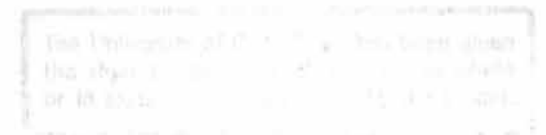


AN INVESTIGATION OF THE METAPHORIC POTENTIAL OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PICTORIAL AND SCULPTURAL SPACE

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Documentation and commentary on the body of practical work presented for the degree of Master
of Fine Art at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town.

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This book is dedicated to my late parents, Don and Olive, with
love and gratitude for their enduring belief in me.

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3. INTRODUCTION

"Sculpture is the best comment that a painter can make on painting."
(Picasso as quoted; Cowling and Golding 1994:179); (fig. 1)

The aim of this dissertation is to provide a background to the ideas and works that have informed the practical body of work.

The practical body of work has developed from an intention to locate a means of articulating personal experience in visual form. The departure points for this process are thus largely idiosyncratic and personal (subjective), while the focus of the investigation is on the potential for the dialectic of pictorial/physical space to articulate metaphors that can mediate personal experience.

This dialectic of pictorial/physical space can be related to one of the primary philosophical debates that underpins Western art practice and theory; viz., the relationship between art and reality, or in other terms, between culture and nature.

In chapter X of THE REPUBLIC, Plato proposes a hierarchical relationship between the idea, which originates with God, and those who realize the idea: the artisan and the painter. The latter two are situated below the originator of the idea, with the painter placed last. He relegates painting to this position since, according to his thinking, it exhibits a deficiency in reality and knowledge, as imagination does, and therefore lends itself to the elicitation of undesirable moral consequences. Thus, the painter, at two removes from the idea, can only represent what the other two have made and is therefore dependent on the "tricks of the eye". Truth, according to Plato, eludes the painter.

He values the work of the artisan more highly than that of the painter; since the artisan follows a more truthful image, that of the diagram, while the painter follows the tricks of the eye; that which is untrue, the world of mirrors. He dismissed painting (scene painting in the Ancient Greek context) as being like witchcraft because its illusionistic devices did not show the truth, but tricked the eye and the soul into believing a falsehood. For Plato, painting was dangerous because it blurred the distinction between truth and falsehood:

"The same magnitude, I presume, viewed from near or far does not appear equal. - Why, no - And the same things appear bent and straight to those who view them in water and out, or concave and convex, owing to similar errors of vision about colours and there is obviously every confusion of this sort in our souls. And so scene-painting in its exploitation of this weakness of our nature falls nothing short of witchcraft, and so do jugglery and many other such contrivances."
(Plato as quoted; Gombrich 1977: 108)

The dynamic of this debate is still relevant to ideas¹ around the production and perception of painting and sculpture. Any enquiry into the workings of visual metaphor is shadowed by the presence of this debate. I concur with the notion that visual metaphor can be experienced as a dynamic reconciliation of the paradoxes that govern experience. Further, I identify the pictorial/sculptural dialectic as a fruitful position from which to generate visual metaphors that can mediate personal experience. My intention is to produce discrete objects through which I can explore the contradictions and tensions that exist within my experience. The aesthetic context holds the potential to set up a coherence of disparate elements in a dynamic state of integration.

"The Metaphysical Poets were aware of the great psychic potential in the capacity of Art to resolve or reconcile paradox by symbolically uniting opposites, by metaphoric means"
(Arnott 1993: 3)

In Milan Kundera's book, *THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING*, the writer explores the paradoxes that seem to govern life experience. The core of the book is centred around the two aspects that shape life experience: choices that are seemingly inevitable, irreversible (weighty), and events that are unexpected and random (light).

The reconciliation of opposites, of the paradoxes that appear to govern life experience, has become one of the 20th century's

1 Plato's complaint with painting is echoed in the words of Donald Judd, circa 1965: " Three dimensions are real space. That gets rid of the problem of illusionism and literal space, space in and around marks and colours - which is riddance of one of the salient and most objectionable relics of European art." (Judd 1965: 77, Harrison and Wood 1993: 813)

most often expressed notions of the primary function of art. It has its basis in a psychological perspective on aesthetic experience:

"Somehow, a creative product must give a sense of reconciliation, of having resolved in an aesthetic and harmonious way the discords and disharmonies present in the original situation. The work of art, for a moment re-orders and brings into balance the tensions of form and space, and in so doing, moderates the inner tensions of the observer, giving him a sense of encounter and fulfillment."
(Storr 1986: 291)

The resolution in aesthetic terms does not imply a simplistic sense of harmony as a state of static balance where oppositions have become defused by having their differences homogenised; rather, it implies a state of dynamic balance where harmony is attained by the very emphasis of their difference:

"All successful work... is not one which resolves objective contradictions in a spurious harmony, but one which expresses the idea of harmony negatively by embodying the contradictions pure and uncompromised in its innermost structure."
(Adorno, as quoted: Barnes 1991: 27)

Adrian Stokes speaks of the reconciliation of three-dimensional form and the two-dimensional picture plane in Modern painting as being symbolic of the process of individuation. Thus, the aesthetic experience can give the artist/viewer a sense of encounter and fulfillment because it enacts this reconciliation in a discrete object which allows for projection. He furthers this idea by stating that aesthetic awareness of wholeness has two opposite nuances: one being an experience of singleness or envelopment and the other being a recognition of a reconstructed, independent object. The ability to project the self into the artwork and simultaneously recognize it as a discrete object, allows for identification with the aesthetic reconciliation:

"The art of painting and the preoccupation with the representation of space, symbolizes the restitutive process as well as a settled distance of the ego from its objects"
(Stokes 1978: 111)

Thus, for Stokes, the art object must maintain a position somewhere between being a discrete object and merging or enveloping the artist/viewer; and that the work of the artist is the struggle for unity.

Aesthetic means of reconciliation must, therefore be centred on the generation of metaphor. Gombrich suggests that the word, "metaphor" stems from the Greek word "metapherein", which means "transference" (Gombrich 1971: 14). Gombrich sees metaphor as occurring through a process of substitution:

"The possibility of metaphor springs from the infinite elasticity of the human mind; its capacity to perceive and assimilate new experiences as manifestations of earlier ones, of finding equivalences one for another. Without this constant process neither language nor art would be possible."
(Gombrich 1971: 14)

Gombrich suggests that meaning is elicited from metaphor because of the absent referents set up by this process of substitution. Thus a stick can become a horse in its own right because it can be "ridden", but it can also function as a metaphor for horse which it evokes through the absence of the real horse by standing in for it.

Krauss, from a structuralist point of view echoes this:

"Meaning is not the label of a particular thing; nor is it the picture of it. Meaning, for the structuralist, is the result of a system of substitutions."
(Krauss 1985: 2)

Jacques Derrida rejects the separation of form and content which Structuralist methods of interpretation often result in. He proposes a more infinite play of meanings in an ever-referential chain. He speaks of the elements of the structure of thought systems as being interrelated by their distinctions, by their "removes", "distances" or "intervals" from the reality they "represent" and by previous acts of representation whose "traces" they bear.

It is useful to consider Derrida's analogy of framing: that an artwork can frame in an intrinsic way, in other words, not merely framing what is inside and not outside, but being more like a composite of what is inside and outside. Derrida imaginatively quotes Kant:

"When we ask "What is a frame?" Kant replies, "It is a parergon, a composite of what is within and without, but a composite which is no mere amalgam or half-and-half, an outside which is summoned within the inside in order to constitute it as inside"

(Derrida; as quoted: Griffiths 1988: 17)

My intention in the work is to approach the art/reality dialectic from within the dialectic of pictorial and physical space. These two terms relate to the production and perception of space in the relative modes of painting and sculpture. Both modes exhibit the effect of illusionism: in fact, illusionism can never be absent from an art object, since its very materiality and compositional context will always ensure an illusionistic effect; where forms display apparent characteristics which they do not physically possess.

The essential difference of these two modes is exactly that which allows for an elastic field of possible dialogue between the two (this in turn, has implications for a play of dialogue between art and reality). That difference is the relative positions of each mode in relation to illusionistic effects of space and physical presence in space.

In the painting mode my intention is to investigate the nature of pictorial space by bringing referents to its physical characteristics to bear on its illusionistic effects, - i.e. to put pressure on the illusionistic effects of painting by asserting its physicality. Conversely, in the sculpture mode my intention is to bring pictorial characteristics to bear on sculptural form, i.e. to put pressure on the physicality of sculpture by emphasizing illusionistic effects. The relation of painting to the picture and wall-plane and sculpture to the wall-plane is thus an important locus of this investigation. How these concerns are materialized is given a fuller account in the section, **Notes on Individual pieces.**

An assessment of the implications of Cubist redefinition of pictorial space is relevant to the larger investigation of the body of work. The Cubist works of Picasso and Braque produced in the years 1909 to 1914, presented the most effective, repercussive and enduring challenge² to the traditional distinction between pictorial and physical space as well as to the distinction between the disciplines of painting and sculpture.

The predominant outcome of this challenge is that it effects a major paradigm shift: viz., that the pictorial/physical dialectic becomes the form and the content of the work with the result that the artwork displays the processes of its making, and this, in turn takes on a metaphorical function. Thus Cubism approaches the art/reality dialogue from a different perspective by making it the subject of the artwork, and in so doing, extends the referential reach of painting/sculpture:

"The "deep-lying subject" (of Cubism) is really the rivalry between the real world and the representation of it which we make ourselves."
(Elderfield 1971: 48)

Although Braque and Picasso collaborated closely during this period, an examination of Picasso's Cubist work will serve to reveal the nature of the Cubist challenge. This paradigm shift, together with the role that collage played in effecting that shift, is examined more closely in the section, **Theoretical/Historical Context**.

2 The work of previous artists had presented a challenge to the distinction between painting and sculpture; notably the transference of pictorial qualities to sculpture by Giovanni Bernini and that of sculpture to painting by Michelangelo Caravaggio in the seventeenth century; as well as the nineteenth century Romantic notion of the Gesamtkunstwerk (Philip Otto Runge) which proposed an integration of painting, sculpture, architecture and music. Yet these did not effect a paradigm shift to the notion of pictorial or sculptural space, and were either absorbed into the distinctive modes of painting and sculpture, or were relegated to the field of art theory discourse.

Cubism set up an open system which allows for a play of meanings and where there can never be an ultimate signified outside of the work. The work itself contains all of the traces which allow for variable experiences to be elicited. This is an important theoretical basis for my work and can be identified in the concerns of other artists whose work has had a bearing on my own;

" I personally would like to keep the painting in a state of "shunning statement", so that one is left with the fact that one can experience individually as one pleases; that is, not to focus the attention in one way, but to leave the situation as a kind of actual thing, so that the experience of it is variable."
(Jasper Johns in an interview with David Sylvester; Harrison and Wood 1993: 720)

An extended discussion of the work of artists whose concerns have corresponded with some of mine, is continued in the section, **Theoretical/Historical Context**.

The repercussions of Cubism's paradigm shift inform much of the theoretical framework of Modernist art theory and production. Some aspects of late Modernist approaches to pictorial/sculptural space and the picture plane are outlined in the Theoretical/Historical Context, as they have bearing on and are directly referred to in the works. They are dealt with under the following headings:

- * GREENBERGIAN PICTORIAL SPACE - the conception of pictorial space as a shallow space in which the medium and the autonomy of the artwork are asserted.
- * THE PICTORIAL GRID - the presence of the grid as an emblem of the ambivalent stance of Modernism in relation to matter and meaning, or, in earlier terms, science³ and spirit.

3 Science is meant here in the nineteenth century sense, with its strong Positivist overtones.

- * THE FLATBED PICTURE PLANE - the tilt of the picture plane from vertical to horizontal.
- * PICTURE PLANE AS SOMATIC SPACE - the metonymic possibilities⁴ of pictorial space and paint matter.
- * THE PAINTING/SCULPTURE
DIALECTIC: CONSTRUCTED PAINTING - the interface between painting and sculpture.
- * POLYCHROMATIC SCULPTURE - the application of colour to sculptural form

An outline of the concerns involved in the process of producing the body of practical work is provided in the section, **Creative Process: Conceptual and Formal Processes and Technical Processes**. This is preceded by a brief reference, in **Contextualization of Body of Work in Relation to Earlier Work**, to some earlier works in order to contextualize this body of work in relation to my previous work.

⁴ Metonymic potential refers to the process whereby an identification, or exchange takes place between the physicality of the viewer/artist and the material, constructed physicality of the artwork.

4. THEORETICAL/HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Some of the theories relating to the primary concerns of this study are outlined here.

4.1. THE CUBIST CHALLENGE:

The Cubist paradigm shift is central to Modernist and Postmodernist critical reflections on the nature/culture dichotomy. Cubism effected the restructuring of representation by making the examination of the classical premises of representation the focus of the work, and in so doing changed the paradigm of representation so that it functioned from within the work. This resulted in an emphasis on the referential nature of art (culture) from which experience of reality (nature) could be intimated. Golding notes that the Cubists saw their paintings as constructed, independent objects, which did not reflect the outside world, but recreated it in a completely new form. (Golding 1988: 94)

This paradigm also allowed for an open acknowledgement of the polysemic nature of art works. The metaphoric play operates in the differences between the re-presentation and the world it re-presents; metaphor is thus "embedded" in the artwork's form, in its structure:

"The principle of difference, already operative in the distinction between nature and art, thus becomes a principle governing the internal organization of the work as well... Picasso's pictorial oppositions assert the artificiality of art, and the arbitrary, diacritical nature of its signs."
(Poggi 1988: 316)

During the Analytical Cubist phase (1909 -1912), the traditional conventions of painting were dialectically converted to arrive at a re-constitution of reality where the tensions of that re-constitution remain evident. The primary tension is that set up between traditional illusionism and a negation of that illusionism (Fig. 2). Thus, tonal variation, the primary means of generating the illusion of three-dimensional form on a flat surface is used to set up facets of planes which fragment the integrity of the

image, by alluding to their own presence as illusionistic planes in pictorial space. The image is glimpsed through these planes but its illusionistic potential as three-dimensional form in space is transgressed: what is not transgressed is its representation as three-dimensional form on the flat surface of the picture plane. The facets are anchored to the surface of the canvas by lines which also act as markers, pointing to the presence of the picture plane⁵. The two opposing characteristics of painting are simultaneously revealed, viz. its ability to generate an illusion of form and space and its physical aspect as a three-dimensional object with a surface covered in paintmarks.

The introduction of collage⁶ elements marks the advent of the Synthetic phase of Cubism (fig. 3). Collage extended the pictorial/physical dialectic in a profound way:

"Because it could make use of materials taken directly from the real world, collage made it possible to synthesize two kinds of space: the pictorial and the real. As such, it mediated between reality and illusion. The collapsed elements function within an abstract plastic structure yet also retain enough of their original character to participate in a visual play between the true and the false; they actively partake of this paradox, while traditional painting functions solely as an illusion."
(Dabrowski 1992: 17)

Synthetic Cubism calls attention to the surface plane in more complex ways than the line-on surface and paint textures of Analytical Cubism. It makes the ground (picture plane/surface) the focus of the dialectic of re-presentation and reality, rendering it problematic rather than secure⁷. The collage element is pasted down to obscure a plane which is then refigured in a miniature

5 Kahnweiler underlines the essentially plastic approach to painting in Analytical Cubism by pointing out that the facets are built up away from a defined background, towards the viewer's space (Kahnweiler 1915; Harrison and Wood 1993: 207)

6 Collage can be understood to be the introduction of extraneous material into the context of traditional painting media.

7 Poggi and Krauss both put this idea forward. (Poggi 1988: 311), (Krauss 1985: 23)

facsimile on the collage element itself (fig 4). Thus, Cubist collage hides the ground and refigures it so that it becomes, not merely a perceptual experience, but an object of discourse, of re-presentation.

The introduction of *papier collé* by Braque, inflected the traditional illusionism of painting. The *papier collé* material was generally a printed imitation of a surface, such as those found in contemporary wallpaper designs which often imitated other surfaces such as woodgrain. Golding makes the point that Picasso and Braque condemned the illusionism of the entrenched, Salon type of painting, but were completely in favour of the artisan's type of illusionism (Golding 1988: 105). The artisan housepainter could produce a wide range of illusory, imitative effects with the minimum of means. This humbler version of illusionism was adopted by Braque and Picasso via the *papier collé* technique. The printed woodgrain imitations were superimposed with painted and drawn versions of the same, and the housepainter's comb was used directly on the painted surface to produce textures in the paint material.

A principle of multivalency is in operation in the Cubist collages. This can be seen in the way that one piece of paper corresponds to its original identity and simultaneously re-presents others. In *STILL LIFE WITH COMPOTE AND VIOLIN* (fig.5), the use of a single paper material, viz. newsprint, signifies floor, a table top, a glass, part of a fruit dish and the newspaper itself. In an example cited by Christine Poggi (Poggi 1988: 315), *VIOLIN AND NEWSPAPER*, the ground is a transparent plane of glass. This ground dialectically reveals, that for the picture plane to operate convincingly as a figure of transparency, it must be opaque.

Viewed from the perspective of Structuralist interpretation, Synthetic Cubism can be seen as a system of signs, where signs are understood as being inherently diacritical; i.e. their meaning can never be absolute. Krauss speaks of the collage elements as "collage signs" which "write" the presence of the illusion of space, and in so doing, they re-present it and thereby guarantee its absence:

"A single collage element can function simultaneously to compose the sign of atmosphere or luminosity and of closure or edge. In the great, complex Cubist collages, each element is fully diacritical, instantiating both line and colour, closure and openness, plane and recession."
(Krauss 1985: 35)

Cubism asserts that representation is both problematic and central to the culture/nature dichotomy.

Where Poggi and Krauss see collage as the tool which dismantled and reconstructed traditional representation by separating signifier and signified; Kuspit proposes that Cubism set up a relativist model for artworks; that it provided the medium of fragmentation and indeterminacy for articulating the restlessness of individuality in the process of becoming. Kuspit asserts the importance of Cubist collage as an apt medium for the dialectic between the individual and the world, thus claiming ground for the paradigm introduced by Cubist collage that connects it with the Romantic tradition:

"As such, collage becomes emblematic of the task of art at least since Baudelaire: the redemption of individuality in mass society." (Kuspit 1990: 512) and further, that:

"The essential playfulness of the collage is direct acknowledgement of the relativity of individuality in the world, as well as a way of expanding the world to include it, and of expanding individuality to include the world." (Kuspit 1990: 506)

Both the Structuralist and the more psychologically orientated viewpoint of Kuspit allow for readings of Cubist collage which establish that Cubism effected a major shift in the notion of representation; not to abstraction⁸, but to a broader conception of what painting/sculpture can represent. I contend that it is this shift that provides painting/sculpture with validity as a mediator of meaning.

8 This posits that Cubism is not only internally referent as is suggested by the view that Cubism resolved the problem of representation by changing its terms and creating the problem of abstraction. (Kuspit 1979: 27)

Cubist collage opens a field of play for meaning, where metaphor is generated out of oppositions which are set into play but do not resolve themselves, and where, what is absent is evoked by the presence of the fragment. The fragment gives a mnemonic suggestibility to the artwork: it refers to what is absent in a poignant way. The fragment suggests the once-presence of a whole and thus induces associative memories of other, similar wholes. This complicates the possibility of an ultimate signified outside of the work, but emphasizes the infinite play of possible signifieds, once again reiterating the polysemic nature of artworks.

"It seems important to me never to forget the transverbal dimension in communication, to take into account the visual factor, the plastic effect of the icon as signifier, which lends itself more easily to playfulness, to invention, to interpretation, than verbal thought, which can have a repressive intellectual weight."

(Kristeva 1986: 139)

4.2. SOME LATE MODERNIST CONCEPTIONS OF PICTORIAL SPACE:

4.2.1 GREENBERGIAN PICTORIAL SPACE:

Clement Greenberg's theories on painting played a seminal role in exerting an influence on the work that was produced in the 1960's. Greenberg's notions of pictorial space are important, not only in that they exerted such widespread influence, but in that they also provide a foil against which alternative readings of Modernist pictorial space can be generated.

Greenberg views Cubism as the yardstick for all subsequent art, since Cubism, in his terms, achieved a dialectical fluctuation

between abstraction and representation through dialectical conversion⁹. In Cubism he sees a shift from representation to abstraction, and sees this as not solving the problem of representation, but as destroying it to create the problem of abstraction:

"The Cubists inherited the problem, and solved it - but - as Marx would say - only by destroying it: willingly, or unwillingly, they sacrificed the integrity of the object almost entirely to that of the surface. (Greenberg, as quoted; Kuspit 1979: 27)

The surface, or picture plane becomes the focus of what Greenberg values as the "strength of... art." (Kuspit 1979: 32). He acknowledges the importance of the dialectical interplay of the illusionistic and the flat; but his definition of illusionistic space relates exclusively to the nuances of shallow depth just beyond the surface. If that illusionistic depth were greater, then the tension of surface and illusion would be lost. Thus, in Greenberg's terms, painting's validity lay in its ability to sublimate the contradictions/ oppositions of life in the dialectical tension of the flat and illusionistic surface:

"That which modern art asserts in principle - the superiority of the medium over whatever it figures; thus the inviolable flatness of the picture plane; the ineluctable shapedness of the canvas, panel or paper; the palpability of oil pigment, the fluidity of water and ink - this expresses our society's impotence to organize experience in any other terms than those of the concrete sensation, immediate return, tangible datum." (Kuspit 1979: 33)

Osborne sums up the "period style" of the 1960's as being the repudiation of artifice and the rejection of relational composition in order to establish a new simplicity of the obvious: as Frank Stella stated; "...What you see is what you see." (Osborne 1976: 107 and 101). As with much of the painting of the time, sculpture was defined in similarly materialist terms such as "Primary Structures" and "Specific Objects".

9 Kuspit sees Greenberg's notion of "dialectical conversion" as an essential paradox: it demonstrates the urge to unity within a situation of dichotomies, but the unity revives the vitality of the terms of the contradiction that seemed set in their ways. (Kuspit 1979: 24)

Greenberg's position can be viewed as essentially paradoxical: that for painting to be meaningful beyond the illustration or description of appearances, its physicality as a flat surface, its materiality has to operate as the sign of its integrity.

"It follows, that a Modernist work of art must try, in principle to avoid communication with any order of experience not inherent in the most literally and essentially construed nature of its medium. Among other things, this means renouncing illusion and explicit subject matter."
(Kuspit 1979: 34)

This position ignores the open system proposed by Cubism where meaning plays in the re-presentation of reality, since this can only operate when traces that refer to objects, images from the visible real world are present¹⁰. Poggi points out that Greenberg undermines his initial premise that collage was designed to affirm the flatness of the medium of painting (Poggi 1992: 255). She remarks that, in his own analysis of Cubist collage, he concludes that flatness is depicted and re-created through the collage elements: it is therefore referred to by being literally covered by its re-presentation.

Greenberg's objection to traditional painting is that the illusion of space dominates, so that one sees "into" the picture space. His advocacy for Modern painting is that one should see its physicality first:

"Whereas one tends to see what is in an Old Master before seeing it as a picture, one sees Modernist painting as a picture first... For the sake of its own autonomy painting has had above all to divest itself of everything it might share with sculpture."
(Greenberg, as quoted; Harrison and Wood 1992: 756)

10 One of the latent aspects of Cubism is the awareness that the process of "translation" from nature to culture could only become revealed when both images of the object, or fragments of it (clues), and its translation are simultaneously present.

This position can be aligned with the distinction between transparency and opacity in relation to the picture plane: transparency converts the picture plane into a vehicle for seeing beyond it, while opacity asserts the picture plane as physical fact. This distinction correlates with that between vision and touch. It is this distinction which Cubism, not only laid bare, but made the elisions between vision and touch the focus of the work. Greenberg's theory favours the physical, material nature of the picture plane, while it glosses over the potential of collage to re-present and therefore to make the painting function as an open system of signification¹¹. Greenberg's comment that painting should divest itself of anything it might share with sculpture reveals his intention to claim an area which painting could exclusively occupy. This area was its condition of two-dimensionality, its flatness, and thus his overt emphasis on flatness as the rock-bed of Modernist painting.

4.2.2. THE PICTORIAL GRID

The grid enters into painting in an overt way through Cubism. The Analytical Cubist (fig.2) fragmentation of the picture surface (grid as signifier of surface) developed into the full-blown presence of the grid in Piet Mondrian's work (fig. 6) (grid as signifier of cosmic states).

Krauss identifies certain structural properties in relation to the grid, viz., that of: stasis; lack of hierarchy; lack of centre; hostility to narrative; anti-referential; as collapsing spatiality of nature onto the surface of a purely cultural object; and that it doubles as the canvas surface. (Krauss 1985: 20)

Thus the grid can, in Modernist terms, establish the autonomy of the art object in a tautological manner: it is a representation of the surface, mapped onto the surface it represents. There are two main interpretations of the grid. The one is that it can be

¹¹ Poggi suggests that Cubist collage founded an alternative to the Modernist tradition; an alternative that challenges the values and premises of Modernism. (Poggi 1992: 257)

centrifugal; that is, that it extends to infinity making the painting a fragment of that infinitely larger field. The other is that it is centripetal, where "the grid is an introjection of the boundaries of the world into the interior of the work: it is a mapping of the space inside the frame onto itself." (Krauss 1985: 20)

These two interpretations relate to the metaphysical on the one hand, and the material on the other. Agnes Martin's work (fig. 7) exemplifies the centrifugal grid, associated with an infinity which can easily have spiritual connotations, while Frank Stella's early work (fig. 8) with its within-the-frame grids presents the centripetal grid which, in turn has materialist connotations.

Elderfield notes (Elderfield 1972: 53) that the grid in art, can be traced back to the drawing devices (fig. 9) artists used for transferring three-dimensional perceptual information onto the flat surface of paper or canvas. Perspectival systems can also be related here. Both devices were used to establish an illusion of three-dimensional form and space on a two-dimensional surface. Paradoxically, the grid in twentieth century art is used either to assert the surface, the materiality of the painting or, conversely to refer to, or evoke, the universal, the spiritual.

In these manifestations of what can be regarded as the two threads that run through Modernism, (the material and the metaphysical), the grid plays two opposing roles. In both, the grid produces an abstract effect; one, to reflect the "abstracted-from representation" reality of the painting object, and the other, to intimate the metaphysical reality that the painting alludes to.

Krauss (Krauss 1985: 25) links this ambivalent position of the grid in Modernist work to a mythic function, where the grid deals with paradox and contradiction, not by dissolving the paradox or resolving the contradiction, but by covering them over so that they seem to go away. Thus the values of the material and the metaphysical can, by means of the grid, be maintained within the consciousness (unconscious) of Modernism as something essentially repressed.

Krauss expands on the idea of the ambivalence of the grid by noting two historical "paths"; one which returns to the

diagrammatic grids of the nineteenth century enquiry into optics (an emblem of the infrastructure of vision) and the other which returns to the Symbolist image of the window, a transparent vehicle, letting light in, but also experienced as a mirror which reflects the self. This ambivalence, inherent in a grid structure, enables it to be used as a pictorial structure which can refer to various states of duality; whether they be the ambivalence of the illusionistic/physical surface of painting or of other, more psychologically based dualities.

4.2.3. THE FLATBED PICTURE PLANE

This term was coined by Leo Steinberg in his essay, "Reflections on the state of Criticism" (Steinberg; 1972, 37). He borrowed it from the Webster definition of the flatbed of a printing press and used it to describe what he saw as the characteristic picture plane of the 1960's. He proposes that a major shift in content is due to the angulation of the pictorial surface in relation to the posture of the human body.

The perceptual condition of traditional and even Cubist painting is that of verticality: where the picture plane is read in correspondence with the erect human posture. Where the flatbed picture plane is operative (the work of Dubuffet, Rauschenberg), the picture simulates flatbed horizontals, and in turn emphasises opacity:

"The flatbed picture plane makes its symbolic allusion to hard surfaces such as tabletops, studio floors, charts, bulletin boards - any receptor surface on which objects are scattered, on which data is entered, on which information may be received, printed, impressed - whether coherently or in confusion."
(Steinberg 1972: 46)

Steinberg associates this shift from the vertical to the horizontal as having important bearing on the nature/culture dialogue in art:

"What I have in mind here is the psychic address of the image, and its special mode of imaginative confrontation, and I tend to regard the tilt of the picture plane from vertical to horizontal as expressive of the most radical shift in the subject matter of art, the shift from nature to culture."
(Steinberg 1972: 46)

In the paradigm of the flatbed picture plane the positioning of visual information is as much conditioned by up and down as it is by figure/ground relationships. It also implies the possibility of projections onto the surface, as though the surface is a physical surface upon which objects and materials can be placed. Although the paintings are hung on the wall, they continue to refer to horizontals on which one can walk, sit, eat... The picture plane adopts a metonymic function where it evokes a strong association with surfaces that are directly experienced in a physical, everyday sense.

Claes Oldenburg's work hinges on just this kind of metonymic transference of one perceptual experience to another; one material to another and of one image to another:

"I turned my vision down - the paper became a metaphor for the pavement, its walls (gutters and fences)." ; and, " A style period is preceded by analysis, once begun, it assembles all relevant elements in a conspiracy , as for example, the paper becomes the street (a floor - downward glance), or wall (a window - sidelong glance), or room (deeper glance).
(Oldenburg as quoted ; Rose 1970: 194-195)

Many of Oldenburg's works display this concern with a sense of continual metamorphosis. In SOFT DRAINPIPE (fig.10), the referential reach of the work is extended by the processes of transformation; the image of the drainpipe, a utilitarian object, displays itself as a biomorphic, sexual form: it's a sculpture, but its material of cloth and paint allow the form to acquire painterly qualities.

The notion of the picture plane as a surrogate for other, physically (often everyday) experienced surfaces introduces an even wider referential reach than the one outlined in the assessment of the Cubist challenge¹². The range of projections onto the flatbed surface and its implications for the referential nature of painting/sculpture can be clearly identified in a work by Robert Rauschenberg, *BED* (fig. 11). In this work, a strong sense of somatic identification is established: it is difficult not to project a body experience onto the picture plane because the picture plane is so convincingly that of a bed. Rauschenberg's use of an actual quilt, sheet and pillow as painting's surface ensures this reading and also reveals that for him "flatness" was not a problem, but a strong connector of picture plane to physical experience. This lifting of bed, table or work surface to painting's traditional position on the wall plane expands the associative, referential potential of painting, thus enriching the culture/nature dialogue which Cubism made overt. Steinberg notes:

"There (on the wall), in the vertical posture of "art" it continues to work in the imagination as the eternal companion of our other resource, our horizontality, the flat bedding in which we do our begetting, conceiving, and dreaming. The horizontality of the bed relates to "making" as the vertical of the picture plane related to "seeing".
(Steinberg 1972: 49)

Jasper Johns uses sculptural elements to provoke a witty play between Modernist pictorial space, traditional sculptural form and the title of the work: *PAINTING WITH TWO BALLS* (fig. 12). Its identity as a painting is emphasised by the presence of overt painting elements; by the inclusion of the two, fully three-dimensional balls; and by the title. The Abstract Expressionist-alluding brushstrokes point to its identity as painting; the two balls literally prise the two top panels apart, unmasking its identity as three canvas panels; and the title serves to reinforce its literal identity as a painting.

12 The Cubist paintings whose formats are oval, come closest to this idea of picture plane as surrogate for other surface (here the domestic cafe one of the table). This is discussed further in relation to Picasso's work: *STILL LIFE WITH CHAIR CANING*.

In a later work, TANTRIC DETAIL (fig. 13), Johns echoes the earlier work, but invests it with overt references to the body: the vertical dotted line evokes the symmetry of the body; the cross-hatching links it to other cross-hatched paintings of Johns; with its reference to breathing and to skin, while the presence of a skull and genitalia reinforce the body/picture plane and canvas/skin associations.

4.2.4. PICTURE PLANE AS SOMATIC SPACE

Max Beckmann's paintings appear to be based on the premise that spatial distortions can impart a strong emotional impact. In his work, modelled forms, which are recognizable, but at the same time exhibit distortions or differences from their counterparts in the actual world, are piled into compositional structures. The effect of this is that space can be read as a protagonist, in that it compresses and distorts the forms and they reciprocate by appearing to do the same to it. The sensory effect is thus heightened, so that the viewer can experience a somatic and psychological identification with the claustrophobic space.

Beckmann's paintings from the 1920's and 1930's exhibit this compressed sense of pictorial space. This is evident in both the still life and figure paintings. An interchangeability seems to exist between figure and object. The spatial distortions in the still life paintings imparts the same sense of physical and psychological discomfort as do those in the figure compositions (figs. 14 and 15). These examples also display Beckmann's painting technique, in which the rawness of the brushmark similarly effects an impact on the forms and space; compressing one into the other and thus also delimiting the extent of spatial illusionism.

