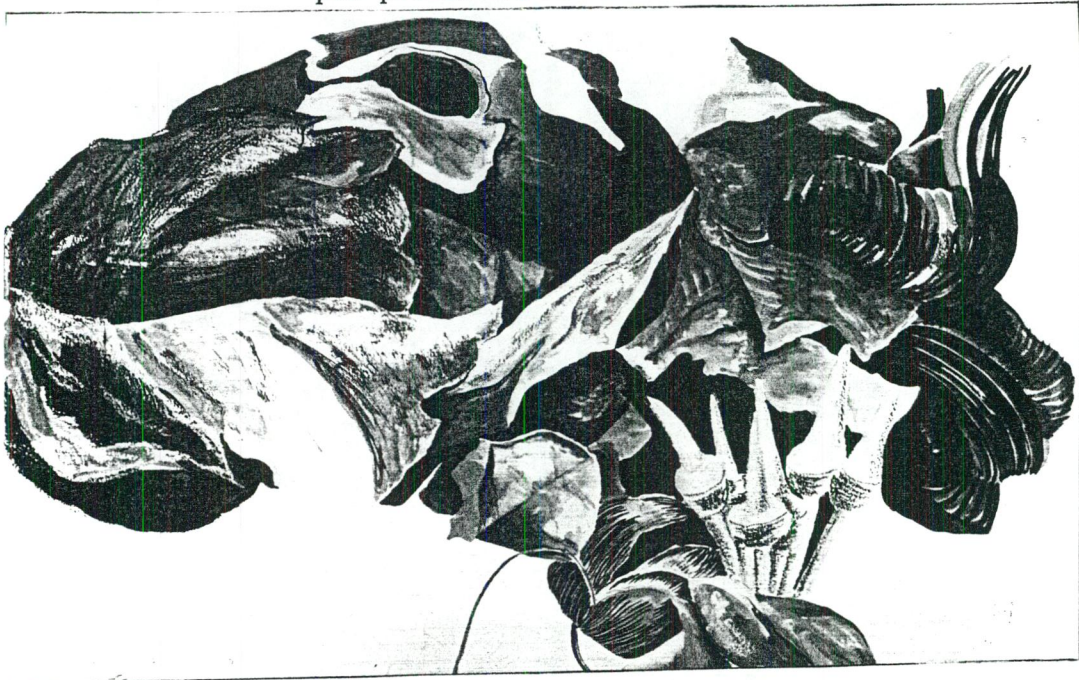
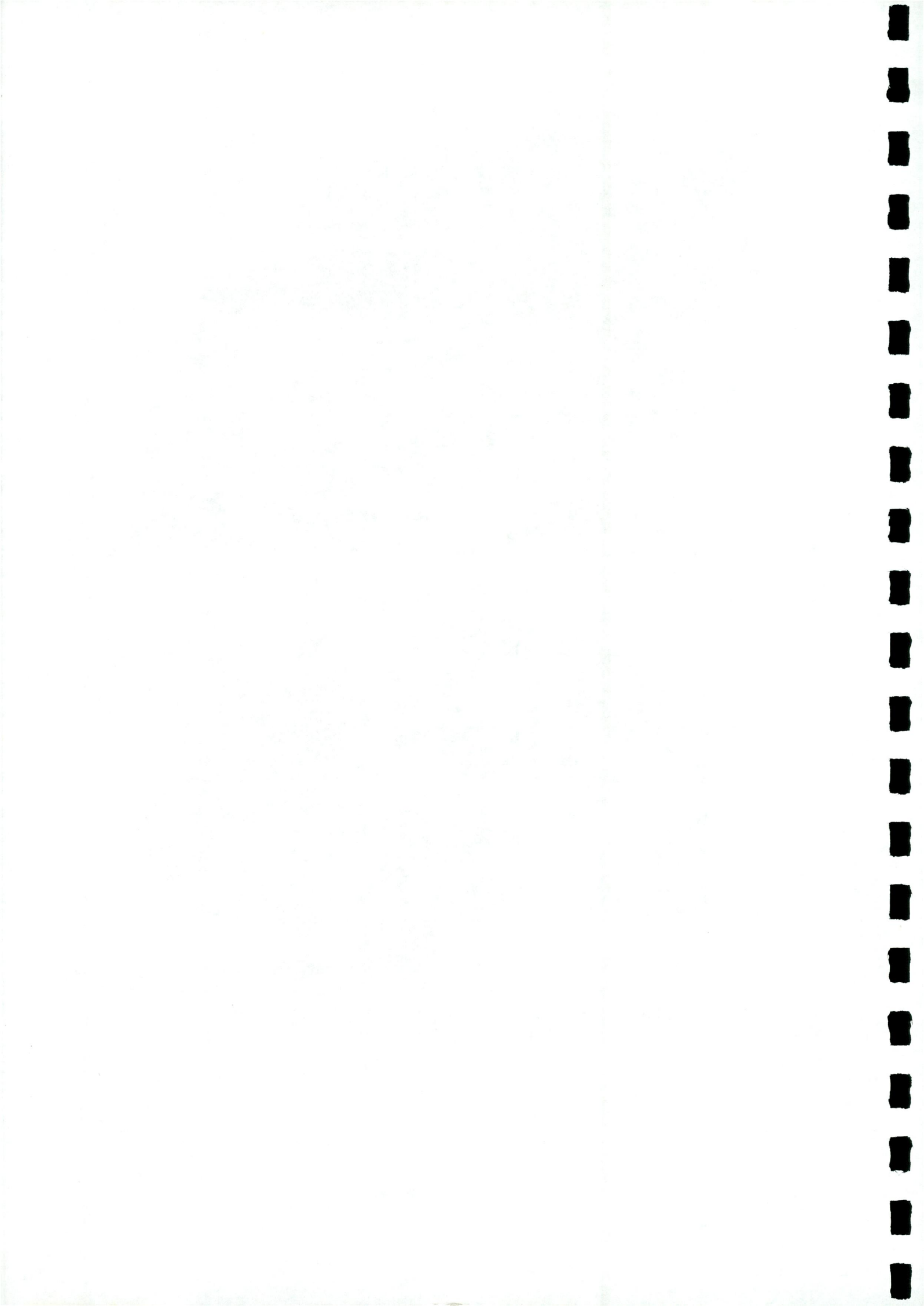


Figure 6 : Enlarged painting of dried leaves and pot-pourri in mixed media.



I have made a series of woven pieces whose content is based solely on the theme. The pieces I have woven so far are based on drawings and paintings from the Winter/Spring section. I have photographed one. In this you can see how the colour is directly derived from the source. See Figure 7.

As I have mentioned in my introduction, I qualified in Printed Textiles and was primarily engaged in work of a two-dimensional nature, consequently working on the woven pieces has proven both challenging and exciting. I particularly liked the technique of 'half-knotting' a loose piece of wool which is tied to a preferred area of warp. This enabled me to "draw" such forms as tendrils which figured quite prevalently in my studies. This process of working three dimensionally featured strongly in my final woven piece where I used particular weave techniques such as 'tufting' and the aforementioned 'half-knotting' to capture the three dimensional qualities of the pot-pourri. The contrast between flat weaving and 'raised texture' weaving worked very well. The contrast visually and physically was pleasing. It was, however, necessary to be careful working in this way as technically it is quite difficult to keep the tension regular whilst using different yarns and manipulating them in different ways.

For the summer series of paintings I went to The National Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin where I had previously brought my 2nd Years on their field trip. There I found an endless source of inspiration in the irises, daffodils and tulips. I attempted to draw a very exotic flower contained in the palm house using mixed media but was not really pleased with the result. I felt that the drawing lacked the grace and elegance naturally

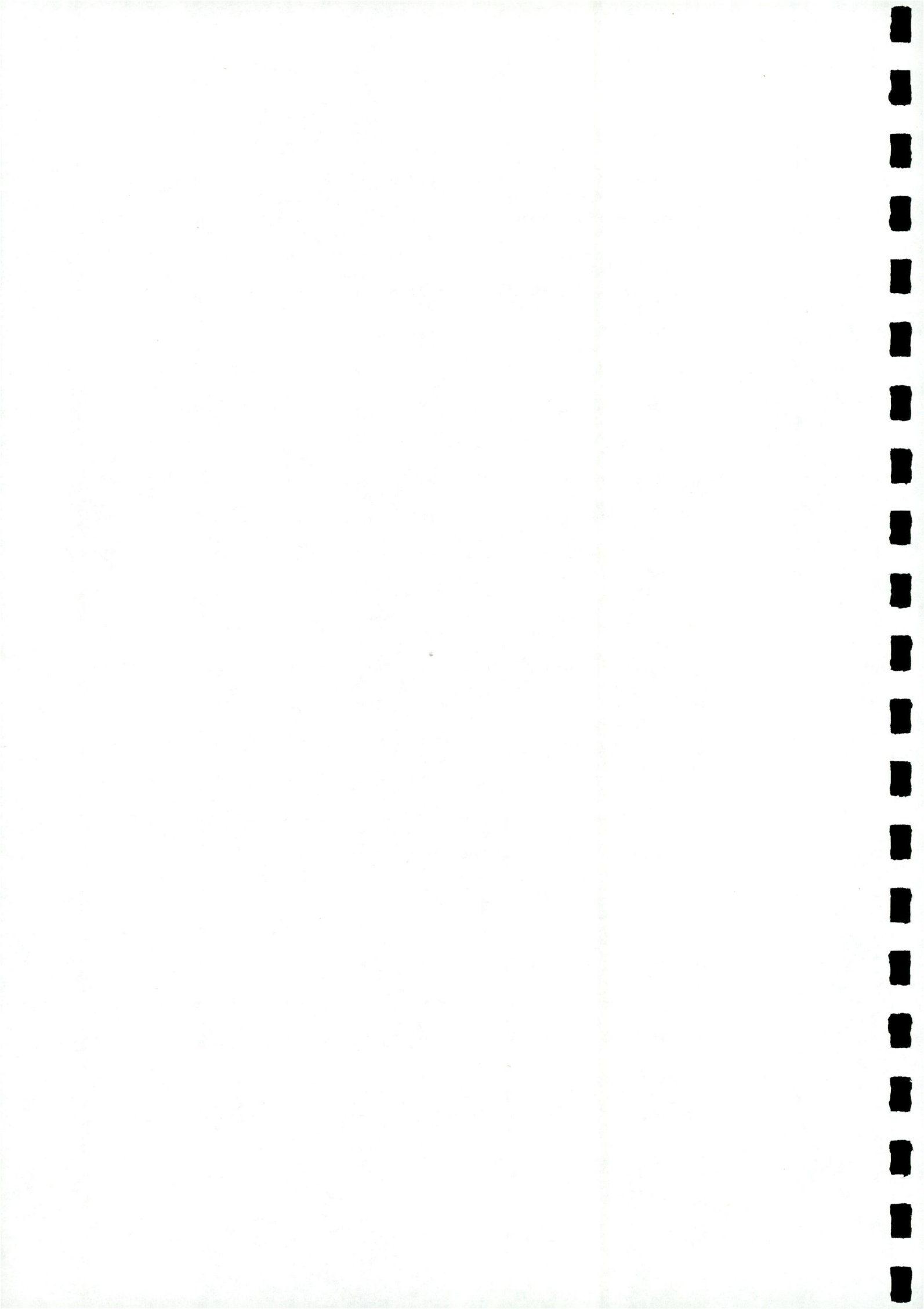
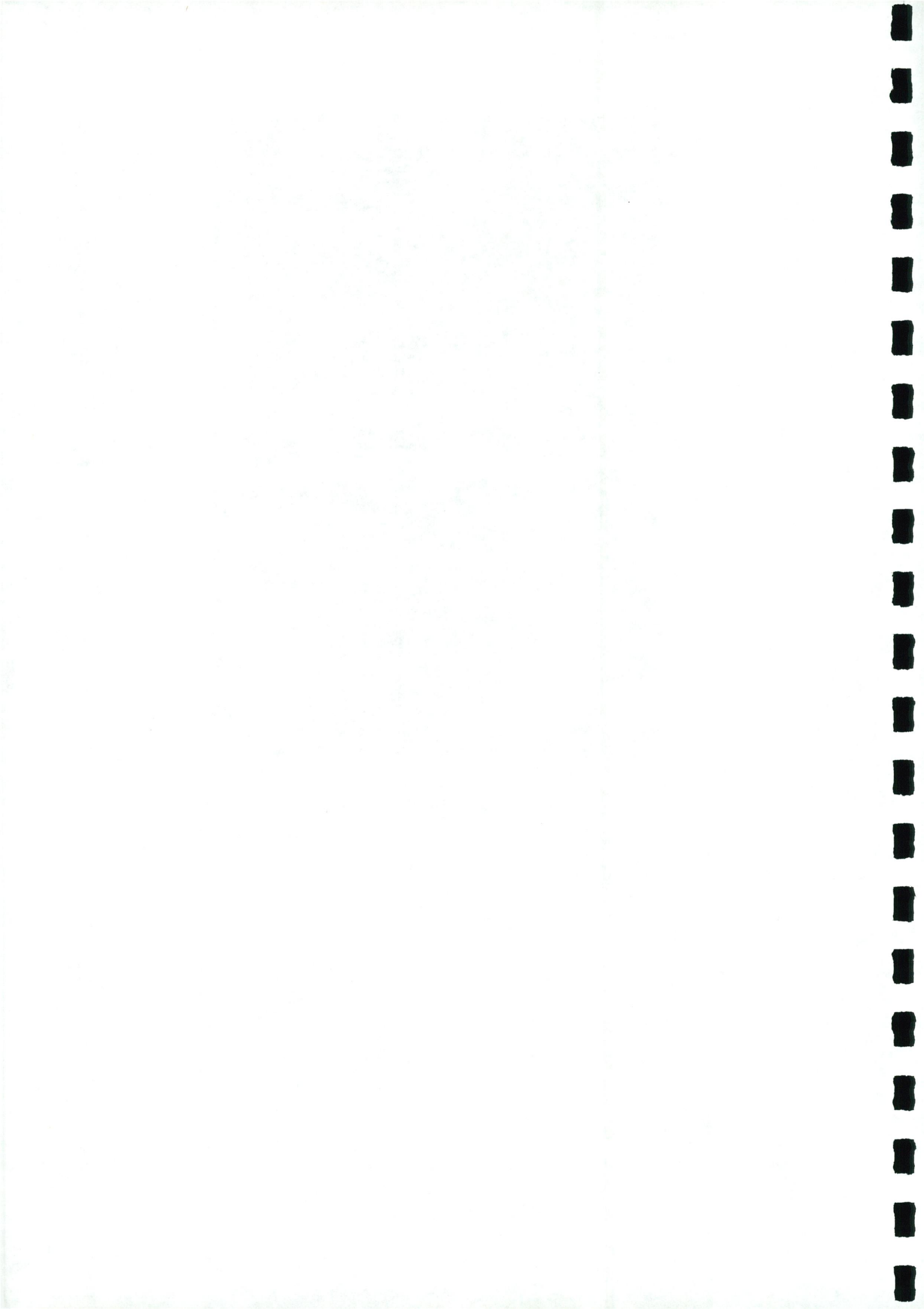




Figure 7 : Photo of weave in context with the source.



inherent in the flower. I have included two photographs from the Summer series of paintings and they vary considerably. See Figures 8 and 9. The first painting (Figure 8) was executed in mixed media, watercolour and coloured pencils. I took a lot of time setting this up into an interesting composition at home. I tried to capture the light and shade where it occurred as the light came through the window. I spent four or five hours on this painting. The second painting (Figure 9), however, was painted in the Botanic Gardens using watercolours and took much less time to paint. I think that it has a freshness and spontaneity to it that is not present in Figure 8. I have concluded my personal project with hand painted silk pieces of varying sizes. These silk pieces mostly depict flowers and leaves that I have observed so far this Summer.

I thoroughly enjoyed working on my theme this year as it was so different for me. When I was studying textile design I spent two years working from man-made structures, i.e. observing architecture and furniture, particularly art-deco objects and incorporating them into my fabric designs. Consequently I was yearning to work from nature, and what better source than flowers and leaves.

