IMAGES, WITHIN AND WITHOUT

A personal search for imagery with implications for teaching Art

by

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We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents the account of one student-teacher-artist's odyssey through the discovery and evolution of a personal imagery. As the participant-observer in this quest, I have selected material arising from memories, thoughts, ideas, sketches and dialogues that relate to the history and processes of my image making. A body of visual work is presented which demonstrates the development of specific symbols and compositional tendencies.

The thesis attempts to provide answers to three questions: How has my development as an artist influenced my role as an art teacher? What implications may be drawn for the art teacher? What strategies may be helpful to the art student and to the artist?

The processes occurring during the act of drawing and painting the works presented in this thesis are described. Insights related to image-making are shared. This information may be of assistance to the others in their pursuit of a personal imagery and may provide understanding and knowledge useful in guiding students along this same path.
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My special thank you goes to my two daughters, Kirstin and Paisley Shaw, who have been very understanding of having an artist-mother.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother and father who were always indulgent of my fantasies.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Teaching in the public school system places considerable demands on any teacher's time and energy. Art teachers often encounter even greater demands if they wish to also explore and develop their own creative work. Linn (1982) states:

Many art teachers in the public schools desire to create their own art work and to develop their talents in art. They have a need to express and to communicate as artists, and they believe that the creative art teacher has a lot to offer the students....lack of time and energy, due to the demands of the classroom, hinders the development and growth of their skills. (p. ii)

It is a premise of this thesis that teachers who pursue their own personal imagery will gain confidence in their own ability and acquire an intrinsic knowledge of the art-making process. It is believed that such teachers will then be better equipped to guide students in a similar quest, thereby deepening their awareness of the personal meaning often revealed through the exploration of content and form. Based on her research, Linn makes the claim that "a teacher of the visual arts must continue to explore the problems of personal imagery and of skill development" (p. 46). Linn further recommends, "A good learning situation arises when instructor and student are both exploring, discovering, learning and sharing successes and failures together" (p. 46).

This writer posits that the teacher who has been, or is, actively involved in the production of art work is more likely to be empathetic with the wide range of student feelings and attitudes toward art and may be better able to demonstrate sensitivity to the students' need for encouragement and direction. Linn supports this view, "Surely the art teacher who is
experiencing the problems and hard work inherent in producing art will have more sympathy with the dilemmas and frustrations met by his art students..."(pp. 43 and 44). Linn's study supports the premise that the art teacher who is personally involved in making art and who expresses enthusiasm for the art process is likely to generate interest and excitement in the classroom (p. 43). Students may profit from hearing about, and identifying with, the frustrations and joys that the teacher has experienced during the course of an art career and also through the production of individual pieces. Students may be encouraged when they see the progress evident in a comparison of the teacher's past and present works.

Linn found that many teachers in her study emphasized that "...students can see at first hand the creative process from the inception of an idea through to the completion of the art form. Students are encouraged to value the process as well as the final product" (p. 44). The students will come to realize that to grow in art requires time, work, concentration, and dedication.

As a result of listening to an art teacher talk about the search for imagery, students may gain the confidence necessary to trust in their own artistic instincts when making decisions about form and content. Linn maintains that students are "highly interested and intrigued" by the teacher's creative work (p. 47).

It is the belief of the researcher that the common fear of "Art" and the inhibitions resulting from this fear are a central factor in the difficulty faced by art teachers in the school system. This fear may be based on two prevalent misconceptions about the nature of the artistic process. The defeatist statements so often heard by the art teacher, "I'm no good at art" and "I can't even draw a straight line," both arise from the same confusion between the ability to draw realistically and the making of art. For the student the
equation is, "I cannot produce a 'realistic' representation therefore I cannot do art." Lewis (1984) states that by the time children are of elementary school age they are able to decide in advance on the content of their pictures and judge them in the light of their intent. Their intent (unless they have decided to do a "design") is to "make it look real" (p. 9). Reinforcing this view is the corollary misconception that the finished product must be "right" as determined by some external standard. This belief is natural to anyone educated in schools where "rightness" is the prevailing criterion of success and in a society which is so much more oriented to product than to process.

An effective remedy for these fears and inhibitions may be that of educating the individual in the technical, experimental, and personal nature of the art process, the theme of this present work. Doerr (1984) claims that students need training in the artistic process, a process that involves both pleasure and pain. "Students," Doerr continues, "need to develop an understanding of the technical, formal, and expressive realms of the content of art in order to develop an understanding or mastery of at least some part of the art process" (p. 32).

It has also been found by this teacher-artist that learning technique, however important, is not enough. It is equally, or more important, for the artist or student to develop a personal approach to form and content. It is certainly possible for a student to learn the language of art without discovering how to make personal statements with that language. It is possible that teachers who have learned only impersonal techniques and who have never found their own personal style, or used their skills to tell their own visual stories, may not have the courage or know-how necessary to guide students effectively in the development of their own visual imagery.

Following from these premises, the thesis addresses the following questions:
1. How has my development as an artist influenced my role as an art teacher?
2. What implications may be drawn for the art teacher?
3. What strategies may be helpful to the art student and to the artist?

The Method

The proposition of this thesis is that the producing artist is a constant student and, at the same time, his or her own teacher. The writer provides implications for art education based on the personal experiences and the knowledge gained from participation in the three roles.

Due to the personal nature of the art process, which is the focus of the study, the "artistic" or qualitative approach to research has been chosen. Eisner (1981) states that the artistic approach to research seeks the creation of an "evocative form whose meaning is embodied in the shape of what is expressed" (p. 4). The "Odyssey" chapter presents a personal journal revealing the student-teacher-artist's development through the art process. In order to separate the subjective material from the formal sections of the thesis, a change of print style has been utilized. The Letter Gothic 12 Pitch is used for Chapter 1, "The Introduction" and Chapter 3, "Implications for Teaching Art". Chapter 2, "The Odyssey", is printed in a Bold proportionally spaced type face.

Eisner defines the validity of artistic research as "the persuasiveness of a personal vision; its utility is determined by the extent to which it informs" (p. 5). He states that the focus is on the experiences the individuals are having and the meaning their actions have for others (p. 5).

The artistically oriented researcher is interested in making the particular vivid so that its qualities can be experienced and because he believes that the particular has a contribution to make to the comprehension of what is general. (Eisner, 1981, p. 8)
In order to make the particular experiences described in the Odyssey more useful, the implications for teaching art, based on a survey of the journal data, are presented in Chapter 3.

The working assumption, (of the artistic approach) is that with (the resulting ineffable forms of) understanding both cognitive differentiation and the ability of individuals to grasp and deal with situations like those portrayed in the research will be increased. (Eisner, 1981, p.12)

Eisner states that the major source of data, in artistic research, emanates from how the investigator experiences what it is he or she attends to and that the meaning of an incident may be revealed when it is put in its historical context (p. 12). Eisner further states that in artistic approaches to research the role that emotion plays in knowing is central (1981, p. 13).

Following in this context, the writer has elected to use herself as the subject of the research and has chosen to use the participant-observer mode for collecting data. Related personal history and significant influences are included to provide the reader with a clearer understanding of the sources of current imagery. By tracing the ancestry of the images from the past to the present, other artists are offered a useful avenue for finding their own personal imagery and art teachers are presented with insights that may prove useful in guiding others in their pursuit of "authentic imagery." The researcher's art training is reviewed. Key works are described and discussed. The research material includes memories thoughts, ideas, sketches, photographs and dialogues with others. The material has been collected by tape recorder, notes, photography, sketches, and journal entries.
Importance of the Study

In order to develop implications for art education, this thesis attempts to present a highly personal account of one artist's quest of an authentic imagery.

Limitations of the Study

The study covers just one artist-teacher's experiences with image making. This thesis can only relate the knowledge gained to the present time, and it is limited by the perceptions, personality, lifestyle, and cultural experience of the participant-observer presenting the thesis.
THE ODYSSEY

Personal History and Influences

As a producing artist, I explore, experiment, work, and play with visual images. The images I have chosen for my present explorations have welled up from my past and are rooted in family traditions. When I search my personal environment, experience, and feelings for form and content, the resulting work has an integrity of meaning that satisfies me and often touches others.

I am awed by the persistence throughout my life of the same visual and emotional preoccupations. My excitement with all things visual and the particular pull towards certain forms have not fundamentally changed over the years.

My visual curiosity is, and always has been, relentless. I have, at times, felt overwhelmed by the power my eyes have over me. When I find something I want to visually absorb, my eyes drink in every nuance of the object. They rove over, around and under, devouring every change of direction, texture, colour, line, shape, tone, and contrast belonging to the object.

I cannot say for certain that I had this passion for the visual at an early age (my very earliest memories bring mostly a feeling of atmospheres), but I deduce that I did from the fact that much later, in college, I was able to produce a detailed representation of my first childhood kitchen in the Eastern United States (Plate 1, a). A few years later, I remember persuading my mother to choose one piano over another on the basis of the wonderful opulent curves of its legs. This piano became a visual relief from the "modern" decor of my childhood home. I remember fondling my rock and stamp collections with great visual delight. This visual appetite intensified as I grew older and has provided me with an abundant dictionary of visual images.
a. Continuous drawing of early memory of a kitchen

b. Initial drawing
c. First stage
d. Final etching
copper etching plate

Plate 1: Kitchen Theme Grouping

e. Exploration sketch "My Own Kitchen I & II"

f. Photocopies of sketch for "My Own Kitchen I & II"

h. Photocopies of photographs of drawings

i. Sketch for "Tea with a Great-Aunt"

j. Sketch for "The Star"
My eyes cause me to linger, taking in every drop of colour left in a sunset and every sparkle on the sea, to search every grain of sand for new visual messages and to investigate every tree, flower, and glade. My eyes soak in the rushing water tumbling over creek stones, light dappling through the trees, gutters, where wet leaves lay partially submerged in rain water, and the reflections in puddles. I have studied undulating alleys full of richly filled garbage cans staggered below the patterns of yellowed window blinds peering through tattered curtains. I have gazed up at skyscrapers leaning toward each other as they soar to the sky. I am fascinated by the changing perspective of the patterns of glass imprints in the concrete faces of these mighty structures. I am overwhelmed by the radiant light of delicate blossom trees and the glowing centres of flowers with their piercing pistils and stamens. Worn, weathered wood with the subtle traces of mildew and moss, chunks of metal, nails and railway spikes rusting from use and weather, walls of peeling paint, the "retinal circus" of second-hand junk and clothing stores are sources for my visual glossary. Rainbows from crystal prisms dancing in my kitchen sink tantalize my vision. I study the effects of light dancing in the mulberry tree outside the steam-moistened windows as I soak under bubbles in my old-fashioned bathtub. My sight is fascinated by the fractured images from the bevels of old mirrors and the phenomena of entire mountain ranges reflected from a single facet of my grandmother's diamond ring.

When I make my art, I draw upon the visual resources which fill my environment. The graceful shapes and indentations of age-worn pressed back chairs, turned spindles splintering backgrounds into bits of pattern, the quiet deepening of colours in drying flowers, ornate silver tarnishing in the dust of neglect, and the sculptural lines of the humble yet powerful sewing machine decorated with an Egyptian Makara (a winged lioness-woman of powerful strength), provide inspiration for my images. The sun dancing through the undulating wisp of sheer curtains or the melancholy burnt sienna glow from an end-of-the-day sun filling a room with last-chance warm light illuminates my work. Cocky clay pots sprouting jocular geraniums,
nasturtiums spilling over with delightful petals of brilliant sunburned colours, age-crazed china plates laced with faded floral designs barely clinging to their golden rims, worn baskets filled with bits and pieces offer colour and shapes for my art.

I exult over satin ribbons, netting and lace, needlework heirlooms, antique lingerie, and old wedding gowns. I store treasured pieces of tinfoil as if they were bits of captured rainbow spilling from the fabled pot of gold.

The foregoing descriptions detail but a few of the resources of my visual image bank. I draw upon this collection as a stimulus to my own creative processes and, in teaching, to lead my students to keener observation. It is an important goal of my teaching to develop the students' ability to see the visual world. Sharing my own visual excitement has proved very helpful in this. My ability to observe enables me to notice subtleties in students' work and thus give them useful feedback.

While it may not be possible to explain how I acquired this predisposition to the visual, I can, to some extent, follow the ways in which, as a child, I translated enjoyment of observation into graphic form.

My first mark-making efforts were recalled in an autobiography written in Grade Ten. I wrote, "My bed was by a wall and I used to have the most fun drawing on the wall, and I remember the eraser Mother bought to clean it off." I sometimes wonder how much effect that eraser had on my "slow arrival" to art making.

My involvement with art making is further documented by my kindergarten portfolio (Plates 2 through 6), work done in Grade Three (Plates 7 through 12), Grade Five (Plates 13 through 19) and Grade Eight (Plates 20 through 24). I find it interesting to note the similarity between my childhood work and my recent work. My interest in bold pattern, texture, contrast, colour, shape, and line are evident at an early age. I filled space and shapes with intricate detail then as I do now.

Embroidery was another way I satisfied my hunger for colour and detail. I liked to use as many colours as possible in a design. I have always enjoyed working with my hands and eyes. I find pleasure, a sense of being mesmerized, in watching the visual
Plate 2: Kindergarten

Plate 3: Kindergarten
Plate 4: Kindergarten

Plate 5: Kindergarten
Plate 6: Kindergarten

Plate 7: Grade Three
Plate 8: Grade Three

Plate 9: Grade Three
Plate 10: Grade Three

Plate 11: Grade Three
Plate 12:
Grade Three
Plate 17: Grade Five

Plate 18: Grade Five
events brought about by the manipulation of tool and media or a needle and thread as
the surface qualities of a work emerge. I believe this trait plays a major role in my
approach to art making and the resulting products. At times, when I am into the one-
small-stroke-at-a-time stage of a painting, I feel as if I am embroidering the image
onto the canvas. Etching provided me with this same mesmerizing act of
concentration.

My first "recognition" as an artist came when I was in Grade Four. The class
was studying Mexico. The teacher had planned several colourful art activities related
to the unit. My task was to draw a lifesize Mexican boy in a serape. I was intrigued
with the folds of the draped serape as they fell from the boy's shoulder. I recall how
impressed I was when I found that a wavy, horizontal line joined at right angles by a
few vertical strokes moving upward, created folds. I still like making folds and
creating the illusion of undulating movement on a surface. There is a particular curve
inherent in folds that permeates my work. Folds appear in several works (Plates 1, 2,
27 - 30, 32, 38, 43, 51, 60, 65 - 67, 76, 77, 90, 94, 95, 99, 114, 117 - 121, Appendix,
Plates V and VII) and in the background of "Rock-a-bye-Roses" (Plate 104). Working
on the Mexican serape linked me with Jerry, the best artist in the class. I can
remember the flush of pride and status I felt when the other children would marvel at
our ability. Unfortunately, my family moved soon after and I lost my new found
identity.

