

JASPER JOHNS
AND THE INFLUENCE OF
LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

by

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ABSTRACT

The influences upon Johns' work stem from varied fields of interests, ranging from Leonardo to John Cage, Hart Crane to Duchamp, Marshall McLuhan to Wittgenstein. The role that Wittgenstein's philosophy plays has never been fully appreciated. What discussion has occurred - namely Max Kozloff's and Rosalind Krauss' - shows an inadequacy either through a lack of understanding or a superficiality towards the philosophical views. An in-depth analysis on this subject is invaluable in fully comprehending the ramifications of Johns' painting of the 60's. The intention of this paper is to examine Wittgenstein's influence and assess how his method of seeking out meaning in language is used by Johns in his paintings to explore meaning in art.

Johns' early work could perhaps be nutshelled as a reaction against the egocentricism of Abstract-Expressionism. Through the Flags, Targets, Alphabets and Numeral pieces he has suspended the formal issues that were prevalent in the early fifties in an attempt to provide all sides of the argument rather than some facile and unsatisfactory reconciliation. Johns saw that the problems in painting lay not in wrong answers but in the lack of understanding the nature of visual communication. It is impossible to present the artist's self since the 'success' of the art object involves an equally important member, the audience, and it is within this dialogue that meaning lies. The object-paintings of this early phase ask, what is painting? and pose different suggestions with each being feasible and relevant without being conclusive. Johns insists on keeping the situation incapable of any final resolution.

In 1959 Johns discovered Duchamp and his broader idea of art that moved away from retinal boundaries into a field where language, thought and vision acted upon one another. False Start, 1959, reflects this interest and can be seen not as any radical change from former work, as Barbara Rose and Sidney Tillim suggest, but as

a development of previous ideas, now taking into consideration the role language plays in the reception of a painting.

Wittgenstein began to interest Johns in 1961. His analysis of meaning in language set down in the Philosophical Investigations not only shared a close affinity to the 'art is life' maxim of Johns, Rauschenberg and Cage but more importantly presented Johns with a methodology to clarify the definition of art. Like Duchamp, Wittgenstein saw the establishing of meaning lying outside the problematic - there is no solution since there is no problem. The Investigations - a complete reversal of the earlier Tractatus Logico Philosophicus which claimed that language is a logical picturing of facts - essentially poses that the meaning of language lies in its usage, that there is no one authoritative definition of a word but as many as there are uses for it. Wittgenstein saw the role of the philosopher not as one of providing new information but of clearing up misconceptions through reviewing what we have already known. Philosophy is 'a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language'.

Johns' paintings from 1961 on become such where he sees the role of the artist as a battle against the bewitchment of our sight by not simply language but more specifically, criticism. The Critic Sees, 1961 and its attack on writers whose motives are very different from extending any visual awareness sets the stage for a collection of paintings that questions the whole aspect of schools of criticism with their polemical discussions as to how we should see. This interest in meaning with a bias towards New York criticism is understandable since it was from here that the most intriguing and muddled ideas of Johns' work came and in addition, he was painting at a period when the artist's aim was becoming more and more prescribed by what the critic proposed.

Johns' largest canvas to date, According to What, 1964, is an apologia of the notion of perception that he shares with Wittgenstein rather than a grand homage

to Duchamp.

A Wittgenstinian analysis of Johns' post-1961 paintings not only gives an explanation of the imagery employed but reveals to us two fundamental issues inherent in them: looking is relative with the only common denominator being life, which in turn shows criticism, in the controversial from Johns was used to experiencing it, as more concerned with reinforcing individual claims rather than any desire to evolve a total awareness. As with Wittgenstein's philosophy of anthropocentrism, Johns does not advance any one theory. He does not, unlike the formalist interest, regard the problems of contemporary painting as empirical but as a blindness to the numerous inherent and unavoidable visual aspects in any one work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF PLATES	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I : 1955 to 1961	4
CHAPTER II : Wittgenstein's Philosophy: A Synopsis	24
CHAPTER III: Johns and Wittgenstein: The State of Criticism so Far	36
CHAPTER IV : Johns and Wittgenstein	45
CHAPTER V : Conclusion	70
FOOTNOTES	74
PLATES	90
BIBLIOGRAPHY	116

LIST OF PLATES

PLATE I	<u>Flag</u> , 1954
PLATE II	<u>Target With Plaster Casts</u> , 1955
PLATE III	<u>Target with Four Faces</u> , 1955
PLATE IV	<u>Construction with Toy Piano</u> , 1954
PLATE V	<u>Untitled</u> , 1954
PLATE VI	<u>Large Green Target</u> , 1955
PLATE VII	<u>White Target</u> , 1957
PLATE VIII	<u>Figure 5</u> , 1955
PLATE IX	Charles Demuth. <u>I Saw The Figure 5 in Gold</u> , 1928
PLATE X	<u>Gray Alphabets</u> , 1956
PLATE XI	<u>Gray Numbers</u> , 1958
PLATE XII	<u>Gray Alphabets</u> , 1956
PLATE XIII	<u>Untitled</u> , c.1954
PLATE XIV	<u>Tango</u> , 1955
PLATE XV	Andy Warhol <u>Dance Diagram - Tango</u> , 1962
PLATE XVI	<u>Canvas</u> , 1956
PLATE XVII	<u>Drawer</u> , 1957
PLATE XVIII	<u>Gray Rectangles</u> , 1957
PLATE XIX	<u>Painting With a Ball</u> , 1958
PLATE XX	<u>Tennyson</u> , 1958
PLATE XXI	<u>The</u> , 1957
PLATE XXII	<u>Shade</u> , 1959
PLATE XXIII	Magritte, <u>Human Condition I</u> , 1933
PLATE XXIV	Delaunay, <u>Windows on the City</u> , 1912
PLATE XXV	<u>False Start</u> , 1959
PLATE XXVI	Magritte, <u>The Use of Words</u> , 1928-29
PLATE XXVII	<u>Jubilee</u> , 1959

PLATE XXVIII	<u>Out the Window</u> , 1959
PLATE XXIX	<u>Thermometer</u> , 1959
PLATE XXX	<u>Painting with Two Balls</u> , 1960
PLATE XXXI	<u>Device Circle</u> , 1959
PLATE XXXII	<u>Painting with Ruler and "Gray"</u> , 1960
PLATE XXXIII	Leonardo da Vinci, <u>Vitruvian Man</u> , c. 1485-90
PLATE XXXIV	<u>Device</u> , 1961-62
PLATE XXXV	<u>By the Sea</u> , 1961
PLATE XXXVI	<u>Passage</u> , 1962
PLATE XXXVII	<u>Fool's House</u> , 1962
PLATE XXXVIII	<u>Out the Window II</u> , 1962
PLATE XXXIX	<u>Field Painting</u> , 1963-64
PLATE XXXX	<u>The Critic Sees</u> , 1961
PLATE XXXXI	<u>No</u> , 1961
PLATE XXXXII	<u>Periscope (Hart Crane)</u>
PLATE XXXXIII	<u>Land's End</u> , 1963
PLATE XXXXIV	<u>Diver</u> , 1962
PLATE XXXXV	<u>Watchman</u> , 1964
PLATE XXXXVI	<u>According to What</u> , 1964
PLATE XXXXVII	Duchamp <u>Tu m'</u> . 1918
PLATE XXXXVIII	<u>Fragments - According to What - Hinged Canvas</u> , 1971
PLATE XXXXIX	<u>Cup 4 Picasso</u> , 1972

INTRODUCTION

In a footnote to her article on Johns, Rosalind Krauss talks of his initiation into Wittgenstein's philosophy.¹ Johns recounts that in 1961 someone told him the story Norman Malcolm writes of in his reminiscences of Wittgenstein.

'Once after supper, Wittgenstein, my wife and I went for a walk on Midsummer Common [Cambridge, England]. We talked about the movements of the bodies of the solar system. It occurred to Wittgenstein that the three of us should represent the movement of the sun, moon and earth relative to one another. My wife was the sun and maintained a steady pace across the meadow; I was the earth and circled her at a trot. Wittgenstein took the most strenuous part of all, the moon and ran around me while I circled my wife. Wittgenstein entered into this game with great enthusiasm and seriousness, shouting instructions at us as he ran.'²

On hearing this story Johns decided to read all the Wittgenstein he could. The appeal the tale had for him was one that still remains intrinsic to his work; the idea of game playing, but like the philosopher, games to be played seriously not lightly. As language was for Wittgenstein's later philosophy so is art for Johns - in fact he has often expressed that painting is a language.

The intention of this paper is to examine Wittgenstein's influence and discuss how his method of seeking out meaning in language is used by Johns to explore meaning in art. For reasons of space, I have kept to the painting up to 1964 which marks the completion of perhaps his most important canvas so far, According to What. Since that time Johns has restricted himself, on the whole, to graphics and only in the last year or so has begun a return to the paint medium.

I will first give an overall view of his work from 1955-1961 as a necessary background to what follows. Before discussing the later painting from a Wittgensteinian viewpoint in Chapter 4, Chapter 2 will be devoted to presenting as briefly as possible a synopsis of Wittgenstein's philosophy and Chapter 3 to a discussion of the present state of criticism on Wittgenstein's role in Johns' work.

What must be stressed at this stage is that Johns is not a philosopher in the strict sense and his predisposition to Wittgenstein does not stem from a concern for the philosopher's place in any linguistic tradition. A philosophical inquiry into the 'accuracy' of Johns' comprehension of Wittgenstein would be pointless. Few philosophers themselves are in agreement in their interpretations and it must be remembered that Johns' application was more than probably coloured by John Cage's influence. Cage's eclecticism has shown itself in his ability to let his ideas 'slide without self-conscious effort into areas far beyond conventional thought'³ - a fascinating practice but impossible to evaluate successfully from a purely philosophical standpoint.

CHAPTER ONE: 1955 to 1961

"Most of my thoughts involve impurities I think it is a form of play, or form of exercise, and it's in part mental and in part visual (and God knows what that is). But that's one of the things we like about the visual arts. The terms in which we're accustomed to thinking are adulterated or abused. Or a term that we're not used to using or which we have not used in our experience becomes very clear. Or what is explicit suddenly isn't. We like the novelty of giving up what we know, and we like the novelty of coming to know something we did not know. Otherwise, we would just hold on to what we have, and that's not very interesting." ¹

Jasper Johns, like Robert Rauschenberg, began painting in a period that was becoming steeped in the successes and failures of Abstract Expressionism. By the early fifties it had already begun to take on the visage of an academy of painting. In 1965, Barbara Rose wrote her article, 'The Second Generation: Academy and Breakthrough'², and attributed the institutionalizing of this style to Rosenberg's 'The American Action Painters' of December, 1952. Rosenberg's article had a similar effect on New York painters as Gleize's and Metzinger's surrogate manifestō, Du Cubisme, had on the Paris artists of 1912. Du Cubisme offered an explanation of Cubist aims as understood by its authors with the resulting absurdity that Braque and Picasso's vision of a Cubist reality got by-passed. Rosenberg's article, which likewise set down the common aspirations of a number of artists, also had novel results. Unwittingly he evoked a focalising force that appealed on a nationalistic as well as an individual level:

"This new painting does not constitute a school. To form a school in modern times not only is a new painting consciousness needed but a consciousness of that consciousness and even an insistence on certain formulas. A school is the result of the linkage of practice with terminology - different paintings are affected by the same words. In the American Vanguard the words, as we shall see, belong not to the art but to the individual artists. What they think in common is represented only by what they do separately'³

Rosenberg provided the 'consciousness of that consciousness', a terminology and ultimately a movement that any American artist could join while being assured of retaining his separateness.

Even today, Johns is perhaps best known, with Rauschenberg, for initiating the collapse and, as some writers are want to view it, castration of this narcissism - in Painting with Two Balls, 1960 (plate XXX) Johns even suspends their genitals between a parody of an Abstract Expressionist painting. How these two managed this, I think, lies in their exceptional intuition. Both

were southerners, both had done time in the forces, neither had had any artistic background or lived in any artistic environment. They approached painting with a naivete that allowed them to ask fundamental questions and answer them with a clear sightedness that perhaps no artist in the thick of an Abstract Expressionist milieu could; as Marshall McLuhan, another influence on Johns, says:

'Professionalism is environmental. Amateurism is anti-environmental. Professionalism merges the individual into patterns of total environment. Amateurism seeks the development of the total awareness of the individual and the critical awareness of the ground rules of society. The amateur can afford to lose ... The 'expert' is the man who stays put.'⁴

A marvellous manifestation of this: Albers the professional, the expert on colour and Rauschenberg the amateur who failed to understand the significance of colour interaction theory at the Black Mountain School and ended up doing an all-white painting.⁵

Johns' intuition and 'amateurism' led in 1954 to paint his first Flag (Plate 1) which set the pattern for the next five years of an inquiry into the reconciling of representation with the picture plane as well as the whole nature of what constitutes the art object - a play between representation and replication.

De Kooning had set the stage with his Woman paintings of the early fifties where he battled with the spatial dilemma of figure and ground. The contours of the anatomy are opened to allow the environment to fuse with the object. He sought to escape from a Cubist reality and return to a representational depiction that would somehow not conflict with the flat surface of the canvas. The tension was one of plus and minus, lights and darks, plane and contour, illusion and fact.

Johns' Flag is remarkable in that rather than find a formal synthesis in which we can attach one meaning he successfully suspends the issues without

their denying each other and insists on keeping the situation incapable of any final resolution. Is it a painting or a replica of a flag? The 'a priori' structuring of the flag image, representationally flat, in abstract terms may read three dimensionally with bands of red on a white background. All these factors are immersed as it were in a neutral painterliness which seems to provide a uniformity of spatial illusion until we realize that this in turn is subjected to the pattern of the flag. We end up mutely dumbfounded by the impossibility of reaching any definite explanation and it becomes an existential experience.

Greenberg can place Johns only in some 'void' between abstraction and representation. He recognizes the various contradictions, but the nagging insoluble quality finally forces him to dismiss the whole thing as indicating a 'certain narrowness'.⁶ Johns refuses to provide any arrival. Unlike, Frank Stella, for example, Johns has gone too far for Greenberg.

'The original flatness of the picture surface, with a few outlines stencilled on it, is shown as sufficing to represent all that a picture by Johns really does represent. The covering of paint itself, with its de Kooningesque play of lights and darks is shown as being completely superfluous to this end.'⁷

In the same way, Stella has sought to criticize Johns' cultivation of 'problems', e.g. Jasper's Dilemma 1962-63. Stella gives his energies to solving riddles, Johns to creating them. Without the 'superfluous' quality of the painterly in Johns' Flag it would indeed take on the function of Stella's work. The disagreement appears to be in the case that for formalism it is anathema to emphasize the process of painting in order to dissociate the image from the emblem.⁸

For the next three years Johns was to continue experimenting with the ironies inherent in the Flag painting. In 1955 he produced his Target pieces. These make even more demands on the observer because of their centrality.

Primarily the focus of Target with Plaster Casts and Target with Four Faces (Plates II and III) is neutralised by the deep blue of the outer circle and the brilliance of the red surround. We are unable to confidently determine background and foreground, but at this stage Johns does not appear too sure of colour to leave it at that and introduces various modulating elements to cancel out the focus of the image. In Target with Plaster Casts the canvas is topped by a series of boxes with lids containing plaster casts of various anatomical fragments.⁹ Both Kozloff and Solomon see the prototype for this work coming from a piece done earlier in 1954 before the Flag, titled Construction with Toy Piano (Plate IV) where numbered keys of the toy piano line the top of a box. For Target with Four Faces Kozloff finds the source in an Untitled piece from 1954 where a box construction containing collage elements and a plaster cast of a head is not unlike Cornell's work (Plate V).¹⁰

The three dimensional elements of these two works de-emphasize the centralising form in such a way that if we are to look at them with a marksman's eye we are put in a quandary whether to aim at the centre of the target or the objects. A further subtlety is that the spectator is given the opportunity to shut off the sight of these casts by closing the attached lids. Perhaps Johns is inferring that these canvases do have literal space - inside as it were. However, since the reproductions do not show what is on the backside of the lids this should not be taken further. Steinberg's attempt to comprehend the collection of unrelated elements is adventurous while still being viable:

'In Target with Four Faces the target of Jasper Johns is always "right here" it is all the field there is. It has lost its definite "thereness". I went on to wonder about the human face and came to the opposite conclusion. A face makes no sense unless it is "here"... as soon as you recognize a thing as a face, it is an object no longer but one pole in a situation of reciprocal consciousness ... I felt that the leveling of those categories which are the subjective markers of space implied a totally non-human point of view. It was as if the subjective consciousness, which alone can give meaning to the words "here and there", had ceased to exist.'¹¹

The analysis is warranted since at no time does Steinberg impose it upon the artist's intentions. Johns, in striving to escape the onlooker's grasp by setting up ambiguities of meaning, allows different interpretations but never a conclusion.¹² Narrative content is consciously played down to ensure this. In the above work the fourth cast has been swapped with the third to prevent any theme of progression in the woman's growing smile.

Kozloff sums up the differences between various criticisms of Johns thus:

'The formalists, while perhaps admiring the ambition with which formal qualities were meshed together, judge the final effort to be an interesting failure. The latter two [Steinberg and Sylvester¹³] initially despairing of finding human and metaphorical expression of feeling in Johns, become aware of a philosophical play upon the identity and usage of images that transcends the merely personal.'¹⁴

Eventually Johns becomes more relaxed with the target image and is able to use it alone in paintings. Large Green Target 1955 (Plate VI) could possibly be regarded as less interesting in that the playing with colour and spatial illusion is dropped, but on the other hand there is a new confidence with the materials. Through a richer use of encaustic and scrap paper Johns builds up a texture that eradicates the spatial caused by the focussing image. White Target, 1957 (Plate VII) is even more charged with dissociation. The grid-like pattern of the encaustic dipped pieces of collage are now subdued by a more expressionistic application with the brush. The result is an even tighter conjoining of structure and freedom to the point of almost imminent explosion.

We could ask at this point why Johns did not simply paint a round canvas. I think there are two reasons. Shaped canvases at this time would have missed the point and impact that Johns was interested in, that is it would have taken the subject away from the idea of easel painting. Also, whilst there is an element of spatial recession within the image the placing of it on a flat ground heightens the irony.

The number and alphabet series were originally used in much the same way as the flag and target images - for example Figure 5, 1955 (Plate VIII). It is generally accepted that Johns took this motif from Charles Demuth's, I Saw The Figure Five in Gold, 1928 (Plate IX) who in turn took inspiration from Carlos Williams' poem The Great Figure written a few years previously.¹⁵ Demuth's image is futurist and becomes a celebration. Johns' use has no related meaning. It does not quantify anything, it attaches no anecdote, it is just a common every day number as the flag was an everyday symbol. But there is a difference. The digits, as well as the alphabets, are much richer forms than the previous two. The Figure 5 is far less static and possibly it was this quality that led Johns to look at the question of narrative in abstract art. He seems to have asked himself, how do we include a sense of time without denying the presentness of painting?

'... The first number paintings were just single figures.... then I saw a chart. You know the gray alphabet painting? I saw a chart in a book that had that arrangement of the alphabet. Then I, of course, realized I could do the numbers that way too. But earlier than that with the first numbers I didn't do every number and I didn't work on them in any order and I deliberately didn't do them all, so that there wouldn't be implied that relationship of moving through things.'¹⁶

Johns then, growing tired of seeking out flat image after flat image, saw a means of how he could bring in the element of time and let the same situation deny it through the use of the chart arrangement. With Gray Alphabets, 1956 (Plate X) or Gray Numbers, 1958 (Plate XI) no line of digits or letters is the same whether read horizontally or vertically since in Gray Alphabets the chart grid is made up of twenty-seven rectangles by twenty-seven rectangles with the top left rectangle left blank and likewise Gray Numbers is eleven rectangles high and eleven wide.

At the same time that Johns is careful not to duplicate a line with a similar arrangement of images, there still remains from one aspect, a constant

pattern of progression which becomes boring to the extreme. However this alphabetical and numerical rigidity is countered by the rich painterly treatment of each rectangle so that no letter or digit looks the same (see Plate XII). On the one hand we are presented with monotony on the other with extreme variety. In a statement to Hopps, Johns said:

'I'm certainly not putting numbers to any use, numbers are used all the time, and what's being done is making something to be looked at.'¹⁷

There is another factor in these two works that has not occurred before with the important exception of one early Untitled piece done in 1954 (Plate XIII). The effect of this work - apart from the black and white reproduction looking very like a Zoltan Kemeny relief - is one of half embedded, half superimposing letters or digits. The Gray Numerals and Gray Alphabets are treated in a similar fashion with the contours of the images being opened up so that there is a fusion of figure and ground in progress rather than mutual existence. But this is absurd and traditionally unnecessary since number and ground share the same space. Such a phenomenon inadvertently brings everything back very closely to de Kooning and his opening of planes to allow the background entry, with the paradoxical inversion of now attacking surface as if it were three dimensional.¹⁸

Despite all this, looking especially at Gray Numerals, there is a nagging desire to find some kind of meaning behind the permutations of figures.¹⁹ This is not so entirely pointless as it may sound even if we may never arrive at any satisfactory answer. Kozloff's quote from Marshall McLuhan affords us an insight into this persistency:

'In isolation, number is as mysterious as writing. Seen as an extension of our physical bodies, it becomes quite intelligible. Just as writing is an extension and separation of our most neutral and objective sense, the sense of sight, number is an extension and separation of our most intimate and interesting activity, our sense of touch.... it may well be that in our conscious inner lives the interplay among our senses is what constitutes the sense of touch.