This possibility of experiencing the picture plane as a somatic space is inherent in the theoretical position of Abstract Expressionism in terms of the picture plane. Harold Rosenberg, like Greenberg, defines the picture plane as a surface, but for him, that surface becomes an arena for existential enactment; a surface which marks the evidence of interaction of artist with picture plane:

"At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act - rather than as a space in which to reproduce, redesign, analyse, or "express" an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event. The painter no longer approached his easel with an image in his mind; he went up to it with material in his hand to do something to that other piece of material in front of him. The image would be the result of this encounter."

(Rosenberg 1970; 36)

This implies that "gesture" and "bodily action" will be the determinants of the imagery, and also, that the brushstroke will be the metaphorical carrier of meaning. The brushmark, the artist's gesture or touch, becomes the vehicle for a metonymic exchange between the artist/viewer's physicality and the paint-material of painting.

Shiff notes:

"When we see a picture in terms of its material references to touch, as opposed to its fictive allusions to vision, we reorient not only a local pictorial order but also our global sense of how human bodies contact their surroundings; we reconstruct the functioning of the body and its senses, how it relates to the world. When vision dominates, knowledge becomes centralized, abstracted, and distanced; with touch, experience is multiple, concrete, and proximate - close "at hand". "

(Shiff 1991:43)

Philip Guston's approach to the process of painting is orientated to the tactile, where a metonymic transfer occurs between the hand of the artist and the material of paint (fig. 16):

"I feel as if I'm shaping something with my hands. I feel as if I've always wanted to get to that state. Like a blind man in a dark room had some clay, what would he make? I end up with two or three forms on a canvas, but it gets very physical for me. I always thought, I'm a very spiritual man, not interested in paint, now I discover myself to be very physical, and very involved with matter. I want to be involved with how heavy things are, a balloon, how light things are; things levitating, pushing forms, make me feel as if my hand is pushing in a head, bulges out here and pushes there."

(Guston, as quoted; Hopkins 1980:46)

A similar sense of somatic identification with paint and painting is evident in the work of Georg Baselitz. In his paintings, the figure is realized through the space set up by the paintmarks (fig.17). He infuses his work with a Romantic sense of projection into the picture space:

"Out of dark backgrounds it tips all over me - a stormy vault, a bloodvessel, a fountain, a Piranesi urn, the spike in the ring, the prickle. My tongue's hanging out, black, white, red. Stand the topsy turvy world on its head".

(Baselitz, as quoted: Serota and Francis 1983; 32)

In these artists' work, the material of paint is attributed a physical quality akin to something organic. This results in the act of painting simulating the act of exerting physical, bodily pressures onto the forms in the painting. These forms resultingly take on biomorphic characteristics. The effect of this is again somatic, where a form can be "bruised" by the way it is painted.

A similar somatic identification with pictorial space is evident in the work of Susan Rothenberg. Here the flatbed notion of pictorial space is in operation with bodily empathy occurring between the viewer and the physicality of images in paint (fig. 18). Rothenberg eliminates the differentiation between figure and ground by dissolving the one into the other through small, choppy brushstrokes. The images are surrogates for a self, and the somatic experience of the image, positioned in the web of paintmarks on the picture plane, easily transforms into a psychological experience. This is apparent in SQUEEZE (fig.19) where extremes of physical and psychological struggle are conveyed through the sense of compression (being read) as repression.

4.2.5. THE PAINTING/SCULPTURE DIALECTIC; CONSTRUCTED PAINTING

The dialectic between pictorial/physical space and between optical/tactile sensation; made overt in Cubism and continued in Modernist and Post-Modernist conceptions of pictorial space; reaches a high point of tension in works where the distinction between painting and sculpture is ambiguous.

The Cubist developments of this dialectic can be traced back to the work of Cezanne. From a Modernist perspective, Cezanne's use of repetitive brushmarks across the picture plane results in them appearing to refer more to one another than to the depicted objects, thus constituting a surface of opacity, and thereby endorsing the Modernist paradigm of picture plane as autonomous surface/object. Yet, as we find in Cubist works, it is the presence of the image of the object depicted which produces the tension of the pictorial/physical dialectic.

Richard Shiff, in his essay, "Constructing Physicality", makes an interesting analysis of Cezanne's *STILL LIFE WITH PLASTER CUPID* (fig. 20). He notes that the choice of still life objects involves a play of images that are paintings and those that are sculptures; thus the iconography includes: a painting of a still life, a painting of a sculpture and a still life which includes a sculpture.

Cezanne's method of painting across the picture plane in overt blocks of paintmarks, forces all of these images towards the surface, producing a tension between the reading of forms and spaces into, and onto, the picture surface simultaneously. There is also a metonymic exchange between the surface of forms being touched by the paintbrush and the canvas surface which is touched in the process:

"Here not only identifiable parts of the representation shift between figurality and apparent literalness, but sensory modes shift also. For touch and vision are caught in the kind of reciprocal exchange that characterizes Cezanne's "solidity": touch is figuring vision and vision is figuring touch."
(Shiff 1991: 44)

Thus the two modes of optical and tactile sensation become interrelated in an integral way on painting's surface. The difference between pictorial/physical is again connected with that of optical/tactile.

Kahnweiler recognised that Cubism, the "new painting", effected a profound shift in terms of representation because it allowed for the optical and the tactile to inform both the representation and the structure of the painting:

"The nature of the new painting is clearly characterised as representational as well as structural: representational in that it tries to reproduce the formal beauty of things: structural in its attempt to grasp the meaning of this formal beauty in the painting."
(Kahnweiler 1915: Harrison and Wood 1993: 203)

This reference to the combination of the two sensations of sight and touch is also recognised by Golding as being integral to all of Picasso's work. Golding sees Picasso's sculptural approach to painting as originating in the "physicality of his vision" (Golding 1994: 21) which compelled him to want to touch, mould and handle his subjects¹³. The treatment of the spaces in between forms in the Analytical Cubist paintings leads to a metonymic exchange where the eye moves over the picture surface as a hand moves over a sculpturally modelled surface.

Picasso's paintings of 1908, 1909, which feature the direct influence of the formal reductiveness of tribal art, are clear examples of sculptural intention evident in pictorial form. Picasso's own comments on these works corroborates this:

"...it would have been sufficient to cut them up - the colours after all being no more than indications of differences in perspective of planes being inclined one way or another - and reassemble them according to the indications given by the colour in order to be confronted with a sculpture...The vanished painting would hardly be missed."
(Picasso; as quoted: Golding 1994: 20)

13 Steinberg reiterates this optical/tactile dialectic in Picasso's approach to painting. (Steinberg 1972: 141) . The extent of Picasso's desire to mould the experiential dichotomy of painting and sculpture is recounted by Penrose: "In the early days of Cubism", he told me, "we made experiments, the squaring of the circle was a phrase that excited our ambitions... to make pictures was less important than to discover things all the time" - but he warned me again not to think it was over a question of exact calculations. The aim was rather to create space in a convincing way and therefore a new reality. For this reason, he said, he had always hoped to make a painting that was literally spherical, and he always kept some large balls of clay with which to make experiments in three-dimensional and two-dimensional effects." (Penrose 1981: 170)

Collage and *papier collé* can be understood to be the main means whereby Cubism made apparent the arbitrary distinction between painting and sculpture. The developments of Cubist paintings and three-dimensional constructions were essentially reciprocal. The collage elements made concrete the distinctions between different planes of forms that Picasso had been striving for in the paintings of 1908 and 1909.

The interchangeability between depth/surface, pictorial/sculptural, optical/tactile, illusionistic/physical and the multiple readings that this elicits, lies at the heart of Picasso's Cubist pictorial constructions.

STILL LIFE WITH CHAIR CANING (fig. 21) provides a clear example of the rich interplay of near/far, location of imagery and environment, up/down, reflection/substance and fact and fiction that collage and a paradigm of constructed painting introduced.

The imagery consists of a still life of ordinary objects which have been fragmented by the discrete planes of Analytical Cubism. They appear to be placed against, or painted onto the surface of, a collage element, viz., a piece of oilcloth which carries an image of chair caning. This is a fragment from a mass produced illusionistic surface; oilcloth printed to look like chair caning. It mimics the old-fashioned craftsmanship of chair caning by imitating it in a convincing illusion of three-dimensional form on a two-dimensional surface (the traditional illusionistic trait of painting). Thus the collage fragment's presentation of literalness is negated by its representation of an illusion, which is, in turn, coerced "into" the illusionistic surface of the painting; and further; although the piece of oilcloth is literally opaque, it suggests transparency through the open weave of the caning.

The enclosing rope "frame" furthers the interplay of fact and fiction: it serves as a frame¹⁴, if the painting is conceived of as a picture or a mirror on the wall; yet it can also be conceived of as a tabletop, where the rope suggests a carved wooden edge of the tabletop. Through all readings, the rope maintains its literalness as rope. The literal object is thus conflated with the object it represents.

The format adds to this possibility of the polysemic play of material and image: the play of referents that do not devolve into a single, ultimate signified, but keeps multiple signifieds in play. The elliptical format of the oval conveys the effect of a curved surface (round tabletop) seen from an angle; yet it could also be an oval table surface lifted to the wall at a ninety degree angle to the viewer.

The surface is also elusive: the apparent paintmarks and paint material, together with the literal collage element assert the literal object¹⁵ (objet de tableau) aspect of the painting, while the oval format suggests a table surface. But what if the chair caning indicates a chair "seen-through" a transparent glass surface, or is even a reflection on a mirrored surface? The format and the

14 Rosenblum suggests that Picasso may have found a precedent for this rope frame in the commonplace rope-framed mirrors found in French port souvenir shops. (Rosenblum 1980: 43) (fig. 22). The frame is also an important device in Picasso's work for establishing the play between the pictorial and the sculptural: in GLASS, DIE AND NEWSPAPER (fig. 23), planes of tin are cut and painted to resemble a glass and fragment of newspaper and twisted out of the ground to project into the viewer's space. The frame serves to define the transference from "tableau" space into actual/physical space.

15 In his introductory essay to the catalogue, PICASSO: SCULPTOR/PAINTER (Serota 1994: 21) John Golding refers to the talk of painting's identity as an object, an "objet de tableau", which was circulating Cubist circles at the time. (Cowling and Golding 1994: 22). Kahnweiler refers directly to this concept: "The Cubists, following in the footsteps of Cezanne always insisted on the independent existence of the work of art. They talked about "le tableau objet", an object which could be put anywhere." (Kahnweiler; as quoted: Poggi 1992: 86)

surface hereby set up an ambiguity as to which surface is being represented. The possibility of the presence of two different surfaces further points to the presence of two different pictorial paradigms: the traditional paradigm of the vertical picture plane, where position of images and space corresponds with that of the viewer: the paradigm of tableau; and the paradigm of the horizontal picture plane, akin to the perceptual experience of objects on an actual table surface: the paradigm of table.

The achievement of the work is that it introduces the paradox of two pictorial paradigms co-existing on a single picture plane, and thus it allows for, even encourages, multiple readings which can be contradictory, but which can be sustained in the painting as physical object.

Frank Stella's work, ranging from the early works of the 1950's to the later ones of the 1980's, is firmly based on Picasso's Cubist work. Stella recognised that the interplay of the various dichotomies in Picasso's Cubist work is dependent on the ambiguity which results from the introduction of collage elements into the context of painting. The play of different readings is possible because of the dominance of the pictorial mode into which the sculptural mode has, in a sense, intruded.

This is evident in GLASS DIE AND NEWSPAPER (fig. 23). The same holds for Picasso's seemingly more sculptural pieces, such as VIOLIN (fig. 24). Here the forms of the violin and its surroundings are constructed out of planes of metal sheeting. This contradicts the traditional sculptural methods of carving and modelling by converting the picture plane (flat surface) into a sculptural material which can be bent, rolled, cut out and painted on. This, in turn, has implications for sculptural space which can now include negative and interior space. All of Picasso's Cubist constructions acknowledge their pictorial origins in that they are conceived of, and intended, to be hung on the wall. This pictorial base is particularly evident in the now extant Papier Collé of 1913 (fig. 25), where the forms extend laterally across the wall. Picasso thus transforms the Western sculptural tradition of mass to the same degree that the collages, *papier collé*, transformed the pictorial tradition of illusionism. .

Stella has persistently stated that his concerns are primarily pictorial:

"Whether you call what I do painted reliefs or relief paintings, doesn't seem to me to make much difference. The impulse that goes into them is pictorial, and they live or die on my pictorial abilities, not my abilities as a sculptor...they want to do everything that sculpture doesn't do."
(Stella, as quoted; Rubin 1987 : 20)

Again this is reiterated in connection with the paintings which seem most sculptural. Stella refers to the series which includes ST. MICHAEL'S COUNTERGUARD (fig. 26):

"They're not architecture and they're not sculpture. Although they have a little bit of both those arts in their spaces, they still remain painting."
(Stella, as quoted; Rubin 1987 : 120)

Stella's works remain painting, no matter how much they occupy deep space in front of the picture plane, because they never "let go" of the wall plane. The wall plane takes the place of the picture plane to define the planar protrusions from it as essentially pictorial. In KASTURA (fig. 27), the Modernist grid can be seen to operate in this work in the form of a grille which bends in a planar motion away from the wall. The three-dimensional protrusions are clearly the flat surface, or picture plane bent or rolled to occupy space in a curvilinear way, but they nevertheless remain planes and therefore, pictorial rather than sculptural.

Stella's intention was to extend the boundaries of Modernist painting; to return to Cubism and claim a new space for painting which could avoid the impasse of "The Road to Flatness" which most of Modernist painting had embarked on.

Elizabeth Murray's work of the 1970's and 1980's exhibits similar concerns to Stella's; in terms of her attempt to extend pictorial space into the literal space of the viewer. A central difference is that Murray's concerns are less formalist, as they allow for the impingement of psychological states of being in terms of content, imagery and form. A visual comparison of DIE FAHNE HOCH! (fig. 28) by Stella and WAVE (fig. 29) by Murray reveals this inherent difference between the two artist's work. Roberta Smith says of Murray's painting:

"These changing shapes and events reiterate in visual terms, the process of becoming conscious, of coming to see and understand the facts not just of form, but of life itself. And the facts of both form and life are that both are incessantly suggestive and interpretable."

(Smith 1987: 21)

A sense of mutability and a continual flux of forms and meanings is central to the work. This sense of flux is predominantly conveyed through her manipulation of the picture plane. Where Stella bends his surfaces away from the wall, they remain planar; whereas in Murray's work the surface takes on biomorphic qualities as it buckles off the wall. The effect of this is strengthened by her maintaining the traditional support of painting, viz., canvas on a stretcher. Thus Murray's picture surface is topological where Stella's is planar:

"By replacing the notion of picture plane, a Euclidian one, with that of picture surface, a topological one, Murray has now found a way to make a painting in which the format obeys the same spatial rules as an organic or biomorphic "image"."

(Storr 1990: 210)

Murray's works also have their basis in Cubism, but are intentionally expanded so as to incorporate the psychological experiences of fears of separation, loss and abandonment which characterize the path between childhood and adulthood . On a formal level these are materialised in the multiple possibilities of sustaining fused opposites: geometric/biomorphic shapes; hard edge/ gestural brushmarks; representation/abstraction. The allusive power of the work is tested by emphasising its materiality, its hand-built quality. Murray speaks of her work, TABLE TURNING (fig. 30):

"In TABLE TURNING, the two shapes are like two people. It's one of the first times I used the table and I felt I had turned the tables on myself in some delightful and surprising way. This also is the first time I allowed for the transparency of paint, and one side of the painting is more physical while the other side is more ghostly. The leg of the table fades through the saucer. There are two time/spaces: it's like daylight and nighttime in the same painting."

(Murray, as quoted; Pavese 1987: 62)

The painting/sculpture dialectic is a dynamic one which keeps the play of oppositions alive and takes its strength from the paradox at the root of painting: that painting is caught in a dilemma, the struggle of reconciling distance with presence, possession with watching. In Leo Steinberg's words:

"Sight, which needs distance, is out of touch with its aim; whereas the embrace, having lost its distance, is blind."
(Steinberg 1972: 141)

4.2.6 POLYCHROMATIC SCULPTURE

The application of colour to three-dimensional form had largely disappeared from sculptural conventions of the nineteenth century. It can be argued that Cubism prompted a reconsideration of colour as a meaningful element in the vocabulary of sculpture. It has been noted here that Cubist collage and *papier collé* had made apparent the arbitrary distinction between painting and sculpture. They also effected a liberation of colour from form in a pictorial context. Braque clearly stated the importance of this realization:

"The problem of colour was brought into focus with the *papiers collés*... With that we arrived at clearly dissociating colour from form, because that was the main concern: colour acts simultaneously with form, but has nothing to do with it."
(Braque, as quoted:Penrose 1981: 155)

Braque and Picasso wanted colour to exist as an independent pictorial entity. In that way it could contribute to the formal construction of the painting, but would no longer be conditioned by light and the modelling of forms. In the context of the Synthetic Cubist works, the independence of the colour planes is tempered by its analogous reference to re-presented surfaces and objects, as well as by the line work, which is worked over parts of the colour plane, and which signifies fragmented views of the objects.

It has been noted earlier in this essay that Picasso's Cubist constructions impacted on traditional conventions of mass-based sculptural forms. Similarly, the transference of the collage conceptual mode into a sculptural context, allowed for a free passage for the introduction of colour into those same sculptural conventions.

The use of colour in the constructions displays a similar sense of colour operating as an independent entity as it does in the pictorial context. Yet, most often, Picasso's application of oil paint to these planar surfaces is essentially painterly and rough (fig. 24). In a sense, this results in a pictorial effect, where the sculptural planes become carriers of the paint medium; functioning as so many picture planes, combined to form a sculptural entity.

In the free-standing sculpture THE GLASS OF ABSINTHE (fig. 31), Picasso has worked in the traditional sculptural mode of modelling. The form of the glass has been modelled in such a way that it reveals both the interior and exterior surfaces of the glass, thus defining both open and closed form. The interior is further defined by a wedge, which also signifies the level of the liquid. The integrity of the closed, modelled form has been transgressed by this amalgam of open and closed form.

The original was modelled in wax and six bronze versions were cast. In each, the spoon is an actual spoon attached to the sculpture. Five of the versions were painted, while the sixth was given a coating of sand mixed in oil paint. In the painted versions, the painted dots suggest transparency in a pictorial way. They are also painted onto forms that suggest the same sense of transparency in a sculptural way. Thus Picasso directly conflates the conventions of painting and sculpture in order to signify transparency in these pieces. Colour and the paint medium are used as much to transform the sculptural surfaces, as they were used to transform the pictorial surface in the paintings.

The potential of colour as both "skin" applied to sculptural form, and as an inherent aspect of the material used to construct the sculpture, was to become a considered aspect of sculptural practice from that time on. By 1913 Archipenko was also producing polychrome sculpture, which he termed "sculpto-paintings". Picasso's GUITAR (figs. 32, 33) constructions were to lead directly to an exploration of the inherent colour and texture of materials in the work of the Russian Constructivists.

In much of the sculpture of the 1950's and 1960's colour as a sculptural element again comes to the fore. This is exemplified by the work of Anthony Caro, Michael Bolus and Donald Judd.

In Caro's work, colour is an arbitrarily chosen film which unifies the extension-like compositions: it covers the natural colour of the sculptural material but doubles it, simply restating the surface in a brighter hue. Bolus uses flat planes of vivid colour as signifiers of both surface and structure. Characteristic of Bolus' work is the juxtaposition of planes of aluminium, each of which is identified with the applied colour it bears. Judd's use of colour is determined by the extent to which it clarifies the forms. His intention in terms of colour, is that it should neutralize the origins of the material. Judd's approach in his work of the 1960's, was to select colour that makes the forms as unambiguous as possible, in an attempt to block off the illusory effects of colour.

In contrast to this approach, my intention is to utilize colour to introduce pictorial effects into a sculptural context.

5. VISUAL REFERENCES

Fig. 1:	PICASSO	:	THE STUDIO. 1933
Fig. 2:	PICASSO	:	THE TORERO/ THE AFFICIANDO. 1911
Fig. 3:	PICASSO	:	MUSICAL SCORE AND GUITAR. 1912
Fig. 4:	PICASSO	:	STILL LIFE WITH PIPE. 1913
Fig. 5:	PICASSO	:	STILL LIFE WITH COMPOTE AND VIOLIN. 1912 - 1913
Fig. 6:	MONDRIAN	:	COMPOSITION WITH BLUE AND YELLOW. 1935
Fig. 7:	MARTIN	:	NIGHT SEA. 1963
Fig. 8:	STELLA	:	LUIS MIGUEL DOMINGUIN. 1960
Fig. 9:	DURER	:	DRAFTSMAN DRAWING A WOMAN. 1532
Fig. 10:	OLDENBURG	:	SOFT DRAINPIPE. 1967
Fig. 11:	RAUSCHENBERG	:	BED. 1955
Fig. 12:	JOHNS	:	PAINTING WITH TWO BALLS. 1960
Fig. 13:	JOHNS	:	TANTRIC DETAIL. 1980
Fig. 14:	BECKMANN	:	CARNIVAL. 1920
Fig. 15:	BECKMANN	:	THE BATH. 1930
Fig. 16:	GUSTON	:	POISED. 1978
Fig. 17:	BASELITZ	:	FRANZ IM BETT. 1982
Fig. 18:	ROTHENBERG	:	PATCHES. 1982
Fig. 19:	ROTHENBERG	:	SQUEEZE. 1978 - 79
Fig. 20:	CEZANNE	:	STILL LIFE WITH PLASTER CUPID. ca.1892 - 94
Fig. 21:	PICASSO	:	STILL LIFE WITH CHAIR CANING. 1912
Fig. 22:	MIRROR, TOULON.1977	:	
Fig. 23:	PICASSO	:	GLASS, DIE AND NEWSPAPER, 1914

Fig. 24: PICASSO	:	VIOLIN. 1915
Fig. 25: PICASSO	:	PAPIER COLLÉ. 1913
Fig. 26: STELLA	:	ST. MICHAEL'S COUNTERGUARD. 1984
Fig. 27: STELLA	:	KASTURA. 1979
Fig. 28: STELLA	:	DIE FAHNE HOCH! 1959
Fig. 29: MURRAY	:	WAVE PAINTING. 1973
Fig. 30: MURRAY	:	TABLE TURNING. 1982 - 83
Fig. 31: PICASSO	:	GLASS OF ABSINTHE (TWO VERSIONS). 1914
Fig. 32: PICASSO	:	GUITAR. 1912 - 1914
Fig. 33: PICASSO	:	CONSTRUCTION WITH GUITAR. 1913

