

SECONDARY SCHOOL ART EDUCATION:

THE ARTIST'S VIEWPOINT

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ABSTRACT

Artists are seldom consulted in the making of school art programs yet many are vitally concerned with the need for a visually literate public. This study summarizes the history of art education, examines recent issues documented by art educators, looks at opinions of artists of this century on the teaching of art, and presents interviews with six British Columbian artists to elicit their thoughts on what is necessary in a secondary school art curriculum.

The interviews are essentially informal in nature and only those remarks dealing with secondary school education, or related concepts, are included. The final chapter contains an infusion of the artists' ideas under headings suggested by issues raised by art educators. An evaluation of the data collected from the interviews leads to recommendations for consideration for secondary school programs and the conviction that artists should be encouraged to participate in matters relating to art education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. THE PROBLEM.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Justification for the Study.....	3
Assumptions.....	5
Organization of the Study.....	7
2. THE NATURE AND CONCERNS OF ART EDUCATION.....	9
Introduction.....	9
Brief History of Art Education.....	9
Rationale for Art Education in the 1980s.....	17
New Areas of Concern in Art Education.....	19
Art Criticism and Aesthetics.....	19
Environmental Awareness.....	24
Art Versus Craft.....	28
Folk and Popular Art.....	32
Gallery Education.....	33
Summary.....	34
3. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ARTISTS' OPINIONS.....	35
Introduction.....	35

CHAPTER	PAGE
The Twentieth Century.....	37
Artists' Opinions at the New York Art Education Seminar of 1964.....	43
4. THE ARTISTS.....	48
Rationale for the Interviews.....	48
Introduction to the Artists.....	50
Jean Kamins.....	50
Colette French.....	52
Tom Graff.....	53
Greg Murdock.....	54
Marian Penner-Bancroft.....	55
Richard Prince.....	56
Conclusion.....	57
5. THE INTERVIEWS.....	58
Introduction.....	58
Jean Kamins.....	58
Colette French.....	66
Tom Graff.....	77
Greg Murdock.....	85
Marian Penner-Bancroft.....	91

CHAPTER	PAGE
Richard Prince.....	99
Conclusions.....	106
6. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERVIEWS.....	107
Introduction.....	107
Summary of the Interviews.....	107
General Principles.....	107
Art History and Aesthetics.....	110
Studio Art.....	111
Environmental Awareness.....	112
Craft.....	113
Popular or Folk Art.....	114
Gallery Education.....	115
Teacher Education.....	116
Evaluation.....	118
Other Areas of Interest.....	119
Conclusions.....	120
REFERENCES.....	122
APPENDIX.....	127

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Art education has, in recent years, been subjected to pressure from society to justify its existence, either in its present form or indeed in any form at all. Because of the increasing burden of knowledge to be acquired through the school system in the sciences and the liberal arts, because of cuts to school budgets, and because of a lack of appreciation among the general public of the pervasive and enveloping role that art plays in the lives of almost everyone, art education is in danger of being swept from the school calendar.

Attempts to establish a rationale for art education have led to violent swings in teaching methods and justifications, from drawing taught as a mechanical skill, to art as therapy, creative inspiration, or as an aid to reading ability (Eisner, 1974). In recent years art educators have worked more persistently towards the teaching of art as an academic subject, and art history and criticism have been advocated (Feldman, 1981), sometimes to the extent of abandoning current studio-oriented courses for all but those who foresee a career directly dealing with the visual arts (Lanier, 1980).

This groundswell amongst educators has been gathering momentum. The last few years have seen the development of new curriculum guides and literature to support it. In the compiling of these guides, teachers, students, parents, university personnel, and art educators

have been involved in exhaustive studies of the reasons for art education.

However, on looking at the impressive amount of work that has been done and the large numbers of people that have been involved in the researching and restructuring of secondary school art curricula, it is apparent that one group of people, surely vitally interested in what is happening, does not seem to have been adequately represented. This thesis will be concerned with satisfying the need, in curriculum development in art education, for a body of information and knowledge contributed by working artists of all types, which describes the skills and concepts in art that they consider necessary for students to acquire in the course of school art study.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to present a body of information and knowledge derived both from writings of major artists of this century and from discussions with people working in the visual arts in British Columbia today, and to compare the views of these artists with those held by the makers of art curriculum. The problem with which the study is centrally concerned is this: to what extent will practicing artists be able to contribute information, insights, and opinions on the conduct of art in schools, and on the relationship between their own art and the art products of schools, that might be useful in the development of school art curricula.

Justification for the Study

Why have artists been so seldom heard in matters in which they have such vital interest? One answer may be that leaders in art education, while admiring the visual works of artists, do not give them credit for exactly the kind of intellectual ability they are trying to encourage their students to attain by studying the works of these same artists. Edmund Feldman, indeed, says in Varieties of Visual Experience (1981) "Scholars can readily see emotional distortion and partisanship in the critical opinions of artists. Indeed some feel that artists are constitutionally incapable of making critical judgements objectively" (p.459), and later "the artist is not necessarily the best authority on the meaning of his work" (p.476).

Another reason for not involving artists in discussions of curriculum change may be that educators do not feel that artists have enough knowledge of the history of education and of students' needs, and they may therefore produce what seem to be irrelevant notions. This would seem an irrational fear; in any brainstorming sessions, such as those that have taken place over the current British Columbia art curriculum, all ideas were welcomed and considered for inclusion. The fact that most artists work primarily in one area of the arts and may know little of the technical processes of others might raise questions of bias, but there is no documented evidence of such narrowness of viewpoint. It is even possible that artists may have been excluded from educational decision-making because their life-styles and attitudes were thought to be controversial and

generally unacceptable within a conventional education system.

Yet suggestions and opinions from people actively involved in the arts should surely be of value to curriculum planners. Artists have been described as visually perceptive, sensuously aware, broad-thinking, with a fresh informed look at life: they are the originators of what the students are studying. They have a first-hand knowledge of the benefits of making and understanding art and their varied perceptions offer alternatives within an increasingly materialistic and consumer-oriented world. Artists tend to work from a deep sense of personal commitment to the visual arts which they often communicate to others. Because of an intimate involvement with symbolic imagery artists are as likely as educators to be able to evaluate the importance of communication through art. They are able to provide examples that may lead students to a greater sense of identity and a diminishing of the feeling of alienation and anomy that increases during adolescence (McFee, 1974).

Are we in art education moving too far away from art which is grounded in a visual, tactile, physical, emotional, and personal dialogue with humankind? What do eminent artists of our time have to say about art education? What do they consider valuable in understanding and knowing art? What do they say about art educators? This study will attempt to discover the answers to questions like these.

Assumptions

Attitudes held by some philosophers and educators augment and strengthen the position of many artists on the subject of art education. One standpoint expected from practicing artists is that, although criticism and theory are certainly necessary components of an art class, on no account should studio courses be neglected. An article by John Michael (1980) reiterates the position often voiced by teachers that children learn most from doing.

One strong fact emerging from the NAEA study is that the more a student is personally involved in creating art, the more that student is likely to know about art, whether it be in history or in recognizing major art elements and judgemental criteria (p.19). If this is indeed a fact it seems a conclusive point in favour of studio work.

Arthur Efland says:

The school uses art as therapy, minimizing the psychological cost of institutional repression . . . the expectations that children, classroom teachers, and administrators have built up through the years disallow any weakening of the therapeutic functions of art (p.41).

Although this is put in rather negative terms, given that general school programs are, for the most part, theoretically oriented, and current preference is for more theory in the art class, Efland reminds us of the dangers of ignoring the beneficial aspects of the practical studio course. While studio work should not be looked on as instituted for

therapy, the fact that it has therapeutic aspects can surely only be considered an advantage in an increasingly alienating world. Cutting practical classes that are enthusiastically regarded, though not always fully utilized, by students is cutting what Efland sees as relief from repression. What will replace that relief?

Elliot Eisner's (1974) conviction that positive teaching can lead to a keen sense of satisfaction from the visual arts also has its basis in the beneficial qualities of studio work.

The teacher has a much more complex task than simply providing materials and encouragement. Positive teaching does not have to be insensitive or mechanical. Without positive teaching, students, I fear, will continue to come out of the schools with a conviction that develops at about age nine or ten, the conviction that they neither have ability in, nor can gain a keen sense of satisfaction from, the visual arts (p.92).

The people quoted above are educators who are widely known and respected, who have done research into the reasons for, and methods of, teaching art, and who are influential in the kinds of change that are occurring in the schools at this time. To find the opinions of artists on the same subjects is a more difficult task. The writings of artists are seldom seen in the education journals in North America, though they sometimes speak on matters of curriculum content at educational conventions or symposiums. While many artists are reticent to expound at any length on their subject many started their working careers as teachers, and many continued to teach in schools and colleges, even after their

chosen profession became that of artist. Sometimes their choice to teach was made for monetary reasons, but often for the mutual exchange of ideas and enthusiasm that such opportunities brought. Many of these people have the background and the experience to have fully-formed beliefs on what a good art program should contain.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 2 of this study provides a brief history of, and rationale for, art education in the schools. It looks at some areas of art education that have recently assumed greater importance in the eyes of art educators and about which there has been some controversy.

In Chapter 3 the published writings of renowned artists are summarized. Many have written widely on their subject; Michelangelo Buonarroti has poems and letters describing his feelings about painting and sculpture, Hogarth's memoirs detail his reasons for painting and his attitude to the social mores of his time. Whistler, too, was vocal in his insistence on the artist's independence from social pressures. However, while many artists throughout history had a good deal to say in and around their own area of expertise, there are not many extant examples of their advice to students and educators and much of what does exist is directed towards those who intend to become artists themselves, rather than to the general public. Advice given by such artists as Paul Klee, Marc Chagall, and Robert Motherwell is noted particularly.

Chapter 4 contains information on methods used in interviewing

a small cross-section of practising British Columbian artists, the type of questions asked, and the reasons for choosing these specific artists. A short statement on each artist and his or her work is given. Talks with these artists follow the ethnographic type of interview outlined by James Spradley (1979) and Oriana Fallaci (1976), that is, informal discussions with each artist asking for general thoughts and ideas on school art curriculum based on their understanding of whether and why people, both general public and people working in various fields of the arts, need education in the visual arts. A record of field notes, tape recordings and examples of the artists' work has been collected and from them an analysis of their opinions is distilled.

Chapter 5. The interviews. The presentation of these interviews, wherein each artist's opinions are advanced as an entity, is designed to preserve the integrity and autonomy inherent in this type of commentary.

Analysis of information gathered from the interviews is contained in Chapter 6. An evaluation is made of how the British Columbian artists' individual ideas and convictions reinforce or differ from those already cited in the literature. Implications are drawn for directions that might be followed by art education curriculum builders.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE AND CONCERNS OF ART EDUCATION

Introduction

In this study of what artists consider to be of importance in the teaching of art to adolescents a clear understanding of the nature of the subject is necessary in order to evaluate its worth as a part of the public school curriculum. A general interpretation of art is that of human endeavour displaying marked creativity, usually in the areas of painting, sculpture, music, dance, and literature. It is what Ernst Cassirer (1944) calls an intensification of reality formed from emotion and imagination, a symbolic means of communicating emotionally with others. Those general definitions are probably appropriate for the art of any period. The more specific view of art as it is taught in schools, however, has changed throughout the centuries.

Brief History of Art Education

The idea of art education as a refining and enculturing process has been prevalent since the birth of formal education. Although in ancient Greece the representative arts were regarded more in the light of manual crafts and therefore not of importance in the academic world, theory and philosophy of aesthetics were seen as necessary areas of study. Aristotle, in Politics (1941), wrote at length on the subject of aesthetic education, as vital to the advancement of those virtues considered desirable in young men of good birth.

It is evident, then, that there is a sort of education in which parents should train their sons, not as being useful or necessary, but because it is liberal or noble. . . .Further, it is clear that children should be instructed in some useful things--for example, in reading and writing--not only for their usefulness, but also because many other sorts of knowledge are acquired through them. With a like view they may be taught drawing, not to prevent their making mistakes in their own purchases (of painting or sculpture), or in order that they may not be imposed upon in their buying or selling of articles, but perhaps rather because it makes them judges of the beauty of human form. To be always seeking after the useful does not become free and exalted souls (p.1306).

Socrates, too, in Plato's Protagoras (c.390B.C.) saw a distinction between manual crafts such as sculpture and a knowledge of aesthetics. In speaking of the liberal arts he observed, "You didn't learn these for professional purposes to become a practitioner, but in the way of a liberal education, as a layman and a gentleman should" (p.49).

During the Middle Ages there was a decline in interest in the arts as a cultural factor in the lives of the young. An "art" was a technique, and the people whose work was the creation of paintings or sculpture were still considered as having only a mechanical ability. Although art expressed the religious fervour of the time, the artist was merely an intermediary and his work a technical means of representing the Divine. Individuality was not encouraged and the production of works of art was not considered to have any intrinsic value. (Macdonald, 1970).

The Renaissance saw the birth of the artist as a humanist and an individual; the image of the Renaissance man, with his understanding of all spheres of knowledge, is even today exalted and revered as the epitome of excellence. The great writers of the day expounded on the virtues of a well-rounded education (Rabelais, 1534; Cellini, 1562). The Renaissance ideal was to achieve mental, moral, and technical excellence and to perpetuate, from father to son, the true and noble form of man. But although art was seen as a pleasurable and cultural aspect in the life of a gentleman, it was never considered appropriate as a profession for any but the lower classes. Boke named the Governour by Sir Thomas Elyot, the first English book to recommend art education, puts the view that:

If the childe be of nature inclined, as many have been, to paint with a penne or to fourme images in stone or tree, he should be, in the moste pure wese, enstructed in painting or kervinge (Macdonald, 1970, p.149).

Elyot considered that a gentleman might practise art for the useful purpose of mapmaking, astronomy and the like, but would never suggest it as an occupation, saying "someone will scorne me, sayenge that I hadde will hyed me to make of a nobleman a mason or peynter."

In 1692 John Locke published an essay entitled "Some thoughts concerning education", in which the Renaissance ideal of a man of many parts was further advanced.

Drawing. When he can write well and quick, I think it may be convenient not only to continue the Exercise of his Hand in

Writing, but also to improve the Use of it farther in Drawing;
 A Thing very useful to a Gentleman in several Occasions; but
 especially if he travel, as which helps a Man often to express,
 in a few lines well put together, what a whole Sheet of Paper
 in Writing would not be able to represent. . . . I do not mean
 that I would have your Son a perfect painter; to be that to
 any tolerable Degree, will require more Time than a young
 Gentleman can spare from his other Improvements of greater
 Moment (Macdonald, 1970, p.153).

Although his attitude sounds quaint and rather limited from our no
 doubt equally limited twentieth century viewpoint, his inclusion of
 drawing in the range of empirically-mediated activities was an important
 step towards having art considered as a subject for schooling.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries academies were
 established in Europe, first by monied patrons and later as government-
 funded schools. The rules of the academies were rigid, the courses
 restricted, and only "high art", or the art of the elite, considered
 of any great importance. Such was the power of these academies that
 instructors like Sir Joshua Reynolds could insist on following the
 most elitist and inflexible rules, with strictures such as these:

For it may be laid down as a maxim, that he who begins presuming
 on his own sense has ended his studies as soon as he has
 commenced them . . . he must still be afraid of trusting his
 own judgment, and of deviating into any track where he cannot
 find the footsteps of some former master. . . . You must have
 no dependence on your own genius (Reynolds, 1888, p.54).

Art instruction had become temporarily fixed in a mold of what was traditionally accepted as suitable and seemly.

The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw the heyday of art education as a refining, enculturing process. At a time when Rousseau's Emile (1762) was making a startling impact on some educators, with its proposal that the child will naturally do the right thing unless misled by a corrupt social environment, the Puritan idea of the child as naturally sinful unless otherwise tutored was still very much in evidence. Child rearing practices, in general, demanded that children be given good models to follow and discipline to ensure that they did not deviate. Children in the wealthier middle classes, whether at school or with tutors, were instructed to fill their leisure time, which might otherwise be slothfully wasted, with such gentle pursuits as drawing, music, stitchery, and the like.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, with the continuing growth of industrialism and of a more democratic schooling system, the emphasis turned elsewhere. Art education, for the most part, was seen as a necessity for preparation for a trade. Schools of Design were established in England to bring new life into the industrial arts, which were seen to be falling behind those of the rest of Europe in originality. These schools were governed, in part, by members of the academies whose concern was that these designers should in no way compete with them as painters. Papworth, then director of one of the Design Schools, insisted that the young

men attending them should neither be shown "high art" nor be allowed to study the figure lest they "be tempted to leave the intended object to pursue that which is more accredited and honored" (Macdonald, 1970, p.71).

Henry Cole, the most influential person in art education in the 1800s, gave his opinion that the middle class saw art "as a luxury in education, permissible to girls but unnecessary for boys" (p.152). But times and attitudes were changing and in 1836 the secretary of the Central Society of Education stated that:

Drawing has hitherto been looked upon as a polite accomplishment, in which it is graceful to be proficient. . . . It however affords great aid in defining, expressing and retaining certain ideas . . . and must assist in the formation of habits of attention from the circumstances of its requiring so much care and accuracy (p.153).

