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THE MULTIPLE IMAGE IN ART
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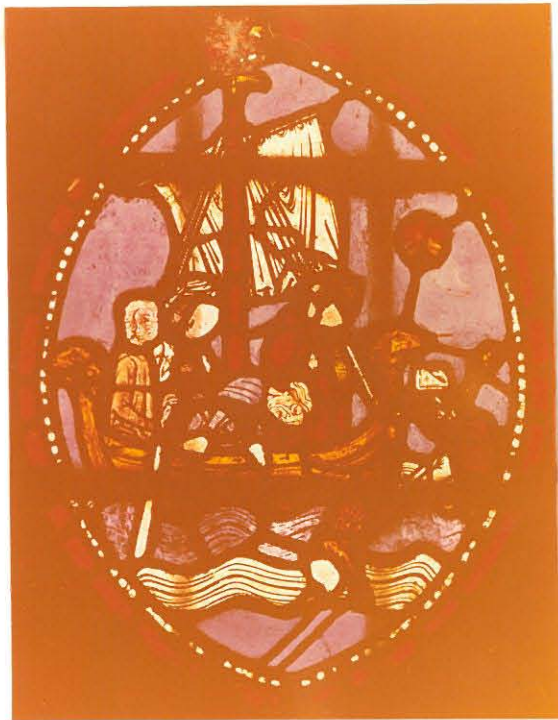
Submitted in part fulfilment
for the Degree of
Master of Fine Art

RHODES UNIVERSITY. NOVEMBER 1975

ANTHONY J.M. SWIFT. B.F.A., S.T.D.

1. SUMERIAN.

The Standard of Ur,
(detail)
2600-2400 B.C.

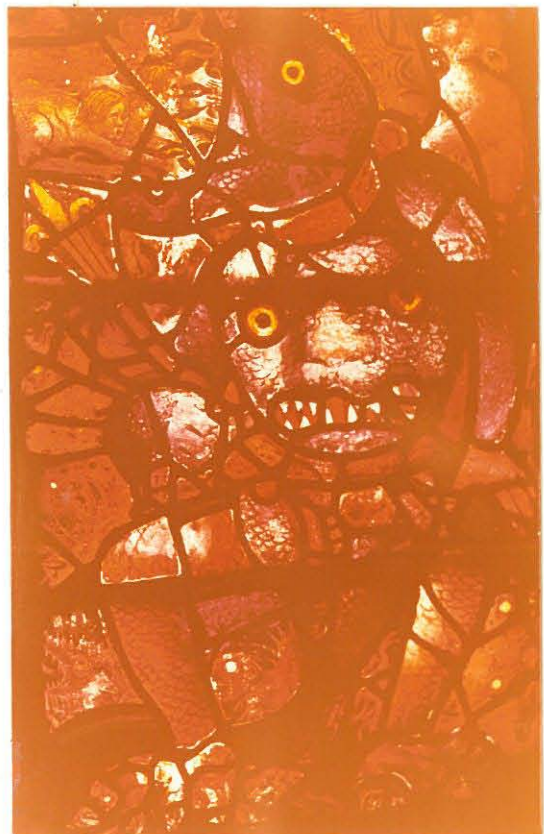


2. ENGLISH STAINED GLASS.

The Legend of St. Nicholas
of Myra, 13th century.

3. ENGLISH STAINED GLASS.

The Last Judgement (detail)
15th century.





4. GABON, AFRICA
Bakota Funerary Mask

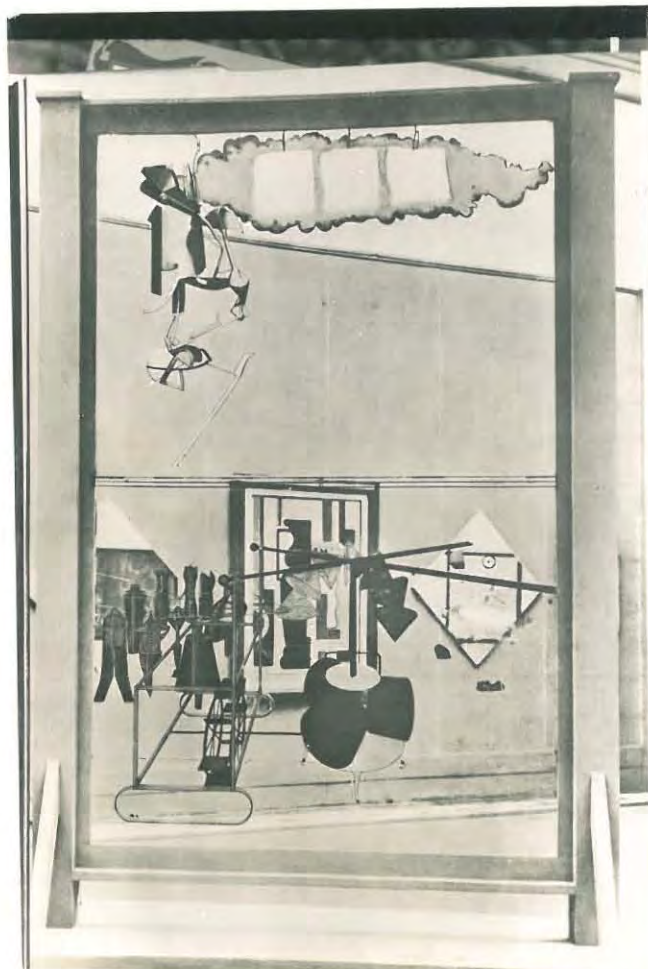
5. PABLO PICASSO.
Les Demoiselles
d'Avignon, 1907



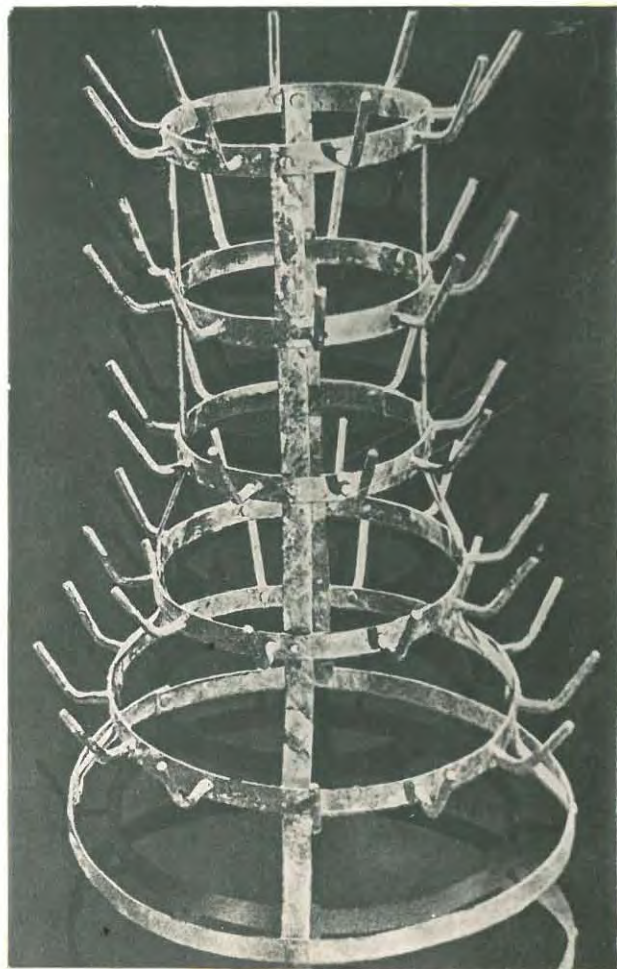


7. MARCEL DUCHAMP.
Bottle-Rack, 1914.

8. MARCEL DUCHAMP.
The Bride Stripped Bare by
her Bachelors, Even. 1915-23.



6. ELIAS ELISOFON.
Marcel Duchamp, 1952.



9. MARCEL DUCHAMP.
Urinal, 1917.



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Four Campbell's Soup Cans, 1965.



