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## CHAPTER 1

### PERSONAL PROJECT - "CELEBRATION"

#### Introduction

Art today has become more public in both its visibility and its support and contemporary artists have become increasingly conscious of the views they project. In a lot of contemporary works of Art there is a positive acknowledgement that a piece of Art is never ideologically neutral but has by very fact of its existence, both an important position and a message to convey. I feel that art has moved quite a lot away from self reflective work and discovered a more universal point of reference. In the face of imminent world catastrophes and pending disasters, the world in which we live holds huge potential for Artistic expression in terms of subject matter. Our involvement and exploration of this and our elemental responses are necessary for communication in todays society at every level.

In addition to reflections on present day society in art references to history, mythology and elements of culture from primitive society to modern technology are essential.

One aspect of culture is that of celebration and it is this aspect

that I feel we need to explore. The state of Art today and societies interpretation of it is changing all the time, and the theme of celebration is one that has been documented by Artists and other for centuries but has been subject to much adaptation and changing interpretations in its representation.

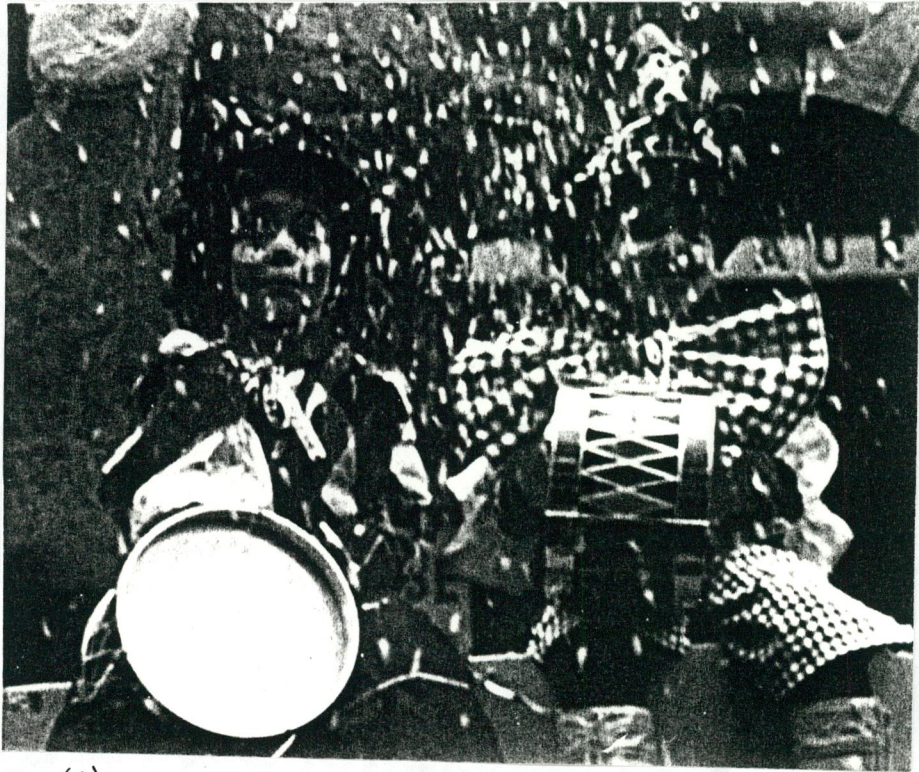
Robert Hughes in the television series and book Shock of the New<sup>1</sup> describes the state of Art today very poetically as he likens it to the cycle of nature. He says;

Nature has been replaced by the culture of congestion: of cities and mass media. We are crammed like battery hens with stimuli, and what seems significant is not the quality one meaning of the messages, but these excess. Overload has changed our Art. Especially in the last thirty years, capitalism plus electronics have given us a new habitat, our forest of the media. The problem for Art was how to survive here, how to adapt to this habitat-for otherwise it was feared Art would go under.

Hughes gives us something to really think hard about. There is an enormous need for society to concentrate on the positive aspects of human existence. As Artists we have to 'communicate the good news'.

Celebration in its cultural context has always held great fascination for me. It is a very broad theme and may cover social structures, domestic tradition, religious rituals, political persuasions and community conventions. The latter is the subject I will be most concerned with in my personal project.

<sup>1</sup>•Robert Hughes, Shock of the New, (London 1972), Chapter 3, pg. 84-111.



Fig(1)

Community conventions, those dealing with aspects of celebration and more specifically with those pertaining to the subject of carnival, I believe to be so potentially explosive with exciting elements of contemporary and historical value that an exploration of a visual nature into their significance is both inevitable and necessary.

This is especially true, now this year when Dublin is at the centre of European attention in a year described by Chief Executive of Dublin 1991, Louis Clohessy, as being one "in which to celebrate, reflect, and construct."<sup>1</sup>

Children need the opportunity to use art effectively to explore and express ideas, insights and feelings and what better motivation could there be than that provided by a celebratory experience. A celebration of any sort - an anniversary, a particular time of year, a street carnival, a funfair, the end of the war, whatever:- a celebration is a phenomenon everybody no matter what nationality, age or social class they are, can identify and is familiar with. It is a universal, ritualistic event that is so significant everybody must stop and honour its happening; it should be so valued and provide the best opportunity for children to express and create giving an event meaning in the environment. The impact a celebration would have on individuals should be one of self-awareness and renewal but these events, however small, also have

<sup>1</sup>. J. Carroll, From the hip on Jim clohessy, In Dublin issue 367, Feb 1991.



good effects on the community, giving it a sense of unity and identity.

By its very nature, the act of celebration has an element of spontaneity, unplanned and unpredictable - not unlike life itself - all these qualities appeal to me and have played a big part in my work to date. Using bright colours, working freely and relatively quickly, I tend to become more involved in the "nowness" of my work, enjoying the active immediacy of translating an episode or idea into a visual form.

During a celebration, a natural quality of play and similar immediacy is present. It might be that just on particular fleeting movement is significant for an individual - a sudden realization - that certain tighthening of the chest sensation as a child just before Santa comes, or on the tip most top of a helter skelter before the plunge, or at one minute to midnight on New Years Eve. It may be brief and transitory but it is a cumulative experience, growing towards further fulfillment of the imagination.

Carnival is a magic time, outside of time it is a time when traditionally old year gave way to new, when nature was revived with the coming of Spring. Carnival according to Alexander Orloff<sup>3</sup> is a time when (Fig 1)

man dons the sacred mask an disguised as a supernatural spirit, ritually mimicks the seasonal struggle of the

elemental forces, recreating the cosmic chaos from which all life springs. This annual rite,

He continues,

exerts an occult power over us stirring the forgotten roots of our primordial soul. The alchemy of masquerade transforms us allowing us to commence with another world the magic world of fantasy. Through the chaotic madness of carnival we invest our social order and rent our pent up frustrations with it. We embrace the opposite within ourselves, abandon our illusionary identities in this so called real world and plunge into a supernatural dimension where the laws of man and of nature are briefly suspended only to surface again reborn with renewed faith in the future."<sup>1</sup>.

If in a visual sense, the essence of Orloff's description could be captured in my project where if even for a second in an attempt to bring the senses and perceptions to the highest possible pinnacle I will have achieved a very important objective.

Orloff talks about communing with another world - the magic world of fantasy - This I believe to be a fundamental aspect of creativity in elevating the mind to another plane. We all dream and our dreams can contain worlds in which strange things happen - where anything is possible with the "alchemy of masquerade coming" into play. The idea of using fantasy and enchantment in Art is a subject that can be linked with my personal project and also that of the class. As part of the historical reference therefore I would like to include aspects of fantasy and its being adopted by artists through the ages. I feel that it has had such a profound affect historically on artists and on me personally in terms of

<sup>1</sup>. Alexander Orloff - Carnival, chapter 1, Myth and Cult, pg. 36-43 1984, Kadshaw Books.



Fig(2). Jonathon . London

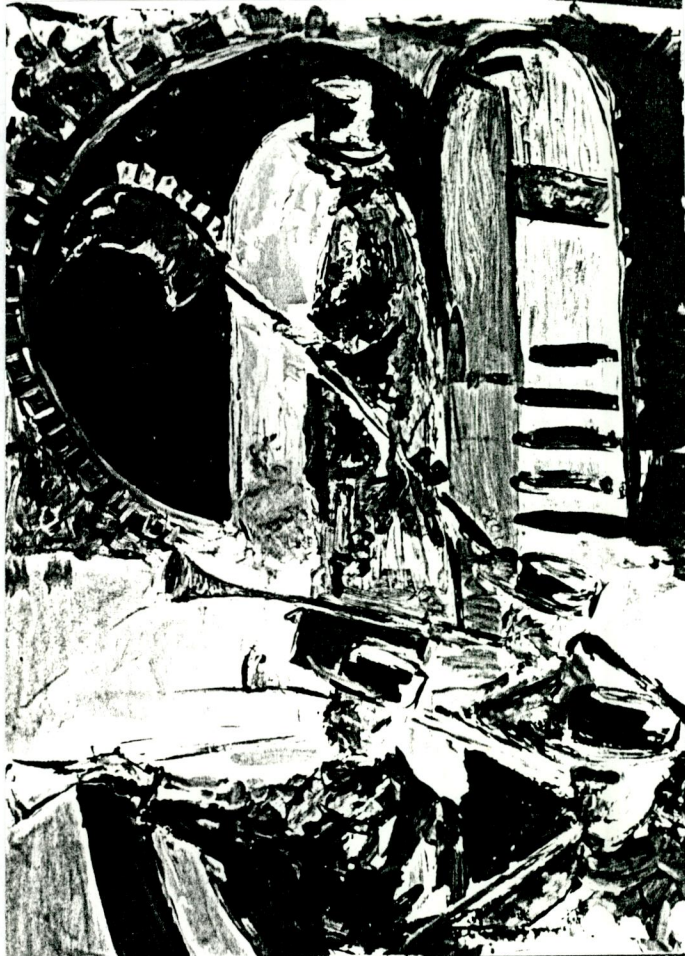
stimulation of the imagination that it cannot go unmentioned.

In an essay on Aesthithicism and Responsibility, Philip Meeson puts forward,

The attitude of mind which desires to embrace the materiality of things whilst at the same time embodying these things in abstract thought suggests the essence of Artistic thinking."

On introducing my project I feel that Meeson's thoughts on Artistic thinking somehow embody my efforts in trying to bring together, a notion - the idea of a celebratory act and its associated - personification or materiality - its nature and its being.

Recently on an unexpected visit to London, I chanced upon a performer on the street. He was a combined act of juggler, acrobat, comedian, clown and babysitter. He had a captive audience of about thirty school children of about 8/9 years old, enraptured - mesmerized. I was among those children revelling in their delight but what I felt was something more of admiration for the performer himself than for what he was doing. I took several photographs. Later I talked to him and a quick sketch of him at work. He told me his name was Jonathan - "pleased to meet you"(Fig 2). We talked a little about work he had done - mainly performing at openings,



SKETCH for PRINT. ACRYLIC 1991  
FIG 3

carnivals etc., and I decided theme would be source of my personal project.