At the new school I was reduced to manilla paper, crayons, the occasional
watercolour, and making a clay piggy bank every year. I have always wondered if I
would have found art in my life earlier had I stayed at the other school.

Before continuing with the account of my development as an artist, I will
examine in more detail the image streams which have been of continuing importance
in my work. These streams are folds, ribbons, crochet and lace, mothers, daughters,
and dolls, and my family's ancestry and memorabilia.
My fondness for folds and undulating motion reveals itself over and over again as I recall the things I enjoyed as a child and still enjoy as an adult. Playing dress-up was a favourite pastime and still is. I find gowns and flounces fascinating. Our sheer curtains and even our bedsheets, in transit to and from the laundry, became great billowing fashions as I flounced in front of the mirrors. Of course, for a girl growing up in that era, the sensuous appeal of these materials was heightened by their romantic associations: Ginger Rogers twirling through life in her filmy dresses, the glamour of formals with rustling taffeta and floating tulle, and the magic of a wedding dress.

Ribbons make a physical appearance in the woven satin ribbon quilts, "Westcoast Reflections" (Plate 25) and "Desert Mirage" (Plate 26). Ribbons become a major theme in my imagery in "Reflections of a Lifetime" (Plate 27). My fondness for ribbons is another manifestation of a deeply rooted attachment to the flowing curve. With their beauty of pattern, texture, colour, and responses to light, ribbons have traditionally played a part in many celebrations and served many purposes during my lifetime. I recall the ribbons on baby bonnets and bassinettes, on doll dresses, on special occasion presents, ribbons on party dresses, corsages and chocolate boxes, for party streamers and awards, Maypole ribbons blowing in the breeze, the happy ribbons on wedding bouquets and the mournful ones of funerals.

The sensual pleasure I seek in ribbons and ruffles, satin and lace, velvet and diamonds, and crystal and china is also found in the dolls I have collected and loved ever since I was a young child. I enjoyed designing and making gowns and dresses for my dolls. I would spend hours sculpting their hair in elaborate styles. I remember my mother crocheting several gowns for storybook dolls which were lovingly added to my collection. My dolls were a "magic carpet" to fantasy. Dolls are far more than toys; traditions and roles are transmitted through the cherishing of dolls.

I grew up thinking that bearing children was part of the fulfillment one gives one's mother — that of being a grandmother. I experienced one of the many joys of
Plate 25: "Westcoast Reflections"
Woven Satin Ribbon Quilt, 80 x 80 in.

Plate 26: "Desert Mirage"
Woven Satin Ribbon Quilt, 80 x 86 in.
Plate 27:
"Reflections of a Lifetime"

Assemblage of Acrylic, Crochet Work, Lace and Photocopies of Photographs on Silk and Paper
Left Wing - 23 x 30.5 in.
Centre - 43 x 32 in.
Right Wing - 23 x 30.5 in.
becoming a mother as I presented my mother with her beautiful, perfect grandbabies. Kirstin, my first, was very much like the treasured china babydoll that had always sat on my mother's bed. This doll appears in the painting "Rock-a-Goodbye-Baby" (Plate 28). My second child, Paisley Terra, resembles my mother's other prized doll. This doll was restored and presented to me when I was old enough to take care of something special and is portrayed in the pastel drawing, "My Mother's Doll I" (Plate 29) and the acrylic painting, "My Mother's Doll II" (Plate 30). I find a similar sensuous pleasure in drawing and painting dolls now as I did when I played with them as a child.

Dolls were revered by my mother, as by me, because of their beauty and because they were given in love, by mothers, and also because they were links with past generations. This reverence extends to all aspects of my family's heritage. When I was growing up, I was curious to know what my predecessors looked like, where they came from, what they did, what special quirks and talents they had, what adventures they sought and how they lived. I was intrigued by the old family photographs and would search them for family resemblances and traits, clothing styles and background details. These ancestral images surfaced to the present through the photo-etchings I developed during my semesters in graphics at the University of British Columbia (Plates 31, 41). A snapshot of my mother and grandmother is the basis for "Mother, Daughter, 1923" (Plate 94). Photocopies of old photographs appear in "Reflections of a Lifetime" (Plate 27). The deep tradition of motherhood and strong family ties are expressed in this work.

The fascination for my family's past was fuelled, when I was a child, by two trips my mother and I made to Ontario, Canada; trips which were to provide some of my dearest and most profound memories. We left dry, brown Southern California with its stuccoed, geometric sub-divisions behind as we rattled our way by train to the "olden days" of "back east". There were farms with barns, cows and rail fences, and old homes with outhouses, waterpumps, feather beds, and china chamber pots.
Plate 28:
"Rock-a-Goodbye-Baby"
Acrylic on Canvas, 19 x 32 in.
Plate 29: "My Mother's Doll I"
Graphite and Pastel on Paper - 20 x 26 in.
Plate 30: "My Mother's Doll II"
Acrylic on Canvas - 35 x 27 in.
Plate 31:

Top Row: Photo-etchings  
left to right  
"Feeding the Chickens"  
"Factory"  
"Percy, Roberta and Robert"

Bottom: "Visiting Their Prairie Daughter" photo-etching  
left to right  
"Bread Doily" embossing  
"Eden Mills" lithograph
Having dinner at a farmhouse was a unique experience for a girl from California. We all pitched in and helped clean the vegetables picked minutes earlier from the garden. This was amazing to me, having come from the land of frozen vegetables. The paintings, "Oasis" (Plate 32) and "Dusty Day" (Plate 33) remind me of farmhouse kitchens.

My great-aunt Verna lived in the old family home. The house was filled with furniture and keepsakes from the previous generation. Coming from the California fashion of blond straight-edge furniture, I was overcome by the intricacies of these antiques. In my great-aunt's special parlour, I would sit alone and very still. My senses were drenched with the delicate, detail-laden atmosphere. Having tea with my great-aunts was a special occasion. The lace covered table would be laid with china plates, linen napkins, gleaming silver, assorted fruit nappies shimmering with a bounty of homemade applebutter, gooseberry and raspberry jams. A pot of teaspoons always sat in the centre of the table. I would choose the most elaborate, fine bone china teacup for sipping my tea. I loved the gentle clatter of a silver spoon as it stirred the steaming tea. Homemade preserves would be heaped onto piping hot biscuits. I would sit very straight and keep my elbows off the table. The painting, "Tea with a Great-Aunt" (Plate 34), features a teacup given to me by my great-aunt Verna and emits the aura I remember from those teatimes.

While sitting very politely next to my mother as she and the relatives chattered away, I would entertain myself by visually rearranging the knick-knacks, pictures, furniture, cushions, doillies, and my favourite, the contents of the treasured china cabinet. My mother would flush with embarrassment when, at an opportune moment, I would inquire if perhaps there might be a dusty old attic or musty dark cellar I could explore. I would root through ancestral trunks and old cardboard boxes; searching the fertile layers of ancient nutrients, quenching my thirst for knowledge of the buried past. I was unconsciously tucking away mental "keepsakes" which, years later, would resurface through my art work.
Plate 32: "Oasis"
Acrylic on canvas - 19 x 32 in.

Plate 33: "Dusty Day"
Acrylic on canvas - 19 x 32 in.
Plate 34: 
"Tea with a Great-Aunt"
Acrylic and Lace on Canvas, 14 x 20.5 in.
I looked into a window on the past when I visited "back east". My appreciation of "woman's work" was strengthened through these visits. When I remember the care and diligence the women in my family put into their cooking, fancy work, and cleaning, I see very similar drives and traits that are essential when I am producing my art. It's a heritage I would like to recognize. Many of the images found in my present work are rooted in the warm impressions gathered from these family reunions. I have celebrated women's "fancy work" in the recent works, "Reflections of a Lifetime" (Plate 27), "Tributes to Someone's Grandmother" (Plates 110 to 115) and "Ghosts in the Garden" (Plate 116).

My mother had always wanted a teacup collection and a china cabinet. This desire was part of her Canadian heritage. China cabinets contained a woman's wealth. The treasured china, crystal, and silver allowed a woman to beautifully present her hospitality. China cabinets make their appearance in "Kitchen Chairs I" (Plate 76), "Oasis" (Plate 32), and "My Own Kitchen I" (Plate 99). My mother died before getting her long desired china cabinet. The denial of my mother's simple lifelong wish caused me to realize how necessary it is to grasp what is important in life while it can still be enjoyed. I decided to begin doing what I most wanted, and that was to learn more about making art.

Learning About Art

In the fall of 1982, following my mother's death, I returned to Canada from California and enrolled in drawing and ceramics classes. At this time, I was craving structure and I wanted to be pressured. I wanted to concentrate my energies into efforts that demanded quality. I wanted to work for and achieve standards of excellence in art.

My goals at that time were to accumulate a knowledge of the various media taught in the public schools and to develop my technical skill in each. After a while, however, I began to feel discontent. Although I was growing in technical skill, I felt that I lacked an understanding of composition. I wondered how artists chose their
form and content. There was a dearth of meaningful content in my work which I found frustrating. I was learning a language but not what to express of myself with the language.

At one point, an instructor made the statement that an artist must be able to simplify what he sees. I understood this to mean "to make simple." I related it to abstraction as in "modern" art. Because I had difficulty in simplifying what I saw and what I wanted to express, I began to doubt my ability to succeed in art. I sought out artists such as the Flemish, Dutch and French Masters to console myself in the fact that other artists have also delighted in detail.

I have since come to realize that a process of simplification is involved in even the most elaborate portrayal of a subject. What I hadn't comprehended earlier was that the degree of simplification used is relative to the artist's personal goal for his imagery. I now accept my love for detail and elaboration as a strength and appreciate these traits as a gift rather than the handicap I once felt it to be.

In those years of my life, I felt that I didn't have anything to express that was esoteric or "arty" without it being contrived. I was constantly searching for the answer to the questions: "What is Art?", "How do you know when something becomes Art?", and "How can I make Art?".

I seldom completely resolved a painting to its finished state. When I finally worked up the courage to push a painting to its darkest darks and to put in the brightest highlights, the resulting image, "Portrait of David" (Plate 35), gave rise to new concerns. David's expressive face filled the entire canvas. The image was insightful and powerful, reflecting David's intensity and physical pain. The ability to paint something with impact frightened me. I was bewildered by many feelings and anxieties. What if I have potential? What if I think I can do something and I fail? At the same time, I was excited by the painting and felt myself being consumed by the desire to lose myself in image-finding and image-making. I could paint for hours, forgetting my reality. I became worried that I might neglect my parenting responsi-
Plate 35: "Portrait of David"
Oil on Canvas - 33.5 x 22 in.
ilities. As a result of these concerns, I decided to take a break from art training and to focus my creative energies in ways that included my family.

The time came, in the Spring of 1977, for me to make another choice of direction for my life. I made the decision to attend an art education course at the University of British Columbia, which had been recommended by a friend. I based the decision to pursue further training as an art teacher on the fond memories of my early teaching experiences in California.

I had taught third grade from 1963 to 1966. I loved working with the children in subjects that allowed for creative opportunities. Art was a favourite. I became very excited as I watched the children's innocent images emerge. I thrilled at the joy and pride the children felt when they had finished something to their satisfaction. During this period I had toyed with the idea of becoming an art teacher.

At this time we were fortunate to have working in our District a dynamic woman with a gray-haired bun, raucous voice, flamboyant personality and clothes to match. Helen Cordell was art coordinator for the elementary schools. Ms. Cordell did a pilot study demonstrating that Grade One pupils could learn the vocabulary of art, apply the knowledge gained in their projects, and enjoy art appreciation discussions. Through workshops put on by Ms. Cordell, I became aware of the elements of art and the principles of design. She taught me also that art had a language that I could learn and use, and which I could teach children to use in a logical, sequential manner. Helen Cordell's mission in life seemed to be to convince the children, teachers, administration, and the board alike, that art was an essential in the education of the child. She was an example of what I wanted to be when I was in the prime of my career.

In June of 1977, I fulfilled a long held dream. I took my children to visit the fabled Eastern Canada of my mother's ancestral home. I wanted to share with my children the wonder of "watering one's roots" which I had experienced when I was young. I wanted them to have the sense of themselves as the extension of a family tree. I also wanted them to experience the crossing of Canada's vastness firsthand.
A relic from the past, which was to have a profound impact on my art work, came into my life on this trip. Driving along Toronto’s Bloor Street at 3:00 a.m. with a friend, I saw an old treadle-driven Singer sewing machine, patent 1885, sitting on the curb waiting for the morning garbage pick-up. My friend and I managed to put the machine into the trunk of the car. It was arranged that my cousin, who was planning to drive a large container truck across Canada, would bring the sewing machine west along with the other treasures my great-aunt Verna had given me. As a result, I saved the Singer from one destruction but, inadvertently, sent it to another.

In July of 1977, I attended a beginning art education course at the University of British Columbia. This course was to have a monumental effect on my life and art direction. The course curriculum covered drawing, painting, three-dimensional work, and graphics. Students were required to choose and develop themes for the projects in each of the four areas. It was in doing those projects that I began to uncover my present imagery.

In the following pages I trace the development of the symbols which emerged as a result of the course assignments and continue to appear in my art work: the sewing machine, the geranium, the chair, and family photographs. The supporting compositional devices, which have become integral in my work, will also be discussed: checks, lace, and crochet. The use of each symbol will be followed until January of 1980, at which point a change occurs in my attitude regarding my symbols and my products. As a student the symbols had played a subservient role in my quest for technical and compositional experiences. In 1980, circumstances required that I perform as an artist. In this new phase of my development, technique and composition suddenly became integrated with the content or concept of the work.

In the beginning course, I chose the sewing machine as my theme image because of my emotional need to make the best of a disappointing situation. When I went to collect my long-awaited treadle sewing machine that I had rescued from Bloor Street, I found a pile of splintered wood and shattered metal. I was wretched with
disappointment. In an attempt to channel my anguish, I decided to turn what was left of the machine head and metal work of the treadle into art. I did many drawings (Plates 36A, 36B, and 37d, 38a and c), a painting (Plate 38), liftprints (Plate 37a and 38b), a lino cut (Plate 37b, 37c), a ceramic sculpture, and a plaster carving based on the sewing machine's features. Crochet and lace were used as compositional supports. As I worked with the image, I became more aware of the artistic qualities inherent in the design elements of the old treadle machine. This increased my appreciation for the old Singer as an aesthetic object. I was almost glad for the disaster.

