To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Richard Allen Fisher entitled "How and Why Calculated Artistic Revelations Maintain Individual and Social Relevance: A Philosophical Exposé of a Methodical Process by Which Art Can Become a Natural Activity of All People." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Art.

C. Kermit Ewing

C. Kermit Ewing, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Walter H. Stevens

W. E. Lloyd

Carl C. Sublett

Accepted for the Council:

Hilton A. Smith

Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

# HOW AND WHY CALCULATED ARTISTIC REVELATIONS MAINTAIN INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL RELEVANCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPOSÉ OF A METHODICAL PROCESS BY WHICH ART CAN BECOME A NATURAL ACTIVITY OF ALL PEOPLE

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## ABSTRACT

Many disparate objects have similar appearances because of similarity in shapes, lines, colors, or textures. If the objects are removed from their respective contents, or have had their contents interchanged, the perceiver experiences the shock of dislocation. New formal-objective content and new subjective content can result. Contrast and shock can be used as an educational device. The author proposes that such a device may have two consequences. First, it may provide for the reevaluation of elements which represent an identifiable object. Secondly, it may force the observer to question his own definition of reality.

The author has developed a visual art method in which the participant is exposed to contrast and shock and challenged to create his own artistic composition relating content and form to his own satisfaction. It is the contention of this paper that this type of activity stimulates the audience to make artistic decisions. Such a method has educational potential, as well as potential to decrease the artist's alienation from his audience and to provide a more democratic enjoyment of art.

Ultimately, it is concluded that a similarity of development exists between the artist as a creator and the individual as a creative member of society. Therefore, the more an individual experiences the disciplines necessary in artistic creation, the greater his ability to create order in his personal and social environment. The method

presented here provides a means for the individual to experience such artistic creation personally, and thereby enhance his understanding of the artistic process. It further allows a spiritual continuity of artist, creation, and audience.

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# CHAPTER I

## THE CONTENT AND FORM ANALYSIS NETWORK: A METHOD BY WHICH AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT IN THE ART WORK IS SO GREAT THAT AUDIENCE MEMBERS ARE ACTIVE IN PRODUCING IT

Metaphysically, what separates the appearance of a long range view of a geodesic dome and a close up view of a dandelion seed pod? If the appearances and sizes of these two objects are equalized by photographing, enlarging or diminishing, and printing them so their structural elements are proportionally equal in size; and the stem of the dandelion pod cut out and placed on the bottom of the geodesic dome and the environment of the dome altered to one befitting a dandelion pod, then many people would identify the newly created object as a dandelion pod instead of a geodesic dome at the top of a stem.

Philosophically, if one agrees with the great symbolic interactionist W. I. Thomas' belief that what is perceived to be real is real in its consequences, then, like the simple visual play on forms just described, every dissolve technique employed in films, every simile or metaphor utilized in literary forms, every double entendre mentioned in conversations, every trompe l'oeil rendered in the visual arts, every reversed court order implimented in law cases, every white lie manipulated in expected social conduct, every degree of psychic or aesthetic distance juggled in theater productions, every cross-bred fruit or animal produced in the biological sciences, every chemical compound

developed in chemistry experiments and every situational dilemma created in dreams become surrealistic experiences. A surreal experience is one in which something real occurs in an unreal context or something unreal in a real context.

A visual art method that allows all people to both subjectively (content analysis), and objectively (form analysis), question and evaluate meanings, structures and appearances of reality and then actually create and own the artifact is the essence of a formalist approach to art evaluation. The above method involves a democratic concept of art and my work as a graduate student. Subjectively, for my content and form analysis network (a network is here defined as a series of individual compositions with four interchangeable parts per composition), I have chosen to use formally related, readily identifiable randomly selected objects because of their direct associative potential with a mass audience. By the means of photography I have standardized this network of several subjectively unrelated compositions that are individually coherent and readable. There are four parts in each composition: (1) the subject of the composition, (2) part of this subject that makes its identity certain, (3) its logical, expected foreground, and (4) background components. Each is individually mounted so it can be interchanged and placed into juxtaposition with any of these other parts of the compositions in the network. This juxtapositioning creates surreal imagery which has

great shock and contrast value. Edmund Burke Feldman says in his book Varieties of Visual Experience that shock is believed to have an educational effect that:

> . . . it obliges the viewer to reorganize his customary habits of perception in the act of experiencing the work. Behind this interest in shock is the conviction that man and society are hopelessly enmeshed in tradition, mainly wrong modes of thinking and acting. Presumably, fantastic art helps the individual to break away from inherited forms of thought and perception and opens him to the possibility of new kinds of behavior. Oddly enough, surrealist and fantastic art can be regarded as having an educational purpose: it quite literally seeks to change behavior, a goal which is one of the fundamental objectives of any system of education.

Objectively, my development of a visual art method allows and encourages people to question the structural physical appearances of "reality" and eventually own a graphic artifact. This aesthetic experience is also representative of the basic procedure of the formalist analysis to art and a democratic concept of art. (To experience the procedure of this method, please use the photographs in the pocket on the back cover (Plates I and II).)

By interchanging the units of the network, the participator can discover the vast potential in different combinations of given arrangements of line, shape, mass, light and dark, texture and color. He is encouraged to experiment with space, scale, and different degrees of abstraction.

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[1] Edmund Burke Feldman, Varieties of Visual Experience (New York, 1973), p. 262.

The subjective and objective implications and possibilities are fantastic both in descriptive and numerical terms. I have developed this project in order to relate some of the experiences of both the spiritual-subjective and physical-objective analysis involved in the processes of becoming an artist. The processes include those of:

1. Decision making,
2. Evaluation of self and relationship of self to society,
3. Development of a philosophy of life,
4. Art and the relationship of the two,
5. Development of a workable definition of reality, and
6. Adoption of a legitimate purpose based on a historical need.

Many of these questions are faced in the development and execution of this project. If the same can happen to an audience, then the purpose of this project will be realized. The audience is confronted with the same procedure that confronts the artist: locating artistic truths. However, the audience must find its own answers--only the means are provided.

The project's end product and its purposes have been described and illustrated. Reiterating, the project has two specific functions. First, it maintains that an educational purpose is realized when a viewer-participator interchanges the panels and makes cognitive associations about the formal and subjective elements that he is dealing with. Secondly, it argues that each composition remains a coherent art work arranged from visual contact with the parts or by choice of parts sight-unseen from lists.

I would now like to give an account of the developmental means of this project. This includes my philosophical, social, historical and technical considerations. The following four chapters will deal with the forementioned considerations.

## CHAPTER II

## PERSONAL PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### I. FORMULATED PERSEVERANCE OVER CHAOS: THE ARTIST AS PROPHET AND THE ARTIST'S WORK AS REVELATION

> In order to be an artist it is necessary to seize, hold, and transform experience into memory, memory into expression, material into form. Emotion for an artist is not everything; he must also know his trade and enjoy it, understand all the rules, skills, forms, and conventions whereby nature—the shrew—can be tamed and subjected to the contract of art. The passion that consumes the dilettante serves the true artist: the artist is not mauled by the beast, he tames it.[2]

> . . . Art can raise man up from a fragmented state into that of a whole, integrated being. Art enables man to comprehend reality, and not only helps him bear it but increases his determination to make it more human and more worthy of mankind. Art is itself a social reality.[3]

I have adopted the theory that an artist is one who imposes himself upon chaos. His impositions seem to define, describe and point out his philosophy of life, of art and the relationship of the two. More importantly, the process of becoming an artist is seemingly revealed in these impositions. It is my conjecture and hope, then, that expressions of this process, and artist's work, can be a valuable, documented, inspirational, instructive formula for those potential artists still

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[2]Ernst Fischer, The Necessity of Art: A Marxist Approach (Baltimore, 1963), p. 9.

[3]Ibid., p. 46.

encased in chaos. There are three twentieth century novelists-artists whose combined outlooks describe an almost syllogistic formula for becoming an artist. Each one builds on a precept that the one before establishes as a basic truth. D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce and Joyce Cary are "artists" whose respective "truths," "advancements" and "creations" evoke a spiritual and physical analysis of the process of becoming an artist.

D. H. Lawrence seems to deal with the primary conflict of one striving to become an "artist." His works illustrate the necessity for people to gain first, a sexual identity and fulfillment and, secondly, an aspiration and realization of a duty goal-identification with some kind of work. An illustrative example of the sex-duty ritual and ideal is seen in The Rainbow. In the book the character of Will records the major Lawrencian truth (contribution) to the formula of becoming an artist.