My project involves using a lot of research material got by photographic means, recording events, street scenes performers as they happened as well as sketches of the same. This initial sources material has formed the basis of fabric prints, I find that the imagery I am using tends to be a combination of the realistic and abstract blocks. I enjoy being able to recognize certain elements using some realistic images while simultaneously throwing in some abstracted element - most of the time for colour balancing purposes.

In my painting and renderings, a story always tends to emerge. most of the time I work spontaneously, surrounded by my source material, usually with music playing in the background. With quick brush strokes, whether I am working on a large scale with acrylics or at a table with pen and wash, I jot down the main movements of the subject. Later on I go back and reassess, and either make changes or leave it untouched.

The subject in the fabric prints and a lino print to date has always been a funfair horse. The horse or nag keeps raising his head in any doodle or design, I embark on - he is constantly trying to manifest himself in my work and who am I to stop him? This

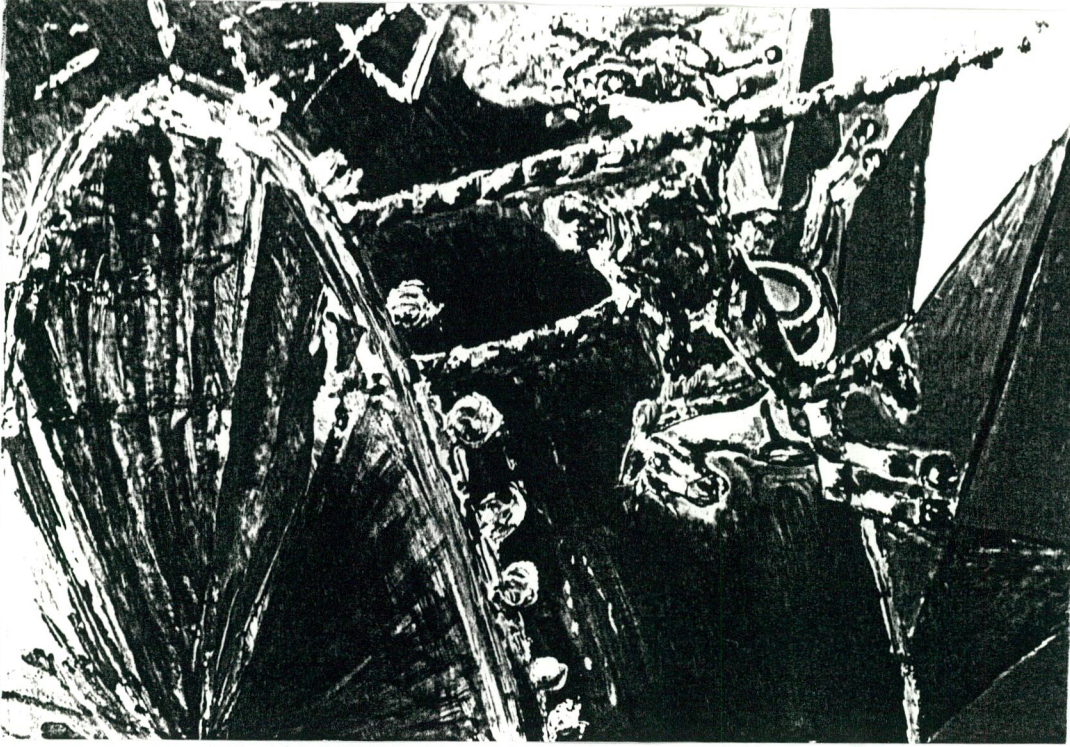


Fig. 4

1991

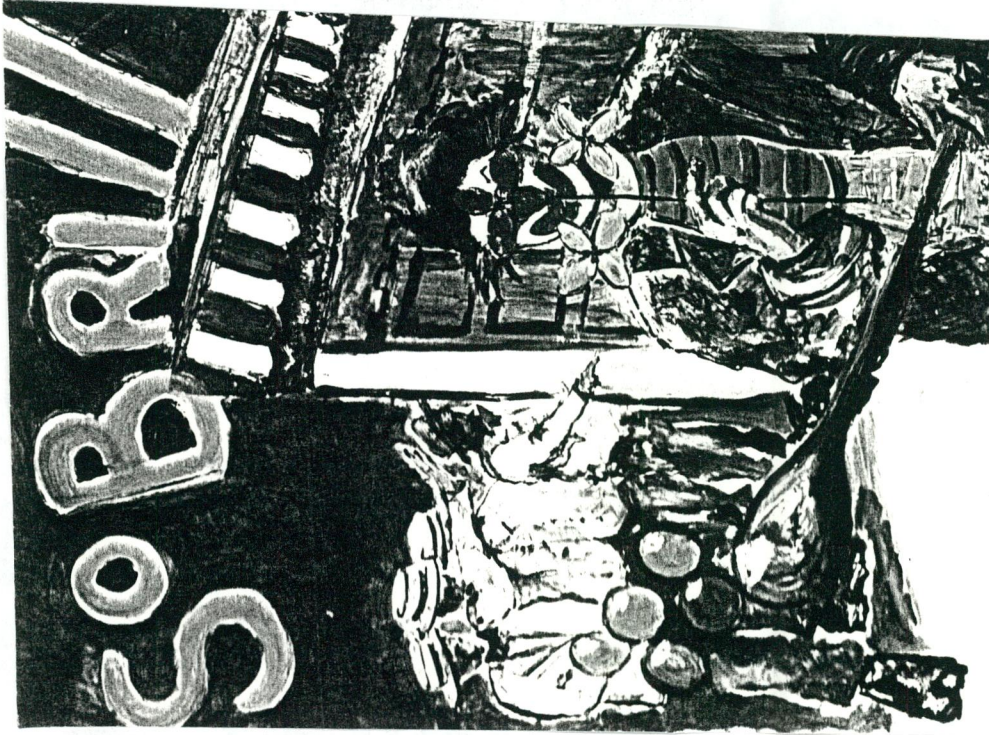


Fig. 5

1991

dobby horse (Fig 3,4) - for want of a better name gives me a wonderful opportunity to include elements of pattern and bright vivid colours along with the funfair paraphernalia - he makes a fantastic subject, being alive moving but holding still for sketches.

On previous occasions I have stated doing illustrations for a children's book that I am writing and with this project my intention is to carry out some more story type small drawing/painting that I can work into a saga (Fig 5). These illustrations will work as backup to my main fabric print and although keeping with the same subject will vary very much in scale and technique of material application (Fig 5,6).

In capturing the essence of celebrations, I have chosen recognizable ramifications of various celebratory acts; what might be considered the personification of good times - the clown, the jester, the tall man, trumpeteers and dancers. There is I believe ingrained in all human experience, celebration being no exception, a sardonic, melancholic, somewhat pathetic streak. The recognition of this fatalistic irony where to put it simply, the happy and the sad meet, is a moment that is of great importance, I believe in terms of developing a sense of self and social awareness. It is a phenomenon that most of us have experienced but few seem to recognize or acknowledge. In a series of acrylic paintings I have





FINAL PRINT (COTTON)



FABRIC PRINT (CALICO)

attempted to record some of these transient times piecing together  
real and imagined images, all of which have their roots firmly  
planted in the background of carnivals and fairs.

## CHAPTER II

### EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

One of the primary concerns of Art education is to facilitate personal expression. Because Art is individual and of every personal nature it follows that each child's art experience will also be unique and personal. There is therefore no one right way to teach Art and ultimately it is up to the individual art teacher to find his/her own way.

Johannes Itten<sup>1</sup> says of education:

There is no field of human activity in which talent plays so decisive a role as in education. Only the talented educator, that is a person with a flair for education, will respect and protect in a child the indescribable miracle of his/her humanity. Respect for the human being is the beginning and the end of all education. Education is a bold adventure - particularly in the arts, because it involves the creative spirit of man.....

The subject of Art is like all forms of human expression - evidence of responses to different kinds of experience. One role of Art Educator is to make a conscious attempt to organise children's experience in Art effectively and in such a way that the children have access to a variety of ways of working through art.

ie. through<sup>2</sup> :

- a. observing and recording.
- b. analysing and exploring.

<sup>1</sup>. Johannes Itten, Design and Form. Introduction to Design, p.17/18, Rendon Books, New York, 1967.

<sup>2</sup>. Robert Clement, The Art Teachers handbook, "Framework for the Syllabus" p: 10-14, Hutchinson, London 1986.

- c. thinking and feeling.
- d. criticism and appraisal.
- e. the use of materials and skills.

Within schools the arts and more specifically art, do not or at least should not exist simply to provide an affective balance to what is assumed to be a predominantly cognitive curriculum. Art education should display an awareness of the conflict between the recognition of the distinctiveness of artistic thinking on the one hand and demands on relevance and purpose extending beyond a purely personal world of the imagination on the other.

To do this effectively requires an effective teacher. Let us first look at some of the reasons for including art in the Curriculum. In the Curriculum and Examinations Boards Arts Discussion Paper 1986<sup>1</sup>, some of the major points in discussing the rationale for a Visual Arts Education are the idea that the Visual Arts help to "develop self esteem, self reliance, personal identity through creative achievement."

Point 6.2.2 states:

Visual art relies more on the active involvement of the student ..... visual thinking and curiosity are developed through, sight, touch, light, space and an interaction with and mastery of the diverse materials of the visual arts

1. Curriculum and Examinations Board Arts discussion, paper 1986.  
Rationale for including the Arts in Education point 6.2.2.

The importance of active participation in an event is seen here and in terms of the class project this is very apparent. There are sound justifications for working as part of a team. The group is involved in making decisions and implementing, and the emphasis here is on the social aspect, where collaboration - division of tasks, one person designing, another assisting and someone else making, the whole effort being communal.

A well planned Visual Arts Education helps students:

- To make decisions regarding subject, content, shape and form.
- To consider materials and possible responses to them.
- To make further decisions as work grows and changes.
- To persist sensitively and with determination to a point of completion.

This active process according to the C.E.B. paper involves the "whole person mental, physical and emotional. All pupils irrespective of their levels of academic achievement would benefit from a good Visual Arts Education."<sup>1</sup>

Whatever his/her subject and whatever teaching method he/she is adopting, the teacher is essentially a group worker.

There is an art to managing a group in a Secondary School classroom that is vital for the pupils.

1. Curriculum and Examinations Board Arts discussion, paper 1986. Selected Reading.

Every teacher must be proficient in this art."

Most importantly though Marland claims that what makes for a successful teaching programme is

not the school organization, the syllabus or the teaching method except in so far as they help or hinder the individual teacher..... the<sup>1</sup> individual teachers are the most important factor.

The conscientious teacher realizes that although personal communication and experience can be valid for lesson planning and schemes - it can just as easily limit the outcome. It is imperative therefore that competent art teachers look beyond their own experience. Viktor Lowenfeld in one of his lectures says:

I'm all in favour of emphasizing the aesthetic experience in it (art education); but I don't think it is the time now to promote it officially, because people will think that we have become subject matter centered, as it were. I think the products which we receive from our students depend on<sup>2</sup> how we teach them, on the quality of our teaching.