The objects/symbols that appear in my artwork are chosen for compositional, symbolic, and emotional reasons. The following explains how the sewing machine satisfies the three criteria:

Compositional: The ornately decorated, curved, sensual form of the machine head fills space with a graceful strength which enhances the fragments of background pattern that reveal themselves through the open spaces of the machine.

Emotional: I have an affinity for things that reflect the patina of use and have been part of the process of life. The aura of these old objects emits a sense of history and passing time. Painting and drawing sewing machines is emotionally soothing for me and evokes many fond memories of the time my mother and I spent together sewing my dreams into fabric.

Symbolic: Sewing is an accepted outlet for women's artistic and creative urges as well as being a way in which they can make a physical contribution to the family. The sewing machine, in my view, has deep symbolic meaning of woman's "place" and "woman's work."

This framework may be used to analyze the presence of other objects and compositional devices which are prevalent in my work.

During the course, I had become intrigued with the graphic process, and decided that I wanted to learn more about the technical aspects of the various processes.
Plate 36A:
Drawings from Sketch Book on Sewing Machine Theme
Plate 36B:
Drawings from Sketch Book on Sewing Machine Theme
Plate 37: Sewing Machine Theme


Plate 38: "Sewing Machines" Tempera, Acrylic Medium on Hardboard. - 19 x 20 in.
I also thought that by eliminating the element of colour from my imagery, I could concentrate on the composition and structure of an image, an area where I felt I needed further understanding.

The following year, 1978, I attended a graphics course. We were to study lithography. I did a rough, simple drawing of a sewing machine for a metal plate lithograph (Plate 37). While exploring a new technique, I feel more comfortable using a familiar image. After the lithograph of the sewing machine, the symbol does not reappear until 1980.

The geranium appeared in my work during the introductory art course. This symbol surfaced quite innocently during a contour drawing session in the university greenhouse. These contour drawings became the foundation for further experiments and explorations in design. The resulting ideas were used for making lift prints, which were further "played with" in the search for imagery.

While drawing the geranium, I recalled the geranium my mother had grown in the backyard of our home in Southern California. Geraniums lived outside all year round and were one of the few flowering plants that could survive hot summers. As a child, I enjoyed their pungent aroma and the fuzzy green leaves poking out at cocky angles, framing the clumps of brilliant red flowers that were bursting from their twiggy stems like "Fourth of July" sparklers.

From a lift print of a tomato and of a geranium in a clay pot (Plate 39), I developed a collagraph using suede, denim, cardboard, and net (Plate 40). Crochet work made its first appearance in this collagraph. I needed something to use as a texture for the geranium flower. That afternoon, while walking about the campus, I noticed a piece of crochet work lying in the road. The piece consisted of three sections of deep scallop shapes with a spoke design in the centre of each section. I could not have found a more perfect piece to represent the flower.

The small-paned window made its first appearance in this collagraph. I used the grid as a compositional device dividing the background and anchoring the organic
Plate 39: Experimental Liftprint
Ink and Watercolour on Newsprint Leading to "Prairie Window"
Plate 40: "Prairie Window"
Collagraph, 23 x 16 in.
shapes to the edges of the format. The collagraph, printed in black, took on the appearance of a silhouette. I experimented with warm sunset colours using a rainbow roll on cardboard. These colours were printed first. When I put the black silhouette on top of the intense sky, fading from gold to orange to rusty browns, I was suddenly transported to the prairies, standing in a darkening prairie shack, looking past the window to the lingering light of a sinking sun filtering through the dust rising from a prairie tractor's wake. I call the print "Prairie Window" (Plate 40). A light source or a window is used to indicate a time of day, location, circumstances, mood, and atmosphere in later works. The prairie shack motif reappears in an etching, "Visiting Their Prairie Daughter" (Plate 41).

The geranium was next used as a subject for exploring technique in a lithography course (Plate 42) and in an intaglio course. Using one of four small copperplates, I did a sampler of etching techniques (Plate 43, I). As three small copperplates remained, it occurred to me that I could put the geranium in a particular environment. I decided to use my kitchen and one of my pressed-back chairs for this design. This was the debut of my own kitchen as a motif. I drew a table covered with a checkered tablecloth for pattern interest and included square windows to divide the background space (Plate 1, b). The final etching (Plate 43, l) strikes a home-like chord in many people. The composition is based on the balance between organic rounds and curves contrasting with geometric grids which is also explored in the collagraph "Prairie Window" (Plate 40). It is interesting to note that these contrasting compositional elements also appear in my childhood art (Plates 2 - 28).

The image on the second copperplate is a simplified geranium and an enlargement of the tablecloth and window pattern (Plate 43 II). The fourth plate was an experiment with the sugar-lift technique using a single leaf and a few flowers. The final image resembled a microscopic view of the juices flowing inside the leaf (Plate 43, IV). The series exemplifies another compositional concept that recurs in my work, that of focusing inward. The plates were editioned in a dark sepia brown on Arches buff paper. The prints are titled, "Geranium Series I, II, III and IV" (Plate 43).
Plate 41: "Visiting Their Prairie Daughter"
Photo-etching, 17 x 13 in.
Plate 42: Lithograph of a Geranium
14 x 18 in.
Plate 43: "Geranium Series, I, II, III, IV"
Etchings from Copperplates
28 x 10.25 in., 4 x 4.75 in.
During that summer session, I continued to explore the intriguing forms of the geranium in a larger copperplate etching (Plate 44) and in a collagraph (Plate 45). For the collagraph I used a variety of materials, including actual leaves and flowers. The petals of the flowers were defined with carved modelling paste. The plant shapes are again anchored down by the window grid.

In the fall of 1978, I began another year of graphics. I continued to explore the concept of abstracted designs based on simplified organic shapes and geometric patterns, along with images based on the contrasting concepts of mood, atmosphere, and the "essences of reality."

I chose to continue working with the geranium symbol. I drew some observation-based drawings (Plate 46) and a free-association drawing (Plate 47) in my sketchbook. These drawings were trial studies for future etchings. The idea of leaving the stylized positive shapes of the geranium leaf and stem white, while filling in the negative shapes with images from my memory, expressed itself in one of the drawings (Plate 47). In doing the "Geranium" etching (Plate 44) and the detailed sketchbook drawing (Plate 46) of a geranium, I had closely observed the edges and shape of the leaf. I was intrigued with the shapes of the negative spaces that appeared when I drew the positive leaf and stem shapes. The free-association drawing (Plate 47) generated thoughts which I noted in the margins of the page. The cow, another a symbol from my past, appears in this drawing.

Following this, I did another drawing which extrapolated the elements I liked best. This new drawing used only the geranium leaf and stem shapes as the positives and the negative spaces were filled with checks. I was again searching out the contrast between the organic curve and the geometric grid. The resulting design (Plate 48) excited my eye and my sense of tension and balance. I decided to use the design for an etching. As I worked, I was mesmerized by the sharpened dental tool sliding through the soft black-brown asphaltum, fine stroke by fine stroke, until every other check in the design was opened to receive the acid's bite. I editioned the print
Plate 44:
Copperplate Etching of a Geranium
13 x 16 in.
Plate 45: Collagraph of Geranium
8 x 7.5 in.
Plate 46:
Observation-based Drawings of Geranium
Plate 47:
Free-association Drawing of Geranium and Memories with Annotated Thoughts in Margin.
Plate 48
Drawing of Geranium
Extrapolating Preferred Elements
in red on white rag paper (Plate 49). I was concurrently working on the plate ("Rainy Day", Plates 50, 51) which explored the mood and atmosphere of an environment.

I experimented with the repetition of a chair shape (Plate 52) and chair and table shapes using pattern as a compositional device (Plate 53). I was fascinated by the feeling of mystery evoked by the "Hall of Mirrors" image (Plate 53). I felt that I had made a breakthrough to a more profound understanding of the principles and the power of composition as I pushed my way through these drawing explorations. The compositional themes and tools discovered in these exercises continue to reappear, almost unconsciously, as the foundations for my personal statements.

The kitchen and chair theme made its first appearance in a continuous line drawing done in the foundation art education course. The instructor asked the class to draw a picture based on a fond memory from early childhood. I remembered the kitchen in the home where I had spent the first five years of my life. I had pleasant memories of the feel of that 1940's kitchen with its wooden kitchen chairs and icebox (Plate 1, a). The kitchen theme next appears in the previously mentioned copperplate etching (Plate 43, I) and in the etching, "Rainy Day" (Plate 51).

We were required to keep a sketchbook in the beginning art education course. This was an invaluable experience for me. I took the sketchbook everywhere I went and made an effort to draw in the book whenever I was sitting and not using my hands to drive or eat. The drawings are a diary of the summer's events. I used a variety of media and drawing approaches throughout. Contour drawings of my kitchen, other rooms in my home and those of friends, household artifacts, and my children were included in the sketchbook. This collection of images held many seeds that would germinate into art work which would later appear in public exhibition.

I went through a phase during the 1977-1978 school year, when I felt my marks and renderings were not significant enough to take up space in a world already overloaded with visual material. About this time, I was exposed to the technique of photo-etching. I began experimenting with overlays of crochet and lace on photographs of my children (Plate 54). I used photographs of lace and crochet from
Plate 49:
"Geranium and Checks"
Etching from Zinc Plate.
8.75 x 11.5 in.
Plate 50: Sketch for "Rainy Day"

Plate 51: "Rainy Day"
Etching from Zinc Plate
8.75 x 11.5 in.
Plate 52:
Sketch of Repeated Chair Design
Plate 53:
"Hall of Mirrors" Drawing
Plate 54:
Experiments with Lace
Overlays on Photographs
my collection and spent hours shifting and adjusting the patterns. I learned a great
deal about the significance of minute spaces while preparing the orthofilms for these
plates. The actual lace and crochet was used to emboss the borders of the prints
(Plate 55 and 56). I became fascinated with embossing.

I had taken a photograph of a doily made for a bread basket. The word "Bread"
was crocheted into the design. Someone had made a piece of fancy work to embellish
the serving of bread and I wanted to take the sentiment to the art level. I see bread
as a symbol of nourishment, the "staff of life," and a woman's way of providing for her
family. I used an orthofilm enlargement for putting the doily image onto a zinc
plate. The plate was deeply bitten by nitric acid. The image was embossed into
Japanese Kochi paper (Plate 57).

By this time, I was totally devoted to lace and crochet as an image. Crochet
and lace have since become dominant compositional devices in my work. The intricate
patterns of lace and crochet provide the visual interest of contrasting textures. I fill
the negative spaces of my compositions with detail and pattern. Lace is fragile,
intricate, and complicated. Delicate floral shapes are suspended on transparent
gossamer webs of geometric grids which hold and capture light.

Crochet is heavier and coarser than lace. The sturdy intricate patterns give a
lace-like effect durable enough for constant use. Crochet blends decor and function,
durability and delicacy, giving common household items a touch of luxury and beauty.
Crochet work was made by women to be used for practical reasons in their homes on
garments used from babyhood to death. Utilitarian items, from pillow cases to dish
towels, were graced with crocheted elegance. Women could get together to talk and
still be constantly productive, contributing to their family's well-being.

In the 1978 summer lithography course, I decided to continue exploring the
"Bread" doily image (Plate 57). I planned to experiment with the doily using the
positive, negative, and reversal processes of lithography. I needed a background for
Plate 55:  
"Kirstin"  
Lace Overlay, Photo-etching and Embossing  
10.5 x 14.5 in.
Plate 56:
"Paisley"
Lace Overlay, Photo-etching and Embossing
10.5 x 14.5 in.
Plate 57:
"Bread Dolly"
Embossed Photo-etching
17 x 14 in.
the doily shape but did not want a meaningless scribble. In my mental elaborations about the significance of the doily, I had pondered my link with the women in my family and how the handicrafts performed by women embellished the family's life. While riding the bus to school one morning, my mind made the connection between my desire for an unobtrusive textured background, a conversation about using handwriting as texture, and my thoughts on the meaning of the bread doily. I decided to use letters written by my grandmother and my mother for the background. That evening I rooted out a package of letters. There were letters from my mother written to me and a letter from my grandmother written to my mother at the time of my second child's birth.

I had decided on a dark background with white writing. I made a negative orthofilm of the letters in their original size. Whenever I tried to explain the project to someone, tears revealed my emotional involvement with the letters. I persevered in my idea which had become an act of grieving and felt good in a sad way. As I worked with the letters, the words of caring would catch my eye and soothe me. As the print evolved and my involvement grew with the background, the doillies became extraneous. The resulting lithograph, "Celebrating Grief" (Plate 58), has a very special significance.

The instructor for this class made it a practice of having times set aside for discussions with students regarding their work, progress, and concerns. During one of these discussions an instructor encouraged the way I was thinking and reasoning in my art. As a result of this comment, I began to feel that my thoughts might be artistically valid. This instructor had accepted my images based on the home and past as worthwhile. I began to gain the confidence I needed in order to visually express my own feelings and ideas. I felt comfortable accepting myself and giving myself permission to explore and search for content within the confines of my own person. I became excited that I could express the praises of the woman-mother-heroine of the home. With my new enthusiasm for the ordinary, I delighted in the idea of doing something with the pineapple-pattern doillies which were on the arms and backs of our
Plate 58:
"Celebrating Grief"
Lithograph of Letters
22 x 30 in.
couch and chairs when I was a child. Apart from a couple of experimental soft-ground etchings done in the autumn of 1978 (Plate 59), the pineapple motif lay dormant until its appearance in "Tributes to Someone's Grandmother" in 1983 (Plate 113). Once I began to feel some confidence in my own imagery, I discovered a paradox. Setting goals and priorities for myself, I was then free to explore form and content to a greater depth and breadth within the chosen framework.

In the autumn of 1978, I began the second year Graphics course at the University of British Columbia. My fascination with photo-etching led me to the exploration of old family photographs. These messages from the past surfaced to my awareness while I was searching for the letters I used as a background for the bread doily lithograph. I found, in this collection, images that I felt were classically beautiful and were archetypal of the Anglo-Saxon Canadian family life during the late 1800's and early 1900's. I invested a great deal of time and concentration in pulling from the evolving prints the nuances of meaning and feeling which were evoked by the photographs.

Transition

In the fall of 1979, I enrolled in a graduate course. This particular course had been designed to give participants the opportunity to perform as artists and to expand on their abilities in the realm of art criticism. The students produced work independent of each other. The class made visits to the studio or place of activity where the work was produced. The site, method, and imagery were discussed. The group would then offer comments relevant to the work of the host artist. The meetings were charged with excitement and provided creative nourishment for everyone.