> In the "darkness and death" of their [Will and his wife's] sensual experience there is no conscious intimacy, no tenderness of love. Their love has become a sensuality "violent and extreme as death." It is all mere lust, "a passion of death." But this destructive Dionysic or Aphrodisic ecstacy, deathly in itself, has a highly important place in a total marriage relationship—for it is only through the fierce passion of sensuality that one is purified into singleness and separateness of being. Will had not so far been liberated into his pure "otherness" of being. Now, having at last been reduced to his single self through a satisfactory sensual consummation with Anna, he can begin "to find himself free to attend to the outside life as well." His fulfilled intimate life sets another man in him free. . . He has "at length, from his profound sensual activity, developed a real

> positive self." . . . He is very happy and keen in his new public spirit. . . . He is able to make his way toward individual expression and form."[4]

Many times Lawrence's characters deal with the sex-duty fulfillment in idealistic terms. This causes unresolved conflict when played against the dogma contained in reality. In such works as The Virgin and The Gypsy and Women in Love, unwed characters are striving for the sex and duty fulfillment—the Ideal—the plan of action process by which the character becomes a creator of a particular mode of life. Accomplishment of this ideal is a compromise because the characters know that they must face the real world's (society, religion, state, etc.) evaluation of their actions. Lawrence thus illustrates the primary truth that an artistic order is achieved when one gains sex and duty identification and fulfillment. However, it is also evident that two dilemmas remain: one, the characters are faced with the critical analysis-(Ideal vs. Real) of their lives and two, they are isolated from many institutions as a result of their decisions.

Joyce, like Lawrence, must realize the sex-duty ideal in order to impose himself upon life. However Joyce doesn't stop there. He carries the process one step further. He deals squarely both with the dilemma of the Critical analysis (Real vs. Ideal) and the problem of isolation. This imposition can be labeled artistic advancement. The scene in A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man in which Stephen sees the girl on the beach seems to complete or become the climax for a

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[4]Yudhistar, Conflict in the Novels of D. H. Lawrence (Edinburgh, 1969), pp. 139-140.

thesis—antithesis—synthesis type evaluation of his real (experienced) and ideal (abstractly analytical) life. In this scene, Stephen shows his first real identity. Up until this scene he was always contemplating suffering, analyzing the dogma and events that his parents, school officials, Irish heritage, church and friends had imposed upon him. After the scene with the girl on the beach, he progresses to the synthesis stage and realized that he could and should dominate his own existence and begin to contemplate how he will impose himself on a life of chaos. The girl became a kind of symbol for art, truth and beauty. She seemingly became the epiphany that made him the artist. Art would become the method by which he could impose himself on the life of chaos. This scene is thus the "revelation" that master minds the three stage development of Stephen as an artist—a unified man capable of understanding existence, truth, beauty, the world and the universe. He has found a place in each one of these entities. The lyrical, epical and dramatic forcefully describe the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, respectively, involved in Stephen's struggle to become an artist. Joyce says that "life is not to be criticized, but to be faced and lived."[5] He also contends that "the role of the artist as creator is similar to that of a priest (in the real world) and to that of God (in the ideal world)."[6]

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[5]George Quasha, James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man (New York, 1965), p. 97.

[6]Ibid., p. 97.

The final stage in the process of becoming an artist is illustrated by Cary's rendering of the character of Gulley Jimson. Gulley achieves the ultimate artistic accomplishment. He transcends into the realm of art philosophy:

> Gulley refers to himself as "the old horse," that is, as having an especial kind of authority by virtue of his calling. When he gets his first letter of inquiry from A. W. Alabaster, he says to himself "Old horse, you are now famous." He refers to God by the same term. God, too, is the horse; and in so far as Gulley is an artist, he is God.[7]

As the third stage representative of the process of becoming an artists, Gulley can only be described as a surrealist and suridealist. He thus becomes synonymous with the term "artistic creator."

> Despite his sense of separateness and despite his personal war with his London, his England and his people, Gulley has no "Crusoe" longings. He is sophisticated, urbane, dependent; and he thinks himself as a seer and prophet. He comprehends the shape of human destiny as a series of cycles, of creation and recreation in which the artist plays a seminal and lonely but not single role.[8]

This three part example of perseverance over chaos termed artistic order—artistic accomplishment is a formula that should be identified, labeled, utilized and perpetuated. Philosophically, "Marxism" is the ideology and methodology that closely parallels this presented formula developed by the description of the processes of becoming an artists. The synthesis stage in the dialetic triad like the synthesis stage in the process of becoming an artist is the most important because it

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[7]Andrew Wright, Afterword in The Horse's Mouth by Joyce Cary (New York, 1944), p. 349.

[8]Ibid., p. 350.

connotes "the removal of contradictions, reconciliation with reality, identification of subject and object, paradise regained."[9] A specification of the synthesis stage of both the general—Marxist philosophy of the dialetic triad and the specific—the applied example of the process of dominance over chaos is the attributive characteristic of community and social responsibility.

> The major task of a socialist society, where the "art market" is no longer supplied with commodities mass-produced by capitalist speculators, is therefore twofold: to lead the public towards a proper enjoyment of art, that is to say, to arouse and stimulate their understanding; and to emphasize the social responsibility of the artist. That responsibility cannot mean that the artist accepts the dictates of the dominant taste, that he writes, paints, or composes as so-and-so decrees: but it does mean that, instead of working in a vacuum, he recognizes that he is ultimately commissioned by society. There are many cases, as Mayakovsky pointed out long ago, when the general social commission does not coincide with the explicit commission of any particular social institution. A work of art does not have to be understood and approved by everyone from the start. It is not the function of art to break down open doors but rather to open locked ones. But when the artist discovers new realities, he does not do so for himself alone; he does it also for others, for all those who want to know what sort of a world they live in, where they come from, and where they are going. He produces for a community. This fact has been lost sight of in the capitalist world, but it was taken for granted in ancient Athens and in the age of Gothic art. The desirable synthesis—freedom of the artist's personality in harmony with the collective—cannot be achieved all at once; it requires much undogmatic thought and experimentation. Every great revolution is an explosive synthesis; but disturbance in the dynamic equilibrium always occur again and again, and new synthesis have to be reestablished under changing conditions. The romantic and individualistic revolt of the young Mayakovsky drew its great content from the Revolution; personal and collective experiences were merged into one. Such unity is not static

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[9]Ernst Fischer, p. 54.

and cannot be preserved, least of all by decree. But socialist art must always draw strength from this very task of re-establishing unity, so that finally, through a slow and painstaking process, all the symptoms of alienation are eradicated.[10]

[10] Ibid., pp. 209-10.

# CHAPTER III

## SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### I. THE PRESENT SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION

#### The Need for Artistic Perseverance and Revelation to Instigate Change

> Art is itself a social reality. Society needs the artist, that supreme sorcerer, and it has a right to demand of him that he should be conscious of his social function.[11]

The philosophy backing the development of a mass produced, mass available "democratic" art would not be justifiable without examining and analyzing the attitude of the mass audience. This attitude basically is the catalyst and inspiration for my work. I have been proposing that the incentive for the artistic process comes from "a twofold social mission: the direct one imposed by a city, a corporation or a social group; and the indirect one arising from an experience which mattered to [the artist], i.e., from his own social consciousness."[12]

To identify and document the current attitude about our social condition now in 1974, I wish to use the analyzed lyrics of a pop song written in 1970 that I feel is the best representative expression of the present attitude. Also, I am identifying this attitude as expressed in a popular song instead of that expressed in the visual arts because

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[11] Ibid., p. 47.

[12] Ibid., p. 47.

no withstanding, identifiable art movement has developed since the beginning of the 1970's. Historically speaking, Concept, Process, Environmental and Performance Art seem to have become the end of artistic advancement and the casuality of a trend of nostalgic retrospectives.

The song is "Never Been To Spain" by Hoyt Axton:

Well I never been to Spain
But I kind-a like the music
Say the ladies are insane there
And they sure know how to use it
They don't abuse it—they'll never lose it
I can't refuse it.

Well I never been to England
But I kind-a like the Beatles
Well I headed to Las Vegas
Only made it out to Needles
Oh, Can you feel it—must be real—
It feels so good—It feel so good.

Well I never been to heaven
But I've been to Oklahoma
Well they tell me I was born there
But I really don't remember
In Oklahoma—Not Arizona
What does it matter—What does it matter.

Well I never been to England
But I kind-a like the Beatles
Well I headed to Las Vegas
Only made it out to Needles
Oh, Can you feel it—It feels like music.

Well I never been to Spain
But I kind-a like the music
Say the ladies are insane there
And they sure know how to use it
They don't abuse it—they'll never lose it
I can't refuse it.

Well I never been to heaven.
But I've been to Oklahoma
Well they tell me I was born there
But I really don't remember
In Oklahoma—Not Arizona
What does it matter—What does it matter?

