



National Library  
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale  
du Canada

Canadian Theses Service

Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0N4

## NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30.

## AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, tests publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30.

From University to the Work World:  
Early Career Histories of Five Art Graduates

Joanna Black

A Thesis  
in  
The Department  
of  
Art Education  
and Art Therapy

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Art Education at  
Concordia University  
Montréal, Québec, Canada

May 1988

© Joanna Black 1988

Permission has been granted to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author (copyright owner) has reserved other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her written permission.

L'autorisation a été accordée à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur (titulaire du droit d'auteur) se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation écrite.

ISBN 0-315-44872-5

## ABSTRACT

### From University to the Work World: Early Career Histories of Art Graduates

Joanna Black

The aim of the research is to understand the early career experiences of five art studio majors during the years following their departure from university. After undertaking preliminary research, five participants were selected on the bases of (1) their articulateness, (2) their insightfulness about past career experiences, (3) their willingness to confide in the interviewer, and (4) their diversity of experience from one another. Also, it was a concern that the interviewees' memories were still "fresh" and not of the distant past; therefore the people selected were all fairly recent graduates having all graduated or left school between 1970 and 1981. A two level interview process was used. In the first unfocused interview the participants led the dialogue and discussed issues they felt were important. The second interview was focused by the researcher toward specific topics selected to establish validity and probe key issues further such as marketing, idealisms and disenchantment. Other data such as exhibition catalogues, and the researcher's own observational notes were also collected. All the data was then used to compile a career history of each person. In the analysis the pattern of transition between university and the work world is identified and elaborated using evidence drawn from interviews. The analysis reveals



that as the interviewees go through the transition process from university to the work world and make decisions about a career as a professional artist their university expectations turn out often to be illusions. As a result, a shared pattern that the participants experienced was focused upon: they all confronted conflicts, struggles, and disillusionment. The five interviewees' views of their university education related to their transition to the work world reveals issues and suggestions worthy of attention by university art educators and art education researchers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

There is one person who has dealt with "reams" of rough drafts upon more rough drafts, who has coped with a difficult long distance relationship via large air mail packages, and who has closely helped me to transform raw material into thesis form: for this I thank Professor Cathy Mullen. I appreciate her inimitable support, and her persevering encouragement. Her high standards of academic professionalism have been for me nothing but inspirational.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Professor Elizabeth Sacca and Professor Stan Horner for their help and insightful comments which has caused me to "step away" from the data I collected and look at it with "fresh eyes".

A special acknowledgement is extended to Anne Brooymans - Donald and Rose Montgomery-Whicher who are former academic colleagues and dear friends. Their understanding of my research, their thoughtful ideas and their support have certainly enriched this thesis and contributed towards making this research writing a pleasurable experience.

To Hannes Kivilaht I am particularly grateful for his loving support and guidance over thousands of miles and many years apart.

Finally, I thank the five participants who shared part of their lives with me. Without their support, sincere comments and confidence this research would not have been possible.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>	
	GLOSSARY .....	viii
I	INTRODUCTION .....	1
	Statement of the Problem .....	1
	Assumption .....	3
	Limitation .....	3
	Personal Motivation For the Research.....	4
	Significance of the Research for Art Education .....	5
II	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	7
	Schools and their Programs .....	7
	The Artist .....	9
III	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	13
	Methodological Rationale .....	13
	Selection of the Life History Method .....	13
	The Written Accounts of the Life Histories .....	14
	Description of the Fieldwork .....	16
IV	CAREER HISTORIES .....	23
	Looking Ahead: Lily .....	23
	Recognition: Kram .....	36
	An Alternative Road: William .....	55
	In Limbo: Sylvia .....	78
	Beyond Personal Expectation: Roslind .....	94
V	THE ANALYSIS .....	116
	Introduction .....	116
	Hopes and Pipe Dreams .....	119
	Struggles .....	123
	Disenchantment: Or Getting to Know the Real World .....	131
	Life After Disillusionment .....	139
	Summary .....	145
VI	ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ART EDUCATION .....	147
	Educational Issues .....	147
	Personal Thoughts for University Art Educators .....	150
	Suggestions for Art Educators .....	151
	Suggestions for Future Research .....	152

BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	155
APPENDIX A .....	159
APPENDIX B .....	160
APPENDIX C .....	161

## THE GLOSSARY

### #1. Professional Artist:

A person who creates and exhibits art on a regular basis. This definition excludes classifying a professional artist in other terms such as life style, knowledge acquired, public response. The definition of the 'professional artist' -- and also the definition of 'education' -- used in this thesis are ones directly related to the professional career world.

### #2 Successful Artist:

A professional artist who has achieved recognition in terms of the art world, and/or in terms of commercial recognition and monetary success. This definition excludes other typical explanations of success of which some are as follows: first, in terms of artistic production; second, in terms of selling numerous art works; and third in terms of the quality of the art produced.

### #3. Art Graduate:

A person who has obtained a M.F.A., B.F.A. or a B.A. in Visual Art.

### #4. Business of Art Course:

A course covering the business side of art, namely how professional artists market themselves; the exhibiting processes artists undergo; the numerous professional relationships with key people in the art world; the monetary aspects of a career as a professional artist; and the application strategies for grants and other assistance.

#5. Nonstandardized Interview:

An interview in which "no prespecified set of questions is employed nor are questions asked in a specific order. Furthermore, a schedule is not employed. This gives the interviewer a great deal of freedom to probe various areas and to raise and test specific hypotheses during the course of the interview (Denzin, 1970, p.126)."

#6. Nonscheduled Standardized Interview:

An interview in which "the interviewer works with a list of the information required from each respondent. This form most clearly approximates what has been called the focused interview in which certain types of information are desired from all respondents but the particular phrasing of questions and their order is redefined to fit the characteristics of each respondent (Denzin, 1970, p.125)."

#7. Structural Corroboration:

A process which Eisner (1979) defines as follows: it is one "of gathering data or information and using it to establish links that eventually create a whole that is supported by the bits of evidence that constitute the whole. Evidence is structurally corroborative when pieces of evidence validate each other (Eisner, 1979, p. 215)." When one establishes structural corroboration intrinsic adequacy is enacted.

#8. Intrinsic Adequacy or Internal Validity:

A procedure which is called intrinsic adequacy or internal validity and which Alexander (1981) states are parallel (p. 42). Denzin defines internal validity as making certain that the data provided by the

interviewee has not changed as a result of the interview process. Denzin, (1970) writes that "when dealing with one case researchers must be aware of their reactive effects and of changes that are going on as the subject reconstructs his life (p. 241)."

#9: The Topical Life History:

A type of life history in which only one phase of the subject's life is studied (Denzin, 1970) which in this study would be the university and career years of the individual.

#10. Art World:

A phrase which refers to not only the artist who produces the artworks but to the network of individuals in art occupations who enable the artworks to exist. I place particular importance on such individuals as dealers, agents, curators, and gallery owners -- people who assist the artist in displaying his or her work to the public. This definition is influenced by Howard Becker (1982) who writes: "Art worlds consist of all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art. Members of art worlds coordinate the activities by which work is produced by referring to a body of conventional understandings embodied in common practice and in frequently used artifacts. The same people often cooperate repeatedly, even routinely, in similar ways to produce similar works, so that we can think of an art world as an established network of cooperative links among participants (p. 34)."

#11. Education:

A term used to refer to professional 'training' for future careers in the work force. This definition excludes others such as indoctrination, socialization, cultivation of students morally and aesthetically, and discipline.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

There are numerous myths about artists. Many of them have been prevalent since the early nineteenth century: for example, it is often thought that artists are moody, unreliable, unconventional, and exceedingly promiscuous -- in short, eccentric bohemians; it is a typical belief that artists live alone, poverty-stricken in a garret with only money enough to buy art supplies and alcohol; and it is common to think of the artist-genius as one who will one day be discovered and then be rightfully placed in the prestigious art history textbooks (Cipriano, 1977; Freundlich, 1975; Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Gouin, 1981; Griff, 1960; Munro, 1958; Pope, 1937). Although some of these myths indicate truths, much is based on stereotype conceptions (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Griff, 1960). In the last few decades, researchers have found that many of these stereotyped images of artists and their lives are incorrect; this has become evident as a result of both researching the types of personality traits common to successful artists (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; McCall, 1975; Whitesel, 1974; Wilton, 1978), and by researching the experiences people have undergone in becoming professional artists (Cipriano, 1977; Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Goodman, 1974; Hendricks, 1973; McCall, 1975; Winder, 1981; Witten, 1984).

Researchers have indeed focused attention on the 'successful' artist. One researcher has made an in-depth study, inquiring of

university graduates, who had become successful fine artists, how they felt the university art programs could be improved (Cipriano, 1977). Others have written detailed, biographical accounts of successful artists' past career struggles (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Winder, 1981). Even though a small number of art students become professional artists (Baker, 1971; Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Griff, 1960), few studies have examined the fine art graduate who is unsuccessful in becoming a professional artist or who has consciously rejected a career as a professional artist (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Griff, 1960, 1964; Wilton 1978). I have found no researcher has written an in-depth biographical account of these graduates' career struggles once the students left the university. The gap is addressed in this research study.

The focus of this study is on obtaining an understanding of the experiences of promising studio fine art university graduates in becoming, or in trying to become, or in consciously choosing not to become a professional artist during their years at and following university. I have interviewed graduates who are (1) successful artists, (2) or who are struggling artists, (3) or who have deliberately renounced such a career. The term 'experiences' covers a wide area including professional training, the graduates' career decisions and the subsequent outcome; their feelings and ideas when they accept, reject or are rejected by the art world; and their perceptions towards their selected career as an artist or in another occupation from the vantage point of looking at the past. In summary, the aim of this study is to gain an understanding of studio art graduates' life experiences at crucial points in their early career years, especially that period when

they are at university to when they enter the career world.

### Assumption

Five studio art graduates' narrative accounts of their career experiences are included in the thesis. A major goal of these career histories is to convey to the reader, the interviewees' experiences as directly as possible. In the accounts the interviewee's own voice dominates. The presentation of these experiences from this perspective is a consequence of a key assumption: namely, that people's own perspectives of their experiences are extremely important (Denzin, 1970). I agree with Becker (1977) who believes that the researcher at best "emphasizes the value of the person's own story. This perspective differs from that of some other social scientists in assigning major importance to the interpretations people place on their experiences as an explanation of behaviour. To understand why someone behaves as he does you must understand how it looked to him, what he thought he had to contend with, what alternatives he saw open to him (p. 420)."

### Limitation

In dealing with graduate students who were asked to discuss their past during the interview, a complication arose. The data elicited was based on memories. A major criticism can be given; people do not always remember accurately the way reality actually was at the time it was experienced. This is a limitation of the research. A documentation could not be acquired of the interviewees' feelings and ideas concerning their experiences at the time they occurred. Rather, a documentation of the interviewee's perceptions was acquired at the time the interviews occurred. Furthermore, it is understood that memories change as new experiences 'shed light' on and consequently alter one's understanding

of old experiences. This is, however, an advantage for the people interviewed, because it enables them to speak with hindsight.

### Personal Motivation for the Research

Personal experiences impelled me to choose the thesis topic. After having entered an Ontario university in an undergraduate program, after having studied intensely for four years in Visual Arts, and after having finally graduated I was unprepared when entering the work force. I asked myself numerous questions. What career do I want? How do I enter the art world? If I want to become an artist how do I proceed? What does becoming an artist entail? I felt that during my years as a student these issues were dealt with extremely inadequately. I ended up graduating without having received any career preparation whatsoever. After university it was painful facing these issues alone, isolated and unprepared. For myself, Betty Chamberlain's (1974) insightful comment about art students was applicable: what happens "after college? -- astonishment!" (p. 45).

One of the reasons for undertaking the research was to explore and understand experiences other people have had who had graduated from a studio fine arts program. I wanted to compare other people's experiences with my own. One supposition was very strong: I believed that in the case of art studio students, facing a crisis when graduating and upon entering the work force was a common dilemma and not isolated to myself alone.

When I had begun the art education research for my thesis, I reflected on this situation I had experienced as an art student. I felt impelled to research the subject of professional training at the university level. Two preliminary studies have since been completed.

In the fall of 1984, I undertook the first study: I compiled data from a questionnaire which was answered by Concordia art students. The purpose of this study was to find out whether art students wanted a 'business of art' course at the university level and it was found that 92% felt a definite need. Furthermore, 76% said they would certainly take a course if it was offered. In the winter of 1985, I completed the second study. I interviewed six B.F.A. art graduates using a semi-structured in-depth interview style. I asked them questions about their university professional training and careers. The results of this study indicated firstly, that the students felt professional training to be inadequate at the university level; and secondly, they felt a definite need for a 'business of art' course in their B.F.A. program. As a result of these interviews the ethnographic data collection methods and interview strategies as well as methods for writing life histories were developed. Furthermore, as a result of the two pilot studies, I developed an interest in acquiring an understanding of studio B.F.A. art graduates' experiences during university and their ensuing careers.

#### Significance of the Research for Art Education

There are several reasons for undertaking this research. First, as a result of reading the written life histories, it is hoped the research will reveal to educators, art students, and graduates some of the types of experiences Canadian art graduates have had in their studio art university programs and in the work force. Second, for art students, of whom many do not know what it is like to become a professional artist, and of whom many will probably be facing similar career decisions, this research may be beneficial to students as a preparatory informational service to help them engage in the issues as they affect their lives

(Brodsky, 1977; Chamberlain, 1976; Fingleton, 1982; Goodman, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1981; Sgouros, 1978; Whitesel, 1977, 1979). And third, the life histories may provide other researchers with data with which to work (Degge, 1975).

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is necessary, in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of previous research undertaken to cover two main areas: first, the university studio art institutions' programs in terms of professional training; and second, the artists in terms of their professional careers.

#### Schools and their Programs

The Education Commission of the States (1986) wrote twenty-two recommendations for the improvement of undergraduate education, and it was suggested that research be conducted in order to "find out what alumni and former students think about their undergraduate experiences." Taylor (1982) interviewed twenty-four professional artists about their secondary education experiences and it was found that they were very negative believing that the institutions had failed to meet their needs. The artists felt a lack of professional support, although they mentioned a few nurturing teachers. Cipriano (1977) interviewed fifteen artists and found that they believed the university did little to prepare them for the professional art world; however, it was noted that the teacher was an important influence who fostered professional attitudes and served as a role model.

Freundlich (1975) praises the university environment. He believes it is excellent for it (a) has numerous qualified, knowledgeable teachers; (b) provides a nurturing environment; and (c) stimulates the

growth and development of students. He does not mention the lack of professional preparation students receive in art programs. Goodman (1974, 1975, 1976, 1981) believes artists must teach themselves how to become established in the art world. Evan and McCloskey (1973), though, believe there is a definite need for career training in academic schools. Universities, they think, need to change.

Many other writers have applied information about the art student or the artist's struggles in becoming a professional to art education. The Education Commission of the States (1986) notes that students' concern for employment has resulted in a narrow specialization and consequently, it advocates training in cultural heritage, critical thinking, interpersonal skills and developing the student's sense of social responsibility. Brodsky (1977) thinks "colleges and universities have a moral obligation not to lead students down the garden path by giving them four intensive years of liberal arts education and no way to survive after graduation. A liberal arts education should offer a means for students to develop some sort of professionalism as well as give them inner resources" (p. 16). Brodsky sees a definite need for a business of arts course in the school curriculum. Cipriano (1977) writes that art "programs cannot profess to train or educate artists without fully exposing its students to all the facets of the art world or art scene" (p. 169), hence he advocates students' exposure to both the art market and the current art trends.

Chamberlain (1974) believes graduate art students are insufficiently trained due to (a) a lack of communication between schools and students about the work world; (b) hostile attitudes of art faculty towards students' need to 'make bread'; (c) career placement



officers who are not knowledgeable in the Visual Art field; and (d) professors who are not knowledgeable about the art world. It is the responsibility of art teachers and art departments to teach about gallery practices, she asserts.

Goodman (1974) notices the difference between medicine and art education, writing that "business practices are not studied systematically by artists as they are studied by students in every major medical and dental school in this country" (p. 20). Adams and Kowalski (1980) compiled results from a questionnaire given to sixty-four art students about professionalism and as a result of the research they strongly suggest that universities develop cooperative programs involving education and 'on-the-job' work experiences. Moreover they advocate that art students would benefit from professional artistic experience in the work force while they are still attending school: "The part of career education that develops saleable skills obviously could have helped students" (p. 14).

### The Artist

The artist, is the key figure in this review. There are few studies written about unsuccessful artists; however, I did obtain a descriptive failure story. Edinborough (1977) described the once successful portrait painter, John Leach, who gave up his career because of his intense dislike of the business side of art. Says Leach, "It is a difficult business, so much anxiety and torment, so much socializing and drinking to make myself known and sought after." Edinborough adds, "And bustling for portraits was not only foreign to his nature, but it had a terrible effect on the portraits (p. 30)."

Researchers note the tension between business and art within artists themselves. Sgouros (1978) advocates that "strange as it may seem, the artist can join the commercial world without any sacrifice in integrity" (p. 104). Griff (1960), however, notes that many artists suffer a personal identity crisis when they choose a career in graphic art. Goodman (1974) who also recognizes this dilemma, observes that many artists find business distasteful and disturbing. But later, Goodman (1976) revises this as a more radical idea that every professional artist is a businessman.