It cannot be denied that the effective teaching of a subject is directly connected and intrinsically intertwined with the teacher himself. This is why I would emphasize its importance in the rationale for teaching art.

Research into teacher personality and by this we mean the whole range of personal characteristics have been used in an effort to

1. Michael Marland, Craft of the Classroom, Heinemann education books, 1989, Ch.3.
2. Viktor Lowenfeld, Lectures 26. Ed John A Michael, the Lowenfeld Lectures, p.331-355

work deeper into teacher effectiveness in general, which in turn raises the question of what we mean by a "good" teacher. Is the best teacher one who helps children's socio-emotional development or one who helps their cognitive development or one who teaches them subject knowledge or who gets them through exams? And how apart from exam results, do we measure whether we are doing these things satisfactorily or not? Just as it is impossible to understand the child's behaviour to the full without taking into account the teacher's behaviour, so we cannot understand the teachers without taking into account that of the child.

In the numerous extensive investigations into teacher effectiveness that have taken place it is generally concluded that the most successful teacher tends to be "warm, understanding, friendly, responsible, systematic, imaginative and enthusiastic. It is interesting to note that, the most successful style of parenting - demonstrating warmth combined with restrictiveness the equivalent of the democratic style of teacher was found to be most successful.

It has been found that a child who is frequently criticized by a teacher, especially if he is inclined to be low in self esteem, will lose confidence in his own ability and will tend to underachieve. Thus a conscientious teacher who believes in pressurizing children to come up to certain standards could quite probably do more long term harm to the progress of particularly vulnerable children than a teacher who seems less conscientious

and more inclined to let children find what has been described by Bennett as being "their own level."<sup>1</sup>

In discussing the rationale for teaching art there is another consideration, one put very well by Philip Meeson<sup>2</sup> when he said:

There is a world that exists beyond the individual, a world that exists whether or not he exists. The child needs to know about this world, to move in it and manage himself in it. The curricula of our secondary schools are filled with their world. Everywhere the child turns he encounters it in the brute facts of history, chemistry, mathematics and so forth.

There is another world however a world that exists only because the individual exists. It is the world of his own sensations and feelings.... He shares it with no-one. It is a world of private space and of solitary subject.

Teaching children to be well adjusted persons and properly adapted to their environment socially, emotionally and otherwise are among the intrinsic arguments for the Arts in education.

This "world" that Meeson refers to needs to be explored and brought to the attention of students. In doing so teachers are helping to shape the world of the future by encouraging students to develop skills necessary to participate actively and meaningfully in the community.

I believe this to be fundamentally important and fortunately the flexibility of the syllabus allows for its implementation in diverse

1. Bennett N. Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress London, Open Books 1976, chap.9, p.76-102.
2. Philip Meeson, The Aesthetic in education essay on Aestheticism and Responsibility Ross, 1985



situations and learning modules should be structured and planned to allow for maximum interpretation and individual approach.

The contextualists maintain that the goals and content of art education depends very much on who the child is and what type of needs the community has and what problems the larger society is facing. In the project I am undertaking with my class in St Michaels Holy Faith Convent in Finglas the needs are quite particular to these children. The goals of the project are not only determined by assessing the situation - the students needs, abilities, backgrounds etc., but also taking into account the resources available.

Most of the students in this class are of working class background. Art has been slotted into their timetable and tends to be looked upon as peripheral to the core 'academic' subjects. I hope by putting art into context by making reference to local historical facts combined with the appealing notion of celebration that the art class will be seen in a different light.

Looking at it from John Dewey's viewpoint, conceiving art as a form of experience having special and valuable characteristics, a form of experience that vivifies life helping a growing organism recognize that it is alive<sup>1</sup>, and by making students aware of our heritage, our tradition can begin to build up a sense of worth , belonging

<sup>1</sup>. John Swqey, sited in Educating Artistic Vision, Eisner, Chap. Why Teach Art, p.1-16.

and confidence both as a nation and on a personal level - something I feel these students particularly need.

So what can art contribute to society? What is it that the arts in general and the visual arts in particular can do to increase the quality of individual and social life?

Probably one of the most important contributions of the arts in a society in which work is fragmented and routine is common is its ability to vitalise life by drawing attention to the quality of experience as such. If art is anything at all it is a quality of life that is savoured for itself. In a social order which tends to encourage people to treat both objects and other people as instruments, the arts call attention to the no-instrumental aspects of life. As Eisner puts it:

The work of visual art is form to be visually explored, the rhythms of the work, its shape, its contour, its colour take one on a qualitative ride. Aesthetic experience is a process emerging out of the art itself.<sup>1</sup>

1. Elliot Eisner, Education Artistic Vision, chap.10, From an age of Science to an age of art, p.257-282.

## CHAPTER III

### HISTORICAL REFERENCE

The following artists are among many whose work I greatly admire and who when approaching this particular project, without undue consideration, sprang to mind almost immediately. Alexander Calder, Red Grooms, Pieter Bruegel, Jules Cheret.

They are in nationality miles apart, in time years apart and in their approach style, and use media so distinct that one might wonder what possible link there could be between them all.

Calder and Grooms both Americans, both contemporary and working mostly in sculpture. Bruegel from the Netherlands, a painter from the 16th Century and Cheret a 1900's French, "poster artist" and painter.

All the works that I will talk about deal with some aspect of life in a celebratory form. If one word were to describe what they all had in common it would be colour. In a very individual way, each artist is uninhibited in his bold use of colour, exploiting its power to adding a certain vitality to all their work.

Over the years, as a student, the work of Alexander Calder has had a great influence on me. Calder probably one of the best known

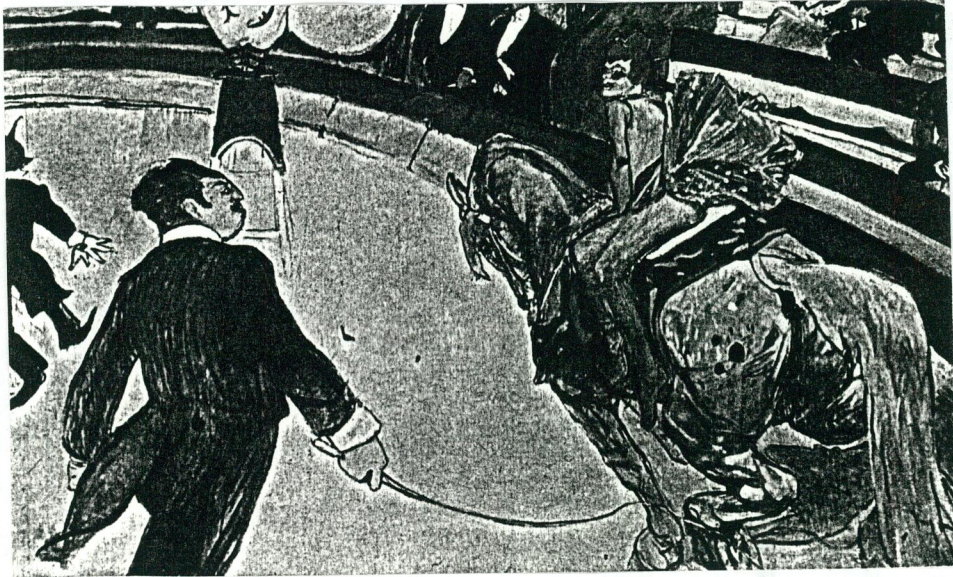


FIG. 7 Toulouse-Lautrec - Cirque

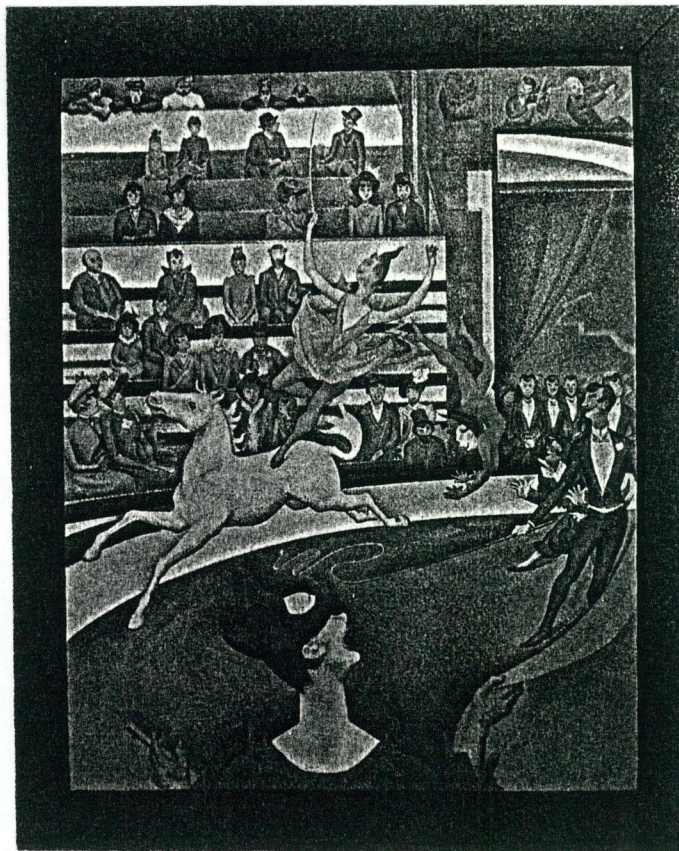


Fig. 8. Cirque - Seurat

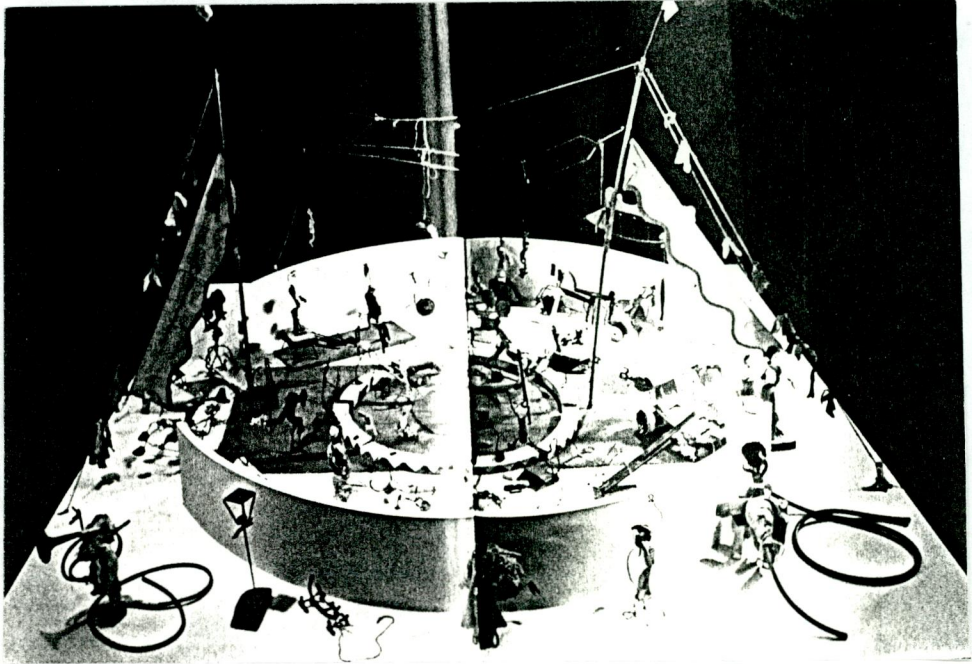
sculptors of the 20th Century is also one of the most disconcerting and I believe captivating. As a student of metal work I greatly admired his wire sculptures and the manner in which he seem to have woven them together with such simplicity and sensitivity. His subjects include those of animals, in a circus both mocking and grave. I choose to mention Calder in relation to my project here because I consider his name and the word circus to be synonymous. Circus falls under my umbrella theme of celebration and like carnival is an event familiar to most children. Most students will be acquainted with works of art that have been created by different artists the main concept being that of circus - Calder, Fernand Leger, Toulouse Lautrec, Seurat, Georges Roualt (Fig 7, 8,9).