With the apathetic rhetorical question "What does it matter?—What does it matter?" it becomes evident that interest in and desire for involvement have been victimized by a continuous bombardment of shocking events that create deeply rooted and widespread disillusionment. This disillusionment kills interest, reaction and motivation. The Vietnam War and multiple assassinations are examples of probable causes of this stigmatizing attitude. The third stanza exhibits in full the song's usefulness as an indicator of this deteriorated philosophical and psychological state of individuals and society at large. For the responsible artist, this prevailing attitude indicates a need for him to initiate change. ". . . In a decaying society, art, if it is truthful, must also reflect decay. And unless it wants to break faith with its social function, art must show the world as changeable, and help to change it."[13]

Perhaps prospective and progressive change has already begun to occur if artists realize the positive educational potential of shocking events. At present, according to the lyrics of "Never Been To Spain" people are again in a very primal, vulnerable, removed stage where attitudes, interests and perceptions have been dulled by too many resentful, existential realities. The positive side of this detachment can be realized when new realities can be developed and evaluated without preconceptions. Information from art accumulated aesthetically without standards and conclusions dictated by historical, psychological,

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[13]Ibid., p. 48.

mythological, archetypal and exponential modes can be a new beginning for art, the individual and society.

Formalist Art Criticism: the Method by Which Artistic Perseverance and Revelation Can Bring Change

> It is clear that the arm of criticism will not replace the criticism of arms. Material force can only be overthrown by material force; but theory itself becomes a material force when it has seized the masses.[14]

In terms of being responsible to society an evaluation of the artists, their philosophies, their roles, their works and their audiences reveals two distinct failures of art since 1945. The first failure is created by the elitist nature* of the artist. There is a gap between the intellectual experience and the life experience of the artist and those experiences of the mass public.[15] For example, just as the abstract expressionist is considered elite because of the intensity of his presence within his work, the pop artist has the same tendency because of his use of technological, industrial, urban, commercialized methods that destroy knowledge of his presence in the finished product

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[14]Richard Wasson, "New Marxism Criticism: Introduction," College English, 34 (November, 1972), p. 172.

*Since successful artists are the people who have successfully formulated a workable method in which to deal with chaos, it proceeds that they are the ones who should be responsible and take the initiative to try to dispense this knowledge to all people. Many artists are elitist and fail to do this.

[15]Gregoire Müller, The New Avant-garde (California, 1966), p. 23.

and because of his responses to an external reality that causes the work to remain highly individual.[16] Thus works produced through this sophisticated, elevated intellectualism and perceptiveness alienate the artist. This alienation creates the second failure, which is the overt tendency by each art movement to be incongruent in regarding the aesthetic truths established by the prior movements. Instead of using a system based on creative critical analysis, the artists, being so alienated and independent, act with the philosophy that art, concepts, themes, forms, experiences, and notions can spring readily into the intellectual domain of the vast public. Clearly stated, the dilemma is this: although recent art movements achieve existence with a minimal amount of historical, psychological, mythological, archetypal and exponential roots, they require some dependable mode of analysis, evaluation, criticism or their existence has no logical relationship or importance to any audience. Thus no purpose for existence is forthcoming. At present, the artist, his identifying movement and the vast prospective audience seem to have different sets of philosophical and physical aesthetics. However, art has now evolved to the point that it is not

> . . . the privilege of a few people but a natural activity of every human being; that a genuine culture depends less on the rare geniuses than on the creative life of the average citizen; and that art is an indispensable tool in dealing with the tasks of being. Art is considered one of the ways of producing mature, complete, and happy people.[17]

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[16] John Rublowsky, Pop Art (New York, 1965), p. 3.

[17] Rudolf Arnheim, Toward a Psychology of Art (California, 1966), p. 337.

> Paradoxically, since the nineteenth century, art has been undergoing a process of accelerated changes. Aesthetic theories developed and were replaced by new ones at a pace faster than the public's taste and understanding could develop. . . . But despite the validity of the intent, [this] soon contributed to the widening of the distance between the artist and the public. In order to support and to promote avant-garde art, a whole structure had to be created; galleries, critics, and later museums, formed a system of efficiently supported artistic experiments by exposing the artists to the few people who were able to appreciate their work. The nature of this system was determined by an art that required a sophisticated cultural background and whose aim was to reach the individual in his home.[18]

In The Making of a Counter Culture, Theodore Roszak predicts "...'that in the coming generation, large numbers of students will begin to reject this reductive humanism, demanding a far deeper examination of that dark side of the human personality which has for so long been written off by our dominant culture as mystical.'"[19]

> The real issue is the breaking of a whole tradition of thought that has created a gap between intellectual experience and life experience, a gap that does not exist in the societies that have succeeded in integrating everything within one unified realm of experience. This is not only an issue for the artist, but for everybody, because our civilization has reached a stage in which, as R. D. Laing pointed out in The Politics of Experience, "we do not need theories so much as the experience that is the source of theory."[20]

The systematic return to basic experience represents the very essence of my content and form analysis network. It aspires to equalize the artist, the artistic act, and the art audience, and to make them interdependent and inseparable. This creates a balance of power between the three.

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[18]Grégoire Müller, p. 27.

[19]Ibid., p. 23.

[20]Ibid., p. 23.

Perhaps the most important aspect of my purge of art (its meaning and form are redefined) is the new rules established for the mass audience. Under these new circumstances, the ability and desirability of the audience to analyze art has utmost importance and meaning. It is not important at this late date to historically check and see where the artist and the art audience became divorced--where the aristocratic and democratic ideals in art were established. It, however, is urgently important for the viability of art to have a system of checks and balances that keeps the artist and the art audience dependent upon each other, that maintains a neutrality between the aristocratic and democratic ideals. At this uncertain time in the history of art (uncertain because of Cyborg or Post Kinetic Art's warning of the possibility that an irreversible technology will obliterate organic life and substitute for it very sophisticated forms of synthetic life[21]), the critical analysis of art has as much importance and as much creative aesthetic potential as the ability of an artist to produce an aesthetic work of art. Because Formalist art criticism seeks to

> . . . find the key to the structure and meaning of the [art] work--a key that inevitably reveals itself as necessary to the experience of the work as an art form . . . the heart of the matter ought to be, quite simply: What is the [art] work, what are its shape and effect, and how do these come about? In short, [the formalists] search for the form, necessary for a real understanding of the work.[22]

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[21]Jack Burnham, Beyond Modern Sculpture (New York, 1967), p. 371.

[22]Wilfred L. Guerin, A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature (New York and London, 1966), p. 45.

The use of formalist art criticism not only allows the mass public to reach the level of intelligence and perception that has been traditionally solely held and reserved by the "elite" artist, but it transcends the traditional treatment of both the artist and the audience. Formalist art criticism allows the "audience" to become the artist--aesthetics creator and the "artist" to become a provider of the tools for artistic creation. I believe that this complete, interwoven dependency by artist on audience and audience on artist achieved by the acceptance and use of Formalist criticism will be the salvation of art.

# CHAPTER IV

## HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### I. SYSTEMATIC INCONGRUENCE AND ALIENATING ELITISM VERSUS CONSTRUCTIVE TRANSITION AND MASS ACTIVE PARTICIPATION—THE DILEMMA OF MODERN ART

> . . . all art is conditioned by time, and represents humanity in so far as it corresponds to the ideas and aspirations, the needs and hopes of a particular historical situation. But, at the same time, art goes beyond this limitation and, within the historical moment, also creates a moment of humanity, promising constant development.[23]

Usually the artist recognized a twofold social mission: the direct one imposed by a city, a corporation, or a social group; and the indirect one arising from an experience which mattered to him, i.e., from his own social consciousness. The two missions did not necessarily coincide, and when they conflicted with each other too often, it was a sign of increasing antagonisms within that particular society. But, generally, an artist who belonged to a coherent society and to a class that was not yet an impediment to progress did not feel it as any loss of artistic freedom if a certain range of subjects was prescribed to him. Such subjects were very rarely imposed by an individual patron's whim, but usually by tendencies and traditions deeply rooted in the people. By his original handling of a given subject, an artist could express his individuality and at the same time portray the new processes

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[23]Ernst Fischer, p. 12.

> taking place within society. His ability to bring out essential features of his time and to disclose new realities was the measure of his greatness as an artist.[24]

An evaluation of the six major art movements since 1945 requires both an innate ability to suppress the "future shock" syndrome and a workable vantage point for understanding. The plan for understanding that I wish to utilize is a thesis-antithesis-synthesis progression. This chapter is divided into three categories that respectively correspond to thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The thesis section most appropriately deals with the artist (his role and his work) of each of the six movements. The antithesis category identifies the nature of each of the six art movements by evaluating each movement under specified criteria. The synthesis projects and speculates on the strengths, weaknesses and possibilities of art's existence stemming from the heritage of the past thirty years.

## The Theses

A person who is accomplished at being able to freely participate in life and who has accumulated certain reactions and feelings that he can transcribe from his physical and psychological self and facilities into/onto another medium can be called an abstract expressionist. He allows feelings and emotions to be transferred, transmigrated and lent to visual representation. Whether his role takes the form of

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[24]Ibid., p. 47.