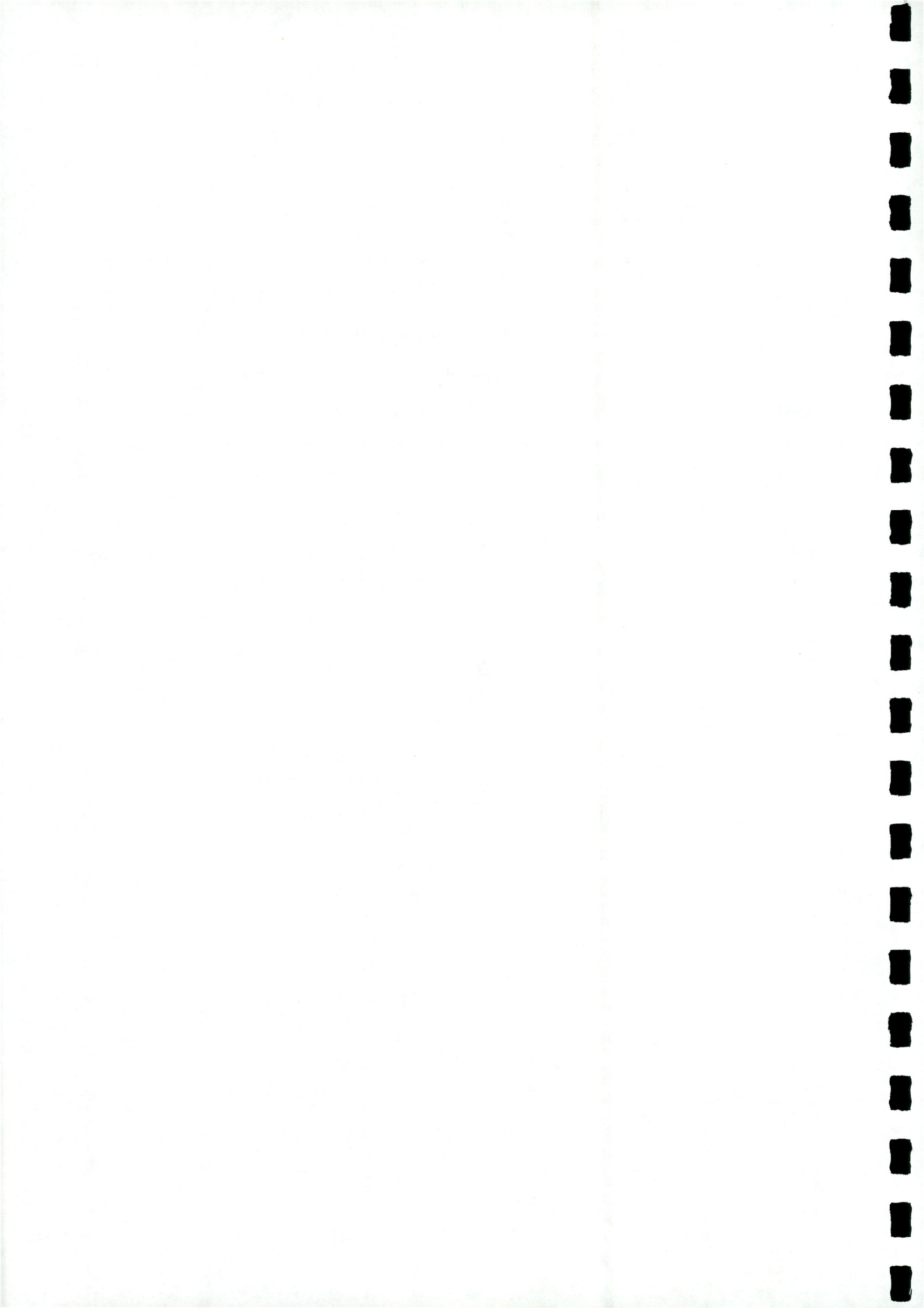
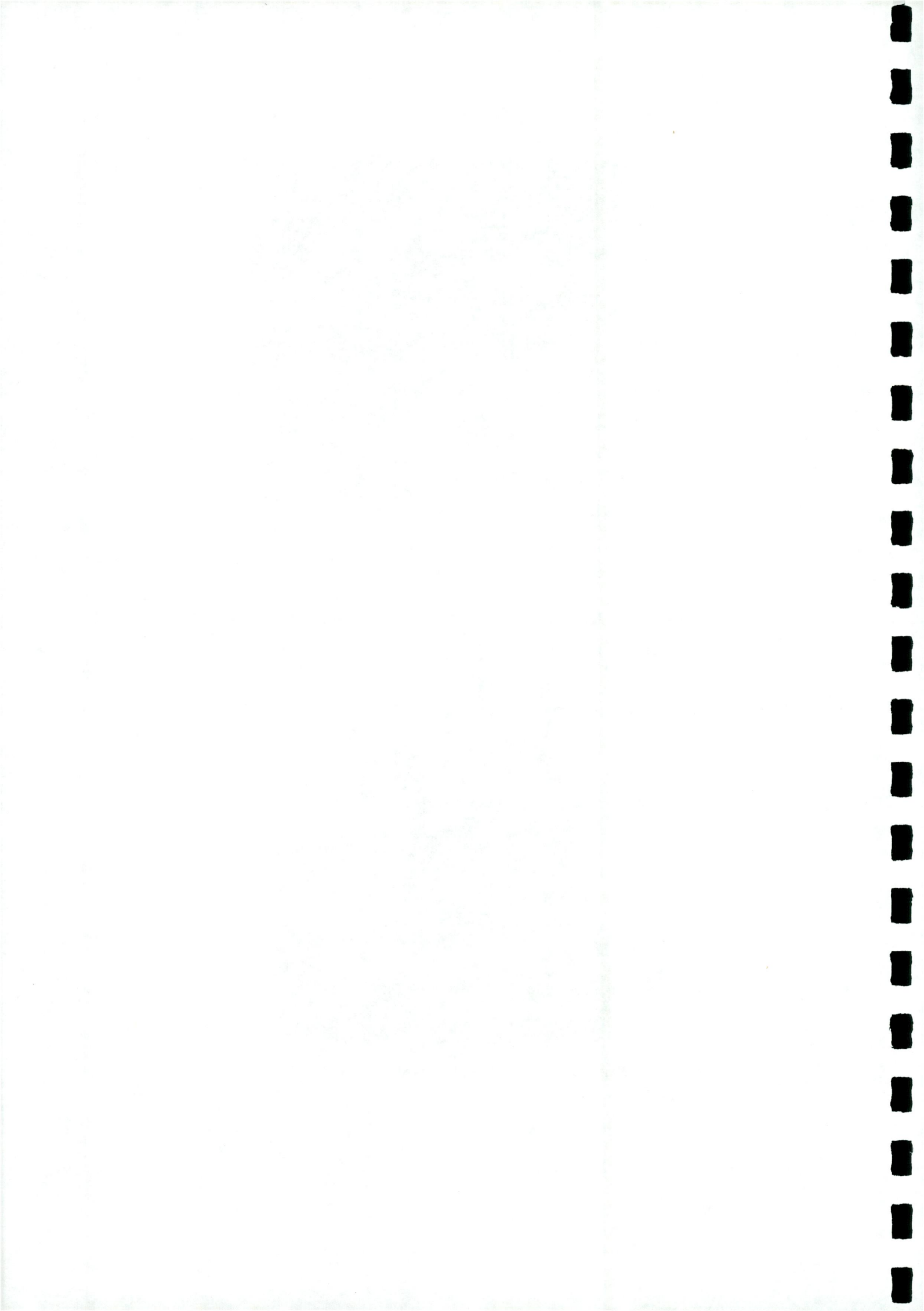




Figure 8 : Summer Painting, Composition of Picked Flowers.



Figure 9 : Summer Painting, Two Irises.



Chapter 2

Historical Reference

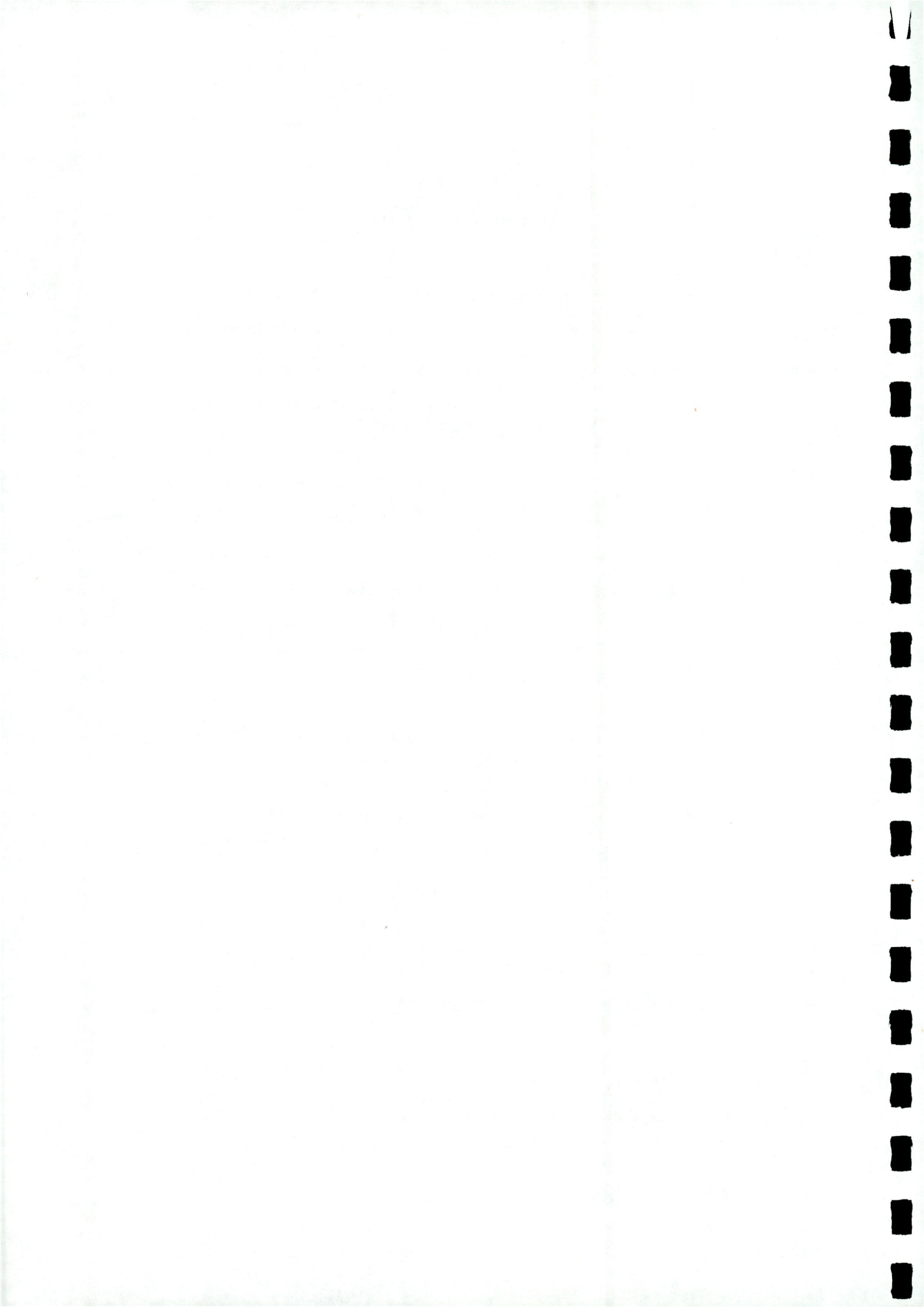
Pissarro, Cezanne and Van Gogh were instrumental in my choice of natural forms as the theme for my Personal Project and are the main source for both my own and the class project. I greatly admire the works of these three artists. Their styles and philosophies are different but equally impressive in their own way.

Ideally I would like to look at their masterpieces, observe and study them, learn from them and hopefully acquire some of their mastery and express it in my own work. I also wish to lead my students to a greater understanding regarding the variety of styles and approaches that might enable them to enrich their work.

Camille Pissarro was born in 1831 and died in 1903. He was an associate of Claude Monet. Pissarro was a desperately poor man. He was an Impressionist first and foremost, and painted landscapes almost exclusively. In these landscapes the weather is evoked with physical effect.

"A cloudy sky reflected in chill water or a stretch of dusty road blazing hot in sunlight"¹

His greatest works have the "vivid heightened effect of landscapes momentarily glimpsed from train windows"² (See Figure 10).



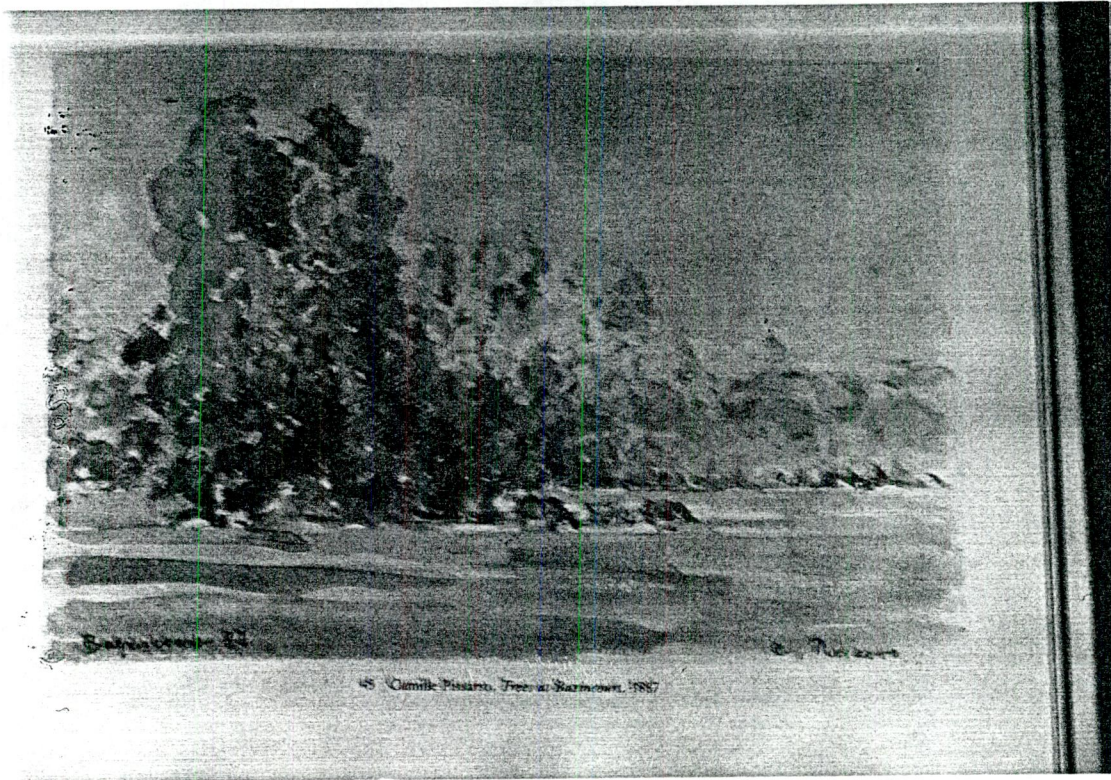


Figure 10 : Camille Pissarro, "Trees at Bazincourt", 1887.



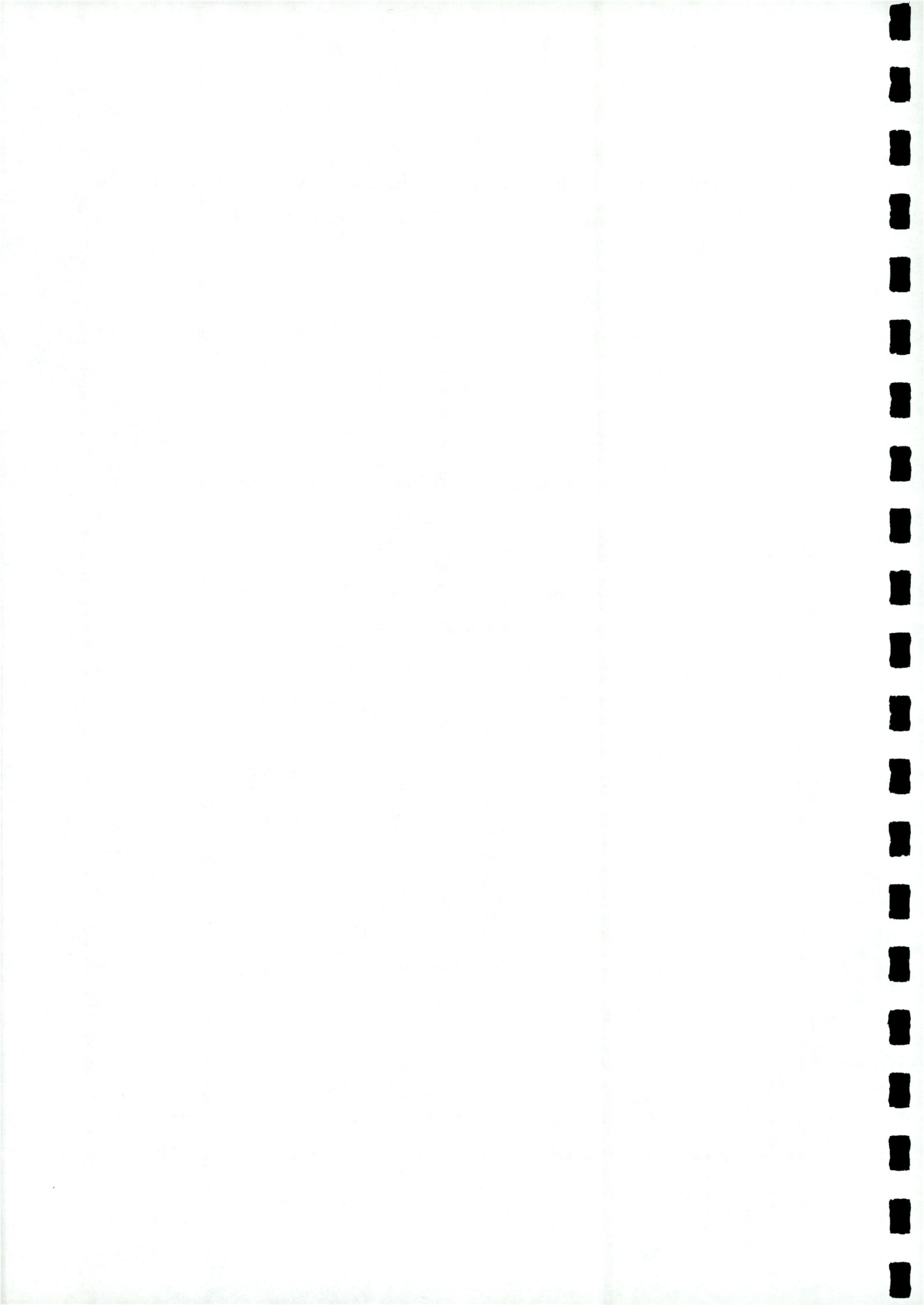
Strict Impressionist at first, he painted in the open-air and like Cezanne he had a "firmer sense than Sisley of the scaffolding underlying what he saw".³

Strongly influenced by his teacher, Corot, Pissarro managed to compose his pictures in a way satisfying and yet natural.

Pissarro as a watercolourist rendered his subjects in finely drawn lines and soft airy washes. He dealt with formal considerations cheerfully and confidently and was matter-of-fact in his observation. Pissarro was not really concerned with seasonal changes of colour. He was more interested in the composition, content and visual elements contained within a scene. For Pissarro, a work was finished as soon as he had captured the 'essence of a subject'. Although different in style, this approach was not unlike Cezanne's where he depicted forms by reducing everything to its underlying form.

One of the things I particularly like about Pissarro's work is the freedom of it. He leaves in lines as they intersect one another. He lets a line carry through to another shape. This, in my estimation, adds a feeling of spontaneity to the work. He does not make corrections. I believe that what mattered most to Pissarro was to capture as quickly as possible the essence of what he was depicting.

Cezanne's early work was Impressionistic, but in fact he had been born to destroy Impressionism. He eventually moved to a stage of depiction whereby he 'reduced' everything to its underlying form. He pares visuals down to the bare essentials.



Cezanne's work to me exemplifies or is marked by straightforwardness and clarity. He does not overembellish. In his own words: "modelling is nothing but the correct relationship of colours among themselves".⁴

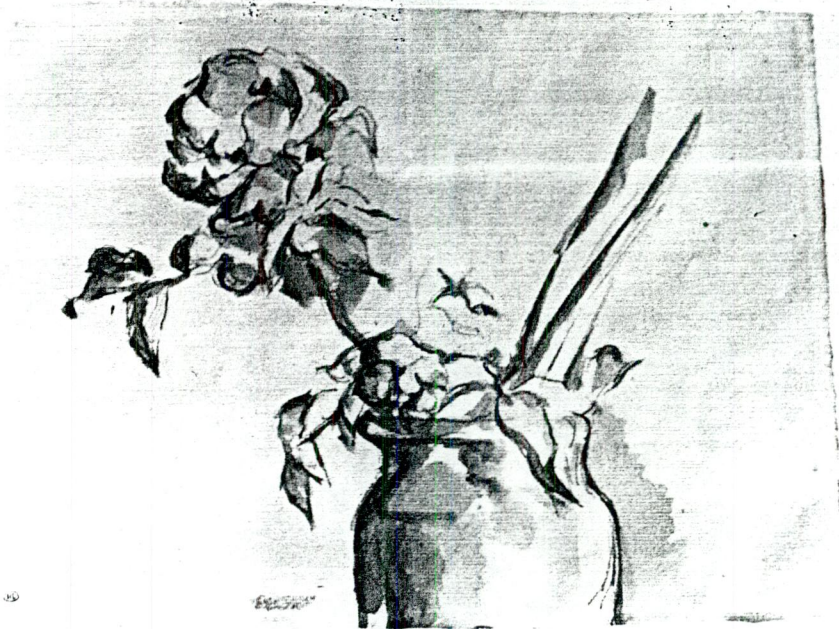
Cezanne believed that colours have correct relationships among themselves and that the artist should only concern him or herself with a straightforward depiction of these relationships and resist the temptation to overembellish a painting.

Some critics maintain that the principles of his philosophy and work in art is to pare down the visuals to the 'bare essential' and to model the form with swatches of colour that relate accurately spatially and tonally.