Calder, in 1971 set about putting together a miniature circus, using wire, found objects, old fabric, tin cans all slung together in an almost naive manner.

The first piece he made particularly appeals to me for its simplicity and directness. It was a lion made of wire and orange wool. He sent woodcut invitations to friends and after performances he packed up the gear carefully in a battered old suitcase and travelled around the world on tour. In his own words Calder says:

"I have always loved the circus..... so I decided to make a circus just for the fun of it"<sup>1</sup>

1. Alexander Calder, from Calder an autobiography, chap 4. Pantheon Books. New York 1977.



CALDER'S CIRCUS

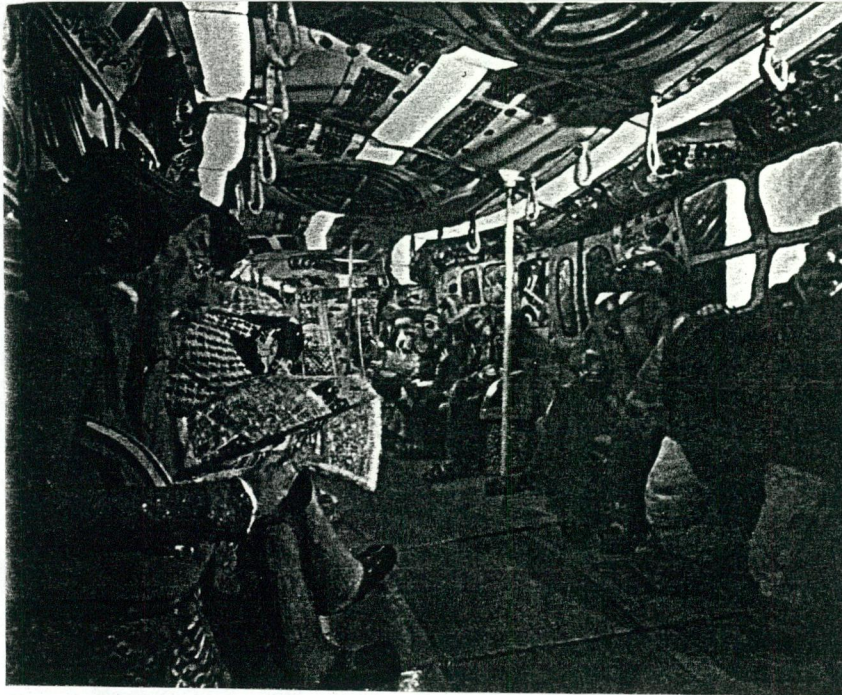
I would consider a sense of fun in my work to be very important, and this is probably the most salient explanation for my identifying with Calder's work and his attitude to it. He has said himself that he had "a big adventure" in that he was inclined to be "happy by nature". Asked by a 'Life' Reporter if he ever experienced sadness, he answered, - "No, I don't have the time." His life work, in all media, has a core of pure joy - in the concept, the execution, and above all the colour, all of which directly communicates pleasure to the viewer. This goes back to a point I made earlier concerning what I believe to be one of fundamental concerns of art - to communicate the good news.

Calder's colours - white, blue and red suggest boldness and simplicity. He says he has chiefly limited himself to the use of black and white as being the most disparate colours. "Red is the most opposed to these, and then finally I use the other primaries..."

In mentioning the word red another Artist who I feel has greatly influenced me comes to mind - Red Grooms. Colour is both Artists common denominator. In an account of Grooms, Carter Ratcliff says:

Big, bright and bold, bursting with energy and humour - this is what makes Red Grooms's art such an irresistible crowd-pleaser"

Red Grooms an American grew up in Nashville Tennessee and by the time he was in High School was making drawings for a local frame shop and avidly reading the New York Art magazines. The cities



RED GROOMS "RUCKUS" 1975



RED GROOMS - 'PICASSO GOES TO HEAVEN' 1973  
FIG. 12



he later visited provided his manic imagination with inexhaustable reference for his city scapes or 'sculpto pictoramas' with their larger than life caricatures of people going about their business. "Ruckus"<sup>1</sup> is the perfect word to describe the high spirited chaos of Red Groom's crazy world, where real life and fantasy blend into a whole hearted celebration.

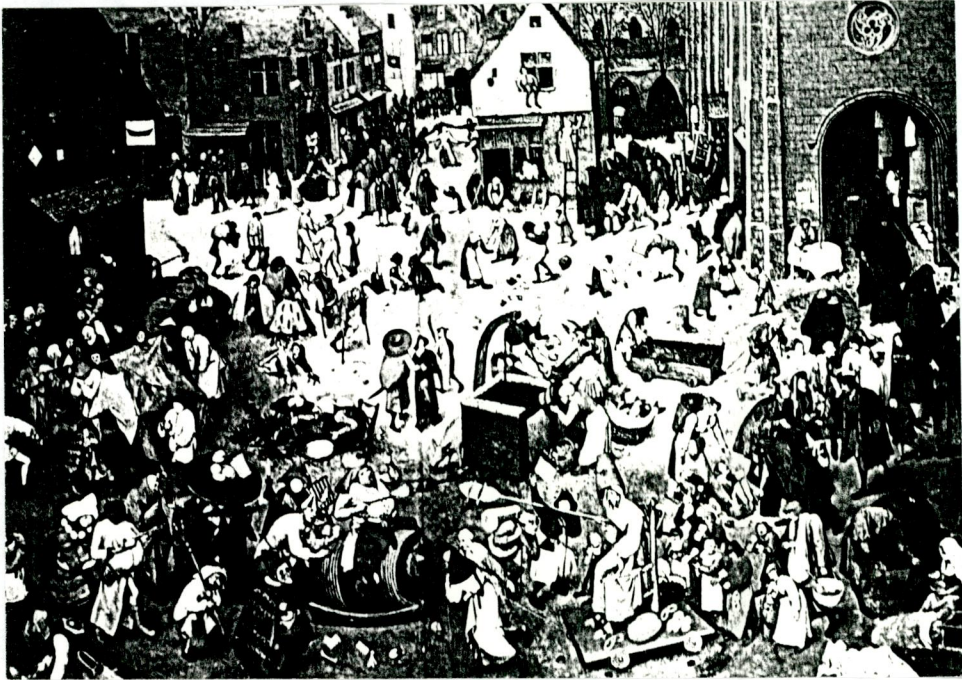
I have included in the illustrations an unfinished piece of Grooms which I feel epitomizes the spontaneity that is unique to Grooms. It was started in 1973 when Red was on Jury duty. He heard that Picasso had died and tells how he ran home in a frenzy and emotionally charged "just threw images on whatever paper I had." The result was 'Picasso Goes to Heaven', Fig (12), an acrylic painting on two sheets of orange paper fifteen feet by sixteen feet.

I just tacked the paper up on the wall and did it. It was never finished. There are still spots I never got around to realizing.

This shows directness. He drew in crowded groups of figures and then if it did not satisfy he simply does something else on top of it. The brash, blunt colour patterns that were laid on obscure a great deal of revision but there is never any fussiness.

An analogy can be drawn here with Calder's attitude to his work  
- Calder remarks:

1. Carter Ratcliff, - Red grooms. "The Cities", Abbeville Press, New York, 1984.



BRUEGEL - 'BATTLE BETWEEN CARNIVAL AND LENT'

FIG. 14

Sometimes I intend to destroy one of my works,  
but then I improve it.

If I don't like a piece, its no good.

That's my only criterion....

I have developed an attitude of  
indifference to the reception of my  
work, which allows me to go about  
my business<sup>1</sup>.

I believe that this kind of attitude is a very good one when dealing with art and its making. Only when an artist can speak 'his truth' unrestrained and is indifferent to opinions of the audience can the onlookers themselves begin to react, be affected by and make an individual response with a certain kind of confidence that they are reciprocating with honesty in the two way "communication".

Going back in time to the 1500's let us look at some work by an Artist who has used themes that are abundant in colour, movement and are so powerful because of their timeless quality.

The Artist I am referring to is Pieter Bruegel, born in 1525, north of Holland. Breugal emerged at a time when famous paintings of the Italian Renaissance bear splendid witness to an ideal world. Artists likes Michaelangelo were creating scenes where great princes and philosophers, stroll between Greek and Roman columns and marble smooth ladies sit in virginal serenity with robes that always fall in perfect folds.