Perhaps touch is not just skin contact with things, but the very life of things in the mind.'²⁰

Johns loves painting. There is in his use of encaustic and oil a deep pleasure in the sensual activity of the application, which at the same time he never lets impose upon the work to any egotistical and hence confining degree.

'.....by dressing and draping numbers, caressing in a hundred ways these units of measurement, Johns' brush confers the homage of his own sensibility upon the human mind. Not as symbols of calculation, but as signs of interacting human faculties, the numbers are presented in their deepest function.'²¹

* * *

The paintings discussed so far, despite their originality, do have the common theme of flat symbol. Their indeterminacy prevents the spectator from coming to rest and the question we eventually ask ourselves is why we are unable to accept a state of ambiguity or unspecified meaning. It is a state that is far more profound than the surrealists'. With Johns he wants to leave us free for experiences that will come of ourselves and not from any particular polemical milieu.²² The possible exceptions are Magritte, and Breton's Nadja where there is less of that intention that most of the other surrealists are anxious to remind us of.²³

At the same time that Johns was doing the above, he was painting works that contained objects that were themselves painted.

'I think if there was any thinking at all, or if I have any now it would be that if the painting is an object, then the object can be a painting... and I think that's what happened. That if on this area you can make something, then on this area you can make something.'²⁴

Tango 1955 (Plate XIV), although it does not strictly apply to the above account of Johns, could be seen as some sort of link between the two groups. Johns introduces overlaying of different tones of blue in the form of pieces of collage set down in a grid-like pattern with superimposed and diverse brush

strokes. In addition the bottom edge is left unworked, serving the same purpose as Pollock's untreated canvas that aids in acknowledging the picture plane. In fact, Tango seems to be an explicit commentary on Pollock's style. If Pollock can fling himself around on a canvas and into its very mesh, why cannot Johns dance on it? Again we are given the use of the banal - the dance hall - for very non-banal ends. Steinberg clarifies this when he asks himself, what is painting?

'It is part of the fascination of Johns' work that many of his inventions are interpretable as meditations on the nature of painting, pursued as if in a dialogue with a questioner of ideal innocence and congenital blindness.

--"A picture, you see, is a piece of canvas nailed to a stretcher."

--"Like this" says the blindman, holding it up with its face to the wall. Then Johns makes a picture of that kind of picture to see whether it will make a picture. Or:

"A picture is what a painter puts whatever he has into."

"You mean like a drawer?"

"Not quite; remember it's flat."

"Like the front of a drawer?"

The thought takes form as a picture - and don't let's ask whether this is what the artist had thought while he made it. It's what the picture gives you to think that counts.

"If pictures are flat", said the blindman, why do they always speak of things IN pictures?"

"Why, what's wrong with it?"

"Things ON pictures, it should be; like things on trays or on walls."

"That's right."

"Well then, when something is IN a picture, where is it? Behind the canvas, like a concealed music box?" (Johns' Tango 1955) '25

Tango looks forward to Warhol's similar parody of Abstract Expressionism in Dance Diagram - Tango, 1962 (Plate XV) and further to Morris' 'gestalts' that survey the phenomenon of integration between art object and artist/

audience.

Steinberg's dialogue encapsules other works of this nature: Canvas, 1956, Drawer, 1957 and Gray Rectangles, 1957. Canvas (Plate XVI) consists of a stretched canvas stuck face down onto the surface of a larger canvas. The whole thing is then covered with encaustic and collage, hence the piece is one of abstract brush strokes on both the front and rear of a canvas. Johns seems to be saying that if one accepts the space setup by painting on and in the canvas, then in actual fact a sculpture is being made - what does a Pollock or a Morris Louis look like from behind? This makes Duchamp's use of glass seem almost superficial. Nevertheless, at the same time Canvas is a painting and is hung as a painting - Johns, remember, would never say it is a sculpture.

Both Drawer (Plate XVII) and Gray Rectangles (Plate XVIII) ask similar questions. Gray Rectangles shows a gray encaustic surface that has been disrupted by three smaller canvases being inserted into cut out portions of the main canvas. It fits to include this piece into the group of object studies as here we have the intrusion of three compartments. They appear to go one step beyond collage - whose surface has always been accepted as compatible to the picture plane previously. Now, perhaps we have to ask ourselves more rigorously; the rectangles are not stuck on they are stuck in. This is the first time the canvas and not its surface can be said to be made up of objects.

Drawer takes this idea even further. Now the object is recognisable. Like collage it is rendered useless in its conventional context by being aesthetised, but it still remains ironically in its common context in the sense of a flat surface with knobs on, flush to the facade that retains it. Like Steinberg, Kozloff treats it as Johns looking at the picture surface as merely surface and hence any surface - be it furniture or whatever - will do.²⁶

In Painting With a Ball, 1958 (Plate XIX) the tension of objects within

the canvas is increased to where a ball is literally forced between the sections of canvas so that it displaces the stretchers and leaves a gap through which the wall shows. The intrusion here is to the point where the illusion of brush strokes versus flat surface reaches breaking point and 'attached' objects attempt to take over once and for all. The tension is extreme. We are allowed to see the quiet space beyond the picture plane if we concentrate to take our eyes off the surrounding canvas, but it does not really help. The area of expressive paintwork and its intruder still remains and we are only more conscious of the abusive way everything has been asked to change its nature. Canvas versus space with neither giving an inch.

Tennyson, 1959, (Plate XX) which Steinberg regards as one of Johns' most beautiful works, although he does not explain to us quite why, is unlike Tango due to the title becoming more the subject of the painting - as is the case of The 1957 (Plate XXI). It seems to be a little different from anything previous and possibly anticipates his interest in language that begins with False Start, 1959. The word evokes our literary nostalgia but Johns portrays it dissociated from any reference except that of its present condition which is apart from any intentions toward past or future. The painting is made up of various tones of grey that do not obliterate the presence or function of the word, they rather neutralize all the particular references, emotions, preconceptions we had over the name. Johns again requires that the audience look at a painting not in terms of the anecdotal but to cause us to ask ourselves questions. The whole work consists of two upright panels on separate stretchers with a piece of canvas laid over the top of them leaving the top and bottom portions visible. Kozloff mentions the right hand edge revealing a scarlet under-painting - 'enough suggestion of a double life to disturb any viewer who thinks paintings should at least be nominally visible',²⁷ We can also see the canvas folded underneath and ask ourselves what Johns has

been doing under there?' The painter's world is private and secretive no matter how much and what he shows us and Johns invites the onlooker to share in this privacy by constructing his own secretive conclusions.

Rosalind Krauss describes Shade, 1959 (Plate XXII) as:

'A painting whose field is dominated by a pulled down window blind, becomes a reference to the traditional analogy between the picture frame and a window frame opening up to a view of illusionistic space. Johns' shade closed against the possibilities of three dimensional space, is ironically covered over with a painterly evocation of the very space the work is at pains to deny.'²⁸

The work is owned by Mrs. Leo Steinberg and Mr. Steinberg oddly enough takes delight in comparing the shade on the canvas to the cost of shades in department stores, discount houses and second-hand shops. He also states:

'On a shade of flat canvas drawn against the outside he shows outdoor darkness; like the dark space known to closed eyes. How are eyelids lowered like window-shades against outer light comparable to picture planes? Alberti compared the open paintings he knew to windows.'

Shade has an affinity to Magritte's The Human Condition, 1955 (Plate XXIII). Magritte, like Johns, has brought the ambiguity of two and three dimensional space to a point of frustration in showing that surface is as much a reality as the space it depicts. There is also a little known work by Delaunay entitled Window on the City, 1912 (Plate XXIV) which compares interestingly. A view of a church and some houses, has been painted on what could be taken for either the front or the reverse of a canvas in a picture frame. As with Shade it questions the whole practice of attempting to reconcile real space with spatial illusion, and in both we are not so much shown a reconciliation as an emphasising of the predicament.

* * *

With the painting of False Start in 1959 (Plate XXV) we see beginnings of a new development. Not only does Johns give up his use of flat images, he also changes his medium from encaustic to oil and applies it in a collection

of explosive brush strokes. Both Barbara Rose and Sidney Tillim have regarded this later period as some sort of major crisis; Rose as one that was primarily a frantic result of an exhaustion of the select category of images which he survived only through the introduction to lithography via Tatyana Grosman's Rhode Island workshop in 1960,³⁰ and Tillim as tantamount to the end of a career.³¹

In the light of previous work the transition is indeed quite overwhelming, but rather than conveying a crisis, the development makes much more sense in the light of Johns' contact with Duchamp's work in 1959 and the important initiation into Wittgenstein's thought in 1961. This will be dealt with at length in Chapter 4 while at present I will limit myself to describing some of the major pieces that lead up to 1961.

About False Start Johns says:

'It got rather monotonous making flags on a piece of canvas, and I wanted to add something... the early things to me were very strongly objects.... I thought then how to make an object which is not so easily defined as an object, and how to add space and still keep it an object painting. And then I think in say, False Start and those paintings, the object is put into even greater doubt and I think you question whether it's an object or not.'³²

False Start is basically a deeper inquiry into neutrality. The mood of it is neutral despite the explosions of colour. Is there deep space or shallow space? Each explosion has a more or less uniform area. The labels are equally 'correct' and 'incorrect' to the colours they are assigned and even the colours of the lettering themselves are either apropos or contradictory in a balanced distribution. The longer one looks at it the more universal it becomes. The labels are equally imposed upon as they themselves impose. There is no hierarchy. It is as if we were being handed everything that constitutes the nature of colour and if we look at it all long enough something will 'click' and we will have formed our own masterpiece. Kozloff refers to the situation as a dilemma but it constitutes more the timelessness of Eliot's Four Quartets.³³

Another way of viewing this is an attempt on Johns' part to awaken us to the process of the visual and the intellectual - between what is read and what is seen. Purity of colour is a fallacy, simply an intellectual categorising of sensation for matters of convenience since there is no such thing as pure sensation.³⁴

False Start may have been the work Greenberg was looking at when he refers to 'de Kooning's play of lights and darks' in that its brush strokes are far closer to him than the previous Guston-like impressionist-like grids. Rosalind Krauss interestingly suggests that the work:

'also heightens the sense of violation of pure colour brought about by the paint handling of, for example, de Kooning....'³⁵

It would be a mistake to see the stencilled lettering purely from a Cubist standpoint of emphasising the two dimensional. The labels if anything, emphasise spatial illusion with their disappearing through and behind the painted surface. The surrealist would cite Magritte's The Use Of Words, 1928-1929. (Plate XXVI), as the prototype to this work, but there is a difference. Whilst Magritte's work is a direct refutation Johns leaves the question open. Calas sees it that Magritte limits himself to a dissociation between image and label whereas Johns is interested in the 'continuous shifting between signs and images.'³⁶ The title itself is ironic for a transitional piece. Johns explained to Hopps:

'I didn't know what to call it and it wasn't like my other paintings and one day I was sitting in the Cedar Row and looked up at a point of a horse race which was called "The False Start" and I said that was going to be the title of my painting'³⁷

Jubilee (Plate XXVII) of the same year is the sequel and ultimate result of what Krauss suggests is happening in False Start.

'By means of the colour names and their shifting relationship to the pure colours they identify Johns points up the ironic dissipation of colour put to the service of modelling illusionistic space.'³⁸

Colour dissipated, points to only one thing it would seem: all colour is

useful for it is the establishing of illusion through darks and lights. This is how de Kooning uses it and a belief out of which Greenberg has virtually made a movement. Johns appears to be saying that if this is the case then why not redo False Start using just black and white and the tones in between. However, he indicates this notion to be even more short-sighted since our vision, being colour sensitive, we even see black and white in colour - witness the hints of blues and reds.

Out The Window, 1959 (Plate XXVIII) shows a simplification of the idea of False Start by reducing the painting to three areas, RED, YELLOW and BLUE. It points up the absurdity of categorisation further by reducing the labels to the primary colours and in addition the letters, not being stencilled, allow Johns to fill them in with a variety of colours to the extent where not only their form becomes dispersed, but also their labelling implications. The ironies are enhanced by the story Solomon tells when Johns' sister visited the studio and unintentionally gave the canvas its name. Finding no meaning in the 'emptiness' of the picture,

'.... she looked at 'the vacant parking lot across the street and remarked that he seemed to paint what he saw out his window.'²⁹

Thermometer, 1959 (Plate XXIX) could be a comment on the concept of equating colour to degrees of temperature. At first the thermometer appears to be callibrated systematically with the temperature of the colours collectively measuring about 85 degrees. But degrees what? There is callibration but no scale. Rosalind Krauss finds irony in that the painting having been callibrated, the action ends up in the thermometer. Nevertheless, maybe the action is within the area of the spectator. The picture remains static until the spectator comes along to set it off. This would tie in nicely with Steinberg's reference to eyelids. The image will only appear if we allow it to become part of ourselves..'Transformation is in the head' says Johns.⁴⁰

Painting With Two Balls, 1960 (Plate XXX) has all the implications the earlier one with a single ball had. It could be regarded as a parody on Cubism with the attempt to render a three dimensional object within a pictorial field - for Johns the stress is enough to split the picture apart. There is also the genitals interpretation, seen as a comment on the indulgent 'machismo' interest in abstract expressionists. With the exception of its prototype, objects have so far played a relatively passive role with paint being the only seducer. Now objects assert themselves and Johns' pictures become 'readable as polarities of doing and suffering.'⁴¹

Device Circle, 1959 (Plate XXXI) shows a similar play between 'action upon' and 'acted upon'. A length of wood nailed to the centre of the canvas determines the radius of a circle - perhaps a future target. One is never quite sure what came first, the canvas covered with red, yellow, blue and white brush strokes and collage or the stick device. The stick has been covered with paint intimating it has been acted upon and consequently came first, also the circle at times determines the placing of colour areas. On the other hand there are suggestions that the stick and its drawing action was subsequent in its action upon areas of paint that not only totally disregard the confines of the circle but have been scratched by the nail at the end of the stick.

Painting with Ruler and "Gray", 1960 (Plate XXXII), which is related to the above in its use of a rotating stick, presents the juxtaposition of free expression within the confines of a measured space. Harold Rosenberg states in 'American Action Painters':

'At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act rather than as a space in which to reproduce, redesign, analyse or "express" an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event.'⁴²

On one level Johns is forcing this arena to be constrained by the measured confines of the thirty-two inch long ruler which rotates from a piece of wood that bisects the canvas. However, perhaps measurement and freedom are not such contradictory issues as they first seem here. I do not think it too far fetched, even if round about, to approach this painting from the aspect of Leonardo's drawing of the Vitruvian Man (Plate XXXIII), where the essential point is that 'Man is the measure of all things' and 'master of the square and circle which he seems to have conjured up around him.'⁴³ Not only does Painting With Ruler and "Gray" incorporate the circle and square but Johns has always had a great admiration for Leonardo's work and thought. Even if all is unacceptable, the fact remains that the moment Pollock steps on to his canvas his arena is determined by his own scale and in this sense can be measured. Rosenberg, goes on to hint at something like this, albeit unthinkingly:

'...what gives the canvas its meaning is not psychological data but 'role'. The way the artist organises his emotional and intellectual energy as if he were in a living situation. The interest lies on the kind of act taking place in the four-sided arena - a dramatic interest.'⁴⁴

The central piece of wood has the word 'gray' lightly stamped on it. Even more than Jubilee this shows the absurdity of reading colour simply in terms of lights and darks since it would necessitate the labelling of the natural toned wood, 'gray'. The use of quotation marks around the word in the title insinuates further the arbitrariness of such a reduction of phenomena to a single term.

Device, 1961-62 (Plate XXXIV) questions, among other things, what its title infers, that the nature of the paint transformation depends not only on the hand but the choice of tool. Fried describes the scraped and squeegeed semicircles of paint as 'clearly meant as a mechanical ironic paradigm of de Kooning's dragging brush and smeared paint tecture.'⁴⁵ This may well be true, but the areas of paint are more than just a paradigm of an earlier

artist's work. Ambiguities of time appear. The circles of paint are almost Futurist but they could well have been scraped at a slower rate than the more static-looking brush strokes were applied. 'There are no objective correlations between gesture and effect.'⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the chief motive of the work is one of anonymity. It shows once again a desire to cease to impose on the spectator a particular view by taking away the autobiographical from gesture. Johns sees it that the artist should extricate himself from the work in order that what is on the canvas is itself and not simply a reassurance of the artist's own identity.

'I have attempted to develop my thinking in such a way that the work I've done is not me - not to confuse any feelings with what I produced. I didn't want my work to be an exposure of my feelings. Abstract Expressionism was so lively - personal identity and painting were more or less the same, and I tried to operate in the same way. But I found I couldn't do anything that would be identical with my feelings. So I worked in such a way that I could say that it's not me. That accounts for the separation.'⁴⁷

Before going on to discuss the subsequent work from 1961-1964 in relation to Wittgenstein it is, of course, necessary to gain some familiarity with the philosopher's thought. Essentially it can be broken up into two books, the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and the Philosophical Investigations. The Investigations is basically a contradiction of the former and is the work that is relevant to Johns' painting. Not only is this confirmed by various reports such as Barbara Rose's who has disclosed that it was his 'bed-time' reading during the sixties,⁴⁸ but I hope it will become more than evident in the proceeding chapters. There is no definite painting that marks a beginning of Johns' reading since it caused a furthering of inquiry rather than any radical break and for this reason I will commence with the paintings in 1961 that show particular intimation of Wittgenstein's concepts. In addition to this, I will analyse the nature of what has been written on Wittgenstein as an influence on Johns to this date. There has been much misconception as to what exactly

Wittgenstein's role is and I feel it is necessary to clear up these mistakes - which are primarily due to a misunderstanding of the philosopher - before we go any further.

CHAPTER TWO: WITTGENSTEIN'S PHILOSOPHY:

A SYNOPSIS

"Meaning implies that something is happening; you can say meaning is determined by the use of the thing, the way an audience uses a painting once it is put in public."

[Jasper Johns]¹

Ludwig Johann Wittgenstein was born in Vienna in 1889, the youngest of eight children all generously endowed with intellectual and artistic talent. His mother was devoted to music and their home became a centre of musical life. Brahms was a frequent visitor and one of Wittgenstein's brothers, Paul, became a distinguished pianist.

To begin with Wittgenstein studied engineering in Berlin and then, from 1908, at the University of Manchester where he became particularly interested in aeroplane engines and propellers. The mathematical aspect of this work led Wittgenstein to develop an interest in pure mathematics and eventually its philosophical foundations. After reading Russell's Principia Mathematica and being greatly impressed by it he decided to move to Cambridge where he spent the greater part of 1912-13 working with Russell - first as a pupil and later as a partner.

During the War he served in the Austrian Army as a volunteer and at the same time continued to work at his book, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, which he completed at around the same time he was captured in Italy in 1918. The manuscript was delivered to Russell via diplomatic courier. The notebooks used in the preparation of the Tractatus were destroyed on Wittgenstein's request. Three of them covering the period 1914-16 accidentally survived and were published in 1961.

After the War, Wittgenstein decided to become a teacher and from 1920-26 he taught nine and ten year olds in various Austrian village schools. During this time he compiled and published a dictionary for students in elementary schools. In 1926 he resigned as a school teacher and inquired at a monastery about the possibility of entering a contemplative way of life. He was finally discouraged by the father superior.

For the next two or so years he lived with his family in Vienna and devoted the majority of his time designing and organising the building of a

mansion for his sister.² It was during this period that he met and was visited by various members of the Vienna circle - most notably the logical-positivists, Moritz Schluck and Friederich Wausmann. The Tractatus supplied the background to many of their discussions.³

In January, 1929 Wittgenstein returned to Cambridge to devote himself again to philosophy and for the next three or four years he gradually developed, largely through self criticism, his new position in philosophy. The earlier version of these views are to be found in the Blue and Brown Books which date from 1933-35. The later version Philosophical Investigations contain his thoughts from the thirties until his death. The Investigations were posthumously published in 1953 together with a translation by G.E.M. Anscombe.

In 1939 Wittgenstein became Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge in succession to George Moore. With the development of World War II, Wittgenstein found it impossible to remain a spectator and in 1941 left Cambridge to work as a porter at Guy's Hospital in London. He was transferred in 1943 to the Royal Infirmary in Newcastle where he worked as a 'lab' boy. In 1944 he resumed lectures at Cambridge but became increasingly dissatisfied with his role as a teacher. He felt a need to live alone and devote his energies to finishing the Investigations. Consequently in 1947 he resigned his chair.