Art education became more democratic, yet was generally cast in the form of disciplinary and rather mechanical exercises. Though Henry Cole had changed the face of art education, many Victorians ridiculed the idea of art as a useful subject and still held that the only art of importance was the elitist Neo-Classical style.

Horace Mann in 1848 and later, in 1870, Walter Smith introduced European technical skills to grammar schools in North America in the belief that art education should be available to all, Smith being responsible for such publications as the Teachers' Manual of Free Hand Drawing and Design (1873). In his opinion it was an indisputable

fact that anyone who could learn to write could learn to draw; drawing, in this case, meant copying from his illustrated manuals (Macdonald, 1970).

The Picture Study movement, started in schools at the turn of this century, was instituted as something of an embellishment to an art program that was becoming increasingly mechanical in concept. Its aim was to familiarize students with great masterpieces of painting, of the lives of the artists, and of the stories behind the pictures they painted. This enculturing process was to encourage in students an appreciation of beauty, patriotism, courage, and piety. It is worth noting that the only paintings studied were those considered by the pundits to be "high art"; works which displayed those attributes thought by them to be worth imitating.

Thus, not only were the significant modern artists of the age absent from picture study, but the study itself was directed to issues that present-day art educators would be inclined to call extraneous to the concepts of art. If picture study was designed to teach something about art history, it was mostly used to inculcate certain ethical values that the paintings were believed to reflect (Eisner & Ecker, 1966, p.17).

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a major change took place in art education. Conceived by Rousseau more than a hundred years before, nurtured by such educators as Herbert Spencer, Wilhelm Viola, James Sully, and Franz Cizek, and coming to full flower in the art education of the twentieth century was the recognition of Child

Art as a separate entity, rather than an untutored and ill-formed version of adult art. Instead of studying and repeating stylized versions of adult drawing and painting, children were encouraged to create self-expressive paintings and three-dimensional objects.

Art in secondary schools today is still on occasion seen as primarily a manual skill.

This bias is reflected in the common assumption that children who do not succeed academically are likely to be good at working with their hands. Further, this attitude implies that art is not intellectually demanding, that only academic achievement leads to success, and that nonacademic endeavors are second-rate activities (Chapman, 1978, p.9).

Yet in general art education today has a broader base and scope than either technical drawing or the study of great masters of the past. The new B.C. Art Curriculum Rationale (1981), for instance, expresses the view that:

It is necessary to develop some mastery of basic skills and to acquire a working knowledge of the fundamentals, history and heritage of art. Both facets lead to worthwhile art experiences, the satisfaction of achievement, and the understanding and enjoyment of the artistic creation of others. Skills, while not ends in themselves, are important keys to greater freedom, personal growth and artistic confidence (p.6).

This seems a heady and wide ranging task and one that has run up against many problems concerning the necessity, viability, and

acceptability in schools of various subjects connected, either peripherally or immediately, with art.

Rationales for Art Education in the 1980s

One of the pervasive thoughts about education is that the basic academic subjects: mathematics, science, social studies, English, and foreign language, are an essential part of all school curricula, while the arts are desirable but not required (Eisner, 1979). One reason given for this point of view is that a very small percentage of students will continue a career in the arts whereas all students will have a need for the "basics" after school. It follows therefore that art classes should be elective courses in secondary school. This attitude can only be explained by the fact that art is here being viewed in the narrowest possible sense. While it is true that the percentage of practicing artists and craftsmen in any community is small, there is a growing body of people in the advertising and design professions. What is more, it must be realized that all members of the community use a visual mode of reference every day in almost everything they do, and, in fact, every bit as much as they use mathematical, scientific, or verbal references.

The vast majority of the population chooses or builds a home, furnishes it and surrounds it with some kind of landscaping, or at least planters, awnings, balcony decoration and the like. Many also erect some kind of holiday home or temporary dwelling. People choose clothes, personal decoration and hairstyles. Almost everyone is an

active consumer of material goods such as cars, boats, books, electronic gadgets, household utensils. While knowledge of the functional aspect of all these things is dealt with, to a greater or lesser extent, in other school courses, one of the major features of all of them is their aesthetic appeal, and this is an almost totally neglected area.

Those who may say that aesthetic appeal is not a major concern of all, or that it can only become of concern to the affluent and comfortable, are not supported by history. From the earliest construction man has concerned himself with aesthetics. The oldest weavings show, not a plain surface as would obviously be functional and simple, but designs increasingly intricate and varied as skill developed. Plain cloths, from the first, were dyed and painted with consummate care for their visual effect. All pottery developed from crude, uneven but functional shapes, to those forms most pleasing to the eye; this was effected not only in the interests of practicality.

Few of us, aware of the personal benefits of certain colours and styles in clothing, would ignore or neglect them. Clothing styles through the years, amongst all nations and social classes, have attempted to be visually attractive. The role of architecture has often transcended that of simple function; ornamentation, beauty of line, proportion, construction material, and design have influenced all who build and buy. The appreciation of setting, whether natural or man-made, has direct input into where people choose to live.

Man is an image maker, a decorator. That which distinguishes him from animals is his ability to create symbols and to use those

symbols to enrich and enhance his life. The purpose of art education for all secondary school students is at least two-fold. It is to fit all students to interpret their world visually, and to enable them fully to realize their potential as image makers and symbol makers. The purpose of art education is no more to make each student a professional artist than is science education to make each student a scientist, but rather to give the student the grounding in aesthetics essential for understanding and evaluating the environment. Artistic or aesthetic choices are of constant concern both on a personal and a community scale and a knowledge and understanding in this field can improve the quality of life for all.

Art educators differ in their evaluation of the relative importance of many of the facets of art education in schools. Several of these areas of dispute will be examined and they will provide the basis for some of the questions in subsequent interviews with artists.

New Areas of Concern in Art Education

Art Criticism and Aesthetics

Some form of art criticism has always been present in school art education, from formal picture studies of great masters to informal discussions of the respective merits of such varied forms of creativity as Greek sculpture, African fetishes, Art Deco design, or air-brushed van paintings. The increasing need to justify the very existence of an art program in public schools has produced the argument that art is indeed an academic area, where facts can be learned and acquired.

knowledge tested. Many art educators (Feldman, 1981; Kern, 1970; Lanier, 1980) therefore advocate an increase in lectures, discussions, and written responses on art criticism, history, and aesthetics, with a corresponding decrease in emphasis on studio-based art classes. The term "aesthetic literacy" has become the catchword of the 1980s. It is, Lanier says, "the proper single purpose of art education" (Lanier, 1980, p.19). Aesthetic literacy, Lanier says, will be accomplished by a dialogue-based curriculum on each school level, reserving studio work as an elective for those with an interest in practical application.

Few art educators would suggest that all art classes be totally removed from the studio, but the question of how much theory should be taught and in what manner it should be handled is a hotly debated issue. Those educators who advocate purely theoretical art courses in secondary school in an effort to make art recognized as an academic subject, likening it as they do to other subjects (Lanier to English, Kern to science), seem not to remember that most English courses require some creative writing from pupils in the form of short stories, poems, and essays, and practical laboratory experiments are a major part of many chemistry and physics classes.

Lanier has been at the forefront of the move towards "literate citizens", and puts, as his view, that:

The principal difference is that aesthetic literacy requires a non-studio curriculum. If we wish to enhance the breadth of the individual's aesthetic experience, we will have to give up our tempera paint encrusted curricula in favor of those which consist

of looking at and talking and reading about art (Lanier, 1980, p.19).

In this view Lanier is in direct opposition to such educators as John Michael, who hold that knowledge and appreciation come most strongly from active participation. He says, "Making art cannot provide learning about art and aesthetic experience in anything near an adequate measure" (1980, p.20). Lanier envisages a "dialogue curriculum" that encompasses both the type of art traditionally viewed as "fine art" (that seen in museums and galleries) and also the vernacular arts. In this curriculum teachers focus initially on television commercials, fast food shop architecture, and industrial products, objects familiar to the students, and then move on to works more readily thought of as art.

Other educators, while agreeing that art education must incorporate a more scholarly area, advocate what could be thought of as an extension of the Picture Study of the turn of the century. Edmund Feldman's insistence that the ability to interpret visual information leads to increased competence in cognitive skills, most particularly reading, has led him to propose that critical study of the arts should be a major part of the school curriculum. In his paper "Art Criticism and Reading" (1981) he says reading is widely acknowledged to be the most important academic subject because it is necessary for the learning of others, and he further notes that the basic concepts developed for reading readiness programs are those included in studies of art criticism. Thus he suggests an approach to interpreting visual art that will encourage development in visual and relational concepts basic, he says, to facilitating learning to read.

Feldman puts forward four guiding rules to art criticism: description, formal analysis, interpretation, and evaluation, and notes that this "critical method" of teaching has been very successful among children of all ages, from kindergarten on, improving learning readiness generally and reading readiness in particular. He considers that this formal, systematic method of understanding art can be applied to all areas of the visual arts to establish visual literacy. Feldman uses as his examples well-known modern art works and does not clarify whether this method of art criticism in the schools would be extended to the popular or folk arts.

June McFee (1974), on the other hand, sees the study of art and art history in terms of exploring cultural, social, and political changes. Art in its many forms, she says, is used to maintain the values, attitudes, and sense of reality from one generation to another. Therefore an understanding of the symbolic communication expressed in forms of the arts and artifacts of our society can help alleviate the growing feeling of alienation amongst much of the less privileged population and can lead to a greater sense of identity. Her concern with mass media (which is so influential to students) being at the mercy of commercial sponsors leads her to the conclusion that teachers must be more aware of what pupils are receiving in order to give them the tools to evaluate it and to provide wider alternatives.

If we accept the assumptions that the school has the further function of improving the environment, improving the standard of core culture as well, then skills in art criticism need to

be developed in language understandable to all age levels, and to encompass the broad uses of art (1974, p.85).

While some educators see art criticism and history as distinct in time and place from studio work, a large number, including many teachers, see theory as necessarily a part of studio activity. Many teachers know from experience that students can be hostile to the idea of time taken from practical work and resent any attempt at history lectures, slide shows, films, written commentaries, questionnaires, or work sheets. Many feel that the most valuable knowledge of aesthetics comes from interaction between students as they discuss their own and each other's work in a more or less formal situation.

David Ecker (1973) considers that children think creatively about their work; they criticize their own work and that of others, and challenge or support the judgements of others. They then theorize about the nature of art and criticism and analyze those theories.

John Michael (1980), too, feels aesthetic discussion and evaluation can best be conducted in conjunction with a student's own work. He proposes that students be critical of the worth of their work and evaluate whether they have reached the goals they set themselves in originality, creativity, and technical performance, whether their work indicates what they were trying to communicate. His view of the necessity of art history is, again, as it personally relates to the student, so that he "sees himself and his work on a continuum with that of the field" (p.17). He contends that it is because of the emphasis on a theoretical means of teaching art that art has lost credibility

in educational fields.

Art has become simply another academic subject in the school curriculum, but without the societal tradition of belonging there which the three R's enjoy (p.19).

He agrees with Elliot Eisner that there is an unequivocal need for art education programs to base their justification in schools on the unique and prized contribution of that which is indigenous to art rather than to attempt to squeeze it into the mold of an "academic subject". Thus the controversy appears to be not whether art history, criticism, and aesthetics are essential to a school art program, but rather in what manner they are best handled.

Environmental Awareness

While the need for a concerned, thoughtful attitude to one's environment has of late been seen by educators as a very necessary part of a child's education, and while the art room has been seen to be one of the most dynamic and positive areas in which environmental awareness can best be stimulated (Chapman, 1978; Lanier, 1980; McFee, 1981), art teachers have been slow to relinquish their perception of the art room as primarily a place for the development of skills in painting, drawing, and craft. This reluctance is fed by the realization that, for most students, time spent in the art room is minimal, and the amount of information an art class can offer is infinite. Therefore, in this limited time, art classes tend to offer traditional, basic, economical, well researched and well documented information and activities. Add to this the fact that most primary teachers do not have a great deal

of teacher training in art, and that many secondary school art teachers have had training and interest focussed on drawing and painting with, at best, a smattering of knowledge and skill in a few other areas such as pottery, weaving, photography, sculpture, or fabric design, and it is obvious that few feel they have the time or expertise to approach such vast (and related) subjects as architecture, urban planning, environmental aesthetics, and the like.

Nevertheless, many educators see a commitment to environmental concerns as meeting the most obvious and prevalent lack in education at this time. This is, of course, not now or hitherto a totally neglected field. John Dewey, in Art as Experience (1934), looks at the aesthetic experience as a much larger basic area for exploration and response than merely a concern with the fine arts.

Esthetic experience is a manifestation, a record and celebration of the life of a civilization, a means of promoting its development, and is also the ultimate judgment upon the quality of a civilization. For while it is produced and is enjoyed by individuals, those individuals are what they are in the content of their experience because of the cultures in which they participate (p.326).

His catholic view gives a warning of the perils of a narrow vision of elitist art.

As long as art is the beauty parlor of civilization, neither art nor civilization is secure. Why is the architecture of our large cities so unworthy of a fine civilization? It is not from lack of materials nor from lack of technical capacity. And yet it is not merely slums but the apartments of the well-to-do that are

esthetically repellent, because they are so destitute of imagination (p.326).

As an architectural critic with an abiding interest in the ecological approach to architecture and education, Lewis Mumford (1928) insists that the community be treated as a major element in design; just as the architect must be aware of the effects of the environment in all its elements so children should be encouraged to understand the functions, potentials, and limitations of their habitat in order to contribute to future planning. He holds that the organic and human components that are now missing in our compulsively dynamic and over-mechanized culture must be restored; that we must not merely follow the architect's wish for novel forms but that teachers and students should search for a fulfilling, aesthetically significant environment (1968).

Albert Parr, in his article "The Happy Habitat" (1970) takes the view that:

Our environment is the entire universe. When we speak of the aesthetic environment we presumably limit our discussion to the surroundings perceived by our senses. . . . Our minds have needs of sensory intake quite similar to our bodily appetites for food . . . a most basic demand on the environment is that it must offer a sufficiently rich, fine-grained, enduring, and varied diversity of forms and colors to offer satisfactory stimulus fields (p.29).

Any idea of a one-design city of complete uniformity in any aspect of our visual habitat is unacceptable, or, in his words, "a frightening

nightmare". Parr's assertion that juvenile delinquency born of boredom is rife in the suburbs is, he says, a direct result of the suburbs' failure to supply the excitement to inquisitive teenagers of either the farms of a century ago or the more doubtful charms of city life. An understanding of this problem by the citizens and their input into what would constitute a blend of mental and physical comfort, well-being, and pleasure would, he feels, produce an aesthetically satisfactory environment for all.

Vincent Lanier (1970) considers that the root problem of education is that "it does not deal with those fundamental economic, political, and social forces whose oppressive impact on our lives has become increasingly overt" (p.22). He feels that such ecological problems as are touched on in the schools are handled superficially, that the root of social problems is a moral issue, that "teaching of art should promote critical consciousness" (p.29), and that "art education should recognize and accept its obligation to participate in teaching the young about the societies in which they live and how these might be bettered" (1982, Prop.#9).

Perhaps the most vocal advocate of an increased awareness and focus on environmental concerns in the schools is June King McFee. In an address to the NAEA Conference in Chicago in 1981, on the nature of art education in the 80s, she said a lowered government support for public education and an economically deprived and ethnically diverse body of students would increase the need for concern about the quality of our surroundings. As she said, "The need to prepare students to

take aesthetic as well as social and economic responsibility for the shared environment will increase rather than decrease as government support and concern for cities decreases" (McFee, 1981, p.9). As she points out:

We in art education have been slow in accepting this as one of our responsibilities. The contribution of education in the visual arts to qualitative survival when so many must use so much less in much more densely populated spaces, must be made clear (p.10).

In "Society, Art and Education" (1974) she looks at the broader aspects of the visual arts with a view to possible changes in curricula.

Art is used to maintain the values, attitudes, and sense of reality from one generation to another. It is used to give character, identity, and status to groups of people, individuals, institutions through mutually understood symbols . . . the styles of architecture and costume (p.81).

McFee sees present curricula as middle class oriented and as possibly widening the gap between social classes, leading to a larger dropout rate and greater alienation. Art forms should give a sense of continuity and belonging to a community; they should include the symbols of all members of the community. If not, teachers are helping to devalue students' perception of their own backgrounds.

Art Versus Craft

A major stumbling block in the organization of art education curricula is the controversy over the amount of time which should be devoted to the learning of skills and techniques of such crafts as

fibre (spinning, weaving, dying, macrame), pottery (handbuilt and wheel), wood and metal working, and photography. When an art becomes a craft deserves at least brief discussion.

There are many people working in the areas mentioned above who consider themselves craftsmen. They are highly skilled, sensitive people who produce functional goods as quickly and expertly as possible. Each piece of work is individually made with care, forethought, and concentrated attention to good form and design. There are, on the other hand, people who work with these same raw materials in their various forms and who have been increasingly recognized as artists and sculptors.