I have chosen to discuss Cezanne partly because I admire his honesty and straightforwardness of depiction. I admire particularly his "Roses in a Green Vase" (see Figure 11).

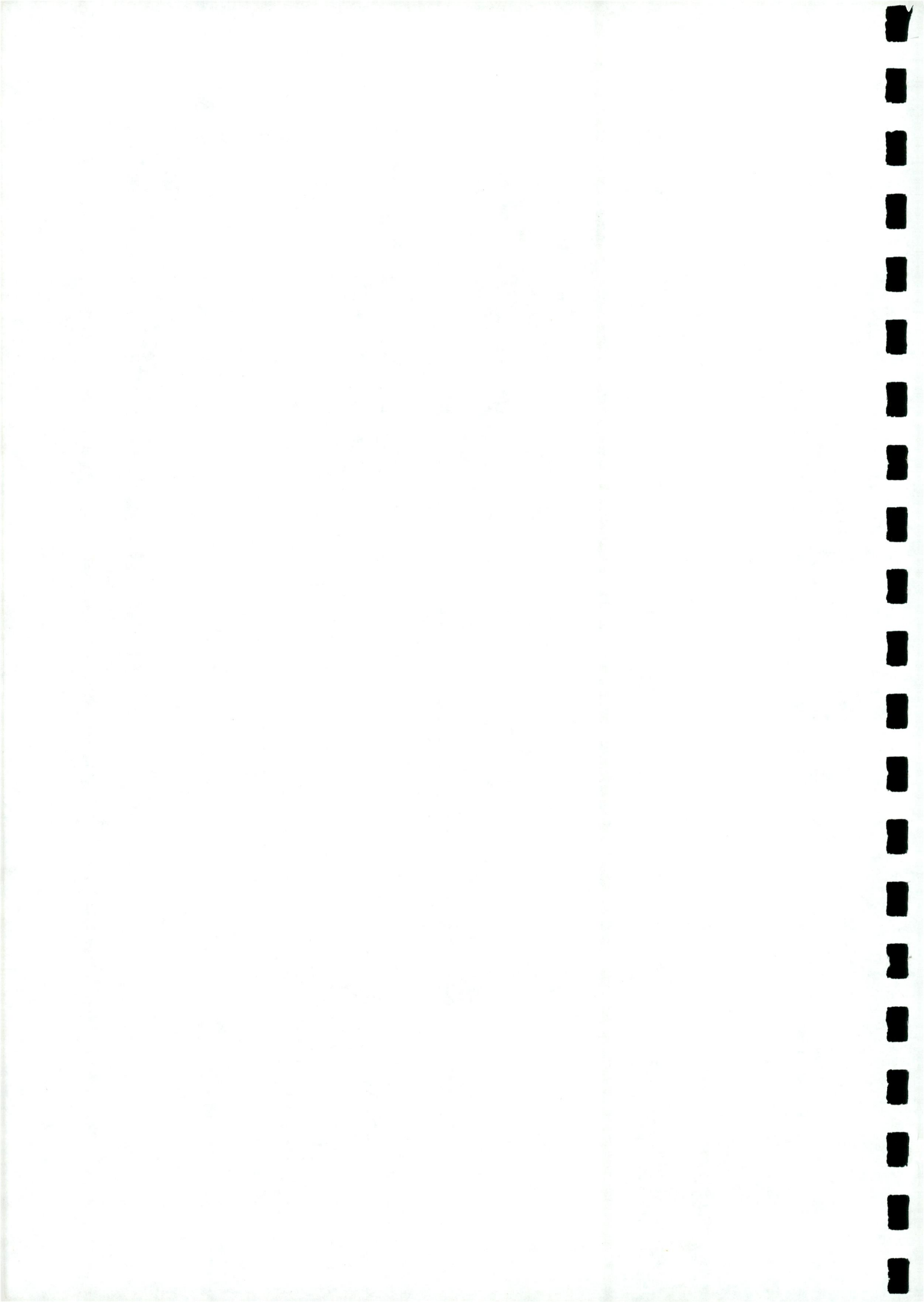
In this painting he combines delicacy with strength. There is nothing 'fussy' about this painting. He has deliberately arranged the washes of colours so that they have valid meaning and relate to each other honestly. He has not succumbed to the temptation to overembellish with detail. I believe some artists, not excluding myself, at times, succumb to this weakness. It is almost as if we become so attached in our appreciation of the source that we do not know when or how to stop. Sometimes it is done in a quest to "assert the reality of something, where it did not succeed with simplicity in the beginning of the painting".⁵





53 Paul Cézanne *Roses in a Green Vase*

Figure 11 : Paul Cézanne, "Roses in a Green Vase" (c. 1880).



I wished to experiment with painting in this manner and attempted to do so in my Spring/Summer drawings and painting. I believe that fresh flowers naturally lend themselves to simplicity and fluidity, whereas my pot-pourri and dried flowers and leaves, due to their very nature - very textured and dry - loaned themselves more to detailed intricate treatment.

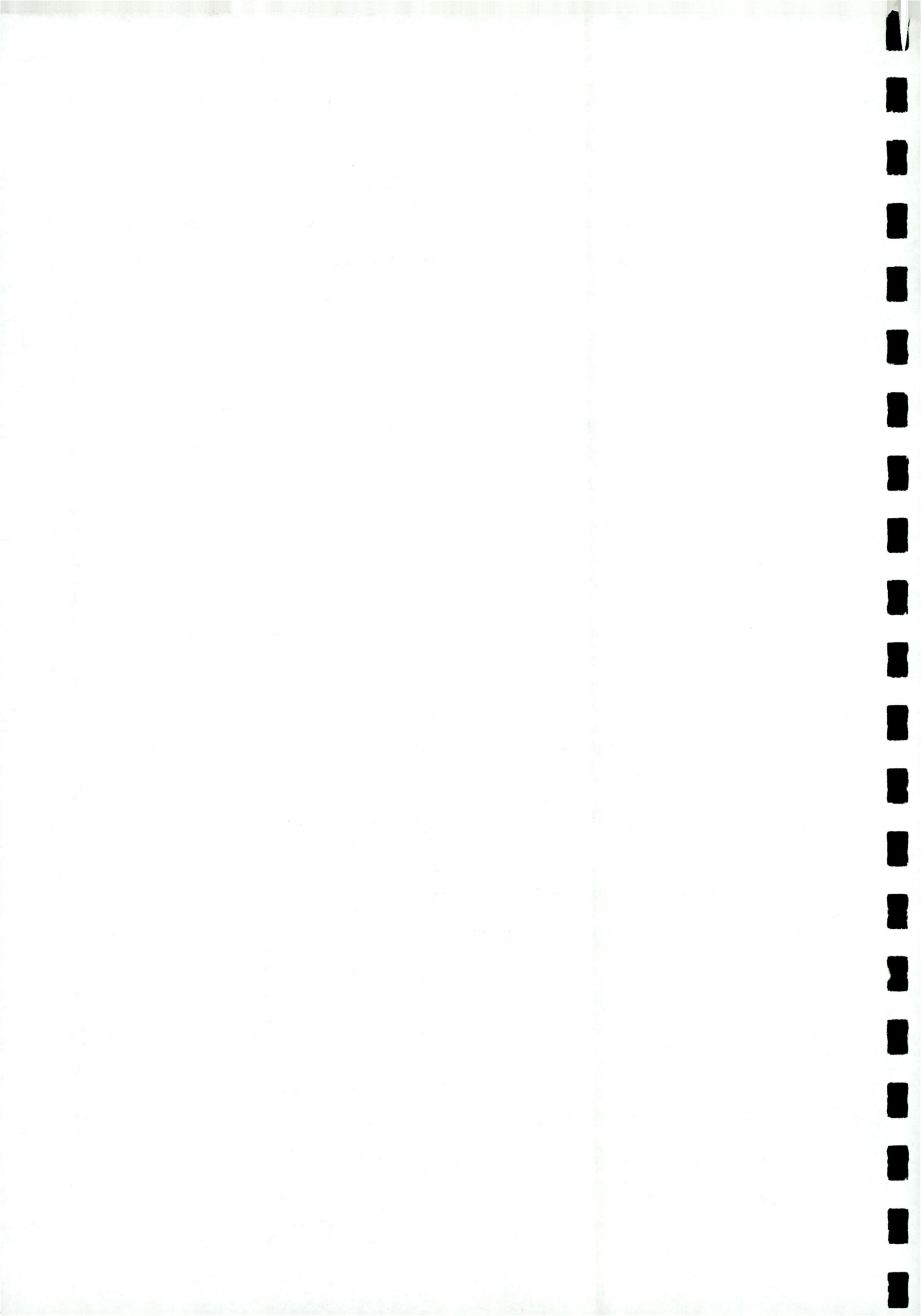
Now we come to Van Gogh. I have been admirer of Vincent Van Gogh's paintings for many years. He was a very gifted draughtsman. Coming from a design background as I have done, I very much appreciate his strong sense of pattern and use of it in his paintings. He had a rich graphic execution.

Van Gogh moved away from the Impressionists and adopted a more intense, expressive and subjective approach to his motifs.

Van Gogh was very much inspired by nature, sunflowers in particular. He constantly refers to nature and used it as a source for his painting. He "drew" from the variety within the repertoire of nature.

The sunflowers that Van Gogh painted have become extremely famous in recent years. (See Figure 12). He observed these sunflowers in the fields he encountered in Provence. He himself spoke of his special affinity with a flower whose rich colour typified the character of the South: "that sulphur-yellow everywhere the sun lights".⁶

According to Van Gogh, Gauguin once commented on his very graphic depiction of the Sunflower and said "That, it's the flower".⁷



The words must have rung in Van Gogh's ear as the highest possible praise, since Van Gogh dedicated his whole short career to a study of nature. He struggled and, in my opinion, succeeded in giving it visible and palpable expression.

Van Gogh became so enraptured with sunflowers and committed to them so wholly that he came to believe that they were exclusive to him. "The Sunflower" he said "is mine in a way".⁸

By sheer persistence combined with observation he became so totally familiar and 'at one' with the sunflowers that he enabled himself to render them unhesitatingly with a very real freedom of expression that was entirely personal.

Van Gogh depicted flowers symbolically and very convincingly. I love the way he breaks up the colours into individual units. This charges the paintings with electricity and energy, as the pigments seem to have a life of their own. (See Figure 13)

Van Gogh took liberties within his depiction of flowers. He exaggerated movement and colour contrasts in a quest for dramatic and impressive visual effects. This resulted in paintings that are very interesting and stimulating to observe.

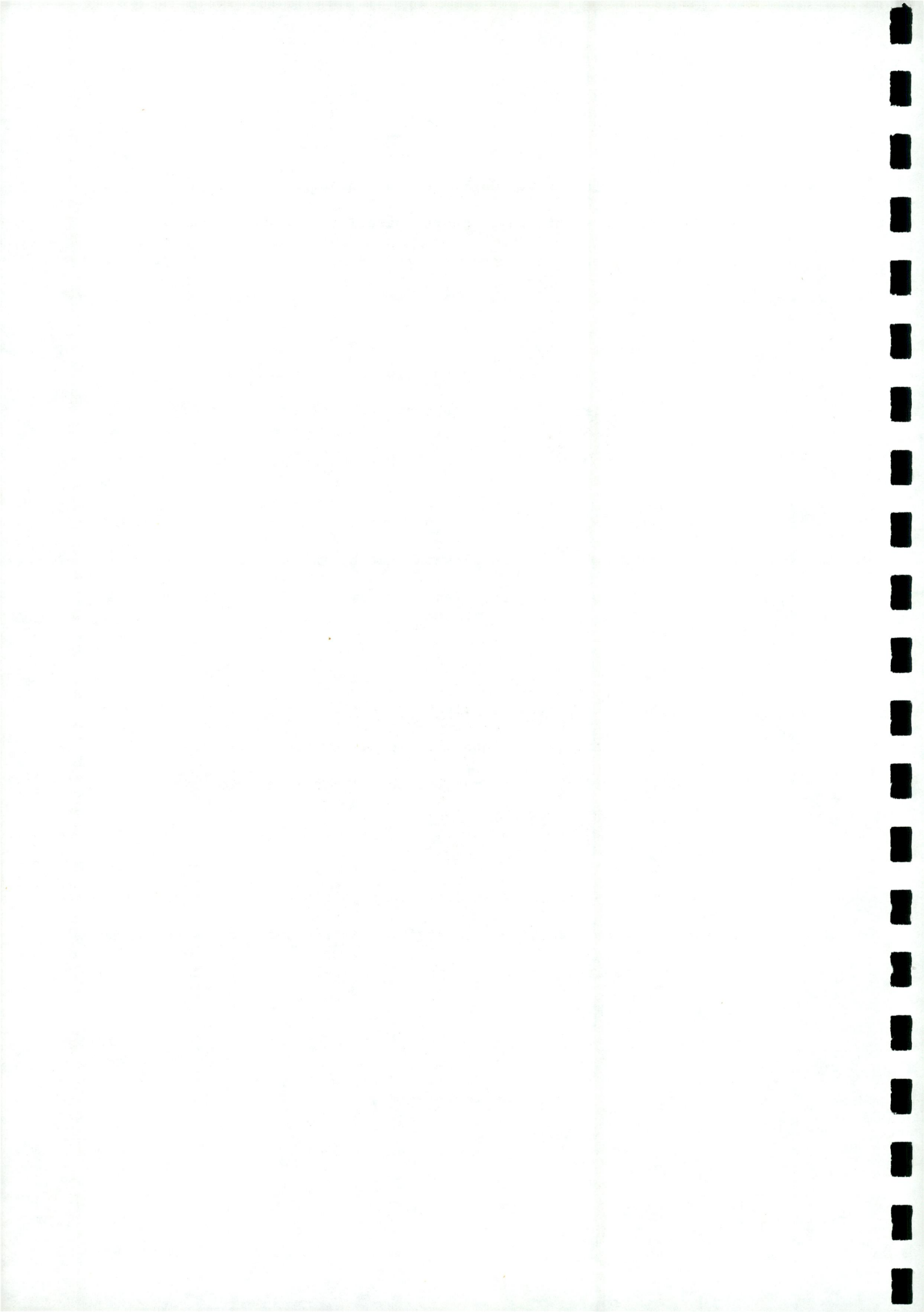
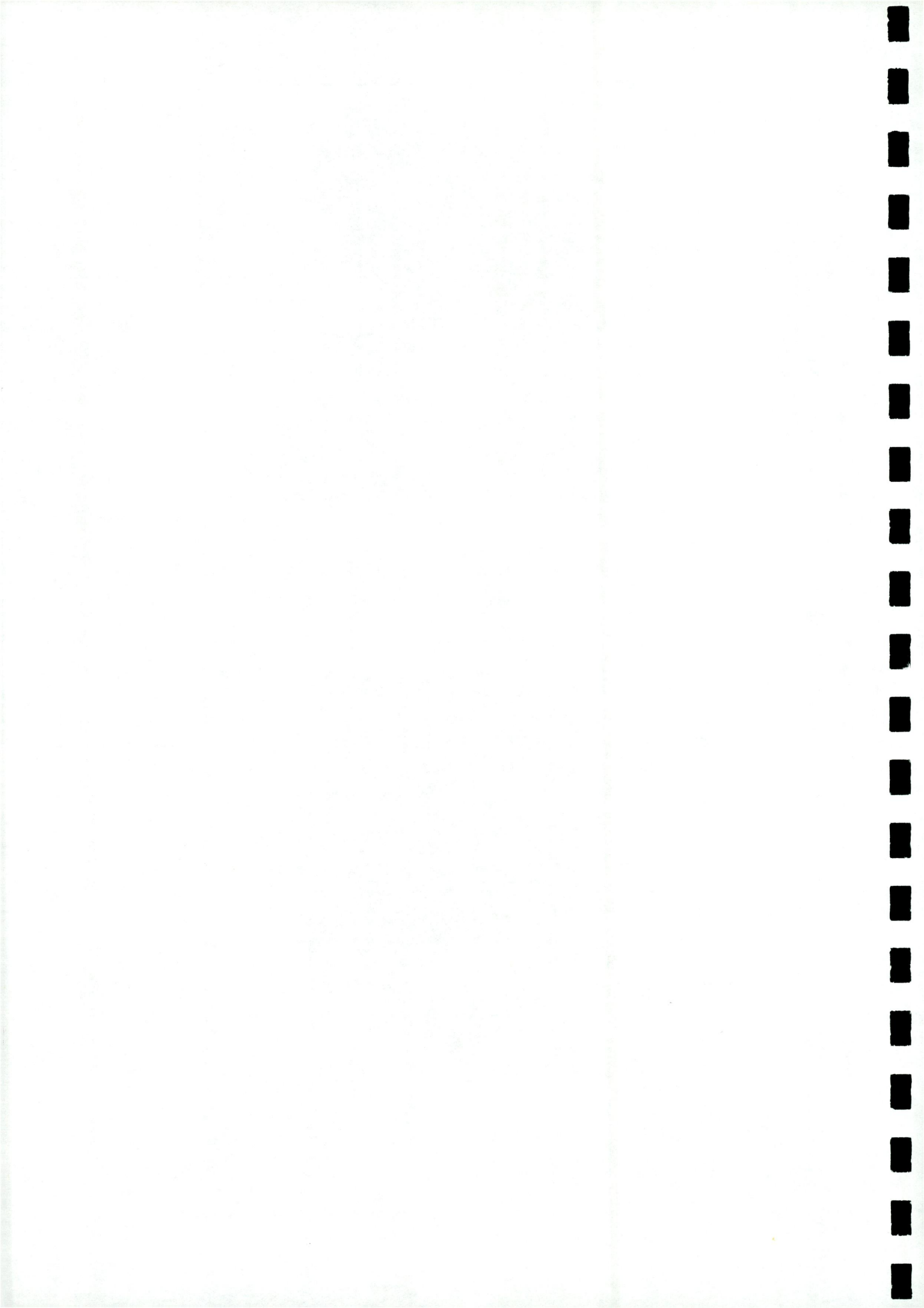




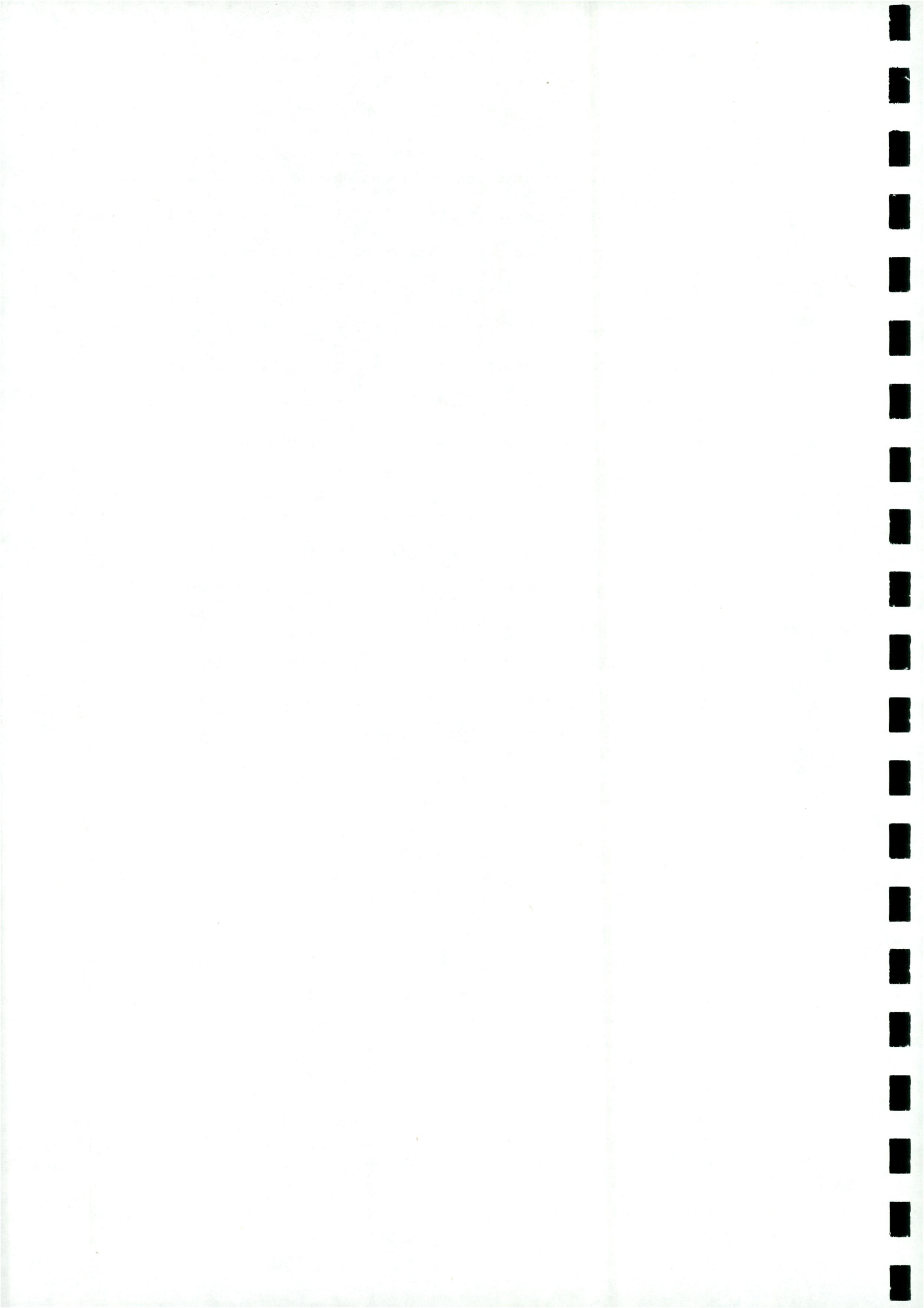
Figure 12 : Vincent Van Gogh, "Twelve Sunflowers in a Vase", 1880.