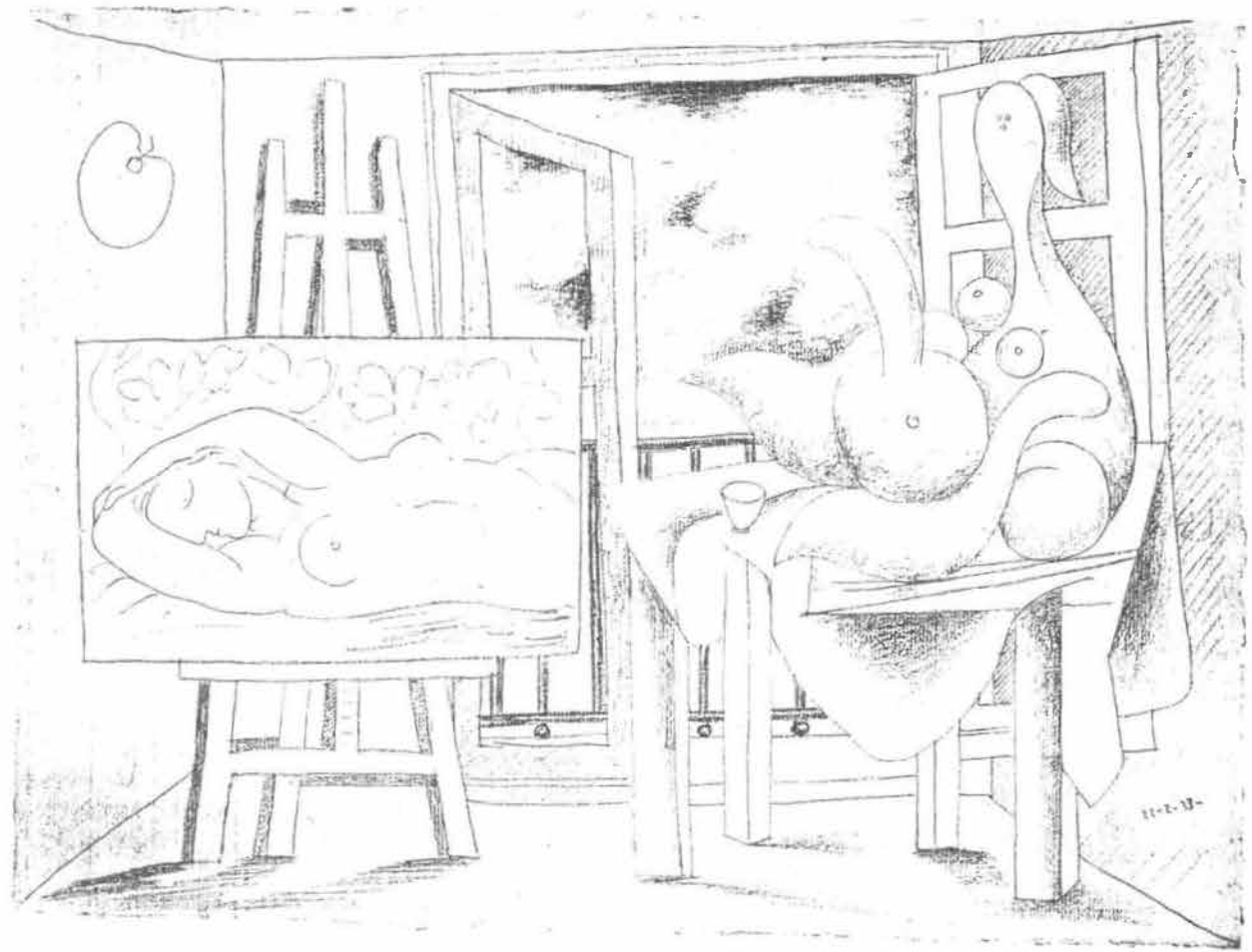


FIGURE 1

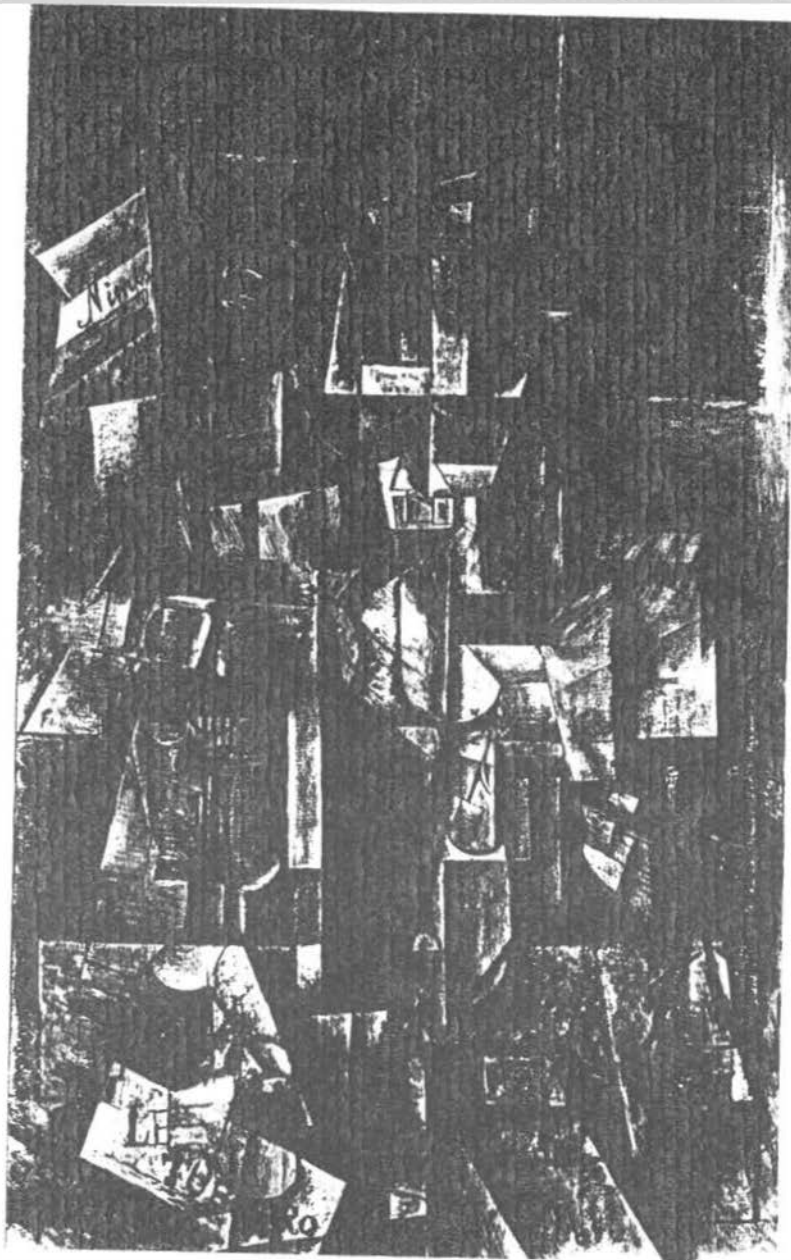


FIGURE 2

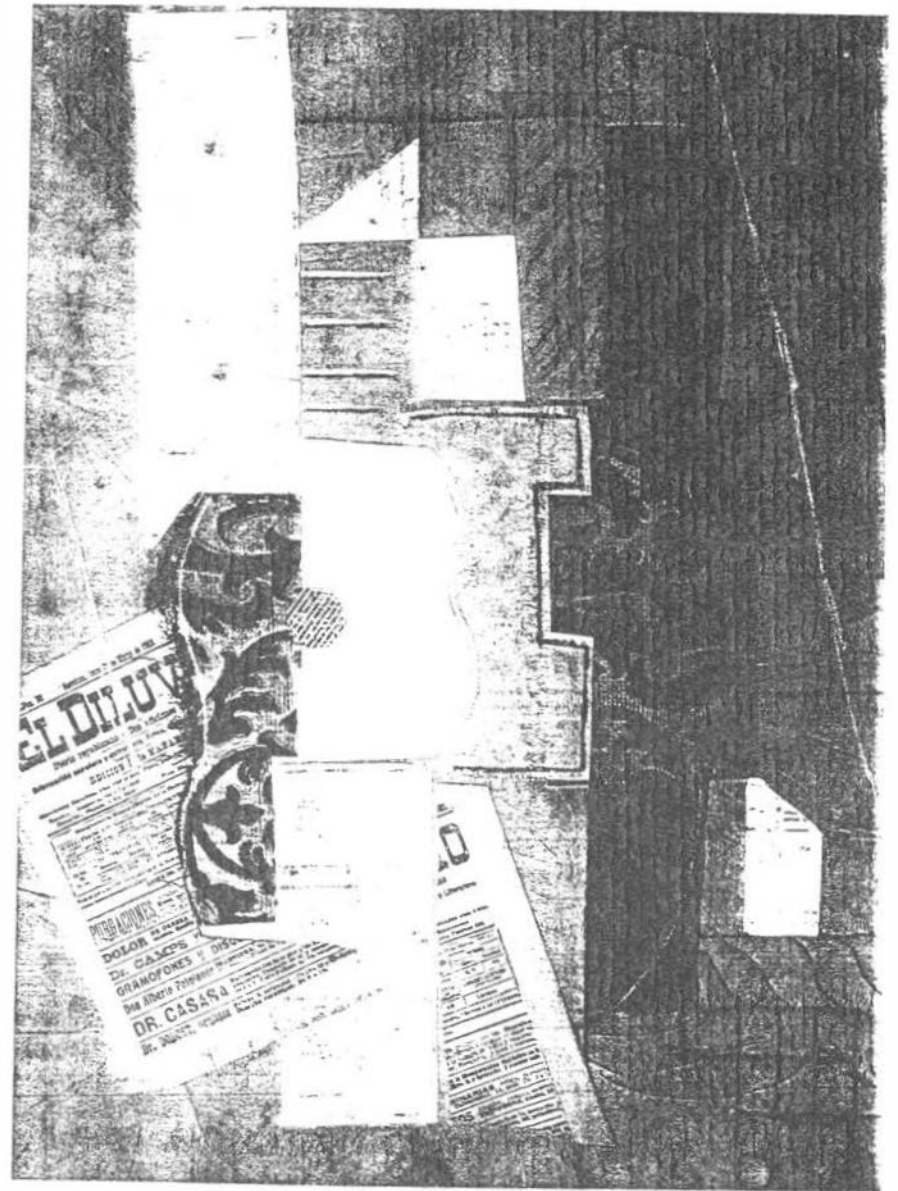


FIGURE 3

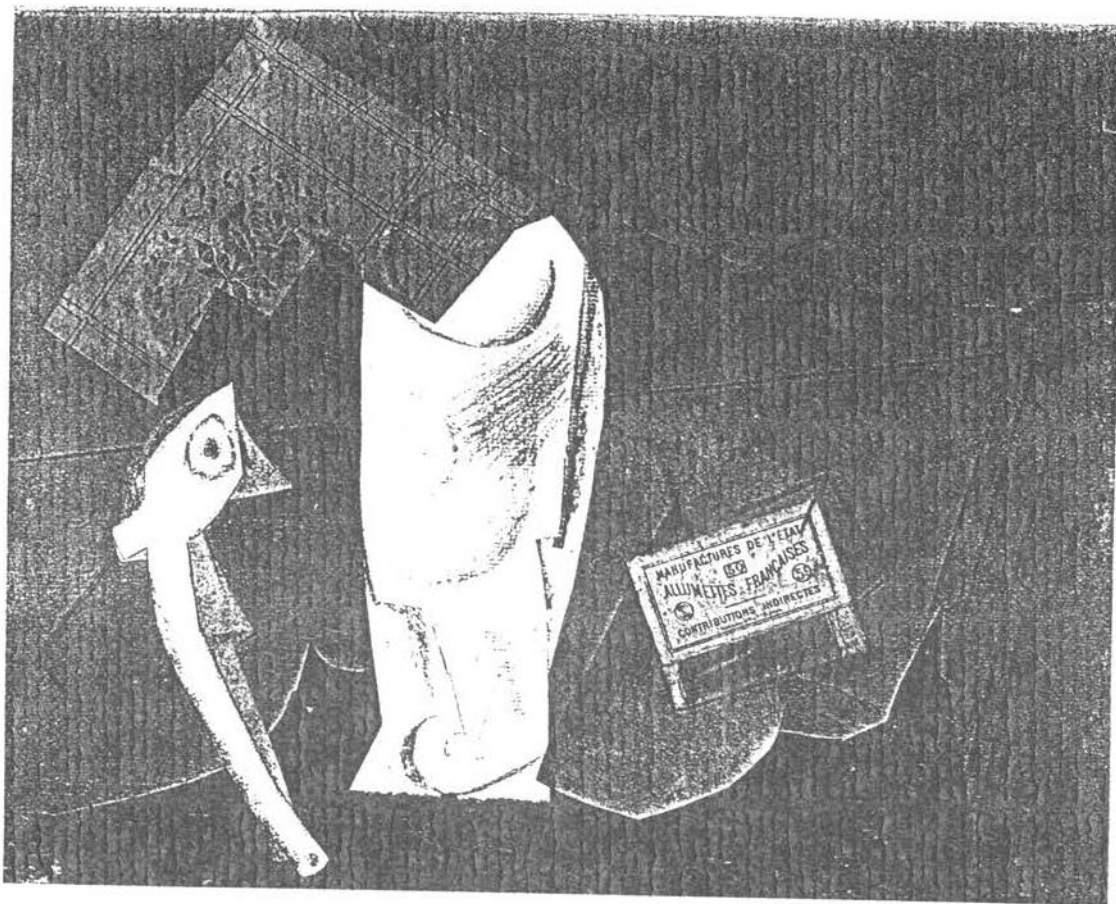


FIGURE 4

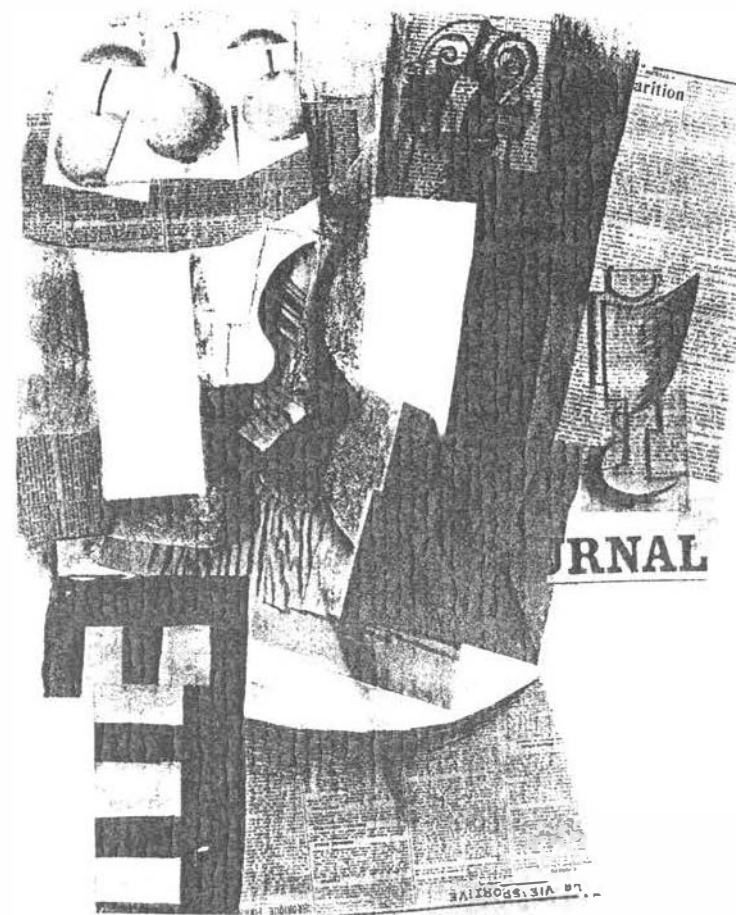


FIGURE 5

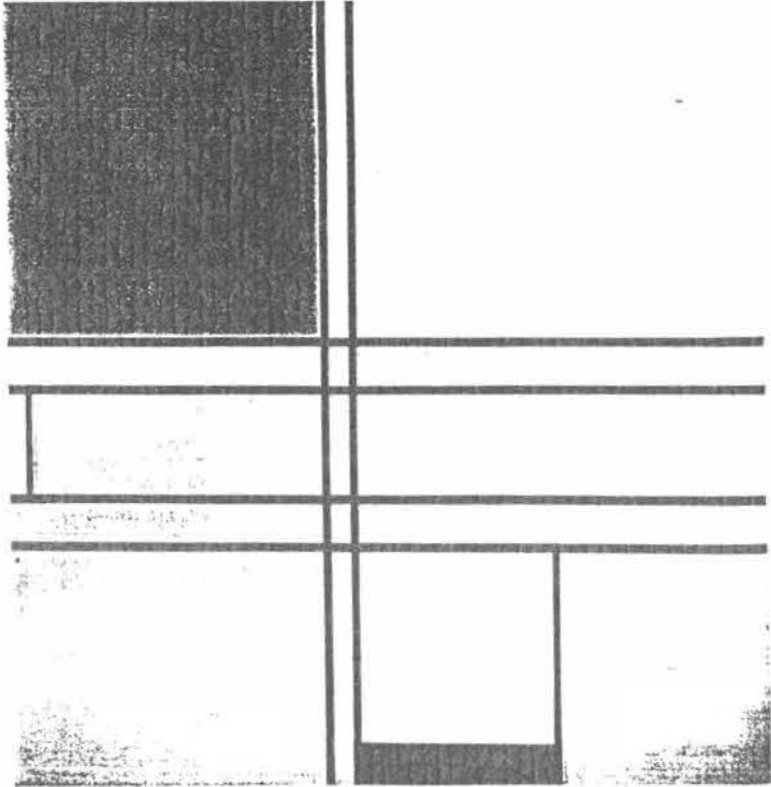


FIGURE 6

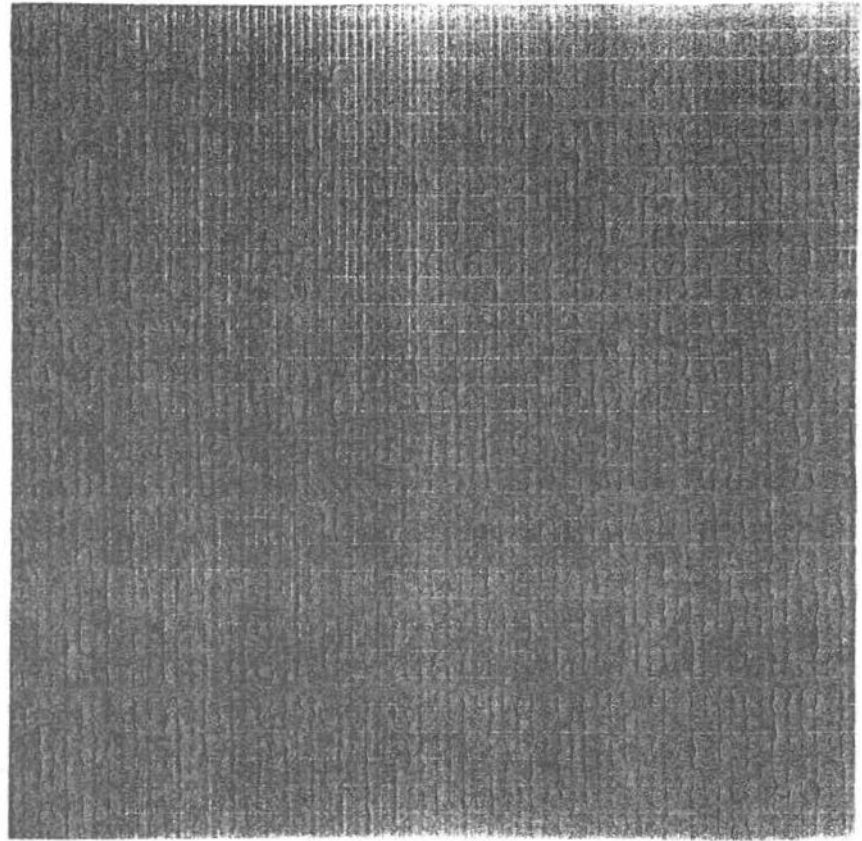


FIGURE 7

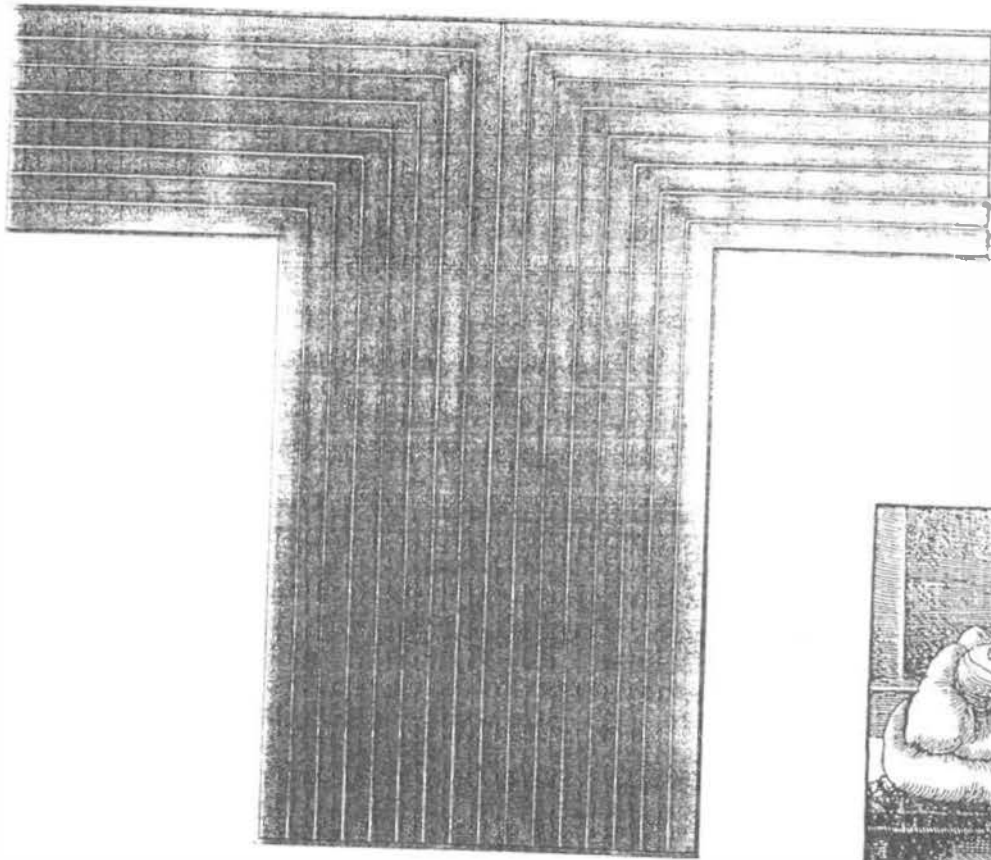


FIGURE 8

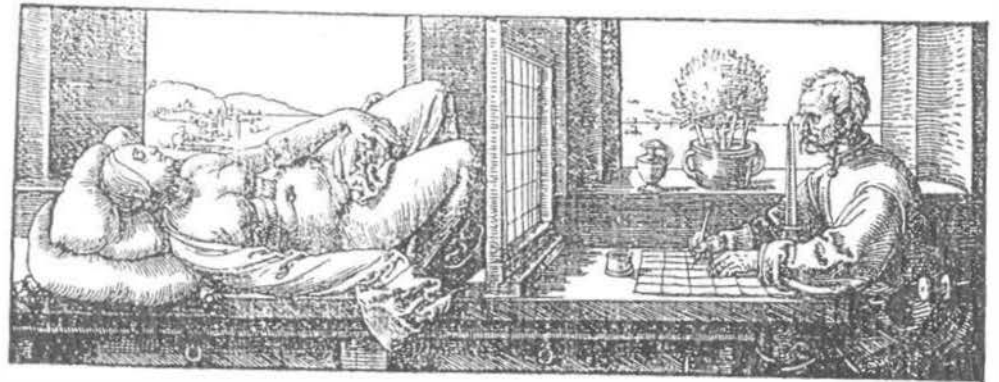


FIGURE 9

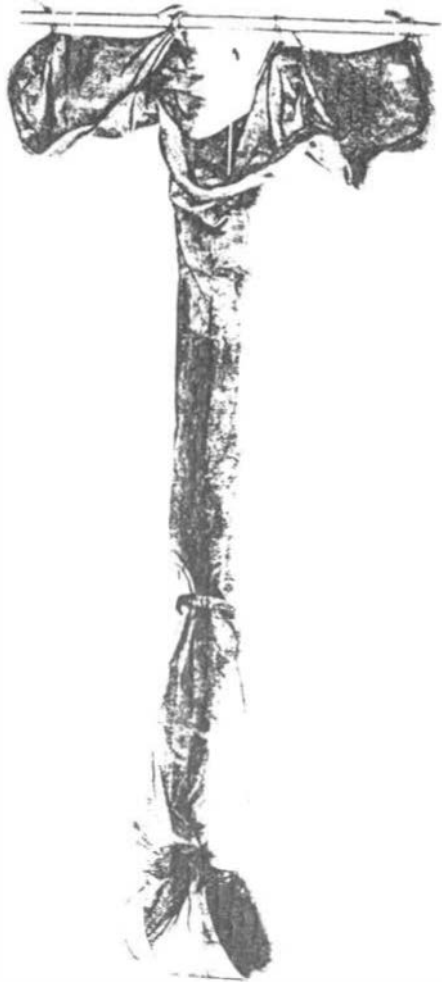


FIGURE 10

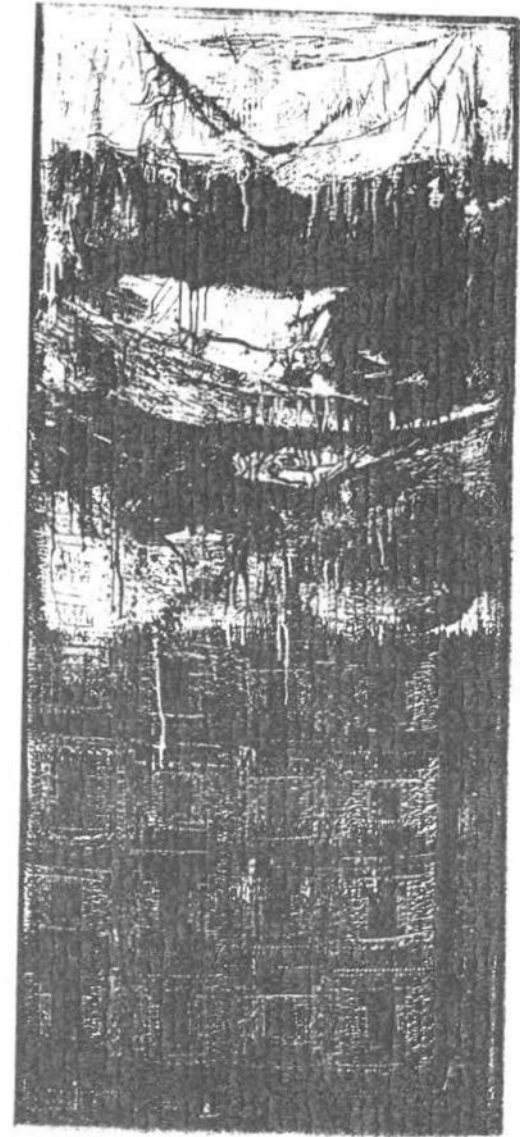


FIGURE 11

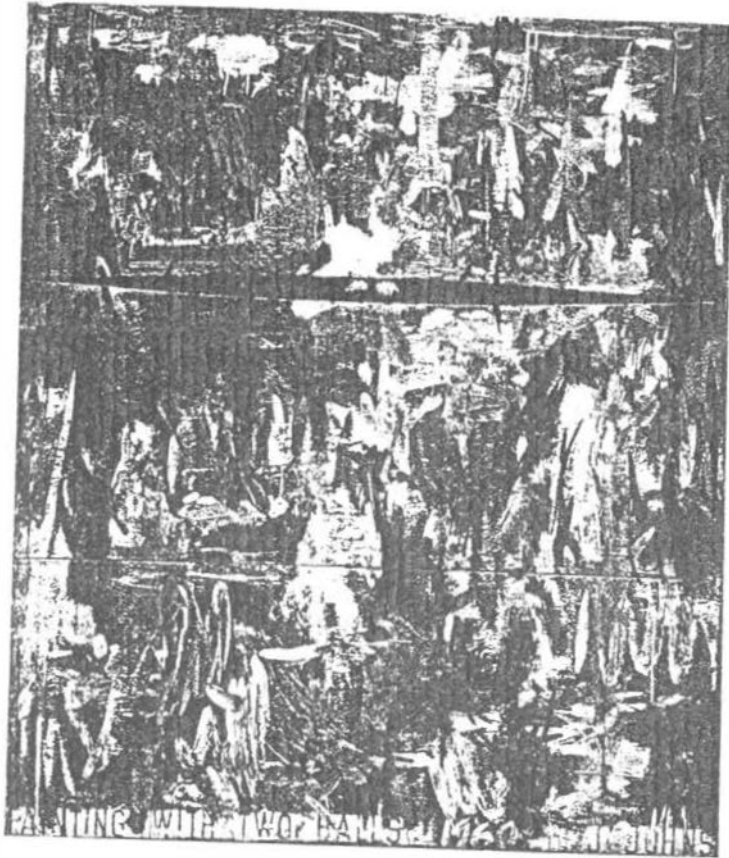


FIGURE 12

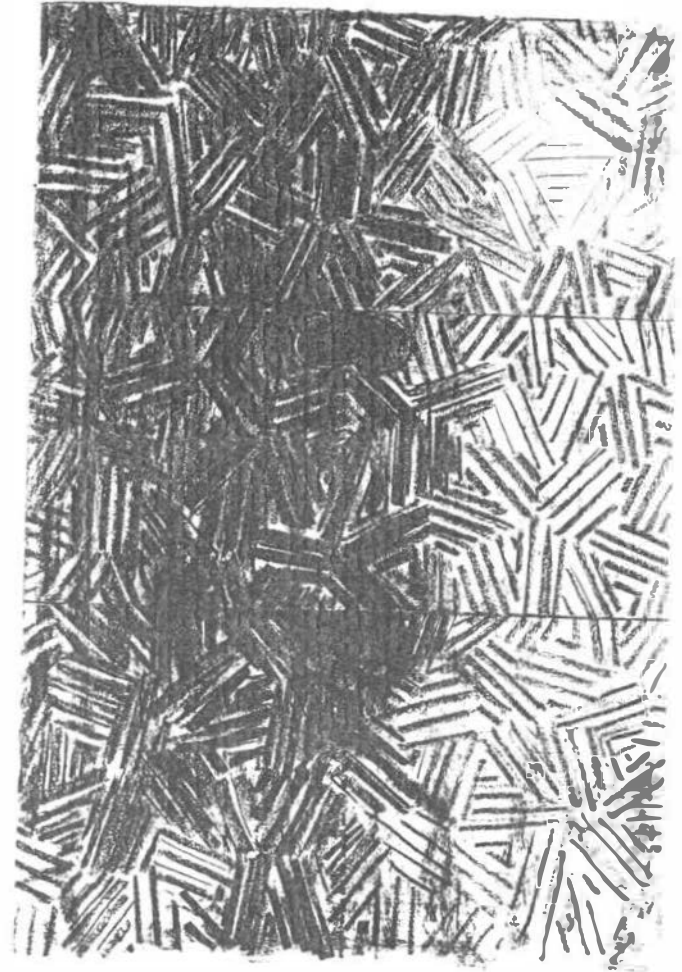


FIGURE 13



FIGURE 14



FIGURE 15

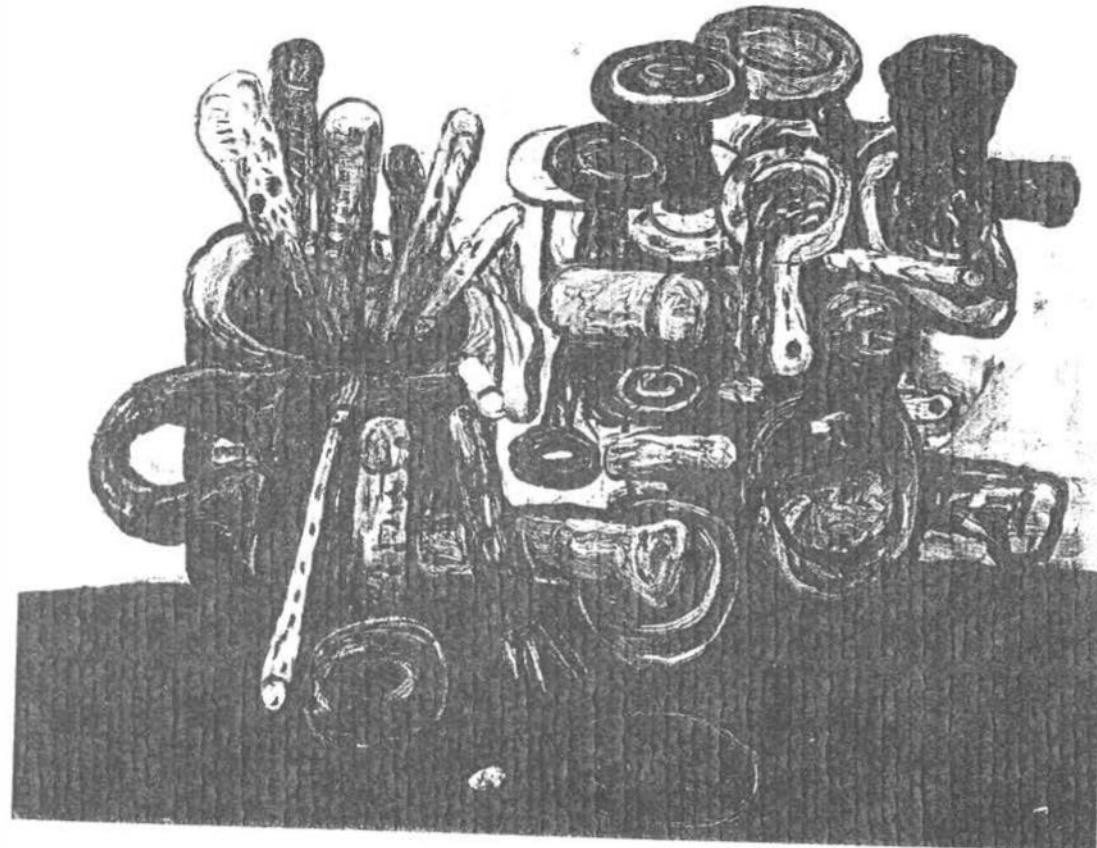


FIGURE 16

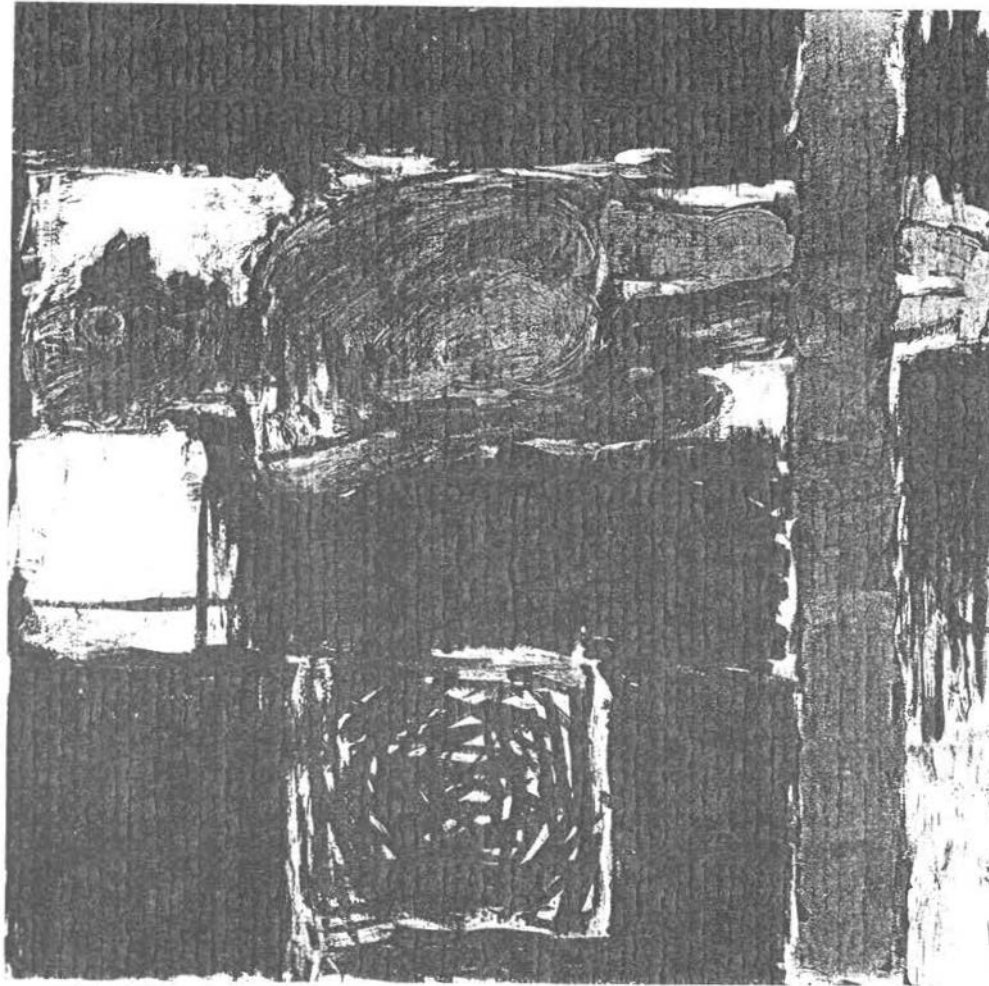


FIGURE 17

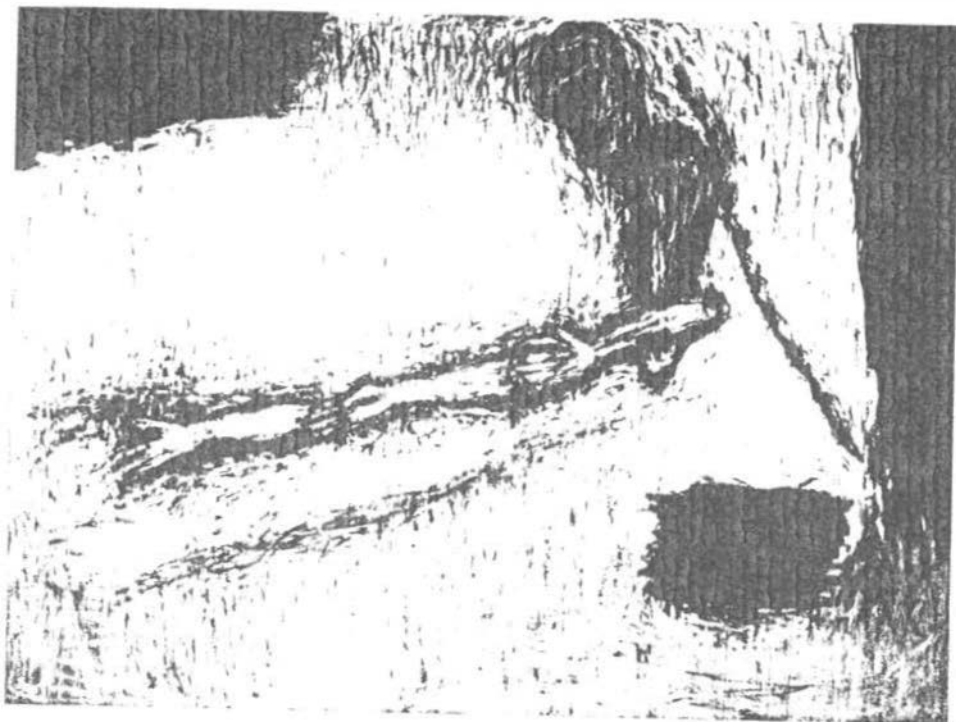


FIGURE 18

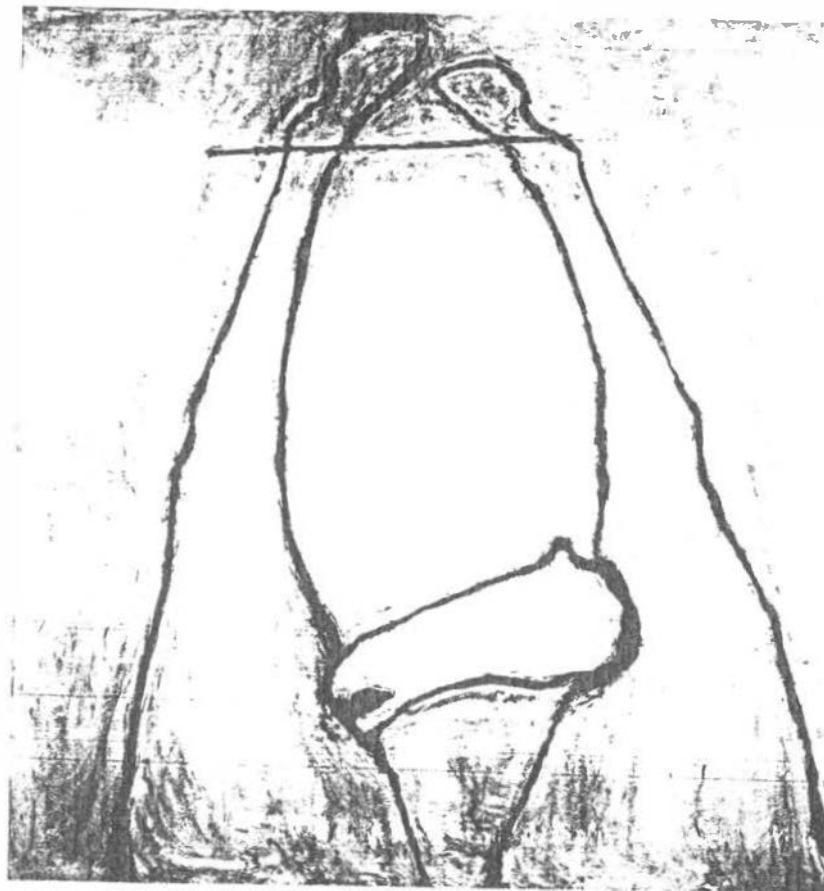


FIGURE 19



FIGURE 20

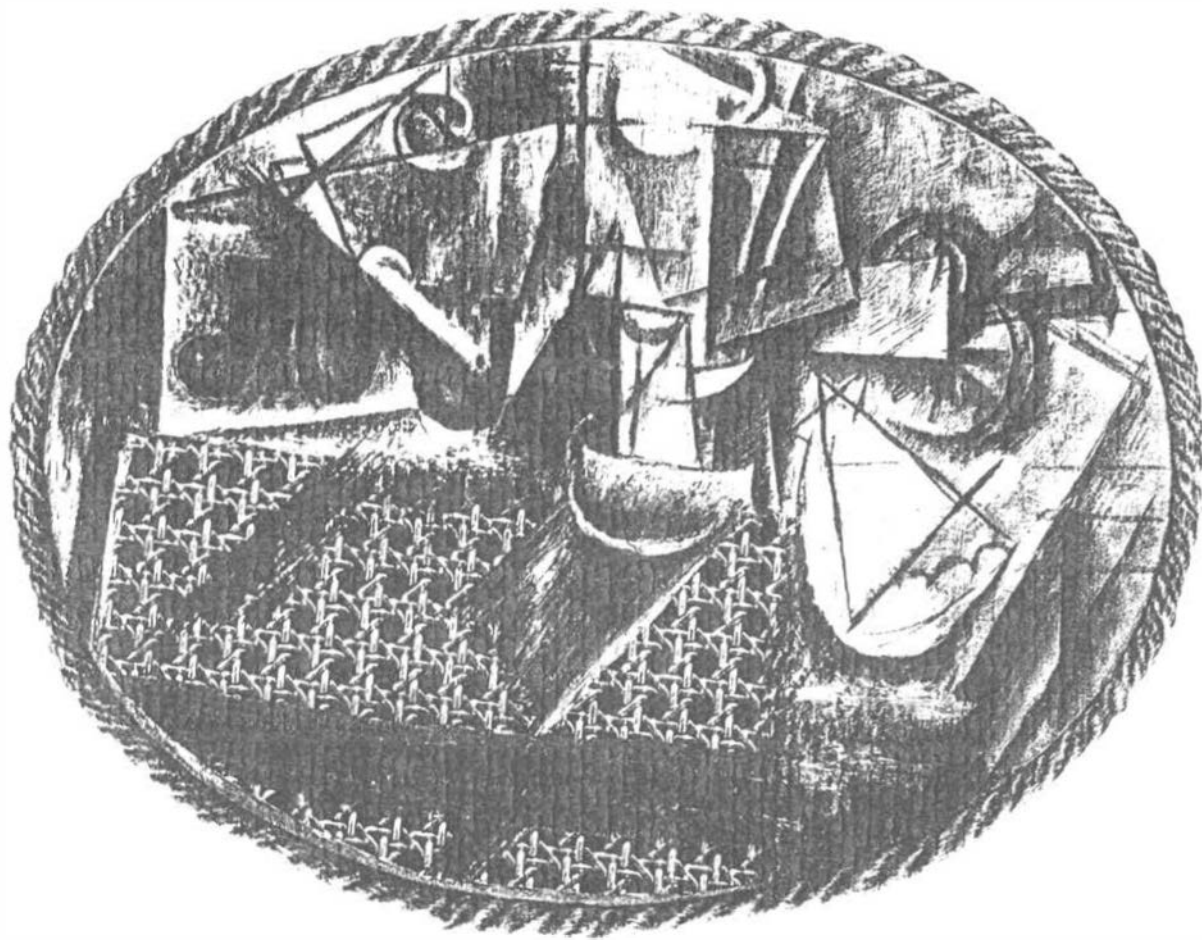


FIGURE 21

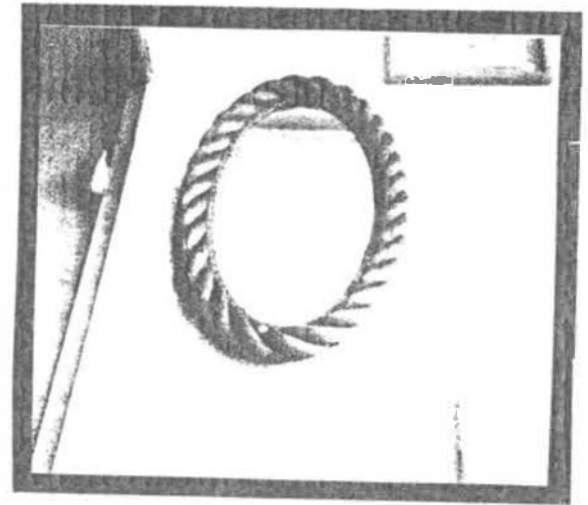


FIGURE 22

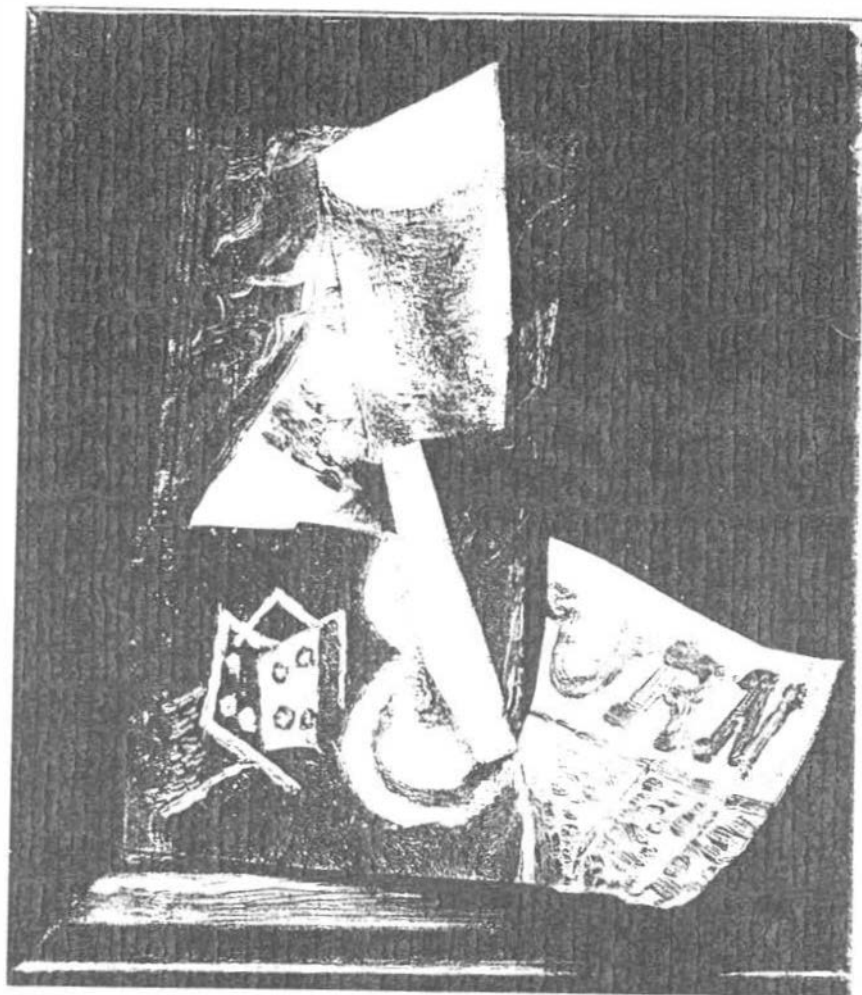


FIGURE 23

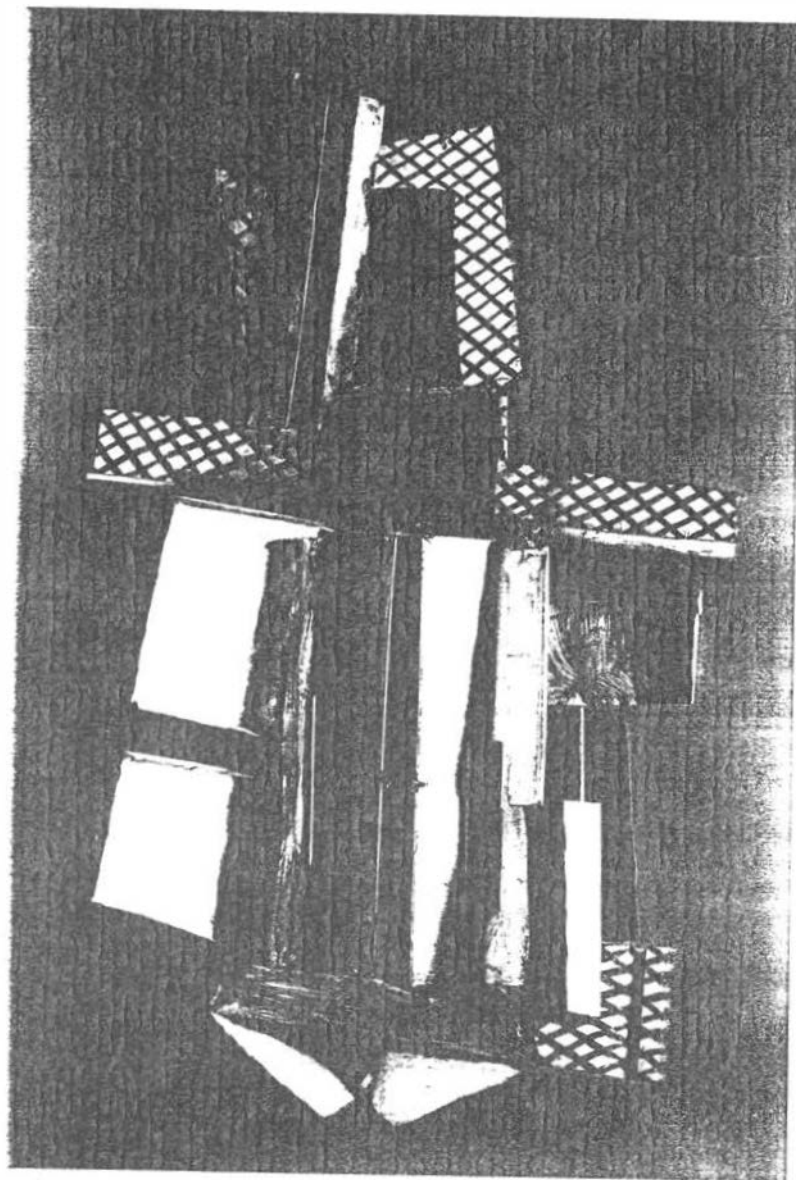


FIGURE 24



FIGURE 25

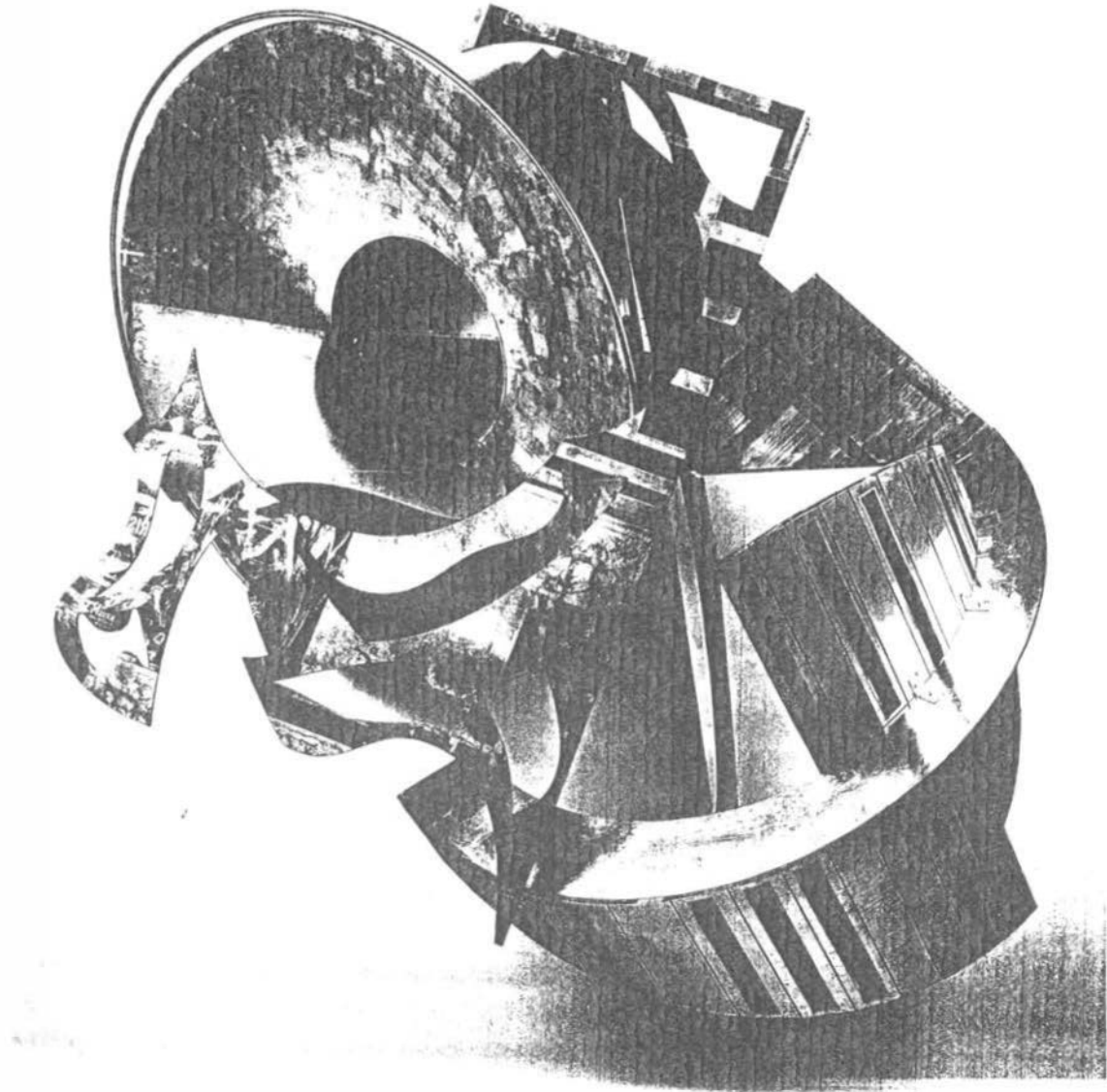


FIGURE 26

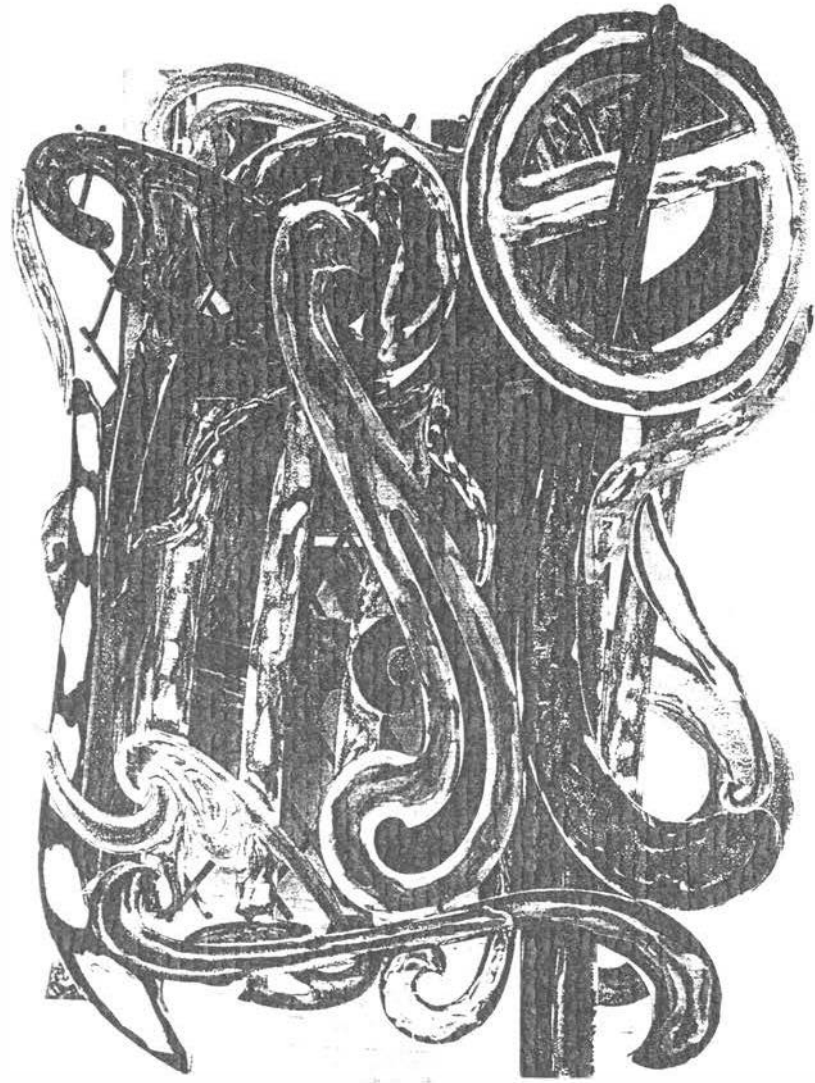


FIGURE 27

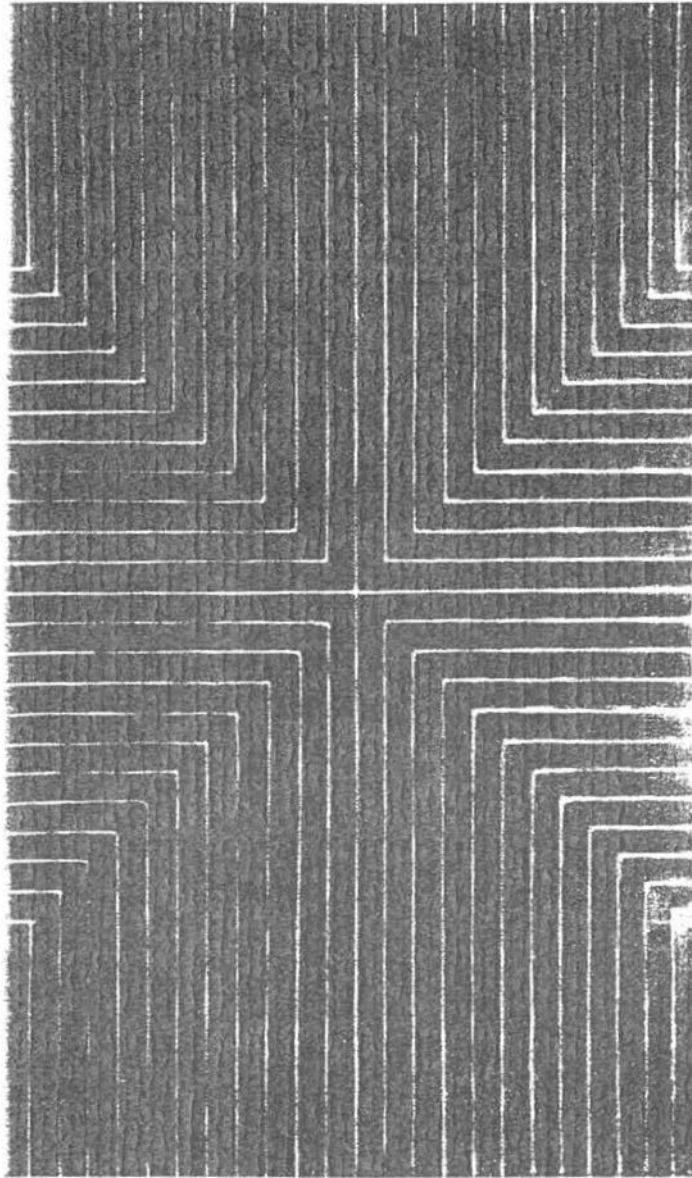


FIGURE 28

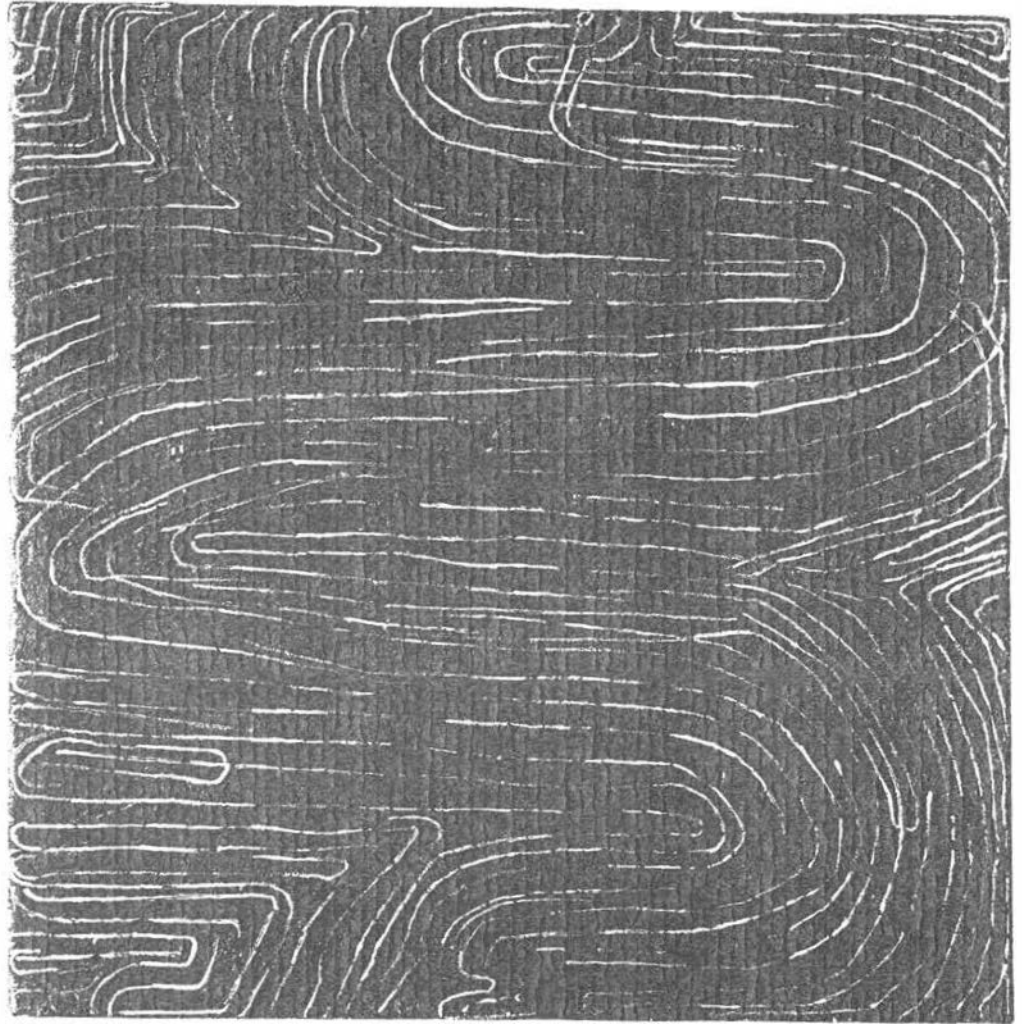


FIGURE 29

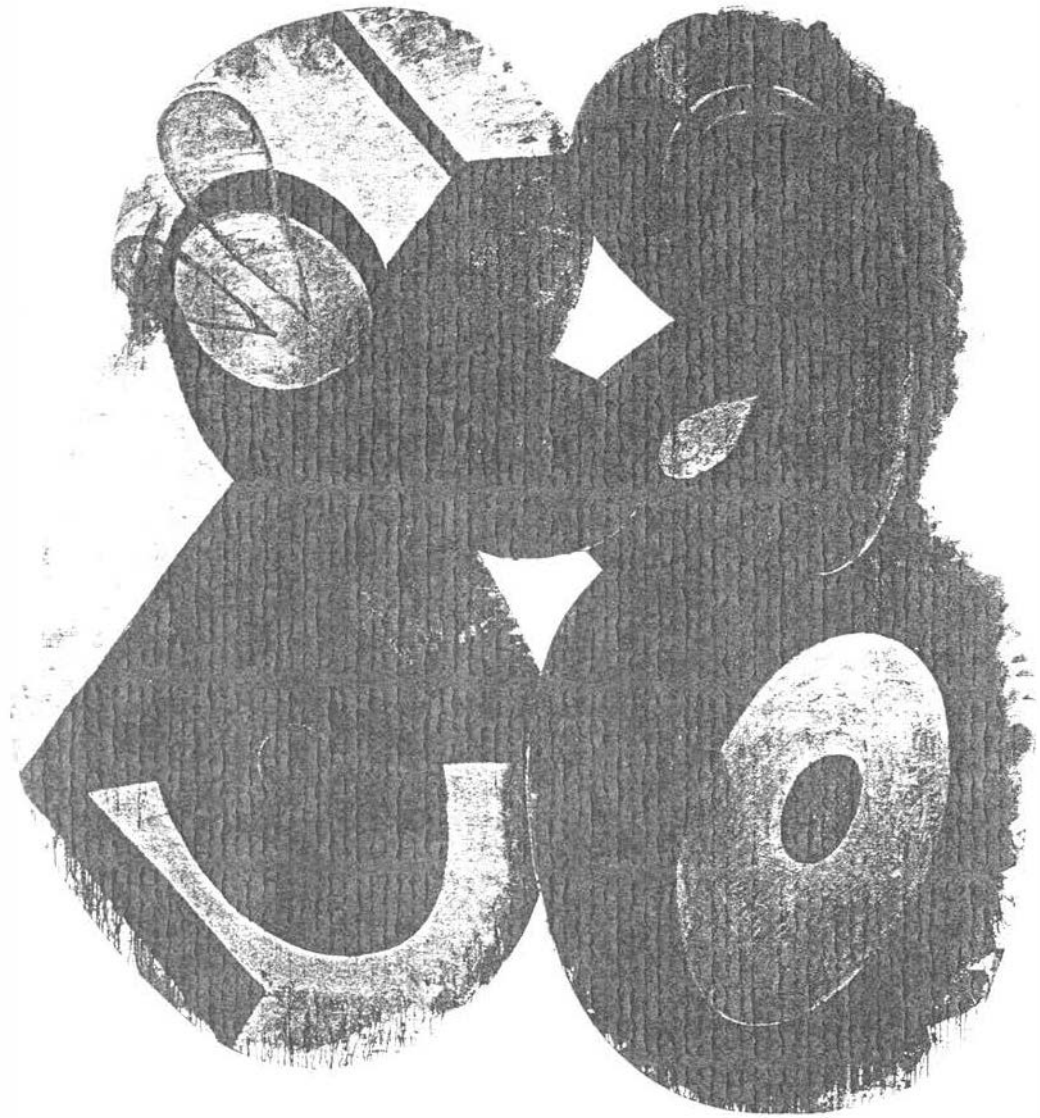


FIGURE 30



FIGURE 31

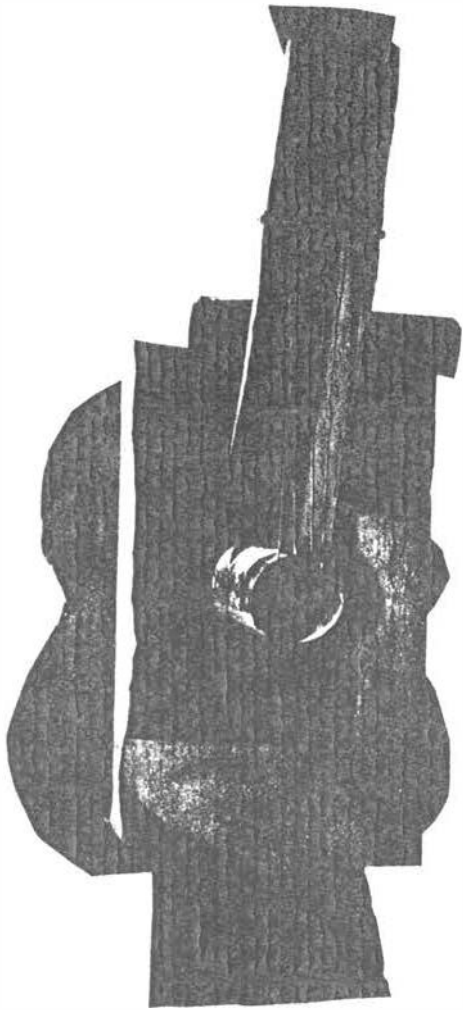


FIGURE 32

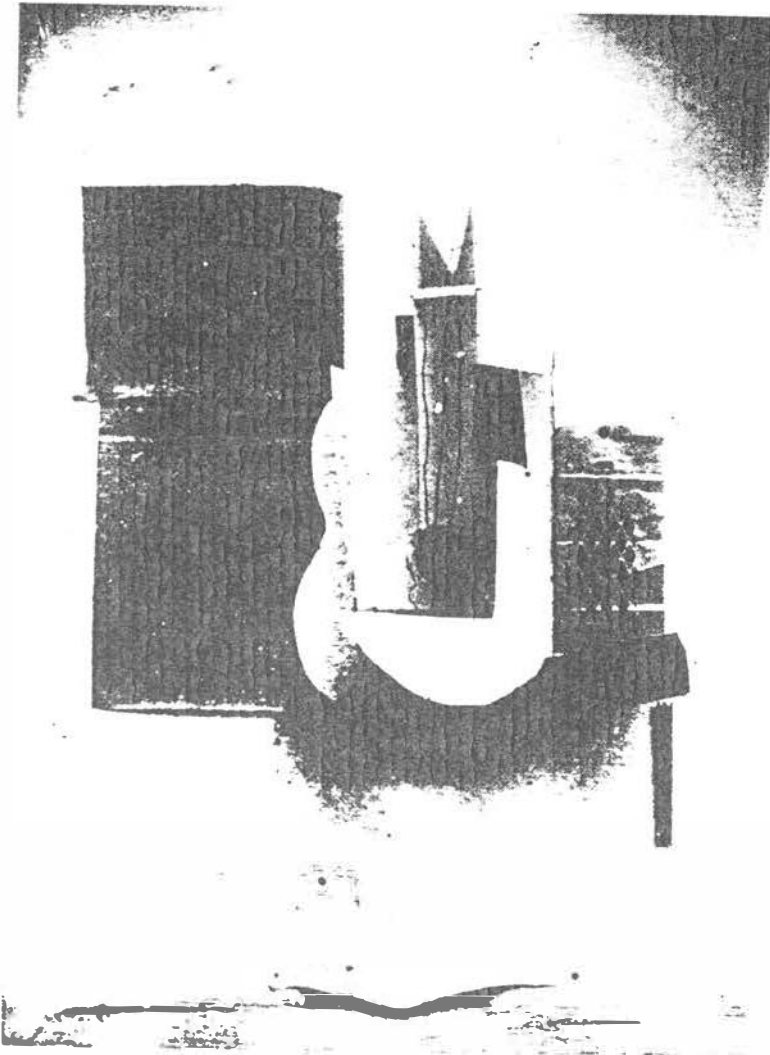


FIGURE 33

6. CONTEXTUALIZATION OF BODY OF WORK IN RELATION TO EARLIER WORKS:

A brief reference to selected earlier works that have bearing on this body of work is provided here. Three paintings are discussed; they are: NIGHT AND DAY (1985) (6.1.), CAR'S ON FIRE AND FALLING (1987) (6.2.) AND DECISIVE DESCENT (1987) (6.3.).

The central concern in these works was to make paintings which could mediate a personal experience of reality at the time. The predominant states which reflected on that experience were those of conflict, contrast, multiplicity, vulnerability, anxiety, imbalance and atrophy.