12. ANDY WARHOL.

Sixteen Jackies, 1964.



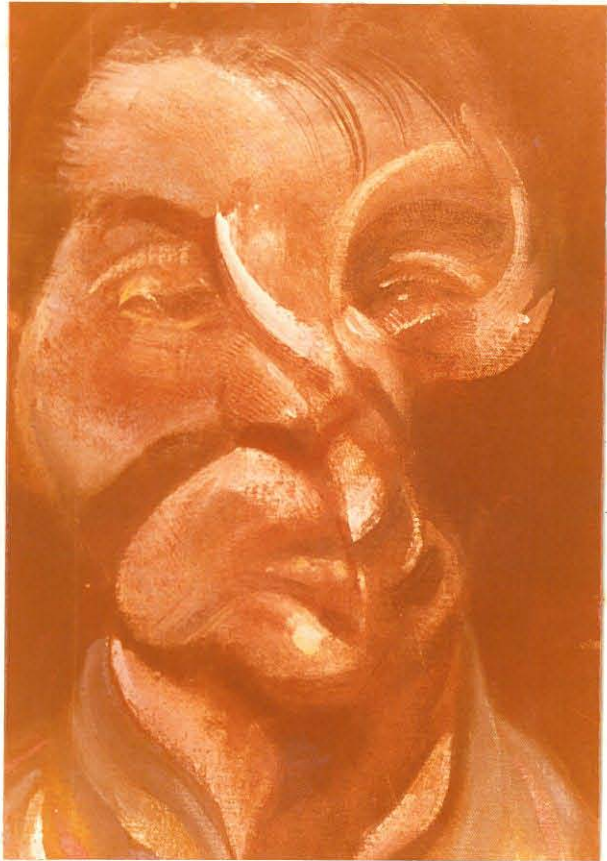
11. ANDY WARHOL.

100 Campbell Soup Cans, 1962.

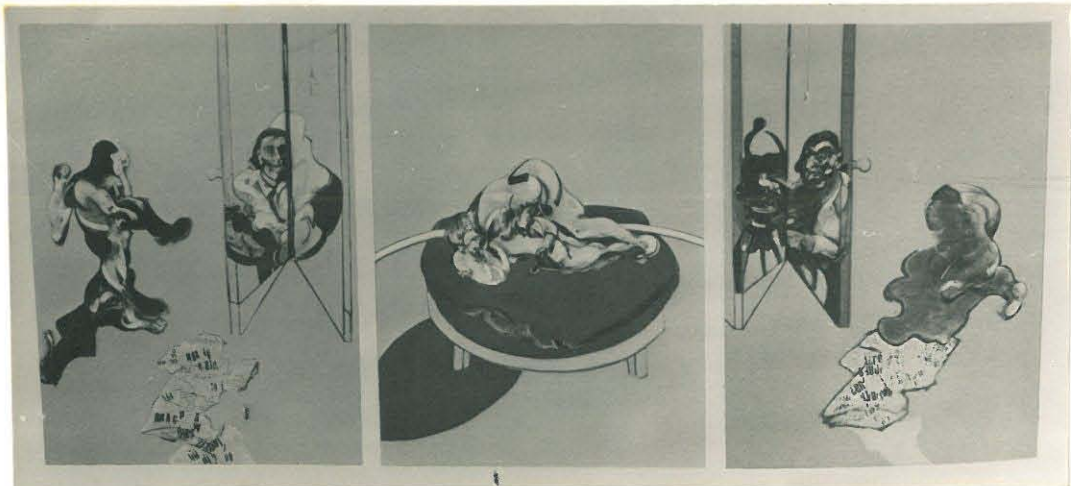


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14. FRANCIS BACON.
Self-portrait, 1973.



15. FRANCIS BACON.
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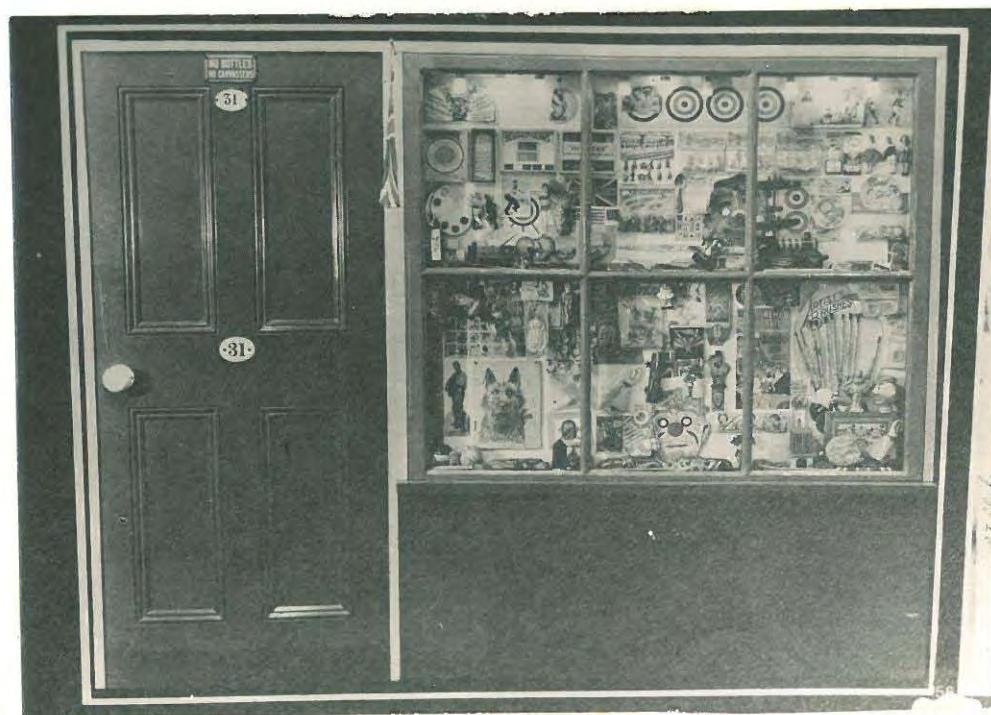
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Got a Girl,
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Suite of Paintings,
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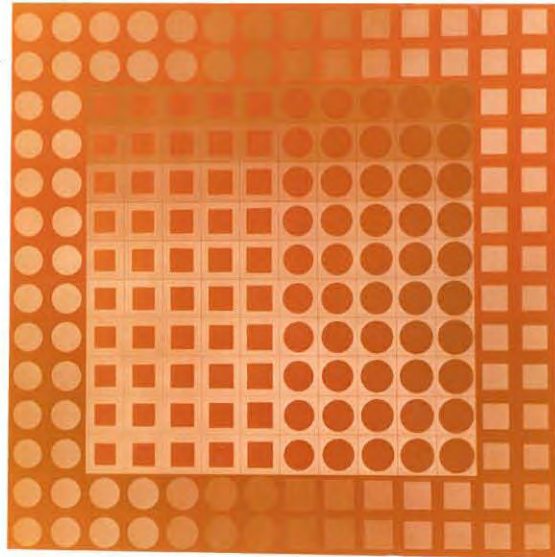