It was decided by the group that we should put ourselves on the line. If we were going to perform like artists, we should exhibit like artists. I make it a rule to accept challenges that may lead to personal growth, so despite my apprehension, I agreed to the idea of an exhibit. A public exhibition was organized for April, 1980.
Plate 59:
Pineapple Pattern
Soft-ground Etchings
My mind was still involved with the ancestral images of the family photos which had been developed into etchings the previous year. Feeling stronger in the skills of composition, I now wanted to tackle colour. Acrylic paint became my next challenge.

In the box of old family photographs, I had found a picture of my mother and grandmother that held particular appeal for me. I had explored the image in a pen and ink drawing in my sketch book earlier in the year (Plate 60). I decided to attempt a painting of this photograph. After some futile attempts I abandoned the project, realizing it involved more than I was ready for at the time. Its completion is documented in the "Mother, Daughter, 1923" section.

Suddenly it was January. The art exhibit that had been scheduled for April loomed large in my mind. In an attempt to conquer the inhibiting fear that my work might not be deemed art, I said to myself, "Just do something, anything." I picked up an old sketch book, some charcoal, and a few pastels that had surfaced and had been floating near the top of my "clutter pool" for some time. I sat down at my kitchen table, looked up, and saw my old black sewing machine. I drew it in the foreground and drew a jar of blown eggs in the background (Plate 61). For the second drawing, I decided to frame the black sewing machine shape with my colourfully patterned kitchen wallpaper (Plate 62).

Because I thought of the drawings as just warmups in an old sketch book, I was relaxed and having fun. My line loosened. I fixed and fussed without worrying about what might or might not become "Art." I spontaneously put in backgrounds. I played, experimented, and explored the nuances of shape, line, and colour of the objects I had gathered around me. I stopped fretting about the "mysterious" rightness after which I was always searching. I found pleasure in looking at these objects and enjoyed the mood and atmosphere they created in my home. I felt a connection with the past through these old, worn, household artifacts. It was visually and emotionally satisfying to use them as the subjects for my drawings.
Plate 60:
Sketch for "Mother, Daughter, 1923"
Pen and Ink.
Plate 61: "Sewing Machine and Eggs"
Pastel and Charcoal, 14 x 17 in.

Plate 62: "Black Sewing Machine with Wallpaper"
14 x 17 in.
I continually reminded myself of three significant comments that had been made to me some years earlier. During my first course at the University of British Columbia, I had asked a fellow student, whose work I admired, how she decided what parts of a still life to draw. She replied that she drew what she "liked." The second comment, made by my lithography instructor, was that my drawing should be as natural as my handwriting. The third, made by the same instructor reinforced my confidence in my artistic thinking. I said to myself over and over while working on the exploratory drawings, "Draw what you like." "Relax and draw in your natural style." I continued to draw the sewing machine with pastels, charcoal, and graphite, experimenting with a variety of compositions, backgrounds, patterns, and moods (Plates 63 - 71).

I grew dissatisfied with the surface I could create with pastel. I felt that the way I was using pastel did not do the objects justice. They lacked impact. I had not taken the time to fully develop the forms. I decided to start leaving the positive shapes white and began to emphasize the negative spaces, which I delighted in filling with a variety of patterns. This provided me with the opportunity to explore the use of line, shape, pattern, and colour, which in turn, led to the intricate visual surfaces I enjoyed. I found the relief offered by the contrasting white shapes enhanced the patterns.

I looked around my house, finding compositions everywhere. My eye was acting as a format. As I drew the pressed-back chairs, geraniums, the rose pitcher, and checkered tablecloth (Plates 72 - 93), I became more and more visually intrigued with the qualities that endeared these objects to me. Using these items as compositional toys, I moved further into the search for imagery. I explored various approaches to form such as movement, psychological space, mood, atmosphere, and pattern. Content evolved from the amalgamation of these elements.

The constructive suggestions given by many of my teachers and the experience of organizing compositions began to merge in my mine. I began to sense a change occurring in my approach to art making.
Plate 63: "White Sewing Machine"
Pastel and Charcoal - 14 x 17 in.

Plate 64: "Sewing Machine and Yellow Checks"
Pastel and Charcoal - 20 x 15 in.
Plate 65: "Sewing Machine and Checks"
Conte - 14 x 17 in.

Plate 66: "Sewing Machine and Chair I"
Pastel and Charcoal - 15 x 20 in.
Plate 67: "Sewing Machine and Chair III"
Pastel and Charcoal - 15 x 20 in.

Plate 68: "Sewing Machine and Three Chairs"
Pastel and Charcoal - 15 x 20 in.
Plate 69: "Treadle"
Graphite and Pastel - 20 x 26 in.

Plate 70: "Fragments"
Pastel and Charcoal - 15 x 20 in.
Plate 71: "Sewing and Machine and Chair IV"
Graphite and Pastel - 22 x 30 in.
Plate 72: "Geranium and Blue Checks"
Pastel and Charcoal - 14 x 17 in.

Plate 73: "Geranium and Red Checks"
Pastel and Charcoal - 14 x 17 in.
Plate 74: "Geranium in Pot with Cheeks"
Pastel and Charcoal - 14 x 17 in.

Plate 75: "Chair and Red Stripes"
Pastel and Charcoal - 15 x 20 in.
Plate 76: "Kitchen and Chairs I"
Graphite and Pastel - 20 x 26 in.

Plate 77: "Kitchen and Chairs II"
Graphite and Pastel - 20 x 26 in.
Plate 78: "Geranium and Chair"
Graphite and Pastel - 22 x 30 in.
Plate 79:
"Chair and Brown and White Checks"
Pastel and Charcoal - 15 x 20 in.

Plate 80:
"Chairs and Brown and Black Checks"
Pastel and Charcoal - 15 x 20 in.
Plate 81: "Chair and Blues"
Pastel and Charcoal
20 x 26 in.

Plate 82: "Checks and Chair Backs"
Pastel and Charcoal - 15 x 20 in.
Plate 83: "Layers of Chairs"
Graphite and Pastel - 22 x 30 in.
Plate 84:
"Chair with Red, Yellow, and Blue"
Pastel and Charcoal - 15 x 20 in.

Plate 85:
"Swinging Kitchen"
Pastel and Charcoal
15 x 20 in.
Plate 86:
"Chair and Geranium Leaves
Black and White" Conte and Charcoal
15 x 20 in.

Plate 87:
"Angel Chairs"
Graphite and Pastel
20 x 26 in.
Plate 88: "Circus Chairs"
Graphite and Pastel - 22 x 30 in.
Plate 89: "Chair Alone"
Pastel and Charcoal
15 x 20 in.

Plate 90:
"Chair and Sewing Machine II"
Pastel and Charcoal
15 x 20 in.
Plate 91:
"Rose Chair and Friend"
Pastel and Charcoal
15 x 20 in.

Plate 92:
"Rose Chair and Pitcher I"
Pastel and Charcoal
15 x 20 in.
Plate 93: "Rose Chair and Pitcher II"
Graphite and Pastel - 22 x 30 in.
The lack of compositional skill I had experienced earlier had been replaced with a more sensitive understanding of the use of space. I could now visually plan the division of space with great precision. My deepened understanding of composition enhanced my ability to express my personal statements. I was also beginning to understand the use of colour and how to balance the contrasts of light and dark, warm and cold, and bright and dull.

A change also occurred in my perception of myself. I went from being a student to being an artist. My images were no longer just practice. I began thinking of them as art. My new found confidence in my expressive and compositional ability was reinforced by the positive reactions of my classmates to the pastel drawings.

To further investigate the elements of art and principles of design, I decided to pursue painting with acrylics. I chose to continue the themes which had become apparent in the series of pastel drawings (Plates 61 - 93). A number of preliminary sketches on each theme were done in preparation for the paintings. Canvases of varying sizes were assembled (Appendix, Plate I). Preferred compositions were transferred to the canvases with charcoal (Appendix, Plate II). The paintings were worked on concurrently. The preliminary sketches, photographs of stages in the underpainting, and the finished painting are presented in the Appendix, Plates III - VIII. These paintings reinforced my interest in the themes which were becoming more clearly defined. Significant works which further explore the themes of atmosphere, mood, movement, pattern, and psychological space will be discussed in the following sections.

Mother, Daughter, 1923

The painting stems from my interest in my family's past and is based on an actual photograph of my mother and grandmother, circa 1923. The photograph has a special appeal for various reasons, some of which are based on form and others are in response to the content.
In the painting (Plate 94), the two lifesize figures are bathed in warm sunlight, surrounded by green grass dotted with small white daisies. The mother stands tall and strong in an ankle-length white dress accented with a dark green ribbon down the front. The child, wearing a pink and white cotton gingham play dress, leans shyly into the mother's protective form. Each has an arm around the other. The child looks shyly out to the world, not yet ready to stand alone. This joining of mother and child symbolizes a mutual sharing of protection, dependence, and love. The child needs the mother, the mother needs the child.

If I take my analysis of the picture further, I find signs of a different kind of support and nurturing structure embodied in the house and trellis. The presence of the male member of the family is implied and represented by these geometric elements in the painting.

To become more familiar with the forms and compositional components, I first painted a watercolour of the image (Plate 95). I was interested in exploring the contrasting patterns, textures, and the differing geometric grids serving as backdrops and supports to a variety of organic shapes.

A large climbing rose bush, laden with pink roses, drapes over an old wooden trellis behind the figures. A garden path, lined with small rose bushes of varying sizes, shapes, and colours winds through the background in front of a towering brick house with a wooden railing edging the front porch. A cross-hatched trellis creates a sun-spotted pattern on one end of the porch. The pink and white checkered pattern of the child's dress contrasts with and defines the soft folds of the skirt and pocket.

I found working from the small photo difficult, so, an eight by ten inch enlargement was made of each face and of the whole photograph. I did a few studies in an attempt to become re-acquainted with paint, which I had not handled for a number of years. The resemblance of the painted faces to the photograph was extremely important to me. This made the task of painting the faces very difficult.
Plate 94: "Mother and Daughter, 1923"
Acrylic on Canvas.
72 x 42 in.
Plate 95: Study for "Mother and Daughter, 1923"
Watercolour - 24 x 38 in.
It was while doing my preparatory painting that I optimistically built the six by four foot canvas, thinking to myself, "If you are going to paint figures, why not paint life-size figures?" The grid method was used for transferring the underdrawing onto the large canvas. I did not know where to start with the paint. I began brushing on two of the wildest colours I had - phthalocyanine blue and phthalocyanine green. I was so startled by the overpowering result that I counteracted with earth colours. Using burnt umber, I tried to establish the shapes and grids of the geometric structures appearing in the composition. I put some burnt sienna on the mother's dress and touches of pink on the daughter's (Plate 96). At this point I was feeling totally overwhelmed. I felt I had forgotten everything I had ever learned about painting. Trying to translate a black and white photo into living colour was much more difficult than I had imagined. I abandoned the project.

The painting sat in the corner of my dining room for a year, a ghostly reminder of my promise to this image from my past. In the late fall of 1981, the painting was resurrected and given another chance at life. It was going to appear in an art exhibit of women's work. I had a deadline, the pressure I find helpful when focusing on a project to the exclusion of most other distractions (the work in progress is shown in Plates 97 and 98).

I found that as I worked on this painting I could indulge in the reminiscences of the happy and sad, friendly and angry, helpful and hurtful times of a mother and daughter relationship. The final completion of this painting, after a month of continuous intense work and learning, was a great personal victory.

**My Own Kitchen I and II**

These paintings are realistic presentations of my symbols; the sewing machine, geranium, chair, and checkered tablecloth (Plate 99). Kitchen I has a chair tucked under a table; the back part of the seat is showing. The head of an old, ornately decorated sewing machine sits on a bright blue and white checkered tablecloth. The wall behind the table is covered in elaborate wallpaper. The floor is a gleaming shade
Plates 96, 97, and 98
Underpaintings in Progress of "Mother, Daughter, 1923"
Plate 99:
"My Own Kitchen I and II"
Acrylic on Canvas.
Each Painting - 34 x 45 in.
of beige. A piece of the geranium and yellow straw mat from Kitchen II appears in Kitchen I. There are two spools of thread and one long brass bobbin sitting on the table. Kitchen II shows a pressed-back chair; great attention is paid to the ornate design of the chair back and to the contours and shading of the spindles. There is a small white cat sleeping on the seat of the chair. The table is covered by a continuation of the tablecloth from Kitchen I; the folds of the cloth at the corner of the table are carefully delineated. The geranium plant, with bright green leaves and red flowers, is growing in a clay pot sitting on a bright yellow woven mat. The decorative wallpaper continues in Kitchen II. A leaded glass door of an oak china cabinet fills the right-hand corner behind the chair; in the cabinet is a stack of handed-down pickle dishes and a white ceramic cream pitcher in the shape of a cow. The creamy beige floor shown in Kitchen I is continued in Kitchen II.

The painting balances the vivid contrasts of homey realities. The geometric, bright, op art quality of the tablecloth accentuates the "old-fashioned" tonal portrayal of the chairs, sewing machine, and cabinet. The colours of the wallpaper are repeated in the geranium, the yellow mat, and in the spools of thread. The chairs and the table are tilted forward to reveal more surface pattern and shape. The beige floor area, with its shadows and patches of soft light, is broken by the chair rungs into a grid of triangular and rectangular shapes. The curves and elaborate decorations of the sewing machine are echoed by the intricate flowing patterns of the wallpaper. The red, green, and gold spools of thread punctuate the blue and white checkered tablecloth with the colours of the wallpaper, geranium, and straw mat. For visual balance, each painting has a piece of wallpaper showing in the lower third of the composition. The china cabinet presents a relief from the patterned wallpaper. The cabinet is a dull tonal grid, in contrast to the warm curves of the chair back and spindles. The shapes and colours reflected in the cut glass of the pickle dishes provide contrast to the dullness of the cabinet window. The blue, yellow, and white ceramic cow brightens the otherwise dark corner. The cow-shaped cream pitcher belonged to my mother and
reminded me of our family drives to the country. I believe that I learned to "really" see by "looking at the cows" (Plate 47).

The lively plant and sleeping cat add a vital element to the image. Sunshine is indicated by a change of tone on the tablecloth, a shadow cast by the clay pot on the yellow mat, and the light falling on the cat, the back spindles, and the seat of the chair. This is a painting of a colourful, warm, sunfilled, friendly kitchen. The kitchen is a productive space, a setting for the emotional and physical nourishment of those who share it.