The formal construct of the paintings was approached as the means of mediating these associative states, connected with contemporaneous experience. Therefore, the conceptual and formal process were integrated in order to allow the one to impinge on and transform the other. This resulted in a symbiotic relationship between concept and form, where these states of being could be embedded in the "matter" of the painting. This further allowed for imagery from different sources as well as different spaces to be "held together" in the material of paint, brushmarks and compositional structure. Thus the intention was to generate metaphors for personal experience from within the construct of the painting; to achieve a tight-knit relationship between imagery, pictorial space and the brushmarks that evoked them. This approach was influenced by perceptions of the work of Beckmann and Baselitz.

The imagery was derived from objects in my immediate environment, found imagery and the imagery that was suggested by the process of painting.

Pictorial space was approached from the vertical paradigm; that is, corresponding with the vertical position of viewer/artist; and this was consciously exploited in order to provoke the physical/psychological states of being mentioned earlier.

6.1 DAY AND NIGHT

3000 x 2800 mm

Two canvasses: each 1500 x 1400 mm

Oil on canvas 1985

This work exemplifies this attempt to evoke experience through the associative potential of imagery, colour, brushmarks and the compositional placement across the picture plane.

The work is divided into two canvasses which suggest two different times; the day and night of the title. A large semi-circular image of a table surface stretches across the top of the two canvasses. This "joins" them and at the same time suggests a continuity of sameness across the two surfaces and across the day/night times they allude to.