For the next couple of years he lived in Ireland and spent a few months with Norman Malcolm in the States. In the summer of 1949 he learnt he had cancer. He visited his family in Vienna and in 1951 moved to the home of his physician in Cambridge. He died on April 29th, 1951.

Wittgenstein was a very unusual man; as a lecturer he invariably wore an open neck shirt - unheard of for the time. His room in Trinity College, was furnished with little more than a few deck-chairs. He seemed to want to lead a frugal, ascetic existence. When his father died in 1912, Wittgenstein inherited a large fortune and proceeded to donate a big sum of it to be

distributed among needy Austrin poets and writers. Part of the reason for this action was the fear of having friends for the sake of money, but to a great extent it was due to the same search for austerity that led him to, not only consider monastic life, but also build a hut near Skjolden, Norway in 1913 where he intended to live a life of seclusion. When he was serving on the eastern front during the First War, he came across a copy of Tolstoy's religious writing which apparently had a great affect on him.

He was subject to fits of depression, often bordering on the suicidal and his close friends were subjected to unaccountable moody reactions. On the other hand, he had a naive charm. Malcolm tells of him washing his host's dishes in the bath and giving Malcolm's wife a dish mop in reference to her 'unhygenic' cloth.⁴ He really enjoyed reading American detective magazines, sitting in the front row of the cinema during matinee performances and rolling pennies at fairgrounds. Human kindness and concern were for him far more important qualities in a person than intellectual prowess or sophisticated taste. There was a profound sense of honesty that led him to enter into philosophical problems passionately. He had a strong desire to clear problems up and be rid of them.

The Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus

I will deal with the Tractatus in as short a manner as is possible since, in this paper, it is only necessary to be acquainted with it to the point of understanding the radicalism of the later Investigations as well as assessing the validity of writings on Johns and Wittgenstein in Chapter 3. It is the philosophy set down in the Investigations that influenced Johns as will be made clear further on.

In the Tractatus Wittgenstein puts forward the argument that language is a picture of reality. The world (reality) consists entirely of simple facts or atomic facts, none of which are in any way dependent on one another. This

does not mean that atomic facts cannot be analysed but only that they cannot be analysed into other atomic facts:

'Each item (fact) can be the case or not the case while everything else remains the same.'⁵

What Wittgenstein is trying to say then is that reality is made of facts that are entities, that is they cannot be reduced to other facts. Each fact has a logical form - they are made up of things or objects whose individual form is unutterable, atomic.

'In a manner of speaking, objects are colourless.'⁶

'Either a thing has properties that nothing else has, in which case we can immediately use a description to distinguish it from the others and refer to it, or on the other hand, there are several things that have the whole set of their properties in common in which case it is quite impossible to indicate one of them.'⁷

A fact (at other times termed 'state of affairs') is made up of objects that link into one another in a logical pattern and Wittgenstein saw language as the picturing of these facts. He reputedly got hold of this idea in 1914 from an article in a magazine about a lawsuit in Paris concerning an automobile accident. During the hearing, a model of the accident was produced. For Wittgenstein, the model served as a description of a possible state of affairs and it occurred to him that he could reverse the analogy and say language, in the form of series of atomic facts, serves as a model or picture of reality.⁸

It is important to realise that Wittgenstein saw language as literally a picture of reality and not merely like a picture. Both language and reality, he posed, share the same logical form and that anything said outside this one to one correspondence is 'nonsensical'. By nonsensical he did not mean valueless but rather 'unreal', that is with no definite meaning. The only way we can assign meaning to something said is if by comparing it to what it pictures, through seeking a logical correspondence, we can say that it is

either true or false. In other words, if a statement is not a picture, it depicts nothing definite hence says nothing definite and therefore cannot strictly speaking be judged as a reality. This is what Wittgenstein means when he says:

'The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence.'⁹

The Tractatus is a guide to the use of language in philosophy in pointing out the boundaries of discussion. Once these limits have been recognized then the philosopher may proceed in a lucid and logical fashion. Matters such as soul, beauty, God, etc., can only be talked about 'nonsensically' and hence are outside the world of reality.

In order to determine whether a picture or proposition (i.e., a spoken fact) is true or false we have to compare it with reality. This suggests that the truth value of elementary propositions have to be ascertained empirically. But there are propositions whose truth value cannot be determined empirically. The sentence: "Either it is raining or it is not raining" is made up of two elementary propositions and the truth value of it is true regardless of what the weather is doing. Such a proposition is true by logical necessity not empirical necessity since it does not deal with reality. Wittgenstein called such an occurrence a tautology and a proposition whose truth value is false by logical necessity - "It is raining and it is not raining" - a contradiction.

'Tautologies and contradictions are not pictures of reality. They do not represent any possible situations. For the former admit all possible situations and the latter none'¹⁰

Hence language can only be a picture of reality if its logical form is that of reality. Without expressing this form nothing can be said. Not only it cannot be said, it cannot be thought since thought is also a logical picture of facts. Wittgenstein means by a 'thought' not the psychological but, in the linguistic sense, an unsaid proposition.

When the Tractatus came out it was eagerly taken up by the Logical-Positivists in Vienna for what they saw as its anti-metaphysical outlook. But Wittgenstein's point is not one of rejecting the metaphysical but rather rejecting the possibility of stating the metaphysical. Through this rejection, Wittgenstein becomes paradoxically mystical in that he establishes a world beyond the limits of language, a world that must remain in silence. It is a realm that cannot be discussed within philosophy since we cannot impose a method upon it.

'The sense of the world must be outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it happens: in it no value exists - and if it did, it would have no value.

If there is any value that does have value, it must be outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental.'¹¹

In the final analysis it could be argued that the Tractatus contradicts itself in being able to discuss what it affirms cannot be discussed. Russell in his introduction says for example:

'The whole subject of ethics is placed by Mr. Wittgenstein in the mystical inexpressible region. Nevertheless he is capable of expressing his ethical opinions.'¹²

Wittgenstein in the end seemed to agree but sees it as having a purpose.

'My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognises them as nonsensical, when he has used them - as steps - to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)'.¹³

The Philosophical Investigations

What precipitated the complete repudiation of the Tractatus is recounted by both Malcolm and von Wright. At one point Wittgenstein was defending his view of the proposition and that which it describes as having the same logical form with a colleague of his, the Italian economist, Piero Straffa. Straffa made a gesture used by Neapolitans to express contempt or disgust and asked Wittgenstein 'what the logical form of that was'.¹⁴ According to Wittgenstein

this was the question that made him realise the absurdity of his former position.

Wittgenstein opens the Philosophical Investigations with a discussion of St. Augustine's conception of the basis of language. In his Confessions he claimed he learnt to understand the speech of his elders by ostensive definition. - i.e., by pointing to an object and at the same time naming it, he believed the word's meaning would become clear. But Wittgenstein points out that such a system consists only of learning names and what they refer to. Such a conception only creates an over-simplified language or as he calls it, 'language game',

'It is as if someone were to say: "A game consists in moving objects about on a surface according to certain rules..." - and we replied: You seem to be thinking of board games, but there are others. You can make your definition correct by expressly restricting it to those games.'¹⁵

The idea of giving meaning to a word by pointing to the object it represents does not fully explain its meaning. It is not the whole explanation, but merely one specific training.

'With different training the same ostensive teaching of these words would have effected a quite different understanding.'¹⁶

Wittgenstein feels that St. Augustine's belief that a person learns to speak by simply memorizing names is illogical since it presupposes a certain knowledge of language. If someone were to point to a red object and say, "This is red", unless the 'student' understands what the word 'colour' means the statement will be meaningless. 'Red' may equally refer to the size, shape or material of the object. Therefore ostensive definition or naming of objects does not necessarily give meaning.

'And now, I think, we can say: Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it already had a language only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already think, only not yet speak. And "think" would here mean something like "talk to itself".'¹⁷

In other words ostensive definitions only work with people who already have some knowledge of the language. In order to point to things by naming them we have to know first the nature of what it is we are pointing to, that is the meaning of the name. Wittgenstein believes the meaning of the word is found in discovering its use. If the use of the word is learned then its meaning is also.

'For a large class of cases - though not for all - in which we employ the word "meaning" it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language.'¹⁸

We could think of words as tools - things that we understand only in association with their function.

All this is a long way from Wittgenstein's previous views in the Tractatus. Picturing or naming the world is meaningless since there are many ways of seeing language. Wittgenstein asks:

'But how many kinds of sentences are there? Say assertion question and command? - There are countless kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once and for all; but new types of language, new language games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and forgotten.'¹⁹

There is no common basis for language; it has no one distinctive property and likewise language games have no property in common. Wittgenstein compares language games with games in general. There is no simple property common to all games. Chess and ring-a-ring-o-roses have a very different make up to each other. However, there may be similarities between games, and in turn between language games - i.e., different usages - which Wittgenstein calls 'family resemblances'.

'I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc., etc., overlap and criss-cross in the same way - And I shall say: 'games' form a family.'²⁰

In the Tractatus each state of affairs was unique and from a logical point of view there could only be one proposition for it and the task of the philosopher was to reveal the logical structure of the proposition. In the Investigations, Wittgenstein not only rejects the notion that facts have a logical form but also that states of affairs consist of objects whose form is unutterable, since whether an object is composite or non-composite, depends upon, not an absolute, but on the particular language game used. He asks us to imagine a chessboard and attempt to determine whether it is composite or not. If the idea of an 'absolute' non-composite object is rejected then the notion of simple states of affairs has to be abandoned. Language is no longer a picture of reality but a tool with a rich variety of uses - each attributing a different meaning to it. There is no one correct form, every sentence 'is in order as it is.'²¹

Now we discern a different role for the philosopher. It is not to ensure the correct form of the sentence but to understand it, and the remainder of the Investigations could be summarised as attempting to do just this - to seek out the reasons for the misunderstanding of language. When one language game is wrongly assumed to be analogous to another, philosophical understanding is needed to see the error. The differences are hidden not because they are unfamiliar but because in ordinary thinking they are too familiar. In this light philosophy is not a science that points out something new but rather something which points out truisms.²² Wittgenstein believes that the philosopher's aim should be to establish complete clarity which would not so much lead to a solution - something new - but a disappearance of the problem.

He does not pose a correct model for understanding but simply reveals the blind spots.

'What is your aim in philosophy? - To show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle.'²³

If we see how to get out of the muddle we can also see how we got there in the first place. Wittgenstein conceives of philosophy as 'a battle against the bewitchment of intelligence by means of language.'²⁴

One of the philosophical problems Wittgenstein discusses are those statements that speak of abstractions rather than bodily existences. Statements about seeing are analysed, but I will deal with this area in Chapter 4 in specific relation to Johns' works. Another area are those statements to do with comprehension which are often misunderstood in what they mean by mistaking how the specific words are used. For example, when we say, "Now I understand", we usually treat it as a report and the question arises: what does it report? It is not the occasion of understanding since if it were so it would imply an observation of a mental act and we would have to ask ourselves whether 'understanding' is a single mental act that can be observed.

'We are trying to get hold of the mental process of understanding which seems to be hidden behind those cases and therefore more readily visible accompaniments. But we do not succeed; or rather, it does not get as far as a real attempt. For even supposing I had found something that happened in all those cases of understanding - why should it be the understanding? And how can the process of understanding have been hidden, when I said "Now I understand" because I understood?! And if I say it is hidden - then how do I know what I have to look for? I am in a muddle.'²⁵

There are different processes of understanding and if the statement "Now I understand" is treated as a report it becomes meaningless as it is not a report of anything in particular. Also we cannot say we understand until we have actually understood. To treat "Now I understand" as an observation is absurd as making the report "Now I have begun". Rather the statement can only be meaningful as an exclamation, like "Ah!" which is a long way from report or

description. Looked at in this way, such statements cannot be true or false even if they can be justified later.

'We could also imagine a case in which light was always seeming to dawn on someone - he exclaims. "Now I have it!" and then can never justify himself in practice - It might seem to him as if in the twinkling of an eye he forgot again the meaning of the picture that occurred to him.'²⁶

The exclamation may be unjustifiable but the joy or relief at having thought one saw the answer to a problem was certainly present. The statement was not a description of a mental state but more what Wittgenstein calls a "signal" which we judge whether it was rightly employed by what the person goes on to do.²⁷

Wittgenstein examines numerous philosophical problems from all different angles - statements of intention, action, pain, states of mind, seeing, recognition, etc.. K. T. Fann describes the Investigations as a book of case histories of philosophic cures. There is nothing in the book that we would ordinarily call a reasoning or argument - 'it is more a book of reminders.'²⁸

In this sense, the work takes on the aspect of some sort of anthropological search where Wittgenstein, repudiating the idea of atomism, seeks the essential connection between things in the same way the anthropologist may look toward the sense of the totality through the study of anthropocentrism rather than ethnocentrism. Both involve the understanding of humanity as a whole.

'What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; we are not contributing curiosities however, but observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes.'²⁹

CHAPTER THREE.: JOHNS AND WITTGENSTEIN:
 THE STATE OF CRITICISM SO FAR

"You have in the past shown some impatience with critics.
Would you care to reveal your present feeling?"

After an especially long pause, he answered in a very small
voice, "I'm very tolerant," and laughed.' l

To date only three critics have discussed the relationship of Jasper Johns' work to Wittgenstein and one of these, Nicolas Calas, devotes only a couple of sentences to the subject.² Max Kozloff's comments are more lengthy but on the whole no more satisfactory - in fact maybe less so. Although Rosalind Krauss' discussion is less erroneous than Kozloff's she too presents a number of 'misunderstandings' that need to be cleared up.

In Kozloff's discussion he is guilty of a series of quite gross mistakes to the point that we have to throw out most of his application of Wittgenstein's writing to Johns' work. It will be easier to sort some of this out by quoting the two most relevant passages in full. He says of the Tractatus

'... it (the World) comprises states of affairs, or facts, regarding the complex relationship of things. Our way of comprehending this situation is by picturing (rather than simply naming) it by language. And this picturing is organized by combinations of words, as in the structure of a sentence, which must identically reflect the manner in which "states of affairs" itself is ordered. "The fact that the elements of the picture," says Wittgenstein, "are related to one another in a determinate way represents that things are related to one another in the same way".'

So far so good - but he goes on:

'Hypotheses about reality, therefore, take the shape of models or language games, designed to show not what is true, for what one holds to be true can be verified only empirically, but what is possible.'³

What Kozloff has done is make the serious mistake of blindly jumping from the stance taken in the Tractatus to that of the Investigations. He shows that he has understood such passages in the Tractatus as:

'A picture represents a possible situation in logical space. A picture contains the possibility of the situation that it represents. A picture agrees with reality or fails to agree; it is correct or incorrect true or false.'⁴

but in the second paragraph says,

'reality, therefore, takes the shape of language games.'

This is in reference to the Investigations, which is a direct refutation of the

Tractatus. So what we are presented with, then, is Kozloff saying that elements of a picture are related in a logical way since 'things' are related to one another in a determinate fashion, and in conclusion, that reality is given form by language games and hence meaning will always be no more than arbitrary. The contradiction is such that it creates fundamental problems for Kozloff's subsequent analysis of Johns' work.

Passing beyond this, Kozloff discusses the question of tautology and contradiction which he says - appearing to quote Wittgenstein - express a "false truth value". Nowhere does Wittgenstein use this phrase and in its context it is difficult to know what exactly Kozloff means. The only way I can explain it is that it refers to statements that are not models of reality - as indeed Tautologies and contradictions, from Wittgenstein's earlier view, are not. But then to use such a term is to misconstrue what Wittgenstein says of these types of propositions. Wittgenstein explains that they both do have a truth value. The tautology's is essentially true and the contradiction's essentially false. They are not pictures of reality since we can determine their truth value from logical necessity and do not require any empirical verification.

Given this misconception Kozloff goes on to explain that what Johns does is present us with various pictorial elements and display them as if they are syntactical entities formed to illustrate some proposition, rather than crystalize them into products of fusion and feeling.¹⁵ The audience presumably does the linking up of these elements and we are forced to see the results as tautologous and contradictory:

'It is only when they are scrutinized and verified to be ripe with tautologies and contradictions that they come fully alive as the creations they are. In other words, their distinction is to have addressed themselves to the fact that what has a "false truth value" [i.e., that which is not a model of reality - I assume] in logic can have a profound aesthetic reality in art.'¹⁶

Supposing Johns' work does contain tautology and contradiction, they are no more 'models of reality' merely because they are presented to us. Wittgenstein also presents us with such statements. It is as if Kozloff feels Wittgenstein has a problem over not being able to fit such propositions into reality, that deep down he would like to somehow and Johns manages it by being creative - art to the rescue! Kozloff has also failed to realise that in the Tractatus aesthetics is outside the world of reality, the world of facts, and hence Johns' work is no 'answer' since it is outside the Tractatus' conception of reality.

Apart from these claims we should look at some of Johns' work to see if they stand up to any of them. By the Sea, 1961 (Plate XXXV) is a useful one to take since it is also discussed by Rosalind Krauss in relation to Wittgenstein. In this work there are four colour labels: RED, YELLOW, BLUE, and a fourth in which all three words are superimposed to form, not a single word as Krauss claims, but a coalescing of the three into virtually an unreadable sign. Each word labels one of four sections of stretched canvas that go to make up the work. Although for the most part they have been painted separately, when joined together the entire surface is covered by a more or less uniform painterliness. Kozloff is asking us to look at these labels and treat them as either tautologous or contradictory or possibly even both. Hence we are to say the RED section is red and the RED section is not red; the YELLOW section is yellow, the YELLOW section is not yellow and so on. However, there is no tautology since the red section is not wholly red and there is no contradiction since the section is not wholly not red. The work in fact has nothing to do with such propositions and even Kozloff himself asserts this when discussing False Start:

'.... Johns would never confuse a symbol with a sign he is neither interested nor uninterested in preserving colour purity.... You do not ask whether that yellow patch is red as the label says but in the unlikely event that you do, the yellow is affirmed and the red (of the lettering) acknowledged, but the connection is not implied.'⁷

The ambiguity of By the Sea lies in something far different that we will look at later on.

Kozloff proceeds to make a further error in calling tautologies and contradictions, "states of affairs" which from the Tractatus' point of view they definitely are not. He then states that what is at the centre of Johns' work is the notion of usage and that, true enough, he picks this up directly from reading the Investigations. But Kozloff illustrates this with a passage from the Investigations that has little to do specifically with the usage of words and more with the fallacy of thinking a word signifies one thing.

'Imagine someone's saying' "All tools serve to modify something. Thus the hammer modifies the position of the nail, the saw the shape of the board, and so on." - And what is modified by the ruler, the glue pot, the nails? - "Our knowledge of a thing's length, the temperature of the glue, and the solidity of the box." - Would anything be gained by this assimilation of expressions?'⁸

To describe a tool as a 'modifier' is not sufficient to give it meaning since what it modifies in turn may modify. Whilst dealing with meaning and usage Kozloff takes a brief look at Passage, 1962 (Plate XXXVI) and Johns' treatment of Wittgenstein's concept.

'But when the artist labels an area "scrape" he shows that a ruler has effected the scraping, and that it has smeared out part of the written direction to do what it has done! Not only is he displacing the proper function of tools, but in the end he also displaces "use" showing it in its true aesthetic guise of uselessness.'⁹

Johns is indeed using the ruler as a scraper rather than a tool for measuring but Kozloff misses the whole point that both Johns and Wittgenstein make, namely that there is no 'proper function' of the word (the ruler has been labelled) or the object: ruler. A ruler is only a measuring instrument when

we use it for measuring. To the boy who is caught throwing ink-pellets in class it means an entirely different thing. If we use it to scrape paint then that is what its meaning is.

The paradox of the word 'scrape' in Passage that itself has been scraped is not a question of a word being rendered useless since we can still read it, hence use it. On the contrary Johns is very nicely reading it from the vantage point of two language games at the same time - one of report: "The paint has been scraped" and one of command: "it says 'scrape' so I scraped it!"

Finally, Kozloff believes Johns differs from Wittgenstein in 'pointing out' that there are no rules common to all language games - but does not Wittgenstein do this? - and managing a 'redundant naming of objects.'¹⁰ But to presume that naming of objects already present is a redundancy is again to miss the whole point. In Fool's House, 1962 (Plate XXXVII) Johns labels the broom, towel, stretcher and cup with a scribbled name and arrow pointing to the object not in order to indicate any absurdity of repetition but to reveal the ill-reasoned notion of names giving meaning. Johns is, essentially concerned with what Wittgenstein asks us:

'Suppose, however, someone were to object: "It is not true that you must already be master of a language in order to understand an ostensive definition: all you need - of course! - is to know or guess what the person giving the explanation is pointing to. That is, whether for example to the shape of the object, or to its colour, or to its number, and so on" - And what does 'pointing to the shape', 'pointing to the colour' consist in? Point to a piece of paper. - And now point to its shape - now to its colour - now to its number (that sounds queer!). - How did you do it?'¹¹

What is the word 'towel' pointing to? Something to dry our hands on? A paint rag, as it has paint smeared on it? A piece of collage? I will discuss this work further in the next chapter.