Figure 13 : Vincent Van Gogh, "Fritillarias in a Copper Vase", 1897.



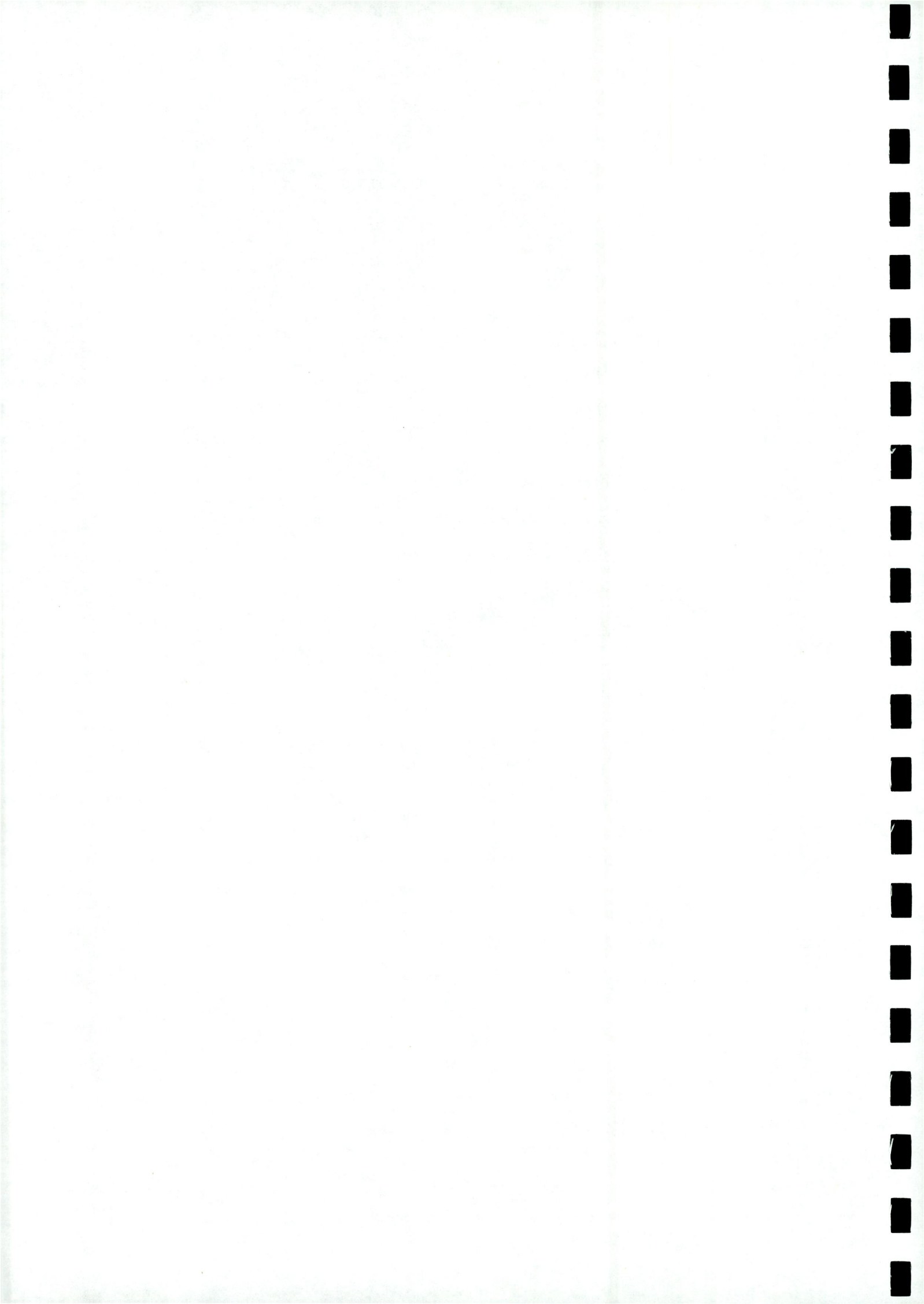
In conclusion, the research into the lives and ways of working of the three artists Pissarro, Cezanne and Van Gogh had I feel, a beneficial effect and improvement on my personal painting this year, which subsequently had an effect on my teaching. On realising that the three artists could work on very similar themes and come up with very different solutions, I decided to expand my research on the subject and explore flowers and foliage in painting through the ages. I did this research as part of a submission for the Art History and Appreciation Section of the course. I looked at various paintings from the 15th to the 19th centuries and submitted an audio visual slide presentation, which discussed the various approaches and techniques of flower, and foliage painting through the ages in chronological order. When doing another project with students on flowers I would use this presentation as a historical starting point. This would not only benefit them practically in the art work, it would also help them learn more about Art history.



FOOT NOTES

CHAPTER 2

- 1 Michael Levey, *From Giotto to Cezanne*, p. 288.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid
- 4 Horst Keller, *Watercolours and Drawings of the French Impressionists*, p. 47.
- 5 Rowland Hilder, *Watercolour Painting*, p. 64.
- 6 Judith Bumpus, *Van Gogh's Flowers*, p. 10.
- 7 Ibid, p. 9.
- 8 Ibid, p. 9.

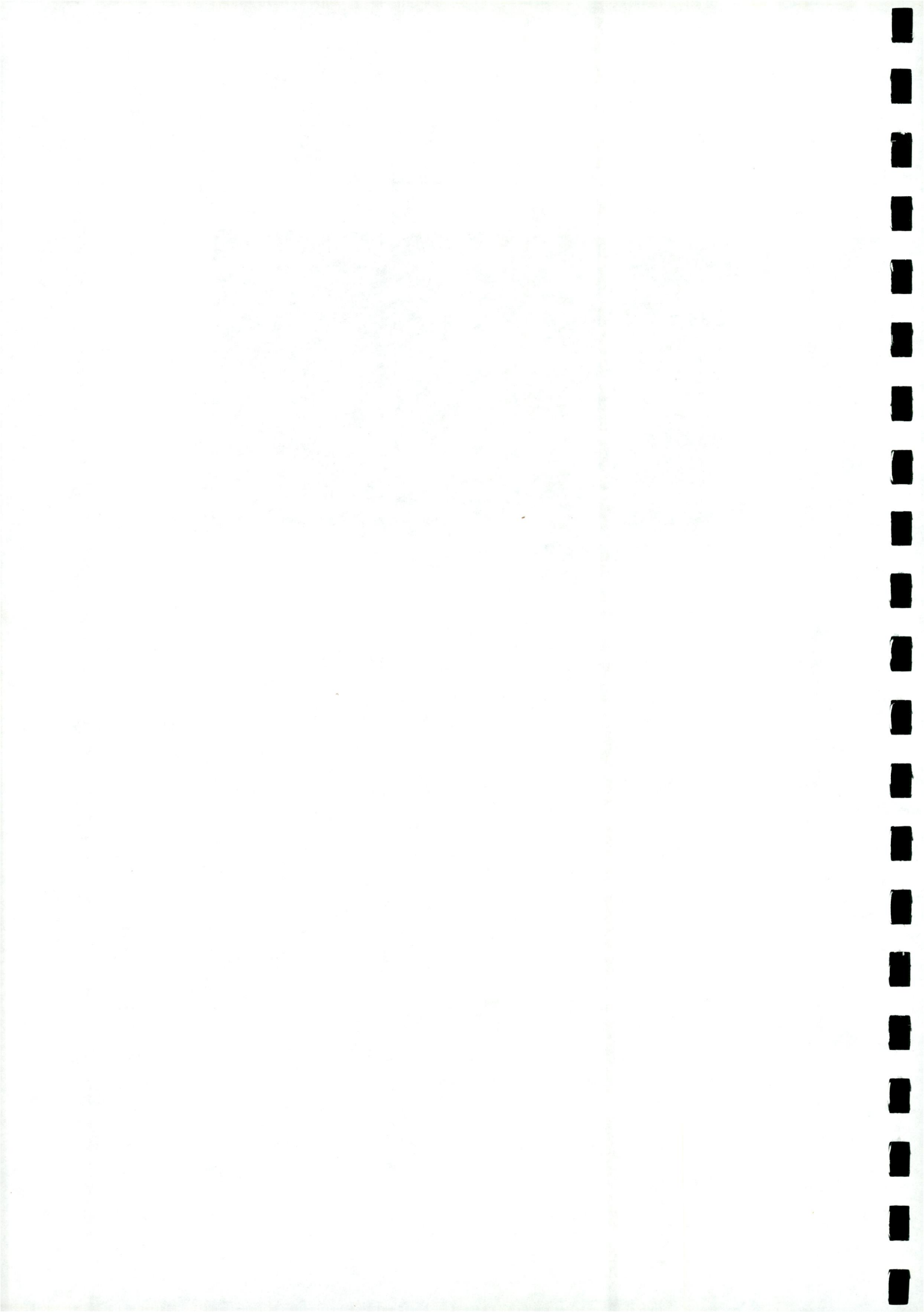


NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS



2nd Years and Me During Field Trip

25/03/91



Pupils' Project

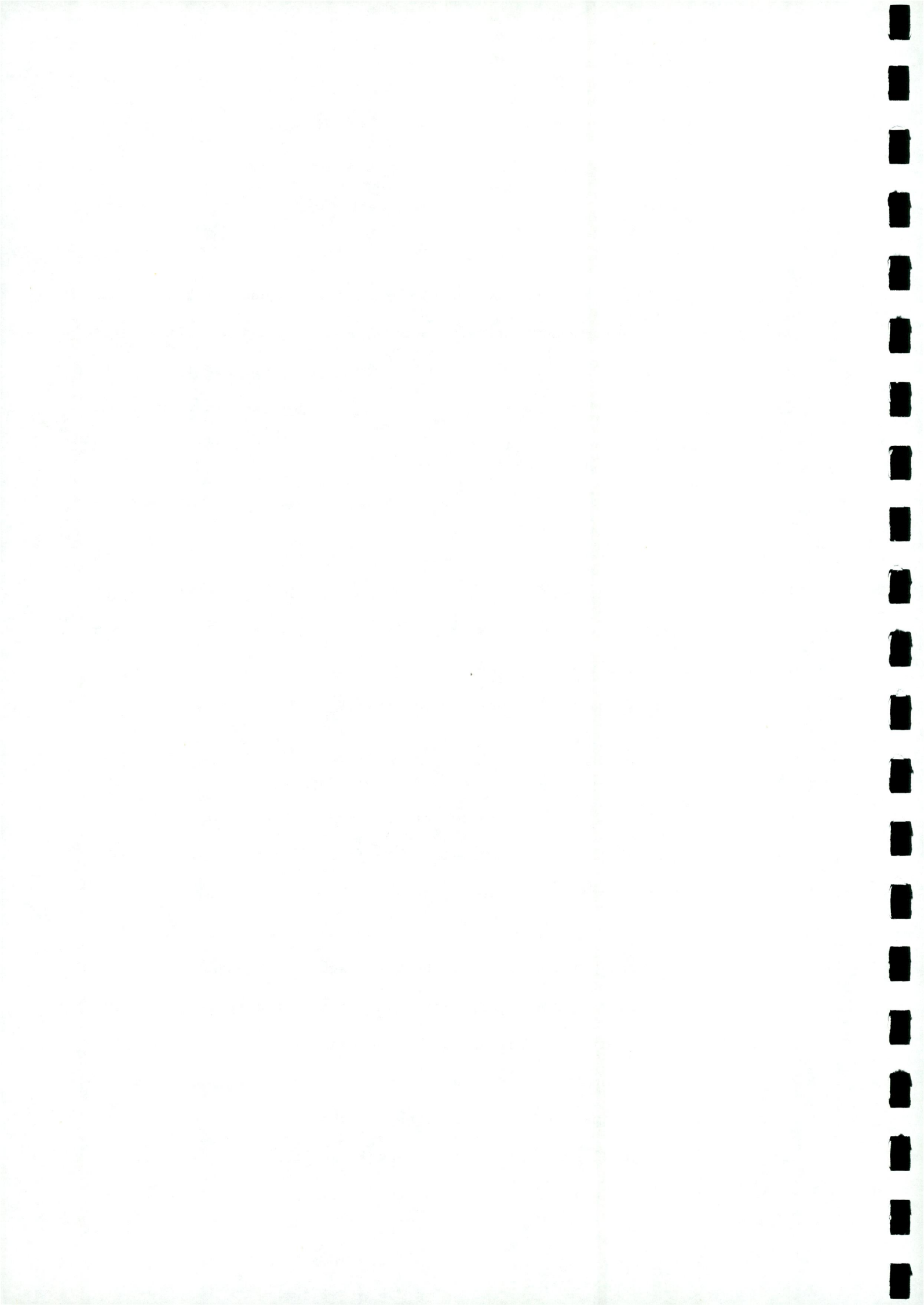
Chapter 3

The school in which I have had my teaching practice and undertook the class project was Mount Temple Comprehensive School, Malahide Road, Dublin. This is a mixed school. The principal of the school is Mr. John Meddlycott. He is a firm advocate of art and is aware of its importance in education. There are two full-time art teachers employed in the school and there are two substantial art rooms.

I taught three junior classes throughout the year and one senior class (6th year) for half of the year. The class I chose to do the special project with was 2nd year who are normally taught by Mr. John Keogh. I chose this class because of their ability and interest in art as a group. The class was a good ability class. They were a pleasure to teach.

The project I did with them was a small wall-hanging project based on observation of plants in the National Botanic Gardens Dublin. The project began on the 25th March with a field trip to the Botanic Gardens. It continued for six subsequent Mondays ending on the 13th of May.

On the 25th of March the class and I went by coach to the Botanic Gardens and spent three hours there. They observed and recorded specific plants required for the project. They used worksheets which I had previously designed for recording the information. The worksheets were comprised of four sheets of A4 paper with instructions to show them what to do; one sheet providing examples of tone, pattern, scale and line with pictures of the elements so they would be clear about their meaning.

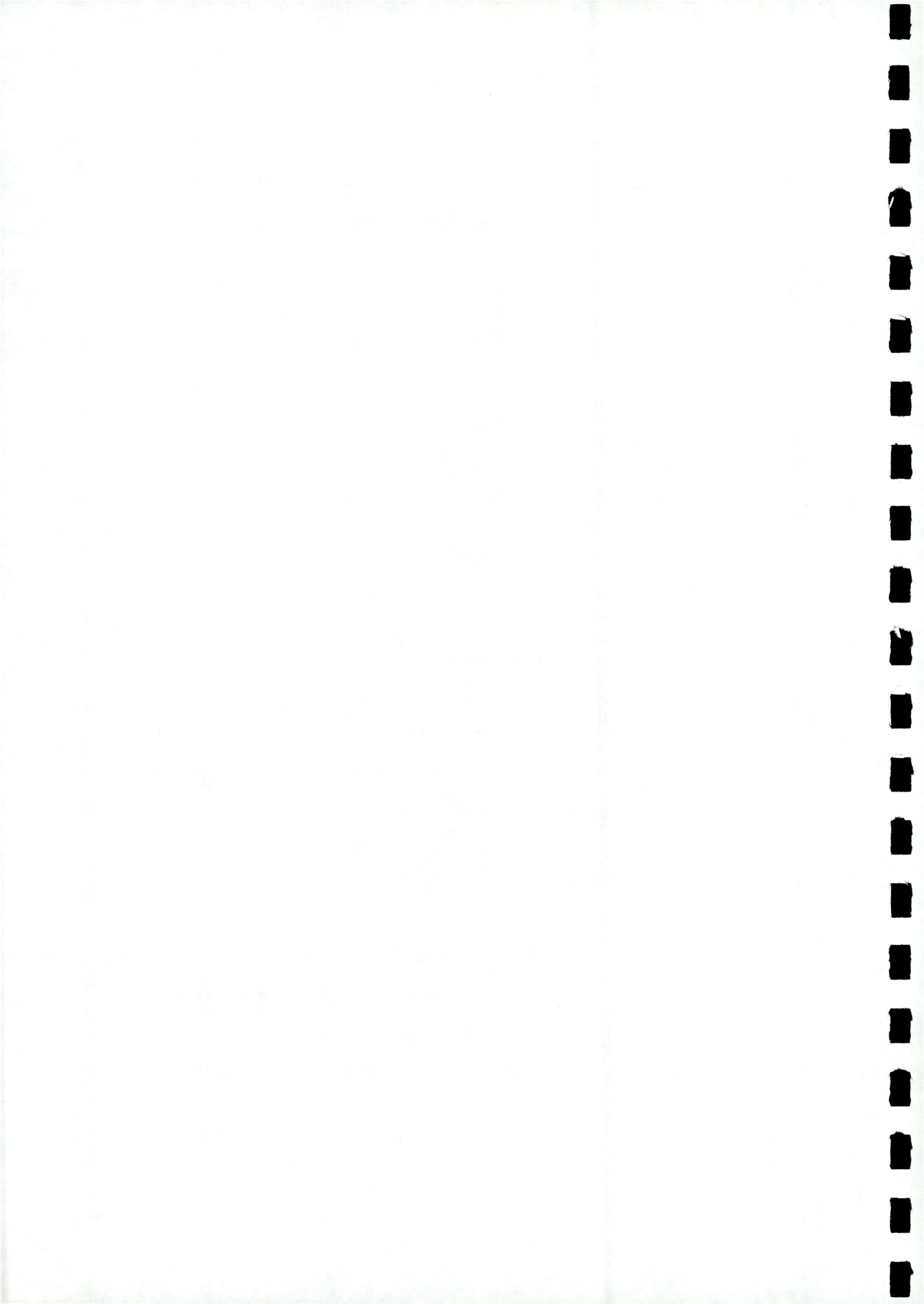


The first page of the worksheet began with an outline of the various elements in art that they would be concerned with as follows:

- Line
- Shape
- Pattern
- Texture
- Colour
- Form
- Scale

I explained to my pupils that all of these elements were important in order to get the most out of their study in the gardens. I reminded them to keep these elements in mind whilst completing each section of the worksheet. The rest of the pages on the worksheet contained instructions and directions about how to get to the appropriate glass houses. These glass houses were (1) The Cactus house, (2) The Aquatic House, (3) The Orchid House and (4) The Palm House.