The table surface is "held up" by its compositional placement as well as by the visual suggestiveness of the two trunks/table legs in each canvas. "Underneath" the table is a trap, which also lies across the two canvasses, further linking or joining them. In the "day" canvas its identity is ambiguous; while in the "night" canvas its mouth, set to snap, reveals it to be a trap. The two halves suggest a mirror-image where the predominant difference is established through lightness and darkness. The "day" canvas is also painted more sensuously while the "night" canvas is treated more roughly with woodcut-like paintmarks. These differences relate to the dual presence of sensuality and violence. The consistent evidence of brushmarks in "background", "ground plane" and imagery has the effect of creating a complicity between the images, as well as between pictorial space and the imagery.

The sense of movement is dominated by the implied weight of the bulging table top and the "strain" of the trunks/table legs. This sense of bearing down is stabilized by the symmetry of the composition and the mirror-image allusion. The brushmarks keep the imagery and pictorial space in a constant state of agitated movement, close to the picture plane. The large scale of the work effects an envelopment of the viewer's own physical scale. The viewer/artist is positioned at the groundline, with the trap, under the table.



6.2 CAR'S ON FIRE AND FALLING

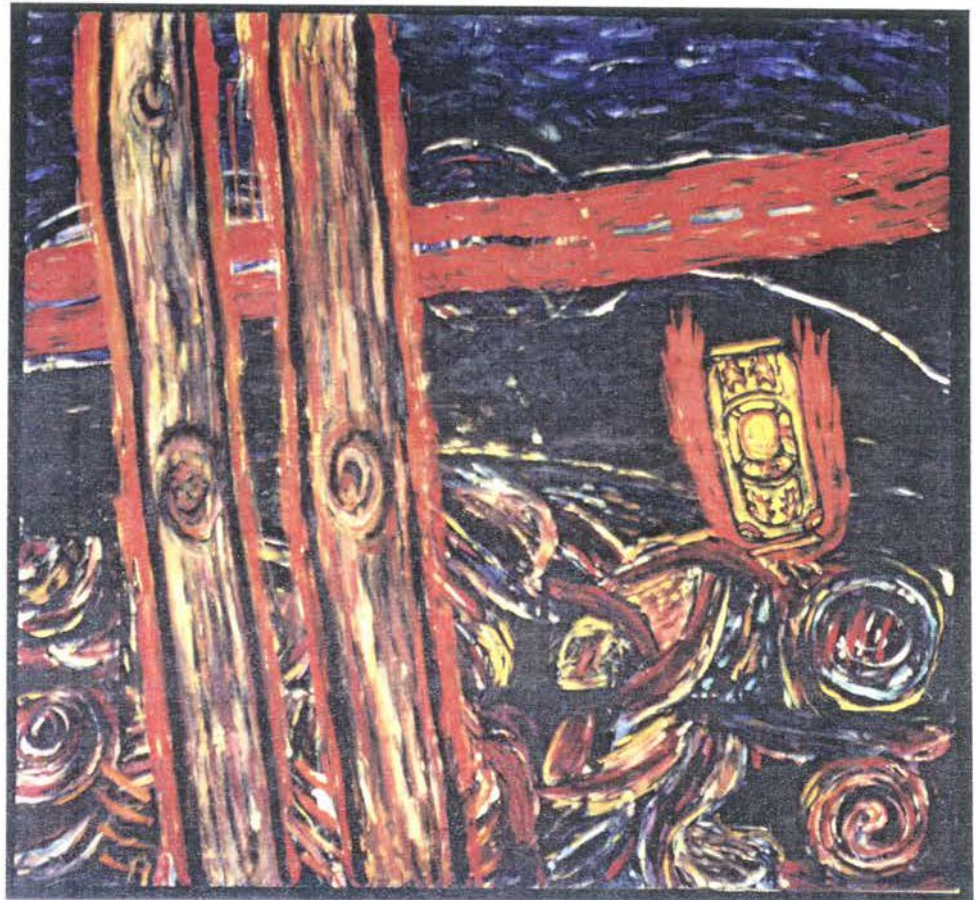
1500 X 1400 mm

Oil on canvas

1987

In the space and imagery is also generated by brushmarks which remain evident and active on the surface. This produces a shallow space which pushes the imagery and the "background" images and spaces into a close, claustrophobic space near to the picture plane. The strident colour serves to emphasize this narrow wedge of pictorial space, allowing some brushmarks to appear as though they are proceeding in front of the picture plane.

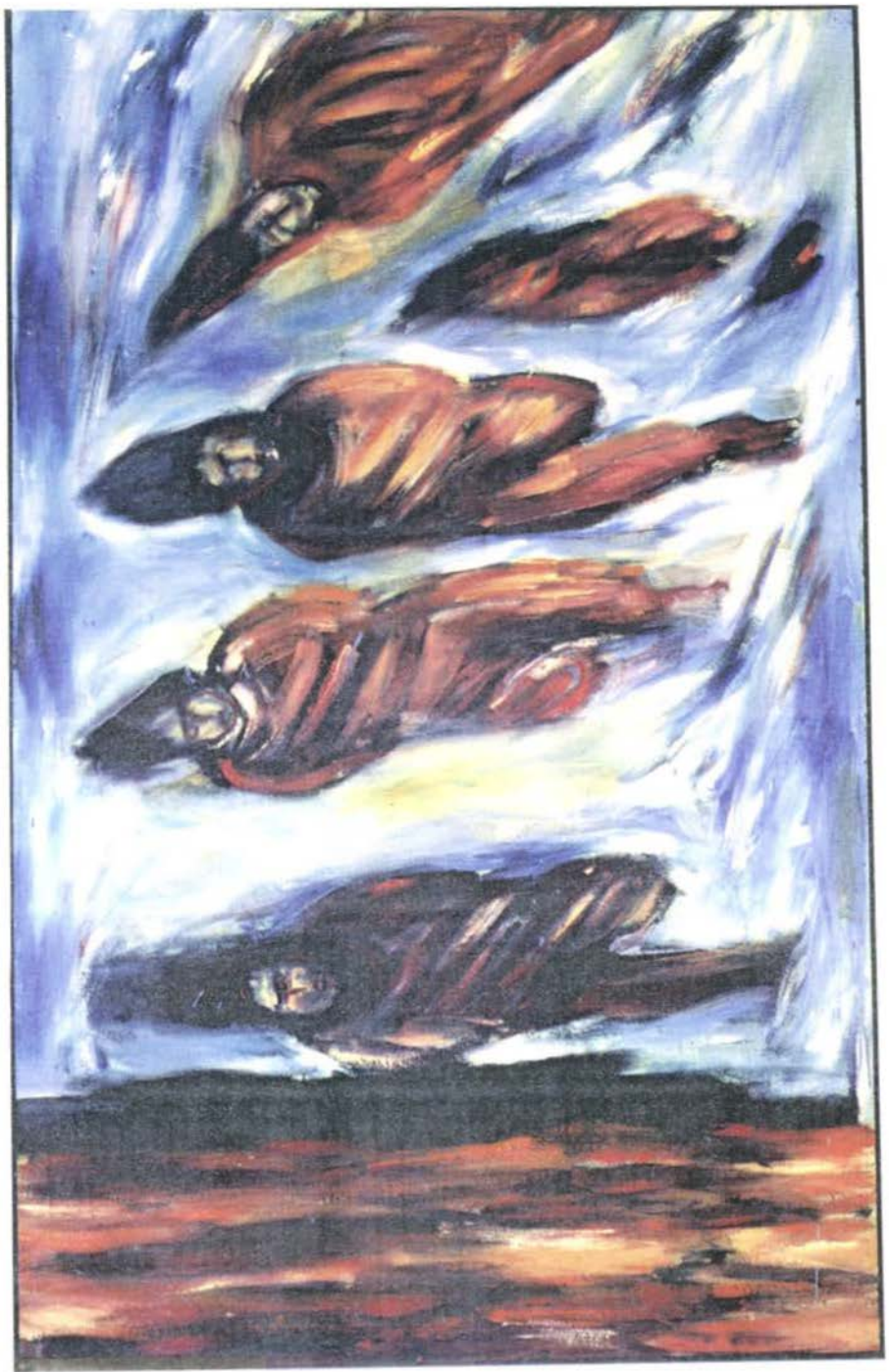
The sense of movement is, in turn, generated by this spatial ambiguity, as well as by the brushmarks, strong colour contrasts and the placing of the imagery across the vertical picture plane. The latter plays on the gravitational identification that occurs in this paradigm of picture plane: the sense of falling is made emphatic by the position of the car in relation to the top and bottom of the canvas. The road/red bar stretches across the canvas in a flat, planar view. The vertical burning tree trunks mark the top-to-bottom of the picture plane and also echo the fall of the car. The car is clearly "out of control"; but still an ambiguity of meaning exists: is the car falling to destruction, into a state of atrophy? or is it travelling away from a known route into an area of regenerative change?



6.3 DECISIVE DESCENT
1300 x 835 mm
Oil on Canvas
1987

A similar sense of "falling" is evoked in DECISIVE DESCENT, where the "Hanged Man" image (derived from the Tarot card image¹⁶, and related to the same image in the painting THE HANGED MAN (1987), is turned on its side and repeated as it "falls" to the bottom of the canvas. The process of falling (deciding) involves loss: in the pictorial context the forms of the figures disintegrate as they fall.

16 The Tarot image suggests a state of having to make an important decision, the time before change: a decision at the crossing of roads.



7. CREATIVE PROCESS: CONCEPTUAL AND FORMAL PROCESS

My approach to the conceptual and formal process in this body of work is an extension of that outlined in the reference to some earlier work. This approach is based on the premise that a reciprocal relationship should be maintained between the conceptual and formal process. The process of constructing the works is allowed to play a major role in determining the referents that are the keys to the content of the work; and also in producing the seminal ideas for further works.

This approach has resulted in the use of a variety of media and processes related to these media. The development of ideas associated with the pictorial/sculptural interface has both required and been determined by this interdisciplinary approach. The earlier section of work consists mostly of works that are realized in oil paint on canvas, card and plywood. Works in the middle section consist of drawings and mixed media constructions. The pictorial/ sculpture dialectic is realized in an overtly sculptural way in the works in the final section. Drawing has functioned throughout as a means of developing the concepts in the form of working drawings. It is also used as a final-form medium in the series of drawings (9.11.1 - 9.11.8)

In the context of this premise, the relationship between the artist and the artwork is affected by both the psychological make-up/history of the artist and the received conventions of art-making. In my case those conventions are located in the Western tradition of painting and sculpture. The particular locus of the work is situated in relation to Cubism.

Cezanne's work reveals the origins of an approach that implies that the formal process could become the content of the work, with subject matter functioning more as a vehicle for that process and less as the primary conveyor of content, as it had been in its traditional role. Cezanne's work reveals a focus on the process whereby the perception of actual form and space is translated into the convention of painting; in other words, the translation from nature to culture becomes the content of the work.

Cubism expanded this notion, by incorporating various processes of various modes of interaction: between artist/viewer and artwork; between different viewpoints of the same object; between space and form; between static and mobile and between

7.1 IMAGERY:

Since my intention has been to investigate the metaphoric potential of the pictorial/sculptural interface, it has been pertinent to work with a limited range of imagery. The focus of the investigation is on the different ways of approaching the formal structuring of those images. The results are thus in the diverse readings that the same image can sustain in the different formal contexts. This does not imply, however, that the choice of imagery is arbitrary.

Those choices have been guided by both the formal qualities of the object/image, as well as by a personal sense of resonance that it evokes. The formal qualities are often those which incorporate contradictory physical aspects. Thus, the image of a cylinder is used because it is a flat plane made round: a flat plane which exhibits overtly three- and two-dimensional characteristics simultaneously. It also imparts a sense of potential movement to its planar origin and is a perfect hybrid of closed and open form. It therefore lends itself to pictorial and sculptural materialization in such a way that it alludes to illusions of spatial position and movement in both modes, and sets up a play of difference between its presence in paint and its identity as sculptural object. The cylinder form has further, iconographic connotations in that it simultaneously sustains both phallic and yonic images. The "simple" image of a cylinder can become enriched with associative, metaphoric potential by its realization in the pictorial/sculptural structure. Both the formal and the associative potential of the chosen images are exploited by conflating the one with the other.

The selection of images is further guided by a sense of difference or contrast in their formal qualities. Flat forms where surface is emphasized; such as the plank of wood, and table surface; are compositionally combined with emphatically rounded forms such as the bowl and fruit forms. Similarly images of constructions, plans for constructions are combined with organic images of prepared food.

The tension that results from the different spatial contexts into which the imagery is realized is precisely where the metaphoric associations lie. It has also been important that the images retain their identity, even though that identity is permuted by the

process of, and context of, their formal structuring.

This approach in which process plays an important role in interacting with an image in order to elicit metaphor can be affiliated with poetry. Poetry cultivates the associative aspect of language and words by prising open the structure of language to allow for a free, associative flow of meaning.

The personal sense of resonance which the images evoke, and which also contributes to their choice, is derived from a process of free, associative memory. Places are referred to by images/objects, colours and spaces that I perceive as having a sensuous, tactile, as well as conceptual, evocation of particular experience of place, time and events. The absence of the human figure is important as its absence places a pressure on the associative potential of objects and other images to evoke those experiences. My intention is that the ordinary objects and banal images I have selected will be loosened from their familiarity to become protagonists in the dramatic interaction of spatial relationships within the imaginatively arrived at construct of pictorial and sculptural space.

Memory is understood to be a process whereby past experience is reconstructed by being filtered through a consciousness in the present. Marcel Proust recognized the potential of inanimate objects to set off an involuntary, and therefore profoundly affecting, process of memory. Susan Sontag, in her essay on Walter Benjamin speaks of the spatial aspect of memory:

"At a distance - life as a space - evoke events for reactions to the events, places for the emotions one has deposited in the places, other people for the encounter with oneself, feelings and behaviour for intimations of future passions and failure contained in them"
(Sontag 1980: 115)

Memory, like all psychologically based experiences, is complex and multi-layered, making it a powerful source for coming to know one's self in the present, and thus a potent source for making artworks.

7.2 PAINTING PROCESS:

As in my earlier work, the mark-making inherent in drawing and painting is recognized as an important source of meaning in the works. The mark, as a material embodiment of gesture, has the potential to impart a somatic identification in the artist/viewer.

In the work of the Abstract Expressionists, the paintmark marks the absence of image by standing in for it; much of the emotional charge of their work relies on both the awareness of absence of image and somatic identification with the paintmarks. In the work of both Baselitz and Rothenberg, the paintmarks coalesce into images. The images rely on their identity through the matter of gesture in paint. This results in a strong sense of pathos as the images are conditioned by both their "history" in earlier forms of Expressionism, where hopes of metaphoric potential were posited on the paintmark (particularly in Abstract Expressionist works), as well as by the individual consciousness that brought them into being.

The work of Baselitz and Rothenberg approaches figuration from the angle of abstraction and thereby regains a tension between abstraction and figuration and between figure and ground. In this respect their work can be related to the associative potential of spatial equivalence found in the work of the German Expressionists in the early part of the twentieth century. This spatial equivalence is effected by the various depicted spaces and forms being delineated by paintmarks which lie overtly next to one another on the canvas surface. Thus the different delineations experience an equivalence on the picture surface. The effect of this is one of kinaesthesia and is therefore emotionally potent.

In my work the mark-making potential of the painting/drawing process is used for its associative potential. It is also used as a means of drawing attention to the surface and the process of that surface having been built up of layers of paintmarks. In the paintings and drawings I have attempted to build/construct the surfaces out of planes, or layers of, imagery that become spatially complex and ambiguous through their juxtaposition, superimposition and erasure. This layering process has a correlation with the cumulative effect of thought processes, memories, sensual and aesthetic responses. The painting process I have used is that of marking the surface with thin washes and "drawn" marks of colour; this is then built up with thick paintmarks and finally

glazed with veils of colour. The process is thus very close to the traditional oil painting process, particularly that used by Rembrandt: - my intention is to make it overt so that it doesn't produce a seamless illusionism, but highlights the materiality of paint, and the tension between thick plastic paintmarks and the thin, translucent glazes that push them into different spatial positions.

7.3 THE PICTORIAL/SCULPTURAL INTERFACE:

In the pictorial mode the picture plane/surface functions as a marker: it marks the perceptual transition from the actual space of the artist/viewer into the constructed space of the painting.

It has been important, therefore, to make the picture plane overtly apparent, as it conditions the experience of perceiving pictorial space. As remarked on under the heading, PAINTING PROCESS, I have intended the mark-making process of painting to conflate the physical surface of the painting with the images and spaces that those marks coagulate into.

Another means of "building" the pictorial surface has been to set up a painted grid and then to superimpose images and marks over that grid. The grid in painting, as referred to in the **Theoretical/Historical Context**, refers to, or repeats the pictorial surface and thus asserts the physicality of the painting as object. The grids that I have built in the paintings and drawings are overtly hand-made and therefore gestural and organic so as to make them spatially and iconographically ambiguous. The grid then marks the surface, but in a particularly physical way, as though it is a tactile surface that has been "worked on", yet because of the organic, irregularity of its form it also shifts into pictorial space, allowing it to operate as image. Hence, its identity is essentially one of duality: it is simultaneously geometric and organic; it has abstract and figurative allusions; it is a sign of containment and expansion beyond the edge of the picture plane.

My approach to the picture is to maintain an awareness of working "onto" the physical surface of the painting (physical pictorial space) and of working "into" it, producing spatial illusions (illusionistic pictorial space). The working "onto" the picture surface

leads to the possibility of constructing the surface and then working both onto and into that surface, as can be seen in DECISIVE DEPTH. In that work the picture plane is "fattened" to become a physical wedge of surface. It is also built up of sandwiched formats which further enhance its dual nature as painting/sculpture. The inherent implications of building surfaces that are non-planar and that proceed deeper into actual space is realized in the sculptural pieces.

The physicality of the pictorial surface has also been made apparent by dividing a single painting into square units, as is evident in DISSEMBLER. This also has the effect of producing an illusory grid generated by the spaces between the units. The notion of format operating as image is also evident in works such as BACKTRACK and DECISIVE DEPTH, where the various rectilinear formats are combined to produce a polygon, which in turn has an image-like effect. These polygon formats derive their sense of image from the "ground" plane of the wall. The potential of format to suggest an image on the wall plane is also tested in PARTIAL PRESENTATION, where the three panels; two rectilinear and one a polygon; placed contiguously on the wall plane, form a perspectival image of a table/chair-like form. Glazes of colour are applied to enhance this illusory spatial effect. These works come close to having the characteristics of free-form (that is, not contained in a closed format) relief sculpture. My approaches to painting can thus be seen to move increasingly closer to sculptural concerns. The sculptural concerns are, however, determined in relation to pictorial concerns.

Traditional relief sculpture shares both pictorial and sculptural characteristics: it is, in a sense, a hybrid of the two modes. For this reason, I have approached the pictorial/sculpture interface in the context of wall-bound pieces. In this position, the paintings can begin to operate in a sculptural way, while the sculptures can come closest to being like paintings. Thus the paintings can extend physically into the three-dimensional space of sculpture while still remaining painting, and the sculptures operate against the "picture plane" that is the wall plane, infusing them with pictorial qualities. The use of colour on the sculptural forms allows for the spatial, and thus illusory, effect of colour which is characteristic of painting. The colour can thus suggest different spatial positions and dimensions than those actually occupied by the forms. This is a pictorial approach to polychrome sculpture, and thus is in marked contrast to that of sculptors such as Anthony Caro, Michael Bolus and Donald Judd, where colour is used as an indicator and clarifier of three-dimensional form.

My intention is to evoke the illusory, pictorial effects of colour on the planar and topological surfaces of the sculptural forms as a means of bringing the pictorial to bear on the sculptural.

The process of lamination is an important aspect of the sculptures, as layering is an important aspect of process in the paintings. My approach to composition in the sculptures is similar to that in the paintings, where disparate parts are brought together in dynamic spatial relationships. Again, the restitutive aspect of composition is emphasized in the sculptures, where metaphoric and actual joining unites the different parts. Richard Deacon also associates the processes of joining and laminating with other acts of making sense:

"I also think that putting one thing on top of another and joining them has connotations as does laying one thing on top of another and gluing them together repeatedly. Those activities of construction have parallels with the ways in which we understand things in the world as having reference or meaning, whether as something applied to them or built up or hidden. I think all those things are part of those constructive processes."

{Deacon; as quoted: Neff 1987: 43}

The play of transparency and opaqueness, evident in the use of the oil paint medium in the paintings and in the layering of drawn/painted images, is also inherent in the formal construct of sculptures.

Transparency is alluded to by the fragments of flooring which can be "seen through" the table surface, but which sculpturally are placed on top of it in TABLE I. Similarly, in MIRROR I, the flooring fragment, which would be reflected in an actual mirror surface, is a form that reflects from the sculptural mirror surface, by literally protruding from it. Thus in TABLE I, the pictorial reading can suggest a fragment of flooring seen through the table form's surface, while the sculptural reading places it as a form presented on that surface; and in MIRROR I the pictorial reading is frustrated by the size and depth of the fragment of flooring, so that it reads predominantly as a sculptural form and not as a mirror reflection/illusion. This paradox is complicated by the surface pattern of the flooring being in fact, a painted version, an imitation of the material and therefore a reflection of it.

This multivalency of surfaces sustains a play between the pictorial and sculptural allusions in the sculptural pieces. The images of the mirrors in MIRROR I and MIRROR II pictorially refers to a mirror; a surface that reflects an illusion of forms in space and yet remains unchanged, as a flat surface, by what it reflects; it also holds no record of what it has reflected. It can then be understood as a material surface which temporarily reflects actual form and space in a particularly intangible way. Yet, for the image of a mirror to be represented in sculptural form, its reflective nature must be referred to by its absence. Therefore, the mirror surface in these pieces is aluminium sheeting which appears reflective, but is only capable of reflecting abstracted light and colour. Its reflectiveness is also further problematized by the indented lines which mark its surface and thereby mark its materiality.

As in the example of the flooring fragments, the mirror surfaces sustain two readings: pictorially its shape refers to a mirror, while its sculptural realization is in a material that neutralizes its possibility of functioning as a mirror, but retains enough of a connection to allude to it. This paradoxical play of pictorial and sculptural associations is central to the conceptual and formal processes that led to the production of these sculptures.

As mentioned in the reference to earlier works, a sense of gravitational pull is an active factor in compositional decision-making in the context of the paintings. The same concern is present in the sculptures; but here the three-dimensional aspect enables an even stronger sense of gravitational pull. The fully three-dimensional forms of the fruit and cylinder gain much of their spatial tension from their defiance of gravity. They appear as though they are resting on the surfaces, but since those surfaces are suspended on the wall plane, they ought, according to gravitational expectations, to fall to the floor.

This is especially noticeable in the cylinder forms where the implied movement, aided by the light-reflective aluminium, is that of rolling or spinning. Their compositional placement and the defiance of gravity imparts a sense of dynamism to the forms which are realized as fairly static sculptural entities, whose surfaces are carefully finished. Further notes as to how the formal and conceptual concerns are realized in the individual pieces is given in the section, **Notes on Individual Pieces**.

8. TECHNICAL PROCESSES:

The technical process in the painting medium has involved a traditional use of the oil paint medium as mentioned in the section, Creative Process. The sequence of this process is as follows: from the application of thin washes and "drawing" with thin washes; to painting thick paintmarks onto that stained surface; that layer is allowed to dry and is then covered by layers of colour glazes. The process is fundamentally one of layering and is repeated a number of times, following the dictum of "fat over lean".

Various surfaces have been utilised as supports. They are:

- * cotton duck on jelutong stretcher
- * cotton duck pasted with Alcolin glue onto hardboard
- * plywood

These surfaces have been prepared with gelatine, followed by an acrylic based primer in the case of the canvas surfaces, and with varnish in the case of the plywood surfaces.

The drawings consist of conté and chalk pastel on Ashrad cartridge, with varnish used as a glaze on some of the drawings.

Marine-ply has been used as the base for the mixed media works. The materials used are: oil paint, oil pastel, corrugated card, paper, conté, varnish, resin, cotton fabric, vinyl flooring, cardboard tube, galvanised bolts, wire nails, copper and aluminium sheeting.

The technical processes for constructing the sculptures have been those of carving and carpentry. The "surface" forms are constructed out of marine-ply and are joined by means of brass screws and Alcolin glue. The fully-rounded forms are carved out of laminated planes of jelutong and are finished with a wood file and sandpaper. These are joined to the other forms with

dowelling rods, Alcolin glue and brass screws. The cylinders are made out of cardboard tubing coated with resin. Aluminium sheeting is then glued, using contact glue, to the outer surface. Galvanised bolts are added to secure the ends and to join the cylinder to the other parts. In the MIRROR pieces, the "mirror" is built up of plywood and jelutong. The surface is then covered by nailing aluminium sheeting onto this substructure, with brass nails. The "rim" of the mirror is bolted with brass bolts onto the "mirror" base. The compositional arrangement of each of these pieces was arrived at through drawings and plasticine maquettes.

9.1 PASSING PHASE

1300 X 1670 mm

(Two canvasses; each 1300 x 835 mm)

Oil on canvas

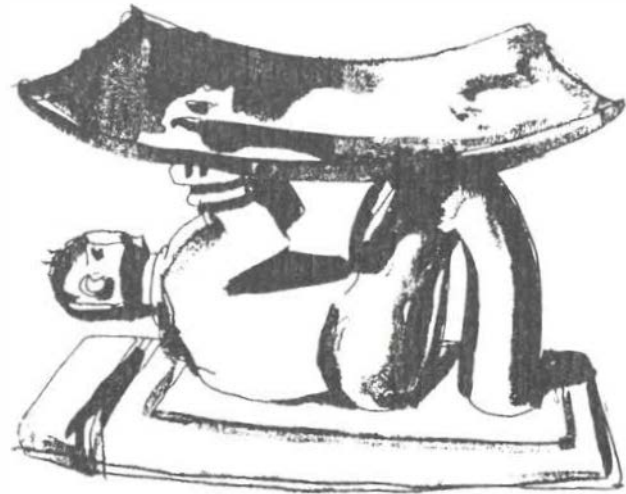
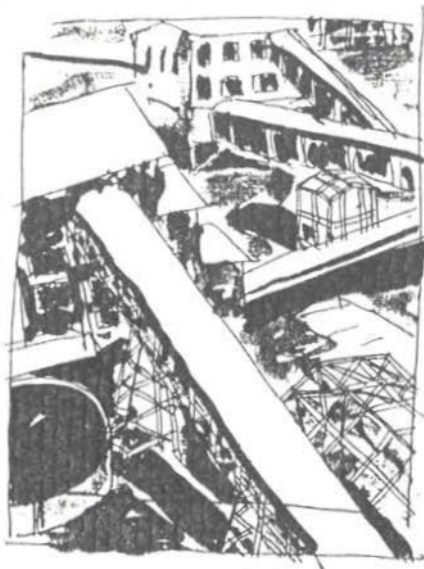
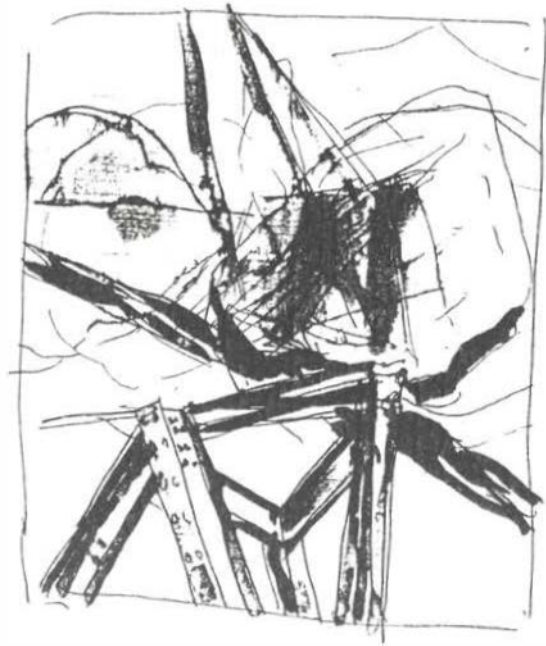
In this painting, my intention was to combine different spaces and viewpoints in a single composition. The diptych format alludes to that spatial ambiguity: the left side is orientated towards landscape space, while the right side alludes to a table surface with still-life objects. This ambiguity is extended to the scale of the objects, where the falling wall and building structures on the left side appear as small, toy-like objects, similar in scale to the actual toy animal images on the right side. The dam/receptacle image in the top middle of the composition, sustains this ambiguity: it shifts from a reading of it as a domestic receptacle on a table surface, to one of it as a dam in a landscape seen from the distance of height. The forms are treated in the traditional conventions of painting, in that the drawing is based on perception of form in space, viewed from an angle, and colour and tone are modulated to increase the sense of their illusionistic three dimensional presence in pictorial space.

The method of constructing the composition is, however, based on the conceptual mode of collage. Hence the different angles of vision, variations in scale and light source co-exist on a single picture plane. The illusionistic space is tempered by contradictions such as, the scale of objects not diminishing, although their compositional placement implies a position further back in pictorial space; the evidence of brushmarks brings attention back to the picture plane surface; the distribution of colour intensity across the picture plane and the combined perceptual experience of looking "into" the landscape and "onto" the table surface. The spatial combination of landscape and table space is an attempt to conflate the vertical and horizontal picture plane in a single painting.

The imagery is derived from objects and images which were selected according to a process of free association with past, particularly childhood, experience. The elusive monkey image "under" the table, as well as the twisted trumpet, is taken from Beckmann's painting, CARNIVAL (fig. 14). The use of a compressed illusion of space is also indebted to Beckmann's work.

The title has reference to a time of passing which invokes memory and is directly associated with the time in which the painting was made. It also implies a phase of experience in the process of maturation.





9.2 FENCESITTER

1300 X 1670 mm

(Two canvasses: each 1300 x 835 mm)

Oil on canvas

The format of this work is also that of a diptych. Here, I intended to make the "dividing line" between the two canvasses more active than in *PASSING PHASE*. The split was to act as a physical device, in that images, as well as colour and tonal values would change as they "crossed" from one side to the other. These changes are mostly subtle in the case of the forms - the central image of the wooden plank shifts in position slightly, while the staff image is more clearly "out of sync" from one side to the other. The colour difference is the most dramatic change, in that the left hand side is darker than the whites of the right hand side.

The dominance of darker tones unites the composition and, by implication, the two halves of the painting. They are further held together by the images that cross-over their surfaces, as well as by the light green ellipse which "heals" the split between the two halves. The fence image, echoed on either side and which assumes a curtain-like function, opening to display the interaction of object-images, also serves to contain the composition.

The central image of the wooden plane, set at an angle to the picture plane, refers to the ambiguity of surface and three-dimensional form. It also has referents to the etymology of the word *table*: the latin "tabula," for a wooden plank, and the French "tableau" - meaning a painting on a wooden panel.

Fragments of images from *PASSING PHASE* are also embedded in the pictorial space of this composition. The girders whose angles of movement implied a state of collapsing, here become roof rafters that are falling in on the other forms. The Beckmann trumpet-image is partially present and the image of the wooden staff again crosses the two halves, but here in a mirror-like reflection, as though it is bent from passing through one medium/space into another. The image-forms are held in a state of suspension. This effect is attained by setting up the gravitational expectations inherent in a vertical picture plane, reinforced by

the reference to a ground plane and the top-to-bottom allusion of the fence/curtains. The object-images placed into that context, without visible supports, thus appear to be suspended in space.

The spatial tension is heightened by the flat line-work painted over the rounded forms and spaces. The flat effect is due to the lighter tone of the line-work which refers to diagrammatic images of the illusionistic three-dimensional forms it is painted over.

The title refers to the position of the image-forms. They are simultaneously compressed and revealed between the two panels of fencing. The pictorial space is sited in an ambiguous position between illusionism and literal surface. It also refers to a state of being caught in a situation which paralyses the ability to situate one's self.



9.3 HORS-D'OEUVRE

1670 x 1300 mm

(Two canvasses; each 1300 x 835 mm)

Oil on canvas

The diptych format, used in the two previous paintings, is turned on its side in this work. The effect of this is an emphasis on top- to-bottom in a physical sense, where the one canvas is literally placed above the other, its lower edge resting on the top edge of the other half. This also serves to disturb the left/right symmetry of the earlier, vertically placed formats. Spatial ambiguity is attained through the combination of abstract washes of colour, modelled, paint forms and diagrammatic line-work superimposed over these.