1. David Bourdon, Calder, mobilists, ringmaster, innovator. Macmillan publishing, New York, 1980, p.78.

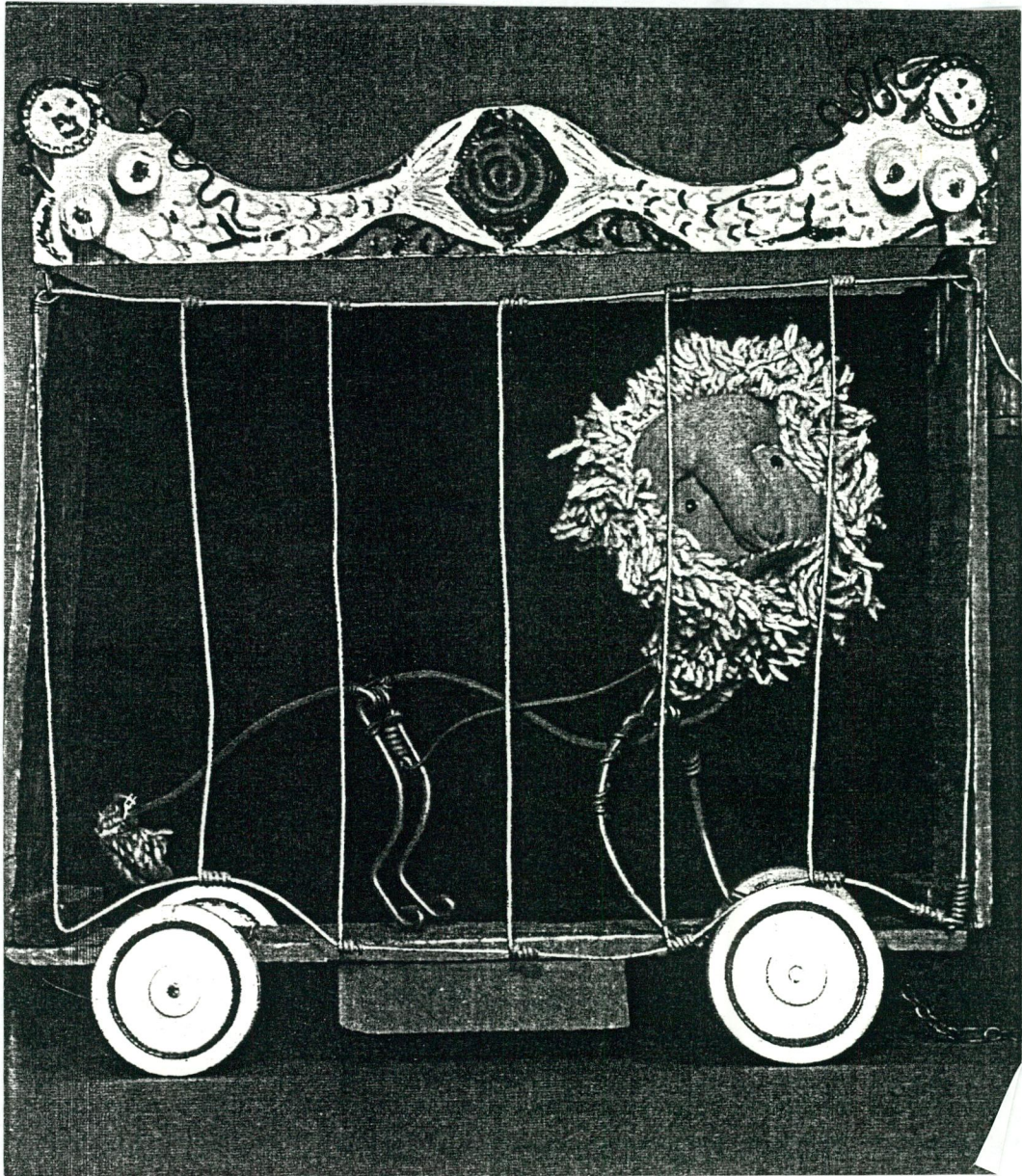


FIG. 13 CALDER'S LION CAGE

Bruegel meanwhile shaped the image of a far different world. He saw man small. His lumpish creatures, mostly peasants and middle-class folk, are neither noble nor Godlike like those of the Italians, but are lowly and often prone to strong drink and thieving habits. Muffled in clumsy clothes against the northern cold, they carouse in fear of their own brief mortality and "sometimes themselves pursued by demons and often dance, as men will do in terrifying times, within the shadow of the gallows. Like most of us, they freeze in winter, sweat in summer and are foolish in all seasons."<sup>1</sup> The paradoxical craziness and complexity of man's world is portrayed in such a forthright and interesting way by Bruegel that his pictures linger in the memory not only because they please the eye but because they engage the mind in thought. Trimmed with gyrating human figures and studded with every sort of homely detail, they make a kind of story board which can be either studied carefully or quickly glanced at. The addition of little details is a trait common to many artists that appeal to me including the two that I have already talked about. Look at the decorative fringe on Calders lion's cage (Fig 13) and the print on Grooms's newspaper in "Ruckus".

Bruegel's "Battle between Carnival and Lent", (Fig 14), offer a round trip ticket to a 16th Century Flemish Village Fete. Figuratively, a viewer can walk right in and happily find himself surrounded by dozens of Mardi Gras attractions - an enormous fat Fleming riding a huge barrel about to joust with a thin blue figure got up as Lent; venders selling their wares and hangers on enjoying

<sup>1</sup>. Timothy Foote, the World of Bruegel, "The Northern View Time-Life International (Nederland) 1972.



FIG. 15 BRUEGEL WEDDING FEAST 1500's

a comedy aptly entitled "The Ugly Bride" being staged by strolling players.

There is a certain theatrical mood in the depiction of these characters, which appealed to me on a personal level and for their value in demonstrating to a class, the boundless peripheries to which the imagination can be stretched. This painting is an excellent example of a piece that is rich in potential for discussion in areas such as content, and subject matter. It is also one that can be equated with in the theme of Mardi Gras celebrations particular to the local history of the class with whom I am carrying out the celebration/carnival project.

In one of his most cheerful portraits of Flemish life, Bruegel shows a party of reasonably well off farmers, with a scattering of town folk sitting down to a wedding feast (Fig 15). It is set in a barn that has been done up for the occasion. The scene is packed with wooden benches, clay jugs, beer goblets, an old door serves as a tray. There is no mistaking who the the smiling bride is sitting smugly behind a green cloth. But generations of viewers and critics have never quite been able to decide which one of the motley crew the groom might be. A critic Culbert Highet, has a hypothesis to offer based on the facial similarites, place at table and difference in dress. Through a process of elimination Highet concludes that he has got to be the long nosed guy leaning back from the table and raising his jug to ask for more drink. The fact that his painting is so rich in realistic details makes careful

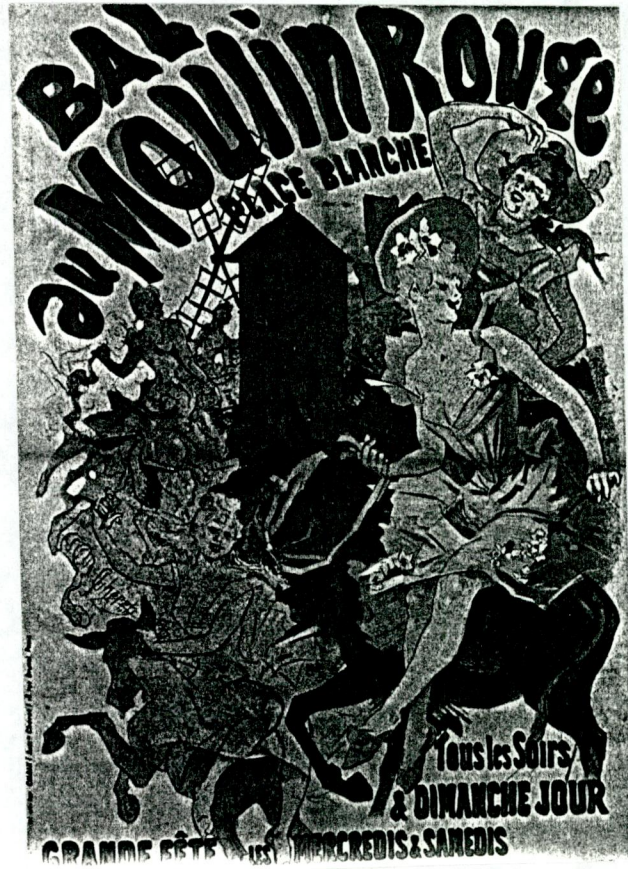


FIG.16 JULES CHERÉT MOULIN ROUGE



scrutiny an avoidable temptation, even if we never really discover who the Groom is.

Jumping ahead to the 1900's, the next piece of work I would like to include as having influenced my work, is by an artist who lived in Paris at the turn of the century.

Jules Cheret taught himself the rudiments of drawing. He began copying manuscripts while an apprentice to a lithographer and later moved on to set up his own design and print workshop.

By overprinting several colour plates Cheret achieved results hitherto unknown. His prints became artistic masterpieces of 'esprit' and humour (Fig 16).

Around the 1880's, especially in Paris, a new style had developed, the product of partly conflicting aims. Many literary, philosophical and scientific influences were at work and as a result it is incredibly difficult to pick out a typical 1900's style, but when we look at French posters produced then it is very evident that the human figure is always predominant, whether in repose or dynamic movement. Everything revolves around the human form and this is a huge departure from the up till then accepted practice of using outsize script as a means of communication.

Cheret's work suggest to me the perfect synthesis of art and design.

# FOLIES-BERGÈRE



JULES CHERÉT - L'ARC EN CIEL FIG. 18

They radiate vitality more so in my opinion than any other work done by his contemporaries, Steinlen, Muchu, Berthon, Grun even Lautrec. Cheret himself says of his own work;

The poster artist must be a psychologist; he must have gone through a hard school and become familiar with the logical and optical laws of his art. He must invent something new that will attract and excite and nothing is better suited to this purpose than a simple charming and yet captivating picture in bright yet harmonious colours.<sup>1</sup>.

In Folies Bergere, L'are en Ciel (Fig 17) Cheret makes use of dynamic performer type figures, superimposed to advertise a ballet. Clearly it is the colour, so skillfully almost randomly blocked in that brings this poster to life - the lady in yellow almost leaping out at the viewer. Cheret used his technical virtuosity to depict the mad world of carnival and stage characters which he had invented. On calling so sensitively on the human figure in a new form and its representation in the poster performs a particularly stimulating social function and the intimate relationship between art and life is thrown into sharp relief.

This relationship between art and the state of being alive is something that is eviident, I believe in all the works I have chosen to talk about and as far apart chronologically, geographically, culturally or stylistically the pieces seem to appear, it is that common thread of man and his celebration of life depicted with a certain sense of fatalistic humour that I believe hold all this work together.

1. Hermann Scherdt, French Posters of 1900's, the art of the poster Bracken Books, London 1987.

## CHAPTER IV

### CLASS PROJECT

In this project - a group project - based on the theme celebration, the students will not only be working as part of a communal effort but also on an individual basis.

The class who took part in this project from were St. Michael's Holy Faith Convent in Finglas, 3rd year Inter Cert girls. There are 27 in the art class who are of mixed ability. The majority come from the Finglas area and so could appreciate better the historical connection.

Having considered all the groups I am involved with, I decided that the theme would have best understood, appreciated and fulfilling for this 3rd year group, despite it being an exam year. The other groups I am involved with being low stream first years. I felt the nature of the project would be too conceptual.

Very often our eyes are closed to the obvious. We need to take a fresh approach to our environment, considering the visual and emotional impact of places on us. Initially information was gathered on an outing to the funfair/amusements at Bray. Because of the time of year, bringing the class to a circus as first planned had not been possible but I feel in retrospect that by actively



ST. MICHAELS, CLASS PROJECT. PAPIER MÂCHÉ APPLICATION FIG. 19



PAINTING LIMBS

FIG. 20

participating in various activities the students will gain a greater understanding of involvement and so be more sensitive in their reaction. Lowenfeld makes this clear when he argues that the way creativity may best be realized is for the child to be exposed through all of his senses to the qualities of life. Through direct experiences with tactile, visual and audial phenomena the child's imagination and perceptual powers are developed.

A theme should be perceived as a motivational device from which the student will establish a starting point for their work.