My goal for this painting was to imbue the objects with "greater than life" intensity. I was interested in capturing the "essences of reality" of the objects I enjoy and that hold emotional and symbolic meaning for me. I wanted to provide the viewer with a feast of delicious detail and tantalizing contrast (Plate 100, preliminary sketches, "My Own Kitchen I and II," Plate 101, underpainting, "My Own Kitchen I and II").

Rock-a-Bye-Roses

This was the first acrylic painting after the previously mentioned series of thirty-six drawings in which I became intrigued with the expressive qualities of the drawn line. I wanted to create an image of my rose chair on canvas that echoed the beauty of line and shape that I had discovered while doing the pastel drawings (Plates 91, 92, 93). The objects in my drawings had been left white. I chose to leave the positive shapes of the rose chair as bare canvas. The outline and detailed patterning of the chair were etched onto the canvas with charcoal. Maintaining the qualities of the charcoal line was very important to me. I was unclear in the beginning just what direction I wanted the painting to take beyond the line, shape, and detail of the chair. I sketched some large diagonal checks behind the chair and began filling these in with red, yellow, dark blue, and black. The resulting effect was dreadful. Frustrated at having been so out of tune with the image, I decided to try an opposite approach to colour.
Plate 100: Preliminary Sketches for "My Own Kitchen I and II"

Plate 101: Underpainting for "My Own Kitchen I and II"
Plate 102:
Sketch of Initial Concept for
"Rock-a-Bye-Roses"
4 x 5 in.

Plate 103:
Underpainting for
"Rock-a-Bye-Roses"
31 x 43 in.
After having painted the background over with white. I made the grid behind the chair spindles smaller with wavy horizontal lines and fairly straight vertical lines. The small square-like shapes created a peaceful undulating rhythm as they were painted with the warm and cool tints of red, blue, and yellow. I was very careful not to obscure, with the paint, the unique qualities of the charcoal lines defining the chair. I was feeling quite good about the dainty shapes and colours that were evolving. My daughter commented, "Those look like baby colours." Prior to this moment, I had been pleading with the canvas to give me an indication of what story it wanted to tell. "Speak to me, tell me what do you want to say?" Suddenly, connections began to be made in my mind. I looked at my rose chair with a new understanding and appreciation. I realized that this squat brown chair had once been a rocking chair. I asked myself, "What do rocking chairs do?" "Well, one thing they do is hold mothers and grandmothers as they rock babies," was my reply. As I pursued my questions and answers for the image, the rocking chair became a symbol of safety, protection, caring, love, and security. Having chosen a story for the chair symbol, technical decisions were easier to make.

In my drawing explorations of chairs, I had discovered that by making wavy horizontal lines and varying the distance between the vertical crosslines, I could create a surface that appeared to undulate (Plates 65 to 67). By transferring this finding to the background of the painting, I had hoped an optical illusion would be created between the strong vertical of the chair spindles and the undulating motion of the background, giving the impression that the chair was actually rocking (Plate 102, Thumbnail Sketch). The illusion created was not as dynamic as I had anticipated. I would like to play with this idea in the future.

Meanwhile, my original goal of using the bare canvas for the surface of the chair was being altered. As I painted the background, paint dripped onto the natural canvas surface making it impossible to leave it in an unadulterated state (Plate 103). Also, the chair appeared much too cold and did not exhibit the qualities which were
now taking precedence for the image. My art keeps me constantly in touch with the trial and error method of working. "Just do something", I keep telling myself. "Follow your instinct." "Ego-critic leave me alone!"

What was I to do with the chair surface? I decided to experiment with pale pink, blue, and yellow. I painted three curved bands of colour on the seat of the chair, blending the overlapping edges. To my surprise and pleasure, I had painted a glowing light into the chair, giving it an ethereal quality. The yellow begins as a bright glow then turns to a gentle warmth as it blends into the soft pinks. The pink blurs into mauve, as it mixes into the dusky blue. The effect has been likened to a sunrise and a sunset. The quality of the surface was so successful that I decided to use it in the other flat areas of the chair. The tri-colour theme was also effective in defining the volume of the chair shape. Yellow was used for the highlight, the pink for the mid-tone, and the blue for the shadows. As I changed colours, I would wipe the paint left on my brush into the small shapes of the chairback design. My random dabbing produced some delightful effects. The design of the chair seat and the arch containing the rose and leaf shapes remained to be painted. I based the design for the seat area on the original pressed-paper seat. White appeared in this area causing the other colours to look brighter and offering a visual rest. I looked around for another area that could use this relief from colour. I painted around the paisley shapes on the wings of the chairback with white; the white separated the chair from the background and gave it sparkle. Somewhere along the way, I had smeared on yellow ochre. This turned out to be a fortuitous stroke of contrast. I put sky blue on the area behind the raised shapes of the pink roses and green leaves. That combination, with the touches of white, felt sweet and tender. While working on the painting, I had come across irridescent white paint. I decided to add it to the colours in every other row of the wavy background in an attempt to exaggerate the undulating movement and the luminous quality of the painting (Plate 104).
Plate 104: "Rock-a-Bye-Roses"
Acrylic on Canvas
31 x 43 in.
Children have very positive responses to this painting and they usually recognize it as a rocking chair. Some of the comments I have received from children who have viewed it in the public schools are: "beautiful colours," rainbow chair," the back is like the decoration of a knight's armour," "it glows like a sunset," "the colours are like my baby brother's blanket," and "a magic chair where I can float off into my imagination." A kindergarten boy told me that the painting made him think of a happy, peaceful home for a family.

**Roses at Forty-One**

This canvas is a continuation of the rose chair and pitcher theme explored in two of the previously mentioned pastel drawings (Plates 92 and 93). I was interested in experimenting with pinks, wine, and deep rose. I was deliberately moving into the feminine and sentimental with a new resolve. "If I feel like doing it, I'm going to do it" was becoming my motto. Several drawings (Plate 105), and the paintings "Ghost Roses" (Plate 106) and "Dusky Roses" (Plate 107) explored the rose chair and rose pitcher theme prior to "Roses at Forty-One."

The period around my forty-first birthday was a restless time. I remember telling friends that I felt out of "sync" with myself. I began to worry about aging. I'd look in the mirror and moan to myself, "You are getting older and older. You will never be a young woman again." Looking back now from the calm vantage point of adjustment, I see that I was experiencing the crisis of passage from one of life's phases to another.

I did the initial sketch for the composition on large sheets of newsprint measured to the canvas size (Plate 108). I took great pleasure in working on the huge sheets of paper. Using a fat graphite stick, I translated the graceful curves of the rose chair and pitcher into a flowing composition. The full-bodied jug with its graceful handle echoing the wings of the chairback, the luscious swirling spirals of the roses, and the quivering grid of the crocheted table covering fascinated my eyes. My beloved curve dominates this composition.
Plate 105:
Sketches of the Rose Chair
and Rose Pitcher Theme
Plate 106: "Ghost Roses"
Charcoal and Acrylic Medium on Canvas, 19 x 32in.

Plate 107: "Dusky Roses"
Acrylic on Canvas, 14 x 20.5 in.
I have asked school children to find this curve in my work, and, as a result, have come to realize that it is a major component of my style. I seem to have a natural fondness for this particular visual motion.

When the time came to paint, I felt a strong desire to portray in colour the intensity of feeling I was experiencing at the time. I began layering on various reds, incorporating stripes of varying intensity. Perhaps this was an attempt to interject structure and control. I carelessly painted a design, based on a heart shape with dots, into the lighter stripe. The result was disappointing. I continued to add more layers of red. The unsuccessful design became less obvious. I added a layer of red that had an orange cast to it. This had a diminishing effect on the intensity of the lusciousness I was after. I proceeded to add layer upon layer of the cooler reds, deepening the background hue. I finally felt somewhat satisfied with the background. My next goal was to paint onto the surface of this rich red backdrop a demure pitcher full of flowers placed on a table, which was laced with a delicate crocheted covering and standing next to the tender rose chair. At that time, I began to see this painting as representative of my emotional state. I was attempting to symbolize the opposing forces of my personality within the confines of the painting. The opposing forces were symbolic of the conflicting influences on women, as I saw them. As a result of my upbringing, I felt that it was not ladylike to have impetuous desires and assertive feelings. Yet, I wanted more power and control over my own destiny, but I was afraid that I would appear brash and impolite if I became too assertive or aggressive.

The painting was not working. It was as "out of sync" as I was. I needed to make changes in myself and the painting. I dulled the background behind the chair. I decided to mix opposites together for the foreground. Acra violet, hooker's green, and phthalocyanine blue, again my wildest colours were blended together with white. The results were very exciting. A marvelous range of muted but lively colours evolved. The colours ranged from the pure hues to the rich neutral greys created by mixing complements. The half-circle shape in the back of the chair took on a mirror-like
appearance. Another interesting phenomenon occurred with the table surface. Not knowing quite what to do with this large empty area, I did what I usually do when I don't know what to do. Before making a change of colour for the chair, I wiped the excess paint onto the problem area. When I viewed the surface from a distance, I realized that a luminous, iridescent quality was emerging from the smears of dulled colours.

The rose pitcher was to be translated into a large, glossy white, voluptuous shape. As I painted on the layers of white, I couldn't understand why the pitcher wasn't taking on a more voluminous quality. I looked more closely at the surface of the actual pitcher. I discovered that white china isn't white. It consists of the reflections of all that surrounds it. Trying to capture the deep reflective surface of the white jug in paint became a technical challenge. I began brushing on the various colours found in the other parts of the painting. At one point, I brushed some yellow onto the pitcher and the chair. This colour was not to be part of my original colour scheme. However, I had learned from other paintings that an underpainting of contrasting colours often gives exciting sparks to the finished painting. The yellow on the jug created a sense of warmth in the otherwise cool shape. Gradually, through the layering of colours, which were glazed with white and clear acrylic, the desired pitcher form emerged.

I had been working on the bouquet of roses and leaves in the pitcher concurrent with other components of the composition. Some flowers had been created with the first strokes of the brush; others took a lot of experimental brushwork to bring them to bloom. I painted a beige rose design into the crocheted pattern on the table. It was later drawn to my attention, by a grade six girl, that the crocheted design looked like a dead rose. A connection was made in my mind and I became aware of the symbolism of the rose in this painting. I had unconsciously symbolized the life cycle through the blooming, fading, and eventual death of the roses.
As the elements in the painting became more balanced and the painting began to work, I began to feel more adjusted to the idea of aging and to see the advantages that are inherent in the process. I decided to call the painting, "Roses-at-Forty-one" (Plate 109).

**Tributes to Someone's Grandmother**

During the autumn of 1983, I had the opportunity to participate in a group art show. This prompted me to produce the series, "Tributes to Someone's Grandmother." I located several sheets of German etching paper suitable for embossing, which had been torn to size a few years earlier for another project. In my collection of handiwork, I found a favourite doily with a crocheted design of trees, a house, and flowers. There were a few others also suitable for embossing, one being the "promised" pineapple pattern.

I came across an embroidered piece which I decided to actually use in a work. For this composition, I began by finding a place on the paper where I felt the doily rested pleasantly. The shape was repeated several times. To portray the hint of grey-blue and grey-pink of the embroidery on the doily, I used pencil-pastels. An embroidery stitch-like stroke was used to fill in the details of the doily design and the negative spaces between the doily shapes (Plate 110).

By deciding to use the actual doily in the first image, I was then free to explore possibilities using other doilies. The pale aqua cranes embroidered on two small, round doilies came to my mind. One was more faded and tattered than the other. This contrast appealed to me. I played around with possible arrangements looking for one that would enhance the character of the design. I came to think of the two rounds as a rising moon and its reflection in a pond. The birds were so lively in their movement that I decided to continue their flight design off the doily and onto the paper. As I drew, I could almost hear their cries as the cranes plunged and soared around the moon and into the water (Plate 111).
Plate 108: Preliminary Charcoal Sketch for "Roses at Forty-one" on Newsprint, 31 x 42 in.

Plate 109: "Roses at Forty-one"
Acrylic on Canvas, 31 x 42 in.
Plate 110: "Tribute to Someone's Grandmother, I"
Doily, Graphite and Pastel, 14 x 17 in.

Plate 111: "Tribute to Someone's Grandmother, II"
Doillies, Graphite and Pastel, 14 x 17 in.
One day, as I was studying a piece of crochet in the sunlight, I noticed the wonderful shadow patterns that were created when I held the crochet at various heights and angles from the paper. I decided to darken the negative areas of the embossed designs with graphite. This enhanced the white embossed positive thread shapes. I recreated the positive thread design on the flat surface of the white paper by darkening the negative spaces with graphite. This created the illusion of an embossed surface. The resulting works are very subtle. The intricacy of the crochet thread and pattern is revealed and emphasized (Plate 112). The same approach was used for the pineapple-patterned doily (Plate 113).

The third work using an actual cloth piece evolved from a lady's handkerchief delicately embroidered with a geometric design surrounding minute open spaces. The embroidery is grey, the handkerchief white. I've had the handkerchief a long time and I have always found the contrast between the strong geometric pattern and the delicate nature of the handkerchief material fascinating. I played with various folded and gathered handkerchief arrangements trying to find a solution that showed the design to best advantage. The handkerchief had a blemish in the centre. By pleating the handkerchief, I could hide the blemish, condense the size of the blank centre, and create a vertical shape. This arrangement showed more pattern, less plain area, fit the frame better, and created a more interesting format. I added a vital touch to the work by placing a piece of red velvet ribbon and pink satin ribbon under the centre pleats of the handkerchief (Plate 114).

The embossing from the crochet with the house, tree, and garden evoked a feeling of sunshine and "Home Sweet Home" gaiety. I carefully stroked the raised areas of the embossing with the colourful pencil-pastels accenting the design with cheerful colours (Plate 115).

A series of, what seemed to be, misfortunes resulted in the evolution of a favoured piece. The piece of cotton with the colourfully embroidered garden was kept in plain view during the time I was working on the doily series waiting for an inspi-
Plate 112: "Tribute to Someone's Grandmother, III" Embossing and Graphite, 14 x 17 in.

Plate 113: "Tribute to Someone's Grandmother, IV" Embossing and Graphite, 14 x 17 in.
Plate 114: "Tribute to Someone's Grandmother, V"
Handkerchief and Ribbons, 14 x 17 in.

Plate 115: "Tribute to Someone's Grandmother, VI"
Embossing with Pastel. 14 x 17 in.
ration. A number of silk photocopies had strayed during a clean-up by my elder daughter. A few days before the show, the silk photocopy of five children wearing playclothes standing in a garden "magically" reappeared. I'd found my inspiration.