De Kooning's "psychic improvisation,"[25] Franz Kline's "particular emotion,"[26] Arshile Gorky's "continuous dynamic,"[27] Mark Rothkos' "portrait of an idea,"[28] Adolph Gottlieb's "realism of our time"-"emotional truth,"[29] Robert Motherwell's "content of art (as) feeling,"[30] Hans Hoffmann's "awareness as a visual experience"[31] or Jackson Pollock's "physical participation"/"inner reality,"[32] the abstract expressionist found

> . . . his special vocabulary by turning within, by giving palpable expression to an interior vision that occurs only in the creative imagination of the artist. This is "sensibility painting" carried to its ultimate refinement. Personal, intense, lyrical--abstract expressionism provided the perfect idiom for expressing an esthetic truth that reflected a particular moment in time and history.[33]

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[25]Phrases constructed from an evaluation of: Irving N. Sandler, "Abstract Expressionism," Art Since Mid-Century (New York, 1971); Barbara Rose, Readings in American Art Since 1900 (New York, Washington, 1968); Edward Lucie-Smith, Late Modern (New York and Washington, 1969); Haftman, Painting in the Twentieth Century (New York, 1960).

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]John Rublowsky, Pop Art (New York, 1965), p. 3.

The extreme diversity between the abstract expressionist, his role and his work, and the pop artist and his cause must be the epitome of avant-garde shock. In opposition to the abstract expressionist, a Pop artist reaches out to his world for aesthetics. In relationship to Abstract Expressionism, Pop artists exhibit the ultimate in antisensibility. They take their esthetic from the brute presence of the objects they depict. Pop is depersonalized and anonymous.[34]

Just as the abstract expressionist is considered an elitist because of the intensity of his presence within his work, the pop artist has the same tendency because of his use of technological, industrial, urban, commercialized methods that destroy knowledge of his presence in the finished product and because of his responses to an external reality that causes the work of the pop artist to remain highly individual.[35]

There is even incongruence in many of the artists' statements about the relationship of pop art and abstract expressionism.

> DeKooning himself is reported to have said that as far as the Pop artists are concerned, "I am on one mountain, and they are on another."[36]

> Jim Dine says of his work, and of the new painting, "I don't believe there was a sharp break and this is replacing Abstract Expressionism. I believe this is the natural course of things . . . I tie myself to Abstract Expressionism like fathers and

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[34]Ibid., p. 4.

[35]Ibid., p. 4.

[36]Mario Amaya, Pop Art and After (New York, 1965), p. 45.

> sons." Only Robert Indiana appears to find that the new art "springs newborn out of a boredom with Abstract Expressionism which, by its own aesthetic logic, is the END of art, the glorious pinnacle of the long pyramidal creative process."[37]

The Op artist creates another kind of inconsistency in the advancement of Modern Art. He emerges as a relief character who causes a gap in the vigorous problem solving momentum that had been generated by Abstract Expressionists and Pop artists. Because of a great void in both the physical and philosophical content, the period of Op art seems to be nothing more than a "rest period", a "cathing-up" period or a "sit-down-and-take-it-all-in" period. Op artists seem to show nothing more than a more precise and restricted study of the technical exploitations that the Pop artists initiated. There are two tendencies of Op or Kinetic art which both oppose and reinforce one another.

> One is the tradition of showmanship. Much Kinetic art is "exhibition art". Its ambitions are environmental. It aims to bombard the spectator with new experiences. The greatest triumphs scored by op artists/kinetic artists have been in large, collective exhibitons, such as the "Lumiere et Mouvement" show held at the Musee d'Art Moderne in Paris in the summer and autumn of 1967. Here the sheer number of artists and the spectacular nature of some of the works on view, tended to disguise the extreme narrowness of many of the individual contributions. . . . The other tradition is that of scientific or pseudo-scientific research, which is typified by the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel, founded in Paris in 1959, as a gesture of defiance towards the then triumphant fashion for informal abstraction. The group (was) much under the influence of Vasarely and (was) particularly affected by his tenet that the artist should be as far as possible anonymous, that the work and not the individual should speak.[38]

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[37]Ibid., p. 45.

[38]Edward Lucie-Smith, Late Modern (New York, Washington, 1969), p. 188.

This anonymity possesses the same elitism as that of Pop.

The Minimal artists invent even a more alogical value system in the "progression" of modern art. "The Minimal artist does not think in terms of absolute values."[39] ". . . (He) has to create new notions of scale, space, containment, shape and object. He must reconstruct the relationship between art as object and between object and man. . . . The (Minimal) artist is more immediately involved in daily concerns: Vietnam, technological development, sociology, and philosophy are all subjects of immediate importance."[40]

"Reducing the number of factors dealt with in any particular work of art in order to zero in better on how they are used most directly in a visual medium is the task undertaken by the Minimal Artist. This is an attack on meaning, first, because what he is attempting is the elimination of any and all experimental meanings used in forming the meaning itself, and secondly, he is examining and manipulating the means itself, namely the visual elements, in order to clarify the nature of the function in experience."[41] The Minimal artist also carries a nihilistic campaign against language. Because of the opinions that words restrict experiences as well as develop and organize them, that people become slaves to the limitations imposed on them by the use of language while,

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[39]Gregory Battock, Minimal Art, A Critical Anthology (New York, 1968), p. 26.

[40]Ibid., p. 26.

[41]Ibid., p. 202.

at the same time, that they organize themselves in essential ways because of it,[42] the Minimal artist attempts to avoid this dilemma "by a more direct confrontation with the essential elements of perception (itself)."[43] And because "the meaning of a word is determined by the way in which it is employed and how it is applied,"[44] the Minimal artist "focuses on sensations based on direct perception of objects, which in painting are the lines, colors, planes, forms, and not a symbolic interpretation of them, as when a line is used to express a subjective emotional state of the artist."[45]

> Abstraction in language is necessary when we think in hypothetical terms. We can refer to the future or to the past, to time and to space--elements without physical substance. But the more the abstraction, the less there is reference to actual events and the chance of valid testing. Unquestioning acceptance of abstract definitions, for instance, when applied to whole groups of people, mountains prejudices and circumvents the ability to relate to actual situations except in hypothetical terms. (Minimal Art attempts to avoid the escalation of abstraction by dealing with the nature of perceptions directly.)[46]

Because the Minimal artist negates the most fundamental, universal form of communication, he reaches a new plateau in elitism and isolation.

In terms of the identity of the artist, his role and his work, Conceptual art is the polar opposite of Minimal art and radically

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[42]Ibid., p. 203.

[43]Ibid., p. 203.

[44]Ibid., p. 203.

[45]Ibid., p. 203.

[46]Ibid., p. 204.

different from the other preceding art movements. For the Conceptual artist, words have a dimension--an art-making potential, as form that goes beyond their historical function as media for conveying information and meaning.[47]

> Conceptual art has become, in the past two or three years, an active area for language experimentation. There are at least two distinct schools of thought as to what conceptual art really is. One group of artists often uses language as "information" or, in fact, the "work of art" itself. The other group--mainly those involved in earthworks or related activities--uses language parenthetically as "documentation" of specific, physical projects.[48]

Because of their desire for nontraditional treatment of museums and galleries, the artists have produced a regressive, nihilistic and ultimately boring activity thus achieving elitism by causing the potential mass audience to become apathetic to their art.

"Film-maker" identifies a totally unique artist. He not only has the success and dilemma processes of all art movements at his disposal, but he also lives or dies by the whim of the mass audience. On one hand, he is the most avant-garde of the six artist-types of the past thirty years because the has accepted the most distinct and difficult challenges: he must appeal to mass tastes while developing and maintaining film as its own specific art form while working within overwhelming economical, technological, social and personal confinements.

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[47]Jerry G. Bowles, Jerry Russell, This Book is a Movie (New York, 1971), Introduction.

[48]Ibid., Introduction.

However, on the antagonistic other hand, his art form lacks originality because it is a conglomerate of all established art forms. "It is contaminated by borrowed forms from the theatre, from literature, music, etc.; it is plagued by gimmicks, tricks and other substitutes for the real thing."[50] Since this thesis category seeks to find the identity of the artist that most typifies the movement, at present, the identity of the film-maker with his work seems to be conveyed by Jean Renoir. To a National Film audience in 1967, he said:

> If you want to persuade the public to accept a new point of view, to share in a discovery, you have to play the part of a prostitute, to put on a bit of make-up in order to attract . . . she may be wonderful inside, but if she doesn't put on a bit of make-up no one will follow her . . . you have to be a little bit dishonest, you have to give something the public will follow.[51]

> Because he has to satisfy his audiences or fail, because irresistible commercial pressures ceaselessly push him towards giving the audience what it is believed to want, or at all events no more than it can be expected to take, he finds it peculiarly difficult to work in the pure isolation of the artist solely committed to the art object he is producing.[52]

For the first time the artist is forced to be nonelite.

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[50]Gyorgy Kepes, The Visual Arts Today--Film-Making As Art by Boris Kaufman (Middletown, Connecticut, 1960), p. 139.