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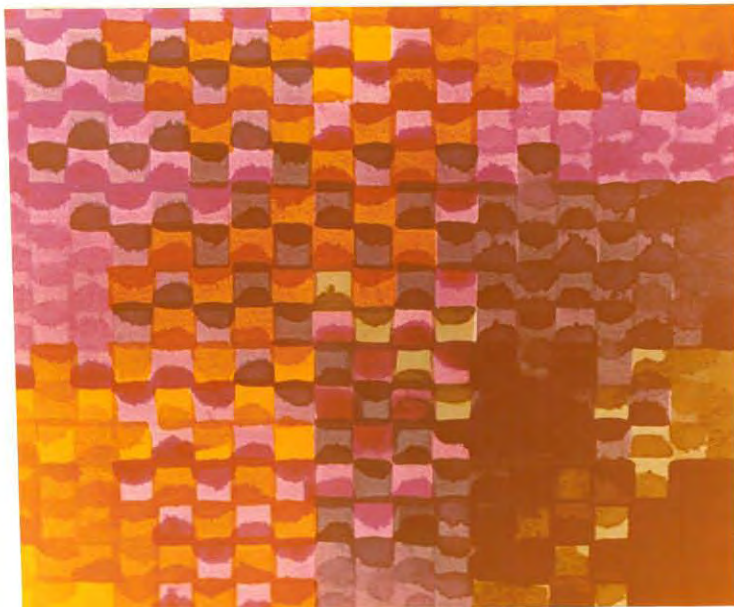


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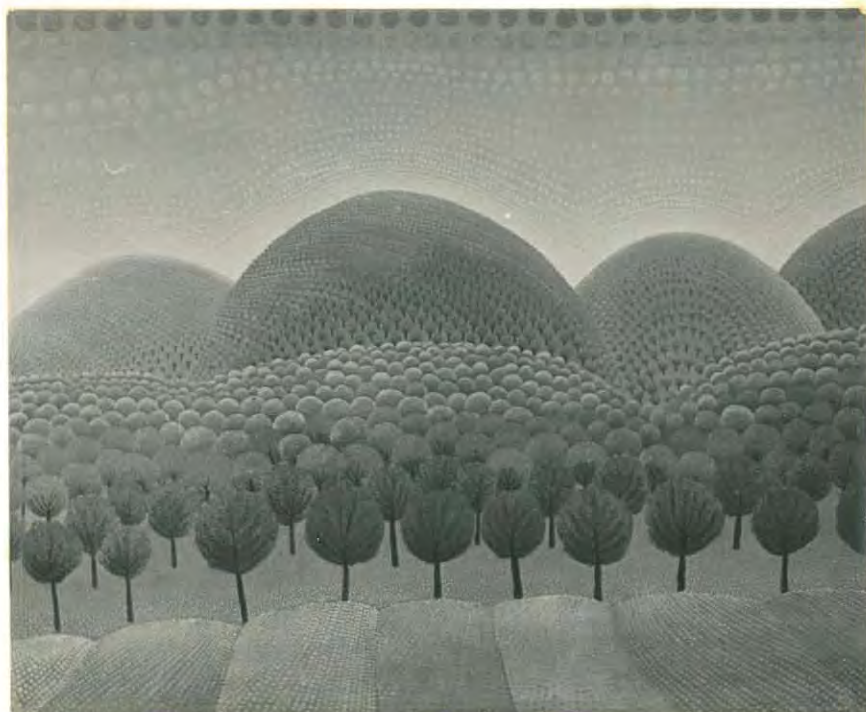


25. IVAN GERALDIC.

Deer Courting,
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26. IVAN RABUZIN.

The Great Forest,
1960.



27. TONY SWIFT.

Bush Path, 1975.
(Pencil and Ink)



28. TONY SWIFT.

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29. TONY SWIFT.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of this thesis is akin to that of a painting. It is subject to various influences that have evoked ideas and each idea has stimulated other ideas, thus the continuity could have gone beyond the bounds of this work. It is not so much an amalgamation of similar ideas but a development of diverse ideas which have, once composed, a common factor - the Multiple Image.

Image refers to some paintings that have been made or part of them, a photograph, a film, a subject visualized in the mind or a complex of forms which is suggestive. Multiple refers to anything that relatively repeats itself, has facsimilies of itself, triptychs, polyptychs or is a conglomeration of ideas in a work of art.

Artists whose works and ideas are discussed are mostly modern artists whose works are relevant to the theme. Opinions that have been sought are those of the philosophers and artists themselves and the opinions expressed in their work. Where possible the opinions of critics have been avoided in favour of a more personal approach and because of my involvement with multiple images in painting. The illustrations are not adjuncts to the writing but part of the whole work.

THE WRITER'S INHERITANCE

This chapter seeks to survey the general attitude of present which must be accepted, rejected or used by the artist. Man's reaction to this attitude has been active, destructive, productive and to a lesser extent, creative.

Economics, and not man's sensibilities, seem to rule his life. He feels he is forced to compete against the computer which virtually rules his life like a god. In practice he is dependent upon the machine and his thoughts cannot escape it. Communications are too vast, the mind is subject to too many divergent influences and too many books are written, thus he is subject to second-hand experiences with the result that he has forgotten how to think for himself. The conditioning process of the commercial world is a lie, but real. Nationalism gives way to internationalism, class and race distinctions interbreed so that man has become an universal mongrel, faithful to the money god that feeds him.

John Leonard of the "New York Times" said in an essay in 1968:

"The rush of aesthetic theories upon us, while we lie numb under the machine, has divided us from our own experiences and has stylized our responses. We do not

understand, but attitudinize, and grow ever more diminished, lost in the put on, clumsy at happenings, drowned in our boredom, swallowing ourselves with our own yawns. The New Art and the TV screen and advertisements all feature the same images and the same episodes, the same cheap myths and the same cheap satisfactions."^{1.}

"Our sacred instinctive individualism is always being corroded and corrupted by the sorcery of the set, the group, the school, the profession, the social clique to which we belong."^{2.}

"The destruction of philosophy by science, the appalling results of which surround us to-day, makes everything so specialized and so technical, that the kind of philosophical writing that combined poetry with moralizing and both with mysticism and mythology, has practically disappeared."^{3.}

Man's humanity is under incredible strain. His instinctive tendencies are suppressed by twentieth century civilization. Man forces himself into situations he does not want to be in. He continually plays a

1. Hofmann, Werner. Exhibition Catalogue, Neue Realisten und Pop Art. Berlin. 20 Nov. 1964 - 3 Jan. 1965. Quoted by Crone, Rainer. Andy Warhol. London, Thames and Hudson, 1970. p.9.
2. Powys, John Cowper. A philosophy of Solitude. London Village Press 1974. p.9
3. ibid. p.13.

game that he does not like and believes he has to play it. He falsely buys time so that he can attempt to put his dreams into practice. Man is the root of his own troubles as Carl Jung says:

"It is becoming more and more obvious, that it is not starvation, not microbes, not cancer but man himself who is mankind's greatest danger."⁴

There is a dilemma of indecision. Modern philosophers seemable to point out the roots of the problems of mankind but do not seem able to offer any lasting solution. They either become utopian dreamers or advocates of oblivion. The youth of the nineteen fifties rapidly swept the communication media with their revolt against the 'Established Order', likewise did the youth of the sixties and seventies only to succumb to the trappings of materialism and fame. The leaders of the various reactionary groups thus prostituted their integrity at the expense of their followers. Optimistic statements like "The Titanic Sails at Dawn"⁵ by Bob Dylan seem no longer hopeful. The counter culture has failed as predicted by

4. Quoted in: Guinness, Os. The Dust of Death. London, Inter-Varsity Press, 1973. p.2.

5. *ibid.* p.40.

Herbert Marcuse:

"Every revolution has been a betrayed
Revolution."⁶.

Bitter irony lies in the statement of an anonymous
anarchist poet:

"Give flowers to the rebels who failed."⁷.