* * *

Rosalind Krauss' article is more useful and she steers clear of anything said in the Tractatus altogether, concentrating solely on passages from the

Investigations. Her understanding is much more sensible than Kozloff's but she limits herself to asking questions specifically in the light of Wittgenstein's idea of 'usage' and does not deal with the implications that his philosophy has in the world of art as Johns does. The project is slightly marred by confusing various works and at times seeing what is not there.

In Passage, 1962, the stick device of Device is replaced by a ruler and Krauss succumbs to the temptation of assimilating Johns' iconography to Wittgenstein's imagery. This is spurious work in the first place,¹² but even then the paragraph she attributes the use of the ruler to bears very little relationship to the context in which we find it used in Passage.

'Suppose I were to ask: is it clear to us, while we are uttering, the sentences "This rod is one yard long" and "Here is one soldier", that we mean different things by "one", that "one" has different meanings? - Not at all - Asked "Do you mean the same thing by both 'ones'? one would perhaps answer: "Of course I mean the same thing; one!" (Perhaps raising one finger).

Now has "1" a different meaning when it stands for a measure and when it stands for a number? If the question is framed in this way one will answer in the affirmative.'¹³

The reason for the mistake appears to be a visual one. Krauss believes that the ruler manages to establish the whole scale of the picture:

'The ruler seems to me to function not only as a scraping tool but also as a measuring device since the size of the upper third of the canvas can be read off from the ruler's scale.'¹⁴

This is wishful thinking since it does no such thing. Each third of the canvas is 18" x 40", whereas the ruler is just under 14" long. It is also unnecessary to force this analysis since the different usages are already implied as pointed out previously. In addition to this Krauss confuses the imagery of Passage with Out the Window, II, 1962 (Plate XXXVIII) which makes reading difficult.¹⁵

Rosalind Krauss' view of By the Sea is far closer to the truth than Kozloff's but even then she does not quite make it. She sees Johns as

'demonstrating the impossibility of separating out meaningful aspects of an object',¹⁶ and finds a parallel in the Investigations.

'.... if I am shown various different leaves and told "this is called a 'leaf'," I get an idea of the shape of a leaf, and a picture of it in my mind. - But what does the picture of a leaf look like when it does not show us any particular shape, but 'what is common to all shapes of leaf'? Which shade is the 'sample in my mind' of the colour green - the sample of what is common to all shades of green?... Ask yourself: what shape must the sample of the colour green be? Should it be rectangular? Or would it then be the sample of a green rectangle? - So should it be 'irregular' in shape? And what is to prevent us then from regarding it - that is, from using it - only as a sample of irregularity of shape?'¹⁷

This is precisely the point of By the Sea. The naming of colours plays a very small part in distinguishing them. We have to take into consideration how we are using these names. A Peruvian blanket-maker may have only one or two conceptions of what 'red' is whilst Greenberg would presumably only read it in terms of brightness.

What Krauss omits are the implications of the lower panel where all three words have been superimposed but the overall colouring remains the same. Literally Johns is conveying the absurdity of naming to a stage where he says to try to describe a colour that has been made up of the primary pigments is no more successful than actually physically mixing their individual names into one meaningless sign. It becomes in the end a question of what we mean by a composite colour:

'We use the word "composite" (and therefore the word "simple") in an enormous number of different and differently related ways. (Is the colour of a square on a chessboard simple, or does it consist of pure white and pure yellow? And is white simple, or does it consist of the colours of the rainbow?...).

To the philosophical question: "Is the visual image of this tree composite, and what are its component parts?" The correct answer is: "That depends on what you understand by "composite"." (And that is of course not an answer but a rejection of the question)'¹⁸

The only other work Krauss discusses specifically in respect to

Wittgenstein is Field Painting, 1963-64 (Plate XXXIX) where she sees Johns actually 'using' colour in a new way by making it literally three dimensional in the form of wooden letters of the words, Red, Yellow and Blue that stand out from the canvas. Johns indeed has shown that new uses give new meanings but he has not enabled us, as Krauss suggests, to point to colour any more meaningfully than before. The question still would remain, as Johns expressly wants it to: exactly what are you pointing to?

Beyond the various errors and omissions discussed, a common undertone that appears in Kozloff's and to a lesser extent in Krauss' is that Johns is in some way anxious to refute Wittgenstein - as if somehow he were trying to present a situation where we can in actuality designate something specific or resolved in painting. This is not only to deny the nature of all the work we have looked at in Chapter I but also to go against his own remarks in the various interviews. In the next Chapter I hope to make this much clearer in showing how Wittgenstein provided a methodology where Johns was not only able to remain even more subtly outside his work but among other things to offer council to criticism in general.

CHAPTER FOUR:

JOHNS AND WITTGENSTEIN

'Furthermore he disposes of the whole matter of influence by observing:

"The problem with influences is that the thing or person you say is an influence has to accept some of the blame for what you've done,"and laughing uproariously.'1

Through his contact with Duchamp in 1959 and Wittgenstein in 1961 Johns was essentially refining his inquiry into the meaning of art. With his previous work he probably saw a certain superficiality in simply showing feasible situations where contraries could exist side by side. As Fried suggests:

'An artist with Johns' critical powers could not but be aware sooner or later, that his putative solution was no solution at all but rather a yoking of incompatibles.

... From being an attempt to solve a formal problem inherent in abstract expressionism Johns' art becomes an exploiting, heightening and showing off of the problem itself.'²

Fried, characteristically, would read it in terms of a Hegelian dialectic, but it seems more fruitful to bring it closer to home and simply ascertain the nature of Johns' developing methodology from the two figures that were becoming prominent during these years.

An analysis of Johns' growth via Duchamp would, of course be a paper in itself and since this is fundamentally a look into the clarification of the 'problem' given by Wittgenstein, I will be brief. After Johns' first one-man show, held at the Castelli Gallery (January 20th - February 8th, 1958), he was spoken of frequently as a neo-Dadaist.³ Having little idea what this meant he read Motherwells' anthology, Dada Painters and Poets. In 1959 Robert Lebel came out with his monograph on Duchamp. This, together with a visit to the Arensberg Collection in Philadelphia in the same year, deeply affected Johns. Shortly after, Nicolas Calas brought Duchamp to Johns' studio. Johns began to collect his works and wrote a short review of a new translation of Duchamp's notes from the Green Box.⁴ Such devotion was unprecedented and goes to show the strong affinity he felt for the older man.

Iconographically we could link much of Johns' subsequent work with Duchamp's - the use of rulers with Trois Stoppage Etalon, 1913-14, Johns' Thermometer with the one in Why not Sneeze, 1921. The colour charts of

According to What with the same in Tum', 1918. The scraped Device circles with the roto-reliefs and so on. In his review in Scrap, Johns showed particular interest in the famous passage from the notes to the Large Glass.

'To loose the possibility of recognizing

2 similar objects _____

2 colours, 2 laces

2 hats, 2 forms whatever

to reach the impossibility of sufficient visual memory to
toatrânsfer

from one

like object to another

the memory imprint

_____ Same possibility

with sounds, with brain facts.' 5

For Duchamp the exercise of transference is primarily an intellectual one whereas Johns' would like to see it take place perceptually:

'My idea has always been that in painting the way ideas are conveyed is through the way it looks and I see no way to avoid that and I don't think Duchamp can either.'⁶

This does not necessarily represent a clash of interests since the aims are the same. But Duchamp is interested in the conceptual⁷ whilst Johns is specifically intent in pointing out the fallacy of generalisation, not from any cosmological aspect - although, of course, it is related - but within the visual practice itself. Johns is a painter and consequently finds enough to think about in terms of the painting alone. Duchamp encouraged him to depolarise the situation and showed a way out of the notion of the problematic - 'there is no solution since there is no problem'.⁸

Johns saw Duchamp as moving his work from one of retinal boundaries 'into a field where language, thought and vision acted upon one another.'⁹ We have seen the beginnings of this interest in False Start and Painting With Ruler and "Gray". Wittgenstein provided a method of dealing with this in a way that the activity would remain without the problematic - it was a method that clarified the definition of looking.

Wittgenstein's later stance is not unlike Duchamp's. His conception of the philosophical problem was a need to elucidate it - a procedure that led not to any solution but to its disappearance. A passage from the Investigations could well serve as Johns' dictum:

'We do not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say, its purpose, from philosophical problems. These are of course not empirical problems. They are solved, rather, by looking into the workings.... The problems are solved not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.'¹⁰

As with Wittgenstein, Johns does not advance a theory, there is no explanation, but rather he looks into the actual workings of painting and the perceiving of it. Unlike, in fact directly opposed to, the formalist interest, he does not regard the problems of contemporary painting as empirical but as a blindness to the inherent and unavoidable visual aspects. Johns attempts to dissolve the problems by 'arranging what we have always known' and it could be said that he sees his role as artist, as a battle against the bewitchment of our sight - as well as intelligence - by not just language, but more specifically criticism.

In 1961, Johns made the sculpmetal piece, The Critic Sees (Plate XXXX). It consists of a small brick of plaster coated with sculpmetal, (3-1/4 x 6-1/4 x 2"). The front of this shows a pair of spectacles behind whose glass each eye has been replaced by a mouth, one open, the other not so much closed as the teeth barred. It is an important work since to misunderstand it is to confuse the artist's stance in further works. Johns relates that this particular piece was inspired by a three minute visit of a critic to one of his exhibitions.¹¹ If it has not done already the intention becomes clear from this information. The critic is not as interested in looking at art as he is

talking about it. This does not assume that the critic does not look at all, only that looking is a means to another end. From a Wittgensteinian outlook the message becomes doubly clear. In the Investigations Wittgenstein discusses the sensation of seeing and the describing of that sensation. When we look at something, we are not simply involved in the act of the sensory but also in an interpretation of that something. When we look we experience different aspects of a figure which in fact are different interpretations of it. Our judgement of that figure will only be one of many that could be made. Consequently there is no authoritative view of the thing seen. Perhaps this is obvious, but Wittgenstein feels it necessary to warn us of the danger in forgetting it. As with the mistake of attaching meaning to a word by its naming function so we must remember that aspects of a painting can be described but not explained and ultimately the only authority is the painting itself.

This is what Johns is saying. The practice of criticism is meaningful only to the extent of suggestion. We are all involved in it - even though I think the work points directly at the professional - and must beware. To argue over interpretation where it becomes a question almost of dogma comes perilously close to losing one's sense of sight.

'Here it occurs to me in conversation on aesthetic matters we use the words: "You have to see it like this, this is how it is, how it is meant"; "When you see it like this, you see where it goes wrong"; "You have to hear this bar as an introduction"; "You must hear it in this key"; "You must phrase it like this".'¹²

New York criticism in particular has become so out of control as to almost impose rules of perception not only on to the audience but the artist himself - e.g., some of the colour-field painters.¹³ The status of the critic is high similar to a film star and consequently there is an attractive position to be held, a reputation that must be carefully nurtured. In the Sketchbook Notes Johns says that 'looking is and is not eating and being

eaten',¹⁴ which indeed is the case of the mouths in The Critic Sees. Not only is this a reference to the more mundane financial aspect of the critics' activity but also to the whole process of chewing over and regurgitating the artwork. Nicolas Calas, one of the few American art writers to watch out for the dangers of criticism, notes:

'When critics treat pictures as texts rather than images, the public is expected to see art in terms of problems and solutions. Marcel Duchamp was fond of comparing critics to parasites feeding on artists; today many formalist artists could seem to aspire to be fed on.'¹⁵

In such a state where material as well as psychological survival plays a large role, such work as Johns' that refuses to be pinned down poses itself even more as a threat and hence more ingenuity must be brought to bear to bring it under control.

This would explain the reluctance of a writer like Kozloff to accept The Critic Sees for what it is and to interpret it in a way that is compatible to his own ends.

'It is perhaps not as worth belabouring the obvious inference that a critic sees with his mouth as it is interesting to note that the piece is figuratively endowed with a sensory capacity of its own ... Taken in itself the object would imply, not that sight is more important than speaking, but that they are Peers, brought together in an unnatural situation... the probability remains that they are necessarily mutual reinforcements, components of an integrated function.'¹⁶

So for Kozloff, Johns is celebrating the glorious practice of the critic who brings about the interaction of sight and voice - 'the prime motive of any work is the wish to give rise to discussion'! Not only is this ridiculously biased, it is an actual example of the critic seeing. He has avoided the implications of the aggressive mouths, the absence of any perceptual organ - we see mouths not eyes, spectacles infer poor vision not clear sightedness - purely in order to safeguard his position that the first reason for painting is not simply to look at it, but so somebody can talk about it!

Johns is attacking the critic whose motives are very different from learning to see. Wittgenstein sees the role of the philosopher as some sort of doctor who cures diseases of misunderstanding and likewise Johns takes it upon himself to clear up bad habits about looking. He does this not by advancing any kind of theory on the meaning of art but by conveying to us that irony in the discussion of art is unavoidable. For every interpretation of a collection of pictorial elements another will follow and application of language to the art object must take this in consideration.

'Well suppose that a picture does come before your mind when you hear the word "cube", say the drawing of a cube. In what sense can this picture fit or fail to fit a use of the word "cube"? - Perhaps you say: "It's quite simple - if that picture occurs to me and I point to a triangular form for instance, and say it's a cube then this use of the word doesn't fit the picture." - But doesn't it fit? I have purposely so chosen the example that it is quite easy to imagine a method of projection according to which the picture does fit after all.

The picture of the cube did indeed suggest a certain use to us, but it was possible for me to use it differently.'¹⁷

The effect of Wittgenstein's argument is that it calls attention to the fact that there are other processes, apart from the one we originally think of, to applying a picture to the word "cube". The connection between, word and image is tenuous.

'What is essential is to see that the same thing can come before our minds when we hear the word and the application still be different. Has it the same meaning both times? I think we shall say not.'¹⁸

Johns must have been a little bewildered to begin with over the varied and conflicting interpretations his work received in the late fifties - not to mention the different schools they gave rise to. Contact with Wittgenstein's work probably came as a welcome relief. In another sense, however, because of its effect in providing Johns with a far subtler vision and methodology of eluding dogmatic interpretations, he has brought most of the North American 'heavies' to have a go in an effort to put him in some

comprehensible slot. The situation of course is not new, but what is different is that Johns is the first to construct an oeuvre that leaves himself out entirely in the same way Wittgenstein deals with what we have rather than giving us yet another hypothesis. Because of this, his work is considered impenetrable and thus difficult and a common result is that literature on his work is also difficult. Max Kozloff, with the intent of producing the definitive work, produces a monograph that at times of uncertainty almost hides behind mystification.¹⁹ In a world of criticism where interpretation is hierarchial such measures are understandable, even if unforgivable, whereas Johns' work addresses itself to nobody and everybody.

Johns is paralleling Wittgenstein's anthropocentrism where the meaning of the painting is only relevant to the specific context it is being viewed in and nothing else. What the critics, and consequently ourselves, have done is to perceive through bringing certain concepts to a particular situation. The result has been that the painting's success is dependant on whether it affirms these preconceptions or not.

'What is meant is that we often see and come to know things only in terms of habit, of conditioned response of mental set, of necessary and predictable cues. We tend to obliterate those facts which contradict that which we already know and anticipate.'²⁰

Johns began a campaign as it were to remedy this mistake and if understood in terms of Wittgenstein's philosophy his works become much easier to live with. Presumably the difficulty the professional critic would have lies in the requirement that he take a radical relook at what he is doing and ultimately a total questioning of his motives for writing.²¹

Before I go on to look at some of Johns' painting in a Wittgensteinian context, an interesting thought occurs at this stage. We have been talking about the dangers of generalisation when trying to find meaning in art. However, at the same time, both Wittgenstein's and Johns' anthropocentrism

inversely has a levelling effect. Pears, on the Investigations states:

'It does not assimilate one kind of discourse to another: on the contrary, it is always the differences between them that are emphasized ... But it does bring all the great philosophical questions which arise within them back to the same level, ordinary human life, from which philosophy started. Philosophy is the voyage out, and the voyage back, both of which are necessary if the logical space of our ordinary linguistic practices is to be understood.'²²

This is precisely what Johns' later work emphasises. We are presented with the impossibility of setting any of our perceptions within a specific framework of reference and this in the end paradoxically leads us to the generalisation that all our perceptions, the critic's, the artist's can finally be reduced only to human life from which art started.

'He is engaged with the endlessly changing ancient task: the imitation of nature in her manner of operation.... he does so without structure, he sometimes introduces signs of humanity to intimate that we, not birds for instance, are part of the dialogue.'²³

The painting No, 1961 (Plate XXXXI) reveals a painted surface where the cut out letters of the word 'NO' hang from a wire casting both a real and a painted shadow. The work as its title implies deals with things and their opposites - the wire-looking shape in the upper left is the outline of an imprint Johns made with the base of a cast of Duchamp's Female Fig Leaf - which in turn is an imprint.²⁴ The letters on the wire serve as a pointing device. Johns wills us to select an area of the painting - or even the whole painting itself - define it and then attempt to verify the definition by swinging the word on the end of the wire over to that area.. We are continuously denied. Informed, we proceed to affirm that our first definition is not the right one for that area and find ourselves doubly denied. Whatever portion we select and interpret not only is it negated but the negation is denied. The irony here is that there is no persuasion on anybody's part towards a definite conclusion. Nor is it a stance of neutrality since each time the word 'NO'

I would just write down numbers and you might say: 'My God! It is grand.' It wouldn't be any description. You wouldn't say such a thing at all. It would only be a description if you could paint (act?) according to this picture, which of course is conceivable. But this would show that you can't at all transmit the impression by words, but you'd have again to paint.'²⁶

In order to reach a satisfactory description of the face of Michelangelo's God, Wittgenstein suggests trying a system whereby a series of grid references may create the necessary impression. That is by a collection of pin-pointed references we may conjure up the image itself. The absurdity of this notion is obvious. Likewise, Johns invites us to describe the canvas by selecting as many points on it as we like in the hope of creating the image itself. After continual negation and double negation we will be forced to realise that description does not capture and that, as Wittgenstein says, finally the only satisfactory answer is the painting itself.

Fools House, 1962 could be described, among other things, as the next step in line from Courbet's L'Atelier, 1855 and Rauschenberg's White Painting, 1952. As Rauschenberg's white paintings were 'airports for the lights, shadows and particles',²⁷ so Johns' canvas becomes a landing strip for objects from his studio. On it he has fixed a number of articles and placed them not in a haphazard way but as if concerned in their compositional factors. They are not detritus in the Rauschenberg sense but important elements of the art process - even to the cup of tea!

The fundamental irony lies in the naming of the objects. The broom is labelled "broom", but it is also a paint brush. The stretcher by inference of the common connotation of the broom could also be taken as the floor. They are also compositional elements, colour, texture. Kozloff even goes as far as to suggest that the dividing of the canvas down the middle by the broom handle is a precursor of the similar division in Field Painting.²⁸ An intensification of

the naming irony was provided by the occurrence of a friend who seeing the picture for the first time exclaimed, "Any fool knows it's a broom."²⁹ Johns has given an illustration of Wittgenstein's maxim, 'the meaning of language is in its usage' and similarly the meaning of art is in its usage. Such a belief of Johns' is what Cage meant in his 'Statements re Duchamp'.

'Duchamp showed the usefulness of addition (mustache).
Rauschenberg showed the function of subtraction (de Kooning).
Well we look forward to multiplication and division. It is
safe to assume that someone will learn trigonometry. Johns.'³⁰

Johns does not simply add or subtract to give extra or changed meaning. He shows the whole in a way that can be understood from numerous angles. As with Wittgenstein's philosophy in which he sees a duty not to impose a uniform grid on the space of language, Johns, by naming various objects that we rapidly begin to attribute different uses to, invites us to look at things from different contexts and not merely from a single preconceived one. To treat the proposition, "This is a broom" as an atomic fact denies the other associations we cannot help making. It is this complexity of meanings that Johns is anxious that we recognise. Pears on Wittgenstein describes this as an interest in holism - a procedure that creates an enormously involved task if it is to be fulfilled. The object must be approached again and again in order to recall all its aspects that make up the whole meaning. From a mathematical point of view the activity is trigonometrical in that two aspects of a work would constitute one triangle and so on.

The idea of usage that occurs in Passage has already been discussed in the previous chapter. In addition, a piece of collage that is labelled "envelope" not only indicates the meaninglessness of naming but is also a pun on what language and art constitute - a literal enveloping of several meanings. A piece of wire and chain joined together by a fork when used in the painting plays the role of line, a barrier to the action of the ruler, another reference to eating and, of course, a piece of chain and wire joined together by a fork.