Celebration in an historical context is particularly pertinent in Finglas as the village itself had for a long time been associated with fairs and social events. In the 17th and 18th centuries Finglas was famous for its May Day festivities

"when the maypole bedecked with multi-coloured ribbons stood in the village centre. Here on May Day, came Dubliners in their hundreds to take part in the many sports and activities. These events included ass races, sack races, hunts after pigs with shaven tails, blind fold chases after a bell ringer and athletic contests of all kinds..... The great annual fun fair of gaiety gradually degenerated into a rowdy affair and eventually went the way of notorious Donnybrook Fair. In 1841 when the reforming Henry Young was appointed to the parish he condemned the sports as pagan and called the Maypole the 'Devils Potstick'. In 1843 he had it filled putting<sup>1</sup> a final halt to the highjinks in Finglas.

I introduced the project to the class with the above quotation.

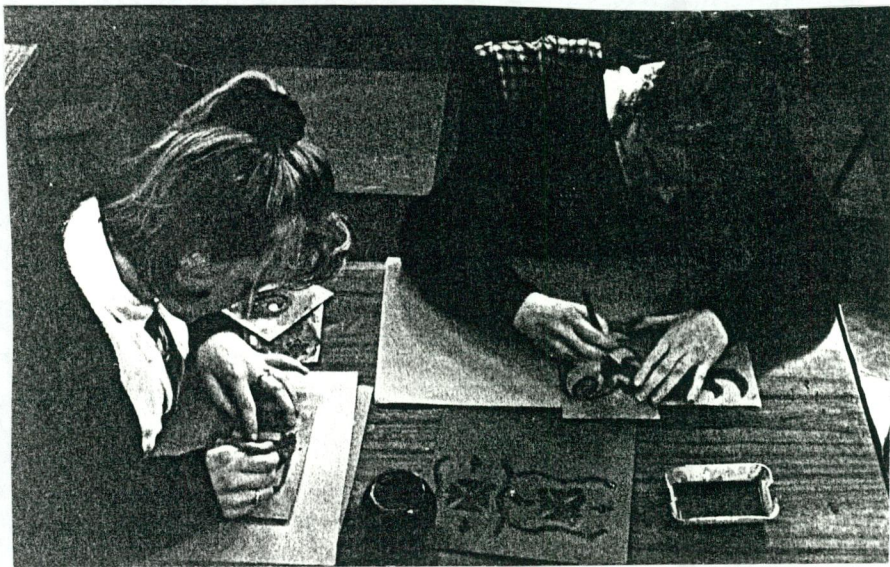
I believe it to be very important to encourage students to contribute their thoughts, feelings and what they already know

1. Joyce "The Neighbourhood of Dublin" - chap.5, Finglas.



SOME ORIGINAL DESIGNS FOR FIGURE

FIG. 21



STENCILLING PATTERNS FOR SURFACE DECORATION AND BACKDROP.

factually to a class, on an informal discussion level.

We discussed all aspects of celebration and carnival bringing in historical connections peculiar to Finglas, contemporary situations - especially revelant in this year 1991 where Dublin is the cultural capital of Europe. Both these angles of discussion could be seen as contextualizing art and giving students a sense of pride in their heritage. Tradition as outlined in the C.E.B. Arts Diagram

Paper is:

a living force and must be nurtured by education. National wealth is not merely an economic or financial consideration. Our cultural resources have an important role to play in building a sense of worth and confidence as a nation.

Other aspects of celebration such as social structures, domestic traditions, religious rites, politics and community conventions were also discussed.

Associations were made with abstract qualities of celebration. What colours come to mind, when we think of the word carnival for example. Can one's mood be changed by the colour?

What affects can be achieved by just a posting two complimentary colours?

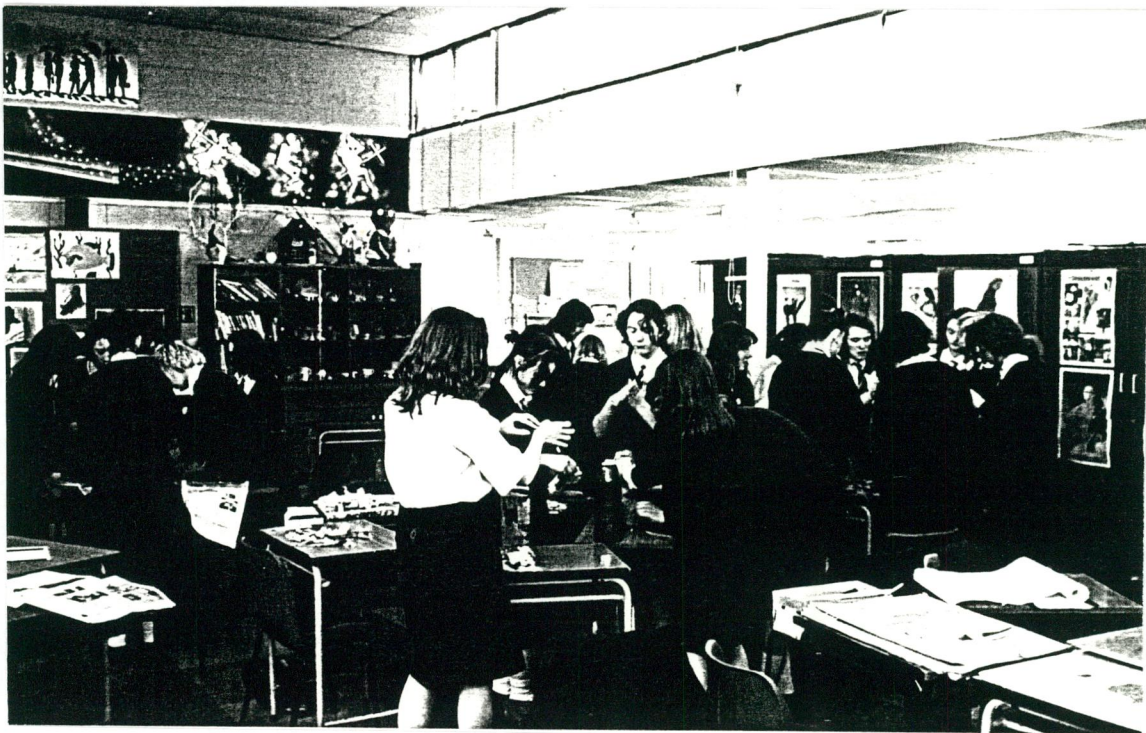
In this class we used paraphernalia associated with fairs/carnivals ie. balloons, hats, streamers, champagne bottles as a starting point reducing the three dimensional forms to basic two dimensional flat shapes, each student was required to choose one of the shapes





•GATHERING INFORMATION ON A TRIP TO BRAY.

FIG. 22



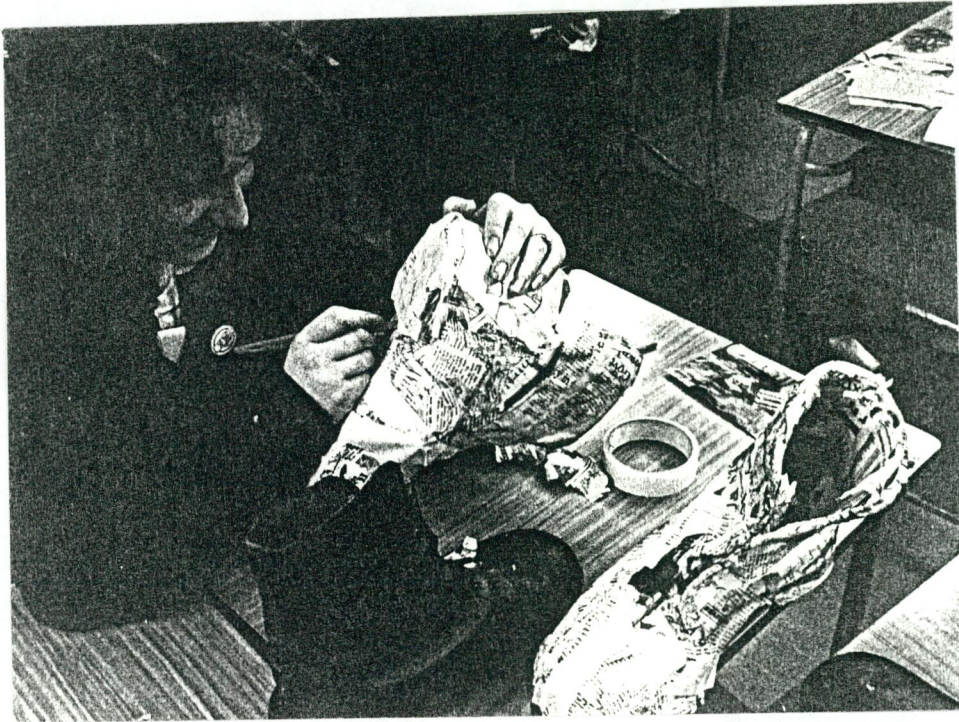
•ALL TEAMS AT WORK IN CLASSROOM

FIG. 23

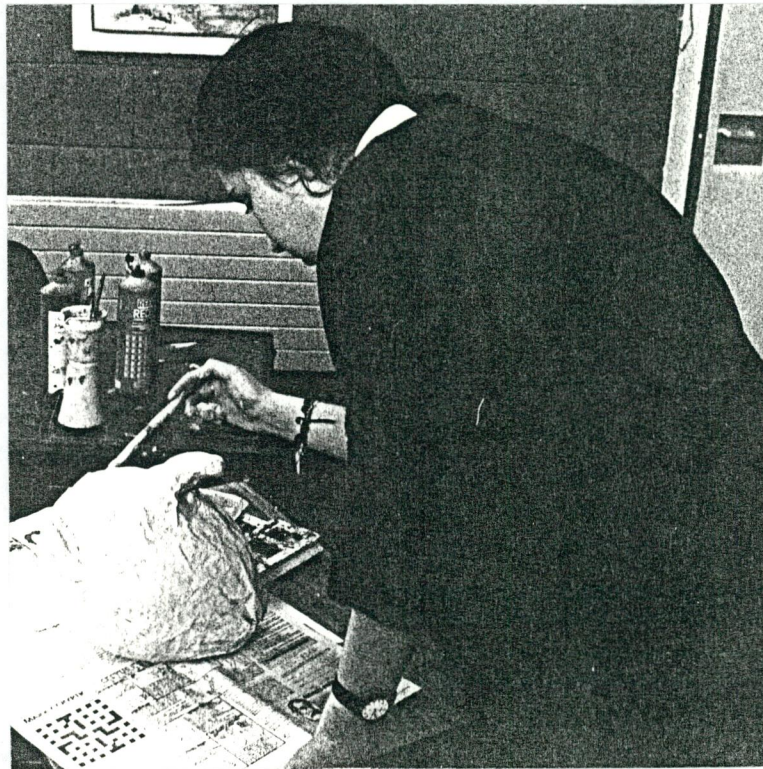
and make an exploding design. This was done by cutting two identical shapes, one in either blue, green or purple and the other in its complement, orange, red or yellow. One shape was placed flat on the page intact, the other was fragmented using a scalpel into various component parts, with sharp and soft cut edges. This design was intended as part of a tee-shirt logo, to be worn on Dublin Street Carnival day.