While few people writing about aesthetics or art criticism care to touch on what is becoming an increasingly provocative subject, Collingwood (1938) has endeavoured to make a clear distinction between craft and what he calls "art proper." To paraphrase his ideas with rather brutal abruptness, he considers craft to be a manipulation of material to a preconceived end and to produce a general emotion, while art produces a specialized emotion, is conceived and is complete in the mind of the artist, and has of itself no raw materials. The archaic meaning of the word art, in Greek and Roman terms, is "the power to produce a preconceived result by means of consciously controlled and directed action" (p.15); the word craft is now more usually applied to this process. Craft, Collingwood says, has a distinction between "means" or such things as tools, machines, and actions leading to the production of a work, and "end" or the finished product. This end is preconceived; the craftsman must have foreknowledge

of his intended result and that result must occur through his actions. The craft is the transformation of its raw material; although the form changes, the matter remains the same.

"Art proper," says Collingwood, is not the manipulation of materials that we see as necessary for the production of craft; it is expressive and imaginative, and it is a language, a means of communication. Art is not mere sensation nor merely to do with concepts but an "activity of consciousness" which, he says, "is a level of experience intermediate between the psychic and the intellectual" (p.275). Collingwood also feels that the artist has a duty to his community, a commitment to convey to them through his work the necessity of a healthy consciousness because, he says, "no community altogether knows its own heart" (p.336).

Ananda Coomaraswamy's views seem directly allied to Collingwood's when he says:

What is art? An answer may be made as follows. Art is the involuntary dramatisation of a subjective experience. In other words, the crystalization of a state of mind in images (whether visual, auditory or otherwise). This excludes from art the practical activity of mere illustration, which involves only the combination of empirical observation with skill of craftsmanship. Even the setting down of notes, etc., that serve to communicate aesthetic experience by the indications of gesture, or audible sounds, is a practical activity to be distinguished from that of creation (1920, p.240).

To move from the somewhat esoteric views of the philosopher to the more practical terms of the teacher and potter Michael Cardew, a

swift and simple working definition of the essence of a craft, as opposed to an art, is that it is useful. In a talk with young potters he is reported to have said that there are more artists now than at any other time who are using the ceramic medium for pure expression rather than for utility. Some started as potters and have discovered in ceramics an exciting new vehicle for expressing their perceptions of what we are and where we stand. To pursue a craft with that intention, he says, is to make it then an art.

It would seem from these views that the use of clay, fibre, wood, and metal in a school art program would only be justified if geared to exploration towards a means of communication, rather than to their manipulation to ensure a busy classroom capable of producing mugs, macraméd owls, and pot holders by term's end. One common complaint of the teaching of crafts in schools is that, in attempting to learn the skills involved in a wide range of different crafts, students emerge either frustrated by their failures or too easily and uncritically satisfied by the production of objects with no aesthetic or technical merit. Kern (1970) speaks for many art educators when he talks of a "cafeteria approach" to the teaching of art where, as he says, the students certainly learn something; "they learn that they cannot throw a pot, paint with watercolors, draw people, or letter a poster" (p.51). Teachers, he says, move from one medium to another in an effort to cover a wide variety of experiences without the time to explore any of them adequately.

Art criticism, environmental awareness and the question of the

extent to which crafts should be taught in school art programs are major areas of controversy.

Folk and Popular Art

There is an increasing recognition of the need for a more open acceptance of folk and popular arts. McFee (1974), Lanier(1980), and Chalmers (1981), indeed those most vocal on the environmental scene, feel strongly that no area of visual communication that is of interest to young people should be ignored in school art programs. Folk art has always been of great importance to a community and, while some may feel the popular arts of the day are aesthetically limited (Broudy, 1978; Smith, 1981), they are powerfully interconnected. Visual arts and music are often incorporated in film and television. Books become movies overnight, movies lead to books; costumes reflect art and vice versa. This melding of the arts, seldom seen in the so-called "high arts", makes for unity and strength of impact.

There has always been folk art and it has always reflected the thinking of the times. There has always, in historical times, been what Smith calls elitist art. There has probably never been such a common meeting of the two as there is now. Oldenburg, Marisol, Rauschenberg, Rivers, Warhol and a host of others have crossed what have been traditional boundaries between folk and high art and have made it easier for teachers to do the same.

Gallery Education

Art gallery and museum education is an area art educators generally feel has been underutilized or mismanaged. The physical problems of transporting a group of students to a gallery are many, especially in the restricted time schedule art classes have. However many museums and galleries now arrange for exhibits to be taken to schools. Laura Chapman (1970) found that 50% of teachers questioned about gallery visits said they scheduled field trips, while 33% reported in-school exhibits or visits by local artists and about 17% would visit artists' studios. Only 25% of the teachers themselves visited galleries with any regularity. Chapman found that children who do visit museums and galleries tend to have a more substantial knowledge about art--"visual recognition and identification of well-known styles, visually identifying stylistic influences, and a general grasp of chronology" (p.18)-- but she notes that almost half of the 17-year-olds interviewed had never visited an art gallery or had visited only once.

Museum personnel, like art educators, are increasingly challenged to produce a rationale for the continued existence of their museums and their continued support through public funds. Educational programs and exhibits geared to school children are now a major part of many museum plans and provide unique examples of the history of our own culture and that of others. Almost every American museum now offers a broad-based education program for all students and surveys have found that 92% of art museum directors consider the provision of educational

experiences for the public is very important (Alexander, 1979).

Summary

Art education is a wide-ranging subject. Its breadth gives it both its strength as a necessity in any liberal education, and its problematic aspect when trying to pin it to an academic requisite for university entrance, a required subject for students who say they have no interest in leaning to paint and draw, or a quantitative learning technique that will compare with mathematics, science, and technical training in government-funded schools.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ARTISTS' OPINIONS

Introduction

While in this study the expression of artists' understanding of important issues in art education takes the form of interviews with artists working in British Columbia, some knowledge of the opinions of artists in the past and from other parts of the world is of interest in revealing their influence on their pupils, and on societies' attitudes to art and art education. In the previous chapter a brief look at the history of art education showed certain trends and widely held beliefs on the subject. So, too, the words of artists in different periods of time show attitudes accepted by either the artists themselves or by the general public but not necessarily both, artists often being noted as at odds with society. The style of an artist is as distinctive in his writing as in his visual works and provides a dimension of individual character that is, perhaps, not possible to present through interpretation by another. There may be contradictions in an artist's speech due to changes in mood or changes in attitude but the most intense thoughts, the pithiest statements on art, come more from the utterances of artists themselves than from outside observers.

Such artists' writing is more than a footnote in a factual history of art; it is a primary and important document in the history of taste, and in the formation of our own likes and

judgements (Goldwater & Treves, 1945, p.8).

It is also a primary source of information on what artists feel necessary in the education of pupils and of the general public.

Many artists have a wealth of literature and criticism written about them which envelopes and sometimes veils or screens their personal traits. The desire to slot people into historical, social, class, and school associations often results in a blurring of the individual character and of the events of that person's life that have been the motivating forces for the work produced and the ideology held. To hear what these people have to say on their subject is to explore their individuality, their thought processes, the unadulterated force of their genius. If the purpose of art education is to encourage personal image-making, the words of accomplished image-makers have particular relevance and importance.

Before the Twentieth Century

As with art educators of the past, the bulk of writing by artists concerns itself with drawing, painting, sculpture, and to a lesser extent, architecture: the "fine arts." The broader, ethnological approach to art is of recent vintage. So too is the conceptual, intellectual stance that art of the twentieth century is so concerned with.

Artists of the Renaissance, notably Cennino Cennini (1933) and Leonardo da Vinci (Notebooks translated and edited by McMahon, 1956; MacCurdy, 1939) produced craftsman's handbooks of technical instruction

setting down specific rules on painting methods. Art was generally defined as a copy of nature by the master painters, and their pupils were encouraged to study the work of other masters of their time and of past eras. They were exhorted to obtain an accurate knowledge of the human body and to study constantly from nature. Physical and mental discipline and restraint were considered essential; the professed concern was for an accurate representation of the natural world and, where in modern times the study of aesthetics is of paramount interest, in former times there was no such discussion, aesthetics seeming more implied than examined.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a time of great political and social upheaval, a profound change in artistic thought was evident. Neo-classicism, its theories embodied in the writings of such noted artists of the times as Sir Joshua Reynolds (1798) and Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (Pach, 1939), was at last giving way to the exuberant wave of Romanticism. Eugene Delacroix's outpourings in journals, letters, and articles (Mras, 1966) present notions of what the Romantics considered essential in art that were quite different from the accepted patterns of Neo-Classicism. Art oscillated between an intellectual and an emotional approach, and a more catholic attitude towards all forms of visual expression was evident.

The Twentieth Century

While most of the instructions of painters of the past have little that can be applied directly to present public school art

studies, since they are not only distanced by time from art theories of today but also were intended primarily for students who would be artists, the writings of many artists of this century hold great interest in their explanations of why these people are image makers, how they feel image making can best be nurtured in students, and what kind of environment is most productive for this sort of activity.

One reason for changes in professed reasons for producing art is, as Francis Bacon (1963) puts it:

Photography has completely altered figurative painting. I think Velasquez believed that he was recording the court at that time and certain people at that time. But a really good artist today would be forced to make a game of the same situation. He knows that particular thing could be recorded on film; so this side of his activity has been taken over by something else (p.13).

Paul Klee (1959) considers that man accepts a wider environment than before.

Formerly we used to represent things visible on earth. . . .

Today we reveal the reality that is behind visible things, thus expressing the belief that the visible world is merely an isolated case in relation to the universe and that there are many more other, latent realities. Things appear to assume a broader and more diversified meaning. . . . There is a striving to emphasize the essential character of the accidental (p.9).

Giorgio de Chirico in 1912 said the aim of future painting is "to create previously unknown sensations; to strip art of everything routine and

accepted, and of all subject matter, in favour of an aesthetic synthesis" (Chipp, 1968, p.397).

Materials have changed; most artists of our time are much more experimental in their use of materials, and more flexible about what can be considered acceptable. Things now considered "art" are sometimes vastly different in physical substance and subject matter from those of a century ago.

Education, its purpose and its needs, has changed; as education became more democratic so did social culture. The majority of people in North America has equal possibility for possession of reproductions of art and of the associated arts of design and decoration; these latter have their basic structure in the principles of art and these principles must now meet the needs of all. No longer can it be considered reasonable to say with Ingres, "It is rarely other than the lower types of the arts . . . which naturally pleases the multitude. The more sublime efforts of art have no effect at all upon uncultivated minds" (Goldwater & Treves, 1945, p.216).

While the writings of great masters of bygone times are of peripheral interest for art education, the thoughts of artists of this century have direct relevance to today's educational needs. The very range of their reasons for producing, their attitudes to society, and their political involvement are important to students. They are not necessarily technically adept at drawing and the mechanical skills needed to produce a painting or sculpture, but primarily concerned with expressing a universal truth, a private conviction, a political

point of view: first comes the reason for creativity, the intellectual basis, the inner stimulus, the irrepressible emotion or force.

Art of the twentieth century demands a more intellectual approach to its understanding than does the openly accessible art of preceding eras. Such movements as Cubism, Futurism, Surrealism call for interpretation by the artists involved. Ferdinand Leger (Chipp, 1968) gave lectures and published articles on the technological aspects of life which led him to his way of evaluating the world through his pictures. Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger were both interested in a theoretical explanation of their painting, expounded in Du Cubisme (1912). Metzinger explained in an article written in 1910 that Picasso "invented a free and mobile perspective" and that "form, used for too many centuries as the inanimate support of color finally recovers its right to life and instability" (Chipp, 1968, p.196). Juan Gris, too, gave theoretical justifications for non figurative art (Chipp, 1968). Matisse (1904) in "Notes of a Painter", offers his opinion on composition, colour and form so clearly, concisely, and honestly that nobody could doubt his intellectual and emotional devotion and integrity to his work though many, seeing it for the first time, have ridiculed his painting as childish and crude, even seeing it as a hoax.

Paul Klee's diaries (1964), The Pedagogical Sketchbook (1953) and various publications for the Bauhaus Academy, where he taught for several years, offer not only thoughts on his own work, but his intense interest in sharing the intangibility of his art. Sybil Moholy-Nagy, in her introduction to The Pedagogical Sketchbook,

says of Klee:

A mind so in flux, so sensitive to intuitive insights, could never write an academic textbook. All he could retain on paper were indications, hints, allusions, like the delicate color dots and line plays on his pictures. The Pedagogical Sketchbook is the abstract of Paul Klee's inductive vision.

His written work has the same imprint apparent in his painting; his words combine the qualities of intellect and imagination so necessary to artistic expression.

We construct and construct, and yet intuition still has its uses. Without it we can do a lot, but not everything. One may work for a long time, do different things, many things, important things, but not everything. When intuition is joined to exact research it speeds the progress of exact research. . . . Art, too, has been given room for exact investigation, and for some time the gates leading to it have been open. . . . One learns to dig down, to uncover, to find the cause, to analyze (Goldwater & Treves, 1945, p.444).

Thoughts about the art of portraiture. Some will not recognise the truthfulness of my mirror. Let them remember that I am not here to reflect the surface (this can be done by the photographic plate), but must penetrate inside. My mirror probes down to the heart. I write words on the forehead and around the corners of the mouth. My human faces are truer than the real ones (Klee, 1964. p.47).

Marc Chagall's writings show teaching in very different circumstances from those of the Bauhaus. His empathic attachment to his students in a colony of orphans at Malachowka is evident from this excerpt from Ma Vie (1960).

I taught those unfortunate little ones art. Barefoot, lightly clad, each one shouted louder than the other: "Comrade Chagall, Comrade Chagall!" . . . The clamor came from every side. Only their eyes would not, or could not smile. I loved them. They drew pictures. They flung themselves at colors like wild beasts at meat (p.170).

Here the enthusiasm of the artist could release creativity in his pupils starved though they were, both physically and intellectually. Here, too, the emotional release and therapeutic value of art is obviously appreciated by Chagall.

On the American scene many of the artists involved in the Abstract Expressionist movement of the mid-twentieth century hastened to share their views on the new form their art was taking. Hans Hofmann (Chipp, 1968) wrote at length on the aim and nature of art, on pictorial laws, saying "Art is a reflection of the spirit, a result of introspection, which finds expression in the nature of the art medium" (p.539).

Barnett Newman (1947) expounded on the subject of man as essentially and universally an image maker. Mark Rothko presented one of the fundamental changes from art of centuries past.

The romantics were prompted to seek exotic subjects and to travel to far off places. They failed to realise that, though the transcendental must involve the strange and unfamiliar, not

not everything strange or unfamiliar is transcendental. . . .

Ideas and plans that existed in the mind at the start {of a painting} were simply the doorway through which one left the world in which they occur (Chipp, 1968, p.548).

Art teachers, unless closely in touch with these ideas, can lead students too superficially to simplistic "abstract art" and leave them, at the end of school, with no substantial understanding of why art of this century has developed as it has, or to where it will be advancing. Where artists go the general public follows with varying degrees of reluctance. As Impressionism was once ridiculed but is now generally accepted and admired, so much art of today is, and will be for some time, misinterpreted and despised. To hear artists' reasoned explanations of their works, of their understanding and interweaving of other art forms, and of their ideas for future directions in art enables the public and especially students, whose ideas are often more flexible and less intolerant, to appreciate their point of view more readily.

Artists' Opinions at the New York Art Education

Seminar of 1964

While many renowned artists of the twentieth century have taught in educational situations, and many have expressed opinions on various aspects of teaching, it is difficult to unearth statements from them dealing directly with curriculum necessities. A four day seminar on elementary and secondary school education in the visual arts, held at New York University in 1964, however, brought together a group of

artists for exactly that purpose, and their considered opinions have great bearing on the direction of this thesis. At this seminar the energetic enthusiasm of these American artists attested to the interest and knowledge that working artists have in the future of art education in the schools.

The seminar participants, who included not only people working in the visual arts but also musicians, mathematicians, and scientists, addressed themselves to all modes, products, and historical periods of art expression. The media of the visual arts were taken to include drawing, painting, sculpture, the crafts, architecture and interior design, printmaking, advertising design, industrial design, still-photography, and cinemaphotography. Artists would thus be defined as people responsible for the production of these arts. The proceedings of this seminar were recorded in Howard Conant's report, Seminar on Elementary and Secondary School Education in the Visual Arts (1965).

Robert Motherwell was by far the most vocal of the artists present, and his view of art education as it exists in North America today was, unfortunately, vitriolic and somewhat pessimistic.

In art education, the blind are leading the blind, from the top down. Most art teachers know nothing about modern art. . . .

There is a very deep alienation of art educators, including university art teachers, from the principal works of art of modern times. . . . Most art teachers are really miserable people because they do not feel what's magical and moving and alive about art.

. . . From the stand point of making a picture or responding to

it, most of what's talked about is so generalized that it is meaningless and has very little to do with the magic of a picture or a sculpture (p.85).

However, he also had much in the way of constructive advice and at the end of the seminar put forward a proposal for an intensified teacher training program in both history of art and studio work.

While it is not possible here to go into all that was covered during the four days of intense discussion and evaluation there are some statements of particular interest:

Helen Frankenthaler's idea on the controversial issue of learning by the exercise of copying a work.

A teacher might say, what is this Matisse, or what is this 1910 cubist picture about? What makes it work? What gives it space? Try to figure it out! Copy it! You might hate the exercise and feel that you got nothing out of it. But, in a year, you might feel it was right (p.157).

George Segal's views on teaching abstraction.