I glued the silk onto the cotton with clear acrylic and blended the photocopy into the cotton background using graphite. Unfortunately, the graphite was applied too heavily and the piece became dull. Wondering what to do, I inadvertently placed the piece on the laundry basket, where I could still keep it in view while working out a solution. Some time later, I realized the work had disappeared. I asked both my children if they knew what had become of the embroidery. My heart sank when I learned that it had been sent to the wash. However, after searching through the clothes dryer I found it, crumpled but intact and much brighter with just enough graphite left to create the desired blending between the foreground and the background. After a starching and ironing, "Ghosts in the Garden" was ready for framing (Plate 116).

Reflections of a Lifetime

In the spring of 1983, while listening to a nurse read her poetry of wartime experiences, I was flooded with emotion. I reached for a pencil and paper. As I wrote my response, my emotions ebbed onto the paper. At some point in the writing, I sketched a chair and the rose pitcher sitting on a long-legged stand (Plate 117). I put an ornately framed portrait of a woman on the left to give triangular balance to the composition. The undulating bands symbolizing waves of emotion, which I had been drawing, ended abruptly leaving the composition unresolved. From somewhere came the word "ribbons." The woman became a bride holding a bouquet with ribbons cascading over the edge of the picture frame, flowing down and becoming the floor itself. The floor takes a dip, a rise, and then a right angled drop. The ribbons taper to an end, creating a positive-negative design on the right of the format. Curving ribbons were woven through the straight, vertical ribbons of the wall creating a check-like pattern in the background.
Plate 116: "Ghosts in the Garden"
Doily, Photocopy, and Graphite.
15 x 20 in.
Plate 117:
Initial Sketch and Writing
that began "Reflections of a Lifetime"
To bring colour to the image, I changed from a graphite pencil to a rainbow-coloured lead. Colour was used to represent the changes in the past, present, and future events, moods, and feelings of our lives. As I added colour to the background, it began to resemble the woven satin ribbon quilt, "Westcoast Reflections" (Plate 26). A reminder, that the same themes continue to reappear in various forms throughout my explorations in art.

Late in the summer, I was involved with arranging the flowers for a wedding. The wedding experience began to combine with my earlier ribbon idea. I resumed the search for ribbon imagery in the fall of 1983 with a drawing based on the first small sketch (Plate 117). The rose chair and the rose pitcher holding cartoon-like roses sitting on a tall plant stand were featured in this drawing (Plate 119). On the right side of the back wall, I placed the portrait of a bride and groom. The bride's bouquet ribbons spilled over the frame and down the walls, behind and under the chair and table, flooding the image with movement. As I darkened the negative spaces between the ribbons, interesting shapes emerged. The image is overflowing with my characteristic curve.

I next decided to focus in closer and explore the potential of texture in the wedding dress, bouquet, and ribbons with a drawing of a bride and groom without heads (Plate 119). The male's large hand clutches his delicate bride's arm. Her hands are filled with a bouquet of spiral roses set in a lacy circle. Loops of varying coloured ribbons hang down from the family of roses. From underneath, the loops of ribbons swell out, as if blown in a breeze. I explored the idea of realistically representing the symbols of married life on the ribbons, however I abandoned this idea. The heads of the wedding couple were placed in blue and grey clouds, with a rainbow for optimism.

The image wasn't working to my satisfaction, so, I moved on to another drawing. At this point, I unearthed an old studio portrait of my great-grandmother and my great-grandfather. The photograph had been waiting for the right connection to be made, allowing it to become more than it appeared to be.
Plate 118: Sketch in Pursuit of Composition.
Plate 119: Sketch of "Heads-in-the-Clouds Couple"
8.5 x 14 in.
I used the portrait as a basis for another exploratory drawing (Plate 120), emphasizing the bouquet and ribbon theme. I enjoyed the ribbons but I was not satisfied with my drawing of the people. The qualities I appreciated of the original portrait had been lost.

I was intrigued with the lace design around the spiral roses in the "Head in the Clouds" drawing. As I considered the lace around the bouquet, the concept of using actual round, crocheted doillies came into my mind as an alternative to painting the lace onto the canvas. About this time, I had found, at a thrift sale, a round crocheted doily, a round linen doily with a lacy crocheted edge, and a long, rectangular, machine-made crochet piece with a rose design.

As soon as I arrived home with my treasures, I took them into the living room where a few blank canvases were leaning against the buffet. I pulled out the three largest. The rectangular piece of beige crochet just fit on the largest canvas. I placed a round crocheted doily on each of the smaller canvases. At this point, I still wasn't visualizing the final composition which, I now see, was before me all the time in my second drawing (Plate 118).

I taped the doillies in place on the canvases. After some experimenting, I decided on a symmetrical arrangement of the three canvases; the large canvas in the centre with the two smaller canvases attached to either side, the three being level along the bottom edge. My comfortable feeling with this arrangement was reinforced when the comment was made that the arrangement was like an old-fashioned, three-way, hinged mirror, as often seen on dressing tables. The outside edges of the two small panels wing out from the wall when the piece is hung, hence the title, "Reflections of a Lifetime".

The composition was still not fully developed in my mind. I had great fun planning various ideas and exploring these with friends who stopped by to visit. At first, I thought I would have two bridal bouquets, one on either side, with flaring ribbons intertwining in the centre panel. I was picturing actual wedding veils and the
Plate 120: Drawing Based on Portrait of Great-grandparents, Emphasizing Ribbon and Bouquet Theme
lace of wedding gowns glued to the canvas. Someone suggested real ribbons. I knew the clear acrylic would obliterate the beautiful qualities of the satin. I was playing with the idea of putting artificial silk flowers on the crocheted lace for the bouquet and of gluing on an assortment of odds and ends symbolic of family life.

At one point, I experimented with the effect that changes in line, shape, direction, tone, and colour have on the illusion of movement being created on a two-dimensional surface. I blacked in the negative spaces to heighten the illusion of ribbons moving in empty space (Plate 121).

As I sorted through the ideas for the triptych, I began to simplify my concept of the collage. The variation in the colours, going from light to dark as the ribbons move across the canvases, symbolizes the changes and experiences in a person's life. The idea of depicting a family history from a particular beginning, symbolized by a wedding bouquet, was emerging. I was still attached to the vision of the spiral-designed roses on each side of the triptych. I began to realize that the triptych could tie together various threads from previous work. I became very excited about the prospect of amalgamating my themes.

The early drawings held the solution for the composition. The concept also provided the opportunity to use a photostatic reproduction of the treasured portrait of my great-grandmother and great-grandfather. The doily on the left fit perfectly around the bottom of the rose pitcher which could hold a bouquet of deeper-hued spiral roses. Great-grandmother's portrait could hang on the distant wall with the ribbons flowing from her hands. I played around with the location and size of the chair (Plate 122). On large sheets of newsprint, I began the canvas-size charcoal drawing of the ribbons encircling the bouquet doily and the ribbons flying across the centre canvas ending on the left panel in the hands of my great-grandmother (Plate 123). I decided to place a small rose chair in the distance of the composition. The rose pitcher became life size to fit the doily which was placed on a fictitious, scalloped-edge table top filling the lower left corner of the left canvas.
Plate 121: Exploring Ribbon Forms
Pastel and Ink
4 x 10 in.
Plate 122: Searching for a Composition.

Plate 123: Planning the Composition for "Reflections of a Lifetime"
The idea to cut the roses and pitcher out of canvas, paint them, and then glue them on top of the doillies occurred to me as a solution to the problem I have with destroying a piece of "fancy work" that someone has created. This solution added low relief areas to the piece.

About this time, I attended an art exhibit in which the artist had used photocopies with washes of water colour. Captivated by the illusionary quality of the work, I began to consider the idea for my triptych.

I gathered some old photographs of my family and of my great-grandmother at different stages of her life. The images were photocopied onto a thin silk material. The resulting ghostly images were placed in the negative space between the ribbons and coated with clear acrylic (Plate 124).

I was now faced with the dilemma of integrating the edges of the photocopies with the canvas and painted ribbons. I wanted a feeling of ethereal space behind the ribbons, not the visual stop of a painted surface. The texture of lace was a natural solution. Cutting the pieces of lace to fit around the photocopies and between the ribbons without losing the smooth edges of the ribbons was not an easy task. I worked on this "idea" for a week, wondering "Why? Why do I do this? My back hurts!" I find ideas delightful to imagine, but not always as easy to fulfill and realize (Plate 124).

For the area around the wedding bouquet, I wanted a lace with a bridal feeling. Going into my collections, I came up with a piece of tattered old lace from a nightgown. I had used the piece for a graphic project a few years earlier. There were blue areas left from the ink. The blue accentuated the small floral design of the lace. I decided to use the blue lace in the area above the bouquet. A silk photocopy of my great-grandmother, when she was ninety-four years old, was placed in the upper right-hand corner of this canvas. I decided to further distance the already soft image of my aged great-grandmother by gluing a piece of bridal veil over the image (Plate 125).
Plate 124: Centre Panel of "Reflections of a Lifetime"
Lace, Crochet, Silk Photocopies, and Acrylic
on Canvas. 43 x 32 in.
Plate 125: Right Panel of "Reflections of a Lifetime"
Lace, Crochet, Silk Photocopy and Acrylic
on Canvas. 30.5 x 23 in.
With the photocopies and lace finally in place, I could begin painting. The pale washes, laid on earlier in order to define the ribbons, had a delicate translucent quality. The highlight areas had been wiped off. This effect enhanced the three-dimensional illusion of the ribbons. I hated the idea of putting opaque paint over the radiant ribbons. However, the lace stood above the surface of the canvas and I felt the texture over-powered the delicacy of the ribbons. I had to say good-bye to the beautiful effects for the sake of the overall surface.

The colours of the bouquet were to symbolize the dreams held by people starting a life together. Iridescent white paint was used to create a pastel, illusion-filled feeling of fantasy around the bridal bouquet. As the ribbons flair out from the bouquet and across the centre canvas, they widen giving the feeling of blowing outward towards the viewer. The ribbons then turn back and begin to narrow as they move toward the portrait on the wall reuniting in the hands of my great-grandmother.

I encountered another conflict. A bouquet of roses stemming from the pitcher would have destroyed the effect that had been created by the wave-like movement of the ribbons leading to the portrait. I was liberated from my plight by friends. I explained my rose-ribbon dilemma to two friends. The woman expressed the feeling that the roses and leaves were unnecessary. She felt the pitcher symbolized a holder of water, life giver, and nourisher. My friend saw the ribbons as flowing forth from the womb area of the woman in the portrait. This interpretation satisfied me; the roses were removed from the left panel. I decided to leave the charcoal line drawing of the rose chair exposed and use only white and iridescent white paint inside the drawn shapes. As the paint mixed with the charcoal, a greyness appeared exuding the desired qualities to symbolize death and to give the chair an otherworldly quality (Plate 126).

The colours of the ribbons were painted and repainted many times. I was aiming for a wide variety of the tints and tones of the various hues of red and blue. I
Plate 126: Left Panel of "Reflections of a Lifetime"
Lace, Crochet, Silk and Paper Photocopies
and Acrylic on Canvas.
30.5 x 23 in.
complained to an artist friend that I was having difficulty in getting the range I wanted. My friend offered to lend me her purple acrylic. A spot of this purple did wonders for my colours and some unusual variations emerged. Friends and fellow artists are invaluable resources for my art process.

In an attempt to smooth over the difference between the height of the lace and the surface of the canvas, paint was laid on as thickly as possible next to the rough edges of the lace. It was not easy to make something look as if it were protruding past a surface which was actually higher. The reverse was also difficult. I had stained the lace a grey colour hoping to match the grey of the photocopy. Every now and then, while painting the ribbons, I succumbed to the temptation to wipe my colour-filled brush onto the lace. The effect was quite pleasing and seemed to warm the background as if the ribbons were casting coloured reflections onto the lace. After taking great care to build up the iridescent surface quality of the cut-out roses, leaves, and rose pitcher, these pieces were finally glued into place.

I am very pleased to have persevered to the conclusion of the work, especially when I share it with adults and children. The form and content of "Reflections of a Lifetime" present a familiar theme and offer an array of possibilities for discussing the compositional, symbolic, and emotional levels operating in a piece of artwork.

Children readily recognize the photographs as being from the past and having to do with families. Some identify the ribbons with celebrations and the wedding bouquet with tradition, love, and families. One third grade girl suggested the ribbons may stand for feelings; pink for happy, blue for sad, and red for angry. The work is generally recognized as a story of a family and how it grew and changed over the years. As a result of these discussions, I have found deeper meaning in the elements I chose to represent my original intentions.
The Student-Teacher-Artist

"How has my development as an artist influenced my role as an art teacher?"

My eyes provided me with a great deal of pleasure as I observed my environment and as I worked with art materials. As an art teacher, I wanted to share this joy with others. Helping children appreciate their vision was the primary goal for my art teaching until I began blending my sensitized power of observation and acquired technical know-how together with my inner thoughts and emotions in the process of making art.

As a result of these experiences my attitude toward my role as art teacher changed. Previously I had wished my students to see more clearly the images without, but now, I also want them to be sensitive to their images within. Our senses provide us with information which, when filtered through our emotions, thoughts, feelings, and memories, may generate ideas that can then be translated through a visual language into personal expressions. I believe this language and its use can be taught and learned.

I was able to work instinctively with young children. However, I felt that before I could confidently lead older students past the inhibiting fear of art, I needed to overcome my own inhibitions. In an attempt to gain firsthand knowledge of the art process and the art work of others, I decided to become a student. As a result of this search for knowledge, I developed as an artist. I have come to believe that, as an artist, I am a perpetual student and, at the same time, my own teacher.

Being a student provided me with new challenges and the benefit of feedback and suggestions from instructors and classmates. As a student, I was given direction and placed under pressure to achieve beyond my own expectations. I was provided with percepts that built upon, altered, reaffirmed, or eliminated previously held concepts.

The transition from student to artist came, not only as a result of an increase in technical skill and the development of personal imagery, but as a result of a change
in attitude. When I began to trust my own instincts, knowledge, and artistic decision-making abilities, I relaxed and overcame many of my inhibitions. At first, I pretended that I was an artist and able to do what artists do. I gave myself permission to be my own constructive critic. I decided when an image was "right" or was "working." As an artist I was able to explore, experiment, organize, clarify, and expand my form and content in directions of my own choosing. At this point, I also became my own teacher.

As my own teacher, I became responsible for assessing my weaknesses and strengths. I congratulated myself for victories and gave myself encouragement in the difficult times. I was responsible for finding remedies for failures. The criteria for success was my own sense of satisfaction. By this stage, I had developed a faith in the art process. I believed that if I continued the search for solutions to my artistic problems, answers would suddenly or eventually be found.