This was a very simple exercise that was very effective in demonstrating the visual impact complementary colours can make. It also dealt with the notion of using a source and the importance of simplifying an idea. In terms of an introductory class to the project - thinking about shape, colour and associated imagery it was quite successful.

During the trip to Bray students collected information on pattern colour etc., on worksheets which serve as a source of information back in the classroom. The aim of this project is to produce a life size three-dimensional character that through form combined with surface decorative elements somehow captures the essence of celebration. This should be done over a period of six weeks with one double class each week. Students were required to imagine, design, draw/paint characters that could be placed in a carnival/fair/circus setting. A video of a circus was shown prior to this exercise.



CUTTING OUT REAL LEATHER BOOT, LEAVING PAPER SHELL



PAINTING HEAD, PUTTING IN FEATURES

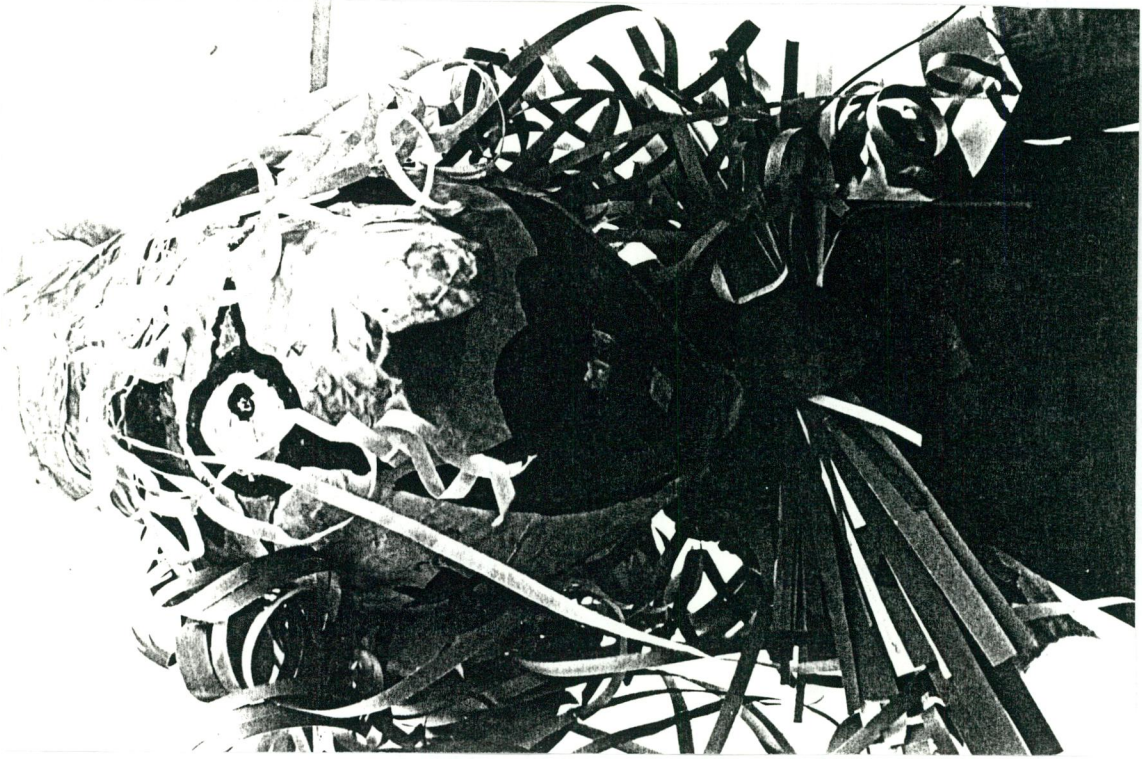
Students were asked to include shapes, colours and patterns which appeal to them personally. The choice of media was left up to the student. Everyone was encouraged to be individual in their response and to call on their previous knowledge gained of the human figure in life drawing classes.

The class were then democratically divided as a group which elements of each students design would best work on the larger group figure.

We decided how best to construct the "character" - in 'papier mache'. How the joints would work, what the backdrop will consist of etc.. Apart from the skills required in 'papier mache', making there was also a certain amount of manipulation of media required in building up a three-dimensional form.

The class was divided into five groups, each group being responsible for some part of the body but all the time consulting with their team mates and referring to their work.

It was agreed upon to use 1LT and 2LT plastic bottles as base for the limbs. a balloon was chosen as being proportionally correct for the head section. Rubber gloves were covered with papier mache strips for the hands and a size twelve pair of army boots for the feet. A chicken wire construction was modelled for the body section and covered with strips and papier mache pulp. The building up of the body parts took over three sessions and in between drying time we worked on the backdrop for the figure. This is an important



DETAIL OF HEAD WITH HAIR, HAT, and BOW



BODY SECTION - STENCILLED PATTERN

consideration as it represents the "environment" into which the piece is placed.

This was approached firstly on an individual basis with each student working on several stencil prints. Going back to the original source of celebration shapes, various patterns were printed on brightly coloured paper. The final outcome was to be a sort of patchwork of pattern pieced together in Vassarely type fashion' (Fig ).

While stenciling took place students took the opportunity to printed a supply of random patterns which would be used to form surface decoration on the 'carnival character' - now called "Mr Hooper". The pieces were torn into sections and struck over the body section to give a textural feeling.

With the backdrop in place behind Mr Hooper, the scene so to speak is set.

The body is flexible being joined at the limbs with wire and on the hands there are dowling rods projecting to enable the model to "perform".



FINAL FIGURE, MOBILE  
(BACKDROP NOT IN POSITION)

## CONCLUSION

On the whole I feel the project was a success. However, I think a lot of spontaneity was lost through the broken up sessions and having to wait for the papier mache to dry etc..... The class is quite a large one - 27 pupils and as a result a core group became very involved where a certain group tended to remain peripheral - working much more successfully on an individual basis - with drawing and stencil printing.

In undertaking a project with a variety of problems and solutions in both 2D and 3D, in painting, pattern making, recording, analysing and experimenting with new media - 'papier mache', My hope was facilitate students in finding an individual vehicle of expression, one most suited to their own personal temperament. This was also a good opportunity for students to pool ideas, collaborate and co-operate - because it is the first group project ever undertaken with the class and hopefully will not be the last.



**A Slide Presentation**

A picture that is produced from the images within the mind can be a more accurate portrayal of human perceptions than one based entirely on observations

The creation of so called fantasy art is achieved by the interplay of the conscious and the unconscious mind. This process was described in 1540 by Leonardo da Vinci, as a challenge to the artist who must resolve a conflict between the observed and the imaginary, the known and the unknown. Images of the imagination have appeared in all forms of art for example the decorative and applied arts, sculpture and architecture starting as early as man started to make art in cave paintings.

Before the camera was invented towards the middle of the 19th Century which in terms of world history is a very short space of time, celebrations, expeditions, battles and other events of topical interest were recorded by artists. That is they had to be drawn and painted if anyone besides an actual eyewitness was to have any idea of the way everything and everyone looked.

Today for most contemporary artists the greatest source of imaginary images are found in literature, both prose and poetry. Stories from legends, mythology, religion and science fiction all create images of new worlds in our minds. In most art that uses fantasy as a theme, there is usually an element

of reality in it as well a recognition of the idea of common experience in life and this is what makes fantasy art so appealing.

Today we are going to look at a selection of paintings made by artists who instead of using models and props from real life in their work, looked to their imaginations to create new images.

The artists I have chosen range from the 14th Century to the 20th Century but all have I believe in their work a common feeling factor that is a certain feeling of enchantment.

Although some of the paintings you will see today are the product of religious ideas, some mythological and some based on cultural connections they have all come about as a result of the artists personal interpretation of a given notion.

To compose a picture in the first place requires some knowledge of the real. The artist except in very unusual circumstances would have made various studies of people, animals, architecture etc., from life and would be familiar with their associated qualities. With this store of knowledge the artist would set about creating a new work on an imaginative piece, delving into his bank of images combining real with imagined.

This phenomenon is what we will explore today starting with "The Tower of Babel by Bruegel"

In Pieter Bruegels time, people had only heard of one skyscraper. They would immediately recognize the shambling structure of the Tower of Babel. In the 16th century the biblical story of man's arduous struggle to reach Heavens gates was a familiar theme in art. Breugel painted the subject at least three times. The fascination exerted on the public imagination by the tower and especially in Bruegels treatment of it, reveals much about how he and his audience saw the world.

In the 16th century Flanders the legacy of the Middle Ages was strong. The primary aim of art was still to preach Christian morality or instill pious feelings. Man was seen as small and the Bible not only featured in the thoughts of people but also in the art of the time.

Bruegel's audience would all have been men familiar with the Tower of Babel story: how King Nimrod presumptuously ordered a tower to be built that would reach the clouds in an effort to get nearer to heaven. God was not in agreement to this and so punished him in making the workers speak in a babble of tongues so that the job could never be completed. This was thought to be the beginnings of the various languages of the world.

Nimrods tower was a Babylon, Bruegels was painted in a scene outside a busy Flemish city complete with bustling seaport and stepgabled buildings. The inconsistency did not seem to bother his audience who were adept at seeing didactic parallels between past and present.

If you look closely, this scene shows great vitality and stirring of life. The tower is crowded with teams of workmen, stonecutters, bricklayers, even

a few foraging chickens and an old croney sweeping up. Earlier painters had dramatically pictured Nimrod as an imposing monarch full of pride and deserving of his punishment. Bruegel shows him, at the bottom left hand corner as a vain petty dignitary whose arrival merely slows up the work progress. Such human touches help transform a towering symbol into a portrait of everyday life with man working at worldly enterprise - but doomed to final failure.

Bruegel was very much influenced by the artist "Hieronimus Bosch", who was also Flemish whose message was also that fire and brimstone awaited every man. He used symbols from remote sources - to depict hell on earth with demonic monsters tormenting long suffering saints and naked sinners.

The sources he used included the writings of Flemish mystics and the lore of the alchemists. In this picture "The Carrying of the Cross" (1505), the expression on the faces of the sinners is so dramatic and absorbing that it almost distracts from Bosch's brilliant use of colour. Here we see captured probably better than any other artist has ever done, the insane lust for violence characteristic of a vindictive mob in his day and in our own, or on the hill of Golgotha outside Jerusalem some 2,000 years ago. The grotesque pressing around Christ are extremes of caricature yet their pop-eyed jeering rage and their frenzied anticipation of the cruelty to come are recognizably human.