We were very fortunate in terms of weather for the field trip. It was sunny and warm. The class enjoyed themselves and worked extremely hard. They realised that the success of their individual wall-hangings, hand painted on silk, would be dependent on how well and how much they recorded that day.



On the 8th April the students proceeded to evaluate the work contained on their individual worksheets. I explained to them that they would be working on design development on that day and on the subsequent two days. They reproduced drawings and enlarged, and reduced work on various mixed media backgrounds (which they had explored on 11th March). They mostly used coloured paper for experimenting with the layout of their designs as I explained to them that it would be much too time consuming for them to draw or paint for each trial design. On the first day, we discussed composition and the importance of balance and proportion in their designs. By the end of the class the students had realised what was required for the final design for their silk wall-hangings, and they spent the following two Mondays refining their designs. The students developed their powers of selection throughout the design development as they were required to make decisions very frequently. For instance, they worked up three different mixed media backgrounds but could only use one for their design. This meant that they had to assess their colours and ascertain what worked best overall with all the components of the design.

On the second day of design development, 15th April the students were engaged in selecting images from their worksheets, enlarging and cutting out and working out their compositions. I also suggested that they use their photos where appropriate to choose and use areas that worked well with their own images e.g. the contrast of soft flowers with the geometric curvilinear glass house structures.

The students learnt a great deal about scale and proportion on that day as they had to make their design work and have an impact on the viewer. We discussed ways of doing this and they realised that enlarging shapes greatly helped to make an impact and have the design relate well to the page. (See Figure 14, 15 and 16)

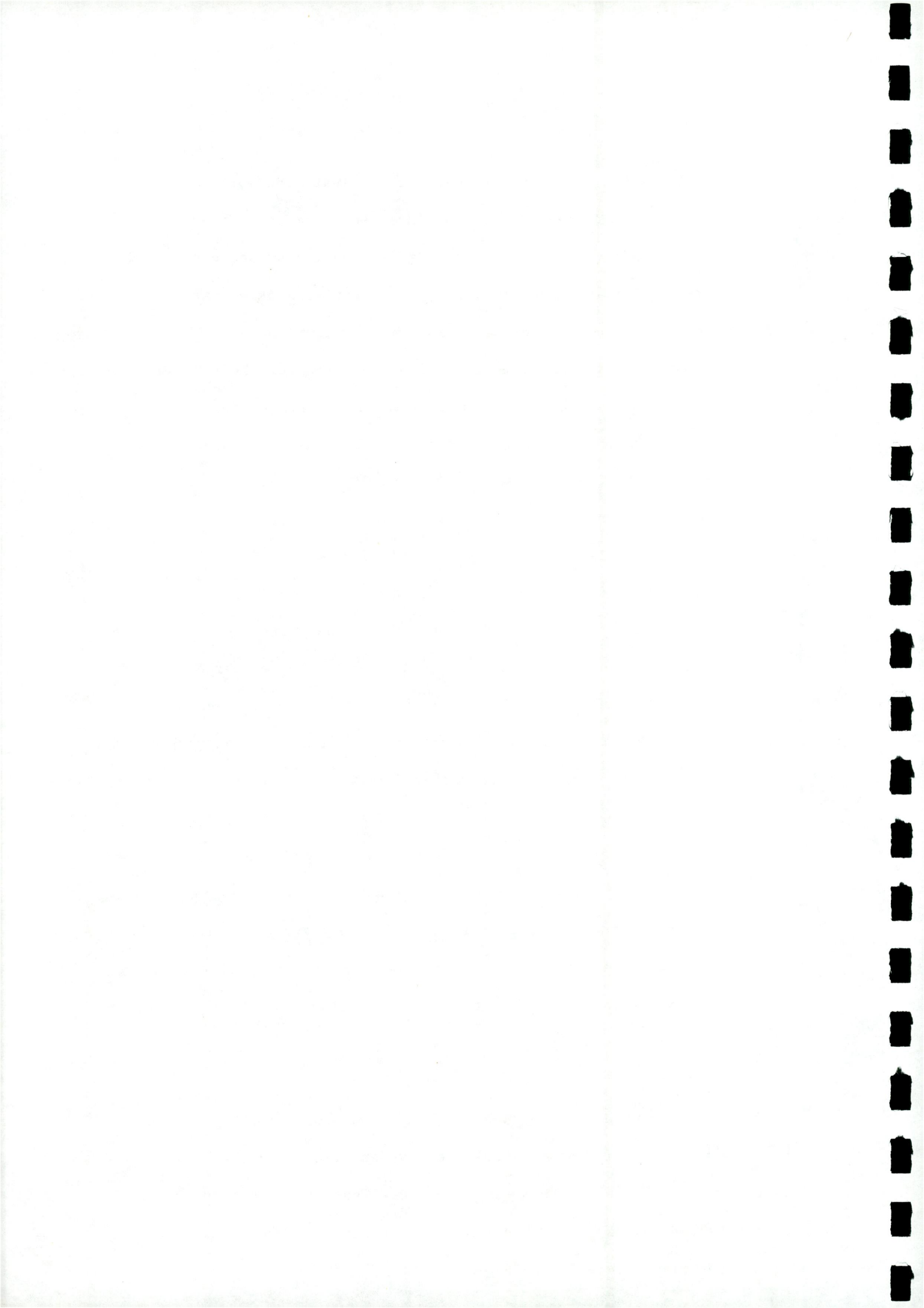




Figure 14 : Michelle O'Donoghue, Final Design for Wall-hanging.

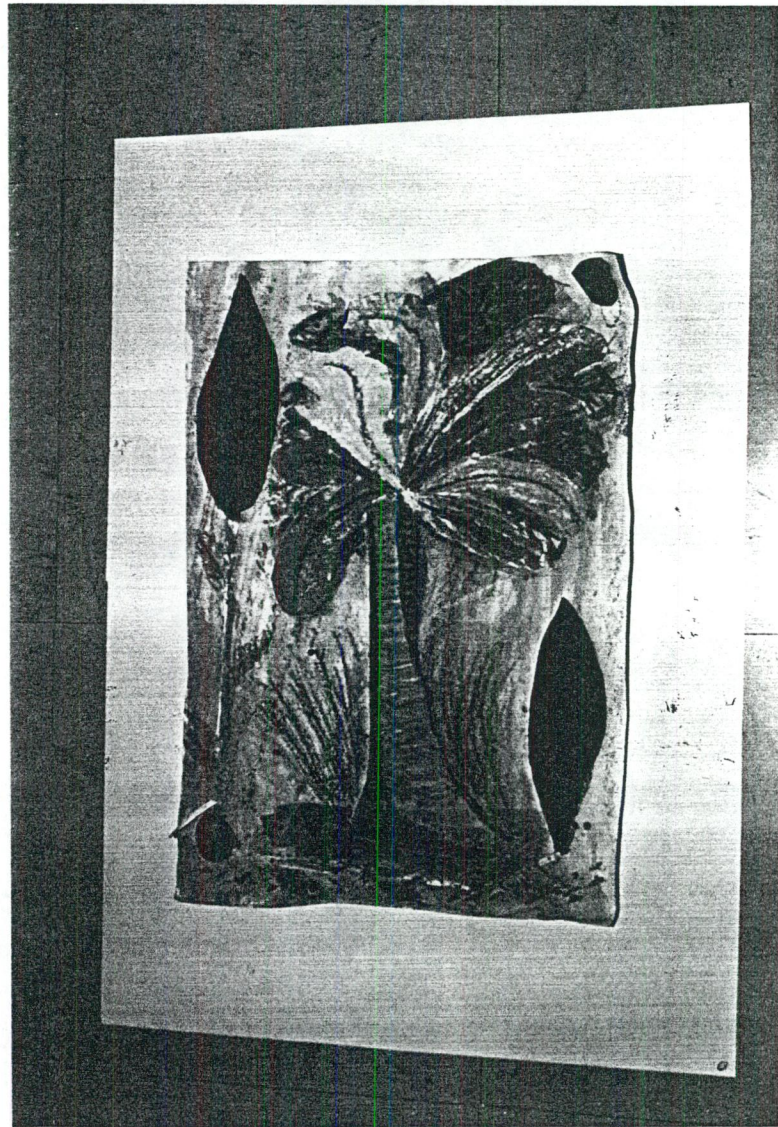
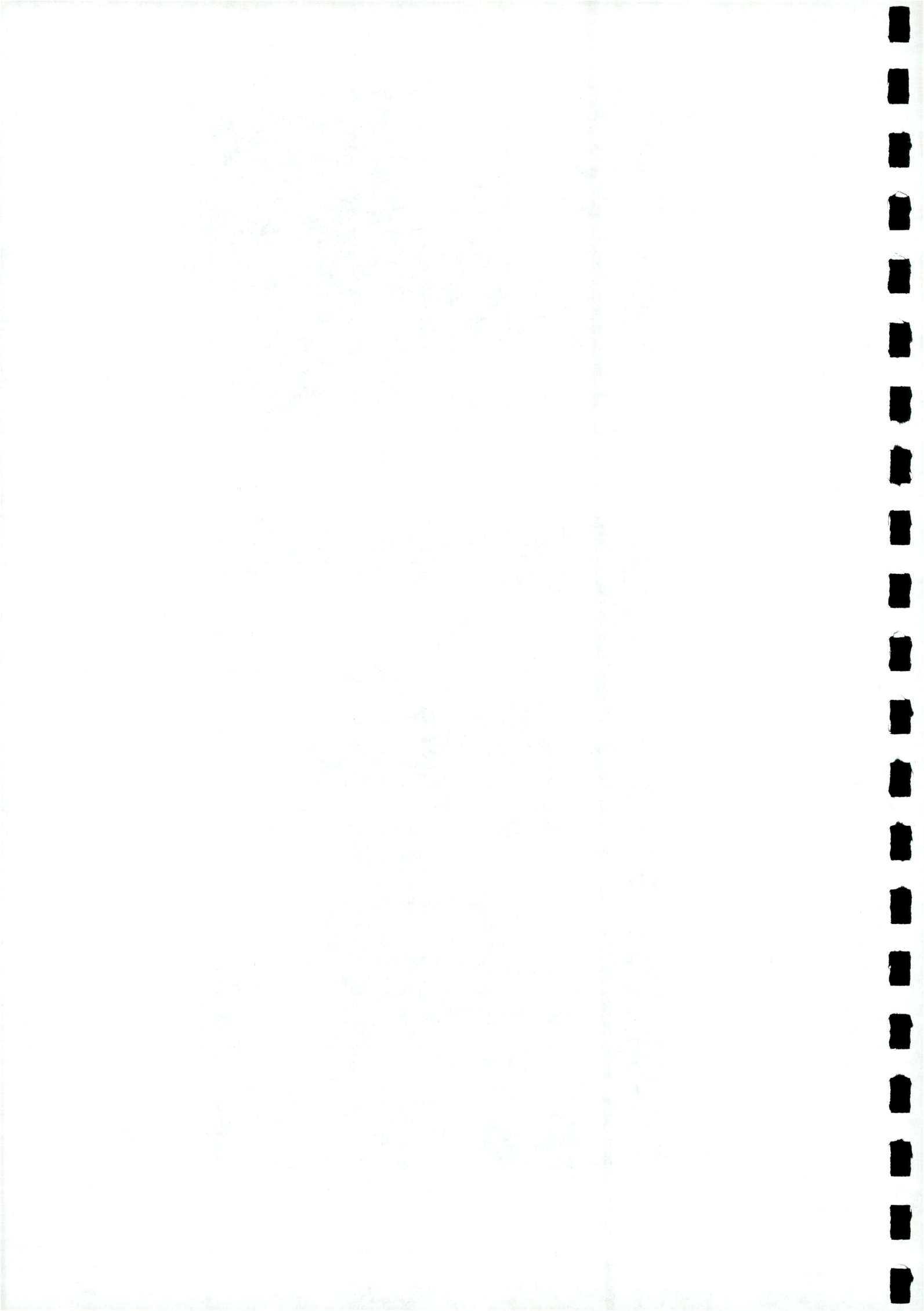


Figure 15 : Ross Gosker, Final Design for Wall-hanging.



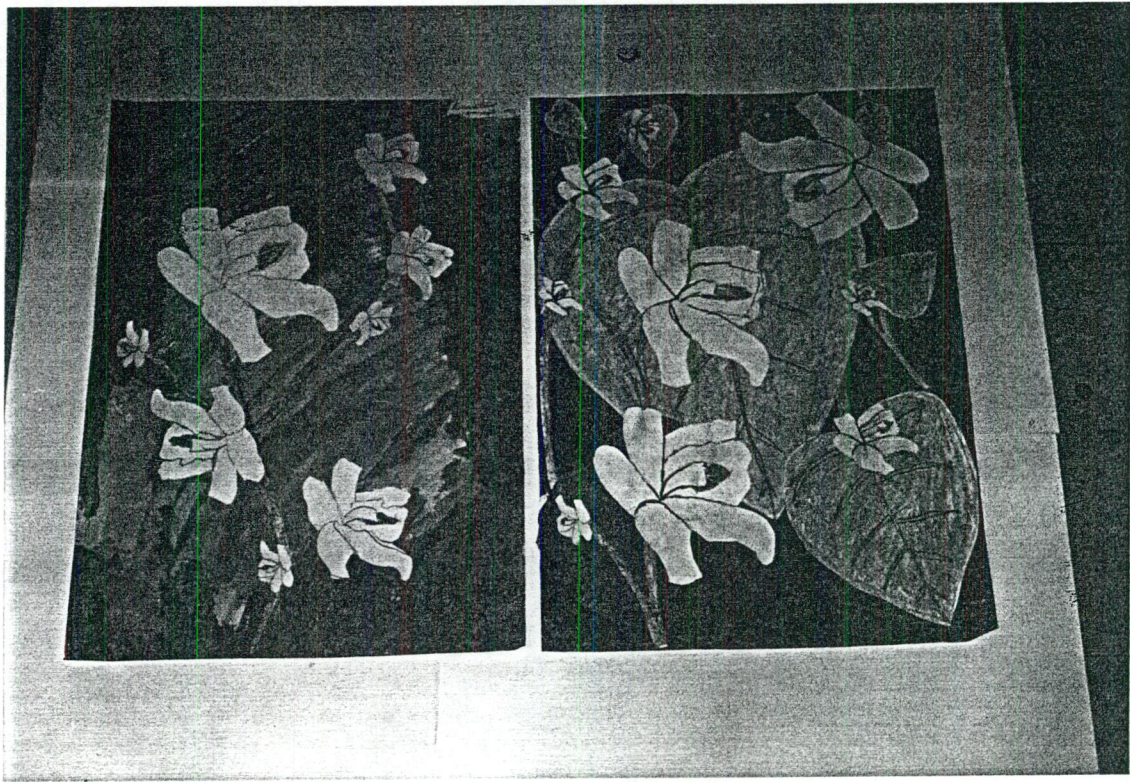
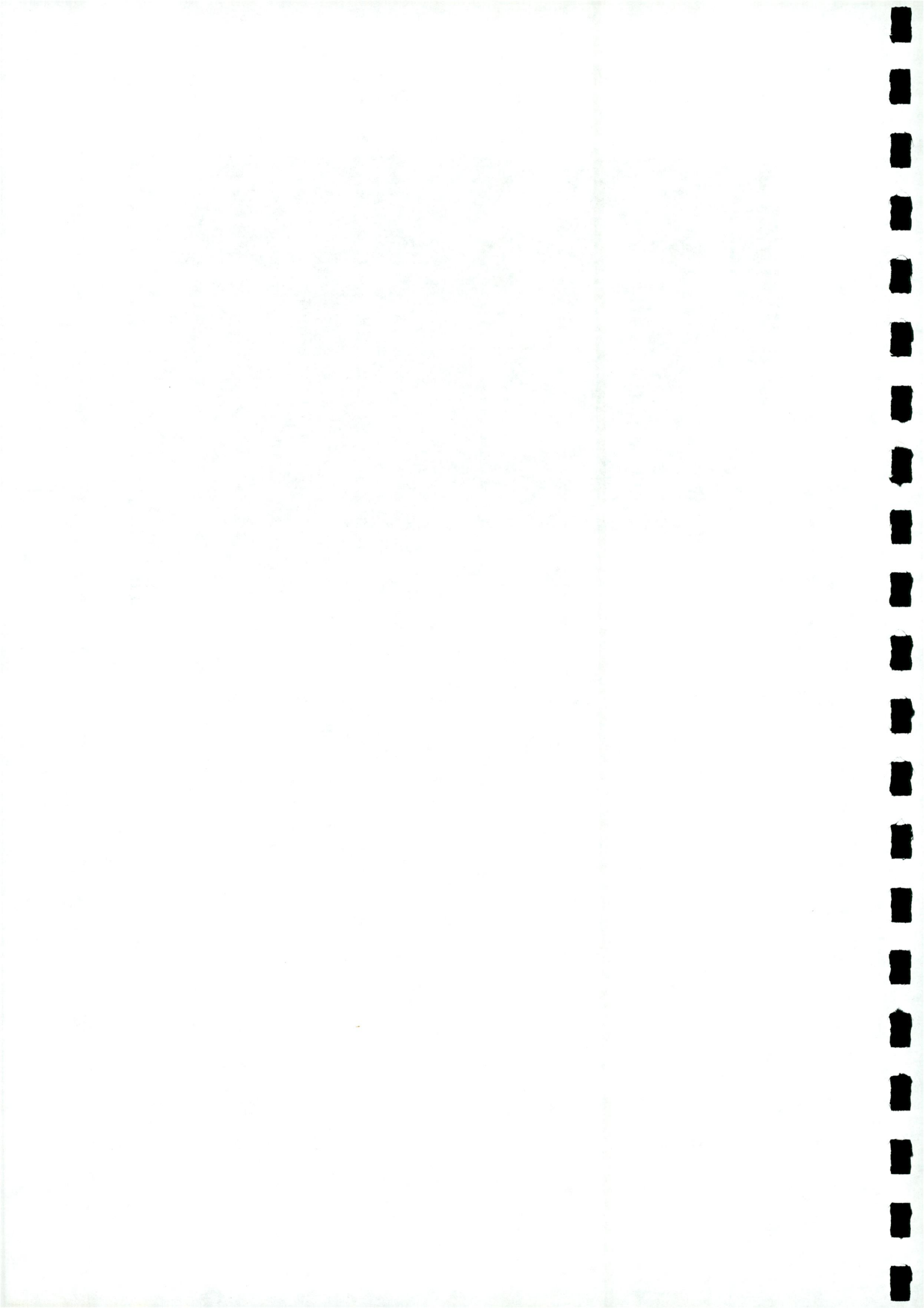


Figure 16 : Evanna Craig, Two designs for Wall-hanging.