Questioning myself, the image, technique, and other people became a useful device for pulling out solutions and finding directions for the form and content of an image. Viewing the work of other artists, past and present, as well as discussions with friends were invaluable in breaking stalemates or bridging gaps in my knowledge. Feedback from other people has also opened many creative doors.

I value the art process as a learning process. I have become more aware of my humanness, animalness, aliveness, and instincts for survival. I achieve a balance between tension and release, problem and resolution, pain and pleasure, fear and joy, love and hate, discipline and freedom.

Process is important, however, a satisfying product can be an invaluable motivator. A product is a record of the fears and tensions that have been resolved in reaching the climax. It is a reminder of the joy and elation felt at each resolution. A product may become a source of pride. Students can share their visible successes. The product is a souvenir of a journey to knowledge and growth, a trophy of an endeavour. A product reassures the student that success is possible, if one will just begin.
As a result of my involvement in the process of image making and the improvement of technical skill, I began to exhibit my art work. Consequently, I grew more confident and comfortable as an art teacher. As an artist and as an art teacher, I am continually learning. This enables me to empathize with the students' dilemmas and victories. I can better appreciate the students' need for direction and encouragement. I believe that the more knowledgeable and experienced I become, the more confidence my students will have in my suggestions. This confidence has been reinforced when, at their request, I have shown students my work.

I would like to encourage teachers who are teaching art, on any level, to pursue some form of personal involvement with the art-making process. Challenging their creativity and completing a successful product, may provide the teacher-artist with the personal knowledge of the art process, the courage, and the conviction essential in leading a group of vulnerable students into the uncharted territory of their own creativity and expression.

In the following chapter implications are presented for teaching art. They are drawn from the personal research documented in the "Odyssey" chapter of this thesis. Page numbers are given for the reader's reference. Strategies that have proven useful in the development of my personal imagery are provided. Letter Gothic 12 pitch type face is used to distinguish the difference between the thesis form of Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 and the personal form of Chapter 2, which is printed in Bold proportionally spaced type face.
Chapter 3

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING ART

The "Odyssey" chapter has presented a written and visual documentation of one art teacher's experience with the art process. As a result of a survey of the data presented in the foregoing chapter, certain implications for the teaching of art have become apparent. The implications and a number of strategies which have proven useful to the writer in the search for a personal imagery follow.

The Fear of Art

A lack of understanding of the experimental and personal nature of the art process was responsible for the early inhibitions of the writer. The dearth of meaningful content and an inadequate knowledge of composition were the cause of frustration even though technical skill was improving. The writer asked, "How do artists choose their form and content?" (p. 35); "What is Art?"; and "How do you know when something becomes Art?"; and "How can I make Art?" (p. 36). Other fears arose as a result of a painting which made an expressive personal statement. More questions arose, "What if I have potential?"; "What if I think I can do something and I fail?" (p. 36). There were fears and inhibitions in connection with the anxiety that one's personal imagery may not be valid subject matter for art (pp. 36, 57 and 71). The fear that what one produced "may not be deemed art" and "fretting about the 'mysterious' rightness" was a strong inhibiting force working against the writer's progress in art (p. 71).

An analysis of the foregoing statements and questions identify several implications for the art educator. These implications are presented in the following sections.
The Art Process

"When students undergo a studio experience in attempting to solve the problem of the artist they encounter the art process" (Michael, 1980, p. 16). It has been found by this writer that an understanding of this process is vital to the student's success and will play a significant role in conquering the "fear of art."

Michael states, "The problem of the artist is to express one's self aesthetically at the highest human level" (p. 16). He further clarifies this definition by explaining,

...to "express one's self" means that the person is giving and projecting his point of view, his interpretation, his personal and unique feeling, thinking, and perceiving about something. In art, this projection is shown in visual form. This expression necessarily will be creative...each person,...is unique. "Aesthetically" has to do with sensitivity to colour, shape, line, texture, form, movement, and value as these elements are ordered, arranged, composed, to give a feeling of "presence," "completion," and "unity." We have many principles...balance, rhythm, contrast, variety, opposition, consistency, and subordination. "At the highest human level"...thinking, feeling, and perceiving as best we can...to express ourselves aesthetically. (1980, p. 16).

Michael also writes that this is where quality comes into the art experience. He states, "The wise teacher is always trying to extend the student to a higher and more sensitive level of achievement in each and all of these areas" (p. 16).

Doerr (1984) suggests that, "Unless the artist experiences both pleasure and pain, maximum growth in art cannot be achieved" (p. 32). The following expressions found in the data demonstrate the range of feelings that the student-artist underwent during the process of creating the works represented in the thesis: "Work up courage," "frightened," "bewildered," "feelings and anxieties," "excited," "desire," "forgetting my reality" (p. 36), "suddenly transported" (p. 47), "mesmerized (p. 51)," "fascinated," "felt...a breakthrough," "pleasant memories" (p. 57), "phase...not significant" (p. 57), "tears...emotions," "act of grieving," "soothe" (p. 67), "special signifi-
cance," "became...excited" "comfortable," "gain...confidence" (p. 67), "futile attempts" (p. 71), "relaxed and having fun," "pleasure in looking," "enjoyed the mood and atmosphere," "visually and emotionally satisfying," (p. 71), 
grew dissatisfied" (p. 74), "startled," "totally overwhelmed" (p. 97), 
"forgotten...learned," "more difficult than...imagined," "final completion...intense work and learning...great personal victory" (p. 97), "frustrated," (p. 101), "feeling quite good" (p. 104), "surprise and pleasure" (p. 105), 
"disappointing," "out of sync" (p. 110), "Why? Why do I do this? My back hurts!," (p. 129), "hated the idea," "had to say good-bye to the beautiful..." (p. 132), "very pleased to have persevered to the conclusion of the work" (p. 134). This collection of comments reinforces Doerr's statement,

It is the balance, then, between pleasure and pain that must be experienced in order to obtain optimum growth in art or in the development of a positive self-concept. This combination of pleasure and pain is a natural pattern in development. (1980, p. 32)

The message for the teacher, according to Doerr, is that the pattern functions naturally if the teacher does not prevent its functioning. Doerr further instructs the teacher, "It is important to leave the task of learning to the child and to focus on teaching artistic content including formal, technical, and expressive aspects that are taught through experience (pp. 32 and 33). The role of the art teacher should balance between acceptance and encouragement and that of requiring students to learn about art and to grow from failure, to be responsible and disciplined in their approach to solving artistic problems.

The Need for Direction

The researcher's need and desire for direction, standards of quality, knowledge of the formal, technical, and expressive aspects are obvious from comments made in the beginning pages of the section, "Learning about Art" (pp. 35 and 36). The writer claims that as a result of being "required to choose
and develop themes....I began to uncover my present imagery" (p. 39). The writer states, "We were required to keep a sketch book....invaluable experience..." (p. 57).

The value of accumulated suggestions given by teachers combining with the student's own experience with form and content is reflected in the section, "Transition" (p. 74). As a result of the success with the personal imagery in the medium of pastel, the artist decided to pursue the imagery in acrylic paint emphasizing colour and tone, areas in which the writer felt further growth was needed (p. 93). The necessity for greater skill is also obvious in "Mother, Daughter, 1923" (p. 97).

Young children love making art. They jump in and enjoy it. However, sometime after eight years old, they want to know how to do it. Art instructors need to teach the skills students want and need in order to succeed to their own satisfaction. Giving the student activities in which technique is developed, but which are at the same time personally relevant to the student will likely further technical skill, understanding of form, and the search for personal imagery. Students must also realize that it takes time, effort, work, and concentration on their part to gain the technical skill essential in expressing their personal statements. "Teachers," states Lewis (1984), "should maximize the opportunities for assimilation and let the accommodations occur when they will." Lewis claims that, "Out of an active engagement with the problems and materials of art emerge the challenges and solutions that impel the child towards higher levels of artistic learning" (p. 17). Lewis warns that instruction can accelerate the rate at which drawing ability develops, or arrest it depending on the kind of instruction and the point at which it is offered (p. 16). Michael (1980) supports the need for direction. He suggests that it is the wise art teacher who appropriately develops the skill of the students as a means for them to create art. He further recommends
that, "skill should always be a secondary consideration and should contribute to the expression so as to bring about a harmonious integration" (p. 17).

The Personal Nature of Art

As we dream, our subconscious mind borrows images from real experiences. When an artist paints, he channels his dreams to flow back into reality through his brush and become a work of art. This transfer is part of the creative process that an artist must recognize, respect, and utilize.... When each painting is born, another dream comes true. (Szabo, 1976, Dedication)

The contrast between the beginning query, "How do artists decide on their content?" (p. 35) and the sense of personal involvement and confident thrust of later works demonstrates the importance of a personal content to this artist. The section, "Personal History and Influences" relates the wealth of background experiences, preferences, thoughts, memories, feelings, and emotions which lay untapped when a predominately technical approach to art was pursued (pp. 7-36). The frustration felt by the writer implies that learning the technical language of art is not enough (p. 35). The writer's expression of the feeling, "I didn't have anything to express that was esoteric or arty without being contrived" (p. 36), implies the lack of awareness that art can be personal communication.

Michael (1980) stresses the importance of motivation in the art process.

First off, you must have something to say about whatever it is that you are doing, creating, interpreting, making, or expressing. Art is a means of communication, a visual language-what are you saying? (p. 16)

Motivation was essential in the completion of "Portrait of David", a painting which indicates a depth of feeling and understanding. The work gave the artist a new awareness of the power of personal expression.

The emergence of the sewing machine, a personal image which sustained the artist's interest for a number of years, was the result of an emotional need of the writer and a course requirement to choose a theme (p. 39 and Plates 36A, 36B, 37, 38, 61-71, 99, Appendix, Plates VI and VII). The meaning of the
sewing machine expanded and deepened as the involvement persisted. The thesis documents the emergence and continuing importance of particular objects and compositional devices throughout the artist's development of imagery (p. 40). The awareness that a favourite object can be used compositionally, emotionally, and symbolically laid the foundation for many future paintings (p. 40). The understanding that the elements of art and principles of design can be used to portray meanings came from further experiences and explorations with media and technique (pp. 44, 74, 93, 100, 101, and Appendix, Plates VI and VII). The knowledge and insights gained with the experiences of the sewing machine transferred to other personal imagery, i.e., the cow (pp. 27, 51, 100, Plates 47 and 99).

The implication for art teachers would appear to be that students are likely to benefit from formal instruction and activities that will assist them in their search for imagery. This premise is reinforced by the development of the writer's imagery using the geranium, pressed-back chair, kitchen, rose chair, rose pitcher, family photographs, crochet, lace, and the checkered table cloth as presented in Chapter 2, "The Odyssey." The historical roots of these images are evident in the section, "Personal History and Influences" (pp. 7-35).

Based on their personal background and experience, each student will have a unique pool of valid symbols and images. It is the skill and sincerity of interpretation which determines the quality and effectiveness of a piece of work. Teachers can encourage students to search their memories, thoughts, feelings, and preferences in order to discover the richness of their personalities. In the process of discovering the wealth of resources buried in their own experiences, past and present, and in their own environment, students are likely to find a deeper understanding of who they are, what it is they like and dislike, and what is important to them. Michael (1980) states, "It
behooves the teacher to put the student into a situation so that he will have ideas and feelings about what he has experienced. Most students have a bank of experiences upon which the teacher can draw" (p. 16).

The historical, social, cultural, and familial influences should not be ignored, when a student is involved in an activity as personal as art. Teachers need to make allowances for a wide range of differences in students, ie. developmental levels, abilities, backgrounds, and approaches to art. Not all students plan to pursue a career in art. Many are interested in the recreational aspects of art and/or the decorative possibilities. Each student's particular interests and stage of development must be accepted and appreciated by the instructor. These interests can then be used as stepping stones for further growth.

A need for the improvement of technical skills is also likely to occur as the student pushes further into the search for imagery and the desire to relate their findings in an "artful" way increases. The content comes from the student, the teacher's role is to guide the student in finding and developing the most effective approach.

Teachers must encourage students to give themselves permission to express their own statements in their own way at the level of their current skill. The data suggests that the writer's style was evident at an early age (pp. 7 and 10). The importance of accepting one's natural style and the themes that continually reappear in one's work is verified throughout the "Odyssey" chapter (pp. 23, 35, 51, 57, 67, 71, 74, 93, and 126). Students need to be assured that their technical skill and depth of imagery are likely to grow and develop in proportion to the amount of involvement and work expended.
Strategies for Discovering Personal Content

A scrapbook collection of personal memorabilia, a photograph album (photo copies may be used), or a collage of "things I like" or "favourite memories" is a valid imagery search activity for all ages (pp. 7, 9, 10, 32, and 44). This has been supported by the interest elementary school children have demonstrated in the assemblage, "Reflections of a Lifetime" (Plate 27). Have the students select something they "love" (pp. 112 to 118, Plates 110-116), a souvenir of an experience they want to remember, a personal or commercial photograph (pp. 93-97, Plates 60, 94 and 95), a poem, newspaper, or magazine article, etc. The more significant the item is to the students' own realm of experience, the more likely it is to arouse their interest and to offer a greater potential for content development. Suggest the item or sketch of the item be pasted in their sketchbook. "Reflections of a Lifetime" (Plates 117-126) demonstrates the development of a work stimulated by a poem and as the process evolved, included "favourite things" and family photographs. Ask the students to choose a favourite object. Suggest that an environment, a set, be painted or drawn around the object. Require the students to answer the relevant questions, Who?, What?, Where?, When?, and Why? of the character, the star. The stage is constructed, the mood is set, action, the play develops around the character, and an image happens. The painting, "Tea with a Great Aunt" demonstrates this strategy (Plate 34 and Appendix, Plate III).

The following suggestions are likely to prove fruitful when used in connection with the previously mentioned activities.

Look around your own environment, that which is closest to you (pp. 7, 9 and 74). What do you do when you are bored? (p. 32) What is it that interests you? (pp. 93, 97, 104 and 112) Look for particular traits in your personal style (pp. 4, 8, 17-21 and 40). What is it you like? (pp. 9, 112 and 118) What fascinates your eyes? (pp. 7-9 and 121) What appeals to (attracts)
you? Why does it appeal to you? How does it appeal to you? When does it appeal to you? Where does it appeal to you? (p. 71) What is important to you, meaningful, or a cause you support? (pp. 63, 67, 132 and 134). What are your favourite fantasies, ideas, nostalgia, or humourous thoughts (p. 67).

Discuss with the students the compositional, emotional, and symbolic roles an object, an art element, or principle of design can perform in a work of art (p. 40).