Becker (1960) relates a change of career to a change in self identity. Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) also note the importance of an occupation in shaping a person's self-image; "To become established in an occupation means far more than working to make a living ... One's occupation is not only a source of income; it is a definition of who one is" (p. 186). They found that the identity of art graduates was still that of being a fine artist when they had chosen another career. Griff (1960, 1964) examined the identity crisis of five art students who had chosen careers in commercial art and he created three categories to identify the way in which they were able to cope with their occupations: (a) the "traditional-role artist" is a commercial artist who still identifies with the image of the fine artist; (b) the "commercial-role artist" is a commercial artist who completely rejects the role of the fine artist; and (c) the compromise-role artist is a commercial artist who identifies with various aspects of both the commercial and fine artists' roles. Griff believes that most commercial artists can be categorized as a traditional role artist.

Hill (1980) compared the personality characteristics of commercial and fine artists and he concluded that commercial artists tended to be less intelligent, emotionally stable, humble, conscientious, shy, practical, conservative, and group-dependent, than the fine artists who tended to be more intelligent, affected by feelings, assertive, expedient, venturesome, imaginative, experimenting and self-sufficient.

Few researchers deal directly with the question, what happens when artists refuse to learn the business aspects of art? Goodman (1974) believes that they will (a) never become professional artists; (b) remain unknown as a consequence; and (c) probably become bitter and disillusioned because their works were not acknowledged by society.

Goodman (1975) also addresses idealistic, dreamer artists. He believes these artists do not have to promote themselves but people will discover their genius on their own:

Somehow the notion has been widely disseminated that our leading contemporary artists were all 'discovered' more or less accidentally, by wealthy patrons, powerful art dealers, and prestigious critics. I call this illusion the Star-Is-Born Syndrome, after the unknown actress who catapults into super-star status overnight, because she was discovered at her waitressing job on Sunset Boulevard. There have been cases where just such miraculous events did occur, but these are rare to say the least (p. 20).

There is also another artistic myth, that artists automatically "learn the ropes" of the art market. Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) believe that art students usually learn art marketing on their own initiative. Winder (1981) found after interviewing thirty professional artists that few of them knew, when they first graduated from art school, about the ways in which to become professional artists. They lacked role models, did not know what an artist's life entails, and knew little of the ways in which the art market functions. Brodsky supports

Winder's view: "I have heard people say that artists automatically learn how to survive in the work, but I don't believe this" (Brodsky, 1977, p. 16).

Baker (1971), Brodsky (1977), Buchanan (1983), Cipriano (1977), Fingleton (1982), Gillespie (1976), Goodman (1974, 1975, 1976, 1981), Sgouros (1978), Whitesel (1977), Wolf (1979) explicitly state that artists must acquire knowledge about promoting their works in the art world. The advice explaining how to promote art varies.

Goodman (1975) advocates that new artists should promote their own art themselves when they first become involved in the art world. Once they have become established and have developed a clientele they can approach a dealer. Tarrant (1977) and Wolff (1979), however, believe that an artist's wisest first step is to acquire a dealer. The diversity of opinion indicates that either not enough research has been done in this area or that there are several routes people can take to become a part of the art world.

Buchanan (1983), Burnham (1982), Cipriano (1977), Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976), Griff (1960), Mollenhauer (1982) have commented on the low income of artists. Gouin (1981) provides statistics: "artists it is found earn between \$3,254 and \$5,826 per year from their work whereas the artists' expenses including production, promotion and marketing are between \$6,135 and \$7,096" (p. 2). In examining graduates of both genders both Cipriano (1977) and Griff (1960) note that, as a result of economic reasons they find that graduates parents will be supportive if their children are seriously interested in art when they are young but become negative if adolescents retain a serious career interest in the field.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Methodological Rationale

This study was conducted following the methods of life history research. The data collection techniques used were interviewing, written personal observations, and published written references on the interviewees. My intention was to seek an understanding of human experiences which are based on accounts of art graduates' perceptions, of their past experiences. Eisner (1981) writes: "Artistic approaches to research focus less on behaviour than on the experience the individuals are having and the meaning their actions have for others... Thus major focuses in artistic approaches to research are the meanings and experiences of the people who function in the cultural web one studies." The artistic, or in other words, qualitative methods allowed me to research people's perceptions of their past experiences.

#### Selection of the Life History Method

One of the main objectives of this study is to obtain a detailed understanding of studio art graduates' experiences at a particular period of their life from their point of view. To achieve this goal I have chosen the life history methodology. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) write: "When the interest is to capture one person's interpretation of his or her life, the study is called a 'life history'" (p. 3). "The life history method is excellent to employ in order to acquire a biographical account of the ideas, feelings, and experiences of

individuals from their perspective" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Denzin, 1970; Langness and Frank, 1981).

The life history method is suitable for scrutinizing career development:

first-person life histories collected through case study interviewing are usually directed at using the person as a vehicle to understand basic aspects of human behaviour or existing institutions rather than history. Hence the concept of 'career' is often used to organize data collection and presentation. Career refers to the various positions, stages, and ways of thinking people pass through in the course of their lives (Hughes, 1934). Sociological life histories often try to construct subjects' careers emphasizing the role of organizations, crucial events, and significant others in shaping subject's evolving definitions of self and their perspectives on life. (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p. 61)

#### The Written Accounts of the Life Histories

In writing the life histories I partially followed the steps Denzin outlines (1970, ps. 253-254 see Appendix A for complete derivation). What is termed the 'topical' life history I have written on each of the interviewees selected, focusing specifically on their career history, professional training, and educational experiences. I have written in Chapter Four accounts of the interviewee's lives in a style similar to that used by Robert Coles in such books as Children of Crisis, and Studs Terkel in Working. They have served as my models of a style of writing that is clear, interesting, and personal, using the interviewees' voices frequently and effectively. I have followed Cole's precedent by not indenting quotes of the interviewees in Chapter Four.

When writing these narratives, I did not follow the chronology of the interviews, but changed the sequence of paragraphs and sentences often, and deleted extraneous dialogue in order to make the reading flow better, and most importantly, to present what I found to be the most

significant part of the material. I have tried to write a narrative that is succinct, descriptive and which is an overview. The only other main alteration was in changing some grammatical structures if the participants had used incomplete sentences in their dialogue which so often occurs in conversations. I share with Coles a strong desire to convey to readers as directly and poignantly as possible the individual's life situation, decisions, and ideas. I hope it will give the readers a better understanding of the central issue: the issue of the professional experiences of studio art university graduates and the struggles that they had to confront.

I have tried to remain as true to the speaking manner of the interviewees as possible. I have attempted to reveal not only what the people say, but how they say it. The rhythm they use I have tried to keep intact by being careful of the punctuation. When for example, a period replaces a dash there is an incredible shift in meaning. Furthermore, I have tried to keep intact the way a person speaks; one person's rambling dialogue is as much a part of them as another person's short, terse, perfunctory way of conversing. It is hoped that the readers will thus obtain a sense of the interviewees' personalities. Furthermore, profanities and slang are left uncensored in order to keep to the spirit of what the participants are saying.

Names and locations and sometimes specific facts have been disguised in respect for the privacy of interviewees and those persons they have discussed. I have used pseudonyms for all the interviewees: Kram and Lily chose their fictitious names and I chose the names William, Sylvia and Roslind. For this research it is not important to obtain specific facts about such aspects as the names of participants

and professors or the exact location where they studied. It is important, though, for the interviewees' experiences and insights which they so generously shared, to be communicated to the readers.

In writing these narratives, in Chapter Four I use my own voice to both tie the information together and to summarize key points. When the interviewees discuss their emotions, ideas and experiences, I have tried as much as possible to quote their exact words. I have to admit that as a researcher I have not pretended to be totally objective. With some interviewees I had a rapport which was stronger than with others. This may be evident in the readings; however, as much as possible I have tried not to let my own feelings occlude what the interviewees had to say.

As has been mentioned previously, in this life history section I have attempted to present an overview to the reader. Approximately one-quarter to one-fifth of the material gathered from the interviews has been used to write the life histories. Consequently, in the analysis, I have used some data that one will not read in the life history section. Thus the new data which is excluded in the life history chapter I have made certain to quote in its full context in the analysis.

#### Description of the Fieldwork

Langnéss and Frank (1981) write: "One of the recurring flaws in existing life histories is the failure to discuss the fieldwork out of which they emerged" (p. 32). By addressing this issue in the following pages, I hope to avoid this flaw.

I selected as interviewees five Canadian former university studio



art students. Two people had a masters of fine arts (M.F.A.), two people had a bachelor of fine arts (B.F.A), and one person was a few courses short of a B.F.A.. I found these people by asking six university professors who teach studio art courses to recommend students who had shown promise during their university years of succeeding after graduation as professional artists. A few problems were encountered at this stage. I began my research in July of 1986 which was not the best of times to start. First, I visited art departments to make appointments with professors only to find out that all but one of the full-time professors were on vacation and the one professor that was there was leaving the following week so we were not able to schedule an appointment until a much later date. Second, I was told that the professors teaching summer school were part-time teachers who had not been teaching for very long, and consequently would have a difficult time recommending people who had been in the work force for a while.

At the time that I had finally contacted a few professors (by leaving messages in their mailboxes, by phoning them, or by waiting a month and a half until they returned) a few more problems had arisen. Some professors had understandably 'lost track' of the outstanding students' current location. When I tried to find the students' addresses and telephone numbers at the university administration offices I was refused access to personal data. Consequently I had to find them by contacting the former students' gallery (if they had one), or by using the phone book which was extremely difficult especially for people who had either relocated to other parts of the country or who had names like Smith. A further difficulty presented itself when I talked to the professors for I found that many of them had only remained in contact

with their former students who have since become professional artists. I had, however, wanted to interview some people who had decided to leave the art profession. I finally spoke to one professor who recommended students who had chosen careers other than that of being an artist. Perhaps one explanation of this phenomenon is that professors usually keep in contact with former students who have become artists because they are only interested in people who have chosen this as a career. Another explanation could be that students who are interested in becoming artists will keep in contact with professors they like. A further explanation is that the art community is close-knit and consequently, students and professors can easily keep in touch through going to openings, participating in gallery showings and being involved in the numerous art events.

Originally I had intended to interview only students who had received their B.F.A., but I found that many professors had difficulty recommending outstanding B.F.A. students because all the exceptional ones, they said, went on to do a M.F.A. Hence I changed my strategy and included M.F.A. students in the study.

The criteria used in selecting interviewees were that the graduates are articulate, are willing to confide in the researcher, possess self-understanding and sensitivity towards their past life experiences. I chose people who had graduated from university between 1970 and 1981, which meant they had some time in the work force, and they also had 'fresh' memories of school. I wanted an interesting variety of people who have had different experiences, made different career decisions and had different attitudes towards their career experiences from each other. For this study I decided that at least one person interviewed

would be currently a professional artist and at least one person would have chosen another profession. Moreover, I planned that at least one male and one female were chosen as participants in order to prevent the group being comprised of one gender. On these bases, from the initial thirteen people I interviewed, I chose five. The five people were selected after the first interview.

Ethnographic research strategies were used for gathering the data -- especially for the interview methodology. I used two interview strategies. I followed Bogdan and Biklen's (1982) advice: "different types of interviews can be employed at different stages of the same study. At the beginning of the project, for example, it might be important to use the more free-flowing exploratory interview because your purpose at that point is to get a general understanding of a range of perspectives on a topic. After the investigatory work has been done, you may want to structure interviews more in order to get comparable data across a larger sample or to focus on particular topics that emerged during the preliminary interviews (p. 136)." For the first interview section I asked the interviewees to discuss their lives from their years in university to their present career position. These were unfocused interviews (what Denzin terms 'nonstandardized interviews'). I asked questions based on what the interviewee answered and was led by the interviewee's focal points in the discussion. I noted these points of attention. For the second interview I directed the interview by asking more specific questions. I did this for two reasons: first, in order to establish validity (previous answers were checked), and second, in order to develop patterns shared by the interviewees. A set of more specific categories of questions is in Appendix B. The number

of interviews per person varied depending on whether the appropriate data was obtained in a shorter or longer period of time. At the minimum, two interviews -- the first unfocused and the second focused -- were compiled. At the maximum I had three interviews with a participant. The interview sessions lasted anywhere from half an hour to four hours, and the average session lasted about one and a half hours.

In the first, unfocused interview sessions I encountered some difficulties. Some interviewees did not like my passive approach and as a result the interview was awkward. Rather than letting this awkwardness continue I played a more active role in the interview. I found that although I tried to let the interviewee lead the interview, if they did not want to do so, I did not force them. The way in which I directed it was to ask questions so that they would recount their career history in a chronological manner. For example, at the beginning of the interview I asked the interviewees to start by recounting their experiences in the first year of university. If they stopped the conversation and anticipated another question I would often say, "And what happened next?" When the interviewees left out a noticeable part of their life I would lead the interview by specifically asking what had happened to them at the time they did not mention. For instance, in the interview I had had with Isabel she did not mention what had happened to her during the two years after she had graduated, so I asked her specific questions concerning this period. Sometimes I felt a need to ask questions when the interviewees made ambiguous comments. For example, Roslind said, "When I was with a parallel gallery I was working out a lot of feminine issues." She proceeded to change the topic and I

then directed her back to that issue by asking, "What kind of feminine issues?"

To establish validity I used a few qualitative research techniques. Data was acquired from various sources: mainly from interviews, and some secondary sources were newspaper and magazine accounts, exhibition catalogues, looking at the participants' artwork and writing my own personal notes about the interviews I had conducted and about the interviewees. These various sources aided in achieving the goal of intrinsic adequacy using structural corroboration (Alexander, 1981; Eisner, 1979). Also, when interviewing people during the first unfocused interview, I attempted to use a mirroring technique, so that I would not direct the conversation. For example, the interviewee may say, "I did not like it." I mirrored by responding, "So, you did not like it?" The mirroring technique ensures that the interviewee directs the type of information offered. I had some problems, however. An example of a personal note that I had written about the problems encountered in interviewing is quoted below:

In Lily's and Roslind's interview I did less directing and more sitting back, listening, and mirroring than with the other interviews. The participants expect me to lead them on the whole. They have an idea (I suppose) of what a traditional interview is like, and so rather than leading the conversation, they want me to direct them by asking leading questions. Consequently, I feel in a position in which I cannot mirror adequately. I find that if I only use the mirroring technique in an interview, I look like an absolute idiot. Mirroring constantly makes me feel (1) uncomfortable; and (2) I find the interviewees also begin to feel uncomfortable, and they begin to ask me questions about my opinions. They want a response. (August 22, 1986)

I established further validity, by double checking, especially during the second interview, taping the interviews, as well as having the interviewees read and verify the transcripts.

In writing the analysis I followed very simple procedures. First I examined the transcripts and found themes. Second, I divided the material in the transcripts into the theme categories I had selected. I then wrote a preliminary analysis draft in which I discussed the themes selected in relation to two broad categories which are the university and the art world.

After a critical review of the analysis I reorganized the themes under a new category: namely the pattern of the experience of transition the five participants shared. I used the transcripts to formulate both the commonalities and variations of described experiences which relate to the idea of transition. The themes chosen are ones which "fly up like sparks" when I read the transcripts. Barritt et al. (1983, p. 90) write, "The goal of the analysis is to find common themes in the written descriptions and to find language that captures these themes." This is what I attempted to achieve in Chapter V. In Chapter VI I discussed educational issues which arose in my thesis, I expressed my own personal thoughts about some educational issues, and I offered suggestions for Art Educators. My research findings in this Chapter are connected to Art Educational issues.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CAREER HISTORIES

#### Looking Ahead: Lily

"My aunts and uncles think I'm cute. Now and then they drop in on me to see that my mental health is okay. They come in and they look around and they sit down and they want to know, and show and tell won't work. They (ask), 'Are you sure you're okay?' They are concerned. They think that I live in a very bad environment. My sisters approve of me because I make really wonderful Christmas presents for their children. That's as far as they're concerned. Because I'm odd, they treat me differently, which is okay because I'm unusual. When you go out with your family they look at you wondering if you remember how to use a knife and fork. And sometimes you don't remember, but you can always get food into your mouth."

My perception of Lily is that she likes to be considered an 'eccentric artist'. She regards herself as being somewhat irrational, different, an anomaly. In fact, she believes that most artists are unusual: "One of the things that strikes you is that these guys are weird. They are not normal. They are not people in business suits. They are like an outlaw and not someone who has to adhere to the world, (but) someone who has to break a lot of the rules." During the winter Lily walked around the streets wearing strange, brightly coloured handmade knitted hats, and during any season one could see her wearing boldly designed, bright and colourful, 'loud' clothes that make her

stand out very markedly in any crowd. She said, "People on the street tell me, 'Nice clothes!' Most of the time I find myself pretty boring although I realize that I am a Central Street eccentric. Like, about a month ago, everywhere I went, to stores and stuff to pick up lunch, they'd say, 'Almost hat season, aye?' Yes, I'm known to be weird. Yes, I'm a nut. I asked the director of the gallery the other day, 'I bet you wear your tie when you paint, don't you?' He always wears a suit and tie. It came out that what a drag it was to paint a portrait because you had to put clothes on. He said, 'You paint without clothes on?' I thought everybody did that because you get up in the morning and you don't dress to go to work because it is just in the other room."