The lower half is filled with an image derived from an Analytical Cubist painting by Picasso. This is schematically rendered. It is "pinned down" by the three-dimensional illusionistic cone image in the bottom left corner. Another three-dimensional illusionistic image, here of a concave/convex sculpural object also "sits" on top of the Cubist image, to the right side of the canvas. The overall orange colour and lightness of rapid brush marks, impart a sense of warmth and lightness to the lower canvas. The upper half is dominated by dark blues, which provide a colder counterpart to the orange in the lower half. The darkness of the blues and the broader brushmarks also add a sense of weight to the top half, making it appear heavier than the "lighter" half that it rests on. The two halves are metaphorically joined by the diagrammatic circular inset to the middle left: it depicts a method of joining two lengths of wood. The sketch-like girder image to the middle-right, extends across the canvas division, thus implying a seamless surface.

The title of the work alludes to the term which refers, in turn, to the dish which is served as an appetizer before the main meal. In the painting, the references to the sensual, painterly food imagery, the geometric-like construction of the Analytical Cubist painting and the woodwork diagrams, are indicators of the concern with the duality of the pictorial/sculptural interface which is to characterize the later works. The references to making, preparing, displaying and constructing are keys to the underlying conceptual and formal concerns of both this and the later works.



9.4 **DISSEMBLER**
1250 X 1900 mm
(Six panels; each 610 x 610 mm)
Oil on canvas on hardboard.

The format of this work consists of six panels, each one is square and of the same dimensions as the others. The regularity of format shape and size enables them to function as units which accumulate into a larger whole. Their placement on the wall plane is set with a regular interval of space between them. This space generates the illusion of a regular grid which crosses the composition vertically and horizontally.

The process of making the painting was as follows: individual charcoal drawings of Yoruba sculptural pieces were torn up and re-assembled on a large sheet of paper; this fragmented drawing composition was then transferred onto six separate panels; each panel was painted independently of the others; finally they were placed together and further overpainting and glazes were applied to establish a greater sense of unity across the panels. The disjunctions of the torn drawn images was maintained through the painting process and even heightened by contrasting them with a darker, paint textured ground. The essentially disjointed paper composition is "held together" by the invisible/visible grid; by the light/dark based colour composition and also by the painterly treatment of image and ground in all the panels.

The title refers to an entity that disguises or clouds its true nature, intentions or feelings. It can also be construed as referring, by a gloss of the tongue, to the word disassemble, which, in turn, refers to the process of taking something apart. The "whole" drawings of sculptures were torn apart and put together in such a manner that their identity remains hidden in the fragments. Although they are re-assembled, their new context in a painting of six separate panels, simultaneously effects their unity and their separateness.



9.5 **BACKTRACK**
1600 x 1640 mm
Oil on multiple canvasses

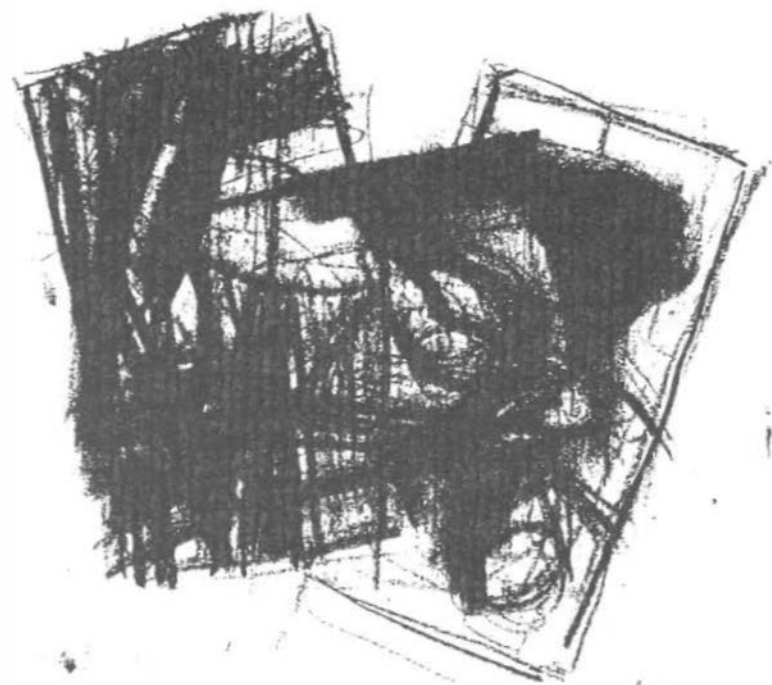
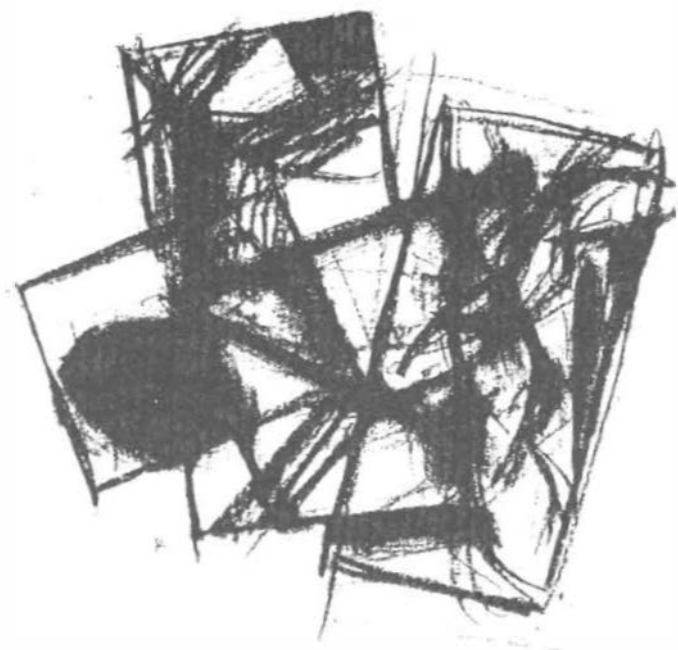
This work was preceded by charcoal drawings in which a variety of rectilinear formats were combined and then drawn over.

The process of constructing the painting was similar, in that the various canvas formats were physically joined and the images then painted over this irregular surface and format. The configuration of formats was arrived at by visually determining the furthest point at which they could be visually "held together". This implies the maximum tension between the two contradicting states of being held together and bursting apart.

Some of the images are "interrupted" by the different formats, in that they change direction and form as they cross over to another canvas. Other images retain the integrity of their form as they move across the various canvas surfaces, thus producing an effect of transparency. These images are also layered one over the other, furthering the sense of transparency. The dynamic arrangement of the image-forms and the spatial intervals implies that a dramatic event is in the process of being played out. This narrative implication is contradicted and contained by the superimposition of images that accumulate on the surface, as though the narrative "backtracks" over itself. The title echoes this. It also refers to going back over earlier tracks/paths; re-tracing one's steps implies re-visiting past experience.







9.6 A SERIES OF CARD MAQUETTES

This series represents an expanded investigation of the sandwiched formats used in BACKTRACK. The intention here was to investigate the tension produced by drawing imagery over the polygon format that resulted from joining various sized rectilinear formats. The format appears to move outwards, across the picture/wall plane. This energetic outward movement of the physical format is held together visually, by the drawn marks of pastel that cover its surface.

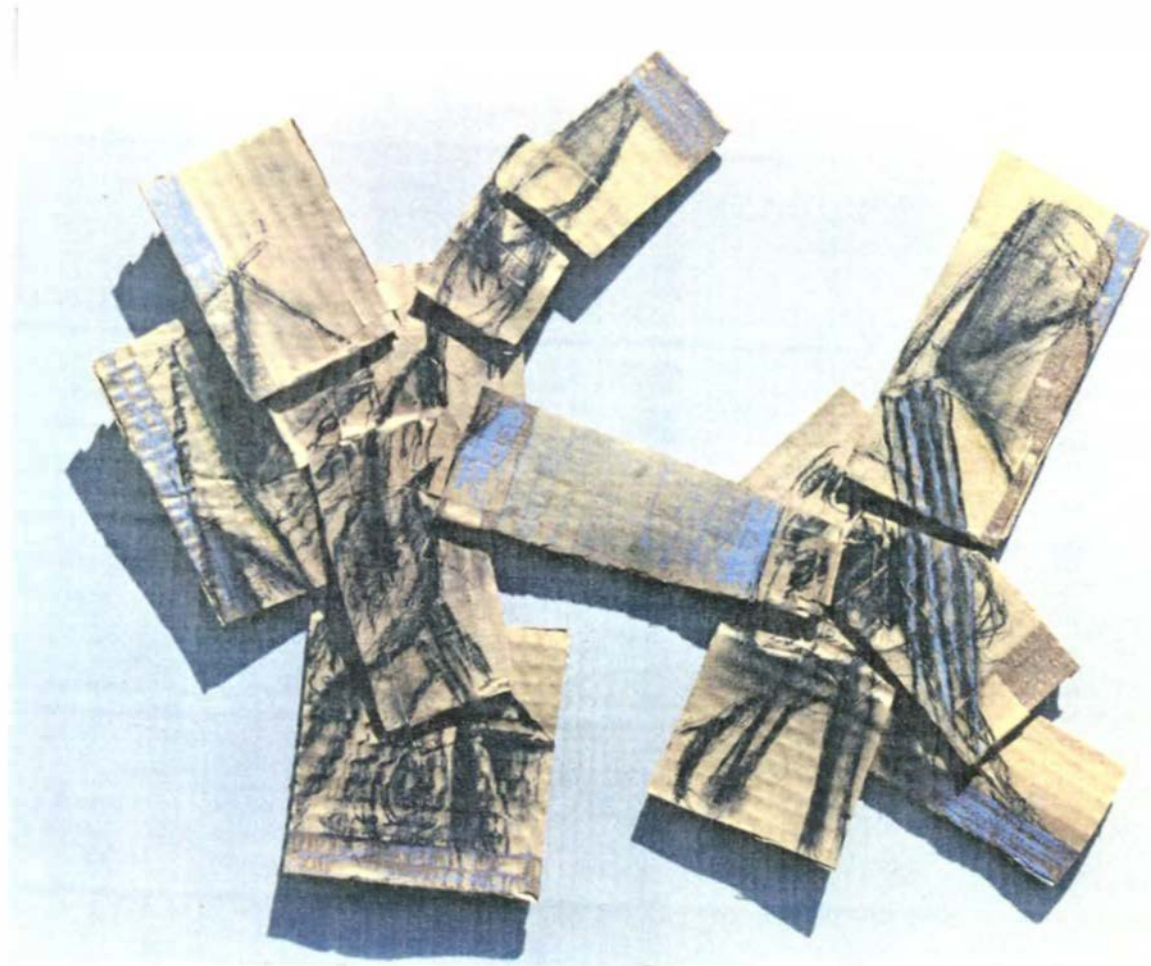
The working process consisted of joining various-sized rectangles of card together, to form an iconic compositional arrangement. The chalk pastel drawing was then made over the surface of this compositional format.

9.6.1

UNTITLED

350 x 440 mm

Chalk pastel on corrugated card and gummed tape.



9.6.2

UNTITLED

380 X 500 mm

Chalk pastel on corrugated card and gummed tape

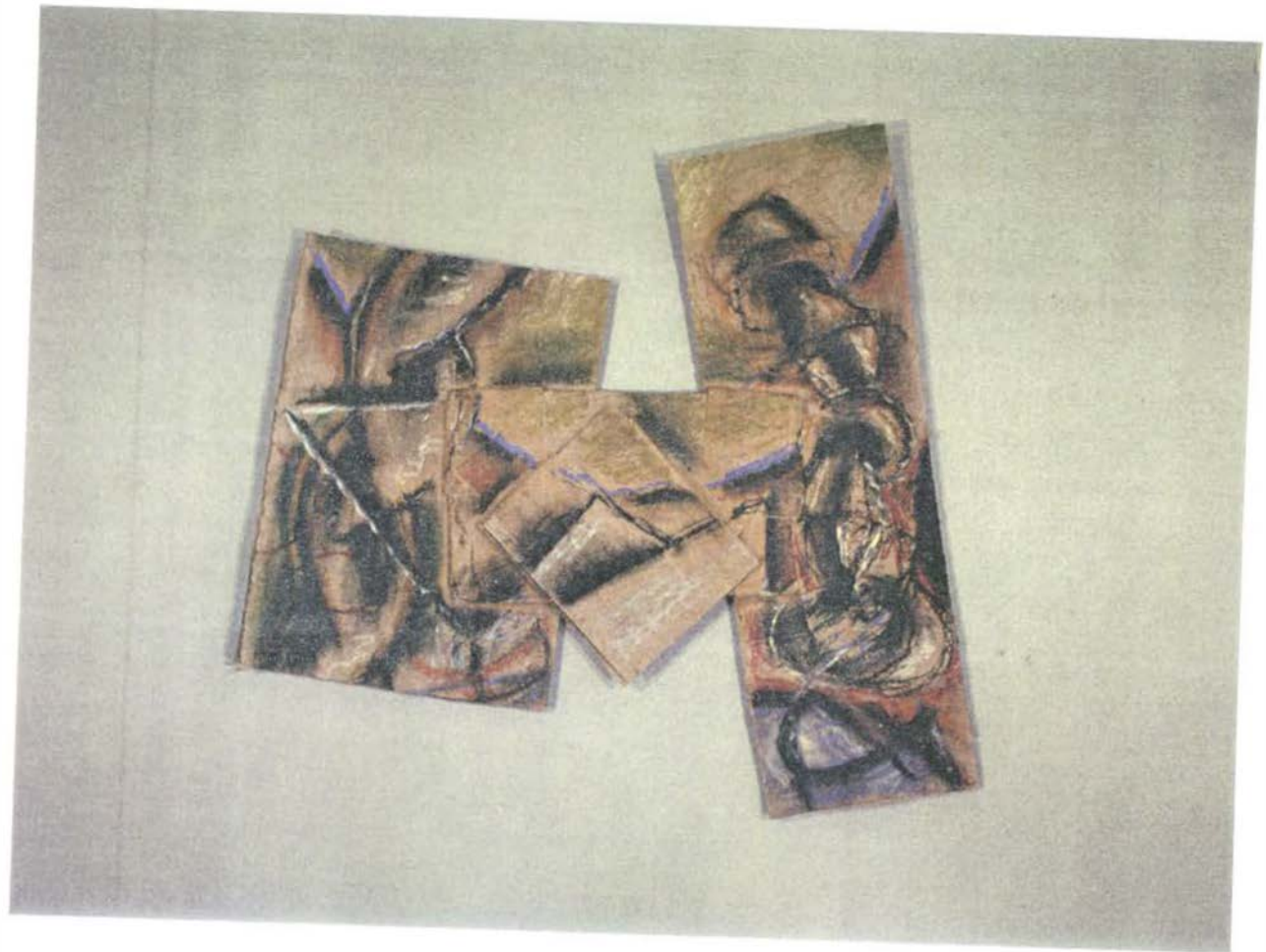


9.6.3

UNTITLED

280 X 290 mm

Chalk pastel on corrugated card and gummed tape

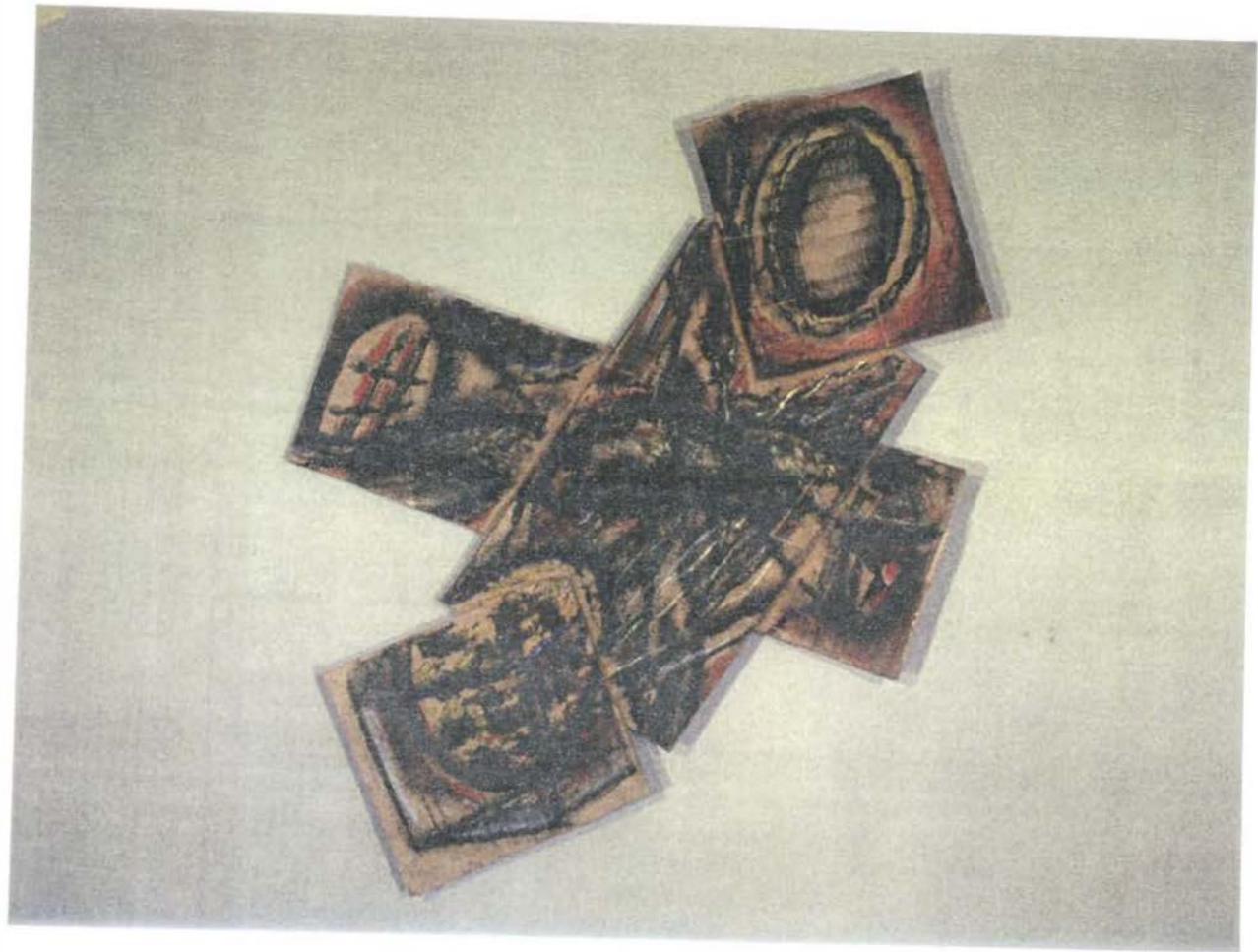


9.6.4

UNTITLED

370 X 280 mm

Chalk pastel on corrugated card and gummed tape



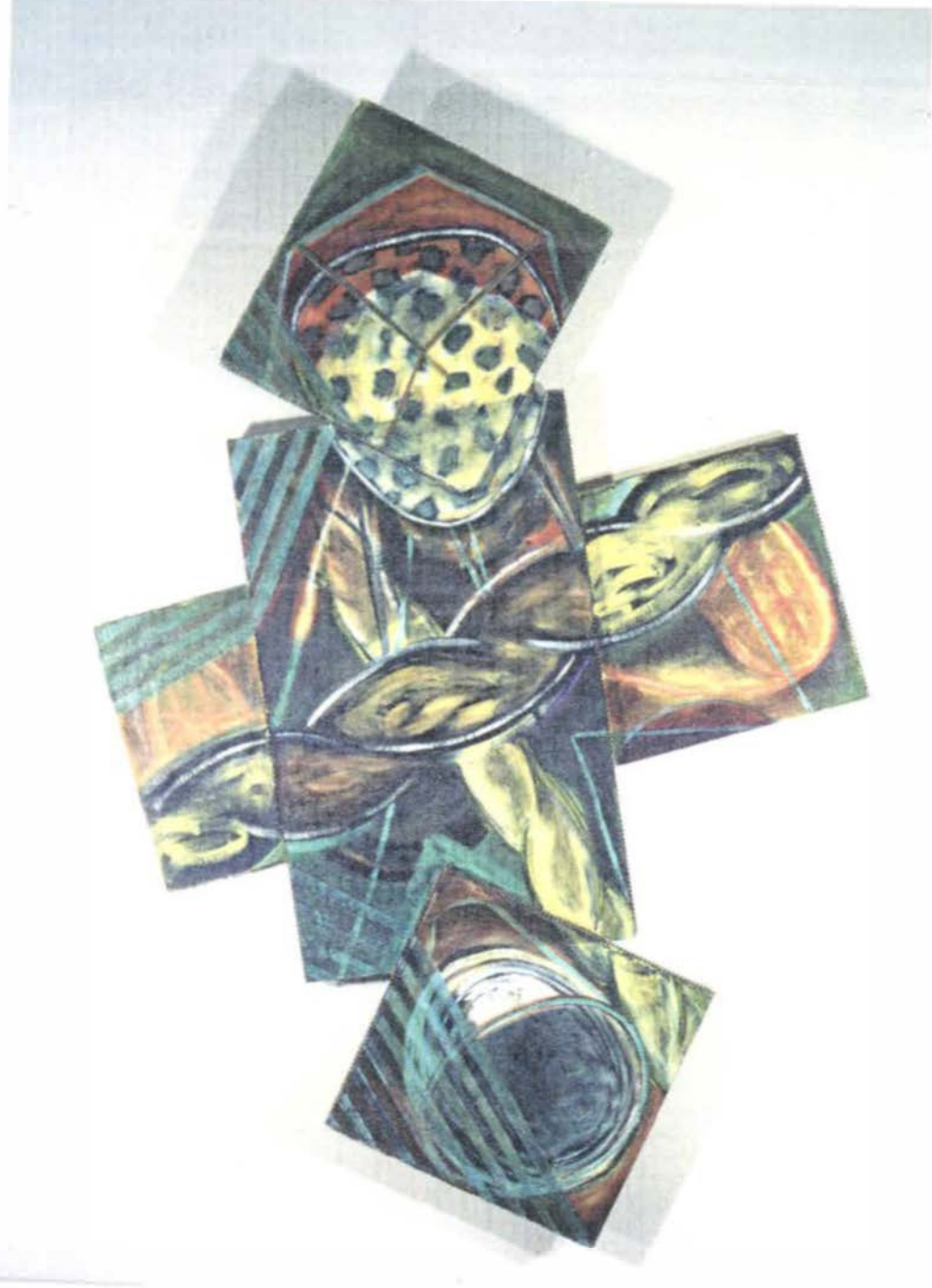
9.7 DECISIVE DEPTH

2000 x 1400 x 140 mm

Oil on canvas on corrugated card on wood stretcher

This work is a realization, in an enlarged scale and in the oil paint medium, of the maquette, UNTITLED (7.6.4). The attempt to produce the maximum tension between the parts of the format being held together and bursting apart, is repeated here, but now the format parts are much deeper than in the maquette. This exaggerated depth draws attention to the points at which the format parts overlap one another. Thus the disjunctions between the parts is more pronounced, providing a greater need to be "held together" by the paint marks and colour composition. These disjunctions also serve to emphasize the material, physical aspect of the work, importing a sculptural presence to the painting.

As in the card maquettes that preceded this work, the compositional arrangement of the format was an important precursor to the compositional arrangement of linework and colour areas that were superimposed on it. The depth and polygon format of the piece provokes a sculptural reading of what has become an iconic image on the wall plane. This sculptural reading is conditioned by the painting technique which is a combination of thick linework, washes and glazes of colour. The washes and glazes sink into the material of the canvas, while embedding the thicker paintmarks into the same surface. The effect of this elicits a reading into the picture plane and thus introduces the illusory effect of pictorial space into the context of an iconic, sculptural image. The title refers to the exaggerated depth of the format-parts.



9.8 PARTIAL PRESENTATION

1000 X 1510 mm

Oil on plywood

In this work, the interplay between an iconic format and pictorial space is investigated; in this instance, in a format that consists of three parts of even depth; two rectilinear and one polygon. The contiguous position of the three parts, produces an illusory, perspectival effect. The final flat format reads as though it is a table/chair form set in space.

The painted surface consists of a series of organic openings, each containing, or revealing a fragment of recognizable imagery. The lighter tonal values of these openings forces a reading "into" them as though they are deeper than, or are receding from, the surface. The vertical bar shape, to the right, connects, and therefore visually joins, the three formats. Its integrity as an image on a flat surface is not affected by the breaks between the formats. It therefore operates in opposition to the perspectival reading produced by the overall format; conversely, the tonal glaze in the centre format, reinforces the perspectival reading.

The title refers to the parts of imagery that can be glimpsed through the "holes" in the tonal fabric of paint, as well as to the iconic effect of the perspectival reading, from which it is possible to apprehend a chair/table image; as though presented to the viewer. The sculptural suggestiveness of this work and that of DECISIVE DEPTH is developed in the later, clearly sculptural, works in the TABLE and MIRROR series.



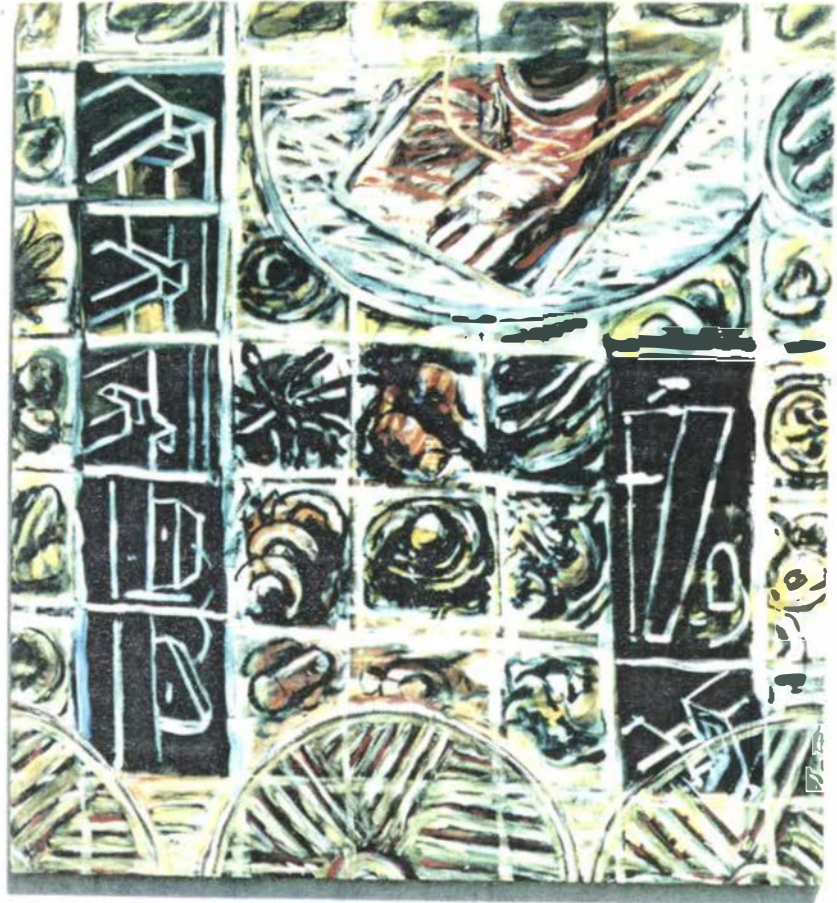
9.9 **RUPT I**
1500 x 1400 mm
Oil on canvas

In this work, a single picture plane and format has been used. The concern was with the ways in which an integral surface could be broken up and reconstituted by the paint marks and by the tonal effects of colour. The approach to the painted surface in PARTIAL PRESENTATION, as a fabric, or skin of paint, which could be "pierced" through the illusory effects of tonal contrast, suggested the possibility of exploring this in further paintings.

The canvas surface is divided into square units by gestural paintmarks, producing an organic grid. The picture plane is thus marked with a grid, but the manner in which it is done produces an organic grid which appears to be in a state of movement. The grid lines are built up of dark/light colour contrast; the lighter colours allowed to dominate so as to elicit an illusory spatial effect, where the whiter parts of the grid appear to proceed forward. These white lines therefore appear in front of the imagery they "contain". The imagery is derived from magazine images of recipes from the 1960's. Each unit contains, or surrounds a different image; the regularity of the grid thus being further inflected by the difference in the imagery.

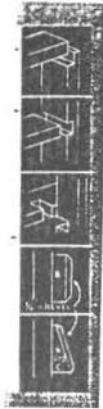
The grid is interrupted in a more dramatic way by the "insets" of dark-toned grid units to the left and right of the composition. These appear to sink back in pictorial space, while the white linework of the woodwork imagery floats towards the picture plane. The semi-circular section of a flat, but painterly-active surface to the top of the composition "holds" a tray with a foot image, also interrupting the grid pattern. Lastly, the cropped circular forms or "wheels" at the bottom of the canvas grind across, and in front of, the pictorial grid.

The title refers to the compositional, painterly, tonal and illusory "interruptions" to the regularity of a grid structure on which the work is based.





The cake stand comes up-to-date in this light-weight modern version made in cane



Stunningly designed portable generator - the Glovactor - is £7 15s. PAGE THREE



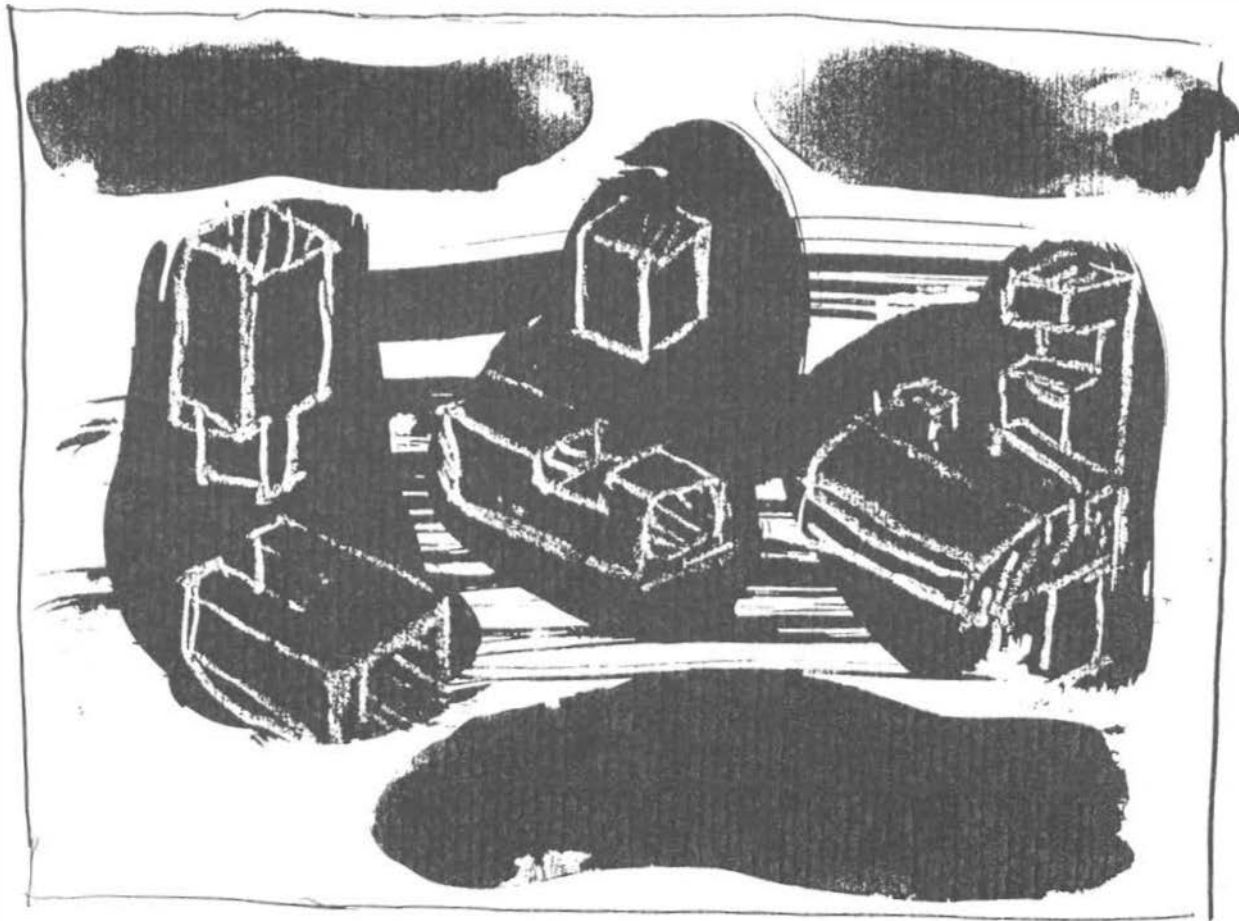
Wall or floor fix - better, the Universal is £7 12s. 7d.