Encourage students to document, by sketching or writing, the exploratory reflections and elaborations stimulated by the item or collection of items in a journal or sketch book.

Suggest that they make lists of the qualities and sensory words that pertain to the image (Plate 117).

Request that a long list be made, in a given length of time, of related thoughts, ideas, memories, and feelings. The pressure of a time limit may have the effect of reducing inhibitions and promoting spontaneous associations.

Suggest the students keep a running dialogue between themselves and the image. Perhaps a story will evolve which will assist them in making choices for the expression of significant qualities (pp. 101-107, and pp. 107-112).

The Experimental Nature of Art

The author found that using a familiar image facilitated the experimentation of new techniques. The corollary of this is that by exploring a theme with various techniques many different aspects of the theme are discovered. The value of exploring a theme by experimenting with a variety of media is demonstrated in the development of the geranium image. The emergence of the geranium as a dominant theme happened quite unexpectedly while doing a contour drawing (p. 44). The drawings were used as the basis for a variety of experiments using different media. Each media has its own unique characteristics
and qualities. Exploring a theme using different media allows the artist to
experiment with the different elements of art and the principles of design
emphasized by the particular media. These activities will bring out a variety
of possibilities inherent in a theme (Plates 39, 40 and 42-45). While immersed
in the search for imagery the writer was free to associate personal signifi-
cance to the theme, leading to further possible directions in which to push
the imagery (pp. 44 and 51). The value of exploring a theme which focuses on
a variety of goals is demonstrated by the series of geranium drawings (Plates
46, 48 and 50), the ensuing etching experiments (Plates 49 and 51), the pastel
drawings (Plates 72-78), and finally the acrylic paintings (Plate 78, and
Appendix Plates IV-VII).

Jerome Hausman (1970) states that the essential content of any teaching
about art must come from the nature of art itself.

The teacher must create situations that allow students the pleasure
of exploration and discovery, the joy of finding new forms for the
expression of their ideas, and the suffering that comes occasionally
from "the pain and disappointment of failure" (pp. 334 and 335)

The evidence presented in the thesis consistently stresses the importance
of experimentation, exploration, play, searching, and work through the process
of theme development and throughout the progress of individual pieces. The
implication for the art teacher would appear to be that, by providing the
atmosphere and opportunities that encourage students to stretch their
imaginations and develop their problem solving skills, one would be offering
the student an environment conducive to the flourishing of the art process.
The author has stated that art keeps her constantly in touch with the "trial
and error method of working" (p. 105). She finds it helpful to tell herself,
"just do something," "follow your instinct," and "ego-critic leave me alone"
(p. 105). The artist has found it very beneficial to keep a watchful eye for
accidental effects (pp. 105 and 110). Keeping an open mind to new ideas is
constantly productive (pp. 67, 69, 101, 104, 105, 110, 112, and 118-134).
Flaws, accidents, and serendipity are constant sources of inspiration to the artist (pp. 39, 44, 47, 67, 69, 104, 105, 110, 112-118, 124, and 129).

It is helpful if the use of the word "mistake" is minimized in the art class. Some things do not work out as anticipated. Encourage the students to try again. Perhaps even attempt the opposite and see what happens. Before changing the "problem area" re-evaluate the phenomena with an open mind. It may be a more effective solution than the one originally planned. Art is full of happy accidents, as verified by the "Odyssey" described in this thesis.

Michael (1980) states that art students must feel that they can, and must be willing to try to work with various art media. He claims that the wise art teacher is able to utilize closure experiences in art to achieve confidence for those students who are lacking in this attribute. He further states that the art teacher must be very encouraging and supportive during these initial experiences by praising the student for "finding" an idea as well as for continuing work on the picture (p. 17).

**Suggested Strategies for "Getting Started"**

A student's lack of confidence and fear of the popular view of what constitutes art is often a great hindrance to their progress in art making. Suggest the students tell their "critic" to go away and leave them alone; this is the time for working and learning, not for criticism.

Begin the work period by warming up with drawing callisthenics. Sketch something quickly. Suggest the students relax and let their ideas generate freely. Ask the students to briefly document the ideas for later reference (Plate 51, and 117).

Play with a variety of free, loose compositions using a chosen theme, element of art or principle of design (Plates 37A, 38, 105, 117-123, and Appendix, Plates III, VII and VIII). By setting limits the students will be encouraged to focus and explore to a greater depth and breadth within the particular framework (p. 69).
Reassure students that an image will evolve as long as one keeps working with an open mind, eye, and attitude toward change. Suggest they keep alert for messages emitted by the images as changes take place. Encourage students to relax and follow their instincts.

Pressure

Linn (1982) found that artist-teachers deliberately set deadlines and due dates which they must meet, such as working under the pressures of a show or a commission. Many of the artists felt that they often did their best work under such situations (p. 39).

The data in the "Odyssey" chapter supports this finding. The writer states, "I was craving structure and I wanted to be pressured. I wanted to concentrate my energies into efforts that demanded quality. I wanted to work for and achieve standards of excellence in art" (p. 35). In the beginning of the section, "Transition", the proclamation is made, "I make it a rule to accept challenges that may lead to personal growth, so despite my apprehensions, I agreed to the idea of an exhibit" (p. 69). As a result of this commitment to an exhibition, the writer produced a body of work which played a significant role in her development as an artist. The pressure to "just do something," brought about the initiation of the series of pastel drawings (Plates 61 through 93). The benefits of the pressure created by an exhibition is referred to in connection with the completion of "Mother, Daughter, 1923." The writer states, "I had a deadline, the pressure I find helpful when focusing on a project to the exclusion of most other distractions" (p. 97). The series, "Tributes to Someone's Grandmother," was initiated and completed in response to the opportunity to participate in a group art show (p. 112).

Pressure of time limits and standards can facilitate creative production for students. The student will be forced into making decisions and choices throughout the art process which will eventually lead to closure. New ideas,
connections, thoughts, and conclusions are likely to occur as a result of disciplined attention to the research, collected material, and/or experience of the student. The pressure of a deadline and the expectations that a product will be matted and displayed can add an exciting element to the art making process. Knowing that a product will be shared with others often adds to student motivation. For some students, however, this may create crippling apprehensions which need to be considered and dealt with by the teacher.

The Role of Questioning in the Art Process

By asking herself questions, the writer has been able to clarify her thoughts, goals, purposes, and priorities for an image. The writer demonstrates the value of questioning when searching old family photographs for information of her ancestry (p. 27). This process is also evident in the chapters, "Mother, Daughter, 1923," "My Own Kitchen," "Rock-a-bye-Roses," "Roses at Forty-One," "Tributes for Someone's Grandmother," and "Reflections of a Lifetime." The writer reports making direct requests of an image, "Speak to me, tell me what do you want to say?" and asking questions about the subject of the painting, "What do rocking chairs do?" Through the question and answer process the concept of the work was established which led to the choices of particular aesthetic and expressive qualities (p. 104). Asking questions about the technical execution of an object is evident in the discoveries made about white china while painting "Roses at Forty-one" (p. 111).

Hamblen (1984) suggests that for problem solving, critical thinking, and inquiry learning, active discussions between teachers and students are essential. Questions, properly framed, foster student involvement and self-initiated learning (p. 12).
Taunton (1984) supports this statement.

Questions and comments, posed by the teacher at different stages of art-making, tend to focus and clarify children's thinking about their ideas and intentions, procedures they are following, and solutions they devise. Questioning strategies can be designed to develop knowledge of one's actions as an artist and to establish a more general awareness of the process of art-making. (p. 15)

Sturr (1982) also recommends that teachers ask students relevant questions during the development of technique and processes, and about personal choices and artistic goals (pp. 12-14).

Questioning Strategies

1. Suggest students ask themselves questions about the image.
2. Suggest students ask the image questions, as they would a friend they are getting to know: How?, When?, Why?, Where?, What? Who?
3. Recommend to the student that they record these dialogues in a private journal or diary. Many such recorded dialogues assisted the writer in recalling the data in the "Odyssey" chapter. Certain comments may be displayed with the work (Taunton, 1984, p. 16). Such comments may prove useful kept in a sketch book accompanying visual images (Plates 47, 48, 117, and Appendix, Plate III).
4. Teacher or student questioning may help a student choose a topic for further development.
5. When a topic is selected for exploration, questioning may lead to still further resolution of the image.

Discussion

Discussing one's work with fellow students, teachers, friends, and other artists can be helpful in the search for imagery, overcoming technical difficulty, the resolution of problems, and for encouragement. The writer reports a discussion with an instructor that led to increased confidence in her personal imagery, feelings, and ideas (p. 69). The value of group discussions is referred to as "providing creative nourishment" (p. 26). Feedback, from
children and adults alike, has given the author many fresh insights about her work and stimulated new ideas (pp. 104, 107 and 110-111). The importance of discussing work in progress is documented by comments in "Rock-a-bye-Roses" (p. 104) and "Reflections of a Lifetime" (pp. 124, 126, 132 and 134).

Students are encouraged by seeing the relationship of their work in a historical context. This is verified by the writer's need to seek reassurance for the validity of her imagery by researching the work of respected artists (p. 36).

The value of classroom discussion is argued by leading art educators. Madeja (1980) discusses the use of language in the art program, defining it as "a device to enable students to describe, analyze, and comprehend qualities, and then to make and justify aesthetic judgements about art" (p. 25). Vincent Lanier (1980) describes a new content for art which he calls the "dialogue curriculum" (p. 19 and 20). Taunton (1984) supports the idea of "reflective dialogue" being incorporated into classroom conversation throughout the art process. She believes that a discussion about works in-progress is beneficial because students are able to make use of comments in subsequent efforts. She further claims, "The validity of children's understanding of how artists, including themselves, make art can be increased by insuring opportunities for reflectivity about their own work" (p. 16).

Through discussions with the teacher and/or fellow classmates on the intent for an image the student may discover further motivations and goals worthy of exploration. The teacher's appreciation of the student's imagery may also be deepened through attentive listening and discussion. The sharing of knowledge, ideas, experiences, insights, new awarenesses, and changes may provide essential encouragement and stimulate group and individual enthusiasm, thereby providing a constructive climate for growth.
Evaluation and the Art Process

Evaluation is useful throughout the art process. This is demonstrated by the mention of judgements and decisions being made by the artist regarding the qualities and effects created by various media and techniques. Such comments as, "the resulting effect was dreadful" (p. 101), "not as dynamic," "much too cold," "did not exhibit the qualities," "so successful" (pp. 104 and 105); "disappointing," "unsuccessful," "somewhat satisfied," "was not working," "needed to make changes," "very exciting," and "marvelous" (p. 110) indicate continual evaluation of works in progress.

Michael (1980) states that in evaluation one must refer back to one's objectives and goals which are derived from the problem of the artist and the art process. The student and the teacher should be aware of the same objectives (p. 18). Stanley Madeja (1980) tells us that our discipline, with its history, methods of criticism, and body of knowledge, is essential to a thorough education. "Any educated person," he maintains, "should be able to evaluate art objects and should have experience in producing them."

As art teachers, it is vitally important that we evaluate children's art products and that we share not only our evaluations but also the process of learning to make objective evaluations with our students. As they see us practice this and as they learn the benefits of evaluation by seeing improvements in their own art work, they will gradually evaluate their own products, a sign of maturation and an important step in the artistic process. (Doerr, 1984, p. 33)

Promoting student discussion and sharing of the process of evaluation and encouraging them to make positive criticisms and suggestions may assist students in looking at, judging, and appreciating artwork outside of the classroom.

Eisner (1966) warned of the dangers of not evaluating artwork on a regular basis.

The student who receives little or no feedback about work may harbor uncertainties of its worth and may be tempted to reject art as unsatisfying. Encouraging the student to participate in evaluation
provides the opportunity for the teacher to discover and counteract such attitudes. (p. 387)

Evaluation is encouraging to the student and artist. The powerful effect of a teacher's evaluation of one's ability and imagery is documented in the section, "Learning about Art" (p. 67). The effect of a positive evaluation of one's work by fellow students is reported in the section, "Transition" (p. 93).

As an artist it is important to recognize one's own weaknesses and strengths. This is reflected in the comments, "I lacked an understanding of composition" (p. 35), "there was a dearth of meaningful content" (p. 36), "I now accept...as a strength and appreciate...as a gift" (p. 36), "...by eliminating the element of colour...concentrate on composition and structure...I needed further understanding" (p. 44). "I could now visually plan the division of space with great precision" (p. 93), and "To further investigate the elements of art and principles of design" (p. 93).

The Art Teacher

The creative, productive teacher is likely to stimulate sincere involvement. The generation of ideas seems to heighten energy and enthusiasm in students. The writer has found that, as a result of sharing her own experiences and enthusiasm for art, both teachers and students have been encouraged to continue in the pursuit of their own interest in art. Linn (1982) states that all of the teachers in her study stressed that art teachers who are also practicing their craft and developing their skills have a positive influence upon art students. The group felt that students have a greater respect for teachers who make art important and vital in their own life (p. 43). Linn concludes that, "when students see a teacher enthusiastic and excited about art, they are more apt to be inspired and to regard art in a new way. As a result, the whole student-teacher relationship is improved" (p. 43). Sharing personal experiences of ups and downs and gains and losses enhances student
understanding and helps in affirming student confidence.

Linn states that, "Art, and the making of it is really a process of sharing, sharing not just the final product but the steps and decisions made along the way" (p. 43). Linn cites Szekely's view of the artist-teacher as one who is "giving his creative self as a model to others" (p. 43).

The art teacher who has developed confidence in the art process through successful experiences will benefit students by sharing this attitude. The teacher-artists in Linn's study reported that their energies and enthusiasms are high when confidence in one's own abilities is high (p. 42). "Success does breed success, and pleasure at seeing one's art work progressing often banishes frustrations" (Linn, 1982, p. 42).

To open the doors to new insights and enlightenment for another person is a joyful reward in itself. Art teachers are likely to reap such a reward as they guide students in the creative journey of discovery and appreciation of the art process. If a teacher is also pursuing his or her own quest of personal expression, surely, the joy will be intensified.
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APPENDIX
Plate I - Getting Ready

Plate II - The Beginning
Plate III
"Tea with a Great-Aunt"
Acrylic & Lace on Canvas
14 x 20.5 in.
Plate V
"Red Curtain"
Acrylic on Canvas
16.5 x 20.5 in.
Plate VI: "Dusty Day"
Acrylic on Canvas
19 x 32 in.
Plate VI: "Dusty Day"
Acrylic on Canvas
19 x 32 in.
Plate VII
"Oasis"
Acrylic on Canvas
19 x 32 in.
Plate VIII
"Going"
Acrylic on Canvas
16.5 x 20.5 in.