Slowly man realises an uneasy sense of doom. His
hopelessness lies in the lack of structure, form or
aim in his miserable existence. His life is a struggle
for everyday survival and this should be the point
where he could act irrationally, because he has nothing
to loose, and discover by chance an outlet. But he
does not, he is too busy existing, he avoids thinking
because he becomes totally depressed about his
inability to influence his destiny, and so constricted
is he by his existence, that he will not even leave
himself open to chance.

The West streams to the East for its spiritual prowess
only to find itself in a spiritual fun-fair with no
ability to retain what it could have learned once
returned to the West. It only seems to offer a
temporary aim for the aimless man who tries to apply,
by modifying, Eastern philosophy to his own western
society. Significant, however, is the fact that the

6. Marcuse, Herbert. Eros and Civilization. First
Abacus edition 1972. p.75.

7. Quoted in: Guinness, Os. op. cit. p.76.

West strives for some sort of spirituality, its own Christianity having lost its appeal. The pseudo-Jesus revolutions are nothing but a sick commercial enterprise, culminating in Jesus slogans on badges, T-shirts, vests and underwear. Even the musical 'Jesus Christ Superstar' has fallen foul of this enterprise.

The drug trippers, the galaxy rush, man on the moon, man on Mars, man on, in, travelling anywhere all confirm that man has a taste for infinity.

Presently the world is hooked on astrology, clairvoyance and the occult. The pre-Christian religions of Europe are being revived and likewise turned into an abortive commercial product. Man functions best with a god but he schizophrenically divorces his god from what he believes to be rational and attributes it philosophically to the realm of mythology.

Christianity is used as a political weapon to the detriment of true spirituality. Man is so vain in his desire to know that when he dies there is something here-after, that he creates gods and religions to justify his existence because he cannot accept the element of finality as infinity and life-everlasting are so reassuring.

The nineteen seventies sees a nostalgic 'calling back the past'. Everyone is trying to isolate time and enjoy an atmosphere of a more favourable climate, thus the many neo-movements, the 'Great Gatsby' films,

clothing fashions, outbreaks of revivals and honouring of past heroes. Man sees no future and the future he does see he hates even more than the present with the result that he will believe in anything that gives him temporary satisfaction. The emptiness of the many beliefs, theories and images he comes in contact with have no sense of lasting, so man has evolved an insatiable appetite for novelty. He is like a drowning man clutching at any sort of jetsam, such as his dying thoughts, so aptly described by William Golding's 'Pincher Martin'.

Morality has been classified to such an extent that no lasting values can be found. There are too many little moral concepts to compare actions against. The Zen Master, Yun Men proclaimed that

"If you want to get to the plain truth, be not concerned with right and wrong. Conflict between right and wrong is the sickness of the mind."⁸

Today moral integrity seems to destroy the advocate of it. Men who decide to sneak directly and unmistakably without regard for the consequences tend to be ultimately disappointed and leave behind them a trail of broken hopes. Strong as their stand may be, and romantic as it seems for others, their work is

8. Quoted in: Guinness, Os. op. cit. p.192.

capitalized upon, the political machinery destroys them. Alexander Solzhenitsyn did this which was valid for him, while he was in Russia, and excellent for the newspapers and political propaganda, but by removing him from Russia, the fight gone, he is no longer a force. Picasso made strong statements but remained personally aloof. He could never be pinned down as he remained elusive. Jean Dubuffet forged ahead regardless of public opinion and that of the salon critics, but he talked too much. Now he finds himself in the archives of history, classified, categorized and computerized.

Blatant -roticism in contemporary art reveals onanism. Pornography is nothing but a shallow titillation which destroys any stable sexual desire. The many pornographic films, books and objects defile man, because invariably they reveal an exaggerated male sexual prowess and a degradation of women in an endeavour to boost man's virility. This is at man's expense because he enslaves his ego to a false sexual stimulant which becomes more important than procreation and affection. Women have become brash and tend to dominate with the result that most of them have lost their mystique. Over-population creates uncertainty in pro-creation, so much so, that man finds alternative sexual outlets, usually unhealthy ones. This, plus analytical psychology and economic circumstances, has corroded the family unit, thus the basic structure of western society is crumbling.

Mankind is terrified of the machine. Man makes anti-machine, anti-technological society films as a means of revenge on the computers that rule his life. Every one of these films holds an ultra-pessimistic view of the future organisation of society, where man lives in a false aura of freedom. When discussing man, Jacques Ellul said:

"He is most enslaved when he thinks he is comfortably settled in freedom."^{9.}

Simultaneously these films hold an optimistic view of man so that he eventually overcomes and destroys the machine. This power of man over the machine reveals his fear of it. Films such as "Alphaville", "A Space Odyssey, 2001", "Zardos" and "Rollerball" are like prehistoric paintings which were painted as a powerful symbol whereby the artist-hunter had a spiritual power over the animal that fed and also threatened him. It is interesting to note that when the animals left, man turned his eyes to the earth.

In "Zardos" the people have immortality, an existence of finality which is static. The outer world they eradicate from their minds. Without a sense of the infinite or the unknown they become apathetic and eventually they re-instate and welcome death as it is a reassuring relief.

9. Quoted in: Guinness, Os. op. cit. p.114.

The sculptor/painter cannot compete with the film media as a means of communication nor as a means to educate. The men, motorbikes and machines in "Rollerball" are the most complete sculptures of the twentieth century. These images are not thought of as sculptures but as objects the viewer can immediately relate to. Educationists encourage children to play on Henry Moore's sculptures so that from an early age they will learn to accept them! The infinite variety of scenes depicting people, architecture and landscapes has revealed the diversity of pictorial images, so that when the public looks at a single painting they can no longer wander into the mystery of the image but tend to delve into the artist's technical virtuosity.

The irony of the situation is that the great art media of the films has numbed the public's senses by showing too much. For them there is nothing left, as their wildest dreams come from some film, their fantasies cannot surpass the film image, their imagination is negligible. The horrifying realization is that this media can no longer educate the masses, but only condition them, as they are, in actuality, totally unresponsive to it in the long run. The film reveals incredible truths, attracting attention by the extremes of shock tactics, but once the audience has left the immediate gripping world of motion pictures, their attention no longer attracted, their ability to

assimilate having been destroyed by too much, the masses fall back into the lethargy of everyday life, knowing they can be temporarily stimulated by the next film.

What man has discovered in his ever changing sense of values has not been positive. Universal honour is dead, integrity is damned, life is no longer sacred, the environment is being destroyed, relationships between people are estranged, the senses are dulled, the will to live is questioned by the question 'what for?' and as an answer in despair, man commits suicide.

THE EAST LONDON CREMATORIUM

Hills of graves
surround this launching pad.
Futility is in the air.
There is no flourish,
But a whimsical puff
of grey smoke.
The West wind blows.
We breathe.
And inside the Gate
an inscription
on a rubber dust-bin
reads:
"No Hot Ash".

THE MULTIPLE IMAGE AND RHYTHM

The Multiple Image has evolved from the very roots of mankind. Art is, and has always been, man's way of uniting his desire to possess the world by having power over it by representing it realistically, and his desire to formulate his concepts of reality by means of abstraction. Art incorporates both science and myth in an endeavour to make the phenomenon of the world understandable.

Rhythm plays an integral part in the Multiple Image because man is so bound up with the rhythmic pulsations of his own heart beat, that when it stops his life expires, thus he creates images with a sense of rhythm. This he does by repeating, with variations, sounds and shapes which engender in the image or sound a pulse beat of its own and so give it life. The Multiple Image is this repetition that gives life to the inanimate.

One finds the Golden Rule repeated in nature and as nature forces itself on man he too must repeat. This rhythm, by repetition, is inherent in life and reveals itself in all man's art. If one surveys the art of mankind from the very beginning one finds this constantly. One has only to see the repeated lines on prehistoric tools, the repetition of animal paintings on cave walls or the alignments of megalithic monuments to feel this rhythm.