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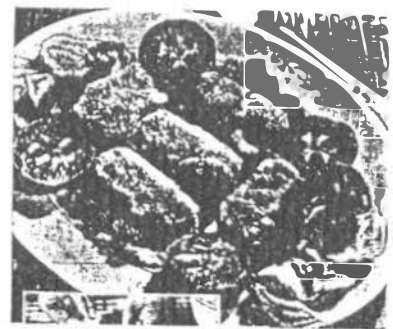
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All you need to know about party dishes

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9.10 RUPT II

1500 x 1400 mm

Oil on canvas

RUPT II is a complementary work to RUPT I. Similar concerns governed its pictorial structure. Here, the colour mood has become much darker and the paintwork denser. The foot image sits spatially on top of the pictorial grid, as a result of the strong colour contrast between the warm orange pinks of the foot, set against the deep, dark blues of the spaces behind the painted grid.



9.11 A SERIES OF DRAWINGS

This section of the body of practical work is related to an intention to expand the grid/image relationship and its implications for generating spatial ambiguity on a single picture plane surface. The manner in which RUPT I had been painted and its emphasis on tonal contrast, resulted in the painting adopting a graphic quality, akin to the drawing medium.

In this series of drawings, my intention was to work directly with the graphic qualities of conté and chalk pastel on paper. The imagery is derived from sculpture objects, food, imagery from recipes, woodwork diagrams and also includes schematic cylinders and ellipses of colour. The compositional structure of the drawings was arrived at directly through the process of drawing. There were therefore no prefixed ideas or sketches that preceded them.

The first five drawings of the series do not allude directly to a pictorial grid. Their compositional arrangement was developed through the processes of drawing, erasure and superimposition. The gravitational effect of a vertical picture plane also influenced the placement of imagery.

The last five drawings in the series are literally based on a grid structure, in that a grid of units was worked onto the surface before positioning the imagery. The grid units were defined by mark-making on different lines of movement. The imagery was then drawn into, over and erased into the conté surface of the grid.

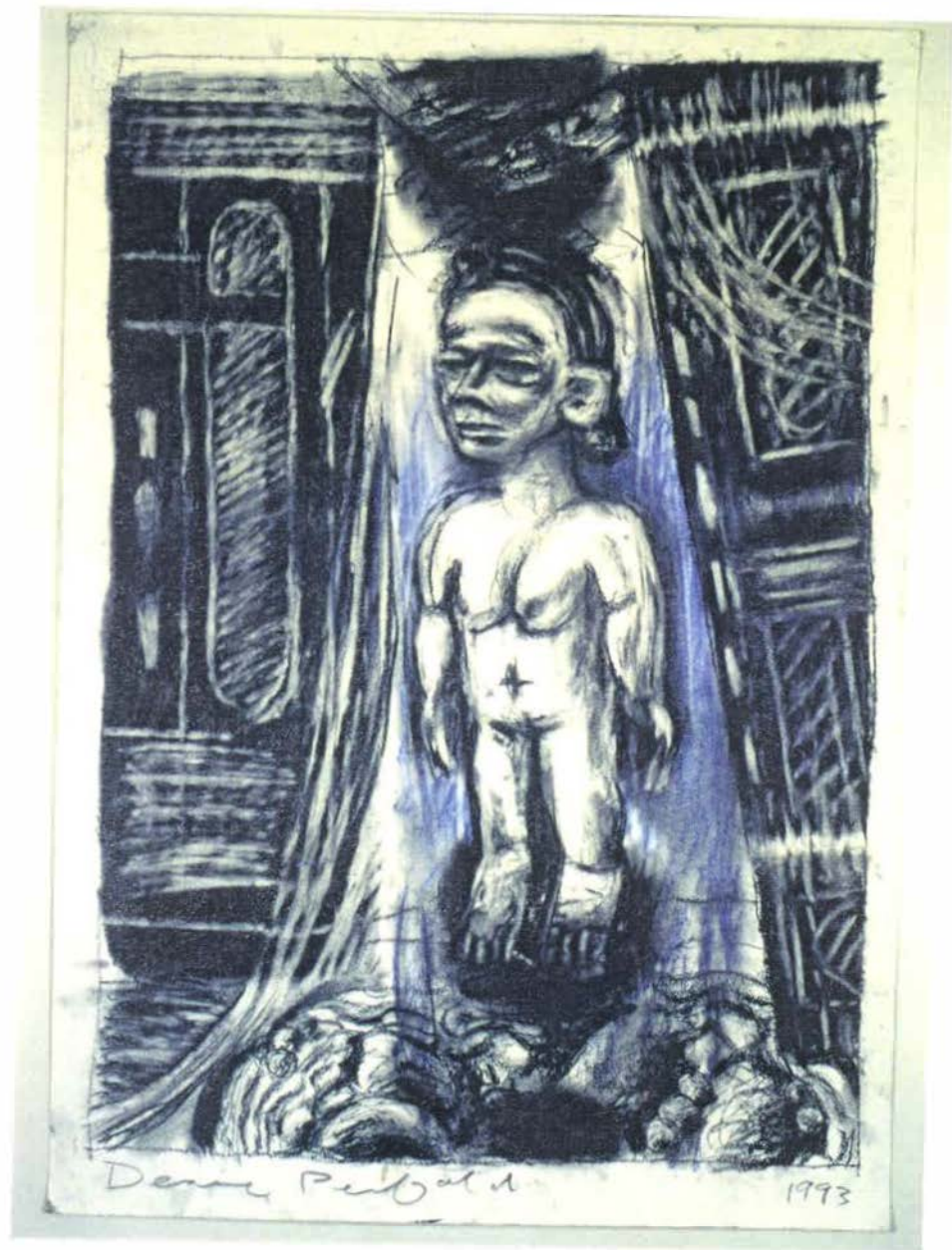
A sense of the states of imbalance, restlessness and anxiety dominates these drawings. This echoes the physical and psychological states suggested in the reference to earlier works such as CAR'S ON FIRE AND FALLING (1987) and DECISIVE DESCENT (1987)

9.11.1

UNTITLED

850 x 595 mm

Conté and chalk pastel on Ashrad cartridge.



9.11.2

UNTITLED

850 x 595 mm

Conté and chalk pastel on Ashrad cartridge.

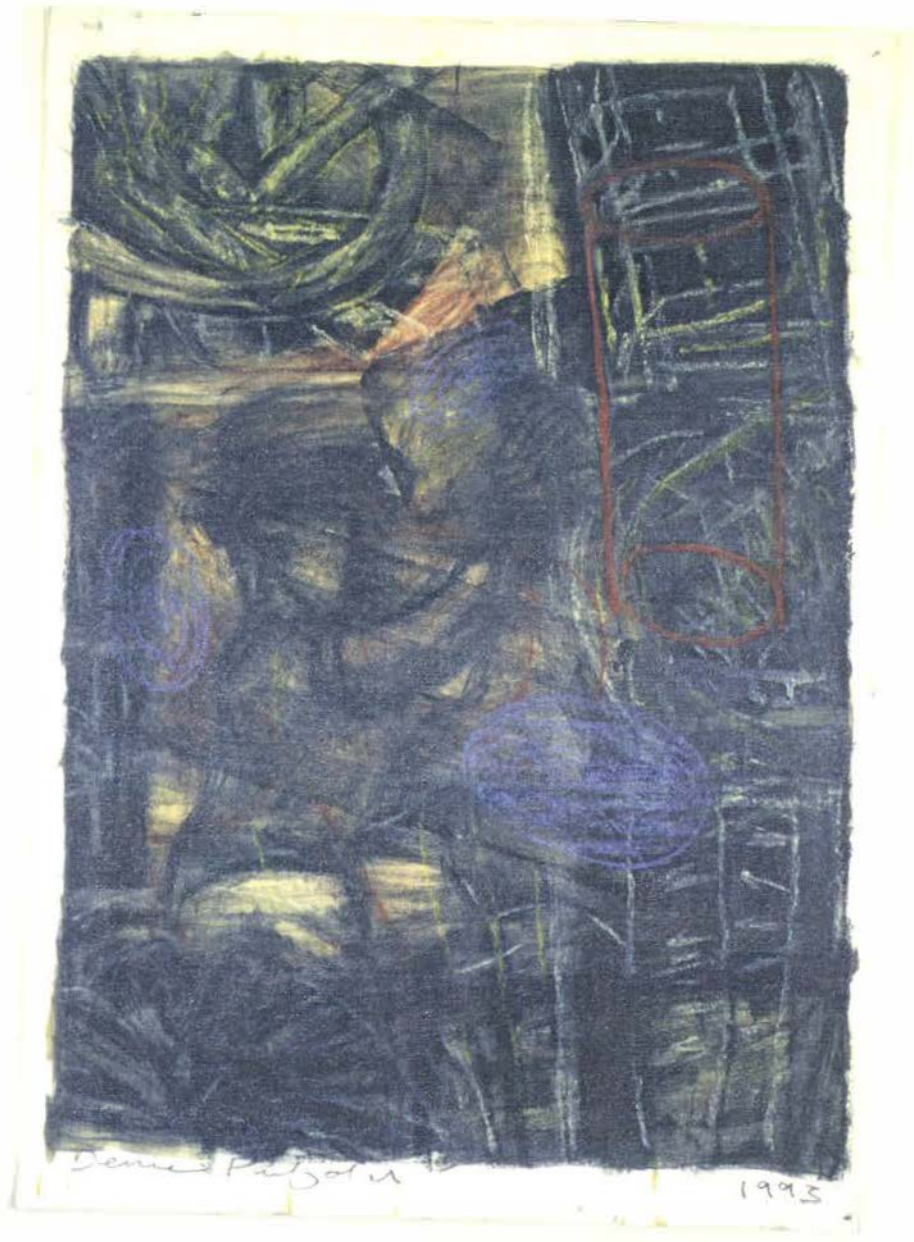


9.11.3

UNTITLED

850 x 595 mm

Conté and chalk pastel on Ashrad cartridge.

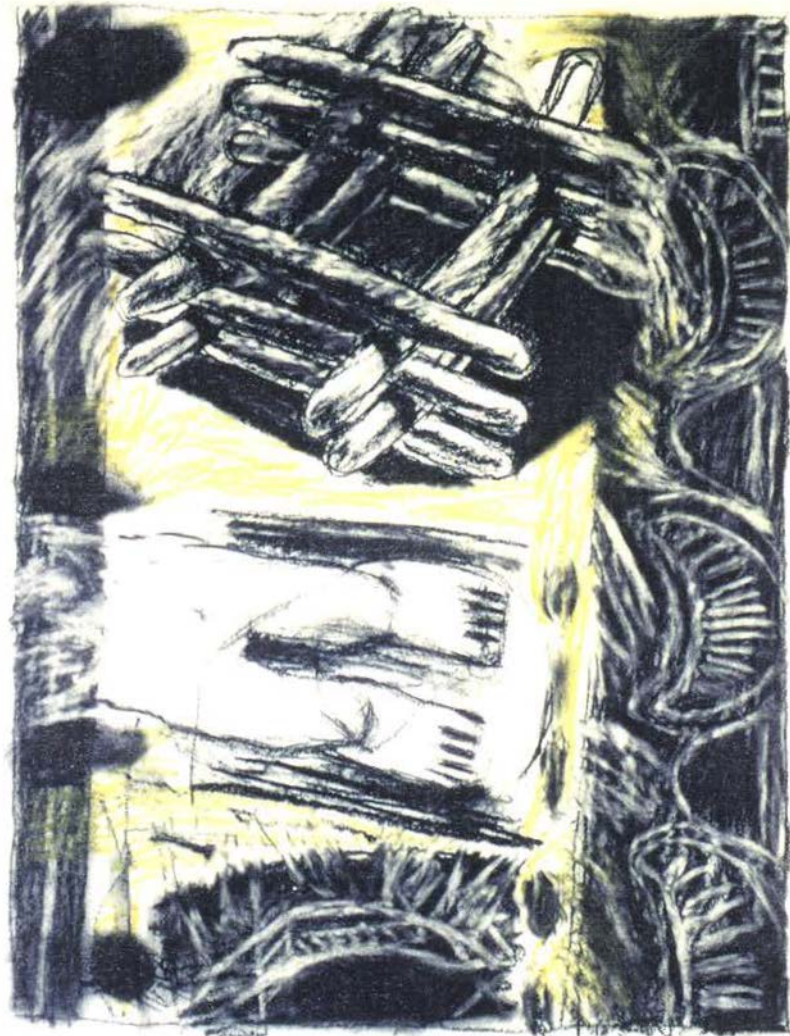


9.11.4

UNTITLED

850 x 595 mm

Conté and chalk pastel on Ashrad cartridge.



Donna P. Bell 1993

9.11.5

UNTITLED

850 x 595 mm

Conté and chalk pastel on Ashrad cartridge.

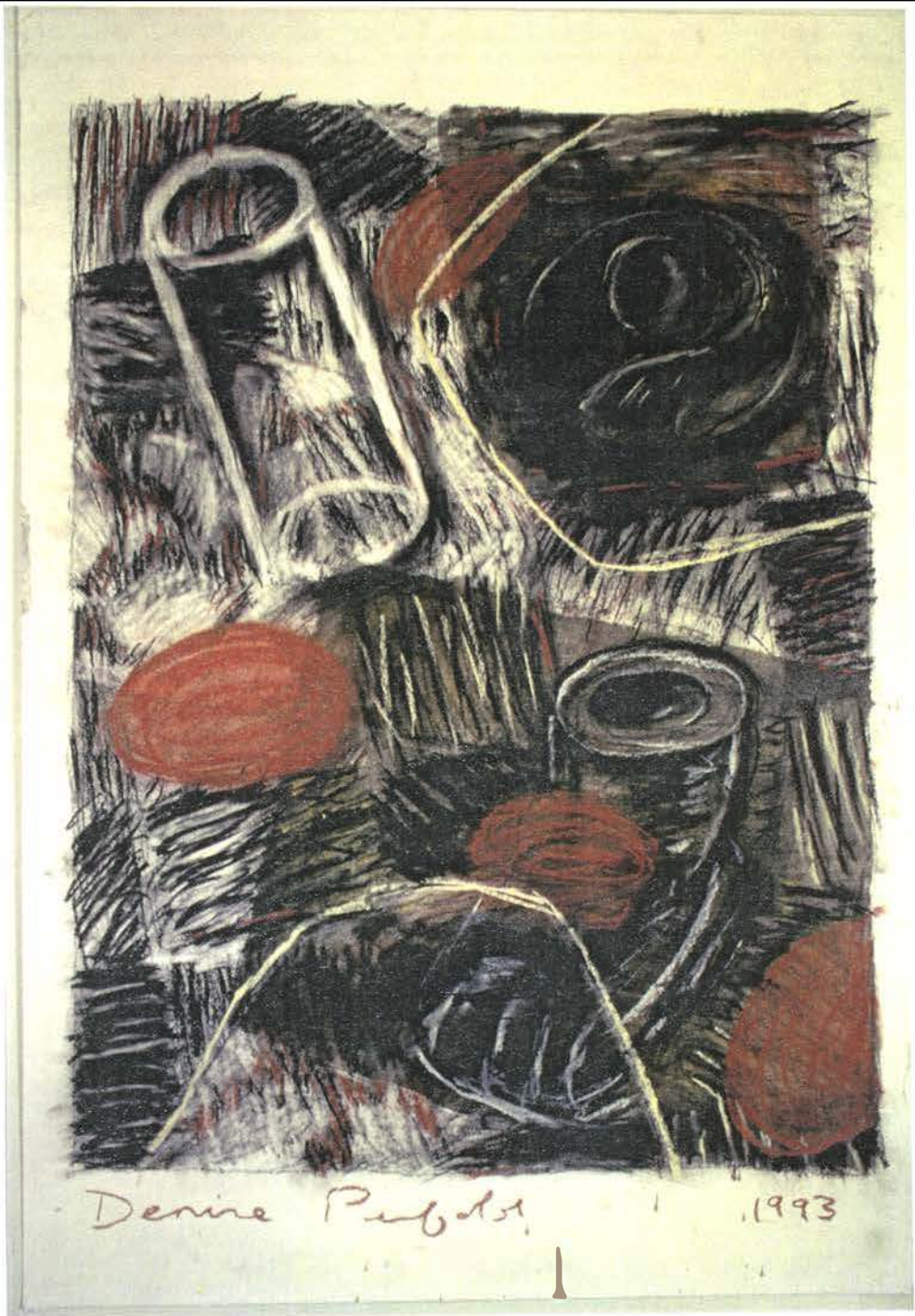


9.11.6

UNTITLED

850 x 595 mm

Conté and chalk pastel on Ashrad cartridge.



Denise Pugh

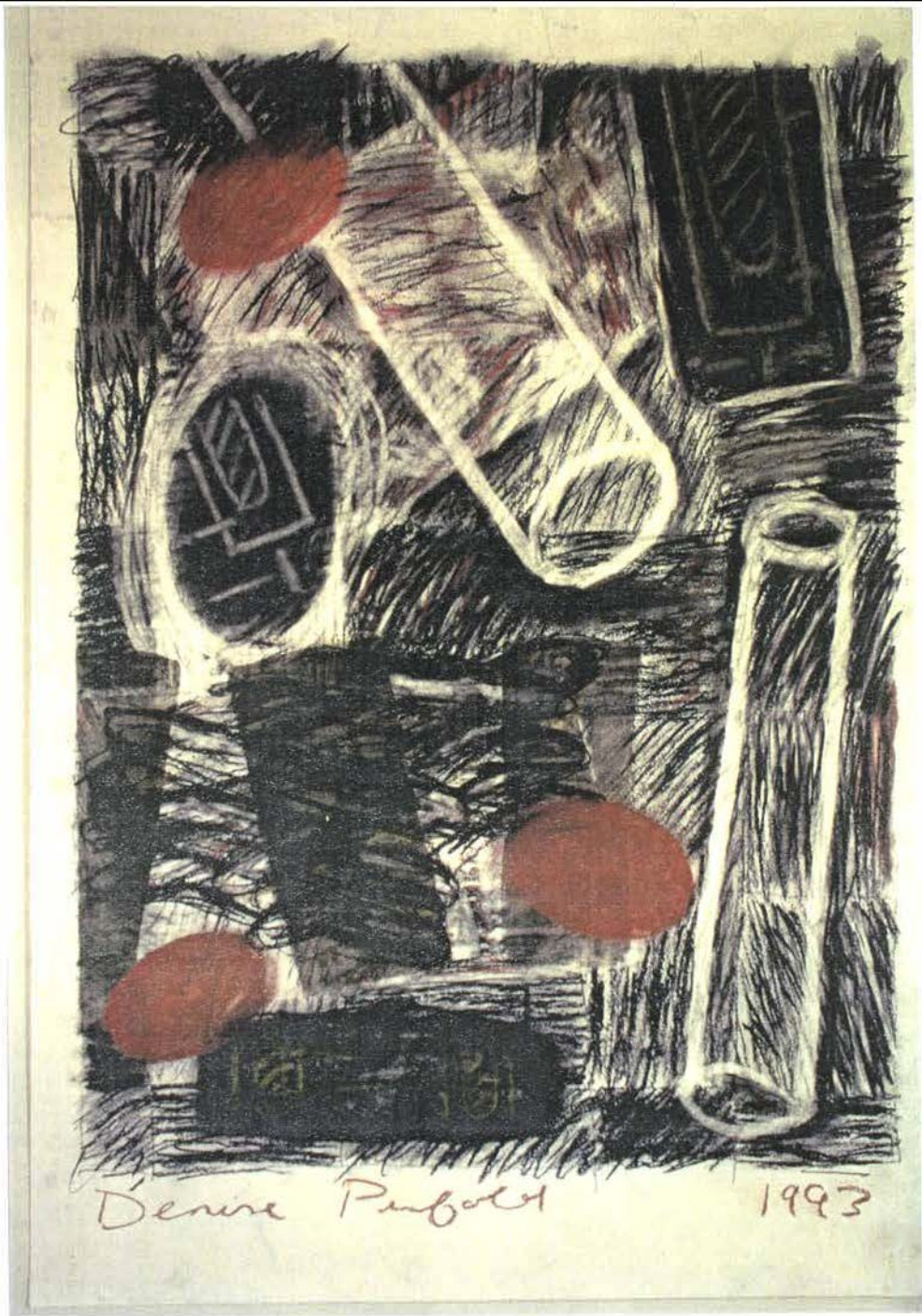
1993

9.11.7

UNTITLED

850 x 595 mm

Conté and chalk pastel on Ashrad cartridge.



Denise Pardolet

1993

9.11.8

UNTITLED

850 x 595 mm

Conté and chalk pastel on Ashrad cartridge.



9.12 A SERIES OF COLLAGE PANELS

This series of collage works precedes the more fully three-dimensional pieces in the last series of this body of work. They can be viewed as transitional works in that they are attempts to three-dimensionalize the concerns inherent in the series of conté drawings (9.11.1 - 9.11.8).

A constant square format was used in order to establish a continuity between the pieces as well as to define the variations and shift in position of the imagery. An ambiguity is also inherent in the repeated format: it could be the same square of pictorial space repeated, or it could be four distinct squares of pictorial space.

The plywood supports were conceived of as the opposite of a container or box; they are surfaces upon which the materials are placed and attached to. In other words, the pictorial paradigm is that of the horizontal or "flatbed" picture plane. Hence the forms, images and heterogeneous materials are placed upon the surface, emphasizing movement across that surface. The inevitable illusionism of space receding into and proceeding from that surface is also in play, as it is generated by the contiguity of marks, forms and imagery, as well as by the illusory effects of colours and tonal values. Thus a figure-ground relationship is set up, but here within a context which is emphatically material and which exhibits attributes peculiar to sculpture.

The constant square format plays a role in "holding" the various materials and imagery together. The compositional placement allows for the diversity of these materials, each of which asserts a unique presence, to be visually "held together" by their spatial relationships across the surface.

Conté drawings of food and sculpture images on paper were curved into tubular forms and attached to the surface. The cylinder image evident in the series of conté drawings, referred to earlier, here becomes more physical as the tubular form of the turned plane of paper. This is also a precursor for the aluminium cylinders in the TABLE and MIRROR series. The range of materials used in these collage panels is also indicative of the later sculptural developments.

All of the materials used are "covering" materials. The aluminium sheeting covers the plywood surface, made irregular by the attached wooden pieces. It is nailed down to emphasize both the joining points, and its literal connection to the picture-plane surface that it covers. The vinyl flooring fragments are glued over the wood surface. Their presence introduces allusions to a floor plane. Conté, oil pastel and oil paint; the traditional "covering" materials of drawing and painting; are superimposed over the various other covering materials. As with the conté drawing series and the paintings, RUPT I and RUPT II, the process is essentially one of layering. That process is made more physical/material, by the use of various heterogenous materials, which are related by their original function as "covering materials".

9.12.1

UNTITLED

300 x 300 mm

Aluminium sheeting, paper, cardboard tubing, wire nails, gutter bolts, cotton, resin, vinyl flooring, oil pastel, oil paint, conté, corrugated card and varnish on plywood.



9.12.2

UNTITLED

300 x 300 mm

Aluminium sheeting, paper, cardboard tubing, wire nails, gutter bolts, cotton, resin, vinyl flooring, oil pastel, oil paint, conté, corrugated card and varnish on plywood.



9.12.3

UNTITLED

300 x 300 mm

Aluminium sheeting, paper, cardboard tubing, wire nails, gutter bolts, cotton, resin, vinyl flooring, oil pastel, oil paint, conté, corrugated card and varnish on plywood.



9.12.4

UNTITLED

300 x 300 mm

Aluminium sheeting, paper, cardboard tubing, wire nails, gutter bolts, cotton, resin, vinyl flooring, oil pastel, oil paint, conté, corrugated card and varnish on plywood.

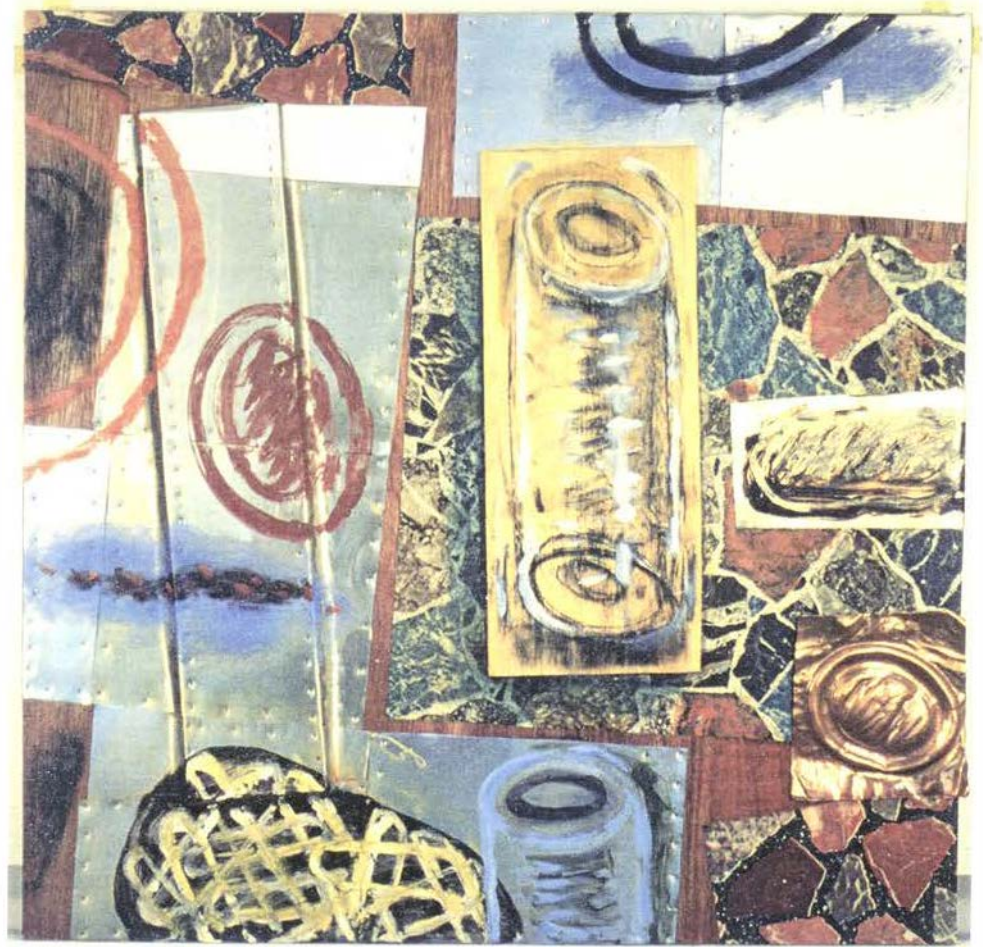


9.12.5

UNTITLED

600 x 600 mm

Aluminium sheeting, paper, cardboard tubing, wire nails, gutter bolts, cotton, resin, vinyl flooring, oil pastel, oil paint, conté, corrugated card and varnish on plywood.



9.13 TABLE AND MIRROR SERIES

In this series of four sculptures, the painting/sculpture dialectic is explored in a predominantly sculptural mode. The imagery from the previous paintings and series of drawings is extended into a sculptural context. Thus the imagery of sculptural objects such as the foot and wooden staff reappear as fully three-dimensional forms in the MIRROR constructions, while images of fruit forms, also derived from curio-artefacts, and related to the food imagery in the paintings, appear in the TABLE constructions. The fragments of plans for woodwork constructions and fragments of flooring surfaces are realized as polyhedral sculptural forms. The surfaces of those forms are then carved or painted to refer to plan drawings and patterned flooring; in the TABLE constructions, actual flooring material (vinyl flooring) covers the surface of the flooring fragment-forms.

The two themes of TABLE and MIRROR provide a respective parallel with sculptural and pictorial characteristics. The TABLE constructions, as paradigm for sculpture, relate to the physical, the tangible and the concrete; while the MIRROR constructions, as paradigm for painting, relate to the illusory, the reflective and the intangible. The play of difference between surface and form, pictorial and sculptural, transparency and opaqueness and ambiguous and concrete is operative in both the TABLE and MIRROR constructions. However, the realization of these interactions is intended to be more overtly concrete in the TABLE constructions. Thus the imagery of woodwork plans is carved into the wooden surface of the fragment-form; an inherently sculptural way of marking or 'drawing' into a surface; while the plan inscriptions in the MIRROR constructions are painted onto the surface in an overtly painterly manner. Similarly, the surface of the flooring fragment-forms in the TABLE constructions are covered with the actual material of vinyl flooring, while that surface is illusionistically represented in the flooring fragment-forms in the MIRROR constructions.

The forms in these sculptural compositions are conceived of, and realized as fully three-dimensional forms, such as the foot, staff, fruit and cylinder forms; and as sculptural-relief planar forms that have one side "hidden" by its attachment to the wall-plane. These planar forms are closest to having pictorial characteristics because of this connection to the wall-plane. They are also conceived of as fragments of surfaces made three-dimensional. The cylinder form exemplifies this, in that a cylinder is a plane

turned to become an open three-dimensional form: it is thus a prime example of a conflation between two- and three-dimensional form. The cylinder form appears in both the TABLE and the MIRROR constructions because of this. It is also present to suggest movement and perspective. Its aluminium surface suggests its origin in the two-dimensional mirror surface. The meeting of the two ends of the aluminium plane is exaggerated, made overt, by the sculptural presence of the gutter bolts that "hold" it together. The fragments that carry construction plan images, were derived from the two-dimensional fragment images in the series of conté drawings, where plan images were erased into the conté-covered paper surface. Here, the planar surface of paper is realized as a polyhedral wooden structure that projects from the wall plane with the plan images carved into, or painted onto their surfaces. Similarly, fragments of floor or table surface "seen-through" the table "surface" or reflected from the mirror "surface", are also part-forms exaggerated to become polyhedral entities. This notion of seeing part of one form through another and of various planes of space co-existing on a similar plane of actual space, is Cubist-inspired.

The abstract forms of these fragments are given identity by their surface "skins". These skins define their different identities as plans, floor and table surfaces. In Cubist collages, abstract shapes are given a representational role by the way in which they are assembled; in other words, by the compositional structure; as well as by the indicators of line, patterning and texture which signify the various surfaces in the original still-life arrangement on a table.

Both the MIRROR and TABLE constructions are based on the spatial construct of Cubism, where various fragments of spatial plans co-exist in a single compositional entity. The integrity of the sculptural composition is therefore an important means of establishing a wholeness out of the disparate part-views made into concrete sculptural forms. The sculptural context allows for a perception of the different part-forms, whole-forms and various materials, as having been put together, or of coming together, in an explicitly concrete manner.

As in the compositional structures of the drawings and paintings, so too here; composition is conceived of as a restitutive process which defines the maximum point of tension between being held together and bursting apart.

In the TABLE constructions, the implied movement of the parts is strongly influenced by gravitational expectations. The implications of a table surface lifted onto the wall-plane, is that it takes allusions to its original floor-plane position with it, while simultaneously acquiring pictorial characteristics because of its wall-based position. Thus, the fruit and cylinder forms achieve their dynamic spatial position from the gravitational expectation that such forms, on a table surface, are held down by the force of gravity; lifted to the wall, they ought to roll to the floor. As a result, a strong kinaesthetic sense of spatial tension is achieved. The spatial paradox is thus dependent on a "flatbed pictorial plane" reading.

In the MIRROR constructions, the spatial paradox is dependent on the expectations of a pictorial reading of space and form into the picture plane. Here the picture plane is realized as the image of a mirror surface. The perceptual experience of an actual mirror surface is acutely ambiguous in that it is a physical surface which reflects actual form and space without embodying or depicting it in any way. Thus, the perceptual illusion is that one is seeing form and space "into" the mirror surface. This expectation is frustrated in the MIRROR constructions. The fragment forms "reflected in" the mirror surface are realized as physical forms projecting outwards from that surface. They are physical forms that occupy the actual space of the viewer, yet their wooden surfaces are painted to generate the illusion of other surfaces, returning them to the illusionistic, intangible characteristics of both mirror and painting.

9.13.1

TABLE 1

800 x 920 x 330 mm

Jelutong, marine-ply, aluminium, cardboard, oil paint, polyurethane varnish, vinyl flooring, gutter bolts and brass screws.