By means of what some teachers have thought to be the "Bauhaus method" attempts have been made to bring students too quickly and quite arbitrarily to a high level of abstraction. Students should, over varying periods of time and in various ways, develop their own concepts, their own abstractions. The function of a teacher is to provide many media of expression, to suggest many ways of using them, and to encourage students to discover for themselves the principles, patterns, and possibilities inherent in their works (p.182).

Architect Noel McKinell on designing.

The only way I can help students learn anything about designing is by finding out the problems of building with them. I think the only way you can help students learn to involve themselves is by working with them as individuals (p.182).

Cartoonist Robert Osborn on the use of film.

The use of film as a medium of art expression and study is becoming more and more important. Plans for new schools and renovations will have to include facilities for film showing and production (p.165).

Robert Motherwell's agreement.

We must make it known that the film is a major art form of the twentieth century.

Helen Frankenthaler.

One of the most totally constructive things we could do would be to raise the level of quality in art education by making teaching more appealing and more readily available to the best possible artists of our time. I've been taught by artists, and I know it was they who gave me the most feeling and the most understanding and the most imagination (p.201).

A summary of the recommendations made by the participants of the seminar included the following conclusions.

1. That the nature of art education must not work at cross purposes with the essential nature of art itself; that is, that it must be open ended, flexible, and broad in scope.

2. That both elementary and secondary art classes must have specially trained art teachers and that training should include more liberal arts courses, much more time for, and less rigidly scheduled, studio courses to be taught by the best available professional artists, and fewer but more intensive courses in art education methods and art history.
3. That students and art teachers should have more involvement with master artists through personal tuition, film, and study of original art works.
4. That it is necessary to establish a sequential program of art education for all, from nursery school through to adult education with emphasis on the development of visual perception.

The seminar, funded by the United States Office of Education, was planned by people who believe that "art educators should stop listening mainly to each other and begin listening to leaders in other disciplines" (p.1), and the outcome was that those leaders had much to say that was relevant.

CHAPTER 4

THE ARTISTS

Rationale for the Interviews

This chapter explains the reasons for presenting the interviews within the body of this thesis rather than as an appendix. It describes the format of the interviews with a limited sample of British Columbian artists, the reasons for choosing particular people to interview, and gives a brief introduction to each artist.

One thing that becomes apparent from looking at artists' work and from speaking to them is that a quantitative evaluation of their ideas would be of little worth. Their value lies in their disparate characters, their individuality, their very contradictions and opposing viewpoints. We admire a work of art because it is removed from the mundaneness of our usual experience; it is exotic, an extrapolation of reality, lifted beyond the realms of everyday normality. The personality of each artist is, in similar manner, unlike another, and to categorize their thoughts under arbitrary headings is to diminish their essential force.

In order to avoid this pitfall, opinions of British Columbian artists are presented almost verbatim in the next chapter. They have been pared down to those statements most closely associated with secondary school curriculum, but to reduce them further would be to rob them of impact. The questions posed by the interviewer are put in a more formal manner and a list of the subjects covered appears

as an appendix. The artists had different areas of interest and expertise and this is reflected in their replies.

Interviewing artists is a tricky task. The concept of art education is anathema to some; many resist any hint of intellectualizing or theorizing about their profession. Even with a willing subject the type of question asked must be thoughtfully and sensitively presented in order to elicit a full, relevant, and coherent response.

The type of interview conducted for this study fell somewhere between a formal and an informal interview in that, although the meetings were arranged ahead of time and in some cases my original thesis proposal and the list of questions to be considered were sent to the artist, meetings were held, where possible, in the artist's home or studio and the conversation was encouraged to flow freely with as little interruption on my part as possible. This indeed was what the artists themselves preferred, one telling me that he had recently been interviewed by someone who would not stop talking.

Although a list of questions of current problems and issues in art education had been prepared for reference it was used only as a back-up or mild goad when conversation lagged. The most vital consideration, and the question most dear to the artists, was why the visual arts are essential to the well-being of every human being and to the continuance of our cultural existence: why, indeed, they should be considered at all in the public school system. The question sheet itself was based on the issues raised by art educators which appear in Chapter 2 of this study.

Choosing artists to converse with, and the type of questioning appropriate, posed some thorny problems. British Columbia has a thriving, enterprising art community consisting of traditional and avant garde artists of all ages, working with many mediums. It comprises persons with varying degrees of academic and vocational training. A representative selection, even if possible, seemed too large to deal with. Rather than sending questionnaires to many, which might prompt shallow, hasty, even worthless responses, in-depth interviews were undertaken with six artists chosen for their different areas of proficiency. These artists were all well-known in British Columbia, all were enthusiastic about participating in the study, and all had shown evidence of working with a commitment to excellence in their own field and an open-minded enjoyment of other forms of the visual arts.

Introduction to the Artists

Though the professional fields of these artists overlapped to some extent they worked with different materials: Jean Kamins was a fabric artist, Colette French was a printmaker, painter, and sculptor, Tom Graff was a performance artist, Marian Penner-Bancroft was a photographer, Greg Murdock was a draughtsman and painter, and Richard Prince was a sculptor. A brief introduction to each artist will serve to show their major directions artistically and their interests and propensities.

Jean Kamins

The interview with Jean was held in her house, a brilliant red,

mock-Victorian in Kitsilano, with newspapers littering the uncut front lawn. The kitchen, where we sat and talked, was like a country kitchen of last century: a large cast-iron stove, jars of lentils, plants on the window-sill, warm and cheerful. Jean's studio was strewn with scraps of fabric and pieces of sculpture and pottery from artist/friends. Large finished canvases were neatly housed in a rack and sketches for work in progress covered the walls.

Jean was raised in Los Angeles where she was a mathematics teacher before studying painting at U.C.L.A. She moved to Vancouver in 1967 and some years later started the enormous fabric paintings for which she is now known. These works portray homely scenes of women at their housework and families at play or exotic scenes such as "The Bathers" a six by ten foot tapestry of plump nudes in a Roman bath. An exhibition at Eros Gallery had the walls covered, as Eve Johnson (1982) said:

in chubby normal consenting adults, amorous, but not kinky. "It's an image I want to get across," she says, "to counter this emphasis on bad painting and bad art and bad people, on brutality . . .

I wish the erotic were more integrated. What I am doing is putting love-making into the context of a family situation. It's only by always separating it that it becomes dirty " (p.11).

Jean is very involved in the Vancouver art community and in group projects such as "Mail Art" where several artists have made small visual works such as drawings, photos, and graphics, gathered them in envelopes, and mailed them to friends and acquaintances.

Colette French

Colette is a graduate from the painting department of the Emily Carr College of Art and Design and, as well as painting, works with silkscreen and three-dimensional materials. Her work has a nostalgic, dream-like quality, pure and innocent. She travelled extensively as the child of a naval family and believes that her work is not "gut-wrenching and soul-searching" precisely because she spent her childhood surviving a chaotic family life. At the time of the interview we met in a cafe near the gallery that handles her work because her private life was again in upheaval as she moved both her living quarters and her studio. Her cool clear water-colours of "The Oualtine Cafe" stand as a remarkable contrast to her ebullient personality and disrupted life style. In a review of a recent exhibition at the Equinox Gallery Eve Johnson (1984) says:

The paintings are more complicated than they look at first glance. French plays with reflections: in Capital Barber Shop, the window, seen from outside, reflects the buildings across the street. French fuses inner and outer space. . . all swimming in the semi-transparent, overlapping washes of acrylic. In Groceteria Window, "a reflection of what it's like to live in this small town on the edge of the continent," the dappled shadows across the plants are also a map of the B.C. coastline (p.13).

Colette's work combines the world she knows and enjoys with a peace and harmony she hopes to obtain.

Tom Graff

I met Tom in his house in East Vancouver. It mirrors the artist; it is loquacious and eclectic, jammed to overflowing with exciting snippets from works of fine art to intriguing junk. Tom is a performance artist and he speaks most eloquently on what that means.

As more and more artists present their art by staring us in the face, we find we can no longer evade their presence. They cannot be dismissed as fringes of "proper" painting and sculpture, nor can performance artists be ignored as frivolous elves of theatre. . . . Instead of playing the piano solo, these people want to be the conductors of their own orchestra (Graff, 1982 p.65).

He calls it a "live collage." The historical roots of performance arts are, he says, in Roman and Medieval Circuses of feats without stories, the eighteenth century "Salon de Machine" of Paris, Futurists, Dadaists, New York "Happenings" of the 60s, and, in amateur form, today's Punks. "They have always acted as the purposeful unstuffers of stuffed shirts." Tom's works are, in his own words, three-dimensional spatial, environmental canvases upon which he has "sculptural intentions."

Tom was born in San Francisco and studied music there, but has been in Vancouver since 1969, touring Canadian galleries with a group of other performance artists, working as choreographer, teacher, art curator, and television personality. In this interview Tom ranged, in subject matter, from Canada Council grants to encourage young artists, to the paper museum he is hoping to establish, based on his own vast collection,

His knowledge of sources for teaching materials, information, experimental designs, interested artists, educators, and other informed people and societies is extensive.

Greg Murdock

Greg Murdock comes from Saskatoon and has recently studied sculpture at Emily Carr College of Art and Design. His works, produced in graphite, coloured pencil and acrylics on painted plywood, show both sculptural and architectural influences. Art Perry (1984) says of his work:

Murdock is a cool clean draftsman. His eye is shaving his white plywood drawings down to a near spiritual emptiness. Murdock's art is not a playground for runaway paint, but rather a silent and still space of empty chairs and barren tables . . . With his bent and seeming awkward perspective Murdock pays homage to the early masters of the Italian Renaissance--Duccio, Giotto, Fra Angelico. The ecclesiastic titles of his work, "Annunciation", "Sacred Conversation", indicate that his Roman Catholic upbringing and schooling have influenced the direction of his work but the asymmetry and skewed perspective hint at the humour and warmth of the artist.

I met Greg in his Yaletown warehouse studio, as uncluttered as his drawings with its supporting columns, stark whitewashed walls, and spartan furnishings. He had recently returned from New York where several galleries had expressed interest in mounting exhibitions of his work. With an exhibition closing in Vancouver and another to open soon, he

was having difficulty settling down to drawing but took the time to be interested and involved in the subject of school art.

Marian Penner-Bancroft

Marian studied at U.B.C., Emily Carr College of Art and Design, and Ryerson Photo Arts Centre in Toronto. Her photographic projects involve her in collaboration with others in films on political and social issues and also in very private concerns: a journal of slept-in beds during a six-week trip to Europe by herself, and "Change/Position" an autobiographical document of seven months incorporating recorded sounds and written words to increase access to the images. Her most serious body of work, "For Dennis and Susan: Running Arms to a Civil War", chronicles Marian's brother-in-law, Dennis Wheeler's fatal illness. She says of her work:

I'm becoming much more conscious of the camera as something I use to respond to ideas and events, and that the resulting translations are peculiar to that machine. For "Change/Position" . . . I attempted an integration of camera syntax with my own emotional momentum: I stood still, I moved, the subject stood still, the subject moved, we both stood still, we both moved (Rosenberg, 1980, p.9).

Marian teaches a photography class at Emily Carr College and I met her in the staffroom there. Renovations nearby and preparations for an imminent exhibition all but drowned Marian's quiet, considered opinions. She is insistent on the importance of an informed, aware public and of the necessity for the artist's voice to be heard.

Richard Prince

Richard Prince is an art history major from U.B.C. and now teaches in the Fine Arts Department there. I met him in his office and, as he was pressed for time, the interview was a somewhat formal one, indeed more of a monologue. He is one of the few Fine Arts faculty members who have any contact with art education students and has, on several occasions, talked to groups of those students about his work and about art in general. His office contains examples of his intriguing sculptures: an elderly red and green bicycle, intricate wood, glass, and metal boxes, precisely positioned; one is uncertain whether they are purely sculptures or also useful articles.

Richard Prince's works have been widely exhibited and reviewed.

Mary Fox (1976) says:

The pleasure Prince takes in natural objects is equalled and, to a degree, balanced by his layman's interest in science. He expresses a somewhat Renaissance wonder at machines and overlays his theoretical understanding of mechanics onto his and the viewer's comprehension of natural phenomena. (p.7)

Rosalie Staley (1982), at a more recent exhibition comprised mainly of cast female forms says:

Richard Prince's current sculptures interpret the traditional bust in terms of castings of a shell, cut-away for an austere perspective. . . . Our interest is more in Prince's design of the form, cutting away hair and part of the body for a strange reality. . . . The

woman seems desexualized, as a placard representative of curiosity and seriousness. . . .The pieces, "Classical Knowledge" and "Simple Objects" are able to be seen in the round, unlike the busts. . . . All are shiny graphite. There is a hint of the turn-of-the-century magic show. One wonders if they will soon disappear (p.38).

Conclusion

These thumbnail sketches of the artists chosen for interviews show their various backgrounds, propensities, and modus operandi. They are not chosen as representatives of anything more than the individuality of the artist and of the artist's devotion and commitment to a career and to furthering visual enlightenment in the community.

CHAPTER 5

THE INTERVIEWS

Introduction

In this chapter an abridged version of my discussions with the six artists interviewed is presented. Some talked for several hours; some for a much briefer period. All conversation had to do with art in its many forms but much related to the artist's own work and milieu which, while very interesting, do not fall within the scope of this study. Included in these excerpts are those statements dealing, in the most part, with secondary school art education. They are presented, as nearly as possible, in the artist's own words.

Jean Kamins

Interviewer: What are the benefits of a secondary school art program?

Jean Kamins: If you want to teach people to have any appreciation and understanding of what the aesthetics of art are one of the techniques is to have people do it and by doing something you have a sensibility about art that you never have by reading about it. I remember a story about Beethoven who played a sonata and afterwards people said "What does it mean?" and he sat down and played it again because if he could have said it in words he would have said it in words. I think with art if you want to say it in words that's all fine and dandy, and I know there is a big intellectual approach to art; but that isn't art. Art is the actual physical doing of it; the other is philosophy or

history but it isn't art--art is the actual doing of it.

It is very important to teach kids to do art because only by doing it will we {artists} develop an audience. Funding for arts comes from the audience; if you want a culture interested in art you have to put money into it. There is plenty of sports news but very little art news; you cannot expect an art culture unless money is put into it. There is no funding to individual artists.

I: Why have art classes in the public schools?

J.K.: There are few classes in school that you remember. Anything that comes out of the education system is an appreciation and understanding. Not very many students go on in art; this is true in science or history also. The gestalt understanding of where we stand in the world comes from these courses. If you want a civilization that has any kind of well-roundedness you have to give an equal appreciation {to all subjects}. We're not teaching historians, teaching government, or voting any more than we are teaching artists. At the moment in B.C., society is being run by ignorant small businessmen and we are suffering the result. They have no appreciation of education and knowledge and they don't want an educated public who might complain about them. This is what has led to all these cutbacks in the schools.

I: Are the crafts important in school art?

J.K. I happen to be in a craft medium and there is a tremendous snobbery and I think it is important that this approach be broken down a bit. The elitist approach to art does several things--it makes people think they can't do art. You want to have people understand that everyone should be allowed to do art and that art is OK for everyone

to do. If you approach art only from an intellectual standpoint ultimately you get people who don't like art because of the art intellectuals, but who might enjoy it in other forms. Approaching art means they realize they can make curtains for their house, paint walls in decorations. These aesthetics you can develop in an art room situation go with them in their everyday lives much more than people appreciate. All classes should be taught with this attitude of "Where does what I am teaching you today fit into your life tomorrow?" Until children understand that they don't know why they are taking courses.

One of the problems with education is that our society has changed a great deal lately and the education system is still functioning in quite an archaic way or else there wouldn't be such a large dropout rate in the high schools. That is a sign the system isn't working, not that the children are stupid.

I: Are visits to art galleries and museums important?

J.K.: Those art works that make it into the gallery system tend to be the more conventional things. There tends to be a fossilization of art and a hierarchy of art, but there are all sorts of galleries and it is up to the teacher to take the kids to a variety of options in the art world. This throws it back on the responsibility of the teacher to be an enlightened person and some are and some are not. We need to have galleries and museums; those are the places our work is transferred to. In North America people don't go to galleries and museums much but in Europe everyone does. This appreciation must

be taught in the schools.

There has been a lot of discussion about T.V. and the visual side of the brain taking over in the way people learn and if this is true, and I think it may be, then there should be more of an incorporation of this in our concepts.

I: What sort of teacher training is important?

J.K.: A serious problem in education is that people have been taught how to teach rather than what they are teaching. If you are going to be an art teacher you should know about art. Not every artist knows about every element about art and I think that's alright. I'm not an abstract artist so I'm not very articulate on it, don't have an actual sympathy for it, but I don't think you'll ever have anyone who is all things to all people. Teachers should be specialists in their field.

I: How should popular art be approached in the art class?

J.K.: I'm not convinced that kids are always interested in what people think they are interested in. You say "I want kids to be able to paint their vans," --why do they have to paint them with those hero-looking guys who have stepped right off comic books or record covers? That's a very male art form and it's certainly not helpful to women. Why aren't they starting off painting their canisters? I'm not trying to say one has any great value over the other; both are an extremely unartistic element in our society and they have chosen the priority of men's toys over women. I'm being simplistic about painting canisters but I feel it's important to teach people how to see if you're going to teach them art.

I: What basic skills should be taught?