The 22nd April was the last day for resolving their designs. They were very excited about the prospect of hand painting on silk. It proved to be a good motivating factor in producing good designs. On this day they stuck down all the components to be included in their final design. They also refined and defined images where necessary. They included surface details such as the veins in leaves.

On the 29th April seven students began hand painting on silk, the rest of the class hand painted on the 6th and the 13th of May. The 29th April was very important as I demonstrated to the whole class how to use the silk painting equipment i.e. the pippets (squeeze bottles), the gutta serti and also how to stretch silk onto the wooden frames. I explained that the silk needed to be taut otherwise valleys of dye would form on the surface. I showed them how to hold the pippets (at a 45° angle) and explained that if they did not do this too much gutta would come out. As I had spent a good deal of time mixing up a wide range of colours from Procion reactive dyes I explained to them that it was vital to clean the brushes after dipping into each dye. They were extremely vigilant about this and, overall, were not intimidated by the process of silk painting.

One student, David Beggan, remarked that he found it easier to work on the silk than to work on his design. This was rather refreshing to hear as often times students prefer the process of working to the end product. I have included a photograph of David and Cronan MacNamara busy working on their silk designs (See Figure 17).

In evaluating their work on this project I would have to say that I was extremely pleased with the classe's input throughout the seven weeks. They translated their designs very well from the worksheets, to design,

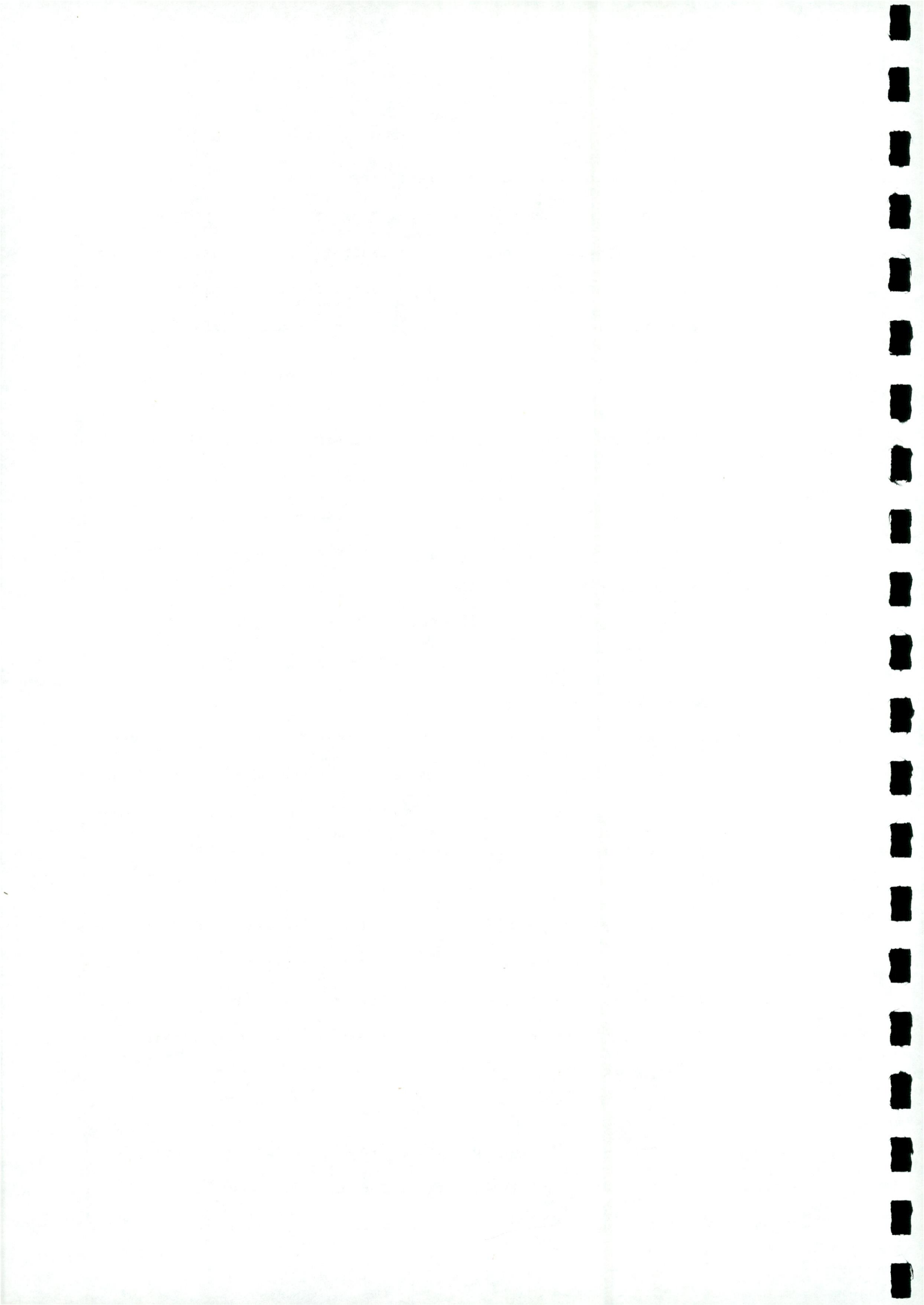
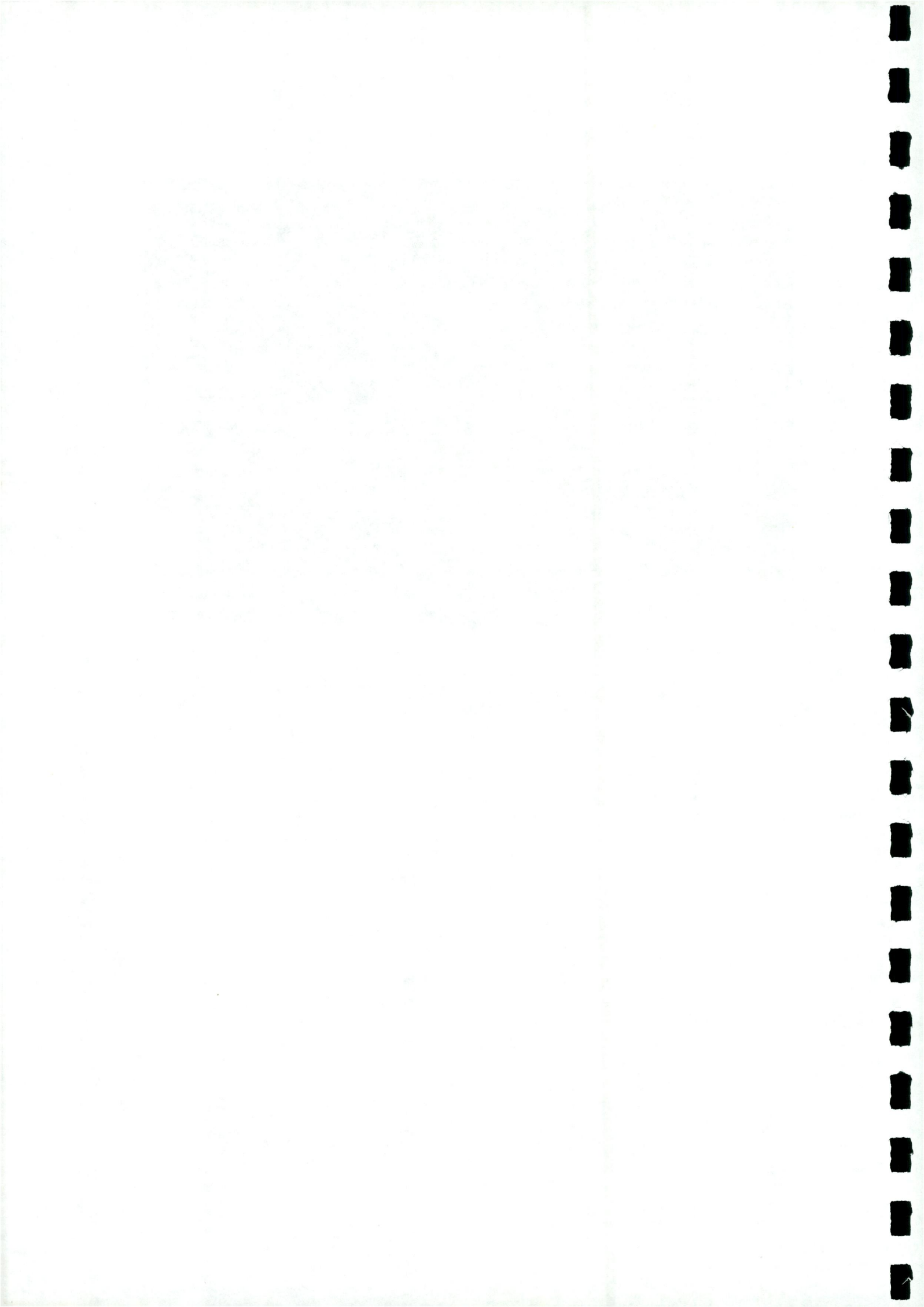




Figure 17 : Cronan and David working on their silk wall-hanging designs.



development, to final finished pieces. It was interesting to observe how the images developed and changed as the classes progressed. If I were to make any changes in this project for use again I would include my Art History and Appreciation audio visual presentation of Flowers and Foliage in painting through the ages. I think it would benefit the students from an educational point of view to see and learn how various artists have tackled the theme. The pupils could use this as a historical reference to build upon and practical lessons could be designed to work in conjunction with this study. Finally, some examples of the designs, the finished pieces and the students at work are shown in Figures 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25.

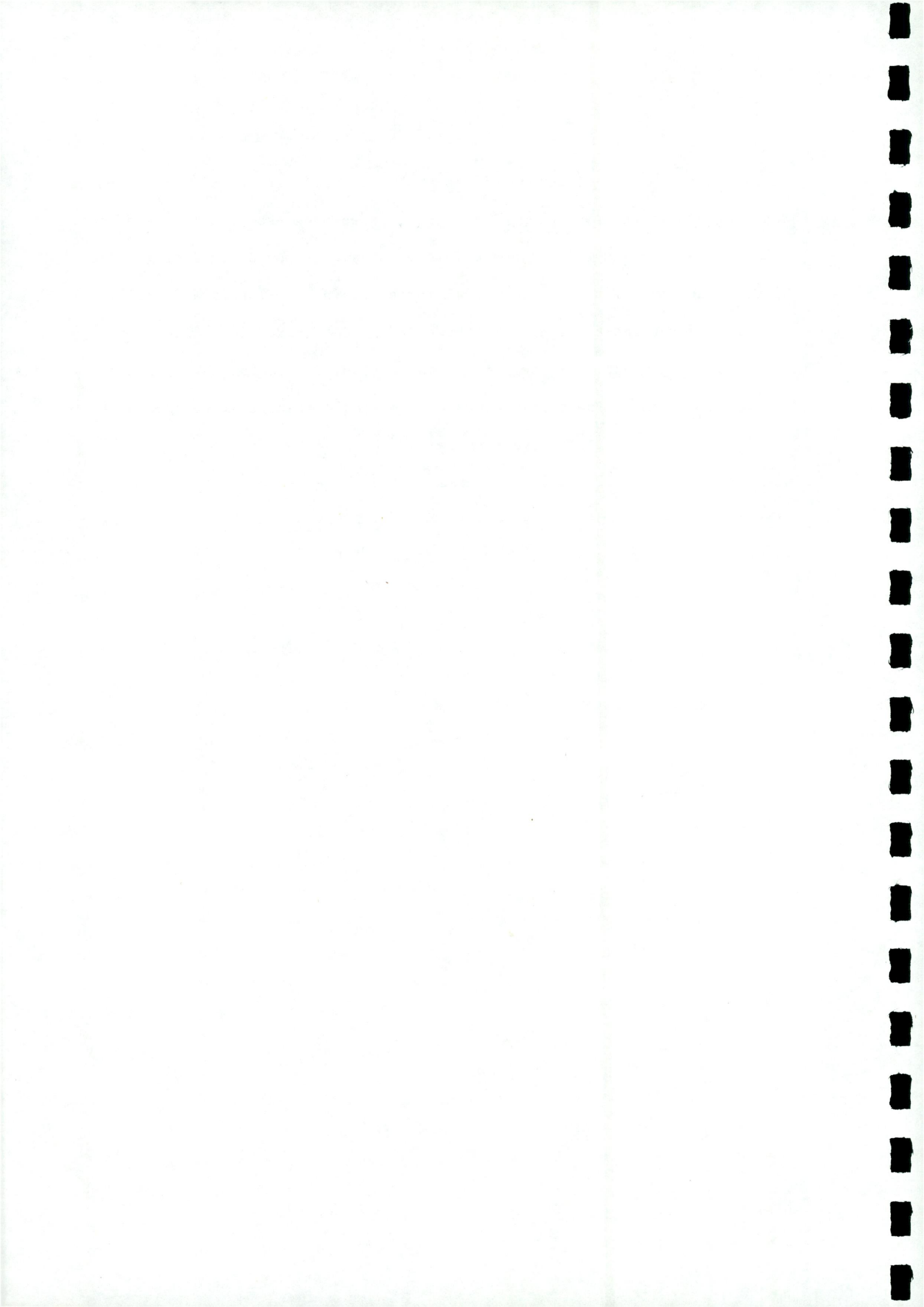
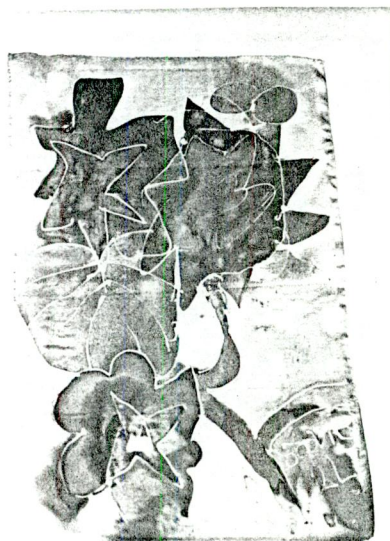


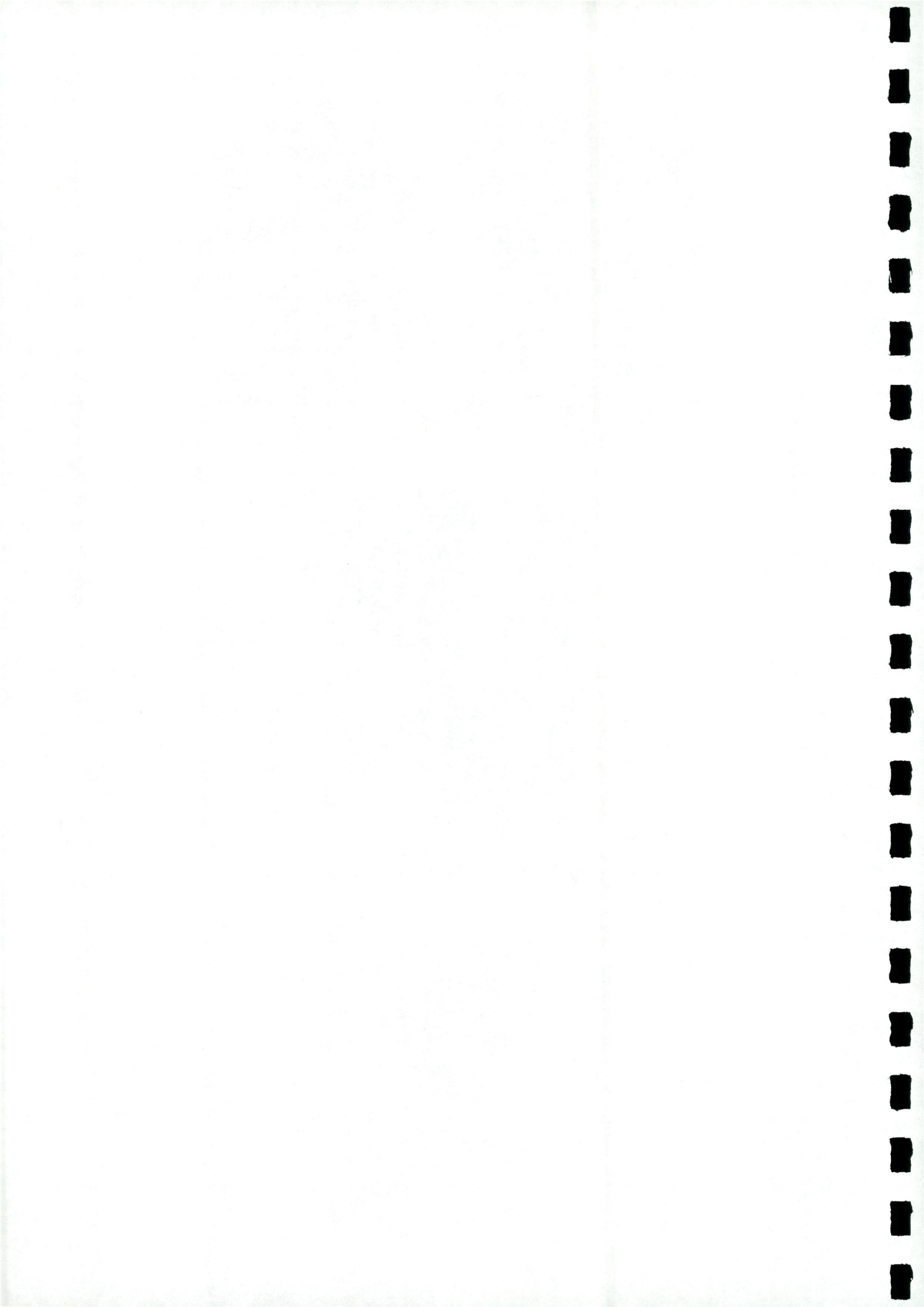


Figure 18 : June Hogan, Design & Silk Wall-hanging.



Figure 19 : Sophie Bedell, Design & Silk Wall-hanging.