Lily pays special attention to clothing -- or not clothing -- her body for specific reasons: what she wears is a symbol of rebellion, it creates attention, and it makes her feel special. She explains: "I've always had a terror and respect for authority that I can't seem to get away from. A feeling of inferiority and trying to do it playing their game and doing it their way as best as I can except when it comes to fashion. Why do I wear all these damn hats? I don't know. (In school) I managed to become a star, which is nice. It's where I like to be. That's why we do all this. To get all the attention and make everybody go 'ooo' and 'awh'. That's why these pants (I'm wearing) are no solid colour (but) all these stupid little details."

Lily always wanted to feel special. "I was seven when I realized that I wasn't normal. I figured that I couldn't have a regular family and be a regular person. I kind of stuck to that although you don't want to make those decisions when you are a little kid. I always felt weird and ostracized and all those bad things, but that makes you



special too if you put a little work into it." She did work at it. At high school, college and university Lily was popular. She felt like a 'star': "I'm well known among my friends. I noticed at university, when I was there -- this has to do with the star thing -- that many more people knew me than I knew them. Like many more people knew my name (I didn't know their name) which freaked me out. (I would think), 'Do I know you?' That's pretty strange. I guess what I was doing was unusual in the university." People would visit Lily at her school studio to talk, gossip and ask her for feedback about their artworks. Lily likes attention and believes that this is of utmost importance to further her career. "You could be the best painter in the world, but if you kept your art in your apartment nobody would ever know. Attention is important because if you are showing in Kingston maybe twenty-five people will see your stuff, maybe there is an article in the paper, and another twenty-five people go by word-of-mouth. Maybe altogether a hundred people go to see your show. If you are really good, the more people who see your (work) the more attention you get, and hence your work will be sold and put into permanent collections and all kinds of things -- if you are good. Attention is an important (aspect)." Being a star, being thought eccentric, rebellious, living strangely is all part of what Lily calls 'the artistic mystique': "We all have to be weird and live on the bad side of town and wear berets and dress weird and (be) bohemian."

Professional artists, Lily believes, are usually good at making art, possess self-confidence and a high sense of morality, are very disciplined, committed, interesting, are able to cope with isolation and loneliness and are able to content with a life of sacrifice and

struggle. Much of what she believes to be situations or characteristics of professional artists also relate to herself: "(Artists) don't have to play by the regular rules. There should be a really strong morality there. I have no morality, not based on God or man but on making the good art. So, because there is this aesthetic that you have to adhere to, (artists) are good, better, more interesting. They make aesthetic decisions on their own between good and bad. This extends into life. You don't have the same kind of relationship rules as other people have or what society 'puts' on it. I think you should try as hard as you can to be in a position where you are only responsible for yourself because you can really screw up! (Have) nobody depending on you. Often, when things are going very well and there is another person involved you don't do much work, but the work you do you don't notice until suddenly they're gone. You use them as fertilizer. You are doing good work now which is hard on the people around you. You don't get along with people. You need a lot of time to yourself. Most people want a lot of time with each other. Well, I've lost people whom I wanted to keep around. It's been a choice between him or 'it' and 'it' usually wins in the end."

"This hasn't happened this year; it happened last year. I was walking home down Frank Street which was beautiful: huge trees, big old houses with Victorian gingerbread, and it's all painted different colours. The sky was bright blue and the trees were orange and there was this big balloon with a basket and a person in it way up in the distance and I thought, 'Normal people go out for walks on fall days. I'm going home to paint.' It was beautiful. The weather was beautiful for the next couple of weeks and I was home with no windows and I was working hard.

~~That's a sacrifice.~~ Normal people don't have a job and then go home and work for twelve hours."

"You have to protect the time because there is a lot of time that you sit around not painting. It takes a lot of being alone and a lot of work. You have to think of it a lot although I don't know that I do because it surprises me when I do think about it -- but then I don't know that I think about anything else. I think it may take discipline. You have to recommit yourself constantly." Lily has thought to herself, "Yes this is what I am, (an artist). I have no chance anywhere else." She said, "You're going to do it or you are going to waste your whole life. That's the alternative. It makes it easy."

In choosing to be an artist Lily has sacrificed fiscal security. At one time she earned three hundred and forty dollars a month of which two hundred and thirty was spent on rent. Seven hundred and twenty is what she presently earns per month -- she is faring financially better now. She still is in a 'tight' financial situation, but Lily remarks, "I don't think because I don't have the money that I should change my goal. The goal would be the same. Most everybody is mercenary. We all have jobs so that we can pay the rent and stuff. That's normal, but to spend all your free time that you've earned doing something that you don't get any money from or any credit -- it is a weird thing for people to do and most people don't do it. I don't know if making a lot of money puts an end to struggles at all. There are many new struggles then. The financial struggle is not the big one."

There are many struggles Lily has discussed. She says that deciding what to paint is a trauma, that making good artwork is a struggle. She questions her career situation, questions whether it is

indeed worthwhile to be an artist. Sometimes she has asked herself, "Am I wasting my time? Do I really have to get up and paint today?" None of these struggles, though, are what she calls 'the big one,' which is "getting rich and famous." She said it is "getting the right people's attention. How much is enough? How much do I want? How much is going to satisfy me? I used to think that I just need one person to think I'm wonderful. That's not nearly enough. I just need to have a show, to get a grant, but that's not enough because nothing happens. You have a show and you get a few obscene phone calls for a week or two."

Lily has been involved with art since her childhood. At college her focus was on art; she received a B.F.A. Of university she comments: "I was really surprised (at) how many people are (studying fine art) because there are so few artists in the world compared to art students. Before I went, I had no idea what it was going to be like. It was a lot of hard work, it was a good time, and it was a hard time."

"My first year (in university) had a lot to do with a painful unlearning of what I had learned in secondary school because apparently we were studying with bigger and more famous teachers. It was hard, it was emotionally hard." As a result of being sensitive to her teachers' preferences in art, Lily felt the need to conform. She recalls her experience in school: "All through high school I was a baby surrealist. Everything had to be subconscious. I got into secondary school and even in my screening, when I went into the interview, they said, 'Do you like Dali?' One of the teachers said, 'You'll get over it.' I thought, 'Oh, no.' Surrealism just wasn't considered an art form when I was in school." Then Lily went to a university in which the professors favored abstract art. She liked painting traditionally but changed her style to

suit their tastes and she noticed that students who produced work that was similar to their professors received better marks.

Lily had numerous criticisms about professors. As well as being biased by personal preferences, she concluded that some of them had prejudices. She recounted an important experience she had had with one instructor. After spending an entire year making a purple, feathery, glittery, jewel-like sculpture resembling feminine genitalia she finally had a critique. Her professor harshly criticized her choice of colour: "He put his arm around me and he said that he was very glad that I was a woman and that he knew me. I got a little like, 'Oh, what's going on here?' I got really defensive. He went on and said that if I was a man and I had done this sculpture he would have a very strange idea about my personality. Like, 'What! What are you talking about?' I thought. He said, 'Well, it's purple.' I said, 'Yeh, it's purple. I was going to paint it flesh coloured because it's really fleshy looking and I was walking in a hardware store where all the car paint was. I had some flesh paint in my hand and then I saw that they had purple glitter paint. I put the flesh (tone) away because I like glittery purple things, and he said, 'Yes, but that is their colour.' I said, 'Whose colour are you talking about?' He said, 'Those men, you know?' I said, 'Which men? What are you talking about?' He said, 'Purple is the colour of homosexuals.' I laughed and laughed and thought he was crazy. This is a sculpture teacher who has a prejudice -- an art teacher with a prejudice like that against colour!"

Lily spoke of incompetent teachers: professors who were not challenging students, who did not know their subject, who gave terrible feedback, and were sometimes abusive. Furthermore, some professors

provided little technical advice about the proper way of handling materials, nor did some teach students about which materials were dangerous and ways to use them safely.

The need to prepare students for the professional art world is an issue Lily discussed: "My mother felt very strong that I get my degree. I told her that if I graduate from art school and don't know how to paint, I'm in a bad, bad way. If you can't paint when you leave art school it doesn't matter whether you can apply to a gallery." Lily did, though, remember that she had received little preparation for the art market. At university, "They don't tell you how to deal with galleries or how to get grants, how to put a portfolio together, or how to write statements, or even how to live by yourself alone. I once, I'm ashamed to say, wrote up my proposal on graff paper -- that's the worst that I was! Artists think that it is very important to be individualistic and expressionistic and creative and unusual, but submitting something to be taken seriously by a gallery or a foundation or anything, you do it as professionally as you can. Nobody tells you this. You have to be so professional."

Overall, Lily looks favorably at her days in university. She was stimulated, challenged. Lily said, "One of the things about school is that you are bombarded with so many techniques and possibilities and stuff that you just have a little flash at each one. You don't have time to pursue anything and there is a lot. I was always busy doing stuff." She was with friends exchanging ideas, she exhibited often and sometimes received awards for her artworks. It was an exciting time. She said she was lucky enough to have one excellent professor a year.

A few professors exposed her to new art concepts, to different ways

of handling art materials, to different art techniques and styles. Some professors were challenging and provocative. The most influential instructor Lily had was her painting teacher who, she said, "Taught me to love painting and also to paint what feels most natural to me which had never occurred to me before. We got along fabulously. I did my best work in painting at school that year."

Lily left university in 1981. This period of transition from school to the work force was difficult. "The last term in school," she said, "you've probably been through this: you've just been trained in art school, school is going to be over, (and you realize) you've been in school for twenty years. I chose to stay in bed at home for two weeks in a catatonic fit." She then started a jewelry business with another friend; however, that 'fell through' after a month. More events occurred which made Lily feel insecure: immediately after her jewelry business collapsed her relationship with her boyfriend, Tom, ended, and her parents told her to move out of their house. She moved to another city. About a week and a half later, Lily was living in a room in a Y.W.C.A. She acted quickly. In the first week at the 'Y' she applied for about one hundred jobs, only one person called back for a second interview, and as a result she obtained a position which she still has five years later. She finds her job flexible, untaxing, an occupation with few responsibilities. She works in a trendy gift store as a salesclerk. "Okay, my true feelings (about it)," she said, "I don't want a job that I have to take home, that's going to drain my creativity that I have. I want to work, make money and then come home and play."

Lily had a job, and had found an apartment, but she had great difficulty in painting. She commented, "At university I was surrounded

by people who were artists. By the time I was out of school I was living in a little room with a paint box that I didn't know what to do with! I was in a total state of shock. I had been an abstract painter. I tried to do abstract painting and stuff, sort of painterly abstracts of my new environment and it just didn't work. I couldn't paint abstractly. I had no anchor, no reason to paint abstractly. You need an awful lot of theory to paint something that doesn't look like anything. That was suddenly just gone and I was all by myself.

I got tremendously depressed, didn't paint for about two months. Tried to kill myself. The only thing to do was die. I was absolutely unhappy. I had no friends here, didn't go back to my hometown for the first two or three months and just flipped out. I just took a lot of drugs. After about eight hours of suffering you realize 'This isn't going to kill me. I'm going to live with myself and I'm going to be sick!' was deaf for a couple of months from all the drugs. I was super depressed, in bad shape because of school, and then losing Tom, and moving away. It was like on all fronts: art, home, family and love. I called Tom and we talked all night which was about four days later. I told him what I did. He talked about a lot of things and then he said something that made me really jealous. I asked him, 'What happens now?' He said, 'Well, just what's going to happen.' He was a year behind me in school. So he was in his third year and he said, 'You're going to go on as you're going and you're either going to paint or you're not going to paint. I'm going to finish being an undergraduate, go to graduate school and be an artist.' I thought, 'Fuck, I taught you how to paint! I gave you your first canvass -- don't give me that shit! I'm going to be a painter.' I got really aggressive. I realized having gotten right



down as far as I did that I have nothing to lose. I can devote my entire life to being a painter. So, after I decided (that), which was six months after I had finished school, I worked a lot and hard. I painted all the time. So I started painting portraits and applied for a government grant. They give you your refusal on Christmas Eve generally, which is a drag. I applied to graduate school and didn't get in."

Lily did manage to obtain a grant and two years later she had her first one person show at a parallel gallery. She describes her first exhibition experience: "I walked in with my slides and I left them (at the gallery). When I went back they said I had to fill out an application, so when I came back with an application the guy who ran the place said, 'When would you be ready to show, Lily?' I said, 'That was great! I like that kind of attitude.' 'The jury is just going to be a formality. When would you like to show?' he said. So, I had a month to prepare a show. I got good reviews and it was funny how my attitude has changed in the last three years. I was really shy and there were a lot of people I would have liked to have invited but was just a little shy. Had a show but didn't really tell anybody. There was a nice party and I got all dressed up and lots of people came with their family and friends. I got good reviews in the newspaper, (and) on the radio. Nothing happens when you have a show and you are not prepared for that at all. This was just two years of work, a month of just maniacal work -- just crazy stuff. I expected bombs to go off. (Nevertheless), you feel good about it. You meet new people. Now and then, maybe eight times in the next two years people would say, 'Oh, I saw your show.' You think, 'Woeee, really somebody saw it!'

Two years after this first one-person exhibition, Lily found out that she was pregnant. She went through another crisis. Does she have an abortion and continue to paint? Does she have a baby and "life is over" as she knows it? Can she be a painter and a parent? Lily did not have to decide -- she had a miscarriage. Nevertheless, she resolved not to have any future occurrences: "I got my tubes tied. It is almost something you want to put on your applications when you go to a commercial gallery, because it is like insurance that I'm not going to drop out and have a family. It's making myself as good as I am able. So far, I think it is the right decision."

Four years after her first exhibition, Lily had another one person show at a parallel gallery. Since then she has shown in another gallery and presently she is exhibiting her art in a group travelling show. There have been several reviews of her art and she has had interviews on the radio. She has been working hard at obtaining publicity which she begrudgingly gives precious time to: "I've been bad lately. I've been taking care of business, shows -- bullshit -- which is a problem when you (are) painting."

Lily currently has a position on the selection committee for a parallel gallery. Even though she herself is a member of the art world she does not regard it positively; she thinks it is remote, and fickle: "The art world is like fashion; it has nothing to do with me. It changes every six months or three years. Trends don't really impress me. (The art world) is very elitist. I have a friend who was asking me, 'Oh, did you see Art News?' I said, 'No, should I? Sorry.' Things like that aren't really going to affect what I'm doing. Anything I'm interested in I paint. I paint my friends, my obsessions, my

perversions, my holidays and my pictures of animals now. The art world is elitist because they have a secret which makes what they do -- (artists who paint abstractly) -- look good even though it may not be interesting to look at or pretty. But, there is this balance that goes on in the canvass when the total sum of it comes up. When the total sum of all the parts add up to nothing we have a perfect canvass. There's this Minimalist thing, like, 'Wow, she put a line in it!' They know it is good and their friends know it is good and the people who know about it know it is good, but if all those people go away it isn't very good at all. It's pretty boring."

Making art has one major positive benefit: money. Lily's first painting was sold for three hundred dollars, and last year she sold a painting to the city hall for two thousand two hundred dollars. About the latter painting, she said, "It hasn't happened before and hopefully it is the beginning of a new trend. For Father's Day this year I am making a picture. Did I tell you it is a photocopy of a cheque for thousands of dollars from the city? One of my sisters is sending pictures of the baby and I'll send them the picture of me and the man sitting in front of my picture."

Lily looks at her teacup as she discusses her present and future situation: "There's nothing I'd rather do than be a painter. I like it. For the last twenty years, maybe more I wanted to be an artist. (I get satisfaction) from doing things that I didn't think that I could do. Yes, from doing things that I think are going to be too hard for me and pulling it off. I was thinking that there are a lot of better painters than me painting. What can I add to this? That's what I get satisfaction out of. To get everybody's attention I have to show them

something. Hopefully, the work is getting better. The better the work is the more people will show it. Hopefully, that all snowballs and gets out of control."

"With everything, there's more self-confidence and you need more to feel you are a success, although my goal for the last couple of years is two television shows in one night. One night I saw Joyce Wieland on T.V. on two different channels -- two different programs in one night! She's a Canadian woman artist and I'd like to be one too. Two T.V. shows on in one night. I figure that's probably making it, you know?"

Lily contemplates her situation. Trying to become a professional artist is a struggle. "It is so slow. Like, since I've left school it has been over five years a day at a time. You work towards things. You build up confidence. You tell more people about yourself." She examines herself in terms of her success; "I have been pretty lucky because it has been about half and half. A lot of people just get refused about everything; a lot of people get everything they want. For a long time it was a lot easier than I thought it would be but it still goes on."

#### Recognition: Kram

"Art is a habit, like, I suppose, drugs can be a habit. It's the kind of thing...that I'm not happy unless I am working. It is a necessity for me. It is an emotional, psychological, physical, necessity for me to do my work. If a week goes by and I haven't been able to do any work because of circumstances, whatever they might be...I start to feel very tense and I start to feel very nervous. It is probably that I get that

way for a number of reasons: first of all because I love to do it so much and anything that distracts me from doing it is a drag most of the time, but it is also because I've been doing it for so long and for so many years that it is sort of like someone who works their whole life, gets up at six o'clock every morning...and they do this for forty years. When they retire they are themselves...getting up in the morning... because their body has been conditioned to do certain things all the time. So, it almost continues on its own whether you like it or not. That is the way I am with my work because it has been such a priority in my life, and I have spent so much time doing it that it feels the need to continue, if for some reason I find myself not doing it. There isn't anything else that I'd rather do."