J.K.: There has to be a sense of colour taught but I hate colour charts. A way of killing any incentive and love of colour is to make you mix it so it is perfect. You can't teach people a love of something by making them do a formula. You can go back to the colour chart after you've played around with colour. If you can't make orange, go back to the chart. But tell them when they need it, otherwise they will have every single tool they ever needed and no desire to use it.

I: How can evaluation of school art work be handled?

J.K.: We somehow have to spark these children into doing something other than cliché images that are handed down from age to age. I'm sure at age five kids all draw the same image. Somehow teachers have to break through that and then, when you find creative elements, you almost have to evaluate them on that, on whether they are being original or not. I have difficulty with the concept of grading. Education should be making a person learn, every day, a little bit more. To say someone isn't learning a little bit more as fast as someone else, so he gets a worse grade, is only a device to register the quality of the teacher. The ability to test is not the only important thing. People think that if you can't test you can't know if you've got your money's worth. As long as we're still thinking in terms of a profit orientation, we have to get our money's worth. If we've paid for full value we have to be able to test. The idea that we have a cultured society is something we are not able to see

on a monetary level, but it is something of value to me and I'm prepared to take the chance. For instance there are people who cheat on welfare but there are others who need it. Do we get rid of welfare because there are cheaters? Do we get rid of art because it's nontestable? I think it is testable but only within the range of an educated audience. An educated person knows what the essential elements of art are. There are variations but if you take 24 well educated artists into the schools to look at people's work, in general they will come up with very similar kinds of approaches to what they are seeing. I believe there is aesthetic knowledge that comes with training and observation that is real and tangible but is only testable in terms of a visual test. This is what people who work within a verbal reference are incapable of doing-- accepting the validity of a visual vocabulary. This is true of music and dance too. The university is controlled by verbal people and non-verbal people are not given access and not given credibility and thereby not given funding.

Specialization pushes the concept of competition. One of the most terrible things in our society is that one has to judge oneself in relation to another person; this is what the grading system does. This is a serious problem, the accountability of the education system. In our society there doesn't seem to be any other possibility. I would like to see educators working on an alternative because only by changing through a generation will there be a change in this; the possibility of another form of accountability.

Words from the Chinese Revolution, "friendship first, competition second." The Russians called their games the Friendship Games--a very important point. It is very important that we work on a noncompetitive method of training. Infants are asked "which one do you like best, the green or the orange?" They are not given the idea that they are of equal value but different. We have to change this in an effort to make us love each other more. If we always think of our peers as our competition we can't think of them as our helpmates. This is a very insidious approach based on the thought that there is no intrinsic value unless it's making a profit.

I: How can environmental awareness be encouraged?

J.K.: I've worked with kids in the school system painting murals. They get very excited about doing these things. Down in L.A. where mural painting is very popular those walls that have murals on them are not vandalized. When kids are involved in their own city beautification there is significantly less vandalism. They have a sense it is theirs and them. There is a tremendous isolation and channelization of children in society. One of the problems with teenagers is there is no place for them in the adult world.

I: Is film an important art form for school children to learn and use?

J.K.: Film is important for different issues-- it can be used as an art form, though not all film is artistic. It is very immediate; with video you do it and look at yourself seconds later. That's pretty good. It teaches us a lot of things on a sociological level. It's important for people to know how they look. It teaches you about

your appearance to others. It teaches you not to say anything you're going to be stuck with without thinking first. It's important on these levels and that's how people can approach it when they're teaching it. It happens to be big at the moment and is thus getting funding (now we are back with the socially accepted art form getting the money). There is video that is interesting; most is as boring as can be and I think that's true in almost every new art form. I'd like to know how it's being used [in schools]. Is it being used really as a teaching form or really as an historical form, or as an art piece? Probably a lot of all; I'm not against that. It can be used for recording an instantaneous experience that would otherwise be lost forever. Learning how to film, splice, etcetera, can be done in a greater or lesser artistic way. But it's a different thing from painting and shouldn't be exclusive. I think it's important not to exclude any art form, and that's how I feel about fabric arts, and the hierarchy of art. They're going to stick film and video into fine art faster than they are going to put fabric art and I personally believe that that is because women do fabric. Men control the "high art". It is important that film and video should not take over as the only art form.

I: Should art classes be required at the secondary school level?

J.K.: If we have time for art sure, stick it in as a required course.

But if we don't have time for it--I don't know. I think learning to read is very important, and English and literature, but I'm against learning techniques over and over again. I think you learn things

when you want to know them. I never wrote a term paper but now I'm writing articles for magazines. It's important to have an educated populace but perhaps taking different electives in art, pottery, home economics, music, and so on is more feasible. There has to be an exclusion of things because of lack of time. The real issue then is, should there be more class time?

Colette French

Interviewer: Why is art education necessary to the general public?

Colette French: If you train people to be artists then you are training them to open themselves to ideas and to interact with the world rather than simply absorb what is said to them. There is a dialogue that is set up in the arts and the kind of enthusiasm that you see in kids who are interested, or have a good teacher, or are suddenly made aware of the possibilities of a medium. All of this spills over into their other activities, and, of course, it is one of the great openings into your own culture and all the cultures of the rest of the world.

We live in a really visually oriented society in which artists' ideas are used constantly; even the work of the Abstract Expressionists has in fact been absorbed and accepted to a large degree into mainstream culture, more than people understand--some of that is fairly subtle.

Our culture is very specialized. Artists tend to specialize in the same way. There should be much more engagement from a whole cross-section of the population. The other thing is that art is one of the great leisure time activities. Thousands are Sunday painters, or are

interested, or go out and look at things. Lots of people actually try to do it on their own one way or another anyway. Art activities are native to being a human being; I think it is part of what people are all about. With training they would enjoy what they do more and they would enjoy what they look at a lot more. It's also a great linker; it joins up different kinds of disciplines that are involved in, and referred to, and touched on, and opened up with a good basic training in art. Learning to paint and draw and handle materials can be as mind expanding as learning to read and write or learning mathematics. All the different disciplines are just keys in a way and I don't know why art is considered such a frill really; it is so fundamental. It helps you to live, when you are painting your house or buying clothes or when you buy a present for someone you care about.

Our attitude to art has to do with a culture that encourages a kind of passivity. We consume things. Art appreciation is seen as a matter of taste rather than anything you are involved in yourself. I think that is bad for us as a society. You have to have individuals who will go out and make the move and have the courage to do it. There is nothing like having to come to terms with yourself on that piece of paper. When you are engaged in making art it puts you in touch with your heart's desire. I think students see themselves as inept and unable to do that. They are intimidated by the stuff that they want to do. There is an imperfect understanding of art that they see in galleries which makes them think "Oh, it's a bunch of garbage anyway."

If art materials were presented and made a basic part of the

learning process right from the very early ages, you could bypass that [teenage block about art]. There should be some acknowledgement too of the different stages that kids go through. One of the problems is that young teenagers have been given: "here are some painting materials; now express yourself. I want to see some nice big paintings" and there are certain periods when children wish to paint in different ways. Young children up to about six or seven do fabulous paintings and they are very uninhibited, and then their social awareness begins to dawn on them and they become very interested in detail, in their place in the world. Their drawing suddenly becomes small, tight, full of tiny pieces. The boys are all drawing cars with elaborate details and the girls will have every little bow and ringlet drawn in. It's a type of response that is part of children's development as they grow up. The kind of art education when I was at school put down that type of art. It would be more useful to see kids doing that and simply supplying an emotional need at that time. That's the point that kids look at their work and think it isn't as good as advertising art. Part of what art education should be about is appreciation of other people's work, not just looking at great art in books; that should almost be a separate thing.

I got my daughter through that difficult period by showing her reproductions of twentieth century artists' work and saying "adults did this work, they had their own reasons--how do you think your work stacks up against, say, Picasso." She wasn't very sophisticated about it at the time and she was thrilled. She saw that as permission

for her to do whatever she liked and it changed her focus from comparing what she was doing with magazine advertisements and cartooning which we are inundated with. We don't look at real art; we look at mass media and it's not the same thing. Mass media imagery is there to sell you things; it's very manipulative and it isn't expressive.

I: Should elementary schools have art specialists?

C.F.: It should be a specialty. What is society for? What is our culture all about? The essential nature of art and culture is what it means about being human and what it means about everything good in our society. It seems to me it should be treated with a whole lot more respect.

People get their aesthetic satisfaction from different places and my concern is that the primary way they get satisfaction is from consuming things, looking at things that are basically made to manipulate rather than objects that are made as real expressions of something that an individual person feels. The idea of conforming, mass culture, I find very disturbing.

I: What subjects should be covered in studio courses?

C.F.: Teaching students the mechanics and then letting them use them teaches them the value of individual interpretation. Those mechanics are an enabling process, like taking piano lessons. You have to do scales and learn how to hold your hands. Learning silk screening, how to use a camera, to draw with a pencil; it's exactly the same sort of thing. Once somebody has it it can't be taken away from them. It

gives them some understanding of what other artists are doing, and it is an immensely useful learning tool. You can draw something, make a graphic realization of an idea and that is as good as being able to write a paragraph of good English prose. This is comparable in that it is something that you can teach kids to do. This is aside from encouraging people who are really gifted, who are going to give us a wonderful creation at some point in their lives. There is no reason not to give people these kinds of skills. It is teachable. Creativity gets mixed up with the actual mechanics of doing something. In cultures where large numbers of people paint or draw, where it is considered just part of everyday life--places like Baker Lake where you've got an Inuit community where nearly everybody does it--there is a recognition that some people do it better than others. Just like a community where everybody goes to church and sings in the choir. There are always some who are really good, but that doesn't stop everyone else from doing it. Then they have more appreciation for the individuals who are really outstanding.

This stuff about how essential the arts are--it's really, really important. I feel that art is such a potent form of expression that I question a democratic society that doesn't teach people how to do it --almost like keeping people illiterate. Any way that you can increase literacy is worth pursuing; you are going to have a more creative, inventive group of people.

For teenagers there are enormous benefits. Why drop art education at this point? Certainly at an early age they do wonderful creative

drawings. So they do at eleven and twelve and so on; they are just different drawings. When you cut them off {from art education} you are cutting them off from a process that is never given a chance to properly unfold.

I: What sort of evaluation of art products is possible?

C.F.: When you get down to the nitty-gritty and start looking at what an art program is, there are ways to evaluate people's work just as there are ways to mark essays. You can make the same demands and you can make the same mistakes, such as letting some really creative impulse go by and not react to it or acknowledge it. You can do that to kids writing paragraphs just as easily as you can to kids drawing; there is an area of ambiguity. But you can also address the formal quality of the work without trampling over everything else. If they have learned to make a good clean image with a silk screen, if they've answered the requirements of a drawing test; that sort of testing has been done for years. And then spontaneity and effort--if you're asked to do a series of paintings or drawings--did you do it. The other part of that--who is best and who isn't--you can't judge that anyway. Certainly talent should be appreciated but you can leave a lot of that out; as soon as you start doing that you are making value judgements.

I: How can the popular arts be handled in the art class?

C.F.: We're running into the business of kids being asked to respond to things that don't have anything to do with their real lives; as if you are teaching a music appreciation course and trying to get

kids to listen to Beethoven when they really want to listen to The Cars. Educators have to face up to what our culture is really telling people. You can put across to the kids that what they do in the art class is respond to the environment, that part of what you do as an artist is put down what your world view is, what you think about all this you're being handed. Do you really love it or have ambivalent feelings about it? Your best line of defense against this visual manipulation is an art class in which they can look at, deal with, and come to terms in some way with what they are being visually manipulated by. There is nothing like making your own work for understanding the mechanics of how a work is put together.

The other thing a good art class can do is look at film and television and media and the aesthetics of advertising. Kids are so smart and they're really hep to all that stuff. They are really open to the dynamics of media manipulation and are very interested in it too. Another thing--if you get a kid in your class who is really good at designing record album covers, good for him. He'll make a lot more money. That's a perfectly legitimate outlet, that's one of the applications. What you're up against there is the separation of a sort of "fine art". I'm not sure what I feel about that but I'm quite suspicious of the elitism that's involved, the element of snobbery, while at the same time being conscious of just how awful and horrid and banal a lot of the advertising stuff is. Kids seem to get intrigued by it. But then, what do we know? Then you're up against you own experience. We never dressed like that, but we had our own

version of what hot stuff was. Pop culture was originated by young kids, a lot in response to what was being sold to them. Now it's being absorbed back into the main stream and being fed back to us in a sort of cleaned-up version. Giving kids the tools to deal with that --there's nothing wrong with that.

But wouldn't it be wonderful to have a more creative, more appreciative population; people who weren't so intimidated by art. Looking at magazines on handicrafts and sewing ideas--people are sold patterns where every decision is made for them. They buy kits where every single item is dictated. People don't have a sense of what is possible for them to do. There is much more realization of how important a good athletic program is to school kids. There is not the recognition that the arts are just as important and fundamental. The kids would work better in all the other areas if they had a good art program; it's a part of people's lives.

I: How can the crafts best be introduced into art classes?

C.F.: I think, with crafts, you're skating around the main issue. Rather than clay pots have them do clay sculpture, work with figures. The crafts aren't intimidating and they are areas people feel free to get into. You see people who are clearly really dedicated who would do well in any expressive medium and maybe they went into ceramics or weaving because they didn't find it intimidating, or they thought it was more acceptable. I think you would break that down if you made the other modes of expression more available. When I went to art school they gave us a basic program; we took pottery and weaving and those fields

are really important; it's just that they are not the main issue. I'd really like to see people being able to come to terms with things that are essentially quite difficult and a bit scary when they are young enough and they can handle it. Those things don't have to be that intimidating. It took me years to come to grips with my own medium and what I wanted to do; a lot of it was just pure fear.

I: How would you approach environmental issues?

C.F.: You can teach kids things like city planning; that can be part of an art program. You make for a more responsible citizen. Open their minds and eyes to what is around them; ask them what they think about those things, about billboards, and various kinds of signs, whether there should be trees on the street or not. The way things work--that's part of what art is. There is a point where art comes very close to science and engineering. As a professional artist what I'm really aware of is the structure and underpinning of what I'm doing and it makes me appreciate the structure and underpinning of what other people are doing. That is where people's talents and abilities come up and art can provide an opening, for instance, in engineering. I have a nephew who does the most intricate drawings of factories and assembly lines. He's invented them but a lot of his ideas are brilliant and possibly, if he pursued this or was shown the right materials or just had his interest appreciated he may become a top-notch engineer. When you draw something in a diagrammatic way, the way that kids do in adolescence, you are making a diagram of some sort, whether it's a

fashion model or an intricate car design.

I: Do you see gallery and museum trips as important in the art class?

C.F.: Get the students to the galleries; the benefits are worth the problems. The docents and guides in the galleries are well trained, they are up on what they are doing, and they know how to talk to different groups of people. If you have a thriving art community you often have galleries in groups and then you can do a little tour. I think getting them out into the galleries is great. Reproductions are not art, they are pictures of art. Seeing the actual physical pieces can just knock people's socks off. It's also very demystifying; a lot of what happens in reproductions is that things are miniaturized. They look a lot finer; they look more finished and that's intimidating. If you look at a real Rembrandt you are looking at how this man put paint on a canvas; you can see the physical process that he went through to do this. If you look at a really good modern abstract expressionist painting you are looking at this incredible, undeniable energy and presence that is not there in a reproduction. You cannot look at a three by four inch Baselitz and have the faintest clue of what the painting is all about. I think the thing is not to scare them off, to let the kids look at a painting and say "yes there is a possibility that you could do this." That is an approach to art appreciation; first of all just to get the hit of what some artist is doing, but then to make it register. The human activity--this is something that people do. Take the genius down off the pedestal. Every genius was supported by several hundred people, pursuing the same sort of ideas.

There are a number of different drawing traditions in the world that involve discipline. What I would like to see is a choice made. I think it is just as legitimate to learn Chinese brush drawing. The same discipline and intellectual activity and the same hand and eye coordination is involved. I don't like this prejudice in favour of Western modeled realism. We are blind in a way; we are so simple in our cultural stereotypes that we seem to think we are the be-all and end-all and we're not. Other traditions from other places in the world should be recognised; to do otherwise is racist. Two thousand years of Chinese and Japanese art--hey, you can't sneeze at that. Academics particularly are really hung up on the Renaissance. They've never got past it. You can tell they really don't get Jackson Pollock.

Also, here in Vancouver, we have one of the most fabulous collections of West Coast Indian art; one of the great art traditions of the world. If you are going to teach art appreciation what I would like to see is those art forms opened up and made as available and given the same status as learning about Breughel, Rembrandt, and Rubens. When you talk to young West Coast native artists they talk about learning their own form language. Rather than going to life drawing classes they talk of the discipline involved in drawing from totem poles. They are learning a language that almost disappeared. Even now, talking about it, it makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up. If you look at the collections and read what came so close to happening. A generation ago there was only a handful of people who were still working in the traditional way.

Tom Graff

Interviewer: What do you consider to be of importance in a secondary school art program?

Tom Graff: We've got to listen very carefully for the motivation behind the recent reaction to both cutbacks and the criticism that studio courses aren't really doing much for the students; that they are not as valuable as math and other pursuits. First, is it to keep a job, and secondly, in teaching academically, are we really being academic or are we just picking up material from the United States and Europe to rehash the same old view of Western culture? That's an anthropological question and a deep criticism of the education system in our province. There is, in the arts, a disrespect for teaching. Artists have a terrible prejudice against educators. It's unfounded. If teachers were encouraged they might be helped, but it's their responsibility to come to the party; the invitations are there all the time.