Andrew Forge speaks of Johns' work in almost Wittgensteinian terms:

'Johns' motive is not to astonish or entertain but to open our eyes to the widest possibilities of painting as a language and to introduce to it a new concept of accuracy.'³¹

This concept of accuracy is envisioning that realm where all things meet, where all implications and interpretations can exist together. Johns says:

'Beware of the body and mind. Avoid a polar situation. Think of the edge of the city and the traffic there'³²

Look to that point where extremes meet, the country and the city and in By the Sea where land and sea meet - the tidal stretch where nothing definite can be said but all is present. Wittgenstein talks about this domain in almost humorous tones.

'Certain drawings are always seen as flat figures, and others sometimes, or always three dimensionally.

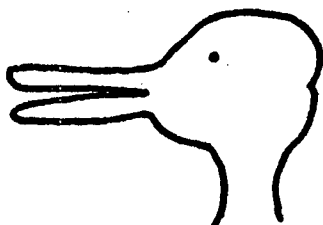
Here one would now like to say: the visual impression of what is seen three dimensionally is three dimensional; with the schematic cube, for instance. (For the description of the impression is the description of a cube).

And then it seems queer that with some drawings our impression should be a flat thing and with some a three dimensional thing. One asks oneself "Where is this going to end?"³³

Periscope (Hart Crane), 1963 (Plate XXXXII) and Land's End, 1963 (Plate XXXXIII) take their cue initially from the 'Cape Hatteras' section of Hart Crane's poem The Bridge. It would be a study in itself to consider Johns' work in relation to Hart Crane's as well as Frank O'Hara's poetry.³⁴ Suffice it to say that at the beginning of 'Cape Hatteras' Crane has reached a vision of the absolute on returning to his native land, but it is never more than momentary and even as he enjoys it he foresees its disappearance:

'Our lenses, lifts a focus, resurrects
A periscope to glimpse what joys or pain
Our eyes can share or answer - then deflects
Us shunting to a labyrinth submersed
Where each sees only his dim past reversed'³⁵

The periscope symbolises our everyday vision that views the world from all its sides but never completely, holistically as our spiritual sense can and Johns advises that we regard our visual perception of things in this light. When we look, we view the whole even though we are only aware of one aspect of it at a time. On this question of aspect-seeing Wittgenstein brings to attention the Jastrow duck/rabbit which can either be viewed as the head of a duck or the head of a rabbit.



'The change of aspect: "But surely you would say that the picture is altogether different now?"

But what is different: my impression? my point of view? - Can I say? I describe the alteration like a perception; quite as if the object had altered before my eyes.

"Now I am seeing this", I might say (pointing to another picture, for example). This has the form of a report of a new perception.

The expression of a change of aspect is the expression of a new perception and at the same time of the perceptions being unchanged.'³⁶

Periscope has been divided up in a similar way to Passage in three equal areas labelled RED, YELLOW and BLUE. The segment of the scraped circle is now larger and to the right-hand edge. Instead of a ruler, a painted hand and forearm appear to cause the scraping action. The semi-circle contains a deep illusionistic space like the tube of a periscope. Rosalind Krauss believes the arm motif to have a spatial quality of an X-Ray photograph of a limb. But from the reproduction it seems rather to emulate very closely the space of the ruler device in being defined within a flat band-like shape. The scraping action is different than previously, though. Now it has a staccato, stop-start rhythm and

instantly we are reminded of the probing concentric action of a periscope viewer. Krauss refers to the hand as suggesting the 'materiality of the paint manually applied to the literal surface of the canvas'.³⁷ But taken in a Wittgensteinian context we read it as the artist spreading before us the holism of vision by separating it into the segments or aspects that we cannot avoid reducing it to when attempting to grasp it either in language or thought.

The areas labelled RED, YELLOW and BLUE are all the same metallic blues and grays and expose the same concept of meaning as they did in By the Sea. However, there are now additional questions brought up with the use of lettering. Rather than enforce the picture plane they set up a spatial illusion even if an uncertain one. The word RED is echoed by a smaller one behind and antithetically the word BLUE is shadowed by a larger one behind. The word YELLOW is preceded by a mirror image of the first two letters 'EY' by the back of the canvas being suggested as in the earlier Canvas, or, as Kozloff asks, has the canvas been folded to produce a negative?³⁸

Another word RED is shown with the 'R' upside down and the 'ED' back to front, and a word BLUE is turned in upon itself. 'Cape Hatteras' has an underlying theme dwelling on space and the travelling through it³⁹ and it is evident that Johns is interested in giving us not a defined or even contradictory one but an experience of all space in producing a collection of different aspects of seeing the same word. The irony rests in the fact that even though we view these words from different angles, they are always recognizable as either RED, YELLOW or BLUE. It seems too close to Wittgenstein's similar interest not to be linked.

'Hold the drawing of a face upside down and you can't recognize the expression of the face. Perhaps you can see that it is smiling, but not exactly what kind of smile it is. You cannot imitate the smile or describe it exactly.

And yet the picture which you have turned around may be the most exact representation of a person's face.'⁴⁰

Land's End employs similar thoughts in terms of lettering. Both pictures contain an arrow pointing downwards. In Land's End the arrow is made to look more like a sign than in Periscope and it points contrary to the direction of the upstretched arm. The situation emphasises that in Diver, 1962 (Plate XXXIV) where tiny arrows are placed on two either outstretched or diving-down arms (depending on how you look at them) in opposing direction to the limb's gestures. Wittgenstein talks to his fictitious questioner:

' "Then can whatever I do be brought into accord with the rule?" - let me ask this: what has the expression of a rule - say a sign-post - got to do with my actions? What sort of connection is there here? - Well perhaps one: I have been trained to react to this sign in a particular way, and now I do so react to it.


But that is only to give a casual connection; to tell how it has come about that we now go by the sign-post; not what this going-by-the-sign really consists in. On the contrary; I have further indicated that a person goes by a sign-post only in so far as there exists a regular use of sign-posts, a custom.'⁴¹

What are the validity of rules in painting? A similar mistake as the above is often made in talking about Johns' work. If a word 'red' labels a jumbled collection of colour the result is explained as an absurdity or dadaist intention. However, the result is an irony on the whole notion of rules giving meaning. Rules can only be understood within the context of a particular custom and Johns is interested in the idea of looking not in the reinforcing of any pre-established ideas about it.

'To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, intuitions)'⁴²

If the background of a custom is removed, the rules embedded in the custom would also disappear. In this way to analyse Johns' use of arrows as contradictory

is merely to see them within a particular institution. Solomon reads the arrows in Diver as creating a tension but Johns is not concerned with presenting contradictions rather he is intent on preventing us resting in any one frame of reference in order that we may see holistically. Absurdity is only brought about by retaining an accepted way of seeing. Wittgenstein asks:

'How does it come about that this arrow  points?
Doesn't it seem to carry in it something besides itself? -
"No, not the dead line on paper; only the psychical thing,
the meaning can do that" - That is both true and false.
The arrow points only in the application that a living human being
makes of it.'⁴³

Wittgenstein realises that following rules is an activity which is involved in virtually everything we do and hence the importance of understanding the concept of the rule, before we become completely subordinate to them. Seen in this way Johns' work is highly moralist. His rigorous search for the curing of misconceptions has the undertones of asceticism.⁴⁴ It is a methodology that interestingly enough has close affinity with Zen and it is not at all inconceivable that the poetic beauty of this approach could have strongly rubbed off from Cage to Johns. K..T. Fann in his analysis of Wittgenstein's philosophy regards it in much the same way. Wittgenstein's contribution is not really a philosophy but a method, an art:

'... Zen masters were very much concerned with giving peace to those who were tormented by abstract philosophical questions ... [and were] well known for their ability to show the nonsensicality of metaphysical questions by replying to the questioner with nonsense, a joke, an irrelevancy, a gesture or what not. The state of 'enlightenment' in which the mind is free from philosophical questions is not unlike the state of 'complete clarity' which Wittgenstein was striving for.'⁴⁵

Johns' hunt for this 'complete clarity' makes it not too farfetched to suggest that he also enjoys an ironic sense of humour in Periscope and Land's End. In the interests of holism we are given the representational aspects as well. Periscope is painted in the metallic colours associative of a submarine and Land's End can also work as an expressionistic view out to sea with the sun

going down on the horizon!

'One thing working different ways at different times.'⁴⁶

Watchman, 1964 (Plate XXXXV) is a more kindly development of the Critic Sees - probably because the earlier piece deals with the careerist and the latter with the everyday onlooker. Watchman is almost a manifesto of Johns' idea of perception and we gain a great deal of insight into its nature from the Sketchbook Notes:

'The watchman falls "into" the "trap" of looking. The "spy" is a different person. "Looking" is and is not "eating" and "being eaten" (Cezanne ? - each object reflecting the other). That is there is continuity of some sort among the watchman, the space, the objects. The spy must be ready to "move" must be aware of his entrances and exists. The watchman leaves his job and takes away no information. The spy must remember and must remember himself and his remembering. The spy designs himself to be overlooked. The watchman "serves" as a warning. Will the spy and the watchman ever meet?'⁴⁷

The work consists of two stretched canvases, the left-hand one divided into areas labelled RED, YELLOW and BLUE (or partially so anyway) which have the overall muddy tones as if the three pigments had been mixed. On the other panel, a chair with the lower part of a body cast of a Japanese art critic sitting on it has been inverted and fixed to the upper half.⁴⁸ The cast has been truncated at the waist and the remainder of the anatomy replaced by a series of bold brush-strokes of green, orange and greys. To the right are three rectangles representing the primaries. Much of the paint has run down from the figure into and over a collaged newspaper. The whole bottom section of both canvases shows a length of scraped paint which not so much wipes out the painting as 'cheekily' covers it with a mechanical and arbitrary scheme of dark to lights. The stick that has been used to do the scraping rests against a ball near the left-hand edge.

The explanatory notes read in a style like a cross between Duchamp and Wittgenstein.⁴⁹ They survey the whole practise of the creation of and the confrontation with the art object in a way reminiscent of the more detailed search in the Green Box notes.

There are a number of parallels in Watchman to passages in the Investigations. The significance of labelled areas is clear. The inverted figure on the chair is

being confronted with a schematised version of colour - the primaries - although the sitter's own makeup is one of diverse permutations. It recalls Wittgenstein's discussion of the play between sample and memory. The sample of a colour appears to be a static affirmation of its qualities but even then our criteria for looking at it each time change since our memory changes. Consequently, a sample is no more 'final' than is our memory.

'Imagine that you were supposed to paint a particular colour "C" which was the colour that appeared when the chemical substances X and Y combined - Suppose that the colour struck you as brighter on one day than on another; would you not sometimes say: "I must be wrong, the colour is certainly the same as yesterday"? This shows that we do not always resort to what memory tells us as the verdict of the highest court of appeal'⁵⁰

The brown streaking of the paint on to the collaged newspaper or journal again infers, as an aside, what published criticism is fed with and reprocesses into terms that suit the particular argument the writer is concerned in. The stick and ball hint at the toys of a child - a reminder of the 'game' view.

Barbara Rose in her C.A.A. talk this year attributed the use of the chair in Watchman and According to What directly to a passage in the Investigations.

'...We see component parts of something composite (of a chair for instance). We say that the back is part of the chair, but it is in turn itself composed of several bits of wood; while a leg is a single component part. We also see a whole which changes (is destroyed) while its component parts remain unchanged. These are the materials from which we reconstruct that picture of reality.'⁵¹

Of course nobody could disclaim this association of imagery completely but it does not seem that plausible. If the chair refers specifically to this passage then why has not Johns emphasised this questioning of component parts? Actually the passage would have closer associations with the plaster cast. Field suggests that the chair has connections with a passage from Understanding Media - surely read by Johns':

'If the nineteenth century was the age of the editorial chair [the private point of view - Field], ours is the century of the psychiatrist's couch. As extension of man the chair is a specialist ablation of the posterior, a sort of oblique absolute of backside, whereas the couch extends the integral being.'⁵²

However, even this sounds a little speculative to warrant too much attention.

Finally we come to what has been regarded as Johns' most difficult and important painting, According to What, 1964 (Plate XXXXVI). It is made up of seven canvases which collectively offer some sort of grand apologia of painting. Reading it from left to right the first panel contains a repeat of the Watchman chair and plaster cast theme with the difference that this time the image is not only facing in the opposite direction but we see the interior surface of the cast as well as a cross-section of the chair. Attached to the bottom of this section by hinges is a small canvas that can be opened or closed. When closed it shows simply the back of a typical canvas with the title of the work stencilled on as well as the date and signature. On opening it we see a profile of Duchamp, the stencilled letters 'M.D.' and a spot of paint that has been allowed to dribble a little. The area that this small canvas covers when closed is a 'trompe l'oeil' version of the rear view of a canvas and has been labelled 'stretcher'.

Next to all this is a large section very similar to Field Painting. Here the letters of the words RED, YELLOW and BLUE are made of solid aluminum rather than wood and have none of the studio objects magnetically attached as the earlier piece does. Also the neon letter 'R' of Field Painting has been omitted but the letters of 'BLUE' have been constructed bent. To the right is a narrow vertical band that looks a bit like a multi-coloured traffic light and has been described as a colour chart. What would have been the metal stencil used to draw each circle has been bent out and attached at the base. A wider strip of canvas joins this colour band and simply shows a passage from white to blue-black through a procession of blended blue-gray tones.

The right-hand section consists of a large area covered with abstract-

expressionist brush strokes together with three flat rectangles of red, yellow and blue to create a Hoffmanesque 'push-pull' effect of surface and illusion. Beneath this is an unpainted surface - with the exception of a few splashes and drips from above - on which a common wire coat-hanger is attached. Half of it has been bent back to show a tracing that coincides with the protruding portion in a way that we can read the hanger as a flat image and a bent one at the same time. Across the whole length of According to What is a long strip of collaged newspaper and each section is linked to another by the paint 'bleeding' over the edges.

According to What has been read as not only a homage to Duchamp, but as a possible paradigm to his painting Tu m', 1918 (Plate XXXXVII), in that they both employ colour charts. I could include wire coat-hanger with hat rack, both of which have been traced around. Barbara Rose links the work with Duchamp in making the connection between plaster mold and malic mold⁵³ and we begin to see that with enough ingenuity the associations could be infinite.⁵⁴

Certainly Duchamp is thought of but if we were to rely solely on the work and Johns' Notes there is no evidence that it has that much attachment to him. In Johns' notes there is this inclusion:

'Profile? Duchamp (?). Distorted as a shadow. Perhaps on a falling hinged section. Something that can be erased or shifted. (Magnetic area) In WHAT use a light and a mirror.'⁵⁵

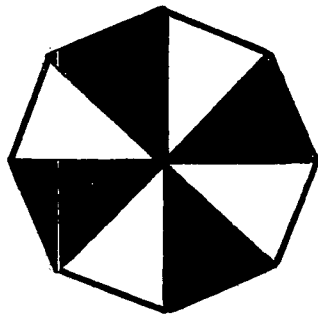
Too many critics have wanted to make the title, According to What either a question which should be answered, "Duchamp", or in it's 'quality of elliptical abbreviation',⁵⁶ a reflection of Tu m' or any other Duchampian word play. From the Notes the hinged canvas seems to be more indicative of Duchamp as an onlooker - somebody that could leave, be 'shifted' or 'erased'. Nicolas Calas writes:

'Johns is not recapitulating or remembering but assembling with Duchamp as watchman.'⁵⁷

Even the title may have been simply intended as 'WHAT' which would lessen Duchamp being the core of the work.

From our knowledge of Wittgenstein's contribution the title takes on quite different connotations. It asks a question: "according to what?" - Johns' interpretation? Yours? Mine? Duchamp's? Max Kozloff's? Barbara Rose's? This critic's or that critic's? and so on. It is also a statement. "the work has been done according to 'what'." Since the final word defines nothing specific we are invited to use it in any way we choose. Johns does not make the title solely a question since it would pose him as a questioner seeking answers. Wittgenstein similarly seeks clarity not answers. He acknowledges the meaning of a word according to a certain usage but that is not the entire meaning.

The use of the chair has already been dealt with. In the hinged canvas, the Duchamp portrait is a copy of his Self Portrait in Profile, 1958 [I have chosen the lithograph version of this section since the reproductions of the original are unsatisfactory (Plate XXXXVIII)]. In the light of Wittgenstein it is clear why Johns chose this image in particular. Wittgenstein describes the diagram below as a white cross on a black background and a black cross on a white background.



'(The temptation to say, "I see it like this", pointing to the same thing for "it" and "this"). Always get rid of the idea of the private object in this way: assume that it constantly changes but that you do not notice the change because your memory constantly deceives you.'⁵⁸

The Duchamp portrait provided Johns with an image he could not resist. What is the background and what is the foreground? In 1972 as a birthday piece to

Picasso, Johns made a lithograph, Cup 4 Picasso (Plate XXXXIX) which uses the old party trick of two profiles facing each other which in turn describe a chalice or candle-stick in the middle. Wittgenstein's admonishing of the 'private object' once more is Johns' sentiment as well.

Richard Field, describes the small paint spot alongside the portrait in terms of Duchamp's declaration, 'a work of art is dependent on the explosion made by the onlooker',⁵⁹ as well as a symbol of the sperm that appears in Munch's lithograph The Madonna and a reminder of Duchamp's 'bachelor shots'.⁶⁰ Be this as it may, it's loneliness - there are many examples of 'impact and drip' within Johns' work - does encourage particular attention and seems to reflect Wittgenstein again.

'But if a sentence can strike me as like a painting in words, and the very individual word in the sentence as like a picture, then it is no such marvel that a word uttered in isolation and without purpose can seem to carry a particular meaning in itself.'⁶¹

Taken in this way the isolated paint spot is particularly appropriate to the 'lonliness' of Duchamp's own unique position, and it is interesting that when Johns himself refers to this in his obituary he counters it, as it were, with a quote of Wittgenstein's.

'He [Duchamp] said that he was ahead of his time. One guesses at a certain loneliness there. Wittgenstein said that "time has only one direction" must be a piece of nonsense',⁶²

The canvas that has its prototype in Field Painting is not only a pun on making colour three dimensional by constructing the words in wooden relief but also as in By the Sea an attempt by labelling to establish the stereotype of red, yellow or blue. The letters of the words never quite match up with their imprints. The letters of 'RED' affirm a redness but never of a uniform tone, due not only to the pigments themselves, but also to the different background colours.

'Does it make sense to say people generally agree in their judgements of colour? What would it be like for them not to? - One man would say a flower was red which another called blue, and so on. - But what right should we have to call these people's words "red" and "blue" our 'colour words'? -

How would they learn to use these words? And is the language-game which they learn still such as we call the use of 'names of colour'? There are evidently differences of degree here.⁶³

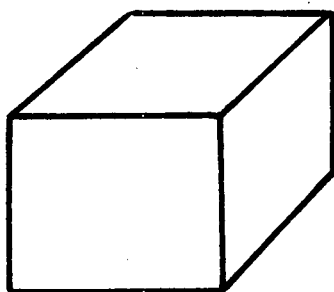
The word 'BLUE' has literally been bent. Does this change its meaning in any way like a colour blue gets 'bent' by individual perceptions? The letter 'O' of YELLOW shows its imprint to have burst into the colour it supposedly was meant to signify but its brightness quickly dulls into a dirty ochre. It is as if Johns has tried to actually depict the mental process between language and image.

The colour chart and graded tone scale make the same references as False Start, Jubilee and Diver. The large right-hand area finds parallels in Wittgenstein's questioning of two and three dimensionality in drawing (see above quote, page 57, Investigations, page 202e).

The long canvas beneath shows a coat-hanger that can be viewed in a number of different ways. Johns has taken a very common object, traced around it and also bent it, changing its nature while at the same time retaining its recognizability.

'Take an object.
Do something to it.
Do something else to it.
" " " " " ,64

The procedure imitates Wittgenstein's analysis of the cube diagram:



'You could imagine the illustration ... appearing in several places in a book, a text-book for instance. In the relevant text something different is in question every time: here a glass cube, there an inverted open box, there a wire frame of that shape, there three boards forming a solid angle.'⁶⁵

'... if you see the schematic drawing of a cube as a plane figure consisting of a square and two rhombi you will, perhaps carry out the order. "Bring me something like this" differently from someone who sees the picture three dimensionally.'⁶⁶

It is possible that the length of newspaper is a reference to criticism which will hold itself responsible for embracing all these ideas into some manageable unit. Johns invites, alludes and illudes but in the end escapes all responsibility for meaning. It may have been Johns whom Cage had in mind when he said:

'When you start working, everybody is in your studio - the past, your friends, enemies, the art world and above all, your own ideas - all are there. But as you continue painting, they start to leave, one by one, and you are left completely alone. Then, if you're lucky, even you leave.'⁶⁷

CHAPTER FOUR:

CONCLUSION

Wittgenstein said:

'The real discovery is one that makes one capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to - the one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring itself into question.'¹

If philosophy is a voyage out and back rather than a move towards different things so is art for Johns and consequently, like Duchamp, he does not have to prove anything. Recently he has bought some land in St. Maarten, is building a house and intends to live there most of the time. In the interview with Vivien Raynor he was asked what he intended to do there, he replied:

'Swim! No, I'm trying to get it set up so that I can paint. I assume I'll continue painting, I don't know. I don't have that kind of plan really.'²

Cage writes that Johns is 'not interested in working but only in playing games',³ and he says himself:

'I just know that in the studio I'm doing all the work and I'm fairly lazy, and have never taken any pleasure in compulsive work.'⁴

Painting is not a linear process and it is difficult to imagine there being any anguish with Johns since he is comfortably aware that the moment a work leaves his studio it will take on different meanings, it will be 'used' differently.