Kram has been consistently exhibiting his artworks since 1970. He has achieved an international reputation: films about his work have been produced; numerous reviews and several museum catalogues have been written; he has achieved many awards from government grants, to a major, prestigious North American fellowship; and he has exhibited throughout the world. In one exhibition press release, it was written that, "From Canada to Germany, from Holland to United States (sic) his 'image' generated curiosity and admiration, making him one among the few to enjoy an international renown."

In 1970 Kram finished a four year Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. He talks positively -- even fondly -- of his years at university: "It is kind of interesting because one seems to rate universities based on their facilities. We had virtually nothing at that time. We were (in a large building) and the entire Fine Arts Department only occupied a small portion of it. That was the entire department...but it was great

-- it was really great. I think that some of the best work that has ever come out of that university came out of those years, the years before I was a student there and the years up until probably a year or so after I graduated, and then it started to lose a lot of that feeling. It really lost a lot when it came into (the new, larger) building in terms of how it functions. You didn't have this sort of barrier that you have now where the students are the students and the administration is the administration and they are at opposite ends of the poles. There is very little communication...Ultimately the bottom line is not how much equipment is available. The bottom line is what kind of teachers you've got and what kind of rapport there is between the administration, the teachers, and the students."

The rapport Kram had with people at the university was good. Kram talks about positive experiences he had had with the department in which he found professors "really bend over backwards for the students. They made things work for you." Kram cites one example: an arrangement with his professors was made during his last year so that they gave Kram a mark corresponding to the one he received for sculpture enabling him to sculpt and only to sculpt during his fourth year, even though his report card indicated that he had indeed fulfilled the mandatory requirements by taking painting and printmaking courses. About this experience he reflects that, "It wouldn't be realistic to expect that something like that would continue for ever and ever, especially as the university grows and you get more and more students. Nevertheless, you do hope there is always some kind of flexibility. You do always hope that at least that much prevails, but that hasn't prevailed. If anything -- now I think a teacher would consider this an insult almost, or if not an

insult (they would say), 'No, you can't do that because that is not the way this thing works. You have to take your painting course.' Then (when I was a student) you could do what I did because they understood the concern of becoming an artist and what it is all about." In another circumstance Kram 'recounts how one professor 'bent over backwards' to make it possible for him to show his art at the university gallery because a person from a major museum's selection committee was coming to view Kram's work.

Of one professor only did Kram specifically and repeatedly talk about, and Kram talked about him in the highest of terms. Although this teacher's work was stylistically different, he understood Kram's work, accepted it and encouraged him. Kram said, "He had a natural talent and ability to communicate and a wonderful understanding of art. My formal art training developed to a great extent because of him or through him. My attitudes and I guess my ideals and...to some extent my work habits really developed due to a great admiration for him."

Kram is currently working for the university that he had once attended as a student, so he is in the particular position to compare the way the Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) program was then to what it is today and he is not impressed with the present situation. "The main concern now for these people, for these professors, associate professors (and) teachers is to survive themselves first and then the students (come second)."

As well as seeing the current problems, Kram notes past problems he encountered while at university. One major problem, he notes, is that professors tended to be greatly affected by what was popular in the art world, which consequently affected what and how they taught. Another

problem he believes is professors unacceptance 'of students' work which stylistically differs from their own. The greatest problem, however, he feels is the lack of professional preparation he received for the professional art world. He commented: "I don't think the university trains people at all to be professional artists. That is a complete fallacy...They don't tell you anything, prepare you in anyway at all for what the real life day-to-day struggles of an artist is (sic). (This university), in my experience so far, does absolutely nothing to train you in terms of being professional artists. The current situation," Kram strongly feels, "still has not changed. How I know," he said, "that (students) are not getting that kind of information of how to survive as an artist from their teachers or from their regular classes here (is) because they finally end up seeking me out and asking me this information."

Kram considers this lack of professional training a serious problem that has not only affected him, but has and is affecting numerous Fine Arts students. "You have the people who come through here with the illusion that they are going to go out and make a living at being artists. Since nothing is being done in the way of training them to present a portfolio, or how to approach a gallery, the kinds of grants available to artists, (or) how the system -- and there is a system out there -- how the system can enable you to survive as an artist, they should, they should really do that if they have at all any interest in turning out professional artists. (When I say professional artist, I mean people who earn their living from their art.) They don't, they don't do that at all. Teachers don't do that because they don't have to be concerned about surviving as artists because they have forty thousand



a year jobs. For the most part people who are teaching at (the university here) are not professional artists. Besides which a lot of those teachers never have one man shows, some of them have little or no experience in terms of exhibitions or grant applications, so they can't advise students about that sort of thing because they do not have a lot of experience in it. (Because) the majority of their income is not from art they do not have the kind of pressure that artists who are dependent primarily on their income from their own work have or students that are graduating from an undergraduate program with a B.F.A. (have)."

Kram discusses the need for a course which would train students for the professional art world. "I think they owe it to the students to give them the option to take that course. Maybe they don't have to take it but it should certainly be available. Students come out with this ideal that you think that you are going to be an artist and that you are going to make it. You start to find out that the reality of the situation is that there is no money out there for that to happen."

About twelve years ago, Kram's wife attempted to give such a university course, but she encountered a lack of interest and support from the school faculty. Some professors said, "We couldn't institute a course like that because all the students would take that course and what would end up happening is that would deplete students from taking other courses and the drop of enrollment in other courses would be the result." Kram reflects upon this situation: "So, you get involved in all this political crap which has nothing to do with artists and an art school. It shouldn't have but unfortunately it does. That is the problem."

When Kram was in university he made a conscious decision that

becoming a professional artist was definitely what he wanted to do in the future. He commented that, "Throughout high school and university I did a lot of different things. Odd jobs that I thought I would like to do as careers, but I reached a certain point in doing these things when suddenly I realized, 'I don't want to do this the rest of my life.' I could see a point at which (I thought), 'This is going to become a drag,' or, 'This is just going to become monotonous for me.' In other words, I reached a mental high or peak in a certain thing that I was doing and I felt after that it is like basically downhill."

"My mother had this little country place, so I went up there because I was helping her build this little cabin and I did a lot of my work there. I was just doing sculpture. It was between my third and my last year. I said to myself at that time, 'Well, I'm going to give myself five years and all I'm going to do is I'm going to just do my sculpture. I'm going to work like hell for five years, and if I see I'm going absolutely nowhere with this, after five years, I'm going to quit. If...I don't see a dead end and I'm not bored and I don't see myself going down emotionally, then it has got to have enough to sustain me. If I see anything at all going for me I'm not going to quit. I'm going to continue.' That really didn't mean financially as much as, 'Can I come to terms with an image or a thing that I really love to do when I see that I'm not going to become bored (and) where there is not this dead end to this sort of thing?'"

Before Kram graduated from university he was offered an unusual opportunity for an undergraduate student: two of his works were chosen by a jury to be displayed in a major exhibition at a large Canadian museum of fine arts. The show later travelled to another major Canadian

gallery. He remembers the experience: "The way they juried the exhibition was one of the jurists made this an open exhibition in the sense that any artist, anywhere, in the country could send slides in of their work. It didn't matter how little experience you had in the arts or how much experience you had. Then (the jury) travelled right across the country to see artists whose slides were of interest to them. There was another student at the time who was also in sculpture (and he also sent in slides to the jury.) These people came by, they looked at the work and they weren't supposed to say anything to us. They were going across the whole country, they were going to look at a lot of work and we were going to only find out later whether any of our work got accepted. (One person on the jury) was very nice, so before he left he said, "I'm not suppose to tell you this but...I guarantee you both that you'll both be in this show."

"That was really wonderful! To be just starting out as a Fine Art student who is just getting ready to graduate and to have something like that happen was just wonderful! This guy is going across the country and you figure he's going to pick the best and it was wonderful that he was picking us because we were just students! We were like nothings if you figure there is a whole art world out there of professional people who had been slugging away there for umpteen years. I think he picked four of my pieces. That was probably in a sense my greatest high. I mean more important things, I suppose, have happened in terms of a career, but not more important emotionally, to have that happen at such an early part of my career was a wonderful thing."

After graduating from university Kram considered teaching to support himself -- an occupation many of his friends chose. He decided

against it. "I felt," Kram said, "it was really important not to go into a teaching situation because that really had a death-grip on people who seem to have done that...I did have the opportunity at that time to go right into teaching at the university (I graduated from) if I had wanted to because at that time they were hiring. They offered me a teaching position, but I was never interested in that. Not because I didn't enjoy teaching, (but) you get sucked into a teaching system. You become dependent on a regular salary and there's no way you are ever going to give that up. It just doesn't happen. I was very fortunate to see, to have learned from the experience of others who were a year or two ahead of me, who graduated and said they were only going to do this for a year or two. They went into teaching. A year or two later not only did they not quit their jobs and go back to their work which is what they said they would do and they do have this ideal -- it is with good intention that they say that (they are not trying to sound off), but they not only didn't do that, they just stopped working completely. I saw that happening and I said, 'This is a trap. I'm not going to get involved.' So I didn't.

"I was just convinced that art is what I wanted to do. I didn't really care whether I was going to be, you know, when you are just starting out you can afford to be irresponsible in a sense. You can say to yourself, 'Big deal, so I'm not going to earn a lot of money! What do I care? How much money do I need to eat and to pay the rent? What's the big deal?' It is not as great a sacrifice as it becomes later when you get married and you have kids and you have responsibilities or your parents start to get old -- whatever it is. There are all kinds of things. The realities of life become much more important. They play a

much greater role in your everyday life. So at that point it can become more difficult to be idealistic. It is much easier when you are just starting out. If you don't want to teach, take extra jobs or something like that and you want to try to make it as an artist it is much easier when you are just starting out providing you are starting out from high school or university. If you want to be an artist and if you can avoid doing (anything else but art) at the beginning that is probably the most crucial time."

Rather than choosing a teaching career, Kram managed to set up a sculpture studio in the spray room of his old high school. At the same time he first began to apply for Canada Council Grants. During the two years he worked at his old school, Kram received two major government awards and he had three one man exhibitions -- he was extremely productive. As a result of the grant monies, he was fortunate enough to be able to dedicate himself full time to making his art. Two years later, Kram's university sculpture professor gave him access to the facilities at the university from which he graduated. About this time, when he moved to the new environment, he said, "I was able to work there without being a student and without being a teacher. I came into contact with students. I guess the teachers felt it was nice to have me there because students could ask me things and I was always helpful." During the next two years he received another government award, he had two more one person shows, and he accepted a position for a year as an official artist in the university residence.

In 1975 Kram received an important European award. He moved to Europe and lived there for a two year period. Originally, it was supposed to have lasted for one year, but he received an extension in

order to establish exhibitions in galleries and museums throughout Europe. For Kram, this was an incredibly crucial experience in terms of his career: "Most of these people who receive these grants," he said, "are very well known artists in whatever their field is. I was probably an exception in the sense that I wasn't a household name in the art world. There were a number of museums that wanted to take my work and show it in other parts of Europe. Museums and public galleries are very interested in these artists because they feel they are like the cream of the artists. They want to be able to show their work. (Consequently,) I've had big museum exhibitions that were quite significant. Probably the ones I had in Europe were the most significant while I was there for the two years."

When Kram returned to Canada he was again offered a teaching job at a university which he refused because he felt it was too much of a commitment. His priority was making art and he did not want that superseded. Upon receiving his refusal, the professors at the university asked him what he would like to do, to which he replied, "I'd like to ideally be able to do my own work at the university -- I mean, I'll pay for my own materials and everything. I just want to be able to use the space and be here as an advisor to students, so that they can come to me and ask me questions, but I don't want to teach." He thinks to himself now, "At that point it probably wouldn't have been terrible to teach, just because I had somehow managed to last six or seven years (just making my art) and I had my priorities pretty much straightened out in my mind. I knew what it was like to devote all my time to my work and put my work ahead of everything else."

A new position was specifically created for Kram as an art

technical advisor which he has had for the last ten years. It was originally made for him and it suits him: he has steady money coming in, little bureaucratic and administrative duties, few hours, and he can use the university's facilities. Students seek him out to ask him advice in all areas from technical and aesthetic aspects of making art to asking him about how to apply for grants.

During the last ten years Kram has taught a few university art courses in Western and Central Canada. In the future he could 'see' himself accepting teaching positions for one or two year periods, but he does not visualize himself in a steady tenure-track position.

Since Kram graduated from university he has had twenty-one one man exhibitions and he has participated in twenty-five group shows -- he has indeed been active in the art world. Kram thought about his attitude towards the art world when he was at university, an attitude he summed up in one word: idealistic: "When I was a student I had this idealistic view that I could go through the fine arts program and when I was finished I could then do my work, whatever it happened to be. I could then devote the rest of my life to doing creative work that was based on my own kind of ideas as opposed to being commissioned to doing something or working for an organization or for an individual to do some creative work. In other words, instead of doing somebody else's ideas, my idea was that I was going to come out and I would only be answerable to myself. I could do my own ideas and I could go the rest of my life doing that, which is a fallacy. At that time nobody enlightened me that this was a pipe dream, that this could never happen. So the other part of this idealism is the ideal that everything that is successful out there is good and you find out that it really has very little to do with

the quality. What it has to do with is marketability, and who is presenting it, and how they are presenting it, and who these people are contacting, and that is essentially the galleries' job, in a way, (which is) to make your work saleable. The galleries' major concern is, 'Can I sell this?' They are not so much concerned with, 'Is this important?', or, 'Is this good work?' They can admit it is good work, but if it is not work that they think they can sell they are not going to show it because they are in the business of making money. Private galleries are not donations. They are not people who are just putting their money into things just because of the love of it. So, those kinds of ideals start to break down as you move along because you start to realize things aren't what you thought they were."

The one positive aspect about the art world, he believes is the excellent financial support system in Canada. Kram mentions the Art Bank of Canada, the Canada Council Grants and other grant organizations that award money to Canadian artists. He commented that, "The Canada Council currently gives out more money, their grants are much higher (and) the amount of grants that are given out in proportion to the population is much greater. If there is any country you want to be in and try to make it as an artist you want to be in Canada because the opportunity is there. There is no saying you are going to get the grants. It is just that your chances percentage-wise are better than being anywhere else." Kram has benefitted from the grant system here and indeed calls this award money 'godsend' which have helped him out of tight financial situations. Other than the grant systems, he has little else to say about the art world that is positive.

Kram feels the art world is pretentious. He calls it a 'system'



which requires 'playing the game': "There are a lot of things in the art system that are to your advantage to learn about and to accept if you are going to survive as an artist. Well, it's not a necessity, but it helps if you become a part of that system. In other words, if you play the game. Playing the game means -- and this is something you have to decide whether this is right for you or not -- playing the game means you go to all the openings, you get yourself seen, you speak to people. It doesn't matter what you really do just so long as you appear in a sense in the public eye. The public eye is not so much the general public out there, but it means the people that are involved in the art scene. Either artists, gallery owners, the collectors and so on." Much of the business transactions Kram learned, occurs over a beer or cocktail at openings and parties. One collector, for example, said to him, "You should really attend these (openings) because I can introduce you to other collectors and 'this' and 'this' can happen," which made Kram realize, it "doesn't mean that right there and then somebody is going to buy from you because you show up at an opening or you meet someone, but these things have sort of a way of developing over a period of time that inevitably, ultimately lead to sales and connections and things like that."

Meeting other artists, making friends, getting to know more and more people in the art world is advantageous because of the 'power of friends'. Many juries consist of artists and if they are friends, Kram discovered, chances are much more in the applicants favor for being awarded the grant: Somebody likes somebody else, even if they don't particularly like their work they are going to give them the benefit of the doubt. It has to end up playing a role for better or worse. We are

not inhuman. We all have got hearts and blood and soul and so we are going to respond in certain ways. That is why it is of some advantage to become part of the art community. That means to completely make yourself available to other artists and especially to and for other artists." Unfortunately, sometimes the system results in important judgements being made on the bases of personal feelings and not on the bases of artistic quality -- this type of practice he particularly deplores.

Playing the game in order to succeed involves more than merely meeting people in the art world. It also means working in a style that is popular or working in a style that 'happens to be in'. Kram's cynicism is revealed in the following words: "The more you understand about the system, and if you don't find it aggravating and if you find it natural to your rhythm of life then the more of that that you use the greater chance of your success. That is, not to say, that if you use all those things that you are going to succeed. You can even be doing good work and that doesn't guarantee success either because good work, if it is not the kind of work that happens to be popular, then it's not going to succeed -- not readily anyway. To be cynical is really a very accurate outlook on what actually exists out there -- and that is, it is extremely unfair, unjust and it's a very sort of complex system. If you want to insure the maximum possibility of success or just the possibility of success you have to sell out a great deal. That is just my feeling. And if you don't sell out, the less you sell out the more your possibilities are cut down for success."