The Sumerian 'Standard of Ur' depicts rows of repeated figures which are complemented by the rhythmic abstract patterns of the dividing lines. In Egypt, the four statues of Ramses. II at the entrance to his rockhewn tomb force the onlooker by their sheer dominant size and repetition to feel that the Ka, the spirit of man, is so very much alive. The alignments of sphinxes that lead up to the forboding temples urge the bypassers to move toward the temple. The very structure of the temple is similar, with its open courtyard and hypostyle hall rhythmically following one after the other, till they reach the life force, the god, in the inner sanctuary.

The columns and friezes of the Greek temples, those of the Christian Churches, the mosaics, the many saints in niches, stained glass windows, door panels, the great ceiling and wall frescoes, the altarpieces, the triptychs, polyptychs, and even the concept of 'The Three in One' pulsate with a rhythm and so seem able to say, what they have to say, more emphatically.

AFRICAN ART AND ITS INFLUENCE

The whole of African philosophy is permeated with a sense of collectivity. The African sculptor embodies the ideas of the community, as he sees for the community and he creates his sculptures in accordance with the correct and accepted magical formulae. Material reality and spirit are conceived as one existence. The artist, although separate, is part of the group and so long as he remains part of the group he shares its power. His sculptures are essentially ritual instruments in which the spiritual elements are determined by the evocative powers of the external forms. These forms in turn embody the spirit and have a life of their own. The sculpture is thus functional and severe, and expresses what is essential. Each part constitutes an idea of its own and all the different parts make up the whole image. The individual parts, like the head, stomach or phallus have varying importance. These parts are in themselves a symbol of the idea, and the idea is representationally evoked by exaggeration. The idea and the part are one, so to represent them in some order of importance the parts are determined by the architectonic spaces and planes that are attributed to them, thus the distortion of reality is essential for the depiction of the ideal man-spirit or animal-spirit, something akin to the ideal beauty of the Greeks. One sculpture can

therefore express a number of ideas simultaneously. The planes and shapes of African sculpture have a strong sense of rhythm which is also inherent in the pulsating African drum beat. The evocative powers of the external forms of African Sculpture influenced European Art but the real significance and understanding of African Sculpture remained obscure, but for Europe this did not matter. At the beginning of the twentieth century all accepted values were questioned; the artists were revolting against nineteenth century academicism and new forms were being sought. The artists such as Picasso, Matisse, Brancusi and Gaudier-Brzeska, amongst others, were shocked by African Sculpture and readily found in its form fresh inspiration. Thus African sculpture acted as a catalyst, itself undergoing no change.

The sculptures of Picasso: "Bambola" and "Man Standing", Brancusi: "The Prodigal Son", Modigliani: "Limestone Head" and Gaudier-Brzeska: "Imp" all reveal this immediate influence.

Picasso's "Les Femmes d'Alger" 1907 revolutionized the accepted values of art and anticipated Cubism and the modern movements that immediately followed. This painting was a series of experiments, ultimately left unfinished, which spoke of things to follow. The two faces of the right hand women are African masks

revealing already a multiplicity of viewpoints in a single object.

The spirit of African sculpture worked its way into the subconscious of Picasso, through the evocative power of its external forms. Sculpture that worked on the mind of the primitive African worked on the mind of Picasso who was open to change. He even said that:

"The African carvings lying about my studio are TOKENS more than examples."¹⁰.

10. Leymarit, Jean. Picasso. London Macmillan 1972. p.217.

A FACET OF CUBISM

The Cubist painters who were not influenced by the spirit of African sculpture took the form of Cubism and developed other fields further and further away from the source that inspired the movement, thus the many aesthetic theorists of Cubism such as André Salmon and Guillaume Apollinaire, Apollinaire himself having an understanding of African sculpture beyond its evocative form. Strangely enough the leaders of Cubism, Picasso and Braque, remained aloof from the initial theorizing on Cubism. Picasso made few statements about himself and his ideas on his art but dealt instead with general attitudes which did not theoretically explain his work. By being elusive he left himself open to chance and change as it reveals itself in his statement:

"A picture is not thought out and settled beforehand. While it is being done it changes as one's thoughts change. And when it is finished, it still goes on changing, according to the state of mind of whoever is looking at it. A picture lives a life like a living creature, undergoing the changes imposed on us by our life from day to day. This is natural enough, as the picture lives only through the man who is looking at it."^{11.}

11. Chipp, Herschel B. Theories of Modern Art. Berkley. University of California Press 1970. p.268.

Picasso maintained that:

"Cubism is neither the seed nor the germination of a new art: it represents a stage in the development of original pictorial forms. Once worked out, these forms are entitled to an independent
12.
existence."

Cubist painting was its own subject and like African sculpture it possessed a life of its own. No longer was the subject of the painting of prime importance but rather the subject was a caldron in which ideas could be formulated. Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger said in a lecture "Cubism 1912" that:

"The fact of moving around an object to seize several successive appearances, which fused in
13.
a single image, reconstituted it in time."

This time factor is evoked by space relationships in Cubist painting and assisted by the multiple images.

12. Leymarie, Jean. op. cit. p.75.

13. Chipp, Herschel B. op. cit. p.207.

DADA THINKING

To think Dada is to refill your resources.

Marcel Duchamp radically broke from the visual appearance of Cubism with his 'ready-mades'. Not only did he break from Cubism but also from the accepted values of aesthetics, just as the artists of the early twentieth century broke from the values of nineteenth century academicism. He refused to accept the validity of any aesthetic or artistic tradition, so he 'flung urinals at the public' as if to say if art has any aesthetics then so has a urinal. The sense that the artist speaks for the community is so strong that the critics accepted these 'ready-made' articles as works of art and in turn the gullible public accepted the views of the critics. This entire attitude was capitalized on by Andy Warhol.

The war with its absurdities demanded new forms and means of thought. Out of this Dada was born. The Berlin Dada group loudly demanded revolution:

"Down with Art

Down with bourgeois intellectualism

Art is Dead.

Long live the machine age of Tatlin.

Dada is the voluntary destruction of the bourgeois world of ideas."¹⁴

14. Crone, Rainier. op. cit. p.11.

Dada was like the Wooden Horse of Troy: it cajoled by its appearance and destroyed with its armoured guts. Dada was spontaneity without the intervention of anything. Its strength lay in its nothingness. As Tristan Tzara said in a lecture on Dada in 1924:

"Dada is a state of mind. That is why it transforms itself according to race and events. Dada applies itself to everything, and yet it is nothing, it is the point where the yes and the no and all the opposites meet, not solemnly in the castle of human philosophies, but very simply at street corners like dogs and grasshoppers."^{15.}

At the time Dada was a negation of everything but I cannot agree with this as I find Dada is positive in that it helps to free us from our cages of logic by allowing us to reconceive our senses and to encourage the illogical and irrational so that in this state we may find accidentally the elements of truth.

15. Chipp, Herschel B. op. cit. p.389.

THE RADICAL INNOVATOR

Andy Warhol rejected the 'original' piece of art. Because his ideas have not conformed to the traditional ideas, people tend to avoid understanding his work but rather emphasize Andy Warhol as an individual personality to the point of his becoming a 'star'. Warhol, like Duchamp, has questioned the validity of a work of art. His subject matter is of lesser importance than the making of it. Warhol has realized that his art can no longer escape the influence of science, so he uses it, and he realizes that accepted values and the concept of art have changed. Warhol does not revolt against this but uses it to make a social comment. Warhol, the interpreter of society will stand the test of time because when future generations look back on the twentieth century they will not look at the original Brillo boxes or Campbell's soup cans but at the work of the man who commented about them, and Warhol's comments will make them realize that he was a great product of a damn sick society. As Marcel Duchamp said:

"If a man takes 50 Campbell's soup cans and puts them on a canvas, it is not the retinal image that concerns us. What interests us is the concept that wants to put 50 Campbell's
16.
soup cans on a canvas."