There is important work to be done going around Canadian artists, B.C. artists, and really exposing the students to the greatness that is going on. We must learn to suspend judgments on recent work because one cannot say "This is great and this isn't." That is taste. Michaelangelo is great and we should expose students to him, but he should get second billing (because he gets such exposure in life and on television) to our own Canadian artists in schools. They are just as exciting and often the students respond more.

Let's face it, what the students are handing in to the colleges in

studio classes is copies of record jackets. What is going wrong?

I can only assume that someone is telling them that it is OK to submit a portfolio like this. It's not OK; I want to see an original work. There is a lot of original work with the very young--simply sociological work. There is a lot of young children's painting shown in B.C. that is nothing to do with art really. It's probably based on an anti-egghead, anti-artist idea of "Anything my kid can do is art." It is also almost free (where artists in Canada have very wisely organized and say "If you're going to show my work, you're going to pay me a couple of hundred dollars"). It's also a system of reward and award that our government loves; someone who wins is very popular with the B.C. government. I don't think children are learning anything about art from this; they are learning at five years old that you win. Art is about continuing to make your art whether you are known or not, and art is tremendously difficult work.

I: Are studio courses important at the secondary school level?

T.G.: It's the old story; is art a thing you do or is art a thing you look at and keep outside yourself. Those who would academize and make art history courses usually don't like art. They will study and get really turned on by the sociology of art. It's a danger; it's a way of turning people away from art, to keep culture on slides and in books. There's enough live art in Vancouver; I'd get the students on the buses and out to see it.

Students must understand that methods count. Teachers must insist that people finish their projects and decide whether they

are teddy bears or not, whether they are cute or strong, whether to throw them out or not. Keeping art that is lousy is one of the basic deficits to a young artist. Teachers should say that it will stunt your energy to keep it around.

You don't have to be a great artist to transmit a love of and a respect for art. You don't have to be an artist to teach art.

Children should not be talked of as "Oh they're so creative, you know. If you just give them paint and paper . . . " I'm tired of that; it's just not true. They're not creative. They'll slop around, but it's not creativity or imagination that we're talking about--they're all doing houses. It's imitation; it's how we learn a language. Don't give them paint; it's much too expensive. I give them paper that's printed on one side and a pencil and say "go and fill the page." Great art can be made on a shoestring; so can lousy art, and we need to make a lot of lousy art before we become artists.

Learning to make art can be a way of hiding, just as having the decorators in to do your house is a way of hiding your own personality. That is why in all school art the teacher is it; the teacher will speed experience or constipate it.

I: What is necessary in teacher training?

T.G.: Methods, methods, methods. That's what has to be taught. You can't give imagination. I stayed away from art classes in school; they had me designing wallpaper all the time, and grading it. How in the world do you grade wallpaper? I took one course and then stopped and now I am a successful artist and that's a terrible indictment of the

school system in North America. Another teacher, Sister Corita, turned us on to the great artists, and she took us downtown and had us look at junk, like car-sales places, a block from the school. She'd have us take a view finder. Her methods of teaching were just wonderful. She was turned on to life; it was her personality. You have to teach methods suitable to your own personality.

I don't think artists should teach methods to teachers.

{Tom read from his lecture, "We should take the Mona Lisa at face value," which he presents to school children. It is one of his many miniature, illustrated books and contains quotations from artists in various media and other notable people. An example is Cecil B. de Mille's statement: "The way to make a film is to begin with an earthquake and work up to a climax."}

Young people love quotations, they love to play with them themselves and they love to collect them. The juxtaposition of them, even ordinary quotes, makes them even more interesting. The reason behind my choice of these quotes is that I think we should stop analyzing things and start experiencing them. Everything is packaged so well for us; everyone carries into the classroom clichés about the Mona Lisa, the David. Certain things about art are defined by advertisements and notions of beauty. One thing I do sociologically in the classrooms is a whole system of the notion of beauty in people. We look at people for a long time and decide what is beauty. We do the "Oil of Olay" thing, look at models and fashion magazines, look all through that stuff and question it. That would help a lot of people who are afraid of their pimples.

Of course, in art, there is always going to be an extrapolation of your life if you are doing anything important. Then one can look at what is beautiful; young men in the class should be shut up if they start making sexist remarks. You could discuss pornography; the kids, goodness knows, are seeing it so you'd better deal with it.

There is a lot of inexpensive art, a lot that fits well into the budget. I'm surprised how many teachers don't have any art when I go to their homes. If you like art and teach art you should be wanting it in your life. If you go on a trip, say to Mexico, you should collect folk art, which is very inexpensive. For \$100 you could really stimulate your class for a year, and yourself.

It would be a good idea to set up a continuing curriculum from grade three through twelve--it would also teach the teacher. There would have to be alternatives to suit different personalities and methods that are adaptable to the teacher's milieu and preferences.

I: How much importance should be placed on teaching crafts?

T.G.: There is so much junk that is produced in, for example, pottery that should be thrown away before it is fired and taken home; those are teddy bears. Students should make tiles for the school's walls instead. At least you could use them for something. The students would think more if they knew the tiles would be seen. I'm not for government restraint because then you have to leave out something, but I am for personal restraint. I would rather see the teacher starting from zero--no money--"where can I go from here?" Maybe the students could get a pencil, newspaper, raid the garbage cans and assemble scraps.

Get books, not the year they come out, but next year from the book warehouse. There is a way to do anything on almost any budget, but our governments don't know how not to spend money.

There are people in industry who will come to the classroom and tell you stuff. People from the paper industry would bring pulp and students could play with it and do a whole paper project. We ought to have a paper curriculum here because we are the paper capital of the world.

The Native population should also visit the classroom to talk about what they do. The anthropology museum would help anyone who wanted to do that. The iconography of, for instance, the Haida is not understood in our Western viewpoint. It is a vocabulary art; it's a whole other way of art, not just design.

There are a lot of artists who want to show their films and video tapes. Schools can offer \$25 to show them or have the artists there too. Take resources like the National Film Board. Animation is one of their fortes; they are known world-wide for their animation films. Bring the films in and discuss animation; do small animation projects. Show other films about Canadian artists. The students might come up with something else, a live performance, or a drawing that reflects what they have seen. They might come up with horrid derivative junk but it doesn't matter; they've been exposed to something good. How do you deal with that as a teacher, that most of it is copy-cat junk? Well you're not there necessarily to produce great work, you're there to learn a great respect for art (those who go on with it and those

who don't) and you are learning that it's work. The teachers should stay in the classroom with the artists; they could probably learn more than the students but they usually go off to the staffroom for coffee.

Something from Goethe: "Thinking is more interesting than knowing but even less interesting than looking." I'd say an art teacher is teaching looking. We are in a post-holocaust state and don't know it. If I were teaching art I would teach about nuclear holocaust because it is going to destroy the art collections of the world.

I: How should art history be taught.

T.G.: I don't think most teachers have enough experience, not only about Canadian art but art of this century, so they end up showing the "Civilization" series. The poor man {Kenneth Clark} treats everything as though Chartres is his backyard; nothing about the twentieth century. I'd rather Hughes' "Shock of the New", but he has a put down for everything. Teachers are not made aware of all the information and resources that are available to them: aids for teaching, films, lectures, equipment.

Much more experimental art has to happen in high school and grade school. I started doing performance arts with students in grade school; it's interdisciplinary. I like to get them before they've got hard rules in their heads. It's not true that you can't do multi-media works until you've got all the skills.

I: What about environmental awareness?

T.G.: It must be taught with no materials; you go and find it all.

Teachers have got to learn to save on materials; we are the throw-away society. A lot of the projects that students do are like designer

art; they are doing what designers would do for a layout in a magazine. We must allow the bad things to happen as well as the good. Teaching art, or showing art, is like a public forum and I must put in what I disagree with as well.

I have great sympathy for teachers; students come late to class, they have shoddy habits, "prove it to me" is the main thing on their lips.

We are teaching placebos for art instead of art--all the expensive trinkets that look aesthetic that you see in art gallery shops and glossy magazines. I lament the availability of Yuppy junk in our art galleries. Put a Gathie Falk in the class room and copy it this week; that would be a really interesting experiment. They'll start looking. That's called audience development, if you have student artists look at artists' work.

I: How can an art teacher handle the popular arts?

T.G.: If you are teaching math or English the rules are all set out. It isn't all set out for the art teacher and you have to be a stronger person to be able to handle that. You have to be clued in to what the students are looking at, for example, on television, to know the visual things that will get them stimulated beyond the normal record cover. One must start educating students to video content, to see that rock tapes are terrible contentless junk that are put together perfectly. Teachers must bring to class video tapes that are useful to counterbalance this glitzy rock phenomena that is so compellingly attractive. They are wonderful and horrible; full of drugs and violence and sexism; they

go nowhere. Why shouldn't art works be brought into the schools? Hang a painting by a B.C. artist in the art room for a week. There is an art bank in Ottawa that ships them all over Canada; a system whereby people get exposed to excellence. There is a huge embarrassment that art isn't intellectual enough. We look at art books and see more writing than picture; there is something wrong with that. We have more curators and educators and talkers-about-art than we have artists.

Greg Murdock

Interviewer: Why is art an important part of a secondary school education?

Greg Murdock: My high school program in art was virtually non-existent.

Art history is as much a part of the other aspects of social history as anything else; all of these areas interrelate. I put that together a lot later than I would have if I'd had an adequate art education in high school. That would have sparked my interest. In other words, the relationship of music and literature to the visual arts is almost growing on each other and interrelating historically. What is important is having somebody who is capable of relating those subjects in that manner. A big problem in art education in general is that the people who teach it are not competent to teach this view, so in that respect you start to think that there is not much hope of interrelated activities.

I think it's important that everyone become sympathetic to visual art because we are a very self-conscious society in anything that has to do with our capability to be creative and the more we can broaden our base of awareness the less insecure we will be about producing art.

There is a lack of confidence among Canadian artists. There is such little chance of artists here breaking ground and getting work out. Artists here often tend to overdo their initial idea or statement because of that insecurity, because they are not willing to stop and say, "That's what I intended." They tend to overwork. And if they move to somewhere like New York their work changes and becomes more certain. It's a bit off the subject but maybe that's what it is with art in the high schools. How can you give anyone else any confidence if you have none yourself? That is what an art education is all about, making you feel confident enough to say to yourself, "this is what I do and I feel strong about it, and I am able to defend what I do." You get an increased awareness when you look at things, whether they be contemporary or historical, and are able to analyze them, feed them into your own ideas and see that what you are doing stands up.

Maybe it is important to have certain high schools with that specific focus. We can't hope, financially, to have a system that would allow for an adequate art education through all high schools. There are not enough people being trained to do that. Maybe, in the same way that art schools provide a foundations course to whet the students' appetites for certain areas of the arts, it's possible, towards the end of elementary school, to have a specific, compulsory art course. This would give an overview to students and, if it has twiggged their interest enough, they can choose to go to a high school that relates those subjects to them on a much fuller art curriculum. Having special high

schools geared to the arts might mean limiting the other students in terms of art education. I don't know what can be done about that because all people need some form of art education. It allows them to become more sympathetic. Understanding art begins with keeping as many doors open as possible in terms of why the artist is doing this, what the artist is looking for.

Either through my own lack of attention or the fact that no one was telling it to me in the right way (that there was something of interest to be learned), I was not aware of the possibilities of art. A lot of the time the fault lies at the beginnings, but the high schools are ultimately responsible for the education.

In art schools there seems to be a fault within the system; a great lack of knowing what is going on once you get out of the school, the possibilities of a job. There are many who aren't suited to working as studio artists but may have a real knack putting together art works. I don't think the art school helps them look in these directions. A lot of people never really discover what they are doing at art school. To me the most important thing to discover at art school as a working artist is the ability to function by yourself. A lot of people never find what it is that interests them, their notion of what they want to do with their own imagery, and become very dependent on the whole school system. Then when the system is no longer around them it's very easy to just bow out and not continue with art work. The fault lies, in a sense, with the educator because, whether at high school or art school level, if you can't stimulate the student

because you're not stimulated yourself, all you can teach is the mechanics of the subject and never get down to the heart of the matter. You're not going to move the student in any direction. Only a few educators allow the student to explore, to try different things, to be as experimental as possible, to do whatever is necessary to find the confidence to continue.

I: What do you feel is important in teacher training?

G.M.: A lot is in the personality of the teacher. Many go into the teaching profession who aren't suited for it. There is also a lack of quality and consistency in the education system, both in the teachers and in those who teach them. I think that 90% of people teaching art are not aware of what is going on in contemporary art. I go to a lot of openings and art activities in the city and it is rare that I see someone there who is an instructor at one of the art schools, let alone the high schools. How can you stimulate a student to understand something about the current issues in, say the German neo-expressionistic movement if you have no clue yourself about what is going on internationally let alone in your own backyard. Also, of that 90% hardly any of them are practicing artists. You've got to start wondering who's at the reins here.

I: Are gallery visits useful to students?

G.M.: I don't know how many classes you've seen taken to a gallery but it's not many. You can only learn so much from a six inch reproduction in a textbook. You don't see what the actual work itself is. If the artist is willing, you could take a group of students to his studio.

If you see enough of them you realize that it's different for every one. Some have pristine studios; some have a hole in the wall. The situation would finally become relevant to the students in that they would see that art is a personal form of expression that they can do as well as anyone else; that they can have an idea that is strong enough for them to wish to pursue.

Somehow there has to be an increased awareness of the art that is being made now, whether through students going out to the galleries, or by bringing in artists to give guest lectures and workshops and to talk to the students. Possibly having working artists coming in on a regular basis would be one of the best ways of dealing with this because you would get a broad range. They could come on an honorarium basis. Having professional artists would provide a lot of stimulus to students who have a potential interest in pursuing an art career. Maybe art is a very specific subject that only a few students are going to be able to absorb--I don't know. There seems to be a very small percentage of students who are receiving a strong amount of information in art.

I: How can you evaluate students' work?

G.M.: That has always been to me one of the hardest things. How do you build up the confidence of the student? Sometimes the most subtle, underscored conversation can be the most devastating to someone who is very vulnerable. The ability for a child or an adolescent at high school to start feeling good about his work is primarily the responsibility of the teacher, in terms of how he is directing the flow of the class. It will determine whether the child picks up or falls by the wayside.

How many instructors take the time, or are broadminded enough, to understand that certain things about the way someone works are highly individual and something to be proud of and develop? Our grading system doesn't do justice to that. One way would be to give private critiques and after that give some evaluation that isn't as cut and dried as A, B, C.

When I look at a lot of artists, they come from a complete bypassing of art in the school because of things there that were deterrents at the time in terms of their feelings about themselves. To my mind one way of assessing is to see how much interest there is, how much work these people are producing. I think that is a good measure of how much you, as a teacher, are managing to stimulate. Art education has got to be a combination of theory and practice. I think our education system is strong enough that students should be able to do both. I don't think we have to have huge studios teaching all the technical aspects of the work. What is the point if they've got nothing they want to do with it? What's the point of learning to weld if you've got no focus? It's more important to instruct a student in the possibilities of why you might want to do something than in learning the mechanics of how to do it. If art classes are being cut for financial reasons you could cut down on equipment.

As far as writing curriculum, maybe the artists should be working in council with the people who are doing that.

Marian Penner-Bancroft

Interviewer: What are the reasons for a secondary school art program?

Marian Penner-Bancroft: The art room is one of the few places in one's public school education where one is able to really use the imagination and develop the use of the imagination. It is very important that there be some place where creative abilities are encouraged. For the fortunate few, that can happen at home with parents who are interested in making sure their child goes to galleries, hears music, or has materials to play with. More often than not they don't and school may be the only place where they are exposed to their own possibilities. Fertile imagination can be applied to any area, be it art or music, history or computers. So, to me, art education is important, not only for those who plan to become artists, but for anybody, just in order for them to become acquainted with their own possibilities in creative ability.

This does not stop at high school age. My most important experiences in art classes happened when I was about 15, when I was just at the edge of knowing what I could do myself that wasn't directed or assigned by a teacher. I could draw from my experience; art class was one of the few places where my experience had a place in school, where I could put things that were important to me. In no other class was that really possible. The other classes consisted of memorizing someone else's facts with very little room for personal creativity. I had a wonderful art teacher who was very supportive of my desire to paint. He encouraged me to use all sorts of materials; the teacher makes the difference.

I: How important are art history and aesthetics in the art program?

M.P.-B.: I never had any art history at school; what I did get was by-the-by, the teacher talking off the top of his head while we worked, and relating the structure of the work we were doing to one of the masters. My art history came from home, from books my parents had. The history of art is very much a part of the history of human activity; it is one more way of understanding why humans behave the way they do. It would be wonderful to have it in school. I don't think it's necessary to have it in with the studio course, it could be a separate course quite easily. I don't think you can teach art history at the same time as someone is trying to paint. But a program that would incorporate both the studio and the academic--that would be wonderful. People planning to become artists need to know a lot more than they used to; demands placed on an artist in 1985 are very different from 20 or 30 years ago. The responsibilities are greater --of knowing what is going around them politically, emotionally, intellectually. I feel the responsibility more than ever now to know where work comes from, where it fits in and doesn't, and why. Its function is changing.