"If someone was to ask me what is the key to being successful today as an artist, I would say be aggressive, but not obnoxious. You are

probably better off doing conceptual work than figurative work. Go to as many openings and meet as many people as you possibly can. A lot of things like that, depending on how strong willed you are and how committed you are or your own sort of emotional rhythm that will determine how much you will give in or how much you will change because all those things will affect you to some degree. Whether they actually do change your style of work or the way you think is hard to say because a lot of it plays a sort of subtle psychology on you. It is difficult for even you yourself to recognize sometimes how much of an effect it is having on you. But, all these things in some sense are going to tempt you, and so when you start to recognize things like that and if you refuse to become a part of that, you do so knowing that you are giving up a certain amount of something. It is like (asking yourself), 'What am I prepared to give up? What am I prepared to trade-off to do what is necessary to be successful?' It is a difficult kind of situation. Now some people fall into these things and feel very comfortable at doing them and maybe in many cases it is even natural for these people to play the game, be part of the system, do what is necessary to be successful, then it's terrific for those people."

Kram disliked going to openings, seeing far too many bad exhibitions and too few good ones, spending too much precious time viewing bad shows when he could be spending it working in his studio. He stopped seeing exhibitions early in his career. There is a sacrifice and he is well aware of it: "By not going to galleries, I'm missing some of the good work going on out there. That is the penalty I pay for not going, but on the other hand I can't deal with ninety percent of my time looking at garbage only to find ten percent good stuff. It

doesn't pay off for me emotionally. It is not enough of a return for what I put in, so unfortunately I miss some of that. It's a (decision) that's cost me, but that's a choice I've made because I don't like to do that. I don't find that is a necessary part of the creative process to have that contact with other artists. It is not important to me. I could be living in the middle of nowhere as long as I have my materials and I can do my work. That is all I need."

There are four qualities that particularly stand out when talking to Kram: commitment, determination, optimism, and an ability to cope well with struggle. He said, "The most important thing you probably have to have in order to make it is total commitment which nobody can train you for. You have to have that in you. You have to have that belief and that kind of commitment that you say, 'No matter how bad and how tough it gets I'm going to stick this out because this is what I really want to do. There is nothing else I really want to do. To hell with the responsibility to my family, to this, to that and everything else.' It is just a question -- because things work out one way or another -- it is a question of commitment. Are you going to throw everything in and give in and join the system so that you can have a regular salary and be comfortable or is your priority to create work? If your priority is to create work then other things have to be sacrificed in exchange for that. It is a sacrifice because short of your family being independently wealthy (who will support you the rest of your life as an artist) well there are going to be a lot of sacrifices along the way. The question really becomes how much you give in and at what point you give in and how much sacrifice you have to make in order to make this work for you."

Kram has asked himself questions like, Should I teach and sacrifice time for making art in exchange for making money? Should I rely on grants, spend as much time and energy as possible on my art and constantly be 'low on cash'? He chose the latter position so that he could have as much time and energy possible for making his art. Consequently, he is always juggling bank accounts and living off credit cards with high interest rates to financially survive. Occasionally he has had to borrow from friends for financial support. Kram commented that "some people can't bear the financial stress very well. They can't sleep at night if they owe a lot of money and they don't know how they are going to pay for it. (They feel stress if they cannot) pay back that money or they never feel right if they feel they owe money at all. If they have any debts at all they never feel good until they've cleared them off. So it depends on how well you can cope with that. If you can handle it, okay, and I figure given what my situation is I'm doing extremely well in handling it. Probably other people would be having nervous breakdowns a long, long time ago. That's the price I pay. It's not that there is no stress. I just can't completely ignore it because I am answerable. At some point at the end of a certain number of months the bank manager is going to phone me and I'm going to have to come up with some story. It is in the forefront of my everyday life -- the reality of it, but still, given what my situation is, I think I'm holding out alright. I don't tend to worry very much. I tend to be a very optimistic person even when things are really bad. I always hope something is going to work out."

Kram says he regards success in terms of monetary gains. "My major problem is a financial one. (Some people may see success) as being

recognized as an artist. I don't have that problem. I am not concerned about recognition because I have established myself in the art world and there are not a whole lot of people doing the kind of work that I do and the kind of imagery that I do. So, in a sense, I stand out probably more than most artists do. It just happens to be the way things work out. So (recognition) is not my concern."

Kram constantly encounters another type of struggle other than a financial one and it is positive. It is the creative challenge to develop new ideas and solve aesthetic problems which is one of the main reasons why he says he is an artist. He enjoys this type of challenge involving judgement and decision making.

Kram believes he does not have a preconceived image of what artists are like. An ideal artist could be doing anything because people are so different from one another. He feels that "sometimes what works for one artist, the way they do things, if another artist tried to do the same thing it wouldn't work." There is only one quality that good artists should have in common: they should be doing excellent work. "Aside from that it doesn't matter what they are, or how they are, or what else they do. It is not terribly important to me." Even though Kram himself does not have a fixed image of what an ideal artist is like he does acknowledge the public's conception and he is affected by its attitude. Being an artist, for Kram has a negative side. "Being an artist," he said, "is sort of a drag. I don't like to tell people that I'm an artist. I don't avoid it. If somebody asks me what I do I say I'm an artist, but it is not something I can say I'm particularly proud of because I don't like most of what everything has to do with art. I love to work and I love to look at good art, but most of what is going on has

nothing to do with that -- good art, you know. I spend all my time creating things that I love to create. I love being an artist in that sense. I don't like most of what is out there in terms of art. So, in a sense, in terms of a public kind of image of being an artist, I'm not terribly happy about that, but I love being an artist for myself."

#### An Alternative Road: William

"I am very opinionated about this topic," William said when I had approached him for an interview. He is indeed knowledgeable, having spent a dozen years in university and following that, almost a decade in the work force. In his middle thirties, he is a fair-haired, attractive man who is soft spoken yet at the same time articulate and forceful.

William was born in Britain and until his early adolescence he studied in the English school system. Having moved to Canada at the age of thirteen and having accelerated in school, by the age of fourteen he had entered a Canadian university and was studying architecture. Eventually he switched his major to classics and when he graduated he decided to study art at a university in Western Canada. It was an exceptionally positive experience, for he met students, many of whom are now important Canadian artists, he was taught by stimulating teachers, and he was given much academic freedom: "Anyone whom I've ever talked to about that school who went there and who has gone on to other schools, have all agreed that it was a special place. It was just chemistry. It was the right people at the right time. We had people who were at that school teaching who should never have been there: famous people. They had cash, I guess, to bring them there. It was the

environment. Those artists or writers or critics wanted to go for a summer or for a break to work at the university and live on the islands. So we had people like William Burroughs and Robert Morris -- all sorts of people who wouldn't normally have been there. You got to know the teachers, you got to know them as people. The town was small enough as well that you sort of knew things about them and there was a much looser division between faculty and students. There wasn't a rigid kind of structure. You worked with them on projects, you'd paint their houses, and so as a result, in the classroom they dealt with you more as a person. They just gave us room. If I wanted to work on plexiglas, for example, (they'd say), "Here's the key." You know, one year I did town planning and I never knew anything about it so it was good. The next year I did casting iron and things that you would never normally do. So, you were led into this kind of labyrinth of techniques and questions and you were able to explore them. What you certainly did was learn a lot about a lot of things. It wasn't like another school where you are committed to drawing or painting or sculpture. You were told, 'Learn all these things and make your decision later on.' So, by the time I was in second or third year I had done everything from sculpture with brass and bronze and animation and film, to drawing and painting. It was a very special place. It was just that the attitude was so different. It was like a day-care in many ways, but at the same time it was a day-care that was very healthy, very thick and fertile. We did not know anything about selling works or about galleries -- we just went crazy for a few years and turned out some great works. I don't though, have a romance about it. I recognize its deficiencies. But, in terms of assisting a student, in terms of encouraging a student, and making



them curious, it was a great place."

William appeared to be what one calls a 'professional student', meaning a person who interminably attends school eventually almost becoming a permanent fixture in the university milieu. Upon graduating he studied Art History first for a year at another university in Western Canada, and then for a year at a university in England. Then he returned to Canada, studied phototechnology and some sciences at an Ontario university and eventually moved out east in order to study Fine Art in a masters program. "I went all over," he said. "It was better than working. I wasn't pushing for a career. I never really needed it. I never really worried about those things. I had the misfortune about being curious about a lot of things when I was in university. I might not have been if my parents had not forced me to study something rigidly. So when I was able to free myself from that I almost probably chose not to pursue a particular line of research and investigation. I have a career, not as a result of employment, but as a result of my own needs."

William discussed the masters program in detail. Several of the professors he had he enjoyed. One teacher's style of teaching was excellent; another professor William respects because he took an active and sincere interest in his students' welfare; yet another professor was a good practicing artist who was readily available for his students; a different professor (even though, to use William's words, he was 'pickled in gin') was able to offer some illuminating perspectives; and one particular teacher was important because he could inspire students to do what they wanted artistically. He learned much by becoming acquainted with his teachers. "Meeting people and seeing the truths

was important). Like meeting Professor Smith was a very important thing for me because everyone had always been in competition with each other. meeting him was like meeting someone who wasn't competing. He is a generous, gentle, and intelligent guy who did his work. I always felt really sorry for him because he always seemed to me to be under an enormous pressure to have a successful career and it was so difficult for him. That kind of really steeled my cynicism about the art world by seeing what it was doing to him."

Although William values some of the relationships he established with professors, this is the only valuable aspect about his graduate studies: "Well the masters program was -- and I don't think this is too ridiculous a suggestion -- I think it was a farce. I really do. Maybe there are M.F.A. programs that aren't farces, but I've never encountered one. I got nothing out of the program whatsoever that I wouldn't have gotten somewhere else, by myself, or just by knowing some of the professors I had had."

The masters program was a disappointment for several reasons. One major one was that William learned little from the other students: "In art you learn to be a good artist in spite of the school, not because of it. If you are lucky you are with a group of people who contribute to your life and your mind. If not you flounder for a couple of years. There is such an intangible quality to the process of making art that it's difficult to ascertain what you're doing. Is it any good? How do you measure it? What is your measure of a good painting? If it moves you? If it survives? If it's big? The measure of a good painting is when it provokes me. Out of twenty artists that I encountered as a graduate student in that intimate environment there may be three or

four, at most, that were making contributions to my knowledge and to my experiences, that brought a perspective that was uncommon, that brought investigations that were innovative and provocative and that moved me. I give them full credit. The rest of them (the ninety percent) were simply more Jesuits reciting their lines."

He explained this last line: "Graduate school was an eye opening experience for me because I realized people were so self-absorbed and terrified by anything outside of their own experiences that it was really disturbing. I didn't realize that what art schools do is they create students (who conform). It's very similar to a Jesuit seminary. You obey. They're loose, the rules aren't concrete, they're an amalgam of things, but you learn them. For example, if you don't talk the right way in a graduate seminar you are ostracized. If you dare to be different you're ostracized. Art students (as a consequence) address very narrow points of references. They can't deal with the artwork any other way except as artists."

The time when William asked his friend, a commercial photographer, to show his work at a graduate seminar he well remembers. The photographs were of an unusual place where none of the students had visited: "It was a remarkable place. These students were with a man who knew an enormous amount about the place -- a very special place -- and they jumped all over him because he wasn't a good artistic young boy. I thought, 'What's happening here? Sure he is a bit of a know-it-all, a bit of a creep, but damn his stuff was incredible! He has a lot of knowledge and why not suspend that competitiveness for an hour of your life and have a look at them and think, 'Oh, what's this thing? And how does that grow? Where does that come from? What's it like

there?' You ask students and it was like they could not see the work. They could not see the place. I realized it was an attitude and that's what you get from art school: you get attitude."

"That's what it does, these schools: you've got to read the right books, and carry around books by Roland Barthes. You've got to cut your hair really short, and wear lots of black, and if you make the 'right' kind of art you succeed, and you get four Canada Council Grants, and you get a couple of shows at a major museum or art gallery, and eventually you buy a house and all is well. That doesn't make it for me. That's just not interesting -- no thanks! It's a farce. Good paintings float to the surface. Institutions don't create good paintings. I think that what makes a good artist is the fact that they listen to themselves and that they provide a perspective that's uncommon. Whether they address the common issues is not important, but their perspective is personal. In an institution you don't encourage that. Art schools in a lot of ways destroy the very things that made art what it is, which is a personal, private investigation and speculation into what is happening to people in their art. They encourage conformity -- it's a subtle, insidious kind of conformity, but it is there. Art students can't dissent. There is a great deal of lip service and a great deal of illusion in terms of dissent. Students delude themselves; they think they're special and they are not. Art schools teach students to conform (and yet) to labour under the delusion that they are nonconformists."

Conformity, William believes is not only self-destructive, but it also affects other students. A competitive, destructive environment develops. He provides an example of this: "There was a girl at school when I was there. Her's was really old-fashioned, traditional painting,

but boy could she paint! Everyone hated her and treated her like shit. She finally left. She could paint these people under the carpet every day of the week. She could have painted everything they were painting ten times better, but she wanted to paint the way she wanted to paint. I don't think she was brilliant but she was very good. I think, 'So paint! Here's the ticket. Do it! You make the paintings the way you want. I'm not going to tell you how to paint. I'm not going to pressure you into painting a certain way. I'm not going to treat you badly because you are not painting avant-grand subjects.' She was an old fashioned girl from southern Ontario and they destroyed her. What a tragedy! So, if you happen to do something that is not 'cool', if you do a funny old landscape and there is no pretensions to being anything else, they'll destroy you. Carnivorous, because they are intimidated. They are insecure about what they are doing. It is necessary for them to protect their work; it is necessary for them to protect their illusions. They do it by evolving an 'adversarial' relationship with other artists. It's pretty sad."

The major reason which caused William's disenchantment with graduate school (and consequently with art schools as a whole) is the lack of rigor and lack of excellence he saw. William provides several explanations. One reason, he is convinced, is because the university staff are not always hired on the basis of excellence, but on the basis of personal factors. Too often friends or relatives or lovers obtain key university teaching positions. "There are people there who are really doing interesting work," William said, "and need a job and nobody goes to the effort of finding them." Lack of rigor is also a result of professors who do not work towards academic excellence themselves. They

often do not set high standards, provide precedents, but are too often too self-interested. William feels that some professors lack of dedication to the art field, their lack of concern for pursuing rigorous study is often being overridden by their interest in such aspects as salary and sabbaticals. Another explanation, he believes, for the mediocrity he finds in the art schools is the professors' encouragement of untalented art students: "We're not honest with our students, we're just not. We say their art is good, keep going when it's not. That's the problem: you take bad artists with bad teachers and you put them in a school with all the students lying to themselves for four years in undergraduate school (because they think they are talented). We should say, 'You can't paint. Get out of school.' We don't have respect for excellence in our culture at all. We've lost it. Plumbers leave holes in the wall. The same thing happens with artists." Furthermore, another cause of the problem, William is convinced, is that the standards in the art schools are miserably low. Coming from England, coming from a different educational system, he compares and does not like what he has experienced in Canadian schools. "England has a much different tradition in teaching art; it's a much better system...There, ninety percent of the kids get tripped out on their ear. For them art is a skill you acquire. If you want to develop your skills (their belief is) there are the requisite things you have to do. Here it is a kind of party. Here is a general erosion in education. I see it in my students I teach. They are subliterate. It is a function of their environment and it is a function of the educational system they pass through. If I have a student who writes a normal essay it's exceptional. Furthermore, the major aim of art schools, which William

believes is training art students to become professional artists, is one of the major reasons for Canadian art students' inferior education. By training students to be professional artists "we are able to exploit the system at the expense of the work. We've allowed the making of art to be eclipsed by the selling of it. It's always been the case because we've institutionalized the act of making art. Now we've made it a commodity and we package it."

"I don't think the emphasis was necessarily preconscious on the part of the college. The professors didn't decide to teach you how to be professional, but the attitude, the kind of pitch of the program was always towards that. I think it is in most cases a kind of attitude that other artists, teachers, and administrators inherit from tradition or from the environment. There was always that intense competition between teachers and between students and that was a kind of currency. People would ask each other, 'Are you having a show? How many pieces did you sell?' So, what happened, I think, is that in that kind of environment those attitudes of professionalism evolved and so they became really important and another subtext really. They underlie everything. People were preoccupied with it. In graduate school students were preoccupied with the curriculum vitae so much, in fact, that they would fabricate them. They'd send a piece, let's say a photograph to the National Gallery with no return address and then they would write in their vitae, 'in the collection of the National Gallery.' I'm not kidding! I saw that twenty times -- not once and not with an isolated individual. So, that what was the unifying factor amongst students and faculty was the idea of a career and not the idea of investigation, not the idea of any of the challenging aspects of making

art, but just the practical ones. To train students (to train them in drafting skills, material skills, historical skills, Art History, and Art Education), or to make them curious, or to make them think is much harder and causes more work and more preparation by the teacher and by the administration. I think universities have abandoned their mandate, their traditional mandate which was to question and to (be a place) for learning to occur."

By the time William was in his final year at graduate school he was teaching art on a part-time basis at a college. A few years later he obtained a full-time position at the same college and is still working there today. William enjoys teaching. He takes his job seriously, aiming to expose the students to as much information as possible, working towards creating a rigorous curriculum, and setting high standards for his pupils. He also feels it is of utmost importance to provide honest feedback to his students. "Do I discourage my students from going to art school if they are bad artists? You bet! I get in lots of trouble in my department for telling my students what I think the truth is. I'm supposed to encourage them and cultivate them. I do. I cultivate their minds, but I don't think necessarily that they should be handling a brush." To use a cliché, William practices what he preaches. He tries not to make the same mistakes that his former art teachers had made.