16. Crone, Rainier. op. cit. p.22.

Warhol's work comments on mass production because it is in itself a mass produced object. By reproduction he breaks down the authenticity of the original work of art. Anyone can make his images but his uniqueness lies in the fact that not anyone can produce his ideas. Whereas Dada rejected and negated, Warhol's attitude towards the Technological Society is positive. Warhol is not anti-everything but takes a definite stand and comments about society, machines, politics and aesthetics itself. Warhol's use of the silkscreen avoids the element of the original but his medium is still subject to chance so that each image that makes up his series is slightly different from the next. He even goes to the extreme of allowing others to print for him or put colour in his works. Here chance plays an even greater rôle and so the depersonalizing process is made even greater. Like the African artist he has become the voice of his society, he sees for them and his powers of observation and output of work lie in the things his society likes, hates, eats and drives. His comments embody the ideas, fads, fashions and fantasies of his society. Marilyn Monroe, Liz Taylor and Jackie Kennedy have become public property. This Warhol says by repeating their images as if they are a mass produced object. By using the multiple image he is able to express his ideas more poignantly. The very

repetition of his multiple images forces the public to accept his work as a product. The rhythmic regularity of the image works on the psyche of the community in a type of repetitive conditioning similar to the use of repetition in advertising.

HE HASN'T COMMITTED SUICIDE YET

Hans Richter's thoughts have been Dada. To an extent he is involved in the multiple image both in painting and the film media. He too believes the boundaries of the canvas have gone beyond the bounds of its frame. In his "Pro and Contra in Colour" 1967 he makes use of two shapes together. These shapes are repeated in a number of panels but in varying positions. The shapes are painted yellow, green, red and black and the white shapes reflect these colours. His theme, the two shapes, is revealed more by the use of different colours. By repeating the said shape he forces the validity of the perfect shape and the diversity of one shape upon the onlooker. When discussing his method of work he says:

"Sometimes I am able to grasp the whole, to consider and want the whole. Other times I do not see the whole at all, but go on digging. I start from somewhere, from a small detail, and dig on, enjoying the purposelessness of a dream. It is like following one little item which is influencing the next. And then, sometimes, in that way the whole develops. It is a matter of disposition, of the light of the day, of the weather, the digestion, the night's sleep, and a dialogue, a sudden

encounter with an object.^{17.}

He goes on to say that:

"no artist in his right mind would rationalize his source of inspiration. The nearer the content to the source of inspiration, the more the artist is himself, and the more irrational^{18.} becomes his work."

What he is saying is that his work is subject to chance and change and develops along those lines. One cannot rationalize one's source of inspiration, one can only say where one found it, what form it took but one cannot say exactly why the wind inspires, why or what the earth says or how the moon holds one in awe. The closest one can come to rationalizing is to say these influences have a sense of strength, a sense of the infinite but it does not explain metaphysical strength, the unknown or the infinite. Richter's "Nervous Harmony" 1968, again painted wood, is based on a counterplay of negative and positive shapes which are repeated in different combinations. One senses more than realizes the slight differences and this sense gives rise to a tension that evokes a nervous expectancy. Because there are a number of variations one feels that there could be an infinite number of

17. Richter, Hans. Hans Richter. London. Thames and Hudson. 1971. p.173.

18. Ibid. p.166.

variations and those that are depicted are not all. The play of negative and positive forms, like the planes of African sculpture with their cause and effect tension, is revealed in his poem:

"FORM AND ANTI-FORM"

When the earth was still the centre of the universe
and flat,

Man the last word of God's creation,

Things might have been simple

direct

unique-

I doubt it though!

But on a very round planet

Infinitely insignificant part of the universe

We, men, enigmatic animals not yet fully developed,

Are forced to see "the simple"

"the direct"

"the unique"

in contrast and connection with the unexpected
manifoldness

of cause and effect.

Everything is conditioned and constructed.

We see life in motion, in relationships

The flow of water in a rivier is its meaning

Not the single drop.

It is not the single outline that is to be contemplated.

No!

How form relates to form reveals a message

Form in itself is confirming.

Boundaries burst -

Form is replaced by pulsation

Forms interact, destroy the limits of form,

become continuities, rhythms, melodies

Life.

You move with them

Then form leads you from one point to another, from

observation to participation

It makes you act.

Round and straight, horizontal and vertical, the

circle and the square

They are not forms

They are what you are

Part of your body.

The round sky, the flat earth and your uprightness

Those are the elements which prevent FORM.

Only then - when you know that - then form - any

form - is

no longer a handicap

It becomes a tool.

You may even use a natural shape, a leaf, a torn

piece of paper

a geometric body or just a blob

You will understand its function - with other - forms

By understanding it, everything becomes NO-FORM
an element of your sovereign will
19.
You are rich."

Dada in its many manifestations advocated chance which acted without any conscious assistance from the person subject to it. This allowed the individual, once he realized that chance played an enormous, if not total, rôle in his life, to forget his preconceived ideas, his prejudices and inhibitions and to give himself almost wholly to this element of chance so that he could liberate his unconscious thoughts, feelings, actions, energies and dreams and through the irrational, develop.

19. Richter, Hans. op. cit. p.125.

IF YOU DON'T YAWN YOU SCREAM

Francis Bacon's themes are his personal visions and experiences. Our concern lies in his ideas on art and the making of his images. He finds accidental marks bring his painting closer to the point which he is trying to realize. His images develop themselves by accident. Although he visualizes what he wants to do it does not always turn out that way, but turns out better than he anticipated as the images themselves continually change. He feels that existing images breed other images and he is continually hoping to renew them. His images are transformed from what he initially visualised by the actual paint. In this accidental fashion he finds the paint makes much better images than he could make them do, so in a way, he creates a formal situation in which he is open to chance and change. He achieves this situation by working quickly and in so doing retains the spontaneity of the image. He finds if he continues to work on a painting it loses its vitality and likewise the image. His images develop a kind of tension between what one calls figurative or representational painting and abstraction. He feels that purely abstract painting concerns itself with purely aesthetic matters of forms, patterns and emotional marks which do not convey any sort of human tension. The reason for this is that the function of the artist to record is now the task of better

recording media such as films, tape-recordings and photographs, so that abstract artists concern themselves purely with colour and patterns for their own sake. He finds that because his paintings are so subject to the accidental, the message of the image comes across more poignantly than illustration because it has a life of its own and this life unlocks the valves of feeling and thereby returns the onlooker to life more violently. He wants an ordered image to come about by accident. He works on the panels of his triptychs quite separately but sometimes places them together in the final stages and unites them if they are not already united. He works on one image after the other in series as the one suggests the other but he always strives to make the one image that will destroy all the others but finds that they are so intimately bound together that they are better in series than separately. As such they seem to say the thing more succinctly. Once there is more than one image in a painting the story-telling factor comes into play. Once this happens the story tends to dominate the painted image and thus becomes boring because it loses its impact, so he avoids this in his multiple images by painting each image on a separate canvas so that it does not destroy its whole impact. By placing them together the vertical breaks between the canvases of his triptychs isolate the one image from the other and cut out the narrative factor between one and the other. His images engender a

mood and this mood is what he visualises. He is fascinated by Mybridge's sequences of photographs of the human figure in motion as he finds that photographs are triggers of ideas because by looking at them he can see a reality about them that they in themselves do not convey. His reasons for not going beyond the triptych into polyptychs is that he finds the triptych a more balanced unit. In this way Bacon does not speak for his images but they speak for themselves and so our concern then lies with what the images have to say.