The "Carrying of the Cross" is a traditional subject in religious art but in most paintings by other artists had a much wider view of the proceedings. As

seen Bosch heightened the impact of his picture by stripping away all the surrounding action leaving only a handful of hateful faces seen large and seeming to float on a blank background. In the middle is the suffering Christ with eyes closed serenely, seemingly oblivious to the nightmare going on around him. The only other peaceful looking face in the crowd belongs to Veronica, who has just wiped the sweat from Jesus' face and has an imprint of his face displayed in the bottom left corner. To intensify his savage satire Bosch includes the two thieves who are usually seen on crosses beside the crucified Jesus. The repentant thief (on the upper right) is being rewarded for his last minute return to piety by what has been described as a "half demented snaggle-toothed monk and the glowering stare of a pompous magistrate." The other thief seen on the bottom right, unrepentant to the end, glares clenched-jawed at three characters who mock him. Ugly as he is, Bosch has made him less repulsive than his righteous tormentors.

The next slide is by the same artist. It is a very interesting way to portray the "Temptation of St Anthony". In true Bosch style, the eye is brought all over the canvas, stopping every so often to marvel at the incredible sights. The work was commissioned by the religious order of St Anthony. Attached to its churches was a hospital which specialised in treating venereal diseases. A sufferer who sought a miraculous cure was asked to contemplate the horrors of evil in front of this painting before being given his treatment. The painting is no larger than a dressing table mirror and only close examination will reveal its details. The many groups, costumes, objects and buildings were intended to convey ideas now lost. Each image is a cartoon of human folly and frailty, many are parodies of Christian

beliefs, well known bible stories, rituals and daily church procedures.

The message of the painting is the renunciation of physical delight. Bosch uses symbolic images and puns on common words to convey his warning.

The "Temptation of St Anthony" is a title used again by the 20th century painter Salvador Dali. A major advantage of all 20th century artists is their ability to gain access to visual sources from different times, cultures and materials. Photographic reproductions, television and movies have provided the artist with resources beyond their wildest dreams. In this version of the Temptation, Dali clearly displays his knowledge when he includes a reference to Bernini's Column in Rome and the Escorial Palace in Spain. There is obviously some kind of private message and Dali himself calls his surrealistic paintings "had painted dream photographs."

Quite a few of Dali's pieces have strong sexual associations and in this one it would appear that St Anthony is desperately trying to ward off the oncoming onslaught of the temptress. A woman on a plate offering herself brazenly as well as a portion of woman framed in a temple like edifice. With his skill in illustration Dali was often called upon to illustrate magazines and books.

Going back in time, still on a subject related to religion let us look at the historical background that was probably responsible for the following paintings.

During most of the 14th Century the residence of the Popes was not in Italy but in Avignon, France. Painters from all over Europe came to the papal court thus gaining the opportunity to study the work of artists from other schools. In France much of the best painting was being done in miniatures and in illuminated manuscripts. This example is by an artist called Pol de Limbourg and is called "The Meeting of the Magi". In it we see a colourful dreamlike scape full of tiny jewel like details. At this time most of the manuscripts were produced by and for the clergy. In addition to these a new kind of manuscript, called the Book of Hours, made its appearance. This was for rich patrons who wanted to follow the liturgy in their own private chapels. The style of painting these manuscripts became known as the International style and was largely a fusion of French and Siennese artistic styles. He can be seen in this painting, animals, plants and little vignettes from everyday life were produced with great accuracy. Another painting in this style, using an imaginary scape as a backdrop, is also of a religious nature - "The Journey of the Magi to Bethlehem", by Gozzoli gives an immediate impression of being a precious object with a glittering jewel like quality. The artists who worked on this style used expensive pigments and attracted the custom of some very rich patrons.

The concept of beauty at this time had changed, women's faces were oval and features were small and refined - although we don't see any women here, we can observe the change in the representation of men. Their faces were also elongated and were often dark and angular, with high cheekbones and slightly almond shaped eyes. Looking at the costume in Gozzoli we can see the attention that is given to the folds and curves of the cloth. Some of the

materials, particularly those worn by kings and queens were extra-ordinarily rich and heavily embroidered. There is a distinct impression of this scene being a stage set, with only the figures in the foreground being somewhat real. It is interesting to note that every living thing in the picture is in mid-action as if caught for one second in the fertile imagination of the artists mind.

At around the same time "St George and the Dragon", was an immensely popular subject with the old masters in both painting and sculpture. This one painted by Paolo Uccello in the the 1400's shows a pretty fierce looking example wedged between a calm maiden and the hero St George. As a real dragon was never found to sit as a model, artists had a ball imagining what one might look like. To Uccello an Italian the slaying of a dragon by England patron saint, symbolized the struggle between good and evil and asserted that virtue and innocence (the maiden) cannot be harmed by evil. Uccello worked in a Christian environment decorating churches and the homes of devout princes. The use of classical and mythological subjects as symbols to express Christian beliefs was very common during the Renaissance. In this painting it is the two figures and the two beasts that are the main subject with most attention paid to their detailing in the next painting we see the human element taking second place to the elaborate treatment of the landscape.

For sheer enchantment, it would be hard to find a more dreamlike scene than this stage like setting by "Fragonard" - the French artist who flourished at the court of Louis XVI, immortalizing the whims in the Never-never Land



fantasies of the Queen, Marie Antoinette. This painting is entitled "Fete at Rambouillet".

Contributing to the aura of magic are the bursts of sunlight that touch the bank and the pleasure boat and crown the long line of trees with gold. This scene almost certainly comes from idealizing the real world - the people in the boat being all friends of Marie Antoinette and the special effects achieved by playing with the light give a rich glow to the picture that render it literally 'out of this world'.

This is a detail of a painting called "The Young Sorceress", by Antoine Wiertz from around 1850. Superstitions often mix crude inaccurate tales about demons and devils with the spice of sex and pornography. In this detail the perfect opportunity is given to display eroticism in a supernatural context. Wiertz was inspired by local folk tales and exploits the notion that any unexplained event is quickly transformed by folk culture into the workings of extraordinary forces which are then portrayed as devils, witches, demons, ghosts, vampires and other imaginary beings. The artist achieves a feeling of foreboding and unevenness of the natural order by skilfully depicting details and adding disturbing qualities which make us pause and ask questions.

Let us now look at a black and white reproduction of the whole painting. What is the old woman teaching the young nude girl to do? Are the other heads those of real observers, voyeurs of pornography or spirits to help in the ceremony? Voluptuous flesh caught in an erotic pose combines with the black,

cloaked ancient crone to suggest evil and secret rituals.

"Kay Nielson", born Copenhagen 1886, came from a theatrical background. He was strongly influenced by the morbid clarity of Beardsley and the spare, exquisitely terse Japanese landscapes. Nielson's powerful style resulted in work which was uniquely his own. All his life Kay had an affinity with the Oriental. This is obvious in his piece called "Prologue 5". With each of his painting which are an ongoing saga Nielson writes a caption based on old legends of the East. Under this one he writes of the Sultan who returns to his kingdom completely disillusioned. Having sworn never to trust another woman, each night he takes a new bride and each dawn he has her killed. The story goes on. Scheherazade, the daughter of the Vizier, volunteers to become the next bride. She has a plan to stop this terrible destruction. At bedtime she starts to tell a tale, cleverly weaving the beginning of a second tale into the end of the first tale so that she must continue the next evening. In this way she is reprieved for a thousand and one nights and wins the Sultans heart.

This painting has a highly decorative and lyrical appeal and a certain sense of calmness with a deep blue backdrop studded with stars enfolding the two figures. The white virgin like woman extends her arm, directing the eye to the highly decorative Sultan, who sits in his glory, looking somewhat disinterested. There is a beautiful simplicity about Kay's work, who being an illustrator, worked from a literary imagination. With extraordinary richness of detail, refinement and ephemeral delicacy he transformed ordinary scenes into dreamlike states. Excelling in the lyrical and the poetical was

the ideal that absorbed him and he made no effort to modernize the subject matter that governed his style.

Henri Rousseau "The Dream", this painting "La Reve" or the "The Dream" was Rousseau's last (1910) and the artist composed the following poem to accompany it:

"In a beautiful dream, Yaduigha  
Who had gently fallen asleep  
Heard the sounds of the pipes  
Played by a well-measuring charmer.

While the moon reflects  
On the rivers and the green trees  
The wild snakes lend an ear  
To the gay tunes of the instrument."

The curious name Yaduigha was the name given to his first wife Clemence. One of her grandmothers had been born in Prague, and this to Rousseau added to her eroticism an exciting foreignness. He painted her, naked apart from her long hair, reclining on a deep red sofa in the middle of a jungle. Rousseau, a customs man taught himself how to paint and considering he never saw a jungle in his life, his imaginative rendering of the scene more than compensates for any small technical short-comings. At the time it was not the fashion to admire so called primitive pictures or folk art but the critics were excited by "strangeness" of Rousseau's work and on at least two occasions he was obliged to explain that Yadwigha was simply dreaming about the jungle. The "dream" is a very good example of the combination in one painting of the real - using a live model in the studio, and the imagined - an incredible jungle scene.

Another painting by Rousseau "Liberty inviting the artists to take part in the 22nd exhibition of the Independents", also demonstrates very clearly, the art of using the imagined and the real to great effect. Here we see how varying the scale can add great impact to a painting. In reality that lion would never have come about. And how do you describe the abstract notion of an immense, larger than life personification of Liberty herself except in an exaggerated scale such as this?

The surrealist artist, Rene Magritte who died in 1967 painted his "Castle of the Pyrenees", with almost photographic realism that he has made the impossible look very possible. Magritte's castle has a very heavy feeling about it - which contrasts with the crashing waves and cotton wool clouds. The dreamlike impossibility of this scene invites the audience to question and probe - looking for explanations almost but not quite in the same way as Rousseau's "Liberty inviting the artists....."

John Ruskin writes:

"Imagination is always the ruling and divine power, and the rest of man is only the instrument which it sound or the tablet on which it writes".

We will finish with an illustration from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. When we look at Arthur Reckhams work at the beginning of the 20th Century we can see how this quotation might be applicable.

Rackham first started his career by doing illustrations for weeklies in London and later became one of the most sought after illustrators of the time and was eulogized as a partner of Fantasies. With Rackham the line is itself almost delicate root tendril spreading over the paper, its growth creating an organic form which is very distinctive in quality feeling and even subject matter. In this picture we see a crowd who stand in a huddle panting the words "but who has won?" I delicate mood is set by use of muted, dark colours which is typical of Rackham. Somehow the fact that Alice is the same size as the mice and the Doo Doo has the hands of an old man does not make the scene look any less convincing.

In other words by Rackham whose work has been described as being neogothic, gentle humanoid mice-like creatures hang around with gib-nosed gnomes who wriggle within the roots of trees of which perch birds of a plumage and form not to be found in the present world of reality. Rackhams transformations and transmutations of animals and vegetation are worked through by the magic of line, so that line and image become inseparable within the organic unity of the whole.

## CONCLUSION

Having looked at how various artists over the ages have combined real and imagined images to create new worlds, we can see how important it is to have a basic understanding of real form, in other words to use a real source in life.

With this ground knowledge, always ready to tap, the parameters to which the imagination can be stretched are boundless.

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