'There is a great deal of intention in painting; it's rather unavoidable. But when a work is let out by the artist and said to be complete, the intention loosens. Then it's subject to all kinds of use and misuse and pun. Occasionally someone will see the work in a way that even changes its significance for the person who made it; the work is no longer "intention", but the thing being seen and someone responding to it. They will see it in a way that makes you think that is a possible way of seeing it.'⁵

Once criticism bothered him, now it does not matter.⁶ He has seen the essential humanity behind it and Wittgenstein was certainly a teacher in this awareness. In the various interviews many of Johns' comments reveal not only a knowledge, but a deep sympathy with the philosopher's thought.

'In one person's work, say in my work, where there are two or three formal possibilities and in another person's work where only one of three formal pursuits is developed - it doesn't necessarily mean that he has less present in his work than I have in mine. This can mean that there is a new language or aspect of art. I don't believe in the quantity of invention or aesthetic quality. When two things come out of the air so closely, one is apt to see two artists whose work is related, and compare them and to say that one does more or less than another. This, I feel, is just an aspect of your attention at that time. I don't believe in negating one man's work in relation to another's.'⁷

'One of the crucial problems in art is the business of "meaning it". If you are a painter, meaning the paintings you make; if you are an observer, meaning what you see. It is very difficult for us to mean what we say or do. We would like to, but society makes this very hard for us to succeed in doing.'⁸

'I think ... the artist is not tied to the public use of his work. There can be feed back, but if one has to identify with the way one's work is used, then I think most artists will feel misused. So I think it's best to cut oneself off from what happens after.'⁹

'If an artist makes something - or if you make chewing gum and everybody ends up using it as glue, whoever made it is given the responsibility of making glue, even if what he really intends is chewing gum. You can't control that kind of thing. As far as beginning to make a work, one can do it for any reason.'¹⁰

Apart from providing the necessary aid in understanding Johns' use of imagery in the later painting from 1961 on, from a study of Wittgenstein we have learnt two fundamental things about Johns' work: looking is relative and, like meaning in language, the only common denominator is life - the human activity of looking. This in turn leads us to view criticism in a much less anxious and controversial fashion and the need for polemics and theories are dissolved. Johns' has been a 'problem' to such practitioners since his work does not address itself to their particular appetites. In order to 'eat' it they must resort to dressing it in a way that makes for a palatability closer to their own personal ambitions. Cage summed up these two elements of acknowledgement of life and its atrophying effect on 'rule-book' criticism perfectly in his homage to Johns:

'We imagine ourselves on a tightrope only to discover that we are safe on the ground. Caution is unnecessary. Nevertheless, we tremble more violently than we did when we thought we were in danger.'¹²

Johns has given us our freedom but in so doing has denied us the comforts of resting secure in our prejudices.

FOOTNOTESINTRODUCTION

1. Rosalind Krauss, 'Jasper Johns' Lugano Review, vol. 1, No. 2, 1965, p.97
2. Norman Malcolm, Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir, Oxford Paperbacks, 1958, p. 51-52.
3. Richard Kostelanetz, John Cage, Praegar, 1968, p.3.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1. Joseph Young, 'Jasper Johns; An Appraisal', Art International, September, 1969, p. 51.
2. Barbara Rose, 'The Second Generation: Academy & Breakthrough', Artforum, September, 1965.
3. Harold Rosenberg, 'The American Action Painters', Art News, December, 1952, p. 22.
4. Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Massage, Bantam Books, 1967, p. 93.
5. Calvin Tomkins, The Bride and the Bachelors, Viking Press, 1962, p. 200.

I will not go into any discussion on the differences between Johns and Rauschenberg further than this footnote. Perhaps it could be summarised by Edward Lucie-Smith's comment that:

'Of the two, Rauschenberg is the more various and Johns is the more elegant; elegance has a genuine if rather uneasy part to play in any discussion of what these two represent.'

Late Modern: The Visual Arts Since 1945, Praegar, 1969, p. 122.

This is in agreement with Pellegrini's belief that, unlike Rauschenberg, Johns' painting is so sensitive 'That he is able to produce extra-ordinary contrasts to the banality of the articles used.'

New Tendencies in Art, (Trans. Robin Larson), Elek, London 1966, p. 215.

6. Clement Greenberg, 'After Abstract Expressionism', Art International, October, 1962, p.27.
7. *ibid*, p. 26-27.
8. Nicolas Calas, Icons and Images of the Sixties, Dutton Paperback, 1971, p. 192.
9. Steinberg asked Johns why he had inserted these plaster casts. His answer was that they happened to be lying around in the studio.
Leo Steinberg, Jasper Johns, New York, 1963, p. 18.
(orig. published in Metro, Milan, May 1962).
10. Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, Harry Abrams, New York, 1968, p. 15.
11. Leo Steinberg, 'Contemporary Art and The Plight of its Public', Harper's Magazine, March 1962, p. 38.

12. The degrees of absurdity that writers have gone to in order to find conclusive messages in Johns' work should be mentioned. Pincus Witten's 'Theater of The Conceptual: Autobiography and Myth', Artforum, October 1973, p. 41, expresses an attempt to prove that Johns was aware of Duchamp well before his reading of Lebel's book in 1959 and therefore that the target was painted to compliment Duchamp's cast, Objet Dard 1951 with Johns reading it as 'dart'.

Such a tenuous thought would give equal value to the notion that the target image came from Johns' acquaintanship with Cage and Zen. Herrigel's famous book, Zen and the Art of Archery had been translated for the American public in 1953. It was prefaced by Daisetz Suzuki, under whom Cage was studying at the time; he would almost certainly have read it.

Pincus Witten's claim is no more valuable than Melville's description of Flag on Orange Field, 1957 as a political comment on America and the dropping of the atomic bomb: "The orange glare at Hiroshima" - 'Master of the Stars and Stripes', Architectoral Review, March 1965, p. 226.

13. David Sylvester, 'Jasper Johns at the Whitechapel', unpub. talk on B.B.C. Third Programme, December 12th, 1964 (excepted in Kozloff Jasper Johns).
14. Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p. 14.
15. See Henry Geldzahler, 'Numbers in Time: Two American Paintings', Metropolitan Museum Bulletin, April 1965, pp. 295-298.
16. Walter Hopps, 'An Interview with Jasper Johns', Artforum, March 1965, pp. 34-35.
17. *ibid.*, p. 35.
18. Seen in this light the alphabet and numerical series are a direct refutation of Steinberg's analysis of the flat images. 'Was it, I wonder, a painful decision that paint was to be no longer a medium of transformation? Probably not; for the painter it must have been merely the taking of the next step. But once taken, it placed him at a point outside the crowded room, whence one suddenly saw how Franz Kline bundles with Watteau and Giotto. For they are all artists who use paint and surface to suggest existencies other than surface and paint'. Jasper Johns, p. 18. This is true for the flags and targets but very definitely not the case with the numeral and alphabet charts which have been transformed by the paint activity to suggest qualities they do not ordinarily have.
19. This becomes even worse (or better) with the later Colour Numerals series of lithographs, 1969 where we are presented with permutations of primary and secondary colours as well. In looking at Joseph Young's diagrams of this series (Art International, September 1969, p. 53) it is very tempting to search for some meaning behind the graphs. This comes across so forcefully as to suggest it only being a matter of time before the structuralists get hold of it.
20. Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media, McGraw Hill, 1964, p. 11.

21. Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p. 19.
22. Johns, together with Rauschenberg and Rosenquist, was invited by the Surrealists to exhibit with them in the 1960, 'International Exhibition of Surrealism', d'Arcy Galleries, New York.
23. See Alan Solomon 'Painting in New York: 1944 to 1969', Pasadena Art Museum, November 1969 - January 1970 - p. 15.
24. Hopps, Artforum, March 1965, p. 35-36.
25. Steinberg, Jasper Johns, p. 27.
26. Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p. 21.
27. *ibid.*, p. 21.
28. Rosalind Krauss, Jasper Johns, p. 89.
29. Steinberg, Jasper Johns, p. 23-24.
30. See Barbara Rose, 'The Graphic Work of Jasper Johns. Part I', Artforum, March 1970, pp. 39-45. Rose saw lithography as gaining the surface integrity that Johns, having achieved in his earlier work, loses from False Start on when he becomes a painter of space, and views the latter as some sort of compromise. She is correct in asserting that Johns' earlier work is non-Cubist for the very fact that none of them are concerned with reconciling three dimensional representation with the picture plane. But Rose is wrong in assuming he is not a spatial painter during this period. In fact we could argue that Johns has inverted the Cubist procedure since his flags, etc. are reconciliations of the illusionism of a painterly surface to flat images. Greenberg hints at something close to this:

'Everything that usually serves representation and illusion is left to serve nothing but itself, that is abstraction; while everything that usually connotes the abstract or decorative - flatness, bare outlines, all over or symmetrical design - is put to the service of representation' (Greenberg, Art International, October 1962, p. 27).

This would help to explain Johns' use of encaustic and collage in that an oil medium, with such 'a priori' structuring as the flag image for instance, would not be so successful in generating the illusionism inherent in painting that Johns wished to retain. Rose intended - and continues doing so* - to establish herself as an authority through way of an adventure into Johns' graphics, posing that spatial suggestion was taboo for Johns and that graphics became the only viable medium. But, as I hope to emphasise later, the retention of the surface's integrity was not the object of Johns' work so much as an exploration into the absurdity of attempting such a solution.

* (I am indebted to Prof. George Rosenberg for his resume on Barbara Rose's talk at the 1974 Annual Meeting of the C.A.A. held in Detroit: Recent Graphic Works of Jasper Johns From Representation to Reproduction).

31. 'It seems ridiculous to speak of the decline of an artist not yet thirty-five years old. Yet that is the conclusion I feel one has to draw from the Jasper Johns retrospective at the Jewish Museum.... there is certainly less irony in his new paintings. There is instead a sort of visual kinness, and even as a facile technician Johns has become a little seedy.' Sidney Tillim, 'Ten Years of Jasper Johns', Arts Magazine, April 1964, pp. 22-26.
 32. Hopps, Artforum, March 1965, p. 35.
 33. 'At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless; Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is, But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity, Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards, Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point. There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.'
- T.S. Eliot, Collected Poems 1909-1962, Faber, 1963, p. 191.
34. Likewise John Cage went into an anechoic chamber anticipating he may experience pure silence and ended up hearing his own body. At the risk of scholarship, it is tempting to draw such parallels between the two friends. We wonder if perhaps Johns may have used the chance methods of Cage precedence in determining where and what labels would be used in False Start. Very occasionally the labels may match up with the colours but how more interesting it is when the two are in wide disagreement. Then the awareness of colour becomes far richer. It is like the I Ching in that the more disjointed are the hexagrams the greater need there is to exercise one's faculties.
 35. Krauss, Jasper Johns, p. 88.
 36. Calas, Icons and Images, p. 74.
 37. Hopps, p. 36.
 38. Krauss, Jasper Johns, p. 88.
 39. Solomon, Jewish Museum Catalogue, p. 13.
 40. G. R. Swenson, 'What is Pop Art? - An Interview with Jasper Johns'. Art News, February 1964, p. 67.
 41. Steinberg, Jasper Johns, p. 24.
 42. Rosenberg, Art News, December 1952, p. 22.
 43. Michael Levy, Early Renaissance, Style and Civilisation Series, Penguin Books, 1967, p. 123.

44. op.cit., p. 23.

In Cage's, 'Jasper Johns; Stories and Ideas', he quotes Johns as regarding the dancer, Merce Cunningham's foot as 'another kind of ruler'.
(John Cage, A Year From Monday, Wesleyan Univ. Press 1963, p. 82.

45. Michael Fried, 'New York Letter', Art International, February, 1963, p. 61.

46. Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p. 30.

47. Vivien Raynor, 'Jasper Johns, (Interview)' Art News, March, 1973, p. 22.

48. Rose, C.A.A. 1974.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER TWO

1. G. R. Swenson, 'What is Pop Art? - An Interview with Jasper Johns', Art News, February 1964, p. 66.
2. See Bernhard Leitner, The Architecture of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, (co-published by Studio International, London) 1973.

Bernhard Leitner, 'Wittgenstein's Architecture', Artforum February 1970.
3. See the recently published book by Alan Janik and Stephen Toulmin Wittgenstein's Vienna, Simon and Schuster, New York 1973.
4. Norman Malcolm, Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir, Oxford Paperback, 1958, p.46.
5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, #1.21, p. 7.
6. *ibid.*, #2.0232, p. 11.
7. *ibid.*, #2.02331, p. 11.
8. See George Henrik von Wright's 'Biographical Sketch' published in Malcolm, Wittgenstein: A Memoir, p. 8.
9. *op. cit.*, p. 3.
10. *ibid.*, #4.462, p. 69.
11. *ibid.*, #6.41, p. 145.
12. *ibid.*, p. xxi.
13. *ibid.*, #6.54, p. 151.
14. Malcolm, Wittgenstein: A Memoir, p. 69.
15. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, (trans. G.E.M. Anscombe) Basil Blackwell, 1958, #3, p. 3e.
- 16.. *ibid.*, #6, p. 5e.
17. *ibid.*, #32, p. 15e-16e.
18. *ibid.*, #43, p. 20e.
19. *ibid.*, #23, p. 11e.
20. *ibid.*, #67, p. 32e.
21. *ibid.*, #98, p. 45e.
22. Justus Hartnack, Wittgenstein and Modern Philosophy (trans. Maurice Cranston) Methuen, 1962, p. 67.

23. op. cit., #309, p. 103e.
24. ibid., #109, p. 47e.
25. ibid., #153, p. 60e.
26. ibid., #323, p. 106e.
27. ibid., #180, p. 73e.
28. K. T. Fann, Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy, Basil Blackwell, 1969, p. 107.
29. op. cit., #415, p. 125e.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER THREE

1. Vivien Raynor, Art News, March 1973, p. 22.
2. Nicolas Calas, Icons and Images of the Sixties, p. 76.
3. Max Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p. 40.
4. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus, #2.202 - #2.21, p. 17.
5. *op. cit.*, p. 40.
6. *ibid.*, p. 40.
7. *ibid.*, p. 27-28.
8. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, #14, p. 7e.
9. *op. cit.*, p. 40.
10. *ibid.*, p. 41.
11. Wittgenstein, Investigations, #33, p. 16e.
12. Johns has used the ruler before in Painting With Ruler and "Gray", and it would be a short step to substitute the stick of Device with a ruler from this precedent. Good Time Charley 1961 also uses a ruler.
13. *op. cit.*, #552, p. 147e (abbrev. by Krauss).
14. Rosalind Krauss, 'Jasper Johns', Lugano Review, vol. 1, no. 2, 1965, p. 92.
15. The spoon and wire belong to Out The Window II whereas the fork and wire belong to Passage not vice versa.
16. *op. cit.*, p. 93.
17. Wittgenstein, Investigations #73, p. 34e-35e.
18. *ibid.*, #47, p. 22e-23e.

FOOTNOTESCHAPTER FOUR

1. Vivien Raynor, Art News, March 1973, p. 20.
2. Michael Fried, 'New York Letter' Art International, February 1963, p. 60-61
 Fried likens Johns' development to the Renaissance/Mannerism transtion:
 'Similarly Italian Mannerist architects deliberately accentuated the
 ambiguities and begged questions inherent in the great achievements
 of the High Renaissance', p. 61.
3. See Hilton Kramer, 'Month in Review', Art Magazine, February 1959, p. 49
Newsweek (editorial) March 31st, 1958, p. 94-96.
 'His Heart Belongs to Dada', - Time, May 4th, 1959 p.58.
 Michel Ragon, Cimaise, January, 1959.
 Pierre Scheider, 'Art News from Paris', Art News, March 1959, p. 48
 Emily Genauer, New York Herald Tribune, April 3rd, 1960.
4. Jasper Johns, 'Duchamp', Scrap, vol. 1: December 23rd, 1960.
5. Marcel Duchamp: From the Green Box, (trans. Hamilton) New Haven 1960.
6. Walter Hopps, Artforum, p. 35.
7. Pierre Cabanne, Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp (trans. Ron Padgett) Viking Press, 1971, p. 77.
8. ibid., p. 53.
9. Jasper Johns, 'Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)', Artforum, November 1968.
10. Wittgenstein, Investigations, #109, p.47e.
 This passage is explanatory enough to counter Tillim's complaint: 'But
 there is no deep engagement of paint and object so that a new and
 greater single visual generality does not result. On the whole this
 has been Johns' "crisis", one from which he has not extricated himself.'
Arts Magazine, April 1964, p. 26.
11. Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p. 10.
12. op. cit., p. 202e.

LEAF 84 OMITTED IN PAGE NUMBERING.

13. Calas, in Icons and Images elaborates on this phenomenon:

'Experimentation in art has had the paradoxical effect of making of methodology the subject matter of art, an idea most eloquently illustrated in Lichtenstein's use of the brush-stroke as the content of a new image. In the sixties art illustrates methodology the way the imagists of old illustrated the *Légende Dorée*, with this difference, that today it is the critic who has to justify the use of this new subject matter'. p. 17-18.

14. Jasper Johns, 'Sketchbook Notes', Art and Literature, Spring 1965, p. 185.

15. op. cit., p. 18.

16. Kozloff, p. 10.

17. Wittgenstein, Investigations, #139, p. 54e.

18. *ibid.*, #140, p. 553.

19. Robert Melville describes such criticism where the motto seems to be, 'if it looks difficult make it difficult', as a process of 'mystery-mongering'. (Master of the Stars and Stripes), Architectural Review, March 1965, p. 226.

20. Richard Field, Jasper Johns: Prints 1960-1970, Philadelphia Museum of Art, April 15th - June 14th, 1970.

21. Nicolas Calas has already come to terms with his role as critic, valuing it as a process of self-knowledge not deceit:

'Let us go on watching how Johns performs, how he repeats a move, or tries a new manoeuvre, pitting black against white, green against red, blue against orange.

I will watch his performance in and out of his game, for this is my game.' Icons and Images, p. 82.

22. David Pears, Wittgenstein, Fontana Modern Masters, 1971, p. 173.

23. John Cage, A Year From Monday, Wesleyan University Press, 1973, p. 75-76.

24. Richard Field, Jasper Johns: Prints

Field quotes Johns' comment in his Notes: "Japanese phonetic 'NO' (possessive 'of')." Johns has visited Japan a number of times and Field extends the question of opposition with this in mind. 'Thus the 'NO' implies a YES, just as the Noh Theater implies its opposite, Kabuki.'

25. Alan Solomon, Jewish Museum Catalogue, p. 15.

26. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief, (ed Cyril Barrett) Blackwell, 1966, p. 38-39.

27. John Cage, Silence, M.I.T. Press, 1961, p. 102.
28. Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p. 34. Rosenberg in 'Things the Mind Already Knows' associates the sweeping action of the broom as a nostalgia towards the target motif. The Anxious Object, Horizon Press, 1964, p. 183.
29. Quoted in Solomon, Jewish Museum Catalogue, p. 16.
30. John Cage, A Year From Monday, p. 71.
31. Andrew Forge, 'The Emperor's Flag', The New Statesman, vol. 68, December 11th, 1964, p. 938.
32. Johns, Sketchbook Notes, p. 185. This area is the same that concerned Leonardo and that Johns picked up on, namely that area where the boundary of a body is neither a part of the enclosed body nor a part of the surrounding atmosphere.
33. Wittgenstein, Investigations, p. 202e.
34. The title Passage could have come from Hart Crane's poem of the same name which in turn comes from Walt Whitman's Passage to India. Barbara Rose in her C.A.A. talk suggests it comes from Duchamp's The Virgin's Passage to the Bride. Equally it could be attributed Cezanne's use of 'passage' - the running together of planes otherwise separated in space - as we see a reference to the same idea of Cezanne's in Johns Sketchbook Notes (p. 187) and in a quote included in Cage's 'Jasper Johns' Stores and Ideas' (A Year From Monday, p. 79).
35. Hart Crane, Collected Poems of Hart Crane (ed. and intro. Waldo Frank) Liveright Inc., 1933, p. 32.
36. Wittgenstein, Investigations, p. 195e-196e.