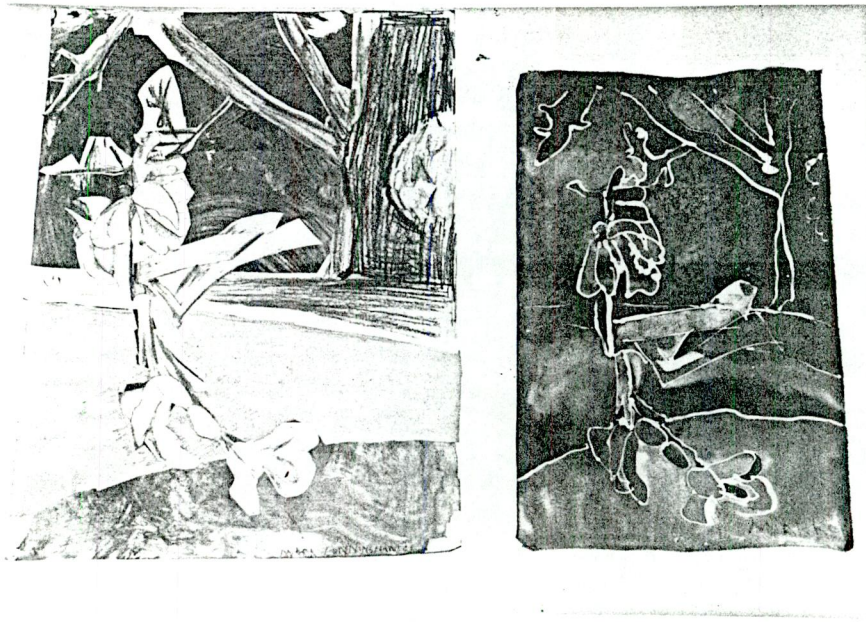


Figure 20 : Mark Cunningham, Design & Silk Wall-hanging.

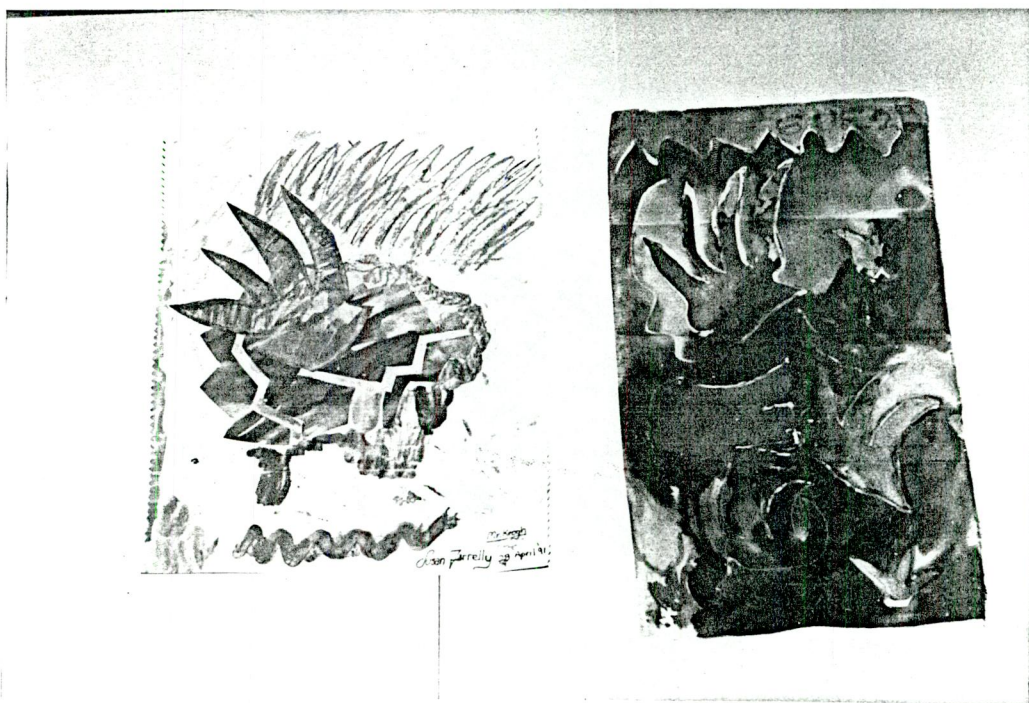


Figure 21 : Susan Farrelly, Design & Silk Wall-hanging.

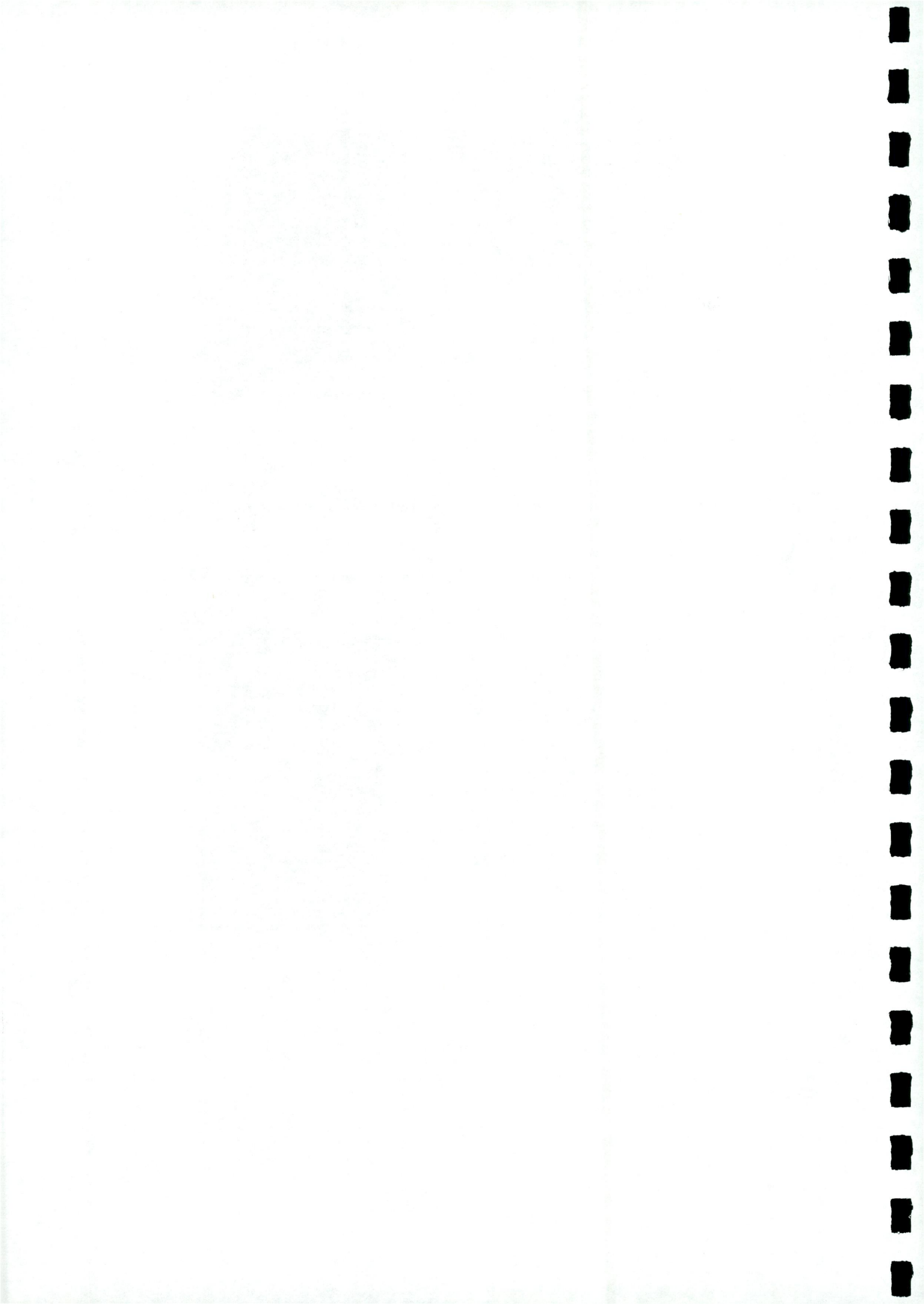




Figure 22 : Evanna, Helen, Philip and Barry working on their designs.



Figure 23 : 2nd Years completing their designs.

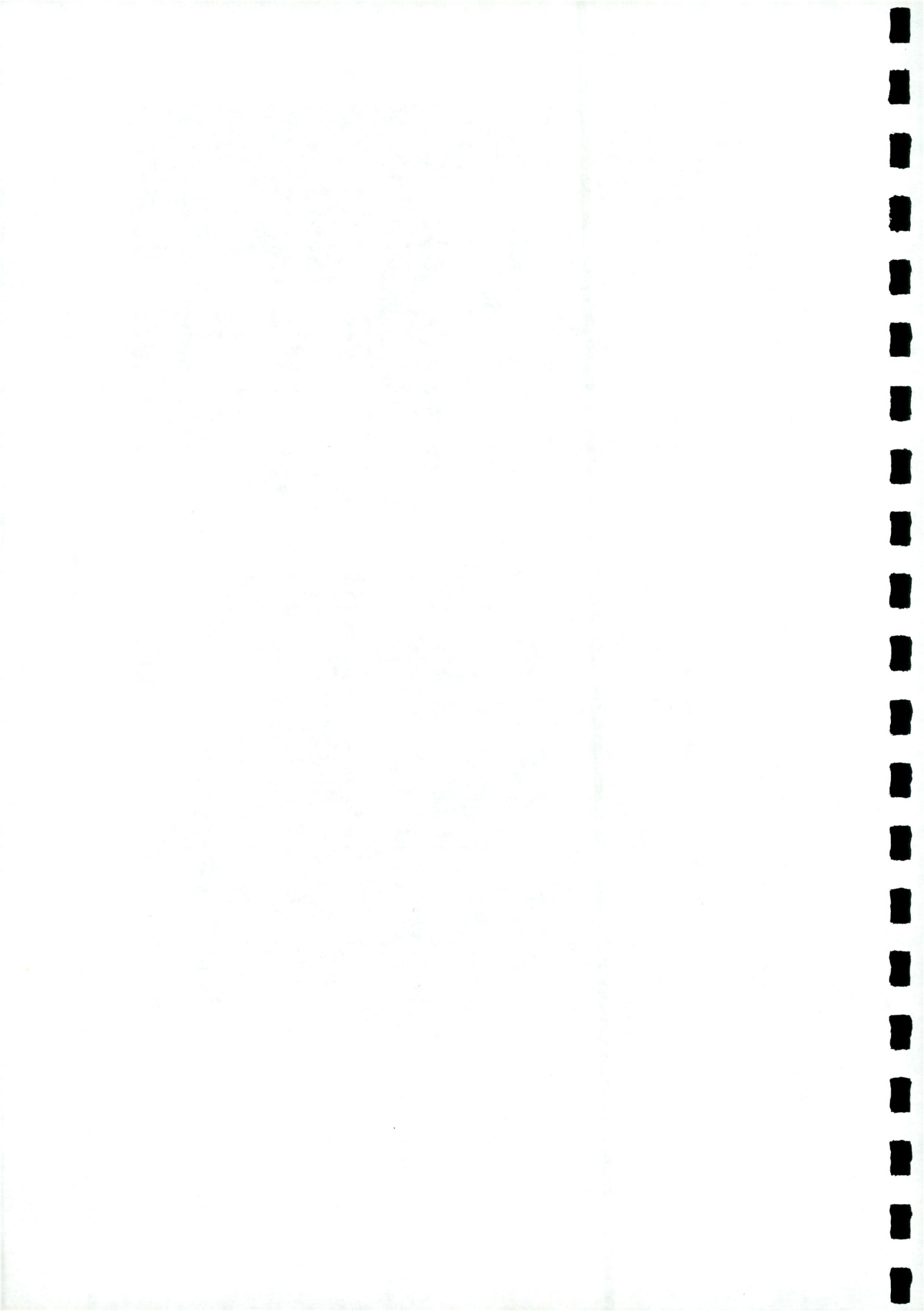
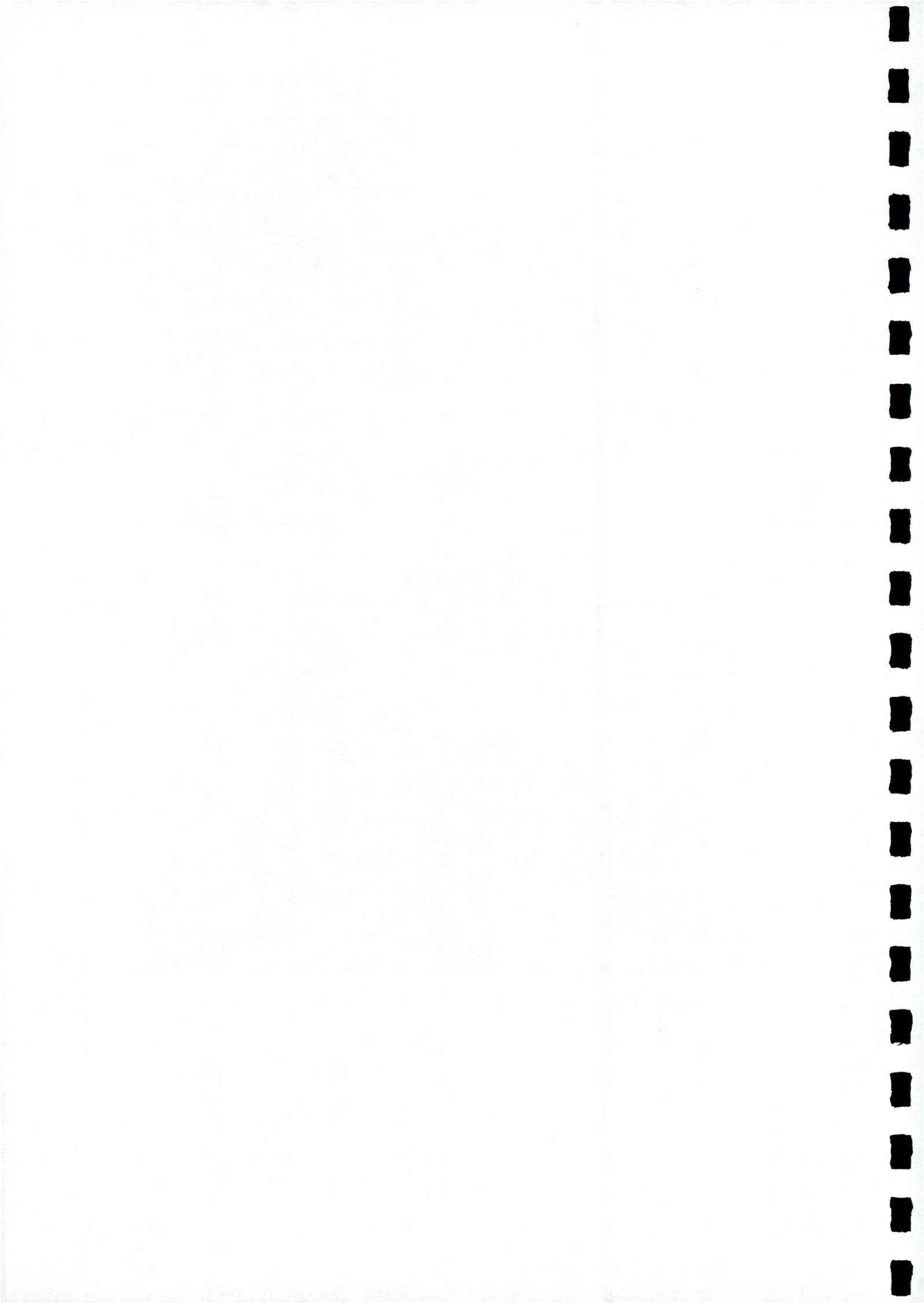




Figure 24 : Helen, Philip, Barry, Cronan and David completing their silk designs.



Figure 25 : Philip, Helen and Ross - finished silk designs.



Chapter Four

Educational Relevance

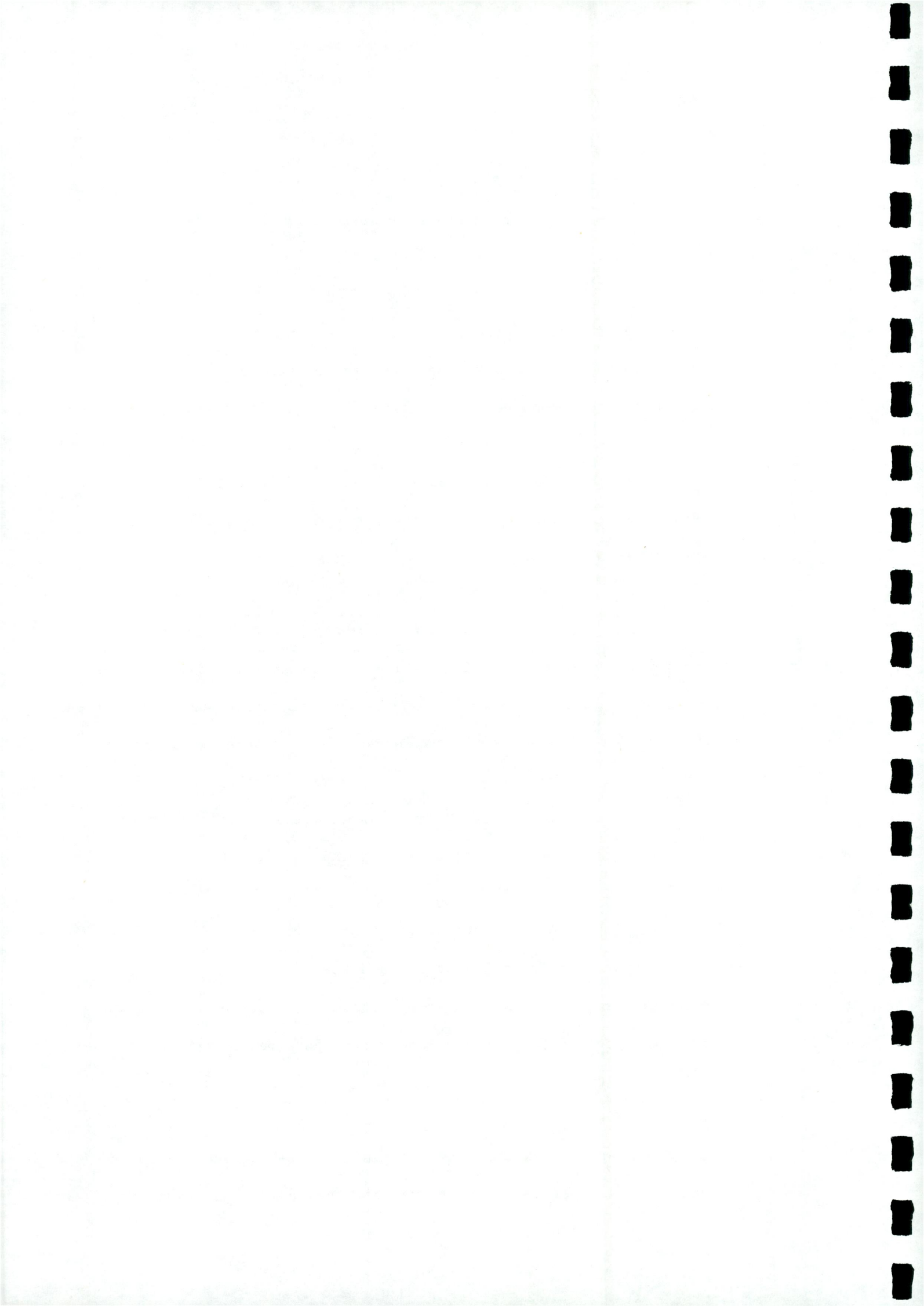
Art & Design

It has been estimated that a large percentage of the nation's youth receive no education or instruction in art beyond the age of thirteen or fourteen. This is a cause of great concern to me because I believe that art should be seen as an integral subject in the pupil's overall education rather than a 'frill'. The relevance of art in education should be considered and taken very seriously, and art should be given a higher profile in subject choices in secondary schools.