Being a teacher does have benefits that William fully acknowledges. He finds teaching easy, not too demanding, well paying, and unlike some other jobs in the arts it's reliable and consistent. Moreover, even though he is considered a full-time employee, he in fact has about six months off during the year which enables him to pursue his numerous



other interests.

During William's first year teaching he had a 'graduate' exhibition. "The last group of work that I did was a bunch of prints, paintings, and photographs combined. I did thirteen of them here in graduate school and I sold them all. In fact, I sold most of them to students and teachers. They didn't even make it to the galleries. I knew they'd love it. They did. They were really pretty. My friend bought one, teachers bought them, the school bought one and a gallery bought one." He was never enamoured, however, with exhibiting.

"The first show I ever had I knew that there was something wrong here. It was out west. I had a one man show at a gallery. I had twenty-seven photographs and I sold thirteen of them to friends and relatives. Everyone bought them and it was 'cool'. I kept thinking, 'Is this it? Is this it?' Now and then local art magazines published pictures and they interviewed and a major Canadian magazine put one of them in...I kept thinking, 'Is this it? What am I getting back from it for having these shows?' I remember having a show at a parallel gallery and one professor coming (up to me) and going 'crazy' and saying 'how brilliant my work was. I knew which one she'd like and I knew which one that person would like and I'm thinking, 'Is this it?' Isn't there more?' and there wasn't more, but I'd been led to believe that there was more. It became predictable. What forced me out of making art was that I could anticipate every corner, every event so far in advance it was so unrewarding."

After he left graduate school he had a few shows in Canada and in the United States. William exhibited what he termed, "regurgitated, whipped up, old work," that for him had little meaning. At about this

time, just after he had graduated, he stopped exhibiting and stopped producing artwork professionally.

"The thing is, that if I would have been a bad artist then it would have been hard, but I wasn't. I was a very good young artist. I was an above average Canadian photographer, but I knew I'd never be much more than that, at least if I continued the way I was continuing. I wasn't going to lie to myself and say what I was doing was important. What I was doing was not that inventive. It was okay, but I don't think I have the insight and I don't think I have the skill to make a significant change. Well, I guess it's a question of standards, whether they are high or not. I think that the standards by which we assess art are not reasonable or responsible. There's so much tokenism and so much indulgence. I just don't have the tolerance for that. What I respect about artists is that they don't delude themselves. Most of the artists that come out of graduate school, they don't admit that the bad paintings they make are bad. They think they're great, the dealers tell them they're great, they think they're great and they are not! I guess I've worked enough at other things like theatre and films to know that you can see something. I worked last year on an Agatha Christie play and I could see the thing there on stage. When it was finished I knew that was it. That is what it was for and when it ended it would be used and it would be torn down. There is no myth. For example, you make this chair, someone sits on it and eventually it will break. It's comfortable, and it works and it's pretty. I'm not going to think that it is anything else other than a chair. (But people think differently about art. They say), 'You were an artist! You are special,' you know? Give me a break -- this is bullshit, but that is what drives people. It

is this neurotic need to succeed, this neurotic need to be different."

"We inherit attitudes from our culture of the artist as hero, artist as iconoclast, artist as revolutionary. That's naive. All through school, all through your life you are sold the image that the artist is the free spirit who communicates with his inner self. Out of that union, the illuminating encounter of one's inner self, there produces something. The product of that is, of course, revelatory and lights the darkness as it were. In some cases that is true. You can name them on one hand in the last fifty years. I think this romantic myth is something that we sell to art students to keep them going on. It does provide fuel for people for it makes them hope their work will improve and their life will improve, but in most cases artists delude themselves. The selling of myths is like an enchantment. What's it called when you chant? Your mantra? You are going to be discovered and things will be good and you'll be victorious."

"I think we lived submerged and intoxicated by promise. If we didn't have promise we've had it. We'd kill each other. We would just give up. We romance everything we do. Now is the fact that we are young and happy; we live as if we are immortal. There is no other way to drive us, especially artists. For very few artists is there any kind of real reward, so (as a result) there is a whole romance with that life-style. There is an old saying: 'If it sells it doesn't mean it's good.' There should be an ammendment to that or an appendage which should say, 'If it doesn't sell it doesn't mean it is good,' because a lot of artists think, 'What I am doing is 'real'. Nobody understands my art. Everything is going to be great. Eventually things will work.' What someone should tell them is, 'No, actually it is just shit. You

should go back to school or get yourself a cab or something.' We pretend as artists that there is something happening. There is nothing happening. People just go to the studio and make work and if it works, it works, and if it doesn't, it doesn't. The marketplace -- the scholars, the critics, and other artists -- create a system that you're part of. It is like practicing medicine without a license; you can't practice art without a license. You get a license and you've got to be part of that community. If you are part of that community you've got to lie, you've got to pretend. In some cases people can work past that, but it takes a long time in their career. So, I don't have low standards for myself and if my work was just acceptable I couldn't see any reason to do it. It was, so I stopped."

William also stopped producing art professionally and exhibiting art for several other reasons. He reflects: "I think that I have a determinist view of making art. I think that if a work is strong like a culture is strong, it survives, it takes care of itself, it's self-enforcing and if I did a dozen really strong drawings something would happen, but I'll never do a drawing thinking that I'm going to have a show or maybe I'll write a book or maybe I'll do this or that because it is not that lucrative emotionally, intellectually, or financially compared to a lot of other ways of making money or making yourself feel better." He explains the reasons why being a professional artist leaves him intellectually and emotionally bereft: "What I wanted was for my work to be personal. I find that when I write it is more intimate... Writing is also a challenge because I take a structure that's unknown to me and I really have to work with every letter, every punctuation point. With a painting or with a drawing, or with making a photograph there are

so many rules that I find very hard to shake. Also, making art (as was already stated before) is too predictable. Furthermore, no one is going to tell me anything I don't already know. What are you or what is Joe Smith or what is anyone going to tell me about the work that's going to send me off in a remarkable direction with this? Forget it! I'm out there. I'm reading, I'm learning, I'm listening, I'm thinking. I don't need anybody's help. I've long since past the point where someone's going to come and give me some direction in my life. If it is going to happen it is going to have nothing to do with having a show somewhere. So that's not the reason. I can't think of any explanation that would make it worthwhile. Financially it wouldn't mean anything even if I sold all the prints. Let's say I had a show. I had ten prints in my show. All the prints were sold and all the prints were say, three hundred dollars. I can make three thousand dollars in three days doing commercial photography. It would take me a month, minimum of everyday work to put a show together, plus all the agony and stress of putting a show together, all the fears, all the worries. So it is not financially worth it to me. It is not going to be enriching and rewarding to me to have the exhibit. Societally, I don't need it. I don't need the so-called currency of having an exhibit and being an artist and being patted on the back by my contemporaries. I have my friends, I know enough people that enrich my life that I don't need other people to say, 'Nice work William' and people do say, 'nice work.' I can't think of any reasons for having a show. I know that it disappoints my friends who are artists and my old teachers who think I'm a failure because I'm not out there dragging my shit around in a black leather case. I divorce myself from that too. It was bullshit...That's not what I'm all about.

That's not what moves me. If it moves me I would do it. We'd be having an entirely different conversation. Time goes by and I guess I just lost a lot of the naivete that I had inherited from that environment about making art, about the art world, about other artists. It's the same in that we would shed that naivete about anything else that we would start. It just happened quite early."

Although William still has strong ties with the art world through his friends, former teachers and associates, he has effectively withdrawn himself from that milieu. It was a conscious decision based on thorough disenchantment. His reasons for disliking art schools also pertain to the art world. Like art students, William feels artists are too often dishonest about their abilities, and consequently the art world is full of mediocrity. Partly this is due to low standards, partly to a belief in artistic romantic myths, and partly to what William calls the institutionalization of the art world: "Hell, we've institutionalized everything (we've even institutionalized sexuality). So what we do with the institutionalization of making art, we've allowed it to be the home of the mediocre because there is no ethic at all. In other words, you can be a successful artist, and be a terrible artist because of the institutional aspects of making art. Historically, there is a great deal of evidence to indicate that if you weren't good you didn't get anything. Now, it is possible to work the system."

Also like art schools, the art world has a lack of rigor, a lack of striving towards excellence. For example, William knows artists who only are inspired to work when they feel the pressure of exhibition deadlines: "Like some of my friends think, 'Oh, I've got to do a show and I've got to get this shit together, dammit! I've got to go to the

studio and whip up a couple of paintings.' Then they'll whip them up and get it in there and say, 'I don't care. It's going to be wet when it's there in the show.' That's the way they talk! Some of my friends wait for like a month before they exhibit and then they do all their paintings. I think, 'What are you doing? Is that painting about painting under pressure or is that painting about you?' I think it is the former. It is a kind of gymnastic 'virtuosic' exercise, 'Let's see what I can do' kind of painting. Only one month! Fourteen paintings in one month ladies and gentlemen! Maybe I'm a romantic in that I think works should be better, should be more important. I don't think you make a significant contribution or a significant growth if you are painting that way. I think that the work you do has to come from you when it comes and you can't force it because you are part of that economic or artistic community."

What art students and artists also have in common, William feels, is that both are too concerned with professionalism and not concerned enough with the art itself. "Art has to be a product of your life and of your observations, not a product of homeostasis, of the organ surviving. It's got to be an expression and so much today is done because of survival, because you need a show, you need a grant, you need this and you need that. All of that affects the way you make art. Success become such an important thing to people that they equate it with survival. It, in fact, does determine what kind of art you make. There is an absolutist point of view that is, 'What I do is good, ergo it will sell, ergo I will have a career.' That certainly is destructive. It destroys artists' curiosity and it destroys their capacity to render judgements honestly about their own work. If they

are so provoked and so pressured by the need to have a career and the need for success they don't see their work the way they should. That's all part of the careerist attitude."

William believes artists have much in common with merchants. They both are concerned with selling their wares: in the case of the artist their art is the product. Toward those artists who do approach their art with a careerist attitude and admit it, however, William has respect. He said, "Merchants are honest. Joe Smith who sells you a suit knows what he's doing. I respect that honesty. It doesn't mean I agree with what he is doing (but) I respect his (attitude. Likewise,) I respect the artist who admits what he is like, he doesn't labor under any delusions, that he is any different, that he is special. (For example), one artist said, "I'll give them a blue, and that is four feet long, that goes over the couch. What colour do you want it? No problem. Want it in blue, we've got it in blue." They are merchants. Let's be honest about the whole process, you know, and not pretend that it is somehow a righteous endeavor when it is not. A lot of artists' work is really conditioned by the marketplace. It's understandable. We have such a romantic relationship to the arts. They are unsullied, not sordid like other endeavors like being a dentist, (but) art is the same way -- of course it is! It is a guy sitting around drinking a beer, watching a hockey game and painting. That's what it is."

Why do people buy art, William wonders, when people are unable to agree about it's worth, about what the artist was trying to do, about its message? He provides answers to his questions: "I think we are afraid of what we don't know, and so we pay for it. There's a kind of cultural cachet for art when you buy and when you support it, but you



really don't know what's happening. People will go and stand in front of a work and look at it and go, 'Wow, it must be great!' There's a kind of mythology, there is a kind of language, an arcane language that nobody speaks but everybody knows is there. It is like a secret signal between the viewer and the art object. There is an ambiguity, a built in ambiguity which profoundly influences the way people deal with work. If it is intimate, like say an etching by Dore, you can see whether it works or not. You can assess it and think, 'This is an interesting piece of work.' (But, humor is not often dealt with by artists) and I realized why. It is so difficult because it is so universal. It is something that everybody understands. To use humor you have got to communicate directly, intimately with a person and you can then judge whether it works or not, whether it is not a good joke, (or) not a good painting. I realize humor is a very vulnerable thing for the artist to use because what it does is it removes the mystique the built in attitude that is: 'Maybe I don't understand the work therefore it might still be good.' This is difficult to articulate, but I think it is a very big thing. In so much of the work that you see there is nothing happening. What you have is blue next to brown and that is all. What is the painter actually saying when you look at the work, like a Schnabel painting? I don't know what it is saying, you don't know what it is saying, nobody knows what it is actually saying except Julian, and maybe it is not actually saying anything. Everybody stands there and goes, 'Ah,' and somebody buys it. I want to know why. So much of art is predicated on distance between the work and the public and not predicated on the intimate connections which one would assume would be what is important about making art. There is a misunderstanding which I

think is structurally a very important thing."

"I am stealing an idea. It was in an article in which the author said that the actual physical work is worth like five percent if you were to take a global view of the artist. It is an impression that the myth is part of the artist: what he did, his life-style, who he did it with, what kind of person he was, what kind of clothes he wore, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. That is up at about eighty percent. Fifteen percent is the business aspects, the mechanics of the art. The five percent or whatever is left is actually the work. So, when you sell the Julian Schnabel, for example, that's the kind of formula that works out."

There are many concrete aspects about the art world that William dislikes. He has been on committees and watched artists being rejected because they were disliked by jury members rather than because they found the quality of the art lacking. He has seen people supporting their friends and not supporting people on the basis of merit. He dislikes the pressures on artists to conform to the latest artistic style and he dislikes the rigidity he sees in the art world. All too often people who are recognized as being accomplished in one medium, will have difficulty having their work accepted if another medium is used. Moreover, it is difficult for artists to change their imagery. Like actors that are typecast and often they have a hard time breaking boundaries: "There's such a myth of freedom for the artist. It's just not true. If Tom Hopkins wants to make a painting of the sexual acts of animals he can't. What if he wants to? Not that he would of course, but I mean his dealer wouldn't have them. There's not the freedom. That's bullshit (that there appears to be)."

William thinks the art world is looked on with far too much awe. "What about the world of dentistry? Who cares about the art world? It is not some sacred cow that you should tread around lightly! No, not at all! The way we tread around artist and art schools! (Artists and art students) should be turfed out when they aren't doing any work and so should bad art. Good art is good art, bottom line and there's lots of it out there...but it is like one percent of the people that are making it and that's the way it will always be."

Even though William has rejected the fine art world he is, nevertheless, very much involved in the graphic arts. He mostly works for one woman who is like an agent finding him numerous jobs. Consequently, he has worked at jobs making films, building sets, designing labels for manufacturers, illustrating, designing products, and producing commercial photographs. He also has other jobs. For example, this summer he travelled to Russia, Iran and Turkey buying carpets and pottery for Canadian collectors. He can be called a fine art 'bricoleur' having been involved in so many aspects in the art field.

It has not been easy for William to break away from the professional art world. Sometimes he thinks he would like to paint, but he was trained as an illustrator and photographer, and consequently he is fully aware of how difficult it would be to be accepted as a painter. He is also aware of how much learning would be involved. "I haven't paid my dues," he said. "I haven't learned how to paint. To learn how to paint takes years and years and years to really learn the materials in the same way that learning an instrument does. To learn how to write a novel is a life-time pursuit. There's no doubt about it. You can't

do it any other way, and I just don't know whether I could commit myself to the thing long enough to be really any good at one thing. What you've really got to do, to be a good painter, or to be good at anything is you've got to have single-mindedness. Eventually you really have to commit yourself. There's a point where you have to say, 'Okay, this is what I am doing and I am going to concentrate for twelve hours a day.' I don't know whether I can do that. I'm not a drone. I'd rather be an astronaut or a wrestler. There's too many things out there that I don't know anything about that intrigue me."

William feels strongly that he made the right decision to leave the art world although occasionally he encounters some conflicts. "I still feel a little bit of guilt. I guess you have a social contract with people...Who are you now? Things that they knew about you they don't know anymore. It's difficult because people like my work and they want me to do things. They encouraged me to make drawings and paintings because they knew I hated photographs. I like the fact that they care about me as a person. (But), one professor in particular thinks I'm a failure. I feel guilty because I like him and I want him to like me. It's a personal thing, you know? I want him to think good things, but I think who I am as a person is a lot more important than who they think I am. (I also think) they obviously don't know what motivates me. Making a drawing in terms of success is not what motivates me. They probably don't understand it. It is like being part of a religion, I guess, and I rejected that. You are a backslider and you are shunned. You are excommunicated: With rejecting a religion there are all the problems of deciding that there is no God any longer. (So, now) people are angry and hostile towards me. You go to a party and there is always the

social pressure. Eventually they leave you alone. They stop talking to you because you are not going to play the right way. And I'm not a success because I don't make art anymore. All I have to do is have one show at a gallery and be a success again. They'd say, 'Oh, that's nice to see your work William. Great. Nice work!' That wouldn't make me a success (in my own eyes)."

William has few regrets. He does not have to compete with other artists, he does not have the pressures to produce art and feel guilty if he is not, he does not have to conform to the art world's rules, and he can enjoy the art making process without being worried about the commercial aspects. He feels a tremendous amount of freedom. He said, "I continue to make art, but only for myself (and) not for you, not for my friends, not for any customers, because I refuse. I don't need anyone to say it's a good painting. It might not be, but I had a lot of fun making it. It is not important to me that it is good. It is important to me that it was interesting for me to do while I was doing it, and if it happens to be a good work, great, but I do it on my own terms. I don't plunge through the pages of Artforum to look for some kind of justification for it (like so many art students and artists do.) Probably the most important (crisis point I had) was coming to realize that art wasn't the most important thing in my life, that it was a part of my life and not the focus of it. That was a great release. I felt like I had been able to shed a 'life of beautiful and rigorous study' and shed that kind of doctrinaire approach. I would do whatever I wanted. That was really important. I was sort of released out of the cult. I wanted to live my own life and not something that the institution or my society designed for me. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe

I'll have a tough time later on, but I won't think that I've spent twenty years bullshitting in the basement with a pot of paint and a canvass creating garbage."