[51]Stanley Reed, "The film-maker and the audience," in The Social Context of Art, edited by John Creedy (New York, 1970), p. 136.

[52]Ibid., p. 136.

The Antitheses

If a philosophical bomb were dropped on Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Op Art, Minimal Art, Conceptual Art and Film Art, and the flesh (identity) of the movements were made completely unrecognizable, I feel there would be only two genres of souls left. One soul-type representing an "Aristocratic Ideal"[53] and the other a "Democratic Ideal."[54] With the understanding that each movement seems to establish or destroy concepts that ultimately result in a truthful and permanent precept that the following movement can either build from or destroy (this seems to be the problem-solving process that is the very heart of artistic creation and accomplishment)--this antitheses category identifies the nature of each of the six art movements in terms of the Aristocratic Ideal, Democratic Ideal or both by: evaluating the impact of outstanding sociological factors, establishing a definition of who the audience is and what his role as a spectator/participator is, measuring the intensity of audience involvement and expounding upon this trend by evaluating the art as it is or is not applicable to the title "art as an activity."

Abstract Expressionism is highly representative of the Aristocratic Ideal. Because of its extremely personal nature, its "turning within," its "expression to the interior vision that occurs in the creative imagination of the artist," the only sociological factors that can

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[53]John Rublowsky, p. 4.

[54]Ibid., p. 4.

possibly be considered are those which affect or have affected the audience. In Abstract Expressionism's case, "the big moment came when it was decided to paint . . . just to paint. The gesture on the canvas was a gesture of liberation from value--political, esthetic, moral--estrangement from society and its demands."[55] It seems reasonable to issue the conjecture that Abstract Expressionism has neither the understanding, involved audience nor significant sociological influences. It is most likely the purest Aristocratic Ideal of all current art movements. So absolutely personal and introspective is the movement that art is an activity only to the artist because he is the only understanding audience member.

The transition between Abstract Expressionism and Pop is one of progressive artistic creation and accomplishment. The Aristocratic Ideal is destroyed and the Democratic Ideal in art is firmly established. "Pop art, utilizing the same artistic freedoms, represents the opposite pole of expression."[56] "It takes its esthetic from the commonplace and seeks those terrible beauties concealed in the vulgar and banal. It reflects a profound revolution in values whose agitating effects are being experienced throughout the world."[57] In regard to Pop art, sociological factors are the determinants of the movement's existence.

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[55]Harold Rosenberg, The Tradition of the New (London-Thames and Hudson, 1962), p. 30.

[56]John Rublowsky, p. 4.

[57]Ibid., p. 27.

Pop seems to have sprung "from two distinct situations, neither of which was in existence before 1950."[58] One is the "economy of abundance, in which the password is 'I consume; therefore, I am.'"[59] The other determinant historical factor is the espousal of nonreferential abstract painting by art-officials, critics, collectors and dealers.[60]

> [The Pop movement] was interested in exploiting the psychological, sociological, mythological (as well as purely visual) elements in images, taking them out of context, transforming them and elevating them to the level of "fine art." Whereas the Abstract Expressionist of a previous generation relied on his subconscious and his alienation from a hostile society to demonstrate a personal gesture on the canvas-arena, the new art relies on visual and emotional impact on widely accepted trivia of the commonplace world as seen and understood through movies, television, comic strips, newspapers, girlie magazines, glossies, high fashion, car styling, billboards and other forms of advertising. Rather than value art exclusively as something separate and distinct from line, these young artists have begun to see it as something inspired by the ready-made, fresh from the assembly line, as it enters everyday reality. Direct experience and primary emotion are eschewed for the manufactured, gift-wrapped feeling, shiny and new and guaranteed not to tarnish.[61]

Pop art's nondiscriminative mass audience's role is to judge the quality of mass media's definition of culture. Pop art also gives great vitality to the "art of an activity theme."

One of the major aesthetics of Pop is concerned about

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[58]John Russell and Suzi Gablik, Pop Art Redefined (New York and Washington, 1969), p. 27.

[59]Ibid., p. 27.

[60]Ibid., p. 27.

[61]Mario Amaya, Pop Art and After (New York, 1965), p. 11.

> . . . mobility and flexibility toward in general, whereby every art situation is more total and inclusive of the simultaneous levels which occur in actual experience. "I am for an art," declares Oldenburg, "that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum."[62]

Assemblage, Environments and Happenings are examples of Pop's activeness.

Transitionally, Op illustrates a close kinship with Pop. Both have high Democratic Ideals. Op seems to be a calmed and sophisticated extension of Pop. Where Pop wanted society to judge their technological, urbanized world, Op wanted society to ape it. It shows concern for subjectivity "but the emphasis has been transferred from the subjectivity of the artist to that of the spectator."[63] "The spectator becomes a collaborator. He is not invited to read a meaning into what he sees but merely to react."[64] The art work completes itself only when looked at. The Op movement seeks to end productions exclusively for "the cultivated eye, the sensitive eye, the intellectual eye, the aesthetic eye, the dilettante eye. The HUMAN EYE is our point of departure."[65] Robert Melville in an article in the New Statesman in 1966 said:

> Op painting has one advantage over every other kind. It gives everyone the same sensation, regardless of eye and experience. To the op artist we are all equal.[66]

Thus, the size of the audience increases while intensifying audience participation.

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[62]John Russell and Suzi Gablik, p. 13.

[63]Cyril Barrett, Op Art (New York, 1970), p. 105.

[64]Edward Lucie-Smith, p. 190.

[65]Cyril Barrett, p. 104.

[66]Ibid., p. 104.

Transitionally, the concerns of Minimal Art is not a nihilistic gesture. "Indeed, it must be understood that by not doing something, one can instead make a fully affirmative gesture, that the Minimal artist is engaged in an appraisal of past and present and that he frequently finds present aesthetic and sociological behavior both hypocritical and empty."[67] This process takes the Democratic Ideal one step further. "The audience is persuaded to walk about the newly defined and delineated space, and the path is determined by the art. In doing so, the artist allows no room for confusion or misrepresentation."[68] The audience is increased greatly because understanding and involvement is only dependent upon a basic, unmistakable human perception. Minimal art thus makes art more of an activity and accessible to the masses than Op did.

The move from Minimal art to Conceptual art is a significant act of artistic progression. Conceptual art tends to thrive on the very elements that Minimal wanted eliminated. From a sociological standpoint, "Conceptual art is most important as a political philosophy. It calls attention to the problems of museums and galleries and forces an examination of the treatment of artists."[69] Minimal art denied any affiliation with aesthetic or sociological behavior. The audience for

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[67]Gregory Battock, p. 26.

[68]Ibid., p. 32.

[69]Jerry G. Bowles, Jerry Russell (Introduction).

Conceptual art is all those who know and understand language. This feature of having a quality innate to the masses reinstates the presence and strength of the Democratic Ideal.

The audience's role is as active and evaluative as his mind and interests allow.

Film's artistic accomplishment represents either an oppressed Aristocratic Ideal or a forced Democratic one. Several sociological factors clarify this ideal-identity dilemma. The economics of film-making, the dependence upon patronage, the degree of intelligence and education of the audience and the problem of the artist being true to himself--finding a place in society--are factors of consideration. "The investor and the creative artist live or die by the whim of the mass audience."[70] This mass audience numbers in the millions.

> The chain of cause and effect which leads from the seemingly fickle tastes of a public embracing Paris or New York sophisticates, factory workers in Stoke-on-Trent, and African farm labourers, to the decision of an American to make or not to make a particular movie need not be followed through in detail.[71]

However, "the common man matters a great deal more than he ever has before; by and large, he is better educated and has more leisure than in previous centuries."[72]

> On the other hand, (the film-maker) has little real communication with his audience, made up as it is of so many races and cultures, so many degrees of poverty and affluence,

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[70]John Creedy, The Social Context of Art (New York, 1970), p. 130.

[71]Ibid., p. 132.

[72]Ibid., p. 134.

> of education or ignorance, so many conflicting hates and loves and prejudices; it is overwhelming. He may be forgiven for feeling that there is only one thing to do; forget the audience, not from principle, but out of despair. He cannot be looking over his shoulder all the time.[73]

The art of film is very applicable to "art as an activity" in that the spectator can vicariously have multitudes of responses and experiences.

Synthesis

The theses (based on the artists, their roles and their works) reveal two distinct characteristics of art since 1945. Each artist exhibits an elitist nature. The progression from one movement to the other retains this "elite" trait, however there is a definite change in the method through which the artist achieves his elitism. (Example: both the Abstract Expressionist and the Pop artist are elitist.) However, their elitist qualities come from two sources as different as their type and style of art.

The other predominant characteristic tendency dramatizes incongruency. Artists of a particular movement demonstrate great inconsistencies in regarding the aesthetic truths established by the prior movements. Instead of using a process oriented system based on historical findings (a process that builds from established strengths--the problem-solving process known as artistic creation and progress). The artists act with blatant incongruency. The perfect example is the progression from Minimal Art to Conceptual Art.