I: What do you think about gallery education and outside influences?

M.P.-B.: Bringing artists into the school, having them come with their work or slides of their work is really important. It's feasible; they would be interested, especially if they were getting paid. Trips to the galleries are very important, more than just to the main galleries. A lot of the small ones around town are showing the work of very

hard working people. Students need role models and that's how they would see them if someone came in and said "Look, this is what I do, this is why I do it." It's not just for those who are going to be artists, just as it is important for those who are not going to be musicians to hear musicians play. You can enjoy an amazing experience without feeling you have to go out and do that. It's quite enriching to have examples of creative thought and empowered energy in practice, people taking control of their lives and making something of them, doing something.

I: What about the popular arts?

M.P.-B.: Voodoo art, I call it. That's as much as they've been given to think is art. In their limited way they are using their imagination. If they don't know they can do anything else, that's too bad. But it's not to be frowned at; given encouragement they'll go on and do more. Some of those people will turn into really good graphic artists and designers. I think as an activity for young people as a means of identifying themselves within their life and within their whole social structure art is very important. High school students, now, are expressing themselves in how they dress; people have got more adventurous with their visual presentation of themselves, which is great. This kind of creativity with clothing and fashion often starts in the lower economic groups and that then becomes the palette of art activity.

It is important, when surrounded by so much media imagery, that students become aware of all the structure that supports all that information. Then they will understand that all that work comes from

somebody, that someone with a point of view made that, that it doesn't just happen out there from some blurry mass of jelly that makes television, that people are putting magazines together. We see why those images work the way they do and how they affect us and our lives.

I: Is a knowledge of film important in the art room?

M.P.-B.: The more tools students can acquire the better. I see the media as tools that can serve the ideas and imagination of the people using them. The more access they have to a range of tools, from paints and brushes to video cameras and posters, the more wisely they will be able to use them. It might be difficult to get access to film-making equipment but there may be a way of school boards having a central depot of equipment that could be lent to schools on a short term basis. Art should be used to communicate and to acquire some kind of critical faculty. The way media has been able to manipulate thinking and our self images is astounding. People feel desperately inadequate in the face of the imagery around them that tells them they should be someone else. If you continually feed a person's sense of lack of perfection, lack of self worth, then you get a docile population. I don't see myself as separate from all of this but I do feel privileged to be able to look with some detachment at the structure of the media. We should all be able to observe the structures that mold us and therefore understand them.

I: What sort of teacher training is necessary?

M.P.-B.: In elementary school I remember being given mimeo-graphed sheets to colour, so you acquire your satisfaction at the level of

being able to fill in someone else's lines. You need better trained teachers. You have to go back further; there has to be a value placed on the teaching of art such that people are attracted to it as a profession. People must have it in their minds that it is a valuable activity. There is not enough value placed on art. People don't realize how much fun art is. They also have it in their minds that to work creatively in art means that you have to put it out there for sale and have some kind of blue ribbon attached to it for it to be a justifiable activity for the individual.

It's really important for kids that it becomes one more thing they can do if they choose. If they are never exposed to art then they are missing something. The skills you learn in terms of your own motivation and imagination through working with art materials can be carried over to any profession or kind of work. It all has to do with flexibility of the mind and developing an emotional capacity. The more people are able to express themselves the more sensitive they are to the people around them.

I: What sort of evaluation can be used?

M.P.-B.: In any art class the really talented people are going to emerge and you want to be able to acknowledge that skill and hard work with a good mark. On the other hand you may have someone who hasn't had the encouragement from the beginning but is working hard; it's impossible for them to catch up in one year. Everyone has in them the capacity to be an artist--it isn't one skill to acquire; it's an attitude to being alive and a curiosity and a sense of adventure with materials.

It's a natural human impulse to make things but everyone gets a different dose of encouragement. Evaluation is a difficult problem for me--giving marks in a high school and making them the university requirement. It's not a quantifiable exercise the way a math test might be. The way I give marks at the art school is a combination of elements: half the mark will be on their actual work, 25% on participation in class discussions and critiques, and 25% on a research presentation. So there is a range of ways of participating and working within one class. The work is the most important but participation also plays a part. Each person is dealt with separately. I feel very limited by having to give As, Bs, Cs, and Ds; I would like something a little more subtle. The one-to-one contact is really important in education, where I am speaking directly to them about their work; this is more difficult in the large classes in high school.

I: Should art be a required course in secondary school?

M.P.-B.: I don't know that anybody should be forced to take art because that immediately makes it suspect in some sense, but it also lends it credibility. There must be enough credit attached to it that it is an attractive course.

I: Is environmental awareness a proper concern in art class?

M.P.-B.: This is central to an artist's concern; the notion of being able to locate oneself as an integral part of a system. A teacher should provide a level of experience for the students which allows them to understand their place in the environment. Physically it could mean visiting places of industry, getting outside the school walls, and talking

to people who are working. Reading and seeing films can help but it's all so second-hand, so distanced. The more first-hand experience they can have of their environment the better. We know most certainly what is happening in the world from what is happening to us. It is important for students to acquire graphic skills partly so they can make posters and advertising material but also to understand all the design that is around them. To understand the skills involved in advertising, choosing a typeface, to understand their role as consumers and producers of information is essential.

I: What basic skills should be taught?

M.P.-B.: It's all training; they are all tools to be used by the individual to lend some kind of substance to their own lives, some kind of weight to their experience, to know that who they are is important. It's important to get as many skills as possible while you are at school. Colour theory; certainly it's important, not as an end in itself, but as a means to understanding. And drawing--everyone can draw. Though the way we have been taught has put a lid on a lot of people's sense of themselves as being able to draw. It's a lot more difficult to be an artist than it was. A lot of people equate art with painting but now the interdisciplinary approach to art is becoming more prevalent in the art schools. Again it is a case of choosing the right materials and the more you know about them the more you will be able to choose what is appropriate for a particular project.

With photography you have to struggle with some art teachers who feel it is not really an art form, or if it is it's a secondary form.

But it is a very expressive tool. There is a fear of the medium among some teachers because it is a democratic one; most people have access to a camera. It isn't an elitist tool and there are some who wish to keep art elitist. If you keep art elitist it becomes a commodity that has a money value placed on it. This reinforces an art arena of buying and selling which gets away from what the art object is or means. Its meaning then comes from a monetary value and the other meaning, a connection to someone's experience, is lost.

I think the need for art education goes beyond just schools. So much of what students get in their attitude to art is from their parents, so it's a huge task. One of the reasons that education and art are not being supported in this province is that we have a government that doesn't place a value on the development of the individual's independence. Given the government we have now, the less we know the better. There is no investment for them in students knowing more and therefore being less easy to manipulate. A lot of what is going on provincially is very short term thinking.

To me, part of an art education is that it allows you to develop your ability to think and do at the same time. It's not just mindless painting on automatic pilot. What proceeds, say Jackson Pollock throwing his paint around, is a lot of thinking and knowledge. His spontaneous activity is incredibly prepared. The only way to save the world is to increase an ability to think creatively.

Richard Prince

Interviewer: Why should art be taught in secondary schools, and what value does art have in the community and to young children growing up in that community?

Richard Prince: These are major philosophical issues that have been handled for years and years. I don't think that it's a question that needs to be answered. I think it's a phony question and I think it's one that indicates there must be a reason for it. I don't know why mathematics should be taught, or literature. All I know is that they are activities that have been going on for hundreds of thousands of years and are part of the culture and if you want to teach people about where and how they live then these things should be taught. I don't think there is any separation of why art should be taught as opposed to why anything else should be taught. I don't think it can be answered. It is just part of human culture and that is what schools should be teaching. Schools should be teaching all the things humans do. We make art, therefore we can teach art; both the making and the looking. Science courses are taught in the same way; both the making and the looking.

Art is a human activity which has certain kinds of meaning; it's a part of a communicative language, therefore it should be taught in the same way that literature, science, math should be taught. I think it's a shortsighted thing, for people to decide to cut out that area. One cannot make a special case for art, one can only make the same case for art as you can for every other area of human need. Art isn't

special, it's just part of human activity and therefore should be taught.

There are two aspects to education, one has to do with enculturing individuals, civilizing them in a sense, introducing people to the ideas and theories of their culture, their past, their traditions and beliefs. The other aspect might be considered that of practical training. Some of these are rightly the province of the schools and some are not necessarily taught by the school system. Choices have been made that some aspects of education should be continued even if they are purely civilizing and educational in the most liberal sense of the word, not trade training. Art falls into that aspect. Art could be taught as a whole cultural experience, which might include music, drama, literature; in other words, the cultural achievements of mankind could be taught in one area. Scientific achievements could be taught in another area, and direct trade training in another. If I was running the school system I would try to strike a balance between those areas: the purely cultural, the technical and scientific, and the trade training, because I don't see art taught properly as a trade training thing. I don't think, in the high schools, there is any need for it to be taught as a trade. If there is going to be that attitude taken to it, it should be at a post-secondary school, like nursing and so on. And there is a need for certain skills in artists.

More importantly, art is like literature. Students should be taught to be verbally literate, to read and write correctly, and they should be taught to be visually literate, so they can examine the

visual products of culture and find them as informative and meaningful, or as silly, as they are. This should be taught so a student can find his way through visual language as well as he can through verbal language. That includes theatre, movies, photography, advertising imagery; these are all part of a visual language which is as potent and as prevalent as verbal language.

I: Do you see this as a studio course as well as theoretical?

R.P.: The parallel would be the teaching of English in schools which begins with a heavily practical approach but all along students are introduced to aspects of literature until, in the senior years, they are able to study and read literature more in order to discuss the ideas embodied in it rather than learn again the fine points of grammar. One of the problems with education in art is that, in the past, there has been a sense, perhaps formed by Bauhausian illusions, that art was one of those things that was going to save mankind from his fate, something that was superior to other human activities and therefore had a special relation to people. I don't know that that is true. I don't see it as having a special "saving" relation to humanity. It is a civilizing influence no more than any other cultural aspect.

One of the things that has to be considered very carefully by art educators is the notion that art can become a highly psychological enterprise and be taught as such. Or one that is akin to some kind of mysterious alchemical process, that it is not taught as the product of intelligence. Or, on the other side, that it is seen to be some kind of therapeutic activity whereby students can release inner feelings,

presumably sublimate them or whatever one does with inner feelings.

I think that is a highly romantic attitude that has been detrimental to art education.

I: What do you see as useful in secondary school art curriculum?

R.P.: What would have improved my art education greatly is if there had been a much larger component of looking at the actual products of artists, I know that is difficult on the west coast of North America, and it's even more difficult if you're teaching up in the interior of B.C.--to teach what art looks like. But I think one of the problems in teaching art in B.C. is that there hasn't been a lot of emphasis on what art looks like.

There has been a tendency, in the past, to treat art in that classy kind of art-and-craftsy way where art was seen to be a psychologically advantageous thing for the expressiveness of an individual, which it certainly is in the junior grades, to allow children to have some experience in actually making products. However, once the student is in secondary school, art should be thought of in the same way as teaching literature where you get both the sense of the writers of the past plus some experience of writing yourself, in the creative and practical sense. I think that art should be seen as exactly parallel to that, where there is a need to study the achievements of artists of the past and to learn how to make works which discuss one's own ideas. I think the history area of a new curriculum should be increased vastly towards the later grades. Perhaps one could have a practical grade 12 art course and a grade 12 art history course.

I: What kind of training should art teachers have? Can we get away from colouring turkeys at Thanksgiving?

R.P.: I prefer the turkeys and the Hallowe'en pumpkins in the junior grades. I think there is nothing wrong with that. I'm a fan of colouring books. I think children should be given colouring books at an early age and a box of crayons and be told to colour and to try to stay within the lines. I think the notion of teaching children to be expressive--like "this child's a creative genius"--that's silly. I think children want to be taught to do all kinds of things. They should be given blank paper and a colouring book too. I don't think one will cause the child to be uncreative. I think it would be a reinforcing and helpful item for them to play with.

I remember doing all kinds of craft-like things and they are fine experiences for kids. In some ways they are advantageous because one of the problems in teaching art at any level is that now there are no canons of beauty. You cannot point to the work of a child and say "This is not good." Any intelligent child will show the scribble to his parents who will point to a Cy Twombly painting that sold for \$20,000 in a New York gallery and say "Tell me the difference." I defy you to find a lot of people who could tell you the difference. I think, because of this, it makes the teaching of art in junior grades, except in purely psychological terms (of encouragement) rather artificial.

There is a major shift when a child begins to have some consciousness of quality differences. Kids, at some point, do want to know why one thing is better than another, and can be told that theirs is not as

good as someone else's without that intense agony and anxiety about it. That is the time to say, "There are differences and let's look at the products of good artists." Once a child becomes conscious of wanting, himself, to do good quality items, then the idea of changing art to become more expressive and yet to answer questions of commitment and quality and achievement, both at an intellectual and skill level, can be brought in. Then art can become less craft oriented. Teaching craft to young children teaches motor control, builds up a whole fund of visual information. They get the most important lesson of all, that things are made. Physically constructing an object that was not there before, whether it is your breakfast, a sweater, or a painting, is very important, whether the child will ever become a maker or producer of art or not. It gives him a clue to the fact that this world is not here by magic, that it is produced by humans.

I: What about gallery education?

R.P.: I think it's very important, once a year, to pile the kids into a bus and take them down to the art gallery. Most of them have never been there. It's an awesome experience. It's clean; you walk through and look at the Emily Carr paintings and it's meaningful and they like it. Whether you should go back and encourage the student to paint his feelings of the forest--I'm not sure.

I think there has been too much stress, in the teaching of art in public schools, on the practical component and not enough on the sense that this is a human achievement with a long tradition of history and a set of ideas.

I: What are your views on popular art in the school art class?

R.P.: I can see no reason why, for example, in order to lure the students into the idea of imagery, the first lesson has to be to look at something as appalling as science fiction magazines. But there would be a way of handling even that, to utilize that imagery as a tactical teaching tool. You could admit from the start that it is junk but discuss with the class why it is appealing. Go from there and find how it is done, how you can model a figure to look like a robot. You could bring in metal pipes from the shop, shine lights on it, do a study of light on metal. Then the student can move on to other areas. There is a tendency with teachers to think that because one thing appeals to students another won't. I think that is the fault of the teacher, not the student. Art is too vast, in all its ramifications, to be handled in one course, or two, or three. It has to be handled as part of human intellectual culture.

I: Do you see a value in a continuing art syllabus throughout school?

R.P.: The achievement levels in contemporary literature, poetry, and art are so far beyond the cultural levels of those that there is tremendous difficulty in looking at anything more recent than what was done 20 or 30 years ago. It is a complex language game to those involved in it. Someone trying to teach that in schools is really butting their head up against a difficult problem. A course would have to be designed so students could make sense of it at every level, otherwise they would be lost. But that kind of problem in determining

a syllabus and achievement levels has been solved in other areas and could be in the visual arts.

I think there has been a tendency in the past to take a highly romantic view of art in the teaching of art in the public schools. This has been charming from the point of view of the artist who is seen as something very odd and different. But in the long run it is a problem for the students because that romantic idea of art is hard to reconcile with the practical world they have to live in. As soon as art is seen as a human achievement, similar to but different from, other achievements of scientists, architects, poets, writers, then it's going to be a lot easier to teach. Once the quasi-religious, evangelical fervour is dropped from art the easier things will be.

Conclusions

There had been no preordained number of interviews planned but by the end of the sixth one it became apparent that (a) questions were being answered in a similar way and conclusions drawn from the artists' opinions were following a similar pattern and, (b) that the individuality of the artists was infinitely variable. Thus, although continuing to talk to other artists would have been interesting, it would not have furthered the original premise of this thesis which was that what artists have to say on the subject of art education is of use to the makers of school art curriculum.

CHAPTER 6

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERVIEWS

Introduction

A synthesis of the information from the six artists interviewed is presented in this chapter under those headings suggested by issues raised by art educators in Chapter 2, and an assessment is made of their importance to the secondary school art curriculum. The nub of each artist's remarks and recommendations on various subjects have been extracted and synthesized to form a cogent statement. This makes for a somewhat artificial interpretation of the artist's intention and should be considered only with regard to the context of the interviews themselves. As the interviews were essentially informal, some of the remarks were, to a certain extent, lightly or humorously phrased; some were hastily made and then, on further thought, partially rejected or modified. These are not fully prepared and polished speeches or documents. This does not however negate their worth; spontaneous ideas are often most pertinent.

Summary of the Interviews

The purpose of interviewing artists was to ascertain (a) their position on whether the making and understanding of the visual arts is necessary to adolescents and should be taught in secondary schools and, (b) if the answer is affirmative, what should be taught and in what manner.

General Principles

In answering the first part of this query the artists interviewed

were unanimous in their opinion that making and enjoying visual forms is, and always has been, a basic component of human activity. The artists related the learning of communication through visual forms to the learning of a verbal, mathematical, or scientific mode of communication. They saw art in some ways as different from, but in others as similar to, and certainly equally as essential as those other disciplines. The public school system was seen as the necessary, and possibly for some the only area where a broad-based and liberal education, vital to a cultured society, could be obtained.