In Limbo: Sylvia

An interviewee informed me that her friend, Sylvia, was extremely interested in being interviewed. I contacted her. With all of the other interviews I approached people, but in this situation I was the one being approached. Later she admitted that just before we had met on the day of our first talk, she was subconsciously thinking about her artistic career, memories of her experiences in art school, and of her experiences making art, and she said she felt extremely depressed: "It is like the whole thing (my artistic experience) was a terrific gain and now it has been lost. When we started to talk about all these things I realized that I was really feeling badly about it all and that a lot of those sad feelings were from that. So for me it's really sad...I feel very strongly and I feel very bitter and very disappointed."

"I once went to see (a guidance counsellor) -- this was a few years ago when I realized that I wasn't making it as an artist or an art teacher. I wanted to be an artist who is supporting herself by her teaching and I went to the guidance department. They said, 'You must have the feeling that you have been led down the garden path?' Well, we all do! He just came out with this. He didn't know me at all. I thought, 'Boy that really describes it! It's like it was all a fairyland.'"

Throughout her life Sylvia has been struggling trying to decide

between two very different lifestyles: on the one hand she is attracted towards making money (at least a liveable wage), having stability, and security which usually is the result of a full-time job; and on the other hand she dreams of becoming a professional artist, to as she said, "make art and to enjoy art and to live art." It is a tremendous conflict she herself is very aware of: "There's two different urges: the one is to give up art and just be safe and secure, and the other is to keep struggling, and hoping, and trying, and working, and feeling and thinking." Sylvia has had to contend with the longstanding dilemma from as far back as high school at a time when she was choosing which field to major in at university.

When Sylvia left high school she wanted to study art at a museum school, but her parents had other ideas for they wanted her to obtain a practical degree, a degree which would enable her to have a career, money and security. She ended up graduating in Library Science. During these years Sylvia studied two Visual Arts courses and because she had such a negative experience it was not until ten years later that she became involved in art again. She commented about this period in her life when she became reinvolved; "I went to the museum at night for one night a week. My teacher taught both there and at a university and he was marvelous. At the end of the course he said, 'And you, you should be doing this.' For each person, I assume he told them what to do next. He opened the door for them -- he opened the door for me certainly. He suggested that I go to university for my next year. It would have taken me a few more years to catch onto the fact that that was really my next step. I did go...From then on it was just like I wanted more and more and more so then I went back full-time for a year." In the next few

years she worked part-time and attended university on a part-time basis. Sylvia said, "Well, I really felt I had an education for the first time in my life that really challenged me. I mean, I've been through another university, but getting a bachelors degree in Library Science was so simple and it was all kind of on the same level. I didn't work very hard and I didn't do that well, but even to do well didn't require a lot of hard work. It wasn't challenging, whereas the painting program in the undergraduate department was. You really felt that you had finished one step and boy there was another one to go and it was harder. So, I felt for the first time in my life that I was really learning something, and I hate to repeat it again, being challenged, you know. That was a very good feeling because it felt like, 'Oh, at last it's happened!' It was very exciting to feel like that."

After graduating from a Bachelors of Fine Arts Program, Sylvia stayed out of school for a couple of years to work part-time as a librarian before she reentered university to study Fine Arts at the masters level. She compared her experiences studying Fine Art at the university levels: "I think that the undergraduate and graduate programs were entirely different. The undergraduate program I really felt was like first this step, and then that step, and then it was more difficult, and it really built up. The courses did get harder and called for more background and experiences as you got through them. One would build on the other. Then, once you were in the graduate program there wasn't a program -- I mean, really there wasn't. There were courses so it was totally a different ball game. It was the people and there wasn't any kind of coordinated program being offered or courses getting harder. There really weren't courses. What we did was we went



from person to person each day: one day we'd visit someone and their work and the next day we'd visit somebody else and their work.

Occasionally we'd go to a show. In a way that is kind of leaving it entirely up to the student depending on what came up during the talk about his or her work. There wasn't much really offered by the teaching staff. I don't think, however, you could not help but learn. There were people from all over doing all different kinds of things with all different kinds of skills, with all different ideas on how to go about it, and with all our studios together in the same building and almost everyone content to share whatever they were thinking about and doing.

People liked to give the other person a hand. I think that was absolutely fantastic." Talking with and sharing ideas with other students was for her one of the most important aspects.

Being in graduate school was a stimulating time for Sylvia. She worked on her art, became involved in the politics of the graduate art department as a result of being a graduate student representative, and she worked really closely with one professor in particular. In fact, she began taking numerous courses with him while she was an undergraduate student and because of this positive experience, Sylvia reestablished her ties with him in graduate school. She spoke fondly of this professor: "He was my teacher, my painting teacher. He was enormously important. As a student and teacher we were quite close. I had had him as a teacher for probably over a period of five or six or seven years. I knew him quite well; he knew me quite well. In terms of a student-teacher team we worked well together, but it was strictly within these limits. He gave me a lot of personal attention and a lot of knowledge and a lot of understanding about art. It comes out in all

kinds of ways all the time. I think what was really important was that there was one person to whom I became a real person, that I just wasn't another number going through. So, for me, that was really valuable."

Sylvia thinks back to how she felt at the time she was a graduate student. She thinks about the way she felt about her experiences overall: "I loved the program; I was the only one who did. It is really true! I was coming from work as a librarian three days a week. I was so happy, I was in seventh heaven. Just give me this for the rest of my life; it would have been fine, really! So, I wasn't being very critical of the program at all. I guess it was like all your eggs in one basket, like (I thought), 'this is for me.' It was what I needed so I didn't compare it to what possibly could have been. I didn't have any choice. I had to stay in the city and they didn't have any other art programs in the city and it was my home ground anyway. So most of the time I felt that everything was fine." Now, however, after having been out of graduate school for almost a decade, after having acquired different experiences which shed new light on old ones, Sylvia's attitudes have changed. She looks at her years in graduate school more critically.

It is the little experiences, the everyday happenings that one often overlooks when they occur, but that remain tenaciously in one's memory. They serve as examples illustrating abstract ideas with concrete descriptions. Sylvia provided anecdotes describing her frustration with the department. She discussed one particular incident when she had asked two professors for recommendations because she was applying for a scholarship: "They must have given me fairly good recommendations," she said, "for I got the scholarship and I called up.

the assistant director to say, 'I got it! I'm so excited and so pleased and so happy.' He said, 'Why did you call me up? Why tell me this?' I just kind of said, 'Oh well, I'm sorry I bothered you,' and hung up and I felt really like somebody had slammed the door in my face. When you look at it now you think, well why not him? What I'm asking about is did people take a personal interest in their students and the answer is hardly. I can remember something else too. I was in on all the faculty meetings and all that stuff because I was a 'rep'. I remember the director of the program telling the professors to make sure when they gave someone a recommendation that they make it good. If you are going to give someone a recommendation to make it really good! In other words, these guys were sitting there giving their students lukewarm halfhearted recommendations. That's a real way to stab your students in the back and I don't think you are supposed to do it. You are either supposed to say, 'I'm not going to give you one,' or you really back them up to the hilt. I also remember two very good students who had asked someone for a recommendation, not getting a scholarship that I got and coming to him and saying, 'Gee you know, we didn't get that scholarship.' They had obviously expected it and quite frankly they really deserved it. I'm sure it was because this guy had written some half-assed recommendation and so of course they didn't get it. So that was the kind of faculty it was."

"Overall, I don't think the faculty was concerned about building a systematic program. Certainly, from what I remember from the faculty meetings they aren't. I remember the director saying, 'How can we change things?' and he meant big changes. Maybe that was the problem because he was a new director and he was coming in. Maybe they were all

kind of looking at him sort of cynically thinking, 'Come on. You don't really know what is going on.' Anyway, I must have made trouble at several meetings like that objecting. I think I did a lot of objecting and one of the people in the faculty meeting said something to me like, 'Well, what do you want us to do, fuck you?' I really didn't know what to say and I was really hurt and I just shut up. No one else said anything either. No one else at the meeting said, 'That's not a professional remark,' or, 'You can't talk that way.'"

Sylvia talked further about her university experiences: she provided anecdotes which illustrate the unequal way professors treated students: The ones who excelled, she said, received recognition and support, and the others were neglected: Yes, we are not all Gauchers and Molinaris. You really want to help the students who are borderline. You don't have to help the students who are extraordinarily good and who are asked to teach and who can teach and do make it. You want to help the next ones down who are pretty good and who are either going to sink or swim depending on their preparation. It is the kind of program which doesn't serve the people who are struggling and have the troubles and who are borderline. I think in teaching that those people are important too. So, in a way it was an elitist program."

At both the graduate and undergraduate level Sylvia strongly feels that there is one major inadequacy at the university she studied at: namely that she found there was no training for the professional art world. "They didn't help you survive as an artist on your own overall at all. There is something missing really in terms of if you are a professor who has students and you want them to get out into the world and survive. They made very little effort to make sure that happened.

It was all training to do art. It wasn't really training to survive as an artist. There's a difference. There is so much you can do in terms of presenting your work to galleries, which galleries to go to. There's so many ways that you can initiate people that are coming up into that world out there and it was all so oriented towards making art and towards criticizing art, and (it) dealt not at all with the practical aspects that would enable people to survive. You know there were people in that program who needed to survive."

"Why didn't the professors contribute more? Why didn't they help us more to survive after (graduating)? Why weren't they more involved in what was really going to happen to us? They could talk about it. They could have people come in who graduated and made it in one way or another and talk about how they managed to do that. Like working as a carpenter and painting -- not necessarily teaching and being totally successful, but (they should have talked about) how others had done it. They should offer a package on framing, and portfolios, and interviews. I think they should do more in placing people for jobs. I'd add a university non-credit course let's say for half a term about your own packaging -- all the things I've mentioned in here, and if they are not going to teach you these things they should at least warn you that, 'We're not teaching any of these things you need to get along in the professional art world. Get out and find it on your own.' At least people wouldn't blunder through it. Oh yes, looking back on it they could have made my life so much easier with just a few little hints here and there, with just a few little courses or a few lectures on how to do this. There is that transition between being in the university and having to make your way economically outside of it. I think that what

we are talking about a lot is that bump, and how it is handled, and how it wasn't handled by the program at all, and how looking back you could expect them to do something about that."

Sylvia learned about how to approach galleries from the other students in graduate school. Sometimes they would tell her to enter shows. She remembers "when someone in the program came in -- she's one of the really good people who had done really well and she really is good. She had a loose-leaf folder. In the folder she had eight-by-ten glossy photographs of her own work. It was like a whole commercial presentation of her own work. I was really shocked! I never thought that being an artist entails presenting yourself as a package to the world. I mean, I think, I've gone all the way through university absorbing what it was saying which was that art is for art's sake and you don't worry about framing, you don't worry about packaging, and you don't worry about selling yourself; you just do art. (Anyway, this woman) knew just what to do, and how to do it, and where to do it, and she did it!" During Sylvia's third year at graduate school she tried to 'do it' -- she took her art works to three galleries. At that time she felt her works were good and that they should be exhibited. "I think", she said, "that I didn't handle it well. I just took it to one or two places. I don't think I knew how to package it and present it at all. So, I'd give them kind of a mixed bag instead of ten things on a theme that all tied together and that they could evaluate as a show. I took it to a gallery and they said they didn't want it but that to come back again. I took it to a commercial gallery on Sherbrooke Street -- a very good one -- and they weren't interested. (I) can't remember why. I took it to a parallel gallery and they walked all over it! That was

lovely. It was drawings and watercolours and they were in those plastic drawing sleeves. They had taken all the work out of the portfolio and put it on the floor. I guess they hadn't walked on it but their floor was filthy. They picked it up and put it in the portfolio and when I took it out of the portfolio the sleeves were gritty and grimey. They were dirty! It was just a mess -- the whole thing. I just didn't know what I was doing. I don't think I tried very hard, I didn't try many places, and I don't think my work was maybe that strong, and I don't think I presented what I did have well either. It was a mixture of a lot of things."

"I really didn't think I was ready to show anything and I really didn't think of myself as an artist." Artists, Sylvia thinks, are driven, are committed solely to their art, are people who work all the time making their art. It helps if they can handle the business aspects of being a professional artist, but it is not necessary: "It is really true that if you're really good, and if you just do your art it really will be okay. You know someone else will come along who will package it for you or will handle it; somehow it will get out to the market."

The financial struggle, Sylvia realizes, is what most artists contend with whether they make good art or not. "Upstairs we are hearing the footsteps of an artist...He works at a photography store as a salesman and he is really into photography and into music. He is hoping to be hired as a part-time musician somewhere. In the meantime he is trying to support his family and he's got all these expensive tripods and cameras upstairs. They can hardly scrape together the money -- I don't know how they are going to scrape together the money for rent. They are living on the sales from his salary and there are four

of them, yet he is full of 'pie in the sky', The whole idea is that it's absolutely wonderful to do anything artistic. It hasn't dawned on him yet that there is an immense price that you're paying and you have to look at it more critically." Sylvia does not believe that most good artists can mainly exist off the profits from their artworks, that they can lead an idyllic lifestyle working solely on their art: "All the students knew that you have to teach. Well, what else is there to do? You know, you are not going to earn a living by painting unless you're unusual -- you're just not. You have to go into teaching or into some other line of work. I really wanted to stay in art," but it became increasingly obvious to Sylvia that she herself had to teach.

While working on her thesis and painting during her last year at graduate school, Sylvia managed to obtain a position teaching one course in a private school. After she left graduate school she wrote every school commission within a manageable driving distance and consequently obtained several part-time jobs in community centers.

During the time that she was working as a teacher Sylvia had two job interviews for an art college position. She said, "They were the only (full-time) jobs that came up in the few years after I had graduated. I found the interviews really difficult. They were interviewing several people all at once and we all had to sit in the same waiting room looking at each other. There were about five people doing the interviews sitting around a big table and they wanted to hear your views on art. I really, at that point, was a lot less articulate than I am now and even now I'm not sure of what I think about things. So, I waited for them to say what they wanted and they were waiting for me to say what I was going to do. I found that very strange and very



difficult. They were being very careful about not giving any suggestion at all of what -- and I think this is perfectly fair of them -- of what kind of thing they expected. They were careful of not leading me on. I realized how used I am to that in a conversation of what the other person expects and then you can fill them in. You follow that lead and there weren't any leads! I don't think I presented myself very well, and I don't think also I'm as articulate or clear about what I do or about what I think about art as other people are. So I came out looking more scrambled than I am. That was a crisis for me because I desperately wanted to get the jobs and didn't get them. That was awful."

During the time that Sylvia was teaching she also decided to try to exhibit again: "I had a show in a major public library. At school I went through with a group which was kind of 'Oh, you don't bother about art galleries anyway. You show in public places and to hell with having a career,' which also made it difficult for me to have one, right? If I had personally thought, 'I'm going to have a career and I'm going to do everything I can to have one,' then maybe I would have picked up more what you had to do. Maybe not because I think I'm not like that anyway. There were people with me who were much more ambitious in terms of doing that and they did it. So what did I do? I had a show in the library which I really loved -- I liked what I showed, (but) it was like not showing it. I mean, very few people who I knew came out to see it. I had another show in the library a couple of years later. I was living in Pleasant Valley and I did photographs of something that had happened there so I had another show again in the library, but then I deliberately wanted it there and I didn't try to show it anywhere else.

I thought that was really the place for it. I really thought I would get some kind of feedback from the community newspaper. I sent them photographs and asked them to mention it and write it up. They didn't even mention it. They usually have an artist in the local library. They forgot to mention it so it never got the slightest publicity whatsoever. I could have 'killed' the editor especially because he kept saying, 'Well, we're not going to do it this week, but we'll do it next week.' The show was up for three weeks and then it was off." She has not exhibited since that experience. "Now I feel," she comments, "as though exhibiting is all over with. Also, I haven't been drawing or painting so I kind of fell out of it. If I am interested in doing anything it is photography and maybe short movies just for my own pleasure, but art movies."

Sylvia kept teaching part-time at various schools until two incidents occurred: firstly, the provincial government cut its funding for community based educational courses by about fifty percent, and secondly, the principal at the private school she was working at favored the cook's husband and consequently fired Sylvia so that he could hire the husband as the new art teacher. Five years after she had left university she was unemployed.

After being on unemployment insurance for four months, a friend informed Sylvia of a library position. She applied and was hired. "I realized," she said, "I just had to (accept the position). It was like I was forced back -- I really felt forced. There wasn't any choice economically. There was just not enough jobs left so I had to fall back on what I had in another area outside of art totally. I really felt badly about it and I still do and I probably always will." For over the

last five years Sylvia has worked as a librarian. She is currently working on a full-time basis running a library in an elementary school, and she also teaches part-time in a library science program in a university.