Gombrich refers to this image in Art and Illusion London, Phaidon p. 5-6. 'True, we can switch from one reading to another with increasing rapidity; we will also "remember" the rabbit while we see the duck, but the more closely we watch ourselves, the more certainly we will discover that we cannot experience alternative readings at the same time. Illusion, we will find, is hard to describe or analyze, for though we may be intellectually aware of the fact that any given experience must be an illusion, we cannot, strictly speaking, watch ourselves having an illusion'.
37. Krauss, Jasper Johns, p. 92.
38. Kozloff, Jasper Johns, p. 34.
39. 'The captured fume of space foams in our ears' and is penetrated by the present day image, the aeroplane:
'Man hears himself an engine in a cloud
... the nasal whine of power whips a new universe.'
Hart Crane, Collected Poems, p. 32-34.

40. Wittgenstein, Investigations, p. 198e.
 41. *ibid.*, #198, p. 80e.
 42. *ibid.*, #199, p. 81e.
 43. *ibid.*, #454, p. 132e.
 44. Johns, in fact, is often described in this way. Vivian Raynor says:
'Nevertheless, it is hard - and pointless probably to try - to reconcile Johns' aura of sociability with the other impression of almost priestly apartness.' Art News, March, 1973, p. 22.
- Cage writes: 'The thermostats are fixed to the radiators but lead ineffectually to two bare wires. The Jaguar repaired and ready to run sits in a garage unused. It has been there since October. An electrician came to fix the thermostats but went away before his work was finished and never returned. The application for the registration of the car has not been found ... For odd trips a car is rented. If it gets too hot a window is opened. The freezer is full of books.' A Year From Monday, p. 78-79.
45. K. T. Fann, Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy, p. 110.
 46. Johns, Sketchbook Notes, p. 192.
 47. *ibid.*, p. 185-187.
 48. See Field, Jasper Johns: Prints 1960-1970.
 49. Barbara Rose, draws the same parallel between the Sketchbook Notes and Investigations. C.A.A., 1974.
 50. Wittgenstein, Investigations, #56, p. 28e.
- William Lycan in his article, 'Gombrich, Wittgenstein, and the Duck-Rabbit, Journal of Aesthetics, vol. 30, Winter 1971, examines the degree to which Art and Illusion and the Investigations are in agreement. He cites an example of actual colour dualism: 'But consider the colour of a slip of litmus paper in a perfectly neutral electrolytic solution. Sometimes it is literally impossible to say whether the paper is blue or pink. In this case, "Now I see it as blue ... now pink" makes sense, even if the colour of the paper actually remains constant.' p. 236.
51. *ibid.*, #59, p. 29e.
 52. Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media, p. 5. Quoted in Field Jasper Johns: Prints 1960-1970, 1970.
 53. Rose, C.A.A. 1974.

54. Walter Hopps in the brochure for Gemini's edition of Johns' lithographs Fragments - According to What, April 1971 takes this association to absurd lengths: 'Both paintings are of elongated and horizontal format, combine various painting and graphic techniques, include literal objects and the illusion of other literal objects and portray images derived specifically from prior work? We have simply to look at a Rauschenberg, Dine, Wesselman, etc. to see how Johns' painting specifically fits Tu m''.
55. Johns, Sketchbook Notes, p. 185.
56. Krauss, Jasper Johns, p. 94.
57. Calas, Icons and Images, p. 81.
58. Wittgenstein, Investigations, p. 207e.
59. Dore Ashton, 'An Interview with Marcel Duchamp', Studio International June 1966, p. 245.
60. Field, Jasper Johns: Prints 1960-1970.
61. Wittgenstein, Investigations, p. 215e.
62. Johns, 'Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)', Artforum, November, 1968.
63. op. cit., p. 226e.
64. Johns, Sketchbook Notes, p. 192.
65. op. cit., p. 193e.
66. ibid., #74, p. 35e.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that in Kozloff's reproduction the shadow cast by the bent coat-hanger and wire that is attached, accidentally is tangential to the bends. In the Fragments - According to What lithograph: Coathanger and Spoon this line is represented by one painted in the colours of the rainbow or spectrum. Johns used Kozloff's reproduction as a model rather than just the work itself (Walter Hopps, Gemini brochure, 1971) and the spectrum line becomes a comment on the nature of light that casts the shadow.

67. Quoted in Maurice Tuchman, The New York School, Thames and Hudson, 1965, p. 76.

FOOTNOTESCONCLUSION

1. Wittgenstein, Investigations, #133, p. 51e.
2. Vivien Raynor, Art News, March 1973, p. 21.
3. Cage, A Year From Monday, p. 77.
4. op. cit., p. 21.
5. G. R. Swenson, Art News, February 1964, p. 67.
6. 'I object to none anymore. I used to object to each as it occurred'.
Swenson, p. 43.
7. Joseph Young, Art International, September 1969, p. 54.
8. ibid., p. 54.
9. Raynor, Art News, p. 21.
10. Swenson, Art News, p. 66.
11. A spectacular example of this type of writing is found in Kozloff's 'Johns and Duchamp', Art International, March 1964, p. 45. 'Each of Johns' strokes is a larval palpitation of pleasure in the liveness of the pigment - a stroke whose morbidezza and cadenced slowness strives to ideate sense itself.'
12. Cage, A Year From Monday, p. 83.

PLATES

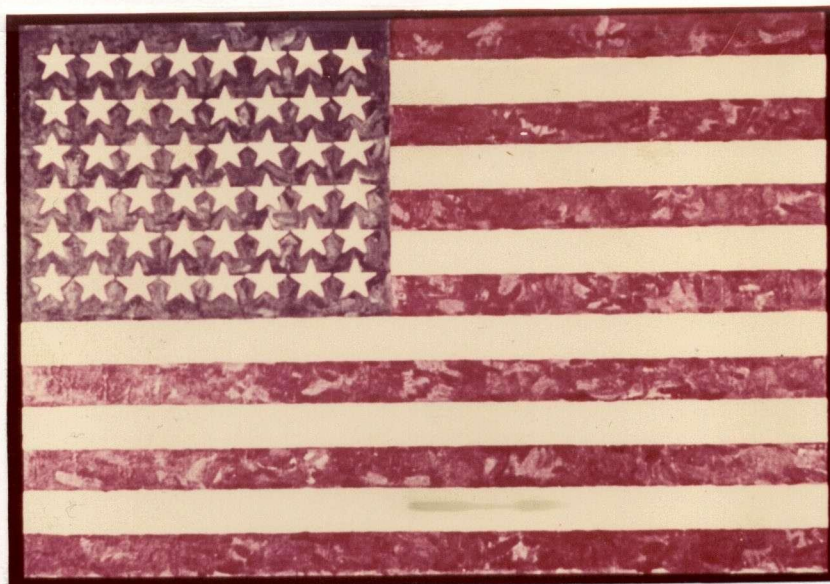


PLATE I Flag, 1954. Encaustic and collage on canvas 41-1/4 x 60-3/4"
Collection Philip Johnson, New Canaan Connecticut.



PLATE II Target With Plaster Casts, 1955. Encaustic and collage on
canvas with plaster casts, 51 x 44 x 3-1/2". Collection
Mr. and Mrs. Leo Castelli, New York.



PLATE III

Target with Four Faces 1955. Encaustic and collage on canvas with plaster casts, 29-3/4 x 26 x 3-3/4. Museum of Modern Art, New York.



PLATE IV

Construction with Toy Piano, 1954. Graphite and collage with toy piano, 11 x 9 x 21". Collection Mr. and Mrs. R. Scull, New York.



PLATE V

Untitled, 1954. Oil and collage with plaster cast, 26-1/4 x 8-3/4 x 4". Collection Rachel Rosenthal Moody, Los Angeles.

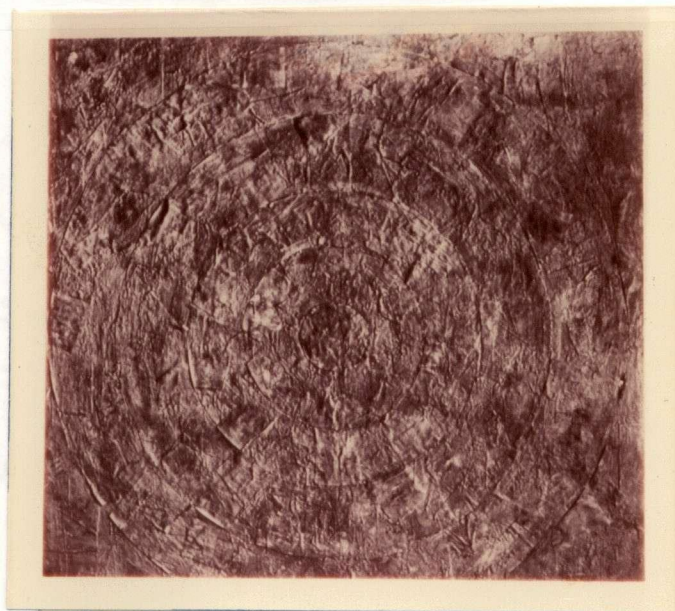


PLATE VI

Large Green Target, 1955. Encaustic and collage on canvas, 60 x 60". Museum of Modern Art, New York.

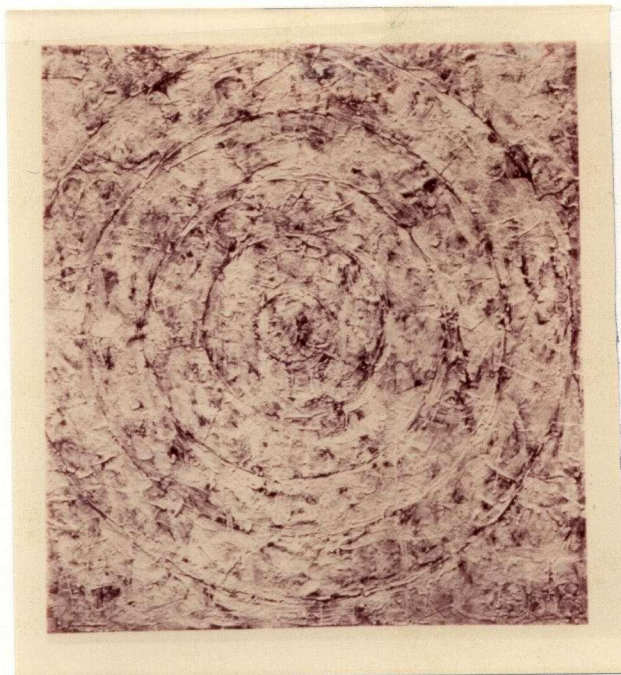


PLATE VII

White Target, 1957. Encaustic on canvas 30 x 30". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Soby, New Canaan, Connecticut.



PLATE VIII

Figure 5, 1955. Encaustic and collage on canvas 17-1/2 x 14" Collection the artist.

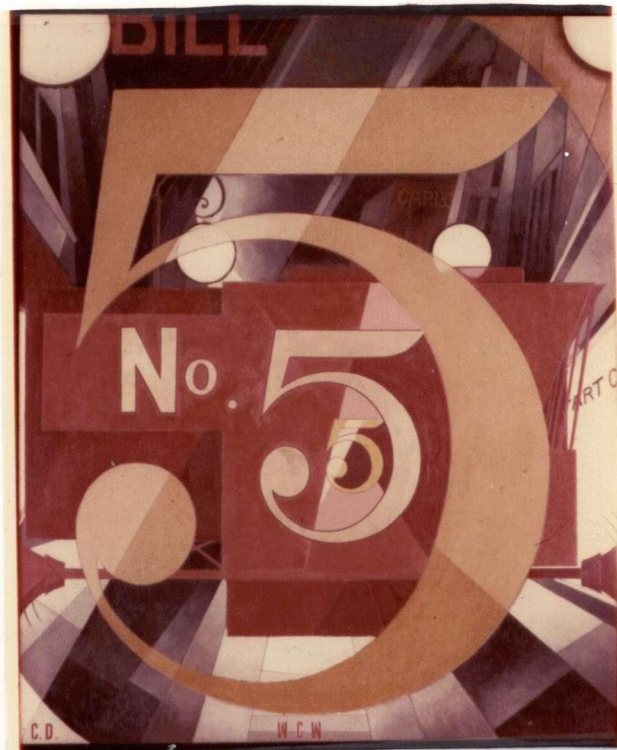


PLATE IX

Charles Demuth. I Saw The Figure 5 in Gold, 1928. Oil
36 x 29-3/4". Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

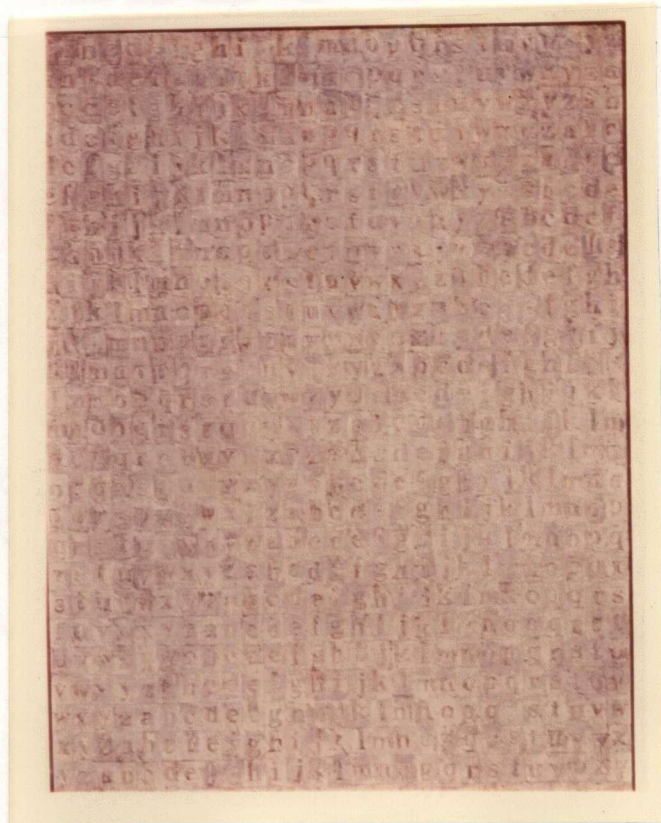


PLATE X

Gray Alphabets, 1956. Encaustic and collage on canvas
66 x 49". Private collection.



PLATE XI

Gray Numbers, 1958. Encaustic and collage on canvas 67 x 49-1/2".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. John Powers.



PLATE XII

Gray Alphabets, 1956. Detail of Plate X.

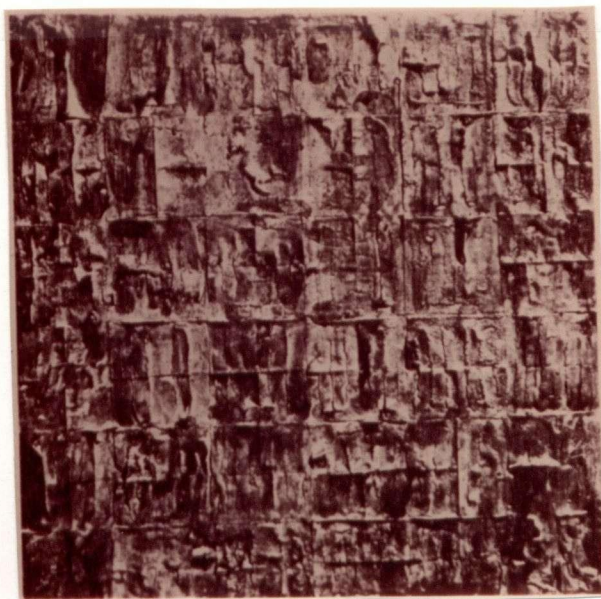


PLATE XIII Untitled, c.1954. Oil and collage on silk. Collection Edwin Janss, Los Angeles.



PLATE XIV Tango, 1955. Encaustic on canvas 43 x 55". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine, Meriden, Connecticut.

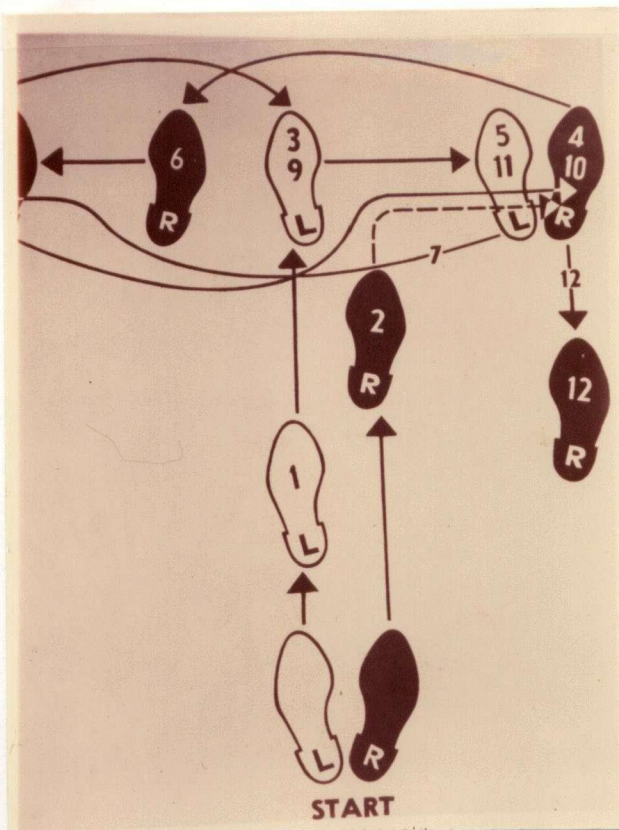


PLATE XV

Andy Warhol Dance Diagram - Tango, 1962. 72 x 54".
Collection Heiner Friedrich, Munich.



PLATE XVI

Canvas, 1956. Encaustic and collage on wood and canvas
30 x 25". Collection the artist.

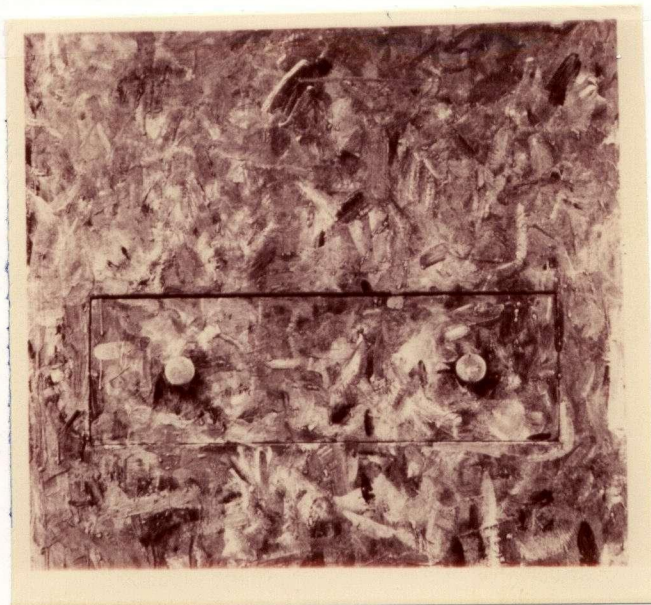


PLATE XVII

Drawer, 1957. Encaustic on canvas and wood, 30-1/2 x 30-1/2
 Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Massachusetts.

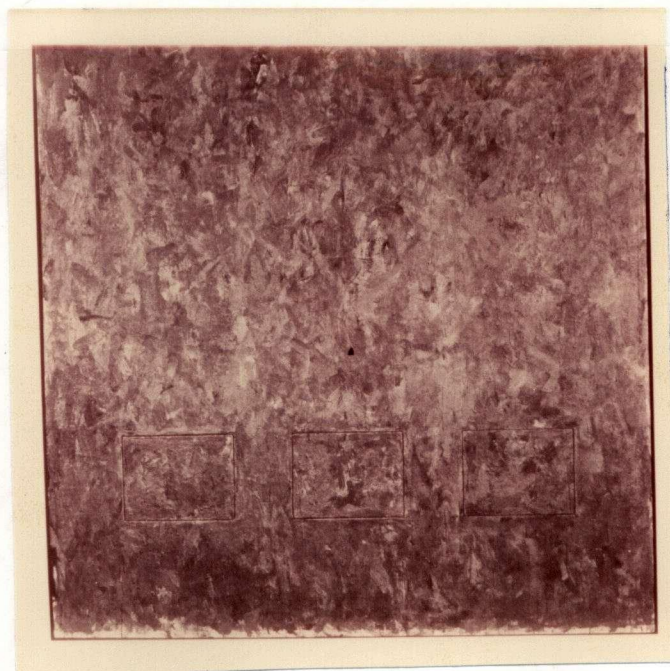


PLATE XVIII

Gray Rectangles, 1957. Encaustic on canvas, 60 x 60"
 Collection Mr. and Mrs. Victor Ganz, New York

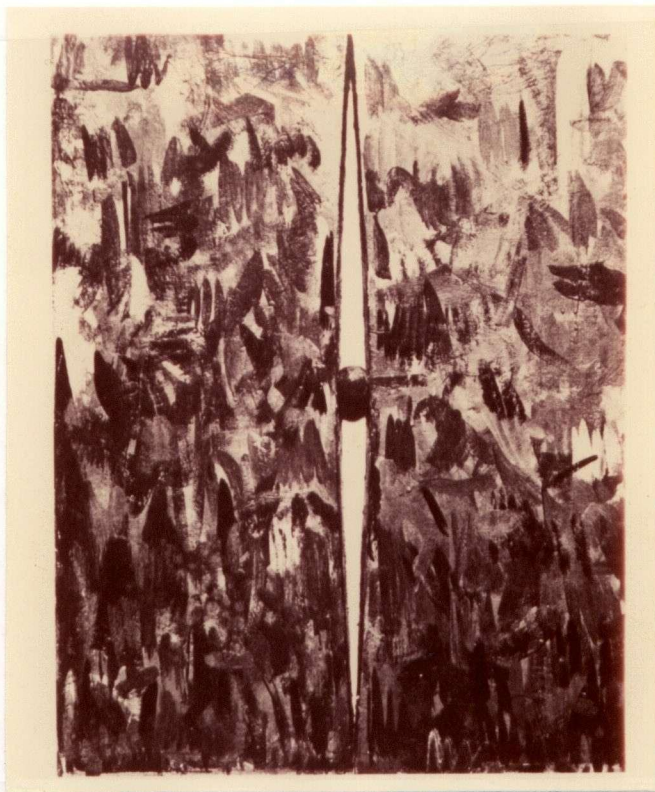


PLATE XIX

Painting With a Ball, 1958. Encaustic on canvas 31-1/2 x 24-1/2. Collection Edward Power, London.