Several artists saw the present British Columbian government as undereducated in the liberal arts and as therefore lacking in an understanding of the necessity for a catholic, comprehensive, and enlightened education for the populace. This, they felt, has led to the focus of current cuts on arts-related subjects in schools and universities. Indeed Jean Kamins saw the restrictions as deliberately enforced in order to curtail an imaginative, free-thinking public who would then criticize the government.

Jean Kamins' rationale for including art in the secondary school system was two-fold; a well-rounded education gives a student an understanding of his position in the world, his complete and unanalyzable whole, and it provides artists with a knowledgeable, appreciative audience. Without these two factors our cultural heritage cannot survive and our sense of identity is diminished.

To Colette French the essential benefit of an art course at the secondary school level is as a foundation in expressive skills that

can enable an adolescent to come to terms with his world and can lead, after school, to enriched leisure time. In her opinion there is a lack of balance in people's lives between making and observing which leads to a lack of self-confidence in our creative abilities and our significance as individuals.

Tom Graff's opinions on why art is essential are difficult to pin down definitively. Talking to him one senses that art is life and life, art; that to comprehend one is to comprehend the other.

To Greg Murdock an interrelationship of all art activities is important. He noted a great lack of knowledge of the arts and the possibilities inherent in them and indicated this should be a major goal in secondary school art courses. This lack of knowledge has led to a self-conscious insecurity about personal creativity and the way to combat that is to ensure a sympathetic attitude to art at the school level.

Marian Penner-Bancroft's reason for art education was based on the conviction that the art room is an exceptional area of school where the development of creativity is actively encouraged, leading to a fertile growth in imagination in students which can be applied to any field of learning.

Richard Prince said that art is a part of human culture and that if schools are concerned with passing on the skills of human activity then obviously art would be included. Visual communication must be

learned to no greater or lesser extent than other forms of communication.

The second part of the purpose of interviewing artists, that of finding what subjects and methods artists considered important in secondary school art classes, is presented under general headings suggested either by the artists' own statements or by the questions put to them.

Art History and Aesthetics

While it was acknowledged by all artists interviewed that art history is a very important and generally neglected area of secondary school art programs it was also seen to be a difficult subject to handle successfully. It was thought by all that art teachers do not have a broad or profound knowledge or understanding of twentieth century art movements or of artists in Canada and therefore are not competent to teach an art history course. Programs based on such works as Kenneth Clark's Civilization (1969) were seen as too elitist-based and racially biased and several artists thought more attention should be devoted to other art disciplines, in particular, given our geographical position, Northwest Coast Indian and Asian.

Traditional art history courses were seen by some as tedious, tending to alienate students from any interest in art, and possibly giving false impressions of general art activities because of the narrow "high art" emphasis of most art history textbooks and films. Artists saw the history of art as simply a part of the history of a society's culture, but considered that it is not generally taught in this manner. While some of the artists interviewed saw art history

and aesthetics as best incorporated in a studio course, others saw no difficulty in having a distinct theoretical or academic course, particularly in the higher grades.

Studio Art

All artists interviewed thought that, although art history and aesthetics should be a part of art courses, they should not function alone. The studio art class was generally seen as one of the few, if not the only, part of school curriculum where students are encouraged to use imagination, self-expression and creativity. Marian Penner-Bancroft said it is the only place where students can relate their own experience to their world. In her own secondary school experience, she said, the art room, alone, was where her opinion was sought and valued.

Most artists considered that the students learned more about visual communication from making their own work than from learning about other art works, though Richard Prince voiced the opinion that there has been too much practical work done in school art with too little thought behind it. Greg Murdock agreed that more emphasis should be given to the reasons behind one's own art work and that there should be a reduction of the mindless production of school art projects. Several artists decried our society's preference for passive watching rather than active doing and saw the art class as a positive influence on students at a formative age, leading, they thought, to an adult population more able and willing to attempt their own creations in both arts and crafts. Jean Kamins' rationale for studio course work was that, through understanding at first hand what goes into making

different types of art, students will leave school with the ability to form a knowledgeable audience and market, a necessity if we are to continue to have an artistic component to our society.

Studio courses were also seen as combatting, through a practical understanding of the processes involved, the bewildering fascination of the advertising world with its glossy, mechanical perfection.

The basic skills of an art class such as drawing, painting, colour and design principles, printmaking, fabrics and clay work, and photography were seen by all as tools, to be learned and mastered to whatever level possible, but not to be considered as ends in themselves. Jean Kamins' view was that the students will learn a skill when they need to use it, that to force students to learn skills before they have any knowledge of where they can be applied will kill desire for further experimentation.

Colette French considered that in studio courses, as in art history courses, the emphasis is too biased in favour of teaching only those skills accredited by the Western culture and that to learn other skills such as Chinese brush painting would give a broader cultural aspect to an art class. Tom Graff's opinion was that there should be a more serious attempt at disciplined work and that the basic skills should not only be taught but should be more severely and critically evaluated. Far too much work, he said, is made without thought or self criticism and too many projects are left uncompleted.

Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness was seen by the artists as the central

thrust of the art of the twentieth century. Knowledge and understanding of one's environment and one's position in it were considered vital.

Several artists saw the ideal way of involving the students in such a field as getting outside the school setting, visiting diverse areas in city, country and industry to get personal and first-hand experience of situations different from, but related to, their own lives.

Mural painting, both in school and on other public buildings, was seen as a way of involving students in the care of their surroundings and in making them aware of their future role in society as adults. Colette French related an interest in one's local urban environment in an art class to a possible future interest in architecture or engineering, saying that the detailed, diagrammatic models and drawings beloved by students in their early teens lead naturally to the more intellectually based plans and studies for technical design. Tom Graff suggested that environmental projects should be composed of materials found by the students in their environment.

Craft

The reasons for teaching crafts at the secondary school level were seen rather differently by the artists interviewed. Colette French said that many students and adults are prepared to work in craft areas because they see them as less intimidating than art as they understand it. However she considered that, rather than take the easier road of craft making, students should be encouraged to see that art, in its many forms, can be approached and attempted by all, and that teachers should suggest, for instance, making clay sculpture rather than the less experimental mugs

and ashtrays that form part of school craft classes.

Jean Kamins said there is a hierarchy of the arts where some art/craft is arbitrarily considered to be of lesser worth and that this elitist approach stops people from thinking some forms of expression and decoration are permissible. It is important, in her view, not to exclude any form of self-expression.

The crafts were seen as an important aid to small muscle development and a feeling of achievement, especially in the lower grades. Richard Prince saw the making of articles in school as an important step in the students' understanding of how material things in this world have been created through human activity. Tom Graff insisted that badly made work should not be encouraged, kept, or taken home; money should not be spent and wasted in producing useless craft, scrap materials could be found or cheaply bought, and many craft products could be used in the school. If these things were done, he said, students would be more thoughtful about the quality of the work they produced.

Popular or Folk Art

While the style of the visual art of advertising was generally disliked the artists interviewed saw an examination, evaluation, and an exposure of its shallow content and manipulative power as necessary particularly at secondary school level. Teachers, they said, should be aware of what their students are seeing on television, film, billboards, and magazines and find ways of helping students understand how they are put together, why they have mass appeal, what values they are portraying, and how the public is influenced by those values.

Tom Graff and Marian Penner-Bancroft spoke of the erosion of students' (and indeed the public's) self-esteem by the flawless perfection of advertising models and suggested that examination and production of graphic materials would dispel some of the mystique surrounding such works. Jean Kamins saw much of the popular art as being very sexist in orientation and recommended art classes leaning more towards decoration of home and personal environment, skills and ideas that would be patently useful to students in their occupations and homemaking activities after school. Colette French decried the fact that most people's art and craft work after school takes the form of working from prepared handicraft kits. This, she says, arises from a basic insecurity in one's own ability to create original works.

The overall opinion of artists on this subject was that popular art should be observed in order to be evaluated but that this evaluation should lead to discovery of other forms of expression which bear a closer relationship to the students' own lives and experiences. Most popular art was seen as commercial art rather than folk art.

Gallery Education

All the artists interviewed considered that there is a lack of knowledge of the work of recent Canadian artists, and of twentieth century art in general, by both art teachers and students. This they saw as a deterrent to the student's understanding of art as a part of their own personal experience and life style. The most obvious means of overcoming this obstacle to an enlightened public was seen as getting the students out to the galleries. The physical problems of

moving groups of students around town were seen as slight beside the enormous benefits of seeing actual examples of artists' work, both those established and generally acclaimed works in the Vancouver Art Gallery and those more avant-garde works showing in the many small galleries.

It was considered very advantageous to encourage artists to visit schools to give workshops, lectures, informal talks, and slide shows of their products, and it was generally felt that artists would be enthusiastic about doing this and should be paid for it. Visits to artists' studios were seen as a way of demystifying works of art, and at the same time, allowing students to see the possibilities of working in a similar manner, providing role models for those students thinking of pursuing a career in the arts. Art works by Canadian artists should be borrowed from institutions and shown in art rooms and teachers should develop their own collections of art works and share them with their students.

There was unanimous agreement that for students to see examples of original art works of all types is a great deal more stimulating and inspiring than to be confronted by reproductions, often miniaturized and consequently appearing more intimidatingly perfect and impersonal than the real work.

Teacher Education

Many of the artists' opinions dealt either specifically or peripherally with the quality of art teachers in the school system. They acknowledged that the generally held opinion that artists have no high regard for teachers

was confirmed in their own experience and that teachers make little or no attempt to keep up with what is happening in the art community in British Columbia. Tom Graff backed his opinion by saying that, although teachers have a much greater salary than almost any artist in British Columbia, very few have any original or local works of art in their homes, and Greg Murdock said that few teachers attend the gallery openings and other art-related functions around Vancouver.

The artists' criticism of teacher training was based on the following observations. Jean Kamins felt that there is too much emphasis on teaching educational methods in teacher training and not nearly enough time spent in learning about the future teacher's subject area. All of the artists thought a greater knowledge of twentieth century and Canadian art is essential for all art teachers, and that they should pass this knowledge to their students. Marian Penner-Bancroft and Colette French thought that the elementary schools should have specially trained art teachers and that the stereotypic junior art classes of Valentine's day cards and Hallowe'en decorations should be replaced by more innovative lessons. Richard Prince, in contrast, considered that these somewhat stilted and disciplined activities could be beneficial if combined with other art forms of a more expressive nature.

All artists agreed that the personality of each teacher affects the way he or she teaches, the way the students react, and the quality of the work produced in class. There was a strong feeling that visits by artists to the schools would spark interest in teachers as well as students, though Tom Graff complained that teachers all too often

retire to the staffroom if they have a guest speaker in the class. His opinion was that the teacher would benefit as much as, if not more than, the students from seeing an innovative lesson by an artist. He also thought that teachers should learn more restraint in money spent on equipment and materials. It was Colette French's opinion that the often observed change from the openly expressive painting of young children to the tighter, more controlled drawings of adolescents is generally misunderstood and discouraged. It should, instead, be seen by teachers as a natural and necessary transition to an intellectual approach to visual information.

Evaluation

Exams, testing, and grading were seen by most artists to be an uncomfortable and unsatisfactory area of an art program. While no one doubted that art work can be evaluated it was thought that a quantitative type of evaluation is unsuitable, a letter grading system is too abrupt and unsubtle, and the only appropriate way to assess a student's competence in art is through personal interviews and visual examination of work done, with some kind of individual comment and discussion. It was appreciated that this is very difficult to do with large classes and that some kind of compromise must be reached.

Tom Graff, whose own work with students has been on an experimental and inter-disciplinary basis, felt students should be assessed on the fact that they had participated rather than on their products. Greg Murdock was disturbed by the possibility of insensitive criticism destroying a student's confidence. He recommended evaluation on the

basis of the amount of work done and the amount of interest shown by the student. Jean Kamins expressed disapproval of the grading system which, she said, leads to a competitive society, but nevertheless agreed that evaluation of art products is possible by an educated audience of artists. Colette French also considered that one cannot and should not judge who is best but that it is possible to evaluate the formal quality of a work to see if the requirements of the course have been met.

Other Areas of Interest

- a. Although learning the basic skills of an art class is useful, what is of paramount importance, in the artists' opinion, is that students be encouraged by their teachers to understand the power of visual communication as an expressive vehicle.
- b. Artists generally decried the elitist attitude to art adhered to by many working in art-related fields such as galleries, universities, and art publications, feeling that it did their profession a disservice and distanced them from much of their public.
- c. Artists' own works of art are based on their experience, their backgrounds, their way of life, and their environment. They felt that students should be making art from a similar foundation rather than from images drawn from advertising media.
- d. Film and video were seen as powerful tools in the school setting which can aid, but should not overpower, other forms of visual expression.

Conclusions

The claim of this study is that professional artists have a great deal of knowledge and information on why the visual arts are vital to our society and how they can best be passed on to subsequent generations. Both the responses to direct questions and the spontaneous remarks of the six artists interviewed for this study show that they have a concern for the same issues as art educators (Chapter 2), but in many ways they approach those issues from a different viewpoint. The same is evident from an examination of the views of participants in the New York seminar on art education (Chapter 3).

To the artist art is artist-oriented and art education should, in like manner, be openly aware of, and receptive to, the presence of the artist. One of the strongest impressions gained from talking to artists is that their work reflects their lives and their attitudes. They are working from personal knowledge of materials and subject matter. The force of their influence is that they wish students to work in the same way, to have, initially, a reason for making art. They understand, also, that making art is a revealing process, intimidating to adolescents but with the possibility of great personal reward. Artists have said that the most successful way of helping students overcome their fear of exposing themselves to unknown criticism in this field is by meeting artists, working with them, and seeing their works.

Educators, to some extent, agree with these convictions and such recent publications as Bennett and Hall's Discovering Canadian Art (1984) may put students in touch with possibilities in visual communication

skills. However, the point of this study is not that educators are negligent or faulty in their assessment of the needs of an art education program but simply that the active participation of artists in any study of art curriculum adds a further and necessary dimension to what is, in essence, their sphere of influence, their world. The six artists interviewed showed a practical understanding of the needs of adolescents, sympathetic but not sentimental. Whether or not educators agree with their opinions, they are producers of art, they are interested in what students learn, they have ideas on what should be taught, and they have knowledge of the benefits of making art. Therefore they should be actively approached by art educators in matters of curriculum, for articles for publication, and for participation in forums and discussions on art education.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION IN INTERVIEWS

History, Criticism, and Aesthetics

Some art educators advocate purely academic art classes for all secondary school students who do not seek future careers as practising artists.

Art history and criticism, they say, can best be taught in the class room rather than the art studio. Others contend that these subjects are better understood and appreciated when taught in conjunction with practical work and in the art studio.

Do you feel a knowledge of art history, criticism, and aesthetics is essential in a secondary school program?

Is the art room the best place, or could it be better taught in a lecture hall atmosphere? Could it be incorporated in a general history or English course?

Studio work

Is studio work vital to the general education of adolescents? To all students? To what age? Should it be a compulsory class or an elective?

Painting and drawing have always been the backbone of a school art program; are these still of value as subjects to be taught in secondary school where students are increasingly conversant with film, computer drawings, xerox, and other mechanical forms of design and reproduction?

Is it of importance to teach representational drawing and painting, perspective, colour and design principles, anatomy, lettering?

Environmental Awareness

This is an area of concern with many art educators who feel the schools have a moral commitment to society to ensure that students are made aware of their possible contribution to the care of their environment and that the art room is the obvious place for this instruction to take place.

Do you agree with this premise, and how could it best be handled in secondary schools?

Are architecture and urban planning areas for concern for adolescents?

Is this an area only for academic study or could model building, map drawing, field trips, etc. expand an understanding of environmental problems?

Art and Craft

The controversy over what crafts should be taught in the high schools and how much time should be devoted to them is difficult to resolve. It has been argued that craft, as in the production of useful objects, has no place in academic studies. Contrariwise, the manual skills and personal sense of accomplishment gained by craft work can be seen as therapeutic in much the same way as physical education (compulsory in most schools to grade 11).

Do you feel that crafts should be taught in secondary school? What crafts and to what level of expertise?

Is it, perhaps, more satisfactory to concentrate such studies in a few, arts oriented schools?

Art theory classes could cover a knowledge of the artifacts of a culture, leaving studio classes for experimentation in various media towards a means of communication, rather than many classes devoted to one craft.

What do you think about this?

Folk or Popular Art

Of what interest and importance to a school art program is the popular art of today that is so fascinating to adolescents, i.e. record covers, van painting, rock concert decoration, etc.?

Should it be studied, taught, encouraged? Alone, or in conjunction with other art forms?

Art Galleries and Museums

How important do you feel it is for students to visit galleries and museums, or to have exhibits brought to the school?

What are the benefits? Are there any undesirable side issues?

What do you feel about reproductions of art works in the studio? How broad would your interpretation of art works be? What place would the popular arts play?

Film and Video Production

To what extent can these be used in the art room?

What are your views on interrelating these with other classes: English, music, social studies?

Art Teachers in Elementary Schools

Should elementary schools have art teachers and what training should they have? If this is not feasible, what training should regular teachers have in art?

Evaluation

What do you feel about a set curriculum so that each grade would cover a certain amount of work, either practical or theoretical?

What do you feel about examinations and evaluation on either academic or studio work? What kind of grading system is possible?

Should an art course be considered an academic qualification for university entrance? In what form--practical, theoretical, or a combination?