ITS ALL BEEN DONE BEFORE

The concept of the Multiple Image is not confined to any single nation, society or race but permeates all cultures. The trend to paint consciously the basic emotions of the individual, by the artist forcing the situation in which he becomes unconscious of what he is doing by turning to drugs, alcohol or exhaustion, has revealed the productivity of an exalted state of euphoria. This trend has come about by the study of anthropology and the availability of stimulants. From the anthropological studies the artist has realized that societies of the past, or present primitive societies were not concerned consciously with building a culture but just went about their ways and developed a culture unique to their environment. The sense of the collective is once more coming to the fore as the artist today, although to a large extent estranged from society, realizes that he is part of the society that constitutes his environment. Present society with its insatiable desire for new knowledge instilled in the artist an almost hysterical desire to produce the new, the unique and the different. No longer concerned consciously with building a culture the artist adopted a laissez-faire attitude because to make his living he had to cater for a fickle public which was on the rampage for anything new. The public, not knowing its wants except the new, drove the artist

to experiment with anything in the hope that it would be accepted. The result was bizarre incoherencies which the critics claimed to understand, while the public claimed to understand the critics and the artist not knowing really what he was doing was forced to theorize on his art because it did not explain itself. The thousands of craftsmen of the past are now the thousands of artists without a craft. The social attitude towards artists is romantic, and the present generation finds some security and purpose in maintaining this romantic attitude by becoming artists. The accepted bohemian life of the artist became an excuse for the 'dropout'. The work produced became indistinguishable from that produced by an ape and both man and ape's work was accepted as valid. The artists have been having serious fun. George Matthieu is a showman. His 40' x 20' canvases covered in two hours are great feats of dexterity. His fantastic calligraphic imagery is well suited to Air France posters but has nothing to do with art. The 'Jan Vermeers' have gone underground.

Realizing that all has been done before, the artists have taken the now old imagery of the new, the unique and the different, joined them together, superimposed, destroyed, reorganized past concept into the 'new look'. The things of everyday life were taken as works of art in themselves only if they were presented as such, like

Duchamp's urinal and bottle-rack. The artists believing that anything they do is valid for their age, regard ethics and aesthetics as part of culture in an anthropological way.

The British Pop artist, Peter Blake, makes extensive use of established imagery and uses this in his multiple image works. What distinguishes Blake from the mass of Pop artists is that he really loves his material and his subject and reveals this attitude with the intensity of the teenager's temporary love for the pinups of his stars and machines that adorn his bedroom walls. He takes the dreams of the ordinary person, especially the 'pop' idols of magazine covers and organises this somewhat shoddy dream - material into a coherent whole which somehow ennobles the poor imagery. This makes his works attractive, nostalgic and enchanting as in his "Girlie Door" 1959. He treats all his material similarly, be it a masterpiece of the past or a photograph of the Beatles. "Toy Shop" 1962 epitomises the nostalgic 'calling back of the past'. This work reveals his boyhood fascination with the many toys in the many windows of shops and the painting remains in his possession.

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL

Windows and mirrors have always fascinated man especially if his image is distorted in the reflection as in a fun fair hall of mirrors. The reflective and refractive qualities of glass reveal a constant change in the image as a still pool of water in which a pebble is thrown. The influence of glass plays an incredible rôle in the life of man today because he is so constantly surrounded by glass. Window-shoppers see their ever changing images in glass and these images are complemented by the objects in the window cases and the various kinds of light. Modern buildings are constructed with thousands of panes of glass which make up entire facades and are always reflecting the passing clouds, cars and people. This influence of glass has manifested itself either consciously or unconsciously in the work of various artists who use the Multiple Image like a window frame.

Michelangelo Pistoletto's pictures like "Balcony with Three Men" 1964 consist of mirrors on which cut out silhouettes of vague, unrecognisable people are fastened. The onlooker sees himself reflected and finds that he forms part of the observed work. His vanity is played upon and he develops a relationship with the silhouette figures by his inclusion in the frame. This inclusion makes him feel part of the

picture and so he is estranged by the work. This helps him to contemplate the artist's creation but usually the onlooker is blinded by his own vanity. Never-the-less the work draws the spectator into the sense of the collective so that he feels part of an aesthetic that otherwise would be beyond his comprehension. He is no longer a silent onlooker but a participant.

Charles Blackman who belongs to the New Humanist group of Australian painters involves himself by use of the multiple image in portraying his figures in an irrational world of ordinary things as in "Alice in Wonderland", an early work. His paintings possess a metaphysical tactile quality where the figures are always touching something or someone, or they tend to feel their way around rather than see their way. His wife is blind and this has had an emotional influence on his work. His subjects are usually adolescent girls, like Alice whom he paints in a theme such as the seaside or a city street. His "Suite of Paintings" reveals his tendency to divide his canvas into different pictures. Here the images of faces of adolescent girls are in no particular order, they are different in size and painted in strong tones of light and dark. These factors give the work a dramatic impetus. The gestalt theory comes into play when the observer wants to complete the fragments into a whole by forming a mental relationship between the figures, and this attitude

helped by the multiple imagery, conveys the mood of the painting. His painting 'Shadow, Large Reflection' is a later work that harks back to the window in 'Alice in Wonderland'. Here the four glass window panes dramatically contrast with the many rectangular red shapes that appear like tiles on the floor. A shadow, which makes one wonder if it does not belong to a grownup Alice, moves unobtrusively into the picture frame and creates an uneasy mood which depends on the uncertainty of the ultimate destiny of the shadow. The divisions of the window and the related shapes on the floor are an essential means of creating this tension. One is forced to look from one shape to the other in an endeavour to understand the relationship and in so doing one sees the strength of contrasts in the cool, slow colours of the panes and the hot, fast colours of the floor which adds to the mysterious tension.

Mystery and Magritte are one. René Magritte's paintings echo a quiet infinity, so quiet that the atmosphere becomes disquieting. His figures in "Golconda" 1953 stand motionless across the plane of the entire picture, destroying the limits of space imposed by the picture frame. The figures repeat themselves in varying sizes and stand on their own ground although they are placed in the building walls or in the sky which becomes solidified by the position of the figures. The images of the men and windows which are repeated

so often, give rise to a mystical sensation in that the images that are seen can therefore hide images that cannot be seen. This is implied by the fact that because there are so many similar figures there could be more and the onlooker is trapped in the eerie realm of the unknown, the infinite and as such, the mysterious.

A SIMPLE SINCERE UNDERSTANDING

Victor Vasarely has at his fingertips an extreme control and understanding of optics, colour and illusion. His art is like a computerised product of a 'pop-out' machine. The exactitude of his work is the most refined sophistication of the technological society. If man were to be a machine he would really understand Victor Vasarely's art. His work reveals the supreme intellect of the modern artist and in his race against his times he has surpassed his age and has entered the world of tomorrow's machine. He has left his mind on his canvasses but not his guts.

The realm of intellectual art is limited to the intellectual man. Has the time come where there is no space for the simple, the direct, the naive and honest man? These men exist and they too have the right to make their world intelligible through their art and if they cannot create intellectual manifestations like the professionals they must create out of the depths of their inner volition. Paul Gauguin left Europe for Tahiti to find the truth of his existence by his own experience. His world was what he sensed and not what he saw at a glance. Vincent van Gogh whose strength of instinct and intimate experience of objects created work that was true to life, despite the lack of artistic virtuosity. Henri Rousseau's dreams became reality.