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[73]Ibid., p. 136.

> Artists today lack orientation in the contemporary world. They come together in small groups in great cities, where, in the safety of little circles they shut out the rest of the world, the initiates share one another's images. They generate illusory spontaneity, but miss the possible vital connections with contemporary intellectual and technological reality. It is unfashionable today, if not taboo, for artists to think and act on broad terms of cultural and social ideals. No doubt moralizing in art can lead to creative suicide, just as market-policed and state-policed art can lead to the murder of artistic honesty. But the other extreme--lack of intellectual curiosity and rejection of commitments--leads to emaciation of artistic values.[74]

> . . . The modern artist does not always seem very happily adjusted to the society in which he lives; to the point where his actions begin to fit certain standard patterns of psychological maladjustment. It does not, for instance, take a very deep reading of the textbooks to lead one to suspect an element of anal aggression in the deliberate messiness and unwieldiness of certain recent assemblages and collages. On the other hand, and this is the more important point, recent developments in modern art do seem to conform to patterns than can be seen in society.[75]

By establishing the nature of the six art movements in Aristocratic-Democratic Idealic terms (by evaluating the impact of outstanding sociological factors, establishing a definition of who the audience is and what his role as a spectator/participator is; measuring the intensity of the audience involvement and expounding upon this trend by evaluating the art as it is or is not applicable to the title "art as an activity"), it is evident that the artistic creation and progression process dominates the Antitheses portion of the thesis-antithesis-synthesis means. Here, there is observed a change from an Aristocratic Ideal to a progressively strengthened Democratic one. Also, it becomes clear

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[74] Ibid., p. 61.

[75] Ibid., p. 43.

that the audience is increasing and his role is becoming more and more of an active participant. Thus, the antitheses considerations are synonymous with the meanings of "transition" and "participation."

It is my contention that the dilemma of Modern Art is illustrated by the manner in which the dogma of the Theses and of the Antitheses of this paper are so opposed that they cannot have any synthetic reconciliation. Clearly stated, at present, the problem is that the artist and his identifying movement have two different sets of philosophical and physical aesthetics.

This dilemma is dramatized in full in the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the art of film. As indicated and discussed in this paper, the phenomenology of film has caused these two realms to confront and challenge one another. It is my opinion that art has everything to gain by this confrontation. If film (or any other art form that may evolve) can fully synthesize the artist and the masses, achieve neutrality between the Aristocratic and Democratic Ideal, and elevate the art work to the realm of a sophisticated and educational form of entertainment, then art's potential has been fully realized. It is my hope as an artist that awareness and appreciation, increased leisure time, and the "economy of abundance" will accomplish this goal. However, until this plateau is reached, art trends will continue to be as recklessly sporadic as they have been in the past thirty years. Just as an artist may tend to be suicidal if the solutions to his art problems are not found, art movements that have not established sound bases for existence will continue to be short lived and necessarily so.

The discrepancy is alarming: on the one hand, the necessary search for new means of expressing new realities, an awareness that "our artistic means are worn out and exhausted; we are bored with them and we probe for new ways" (Thomas Mann); on the other hand, masses of human beings for whom even old art is something wholly new, who have yet to learn to distinguish between good and bad, whose taste must still be formed, and whose capacity to enjoy quality must still be developed. The composer Adrian Leverkühn in Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus believes that all art needs to set free "from being alone with an educated elite, called "the public," for this elite will soon no longer exist, indeed it already no longer exists, and then art will be completely alone, alone unto death, unless it finds a way to "the people," or, to put it less romantically, to human beings." If that happened, art would "once more see itself as the servant of a community, a community welded together by more than education, a community that would not have culture but which would perhaps be one . . . an art on intimate terms with mankind.[76]

[76]Ernst Fischer, p. 206.

# CHAPTER V

## TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### I. EXISTING RESPONSIBLE, EDUCATIONAL AND DEMOCRATIC ART FORMS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO THE CONTENT AND FORM ANALYSIS NETWORK

There are five areas which have greatly aided and influenced many of the developmental philosophies, concepts and techniques of my particular means of expressing art's democratic ideal. These areas are photography, film, multiples and synaesthetic education. I would like to relate the critical philosophical, and/or conceptual and technical components of each of these areas that are the most important and influential to me and my work. I will then proceed to make evident how my work is an extension of each of these four artistic modes, making a unique statement, creating a unique experience, expressing a unique reality.

#### Photography

Philosophically and conceptually, photography has become a fine art. Barbara Rose's article "The Triumph of Photography, OR: Farewell to Status in the Arts" in New York Magazine says:

> . . . but I think [the prejudices against photography] are about to be reversed as the energy devoted to the arts traditionally called minor is gradually becoming at least as intense as that going into the major arts. If we dispense with the distinction between major and minor art, and think

> in terms of quality alone, we see that the quality of American photography, film, graphics and crafts is at least as good as American painting today, and certainly better and more innovative than the collapsing sculptural tradition and our hopelessly retarded imitative architecture still living off European ideas of the twenties and thirties. For some time, I have been saying we are watching the eclipse of the major arts that depend on the expression of the individual ego, and seeing the rise of the democratic arts, which involve multiple originals, mass communication, yet ironically are based on a greater degree of personalism and intimacy than the monumental forms that demand coherent cultural goals. Our present society is incoherent and increasingly pluralistic, its lifestyle is nomadic and communal, . . .[77]

There are strong pros and cons about the recognition of photography as a fine art. The positive interest is in the "reintroduction of the human body, nature and real images forbidden by the long reign of abstraction in the major arts."[78] On the other hand, "the prejudice against photography as a creative art is deeply ingrained because elitist critics feel it deals strictly with found images, and consequently is less freely imaginative than painting and sculpture."[79] Perhaps a compromise is in the Earl of Snowden's (Anthony Armstrong Jones') philosophy that "photography is for the people, to make them think about things they'd otherwise ignore. It should be in the main street, in exhibition halls, in stores. Not in galleries and museums. I'm not interested in the elite."[80]

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[77]Barbara Rose, "The Triumph of Photography, Or: Farewell to Status in the Arts," New York Magazine, 5 (March 6, 1972), 68.

[78]Ibid., p. 68.

[79]Ibid., p. 68.

[80]Julie Maxey, "Art from the Camera," House Beautiful Magazine, 115 (September, 1973), 114.

Like the philosophical aspect, the technological considerations are congruous with photography's democratic idealic potential. The photographer as artist personifies the same genre of balance of power created by the acceptance and use of formalist criticism.

> The photographer suggests a drastically altered view of the artist's role. The received postures of Spirit Medium and Maker nearly disappear. On the deliberate level, the artist becomes a researcher, a gatherer of facts, like Confucius' ancients, who, desiring Wisdom, "sought first to extend their knowledge of particularities to the uttermost." And on the axiomatic level, where the real work is now to be done, the artist is an epistemologist.[81]

The simplicity and high quality involved in mass production is one of photography's fortes as a democratic ideal:

> The negative has somewhat the same relation to the photographic print as the block has to the woodcut, with the important difference that the curatorial notion of "states" does not apply to photographs. That is, the grap hic artist's plate suffers gradual attrition during the pulling process, whereas a virtually infinite number of prints may be generated from the information stabilized in a single negative.[82]

My work departs from the traditional gallery photograph because first, the image captured on the negative is not the final image print. It can and does go through two separate alteration processes. The elements of the total image-composition are formally selected and then arranged by the audience. The resulting photo-collage could include a variety of visual components, everything from a photo-copy of a Degas painting to a vacation type snapshot of an outstanding landmark.

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[81]Hollis Framton, "Meditations Around Paul Strand," Artforum, 10 (February, 1972), 57.

[82]Ibid., p. 52.

Film and Television

Philosophically, in my opinion, film presently represents the most advanced stage of the democratic ideal. It is mass produced and widely available to practically all the people. It, for the most part, has multilevels of concentration that entertain and, or educate millions of people from every walk of life.

Conceptually, in relation to my interests, the democracy of film is strong because "every seat in a motion picture theater is equal. That is, each viewer sees the same imagery; . . . every member of the audience feels that the performance is being played to him alone."[83] Psychic distance is greatly reduced and there is a tendency to attempt to occupy cinema space.[84] Another aspect,

> . . . film initiates and encourages very active and processes of psychological identification; film and television audiences vividly experience life-styles that are not necessarily available to them in reality. They may "enjoy" products and services normally reserved for persons of wealth and privilege, thus acquiring a taste for these products and services that they want to satisfy in their everyday lives.[85]

The educational capacity of film to influence the lives of ignorant, illiterate, or impoverished people is perhaps "the chief contributor to what has been called 'the revolution of rising expectations.'"[86] And to the advanced, educated culture, films and television have the capacity

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[83]Edmund Burke Feldman, p. 604.