PLATE XX

Tennyson, 1958. Encaustic and canvas collage on canvas 73-1/2 x 48-1/4. Collection Don Factor, Beverly Hills, California.



PLATE XXI

The, 1957. Encaustic on canvas, 24 x 20". Collection Mrs. Herbert Lee, Belmont, Massachusetts.



PLATE XXII

Shade, 1959. Encaustic on canvas with objects, 52 x 39". Collection Mrs. Leo Steinberg, New York.



PLATE XXIII Magritte, Human Condition I, 1933, Choisel [Seine-et-Oise]
39-1/2 x 32"

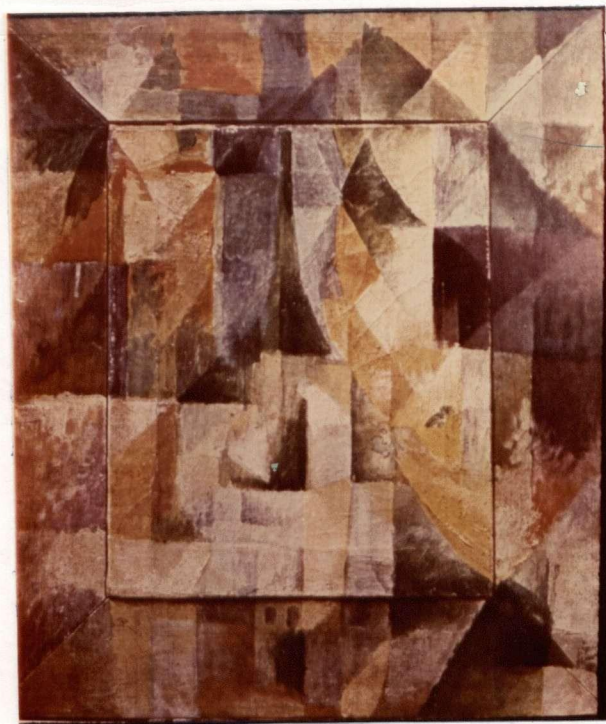


PLATE XXIV Delaunay, Windows on the City, 1912.



PLATE XXV

False Start, 1959. Oil on canvas, 67-1/4 x 54". Collection Mr. and Mrs. R. Scull, New York.



PLATE XXVI

Magritte, The Use of Words, 1928-29, 21-1/2 x 28-1/2, William Copley, New York.



PLATE XXVII

Jubilee, 1959. Oil on canvas 67-1/4 x 54". Collection Robert Rauschenberg, New York.

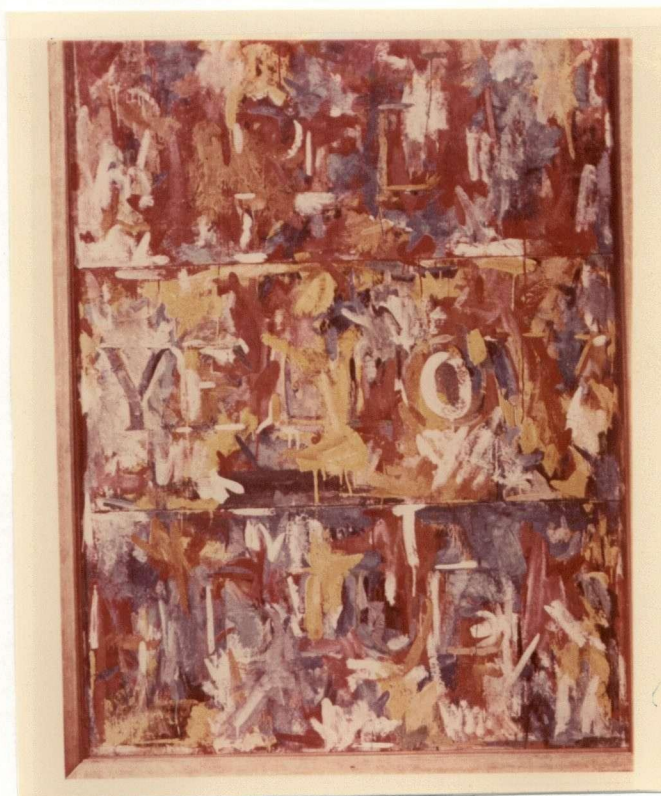


PLATE XXVIII

Out the Window, 1959. Encaustic and collage on canvas 54-1/2 x 40". Collection Mr. and Mrs. R. Scull, New York.



PLATE XXIX

Thermometer, 1959. Oil on canvas with object, 51-3/4 x 38-1/2". Private collection, Seattle, Washington.



PLATE XXX

Painting with Two Balls, 1960. Encaustic and collage on canvas with objects, 65 x 54". Collection the artist.



PLATE XXXI

Device Circle, 1959. Encaustic and collage on canvas with wood, 40 x 40". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Tremaine, Meriden, Connecticut.



PLATE XXXII

Painting with Ruler and "Gray", 1960. Oil and collage on canvas with objects, 32 x 32". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Helman St. Louis.

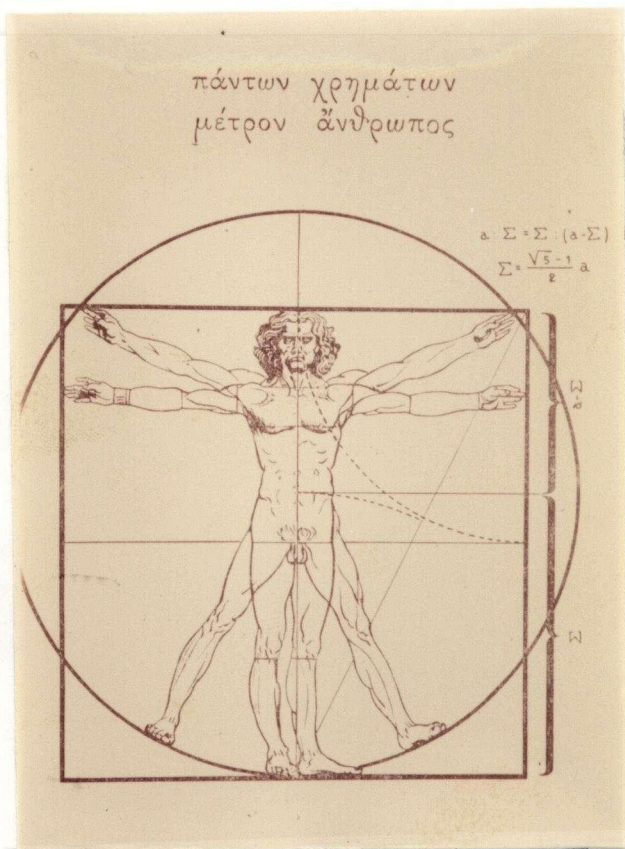


PLATE XXXIII

Leonardo da Vinci, Vitruvian Man, c. 1485-90, Academia, Venice.



PLATE XXXIV

Device, 1961-62. Oil on canvas with wood, 72 x 48".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Monarch, Altoona, Pennsylvania.



PLATE XXXV By the Sea, 1961.
Encaustic on canvas,
72 x 54-1/2. Collection
Mr. and Mrs. R. Scull,
New York.

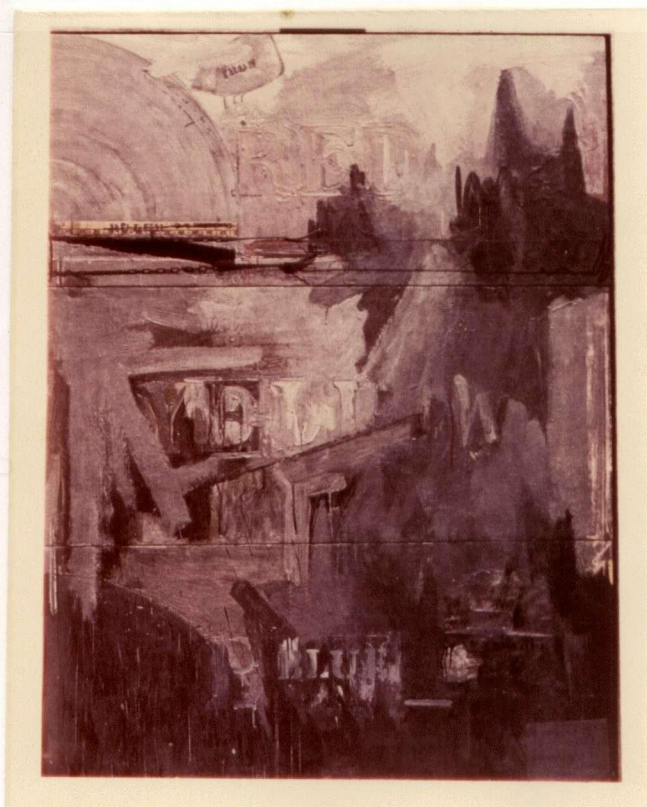


PLATE XXXVI Passage, 1962. Encaustic
and collage on canvas
with objects, 54 x 40".
Collection Georges Marci
de Saqqarah, Gstaad,
Switzerland.



PLATE XXXVII

Fool's House, 1962. Oil on canvas with objects, 72 x 36".
Collection Jean Castelli, New York.



PLATE XXXVIII

Out the Window II, 1962. Oil on canvas with objects,
72 x 48". Collection the artist.



PLATE XXXIX

Field Painting, 1963-64. Oil on canvas with objects.
72 x 36-3/4. Collection the artist.



PLATE XXXX

The Critic Sees, 1961. Sculpmetal on plaster with
glass. 3-1/4 x 6-1/4 x 2". Collection Mr. and Mrs. R.
Scull, New York.



PLATE XXXXI No, 1961. Encaustic collage and sculpt-metal on canvas with objects, 68 x 40". Collection the artist.

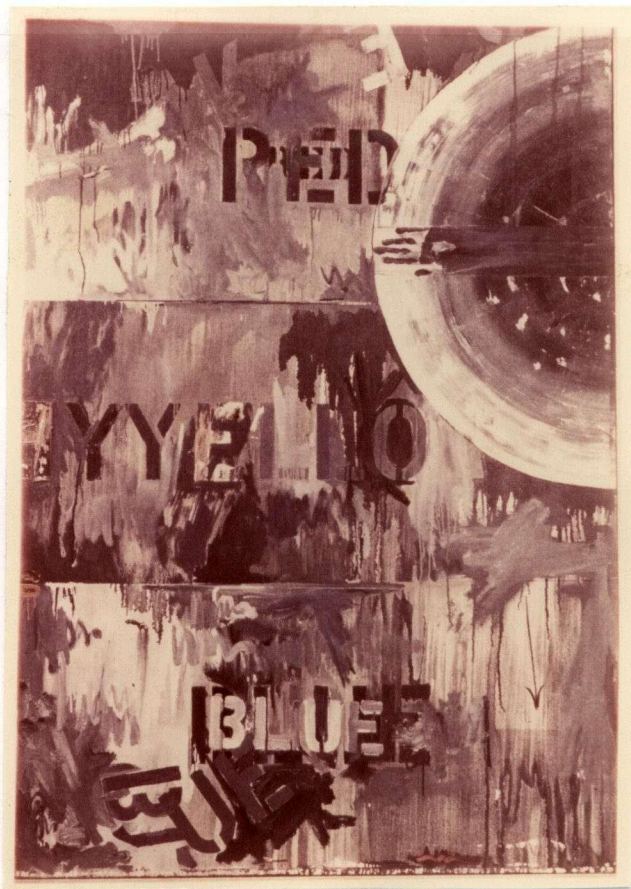


PLATE XXXXII Periscope (Hart Crane) Oil on canvas, 67 x 48". Collection the artist.



PLATE XXXXIII Land's End, 1963. Oil on canvas with wood. 67 x 48".
Collection Edwin Janss, Los Angeles.



PLATE XXXXIV Diver, 1962. Oil on canvas with objects 90 x 170".
Albert A. List Family Collection.

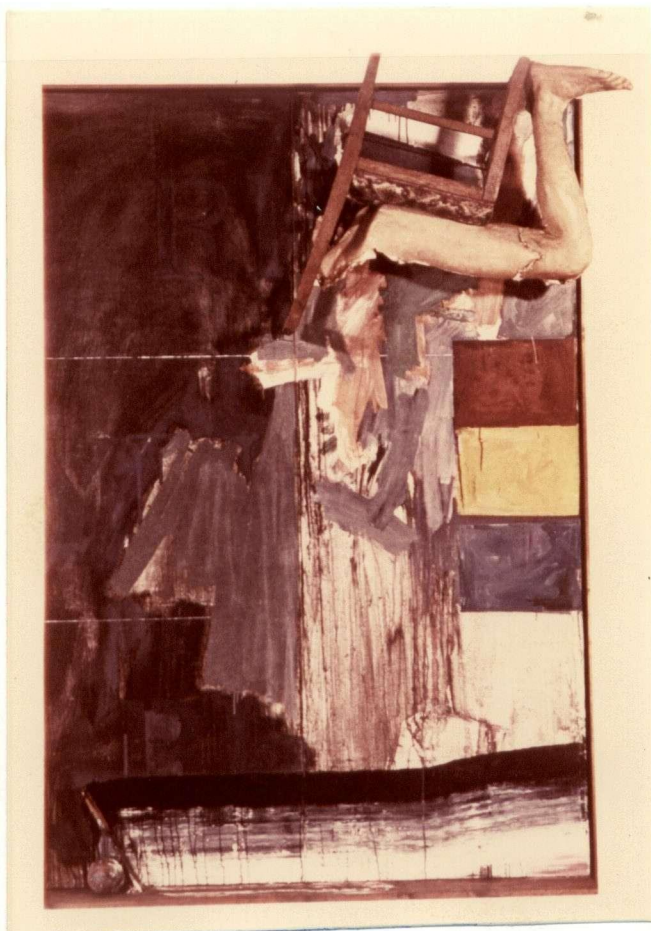


PLATE XXXV

Watchman, 1964. Oil on canvas with objects, 80 x 60".
Collection Sofu Teshigahara, Tokyo, Japan.

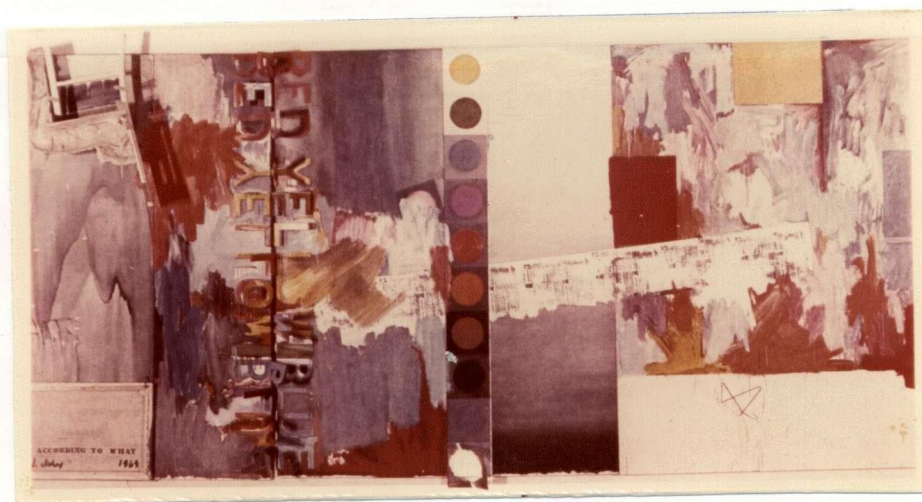


PLATE XXXVI

According to What, 1964. Oil on canvas with objects,
88 x 192". Collection Edwin Janss, Los Angeles.

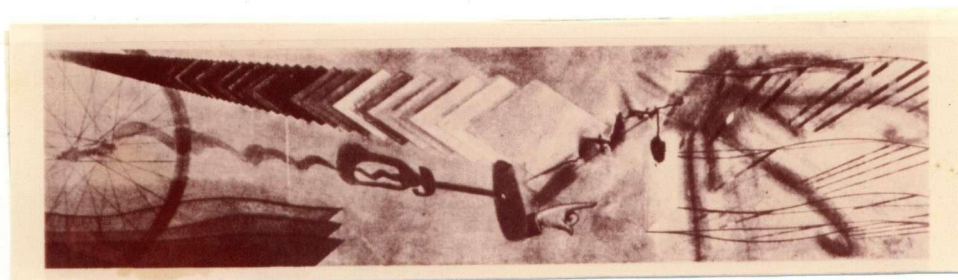


PLATE XXXXVII Duchamp Tu m', 1918. 27-1/2 x 122-3/4. Collection Katherine S. Dreier.

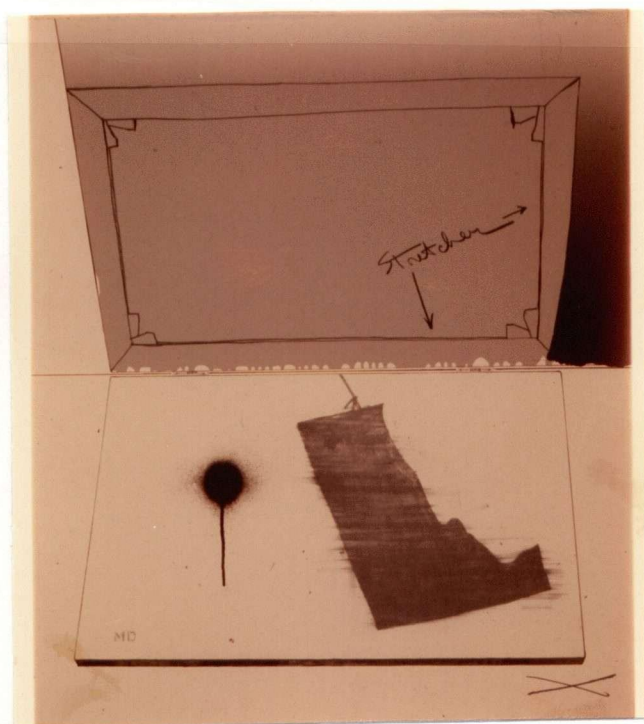


PLATE XXXXVIII Fragments - According to What - Hinged Canvas, 1971 lithograph, 36 x 30". Gemini, Los Angeles.

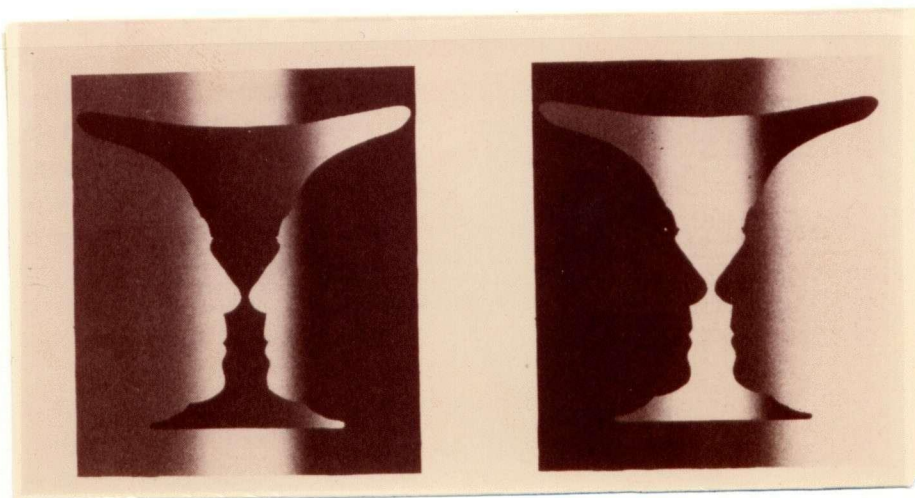


PLATE XXXXIX Cup 4 Picasso, 1972 lithograph, Leo Castelli Gallery.

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