The primitivism of archaic races has not left man living in the twentieth century. The Yugoslav, Ivan Geraldic, wanted to bring art closer to the people in a time when art was becoming increasingly difficult to understand. He paints on glass which results in the unexpected and accidental but he always controls the outcome. His compositions include many figures held together by the rhythm of the community, an echo of archaic collectivity. His painting "The Woodcutter" 1959 reveals the same or similar woodcutter up three different trees. This basic element of repetition gives the work a rhythm and a symbolic mystery. The vertical trees repeat this rhythm and so give a continuity to the act that is taking place. His "Deer Courting" reveals a similar episode of repetition of the ghostlike trees in the background. These white trees are complemented by the four white deer who are all in the same walking stance. The simple repetition forces the onlooker to take a deeper look into the scene, allowing him the time to contemplate the majesty of nature. The colours vibrate with an incredible honesty and reveal Geraldic's passionate love of nature. Another Yugoslav, Ivan Rabuzin, walked the countryside with a picture frame so as to view the world as if it were a painting. He did this as a substitute for painting for he was ignorant of methods of painting. He later substituted the frame for a mirror and continued to carry the burden of a painting inside him. He suddenly realized that the landscape reflected in the mirror was an image of the landscape

so he too could reflect an image of the landscape in painting, like the mirror. He naively uses the principle of repetition which he bases on the arc and sphere which dominate the square or cube as in African sculpture. His paintings which depict skies, mountains, hills, trees and earth all echo the same spherical shapes of varying size, and rhythmically flow like the life force of nature. Here is the naive equivalent of Victor Vasarely.

PHANTASMAGORIA

The universe teems with life, an endless repetition of images and sounds, planets and stars, galaxies and fantasies. Man's endeavour to understand life has led him far into scientific fields. Science has infiltrated art to such an extent that each relies on the other. The scientist, unable to discover in rational terms, finds solutions, like the artist, in an irrational way; develops his discovery to a significant point and then explains them rationally to justify his experimentation to the masses that pay him. The art of the future lies in kinetics, an endless repetition of a great variety of evocative stimuli visualised with alternating rhythmic movements which will serve a sociological, environmental and quasi-spiritual function for the scientific man of the future. Until such time that the entire world's population has transformed itself into a totally scientific being, there will still be place and time for man to ponder over the majesty of his inherited environment of nature. Thus art, as it has always been, will survive. A society that is determined to move into a metaphysical realm where the physical attributes of man and nature are neglected, is moving further away from the essence of existence - the bond to the earth.

In this climate the artist of today, and not the artist of tomorrow, who surmises what the future might be,

must concern himself with his natural environment, which is unhumanised, virginal and prehistoric, because it alone holds the secrets of the universe for him. Painting is thus a personal ritual in which the artist seeks truth, a truth for himself only. He cannot submit to fluctuating world values. He must seek out his own place on earth by realising the value of art. This implies real faith in art, especially his own. If he believes in what he is doing the rest does not count, and if he loves what he is doing he extends himself to the utmost as a human being. In a type of narcissistic way he not only looks at his own image which he creates but into it and into the world which is mirrored in himself. He can therefore only rely on the realm of the unknown for his inspiration, and on his own judgement of his work - his integrity. If the artist lacks personal integrity he follows the futile path of 'trying to satisfy'. In an estranged human and technological environment the artist must be able to stand alone. To do this he must cultivate a strong personal philosophy which is flexible so that he can determine his dealings with men and machines peacefully and at the same time remain elusive. In his quietude he can develop his own spiritual power and remain true to himself.

In his dealings with nature the artist must contemplate those magical and half-realised feelings of his senses

and his spirit. He must believe in the power and magic of his own will so that he ceases to be indignant about the folly of the world. His senses are immediate at moments of intensity. This intensity brings the artist closer to the spirit of nature because he becomes one with nature as the powers of nature break down the barriers within which he has enclosed himself. This results in a dialogue between the spirit of nature and the spirit of man which becomes a dialogue of understanding as it is no longer inhibited by the superficiality of everyday thought. The artist thus becomes a natural animal, prowling the mystical depths of the forests, and in an effort to fathom the unknown he develops instinctively and so projects his own spiritual volition, his essence. He senses in the presence of nature an intangible truth rising from the core of the earth, which tells him that he is a part of the earth and not master of it. He sees civilisations covered with growth or obliterated by the wind. There are no walls of Isengard that can withstand the ^{21.} onslaught of the Ents. Max Ernst's painting 'La Ville Entière' exemplifies this.

The artist is surrounded by a fantastic series of

21. Tolkien, J.R.R. 'Lord of the Rings' Book 2. The Two Towers. London. Union 1974.

elusive images and forms. The initial impact of these images is elusive because the artist sees not an object in isolation but an object in relation to its environment. Consequently the thoughts that revolve in his consciousness are related to the physical setting in which he and the object he is viewing come into contact with each other. The object is seen in relation to what he has previously seen and what he still wants to see. The situation in which we find this meeting between artist and object is rapidly changed, as thought about the situation takes place. The mood or fleeting recognition is determined by the artist's sensitive insight. This mood and the magic of the object is what must remain on the artist's canvas. The forms which convey this mood change. The artist views his subject from all angles. To retain the life of an object in painting the images that are painted will constantly change as thought about the object in relation to its setting takes place. In the multiple image painting, the artist reveals a series of viewpoints of the object so that somewhere amongst the multiple images the intangible life of the object will be revealed. No longer is there a scene, a setting but a constant flow of change which is, in reality, the way the artist sees. A forest is not what the artist sees from the outside but the mystical sensations he feels in the

forest. The essence of the forest is conveyed by the entire conglomeration of earth, dampness, decayed organic material, trees, leaves, insects, animals, birds, the music that they make and the play of light within the whole. The multiple image painting challenges the onlooker to unite the various isolated images into a whole, and in so doing, he is forced by the repetition to contemplate the images. While doing this he will sense the rhythm and the continuity and see and feel that which he ordinarily would not have. A painting must suggest a definite attitude, a path of insight that has not been conceptualised before. The personal link between the artist and the object of his idea must be intimately understood. The artist personifies earth, sky and water because he can thus relate more easily to it, but if he is to understand the spirit of the water, earth and sky he must become so at one with it that he becomes water-wise, earth-wise and sky-wise in his renderings of it.

There are certain realities that cannot be said in a verbal or written form. Gestures speak louder than words. Images are gestures, and the closer these images are to the experience of them, the more conscious the artist will become of the influence these images have over him and he will be able to understand his metamorphosis. Nature is the most incredible revitalising force that exists. The artist is

dependent upon it for some small part of the great spirit of nature is implanted into his being and adds a richness to his existence.

The artist paints to expound his new power, energy vision and understanding that has developed from his contact with nature. He wishes to reveal some of the insight he has received. This insight has to be exposed in a concrete manner so he uses images and objects which he re-presents so that their significance can be seen better. People who look at paintings must therefore stare at, ponder over and examine them in a spirit of voluntary submission, an attitude of temporary acceptance of someone else's ideas, and not with the intention of reinforcing their own. They must try to sense the inner spirit that influenced the artist's hand. Only if the artist remains true to himself will his work be able to impart some of its substance.

To you whom the muliebrile World
Embraces in her calm passion

Open your hearts, for you need her love!

The ancient rocks that crack

Chasms in your mind,

Let them fill your void with space.

Allow the grass that speaks

To shake the kernels from your husks

That you may eat.

Find a sea that pounds your masochism

For it is in need of ecstasy.

Offer yourself to the heat of the sun

So you can grasp its mirage

And become as elusive.

Enclose yourself in grand canyons

And echo their praise.

Listen to the ducks' morning cry.

It cracks the meniscus of the dam.

Render yourself unto these forces

That you may become its voice.

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