[84]Ibid., p. 604.

[85]Ibid., p. 604.

[86]Ibid., p. 604.

to generate a sense of community and social cohesion, especially, they "can unite the anonymous and often alienated citizens of an otherwise depersonalized mass society."[87]

Technically there are five motion picture devices that have greatly influenced my work. They are montage, cut-in, cut-away, sequence and dissolve. Both in my content and form analysis network and in film, these activities represent actual, visual, psychological, literal and symbolic change. In relationship to my work, the manner in which this change is manipulated is the point of departure. Such changes (transformations), are controlled and physically manipulated by the spectator/participator instead of having them dictatorially and automatically controlled and operated by a mechanical projector.

## Multiples

> Why the proliferation, not only in America but around the world, of inexpensive art? There are several explanations. One, no doubt, is that our lifestyle is decorative. It shows not only in the day-glo lithographs on our living-room walls, in the design of Milanese furniture, in the fact that the sixties opened reviving Art Nouveau and closed reviving art deco, but also in the buttons and fist-embossed T-shirts on political demonstrators, the balloons at demonstrations and the disappearance of Brooks Brothers Drab. It may even be showing in our sudden concern for the effects of pollution on the landscape.
>
> At the same time, our life style is casual (often self-consciously so) and mobile, and we feel comfortable with objects that are neither pretentious nor heavy.
>
> Also of course, we are more obviously concerned with matters of the spirit (however rationally or irrationally) than we have been for a long time. To possess a piece of art is (sometimes, somehow) to possess a piece of spirit, now as in the days when Frau Dürer hawked her husband's woodcuts of the Apocalypse at the Nurenberg fair.

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[87] Ibid., pp. 604-5.

> The chief explanation, perhaps, is that artists appear to want to communicate to a wide audience. They have shown this in various ways: by making large paintings and sculptures for public places; by moving in on established mass media like television and films, by bringing their works (be they happenings, earth formations or helium-inflated flying sculptures) out of museums and into distinctly public contexts. Clearly another way to reach many people is to make works that many can afford.[88]

One strain of the "Multiples" movement defines its products as produced with the essential idea of being unlimitly mass-produced. Many of the present problems of my work can be eliminated and many future problems prevented by regarding this group's experiences.

> This category, which while having more problems than any other, also contains the greatest wealth of possibility and implication, and this is the idea of producing unlimited editions of specifically nonfunctional objects, expendable, cheap, and generally as available as a whole range of present-day consumer goods. This group contains the highest failure rate, normally because the excitement of production has been allowed to obscure the practical difficulties of distribution. Group One Four has proved itself to be more enduring, precisely because it has faced up directly to these practical problems, in fact regarded them as an integral part of the whole process. Formed in 1962 by Brian Yale and Mauro Kunst, and with the early introduction of John Berry and the recent one of Edward Alden, they have continuously set themselves the task of responding to the artistic possibilities which modern technology presents, and at the same time reconciling them to the implications which it brings. This means that if you are going to produce something on a large scale, your methods of distribution must be as sophisticated as those of production, and here the commercially-slanted background of some of them is helpful. They therefore take great trouble over the packaging, both of individual items and of exhibitions, so that all their products can be easily handled and interchanged; this is something often considered irrelevant and foolishly ignored by the would-be disseminator of art on a wide scale, which would be overlooked by a commercial manufacturer only at his financial peril. They have also realized the limitations of galleries as outlets for works of this type, and have experimented highly successfully

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[88]Nan R. Piene, "Art Under $500," Art in America, 58 (May, 1970), 95.

> with mail-order techniques, although mostly on two-dimensional and exceedingly cheap postcard prints. Today they have normally produced three-dimensional objects only in limited editions of 75 for the usual reasons, but ideally, they would not wish to continue to be their own artisans, and all their products could easily be adapted to mass-production methods. Naturally the quality of their work is uneven, which they would be the first to recognize, but their approach is refreshingly practical, empirical and progressive.[89]

My work maintains philosophical and technical methods that are similar to multiples. On the other hand, there are strong differences. The major difference is that most likely no two people will create and own the same composition. With twenty panels and five elements that can be altered per panel, there are 3,200,000 different arrangements. With forty panels there are 102,000,000 different possibilities. Secondly, since the potential owner of a composition is ultimately the creator of that composition, I have this person cosign with me and date the work as well as title the work in print fashion. A third difference lies in the distribution methods. My work may be dispensed by any of three methods: (1) The compositional elements may be arranged by selecting a single element from each of five different categories. For example, choose one desirable object from each listing in Table I.

The composition containing the elements "you" selected could be ordered without any visual contact with the elements. The content and structure associations could be made conceptually (i.e., concept art) by contemplating the identifies of each respective category. (2) The elements are code lettered and numbered so they can be composed by

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[89]Charles Spencer, "Multiplied Progeny," Art and Artists (November, 1970), 62.

simply referring to an arrangement of letters and numbers that correspond to the visual elements. For instance, if a composition in which the subject is a cabbage (A), the background is the polka-dot fabric design (V), the top-ground is a circular Jackson Pollock painting (g), the bottom ground is the "Degas" orchestre (8), and the identifying element is Orphan Annie's face and hands (K'), the code representation then is (A,V,g,8,K'). This process makes ordering compositions easy. The code is written on the final print in the traditional edition number area.

TABLE I

COMPOSITIONAL ELEMENTS

| Subject of Composition | Background | Top-Ground | Bottom-Ground | Identifying Element |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dandelion Seed Pod | Starlite Night | Moon | Foliage Highlighted by Moonlight | Dandelion Pod Stem |
| Geodesic Dome | Cityscape | Helicopter | People Walkways Tramways | Outer Portion of Dome |
| Cabbage | A Garden and A Produce Truck | Truck Tire and Rim | Leg and Shoe of a Gardner | Garden Hoe |
| "Degas" Dancer | Dancers on Stage | Stage Light | "Degas" Orchester | A Dancer's Arms and Legs |
| Orphan Annie | Ben-Dey Dot Clouds | Orphan Annie's Speech | Ben-Dey Dot Shrubs | Face and Hands of Orphan Annie |
| etc. | | | | |

The third method and most intentional and meaningful is physically and visually arranging and rearranging-experiencing, the panels along the network.

## Synaesthetic Education

The concepts and techniques of Synaesthetic Education have had a significant impact on my work. By definition of some of the basic concepts and terms the parallel relationship between the mannerisms of my work and the dialectics of Synaesthetic Education become apparent. The Department of Synaesthetic Education School of Art at Syracuse University have these definitions and answers:

> WHAT DOES SYNAESTHETIC MEAN? Synaesthetic is a term we use to describe an experience that unifies self-awareness with poly-sensory perceptions into a meaningful whole.[90]
>
> WHAT IS SYNAESTHETIC ACTION? Synaesthetic action is an intimate and personal engagement between an individual's senses and his environment that results in an intrinsic need to set this involvement into creative action.[91]
>
> HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE SYNAESTHETIC EDUCATION? Synaesthetic education is a discipline based on self-discovery and self-actualization as a result of inner thoughts and psychological transactions between the individual's sensory experiences and his environment. Subjective and personal relationships enhance the student's feeling and allow him to function in accordance with his needs and capabilities.[92]
>
> WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYNAESTHETIC EDUCATION AND THE HUMANITIES? As disciplines synaesthetic education and the

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[90] James A. Ridlon, "The Dialectics of Synaesthetic Education," Synaesthetic Education (Syracuse, 1971), p. 41.

[91] Ibid., p. 41.

[92] Ibid., p. 42.

humanities have similar goals to hopefully bring out the best and unique characteristics of each individual through self-discovery and self-actualization. Here the similarity ends. The humanities are a group of disciplines usually consisting of art, music, history, and English or any combination of these courses. During the course of instruction the individual disciplines tend to keep their identity and total integration is never actually realized. In synaesthetic education the opposite should happen. Art would be a vehicle for the other disciplines to work into forming a totally integrated learning experience of mind, body and subject matter.[93]

DOES PERCEPTION LEAD TO CREATIVE ACTION? Any qualitative art experience is a direct result of perception that triggers a response which resolves in creative action. When a student's senses communicate to him through perception he gains the intensity of awareness to explore these responses with the creative involvement which will lead to self-actualization. It is through these confrontations of self-identification that quality and purpose takes place.[94]

IS STIMULATION AN IMPORTANT PART OF SYNAESTHETIC EDUCATION? Stimulation is an important part of any teaching or learning situation. Perception requires stimuli. So in order to enhance any teaching, a stimulating activity should be incorporated into the activity. Every student will respond differently to the stimulation. It is this selection in perception that gives each individual a unique experience with the same stimulation.[95]

HOW DOES SYNAESTHETIC EDUCATION ALLOW FOR A GREATER OPPORTUNITY FOR SELF-ACTUALIZATION? Synaesthetic education puts a premium on individuality gained by self-identification through personal perceptual response. The personality of the individual is foremost. The individual, in synaesthetic education, can explore his own personality in relation to other people and his environment. It is this exploration that leads to self-discovery and the expression of these discoveries that leads to self-actualization.[96]

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[93]Ibid., p. 42.