Art should be seen in conjunction with the needs of the students and the needs of society in general. It should also be considered and valued as important as other "priority" subjects on the school curriculum. One of the primary roles I would see myself having as an art teacher would be to stress the importance of the subject in the context of other educational programmes. The art teacher should always aim to elevate art's status in the Curriculum and not allow it to be seen as purely peripheral.

On page 1 of The Junior Certificate, Art, Craft, Design Guidelines for Teachers, issued by the An Roinn Oideachais and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the aims of the programme are stated as follows:

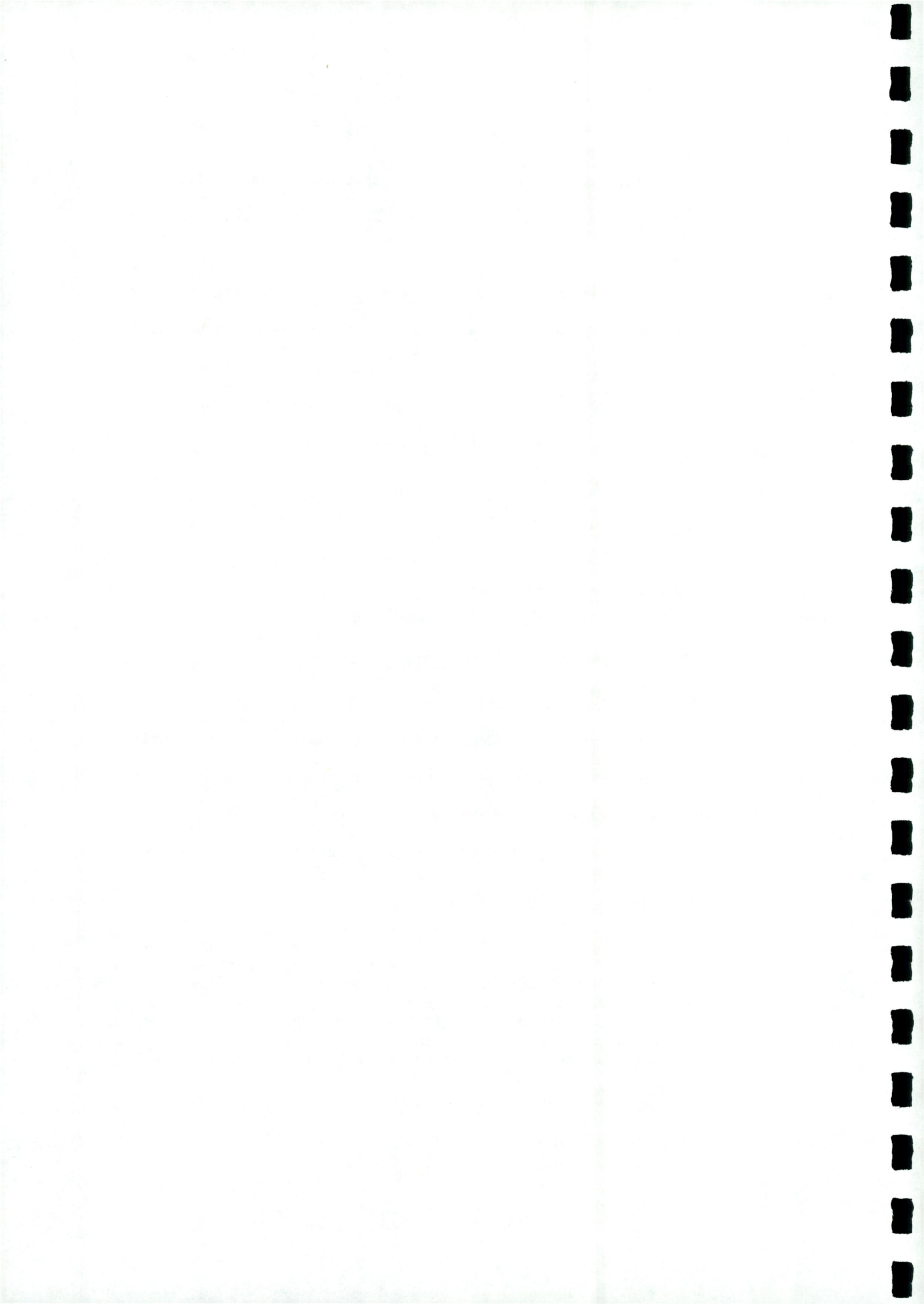
- . to reinforce and further develop in the young person the knowledge, understanding skills and competencies acquired at primary level;
- . to extend and deepen the range and quality of the young person's educational experience in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies;



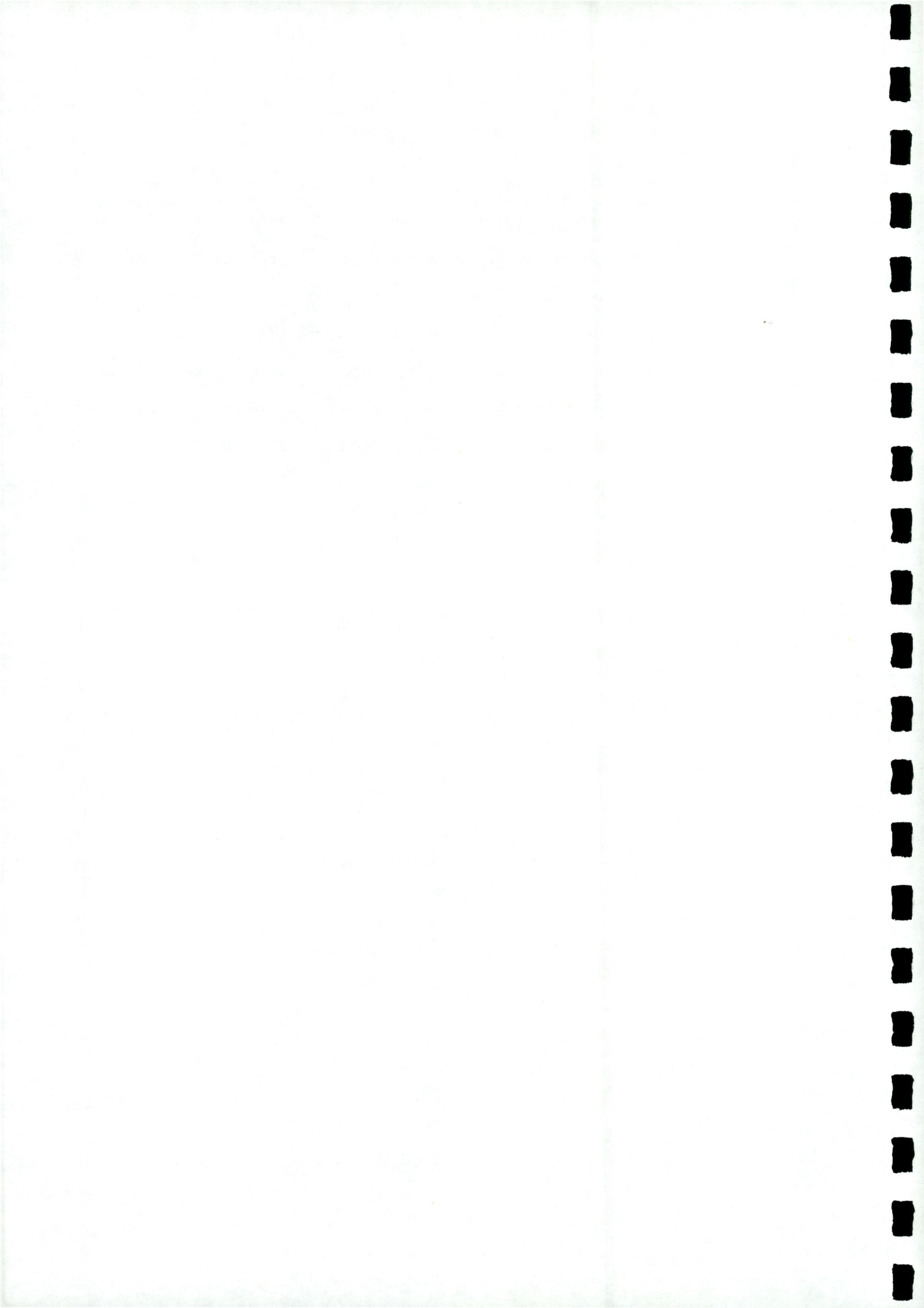
- . to develop the young person's personal and social confidence, initiative and competence through a broad, well balanced general education;
- . to prepare the young person for the requirements of further programmes of study, of employment or of life outside full-time education;
- . to contribute to the moral and spiritual development of the young person and to develop a tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of others;
- . to prepare the young person for the responsibilities of citizenship in the national context and in the context of the wider European Community.¹

I have tried to keep these aims in mind whilst teaching and lesson planning this year. With regard to the third aim, I feel strongly about the possibility of developing the young person's personal and social confidence through working in Art and Design. I believe that art as a subject is relevant for everybody who is interested in it, and not reserved merely for those who are talented. In this respect the words of A. Barclay Russell are relevant:

The beliefs in the S.E.A. rest in the first place on the truth that every man is an artist and on the influences which stem directly from that fact. Such inferences are as revolutionary for society as they are for education. If education fulfils its purpose, then each person will be able to make use of his creative faculty in some dynamic way, and so enrich his whole being for the good of society as a whole.²



Art and Design classes can be very beneficial in improving the 'self-esteem' of students who may be weak academically and as a result used to under-achieving. As there are no definite "right" or "wrong" solutions the students are less inhibited in their work. I have personally encountered this during my teaching practice with one particular class this year. There are a number of students who do not achieve acceptable grades in the conventional academic subjects but have achieved successful results in the art class. They have improved and used their powers of observation whilst undertaking observational studies throughout the year.

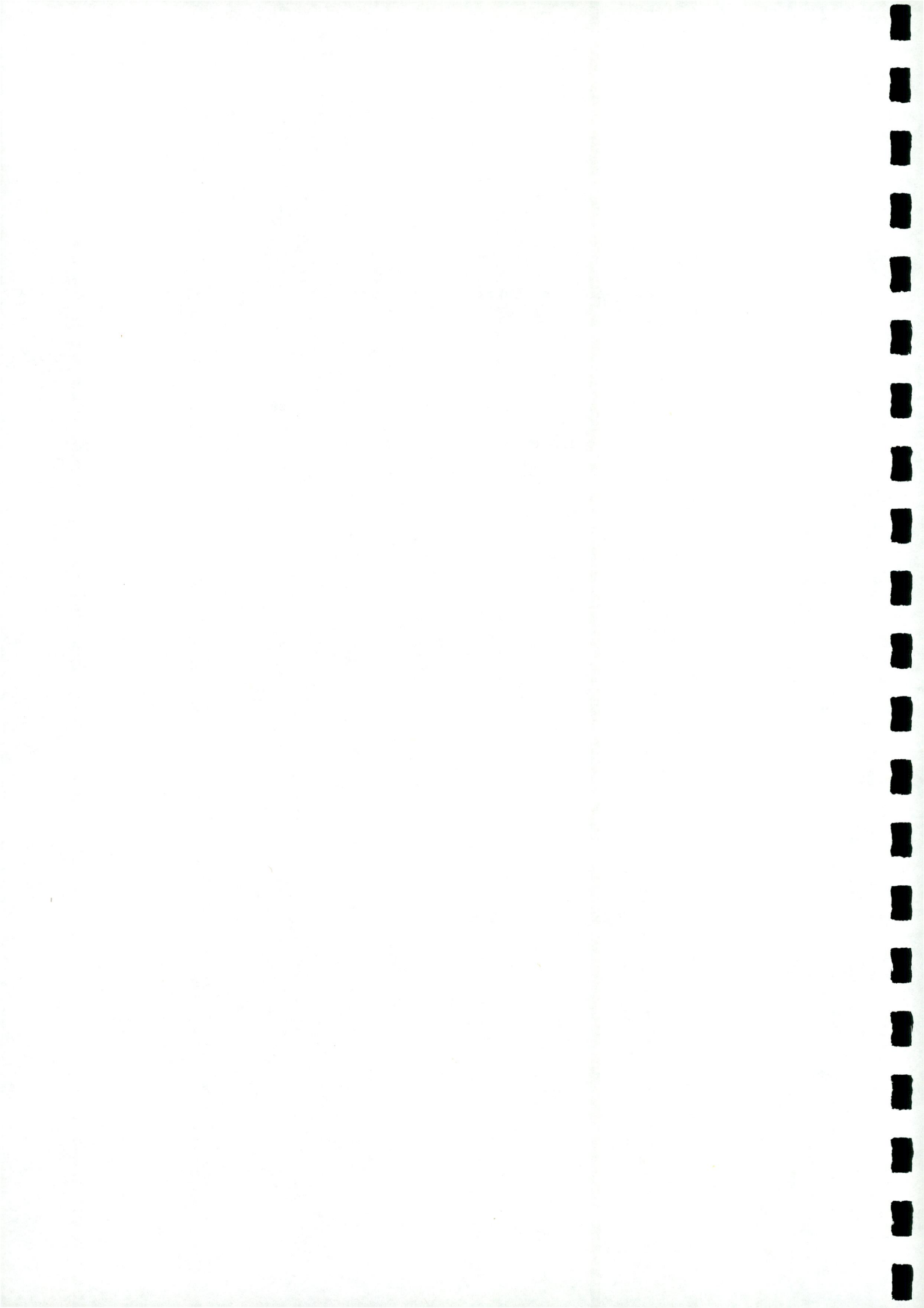


"FOOTNOTES"

Chapter 4 - Educational Relevance

- 1 An Roinn Oideachais, The Junior Certificate Art, Craft,
Design Guidelines for Teachers, page 1

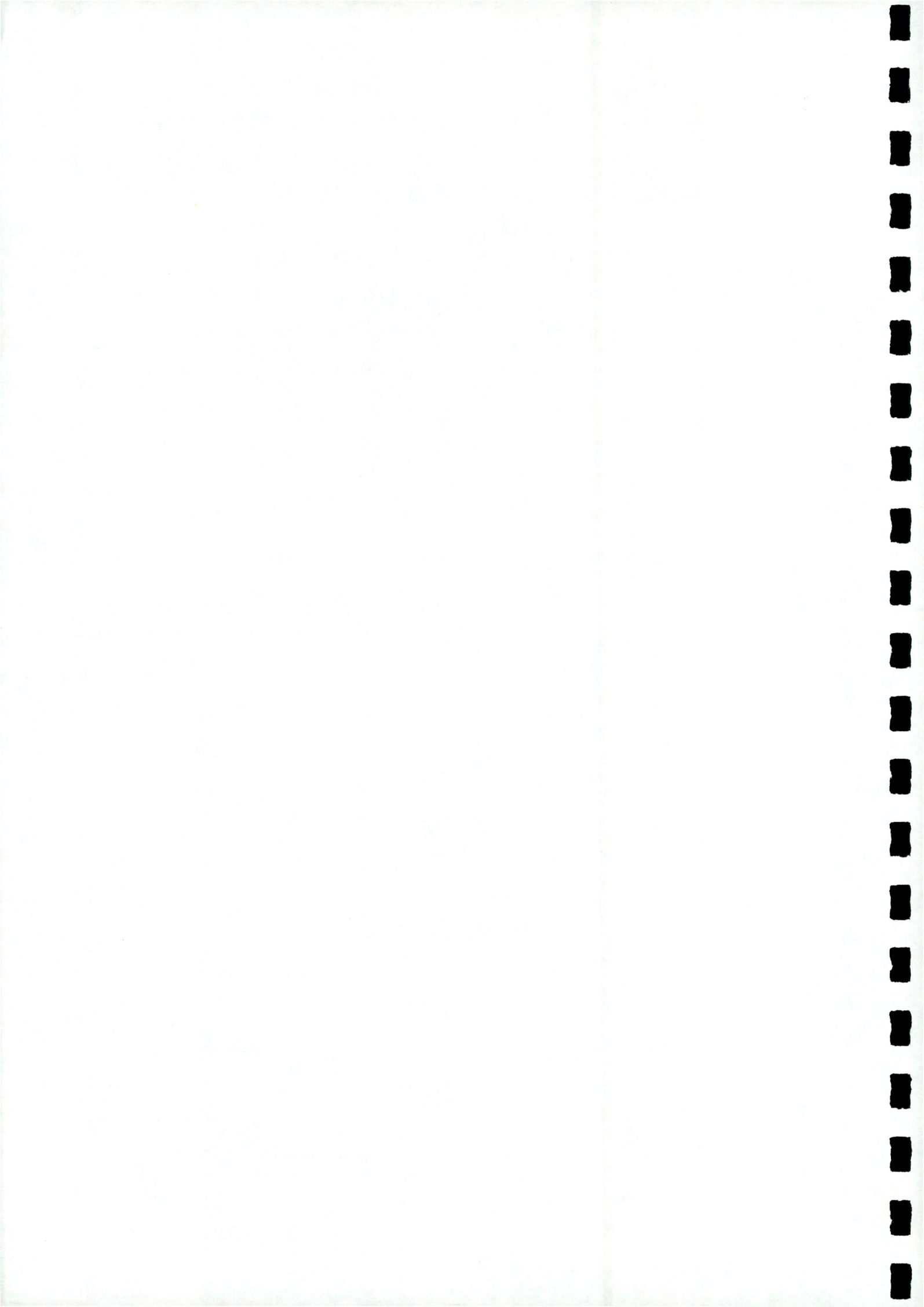
- 2 Education through Art, A. Barclay Russell, page 1.



CONCLUSION

Finally, I hope that I have succeeded in stimulating creative activity and the expression of personal ideas through the pupils' project. I feel that their powers of perception have been sharpened and they have become more sensitive through using and improving their sense of judgement and discrimination while designing their silk wall-hangings. They developed technical skills of working with silk and had a real sense of achievement as they watched the final result unfold.

As far as my own personal work is concerned it is difficult to evaluate and remain objective, suffice to say that I thoroughly enjoyed working on this theme. Working from the same source and recording the changes as the seasons changed provided the necessary variety in terms of colour and texture. The part of my project that I enjoyed most was the hand painting on silk. I decided to work on silk myself as a result of watching the pupils do it. I hadn't previously intended to do so, but watching their enjoyment as they explored the medium inspired me to do some of my own. Teaching can be a reciprocal exercise.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Levey, Michael, From Fiotto to Cezanne.

Thames and Hudson Ltd., London 1989.

Keller, Horst, Watercolours and Drawings of the French Impressionists.

Harry N. Abrams Inc., New York 1982.

Hilder, Roland, Watercolour Painting.

Watson Guptill Publications Inc., 1986.

Bumpus, Judith, Van Goghs Flowers,

Phaidon Press Limited, London 1989.

An Roinn Oideachais, Art, Craft, Design Guidelines for Teachers.

Government Publications 1990.

Russell, Barclay A., Education through Art.

Elliot, Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision.

Lowenfeld, Viktor, Creative & Mental Growth 1st Ed.

MacMillan Co., New York 1947.