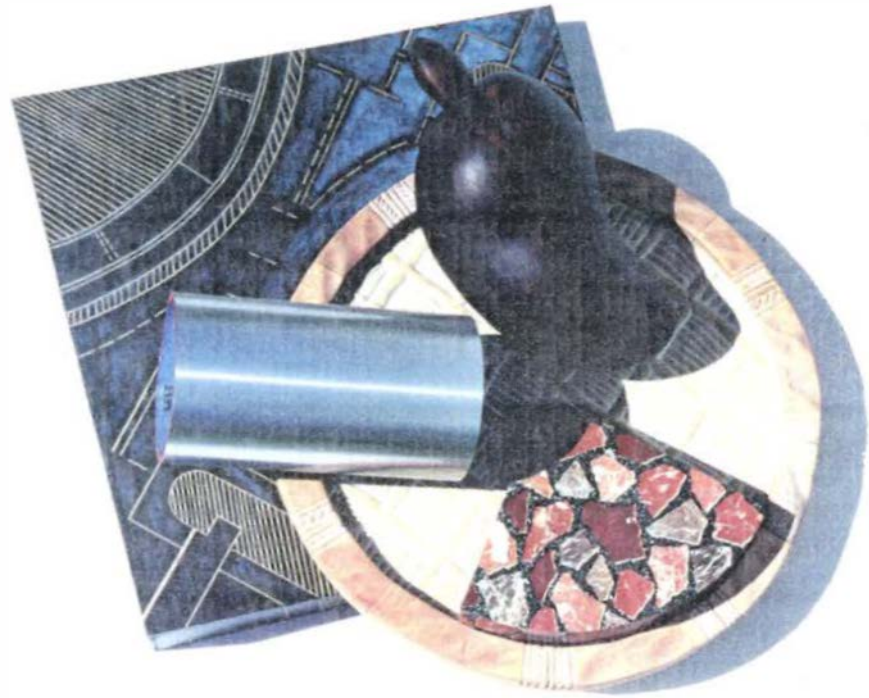
The presence of a table surface is implied by the round tray form on which the fruit, cylinder and flooring fragment form are presented. This is positioned on top of the fragment form which carries the carved plan imagery. The plan imagery relates to the construction of the tray form and also echoes the constructed form of the mirror image in the MIRROR constructions.

The spatial paradigm is that of the flatbed picture plane, where a table surface is lifted to the wall-plane. The wall-plane takes on the spatial characteristics of a picture plane, with the sculptural configuration being read as an image on the "ground" of the wall-plane.

The fragment forms of the construction plans and floor fragment are polyhedral sculptural forms: the first attached to the wall plane, with the second attached to the tray form. The fragment of flooring is conceived of as being "seen-through" the tray, but is realized as a form on top of the tray form. The tray form with the fruit, cylinder and floor fragment "resting" on it, underlines the notion of table as paradigm for sculpture, as it presents three-dimensional objects to be "consumed" by the viewer. The physicality of the forms as three-dimensional entities and their sensual surfaces of smooth painted wood, carved wood, aluminium and vinyl flooring points to the sensual aspects of the sculpture paradigm. The carved fragment of the diagram image takes on a decorative, sensual function, rendering it illogical for carrying out the construction of a concrete form.

The carved surface of the tray form is an essentially sculptural means of generating surface texture, yet it reads as an illusionistic rendering of another material such as woven cane; this sense of illusionism is enhanced by the colour difference introduced by the white oil paint rubbed into the carved surface. It sustains allusions to the grids set up in the series of conté drawings, where cross-hatching was used to generate a lively surface within the grid structure. It also echoes the chair caning of Picasso's STILL LIFE WITH CHAIR CANING (Fig. 19).

The position of the fruit form, cylinder and flooring fragment form suggests potential for movement. This is reinforced by the circular form of the tray which is in strong contrast to the rectilinear diagram fragment form. Movement is also implied in the cylinder form as well as by its shiny aluminium surface, which also serves to introduce, or reflect, the mirror surface in the MIRROR constructions.



9.13.2

TABLE II

800 x 920 x 330 mm

Jelutong, marine-ply, imbuia veneer, aluminium, cardboard, oil paint, polyurethane varnish, vinyl flooring, gutter bolts and brass screws.

The space occupied by this TABLE construction is much deeper than that in TABLE I. Here the fragment form that carries the construction diagram, juts forward from the table top which lies flatly on the wall, lifted 90° to the viewer's angle of vision. The polyhedral form of this fragment is such that it can be read as a table-like form, similar to the form generated by the reading of the format configuration in PARTIAL PRESENTATION (9.8). Its surface is carved with a diagrammatic rendering of a table construction.

The wedge-like shape of the flooring fragment form is similarly deep, also resting on the table surface and intersecting dynamically with the diagram fragment form. The cylinder form appears as though it will roll off, or down to the floor due to the expectation of gravitational pull. Here, a reference to perspective is implied in the smaller scale of this cylinder form to those in TABLE I and MIRROR I, thus suggesting a sense of spatial distance. Paradoxically, the flooring fragment is again "seen-through" the table surface, even though it is physically placed on top of it in the construction. That it is "seen-through" is suggested by its outer curved edge, formed by the partial view through a section of the circular table surface.

The generic fruit form thrusts dynamically from the patterned plate which is, in turn, balanced across the intersection of the flooring fragment form and the diagram fragment form. The form and surface of the fruit form are sensuously treated and stand in sharp contrast to the roughly carved plate. The patterning of the plate is carved in relief, giving it a three-dimensional quality, so that its surface decoration becomes relief form.

The fruit form and diagram fragment form are painted with oil paint to resemble a darker wood than the jelutong and marine-ply from which they are constructed. The plate is also treated with oil paint to establish the light/dark contrast of the original surface pattern of the plate from which it was derived. Thus the introduction of colour to the forms results in the introduction of the

illusionistic effects peculiar to the pictorial mode. These co-exist with the presence of the actual materials of vinyl flooring (in itself a printed illusion of another surface), aluminium and imbuia veneer. All of these actual materials are used as covering materials or veneers: the vinyl flooring covers the marine-ply construction of the flooring fragment form; the aluminium covers the cardboard tube and the imbuia is veneered over marine-ply.

Thus an interplay is established between pictorial and sculptural characteristics within a dynamic composition where the forms are predominantly sculptural, but where its wall-bound position, compositional structure, material construction and colour effects are motivated by pictorial considerations.



9.13.3

MIRROR I

930 x 990 x 360 mm

Jelutong, marine-ply, aluminium, cardboard, oil paint, polyurethane varnish, vinyl flooring, gutter bolts and brass screws.

In this work, the flooring fragment, diagram fragment and cylinder reappear from the TABLE constructions. The theme of the mirror is here used as a paradigm for painting. As in the TABLE constructions, so too here, these fragment-forms are realized as three-dimensional polyhedral forms. The perceptual experience of an actual mirror is that the actual space of the viewer is reflected in the flat surface of the mirror. Here, the fragment forms that were conceived of as being "seen-through" the table surface in the TABLE constructions, are now reflected from the mirror surface in a literal way, ie. they physically protrude from that surface. Whereas in the TABLE constructions, the fragment-forms and other forms are layered one upon the other, based on the intersecting spatial planes of Cubism, here the forms are clearly generated from the single surface/picture plane of the mirror. It is as though they burst out of the mirror surface, thus establishing a sculptural tension in the pictorial context of the MIRROR piece.

The cylinder is more precariously positioned in this piece than in TABLE I, it is in more danger of falling off the plane of flooring thrown up by the mirror. The cylinder is related to the surface that represents the mirror surface, in that it also has a "skin" of aluminium. This both suggests the origin of the cylinder (as plane made round) in the mirror surface, and holds it in place, visually connected to the mirror surface.

The relatively flat surface of the mirror contrasts with the protruding fragment forms which assume a sculptural identity because of their protrusion into physical space. This sculptural effect is tempered by their illusionistic skins. The illusionistically painted floor covering which appeared in its original form in TABLE I and the painterly diagram image press the sculptural form of these fragments back towards the mirror surface.

The painting of the diagram section appears as a section of the mirror construction that the fragment form covers; thus serving

to refigure the inner structure of the mirror and also to continue the sculptural frame of the mirror in a pictorial way. The strong illusionism of the vinyl flooring painting and the rough rendering of the diagram also refer to various degrees of pictorial representation.

The wooden staff enters into and is "reflected" out of the mirror surface. Its point of entry is hidden by the flooring fragment form. Its angle of entry is reflected by the inverse angle of its reflected half. The image of the twisted wooden staff, which has recurred throughout this body of work, has allusions to a sense of dynamic continuity. Here its sense of continuity is interrupted by the mirror surface, suggesting that it is moving through a different spatial plane; or as with a stick viewed partially in and out of water, it appears bent by the different medium in which it is seen. The "errors of vision" which Plato decried and on the grounds of which, dismissed painting, are here materialized in three-dimensional form, making it an image that is at once physical/sculptural and pictorial. A similar materialization of illusive/elusive image is evident in the "shadow" cast by the sculptural configuration. It is realized as a solid plane of wood material, painted to pictorially identify it as shadow.



9.13.4

MIRROR II

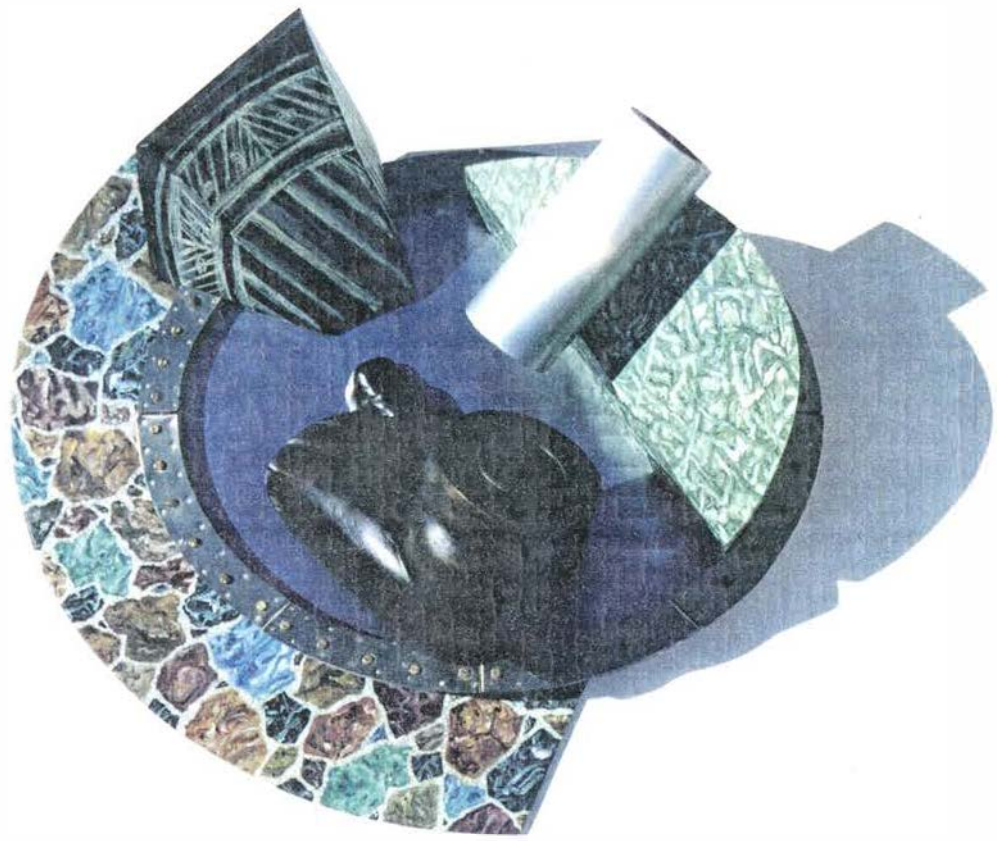
800 x 920 x 330 mm

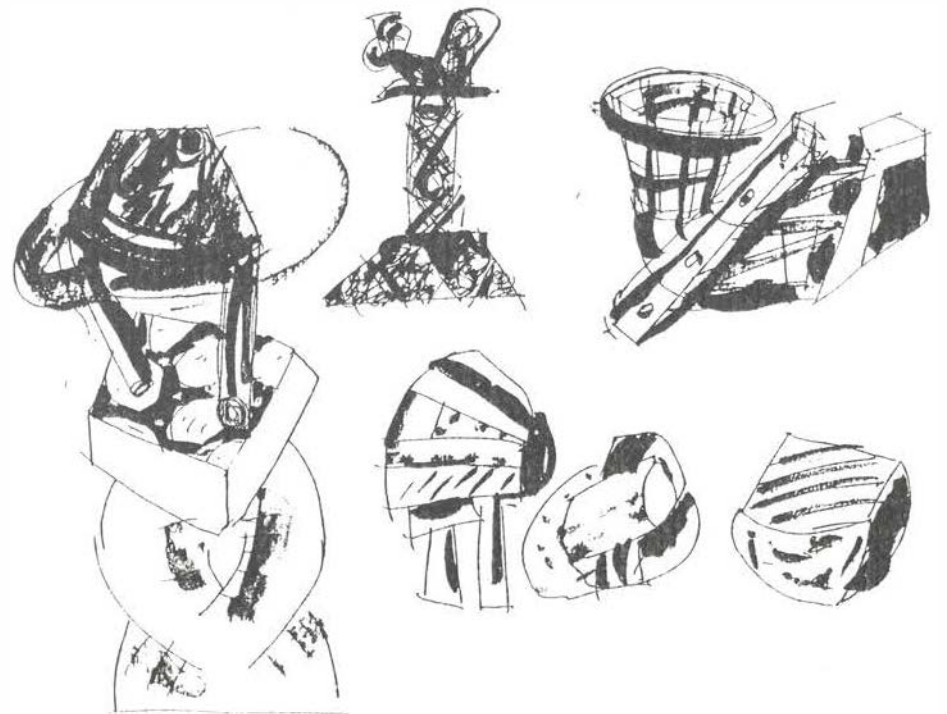
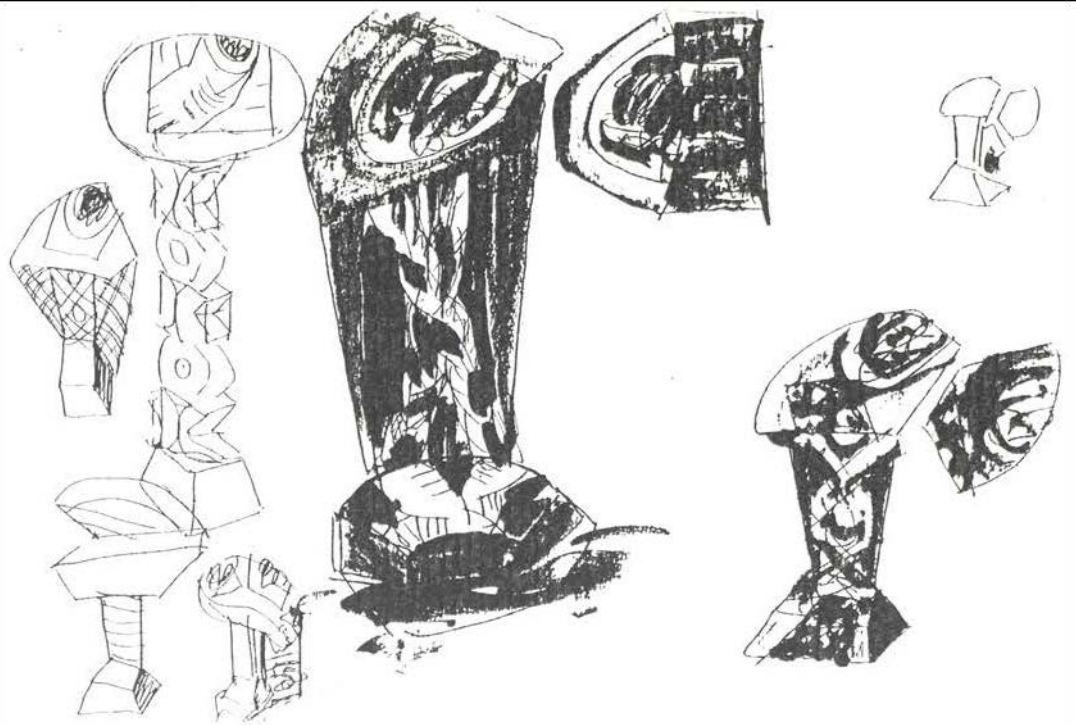
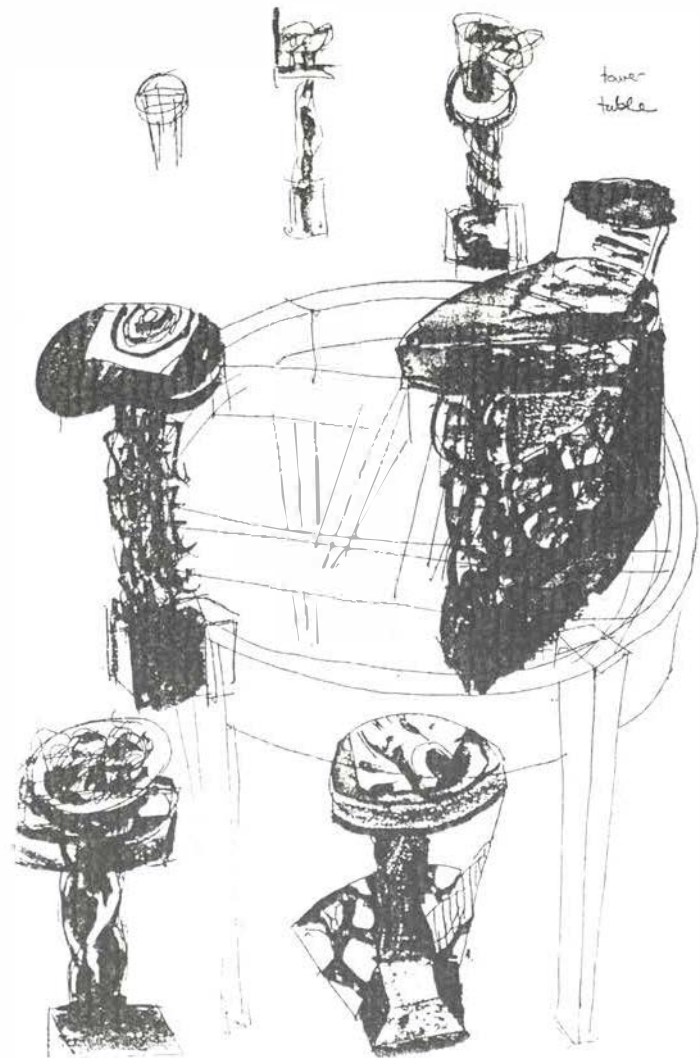
Jelutong, marine-ply, aluminium, cardboard, oil paint, polyurethane varnish, vinyl flooring, gutter bolts and brass screws.

The imagery of flooring fragment, diagram fragment and cylinder again appear in this work. The mirror surface "reflects" the polyhedral forms of the diagram fragment, a table surface fragment and the cylinder. Where the flooring fragment was reflected as a three-dimensional form protruding from the mirror surface in MIRROR I, here the flooring fragment appears behind the mirror, as though the mirror is seen on a floor plane. The fragment form reflected from the mirror surface is that of a formica table surface. Its outer edge conforms with that of the mirror edge, placing it clearly "in" the mirror reflection although its deep form projects outwards into physical space.

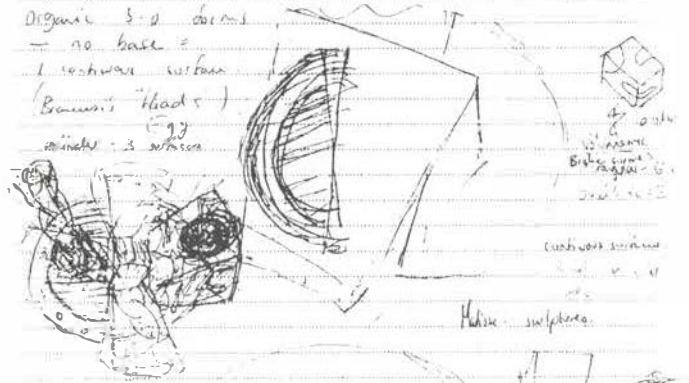
The sculptural image is that of the foot which appears in the paintings, RUPT I and RUPT II (9.9 and 9.10). Here, as with the wooden staff in MIRROR I, it is a fully rounded sculptural form that "enters into" the mirror surface. Unlike the staff it is not "reflected" back, but appears to be moving through the picture plane of the mirror. The foot also reinforces the spatial suggestiveness of the flooring, positioned behind the mirror.

The cylinder form is again in a precarious position; here "about to roll off" the table surface. As in TABLE II it is a smaller cylinder form from that in TABLE I and MIRROR I, again suggesting that it is further away from the viewer, in a pictorial sense, although its sculptural position places it physically close to the viewer.





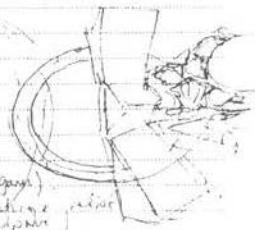
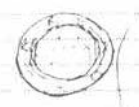
Digenic 3-D forms
 - no base =
 1. surface surface
 (Branco's "head")
 (egg)
 mainly: 3 surfaces



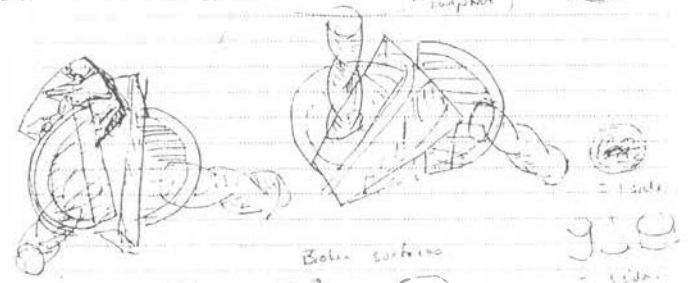
cube
 12 surfaces
 8 vertices
 6 faces

curved surface

White sulphure



1 surface 2 3-D surfaces in the round (spherical)
 more like a mirror & white related work (pale yellow color)
 sulphur



Black sulphure

1 side

3 3-D

2 sides

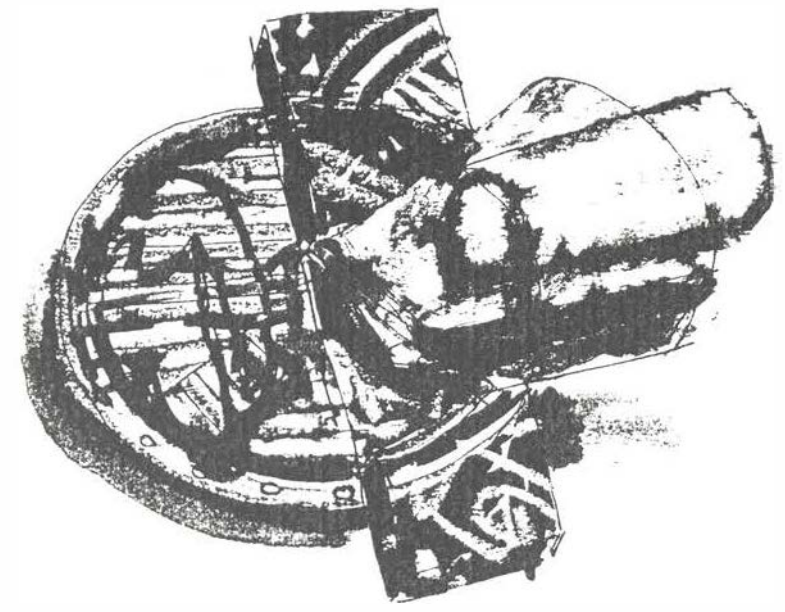


2 sides
 3-D surface

rectangular
 12 surfaces

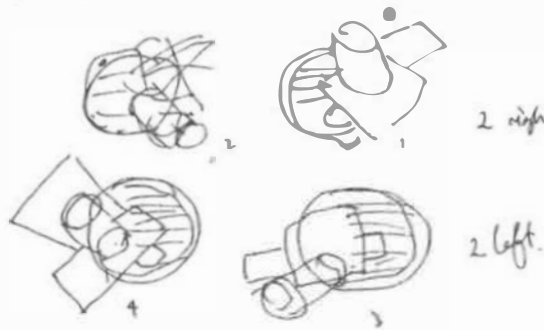
circle
 = 8 surfaces

MIRROR = 2
 sides



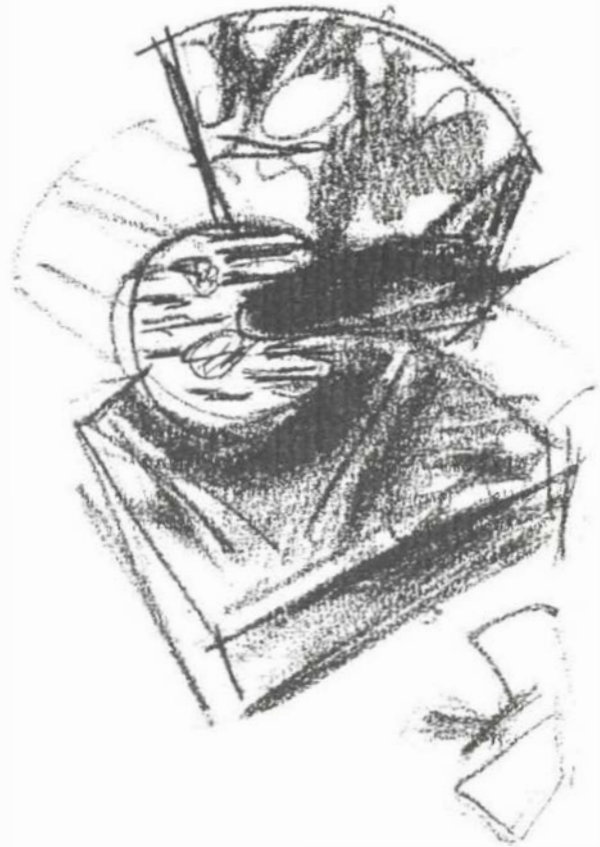
Mirror

4 POSITIONS - SHIFT POSITIONS, (MIRROR).



- Tube turns clockwise.
- 2 right
- "Plans" for mirror curved into gelatone and painted over - blacked.
- Floor (lino) on plywood piece.
- rectangular blockages under aluminium.
- 2 left
- "openings" pressed out in copper and nailed into wood.
- Spots - painted over 1-0 for steps.
- mirror decorations - aluminium with both - concrete.
- sculpture - black painted lino aluminium.

Make replicas of these using mostly the actual materials.



Tables:

Floor

Tables - container

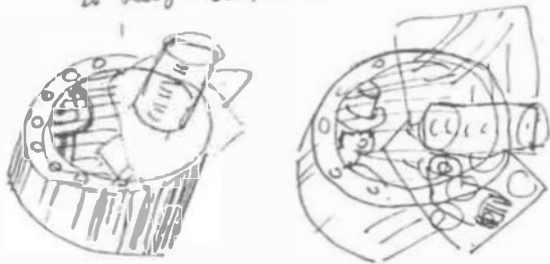
Food - large simple forms as rough sculpture.

DIVINATION DRAFT
Symmetry

Mirror:

cylinder - surface + form simultaneous - passage

Food - represented on 2-0 surface from 3-1 (cylinder).



9.14 A SERIES OF DRAWINGS

These drawings represent a potential area of further investigation, where the spatial constructs and imagery from the sculptural pieces can be explored in the two-dimensional media of drawing and painting.

9.14.1 SPLITTING IMAGE

850 x 1200 mm

Conté and chalk pastel on Ashrad cartridge

The diptych format is used to explore the concept of reflection on a two-dimensional surface. The image of the wooden staff enters into the mirror plane which is represented by the split between the two formats. The left hand side stands as the reflection of the right hand side.

The mirror image and the cylinder that has fallen off, and is set below the mirror, as well as a section of flooring, are all reflected on the left hand side. Where the mirror image and its reflected image meet, a contrasting curve of movement is generated; while the meeting of the floor fragment image and its reflected image results in a matching or joining, to form a whole image which is reminiscent of the table image from an earlier work, NIGHT AND DAY (6.1).



Denise Paulsd

Splitting Image. 1997

9.14.2

UNTITLED

850 x 595 mm

Chalk pastel and conté on Ashrad cartridge



9.14.3

UNTITLED

850 x 595 mm

Chalk pastel and conté on Ashrad cartridge



9.14.4

UNTITLED

850 x 595 mm

Chalk pastel and conté on Ashrad cartridge



9.15 PASSED VISION

1500 X 4800 mm

Three canvasses: each 1500 x 1400 mm

Oil on canvas

In this work the imagery from the MIRROR construction and grid paintings reappears and the pictorial convention of the uninterrupted picture plane is returned to, in order to explore the spatial constructs of the sculptural constructions in a pictorial context. The triptych format is used to generate a sequential effect. This implies a number of references to movement: the movement of the viewer from left to right and the movement of the imagery across the three canvasses. The imagery is derived from the MIRROR constructions and is repeated in the three canvasses, setting up an ambiguity as to whether one is viewing a sequence of different spatial positions of the imagery, or whether one is seeing a simultaneous presentation of three different views of the same still-life arrangement. This ambiguity is reinforced by the repetition of colour in the three compositions.

The surfaces were built up in the same manner as in RUPT I and RUPT II. A grid structure is also established in the paint material. Here the grid's position in relation to the edges of the format is shifted, producing a sense of movement or a difference in viewpoint. The planes of shadow which clamp the corners of the paintings are set in contrasting lines of movement to the grids, excepting for the middle canvas where the two coincide. These sustain a reading of a zig-zag configuration across the three canvasses.

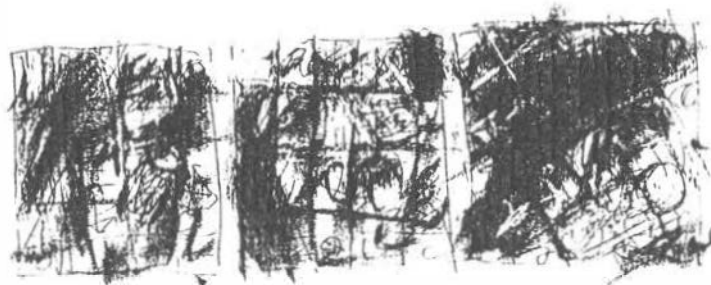
The image of a mirror (circular, seen at an angle or oval seen straight on) swings into the field of vision set up by the paintmarks which inscribe the grid structure and food imagery set into it. The simultaneous contrast of the purple linework of the mirror images clearly place it on top of, or in front of the grid and its imagery. Yet the mirror surface is elusive in that the paintmarks of the grid and food imagery can be seen through the lines that mark where its surface plane is.

The sense of movement across the three canvasses is further enhanced by the three cylinders/single cylinder in three views. The three positions imply a movement from the bottom in the first canvas, upwards in the second and then downwards in the

right hand canvas. Thus a movement across the three painted spaces is generated. Further movement away from, and towards, the viewer is implied by the different viewpoints from which the cylinder is rendered, as well as by the variations in scale. The paintmarks around the cylinders refer to the pictorial convention of suggesting movement; thus they appear to be spinning. This spinning effect is set in counterpoint to the ellipses of their dark interiors which read as still points in the three compositions. The shadow areas contain similar dark toned ellipses; these, however, set up a sense of pattern and movement in contrast to the still centres of the cylinders.

The title alludes to the three painted spaces and its imagery in a state of dynamic movement, as though passing in front of the field of vision of the viewer.





10. CONCLUSION

"You will tell me that you could expect from a painter other views on painting, and at the end I have only brought out some commonplace. To that I will respond that there are no new truths. The role of the artist, like that of a man (sic) of knowledge, is based on seizing hold of the familiar truths that have often been repeated to him, but which will take on a novelty for him and which he will make his own the day that he senses their profound meaning."
(Matisse, as quoted; Varnedoe 1990: 273)

Through the process of producing this body of work, I have attempted to investigate the metaphoric potential of the interface between two- and three-dimensional space. The motivation for this has been to arrive at a "working space" which will most effectively articulate a personal sense of experience. The theoretical and visual analysis of Modernist pictorial space has been a significant means of situating my work in relation to its conventions, while the work of Picasso has been the main touchstone of this investigation. I have attempted to interpret, in theory and in practice, what Picasso's Cubist explorations hold for my own exploration of the interface between pictorial and sculptural space.

Articulation of aspects of personal experience occurs through visual metaphor. I have considered that spatial relationships and the perception of these in the conventions of painting and sculpture, is where visual metaphor, relevant to personal experience, is engendered. Thus, metaphor has been approached intuitively, through the process of formulating and making the different pieces. It has therefore been important to establish and sustain a symbiotic relationship between the various media and their application, in order to stimulate the ideas for, and realization of, the different pieces. This has proved to be a fruitful point of departure, and thus a "working space" for future work has been established; viz. to work in a sculptural context, where the pictorial is consciously kept in play.

The loss of both of my parents during the period of this work has had a profound influence on the metaphoric thrust of the works.

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