[94]Ibid., p. 43.

[95]Ibid., p. 43.

[96]Ibid., p. 45.

HOW DOES SYNAESTHETIC EDUCATION PROMOTE CREATIVITY? Creativity is the ability of an individual to invent new ideas or symbols, integrate new ideas with old concepts, as well as rearrange established organizations. Since synaesthetic education puts an emphasis on emotional, gestural, and imaginative aspects of involvement, the student has a much more meaningful chance to integrate self with environment. This integration through perception will lead to a process of self-actualization and a more meaningful creative involvement.[97]

[97] Ibid., p. 45.

# CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

The disciplines that are necessary for a person to become an art creator are many of the disciplines that are vital for the development of a person as a functioning, responsible, integral part of society. The more people who can understand, apply and synthesize these disciplines, the more aware, perceptive, analytic, responsible and meaningful the society maintained by these individuals. If the artistic process is a formula for perservance over the chaos that plagues both the individual and society at large then teaching this process to large groups of people is of utmost importance. Knowledge of the process allows the individual and society to deal effectively with the tasks of being. Since successful artists are the people who have successfully formulated a workable method in which to deal with chaos, it proceeds that they are the ones who should be responsible and take the initiative to try to dispense this knowledge to all people. Many artists are elitists and fail to do this. This tendency has been a historic tradition. Frustrated and disillusioned, people, if interested at all, tend to demand explanations and experience. If artists are willing to selfishly alienate themselves and abandon society, then people will have to become more sensitive to and assertive with the art work. What is needed is a complete, interwoven dependency by artist on audience and audience on artist. This

dependency usually can be wholly and successfully confirmed by using the Formalist critical approach. There are some artists, however, that are responsible and do deal with the educational and democratic aspects of their art. People who deal in creative photography, film, multiples and synaesthetics are such artists. Hopefully, my project is another method of artistic revelation and enlightenment. My content and form analysis network allows each member of the audience to become intimately involved in the art work. So great is his involvement that he is spiritually and physically active in producing it. As this psychic distance between the audience and the work of art disappears the greater the educational potential of the work and the lesser the artist's alienation. Today an artist should not be one who remains removed and aloof from his world. He has a challenge greater than ever before. He must become a prophet, an educator and a practitioner as well as maintaining great quality in his art work.

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# VITA

Richard Allen Fisher was born in Bluefield, West Virginia, in 1951. His home is at Maxwell, Virginia. He attended nearby Tazewell High School in Tazewell, Virginia, graduating in 1969. The following Fall he began four years of college at The University of Tennessee at Knoxville. While majoring in art there, he exhibited paintings in numerous shows. He received a First Price his sophomore year in the statewide College Art Competition sponsored by the Dogwood Arts Festival. His junior year, he received an Honorable Mention in the Virginia Highlands Arts Festival at Abingdon, Virginia. His senior year he received the First Place Award of Distinction at the Virginia Highlands Festival Art Competition. Also, while an undergraduate, he studied art at Southampton College, Southampton, New York, with Victor D'Amico. In June 1973 he graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Painting. The following Fall he began graduate school at The University of Tennessee working toward a Master of Arts Degree. His One-Man Thesis Show was held at the Carolyn P. Brown Memorial University Center Gallery.

I,

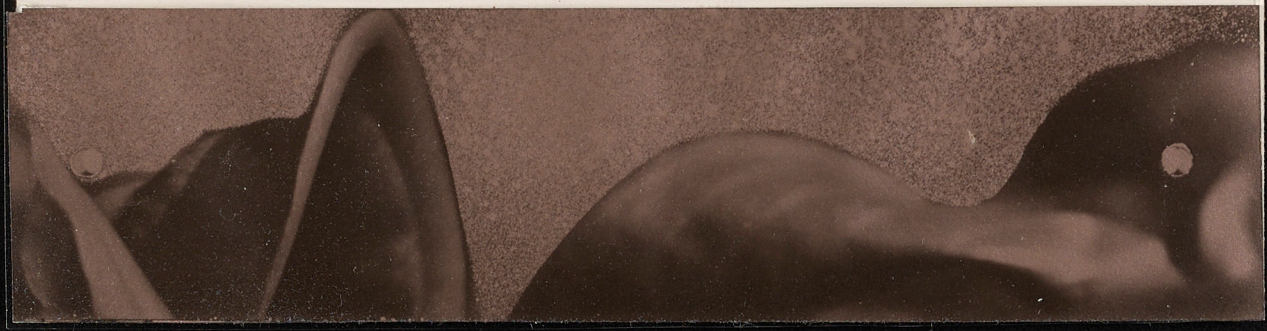


Plate I

II,



Plate II



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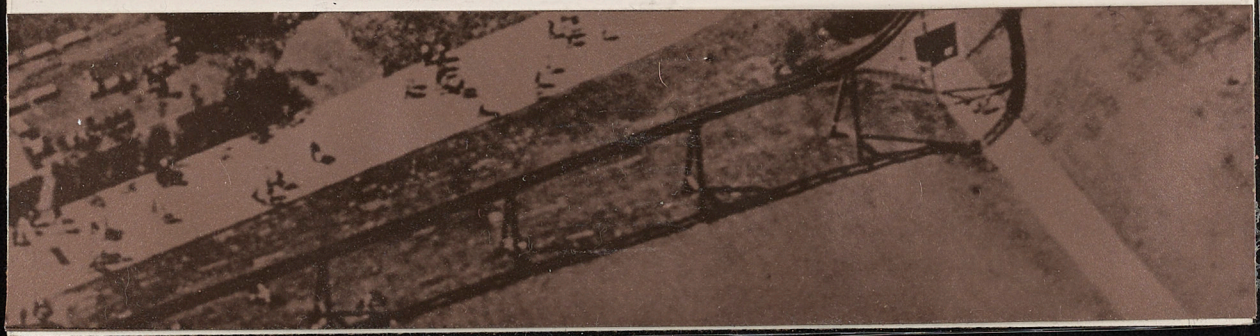
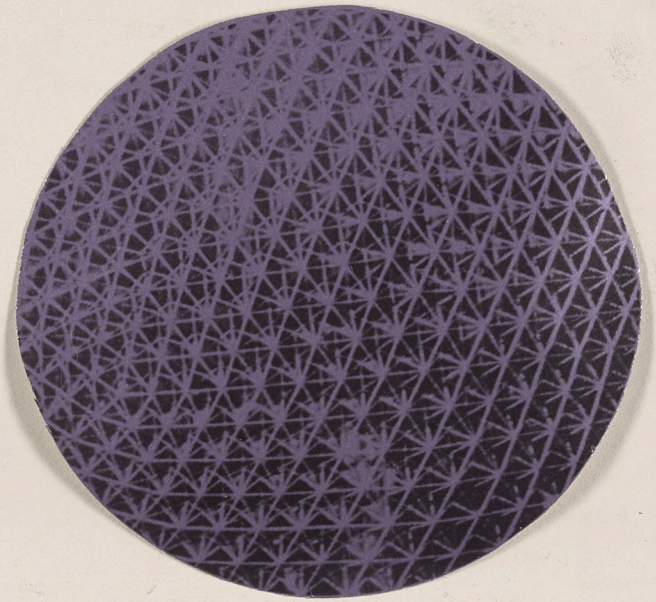


A'



B,



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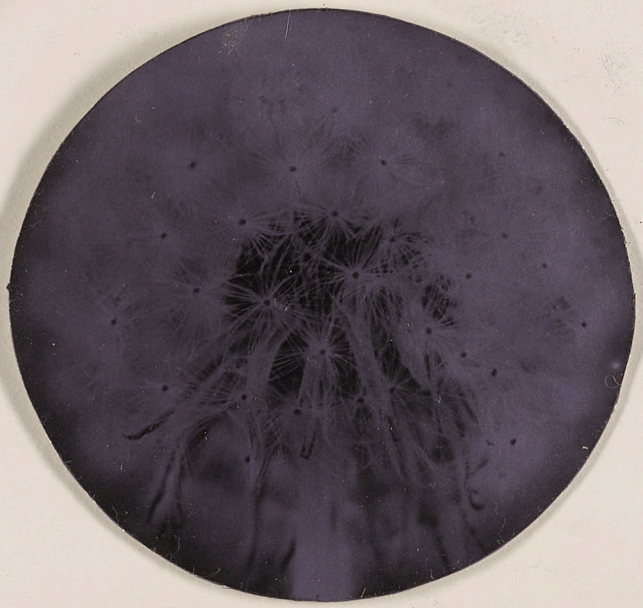

B'



b,



a,