Sylvia reflects on her situation as a librarian. It is troublesome: she is torn between the security, money and stability -- the fruits of a full-time job position, and the desire to be involved in the Visual Arts. She reflects on her situation: "It is kind of nice to save some money. I'll just work all year keeping my standard of living the same and put all that extra money in the bank and have it as a cushion. That's fine with me except that I certainly feel awful. It's just terrible -- I really don't like it. I really would rather be doing art or teaching art or making art at least part of the time. Anything that comes up that has to do with art I find so much more exciting and interesting than the rest of the world. I just feel better when I'm in touch with art. It is hard, it really is hard. At first I thought, 'Well, this is really a lot easier than I thought it was going to be', but it is getting to me now. I feel torn all the time."

Sylvia is in a quandary. She thinks over and over again to herself what her next decision should be. Should she stay at the library? She herself provides her own reply: "I might decide to continue on if I stay as a librarian and make money and forget about art. If I could just forget about the whole thing I would be happy. I really would be happy to forget it all and be content with what I've got, but it is like asking yourself to be made over. It doesn't work that way. You really have certain values and they don't change even though you'd be more comfortable without them." She wonders whether she should remain at her

job and work on her art on a part-time basis during every free moment she has with fervor and energy. Yet she has not done that successfully in the past. Furthermore, she looks disdainfully at this practice, one that she feels belongs to a 'Sunday painter': "My friend said that he could see he and I would be the kind of people that would stop painting completely rather than dribble on doing second rate or third rate stuff. Actually, he is right. I can't dribble on. I really couldn't go on painting or drawing and not feel that I was working to the same standards and demands that I did as a serious artist. It is like asking a concert pianist who has given up being a concert pianist, 'Can't you just play a few tunes to make yourself feel good?'"

Sylvia asks herself whether she should quit the library job which is another viable alternative. If she does she thinks she would go on unemployment insurance for a year so she would have the much desired time for art making. Yet, she feels she will be leaving good jobs. If she leaves she worries about losing her job contacts, she worries whether she can reestablish them later on, and she worries about what kind of position she will be in a year later when she reenters the work force. Another position she is thinking about is taking part-time jobs again here and there, and as she said, 'scrambling for whatever is available' enabling her to have time for her art. She hesitates, she is uncertain about the risk, the insecurity and remembers that scrambling and scraping by she had done for so long a time.

"It's like," Sylvia said when discussing her future, "I'm seeing that maybe I can work things -- something in -- somehow and I'm not seeing this as the final stop for me; (that) this is the end game and I'll work at this full-time for the next fifteen years until I retire

with my pension as a librarian. I can see that there are other threads that are going to continue and I should keep my mind open and flexible."

Sylvia reflects on her situation: "It doesn't actually worry me because I seem to always land on my feet, but if you start looking at money which I never really looked at I gave up an enormous amount of security, financial security, in order to do the Fine Arts program. (Nevertheless), I always felt immensely rewarded. I felt, 'Oh well, but I've got eyes to see with.' I think I'm very unhappy that I can't use it. I think that's where the bitter feeling comes from. It's like I've got all this (artistic) skill and all this potential enjoyment and I can't enjoy it and I can't do art. Partly I feel it was my own disorganization. For me, I was lost in the romantic haze of being an artist and I wasn't thinking of the other reality at all (of having to get out of school) and having to support yourself by teaching or selling your work and having shows, or building a reputation. I wasn't thinking of that reality at all -- not in an organized way. I think certainly you could say, 'Well, why weren't you?' Partly, however, I feel I could have used more practical guidance. I think the school has to feel responsible for this (type of dilemma). I'm sure I'm not the only one who is trying to survive in life wanting to make art and finding it hard to make a living. No, I know I'm not. It is irresponsible of them, (the professors), to go around with their head in the clouds just teaching art and ignoring the practical aspects. They are putting people through real pain and real struggling and real hard times and they don't have to."

Beyond Personal Expectation: Roslind

"The most exciting thing that happened to me was I got on the cover of Vanguard about a year ago. That was exciting! It is still curious to me to read an article (about myself) because when I'm reading it half the time it feels like I'm reading about somebody else. It's very odd. It's a very weird feeling. Then a few more articles were written (on my work), I got some major write ups, and I was invited to exhibit at a major contemporary art museum, and then they purchased one of my pieces I had exhibited. Slowly but surely a lot of these things were happening and I'm still surprised by it all. Sometimes I sort of pinch myself because I can't believe what's been happening." Roslind said.

"I'm really happy. I'm flying. I love what I'm doing. It's not always easy -- it's not as easy as it may seem. Some mornings I really don't feel like working. I'm basically very lazy but I'll get up and I'll force myself to work. I'll procrastinate for an hour or so and then lay on the guilt and say, 'Oh, I should get back into my work.' Some mornings I get up and I just look at the work for hours and nothing happens. I'll just putter around in my studio and not do anything really constructive and a whole week can go by like that. I used to feel guilty about that and now I don't anymore. I just accept those periods as being normal, natural periods. The very productive periods are just as normal and as natural as these periods where I'm not doing that much work, but I'm still working. It's something that I've accepted (which is that) when you don't work you're still working. It is still picking up information and stimulus around you. Then there are periods where I go through self-doubt and there are periods where I

don't even doubt anymore. I just enjoy creating. I love being here and I love working and there isn't any room for the doubts during those periods. Then, all of a sudden I step back and I start doubting again. Other times it goes really, really well and other times I'll get a surprise phone call from a gallery who had seen my work a few months before (and) who is interested in my work, who would like me to send a dossier. I think all of these things are all normal in the process, in the production process because there is no way you could work on the same level the full time. You can't keep plugging away and plugging away without stopping and taking a step back and digesting it all."

"It is a type of career that is extremely surprise oriented because it is really not a stable, predictable existence. It is really unpredictable. It's like playing the lottery. You have to find stability elsewhere. I find I have to find it in relationships with my friends and family. Everything is based on ifs and buts and maybes. It becomes exciting. It depends on the person, I think. Some people would hate that kind of existence. They want to know where they are going. I think that practical side of me also wants to know. (I think), 'Well, will I get a grant next year? Will I be able to sell my work next year? Will my work be as acceptable next year as it is this year?' Sure those questions arise sometimes, but in general I am very happy that I can do something that I'm in love with, something that I love doing."

Roslind works where she lives in a sunny, spacious, immaculate studio which has a large area for art making, a huge beautiful windowed area overlooking a mountained vista on one side and the city on the other, and a commodious living room-cum bedroom space. She lives in the heart of the gallery district, is neighbours with well-known parallel

galleries, and she is in short walking distance of the gallery at which she works as a coordinator of exhibitions. Because of her gallery position she has met with innumerable artists, she also has many friends who are artists, and she works in an artistic milieu. While she sips an espresso she thinks carefully about being an artist and about what she feels are traits people need for this type of career: "You've got to be positive," she said. "You've got to be persistent, and you've got to be somewhat of a dreamer too. You've got to discipline yourself. You have to have a lot of order in your life to do what you are doing. Otherwise, you'd be too scattered and it would show in your work. It would show in the way you present yourself -- presentation is so important. I think that you can't lose insight. You've got to be aware of your own survival, but at the same time you've always got to keep that freshness about you. You've got to be realistic, but at the same time you've also got to keep the imagination going. You've got to keep the creative juices flowing at all times, even though at times you are looking at the world too realistically. I'll give you an example of, let's say, an artist who suddenly discovers one day that by doing a certain kind of style he can sell a lot better than by really following his own instincts and doing exactly what he would like to do. He'll do a certain style because it sells better, because it is more acceptable, it's more accessible to the public, so he completely forgets about the work that is true to him and starts working on these false works. I think that one of the hardest things to do is to say, "Wait a second. I've got to keep doing what I believe in even though it is really marginal, even though this other stuff is selling, and even though this other stuff is getting my food on the table. Even though it can be



appreciated by a much larger public I've got to stop doing it. I've got to keep working on the work that's true to me, that I feel most comfortable with." Roslind further discusses the issue of an artist's integrity: "If someone comes up to me and said, 'Well, why do you work so large? Can't you work smaller?' I would still listen to him. I would say, 'He's talking at a very practical level. These things don't fit in someone's home, but I wouldn't work smaller because that person suggested that to me. I would work smaller because I felt the need to.'"

"To tell you the truth," Roslind said, as she pondered further over the type of characteristics artists have, "I think that we have just as many personalities in the art world as in any other business. We have the artist that will go to bars every night and sit and drink and smoke and discuss art for hours and hours and hours. We also have the so called 'straight' artist that works a nine to five routine in his studio and is just as serious and just as productive as the other artist is. It's all a personal thing. You are talking about personalities and in every field and in every career that you choose you are going to have individuals that are so different, one from the other. Each one deals with his career and his profession in a different way, but I don't think that we are a strange animal that most people think that we are."

"It's a very fictional cliché image that has been laid up on us. I think that on the contrary, the artist of the eighties is extremely business minded, is extremely concerned with money, is extremely concerned with how he lives, how he dresses. You'll go to a vernissage and you'll see artists that are extremely well dressed in the latest fashions. I think the eighties are not as idealistic as the seventies

or the sixties. I think in the eighties that people are much more aware of the fact that in order to get something they have to go out there and get it. I think that that also applies to art and artists. I think they are quite aware of the fact that if they want their works to be seen they have to find some way of presenting a dossier or of going from one gallery to the next and not just staying in their studio and working because they realize that the person beside them is getting exhibitions, is able to show his work and the only way he was able to do that was by pushing himself to go out there and show his dossier or by getting someone else to represent him. That's a myth, that's a huge myth that artists don't know how to handle their own business affairs. I think a lot of artists do know. Some don't, but then again, I keep comparing it to other careers. A lot of people, a lot of doctors (for example), don't know how to handle their own affairs. It depends on the personality, it depends on each individual. I guess it is all relative because we are not as flippant and as crazy as other people think we are. We couldn't be because you have to have a lot of discipline to do what you are doing. I'm not aware of the artists, though, who have just graduated or who are still going to school. They may be thinking completely on other terms. I'm thinking of the ones that graduated at about the same time as I did or ones that have been working steadily and have been on the market for the past five to ten years. I see how they live and I see how they dress and I see how they travel and it's not at all that bohemian starving artist impression that one has always had."

Rosling thought more about the image people have of artists. She is well aware of this image for she herself feels that she has sometimes been stereotyped as an offbeat, fringe person, living a bohemian

lifestyle. She talked about the romantic notion people have of artists who are suddenly overwhelmed by the creative urge: "I think generally speaking artists are still looked at as someone who creates at whim. In the middle of the night he wakes up because he has this incredible inspiration and he starts painting furiously at three in the morning. It's not...all of a sudden waking up in the middle of the night and saying, 'Oh well, I've come up with this brilliant idea and I'm going to start working.' It doesn't work like that. That's a bunch of bullshit. That's bullshit because you have to keep plugging away at it and through doing the work do you get the inspiration. It's like a myth behind the artists' life."

Roslind spent three years at university studying Visual Art. During her first year she took a double major in Studio Art and Art History. Unlike many other students in her situation, she did question what she could do after she graduated with a degree in what she was studying. Just thinking solely about a degree in Visual Arts made Roslind feel insecure: "If you think 'I'm going into studio and then I'm going to become an artist,' then you think -- you panic! You just say, 'Well, I don't see myself doing that, getting up in the morning and being my own boss and bustling and pushing my own work.'" Art History she found was too technical, so she changed one major to Art Education. This change, however, did not prove to be beneficial, for Roslind found the educational theory courses, on the whole, were not only banal but dry. She was not deriving any satisfaction from those studies so she consequently decided to study only studio courses.

Roslind thinks she learned much from her university studies. She learned that presentation of the work was as important as the work

itself. She learned about multimedia, about the then uncommon practice of mixing different mediums together like handpainting an etching, for example, and then zeroxing the image. She also learned to speak about her artwork in a professional manner: "If the teacher," she said, "gave you an opportunity to discuss your work a little bit it was really positive, but if you just came, presented your work and the teacher did a critique, you didn't have an opportunity to talk about the work and to evaluate yourself. I think that it takes a certain kind of professor, a really special kind of professor that will allow you to think first before he gives you a critique. That was rare -- that was really rare." Roslind also was affected by one professor whose teaching was very gestalt-like. She learned to not only draw the object but to be aware of the environment around it. "We were introduced to another way of drawing and another way of seeing that still influences me today because I'll make a drawing and I won't stop at just, let's say one figure, but I'll say this figure belongs in this other environment."

One professor showed slides of contemporary Canadian artist's works. This Roslind feels is of utmost importance because students should be made aware of what their contemporaries are producing, what ideas they are working with, what their lifestyle is like, and how they are able to survive economically. This course content provides real precedents for students. One of her major criticisms is that this type of material is not covered in more classes: "(As a student) you'd be busy creating, you'd be busy working on your own work, but you didn't know about your contemporaries, you didn't know about the people who had just graduated, or the people that had been on the market for the past ten years. You heard bits and pieces about them. I think that is really important to

be able to stop the class once a week, let's say, and bring in slides or talk about somebody's work, or have an artist come in and talk to you about how he lives and talk to you about his artworks. That was rarely done. I can think of one professor that introduced artists often. I think that is really, really important because you start learning about your own personal environment and how it relates to others, how it relates to the artist living in the United States, the artist living in Europe, and how it relates to you once you are out and not in the school situation."

Roslind was very fortunate to be asked, while still a student to work for a professor who was an active artist. As a result of being an 'apprentice' she started learning about the artistic environment around her outside of the school art scene, she met artists and people from the art world, and she was introduced to a professional artist's lifestyle. Roslind was hired to work on an art piece for her professor which she saw develop from its initial planning phase to finally seeing it hanging in a gallery.

Three or four times a week Roslind would meet her professor and they would talk about everything from art, to art exhibitions, to presenting artworks to galleries: "She introduced me to a whole aspect of art that I wasn't familiar with. It was a real learning experience for me. Sometimes I would walk into her office at home and she would be working on, let's say, a grant proposal and not knowing exactly what she was doing I still had the feeling for it. I still was introduced to an aspect of the milieu that I wasn't familiar with. In other words, it wasn't just going to the studio and working on your work, but there was all that other paperwork (I realized) that was just as important."

At university Roslind had little exposure to the information she was learning as a result of being an apprentice. "We had teachers" she recalled, "who would tell us, 'You're all in this program in university. You're all in the Visual Arts and you are all idiots.' This was the only time they would tell us what the world was really like. All of them said, 'You know in Canada there are only a handful of artists that are living off only the sales of their artwork alone. All of the others are teaching as a sidekick or they're getting grants, or they're doing something else to survive.' And so at first I just said, 'Yes, maybe we are idiots,' you know? At the time too, when you are young you keep thinking you have this whole idealistic image of what you may do in the future. (Then when you leave university) you realize a lot of different things. You realize that the world isn't that easy. It's not as easy as you were led to believe it had been. (Overall, in university) we were encouraged in terms of the creative process and not of survival and not of using what we have in a business form. So, it is ideal: it is ideal to think that we can go into our studio and create and that's all there is to it. That is very idealistic because what happens to survival? What happens to that? They never told us about that."

"University doesn't prepare you for the real world. I mean, it is the type of thing where you are there everyday, you're taking courses, you're in a situation where you are creating and you are learning, you're having some fundamental interchanges with people, but it doesn't prepare you for what's really out there. It doesn't prepare you for the discipline, for what you need to have in order to continue working. It is a plastic existence. There is nothing real about it. First of all, when I was in university we didn't have any courses dealing with

marketing, public relations, something as simple as putting together a dossier. We didn't learn the basics. We didn't learn any of that. All of that stuff I learned afterwards on my own. I think those are basic fundamental things that we have to know about so that when we've graduated we are not out there completely cold having only a technical training. You have to learn the basics for marketing your work: you have to learn the basics for plugging your work out there, or how to go about finding an agent, or somebody to represent you (and) the logistics involved. For example, if the gallery decides to take fifty percent, what is the gallery offering you? All those things you suddenly discover for the first time after you've graduated. I think that's wrong. I think you have to train people not only in the simple rules of painting and drawing and everything else that is involved in the creative process but also what happens after you have done the creation. What then? Does the work stay in your studio? Do you want to push it? Do you want to work as a waitress and keep working at your studio without plugging, without pushing your work anywhere? All these things you have to be made aware of, but in school, in university your only priority is getting your work done. Let's say, you are required to do twenty to twenty-five works by the end of the year so that's your only priority. You're not concerned with what happens to you when you graduate. It's really important and I'll tell you why because when I was part of the parallel gallery I was also on the program committee there. As a group we had to choose the whole program for the year. It had to do with performance and the visual art aspect of the gallery -- everything that went into the gallery that year we were in charge of. Sometimes we would be sitting there sifting through seventy (or) eighty

dossiers and three-quarters of the time the presentation was terrible -- really, really terrible. The artist will send us an envelope like this, throw in a few slides on some lined paper, handwrite, I'd like to exhibit at your gallery because (of) so and so reason, and send a 'c.v.' that's very poorly done and then expect to have a show. I realized that presentation is so important. Part of being a professional is showing that you are professional, showing that you can present yourself as a professional. There is no way that you'll be able to get away with any of that anywhere, whether it is here or whether it is in a bigger place like New York or Toronto. People won't take you seriously. But these artists that did this don't know any differently; they don't know any differently because they were never taught any differently. I mean (the bottom line is that) art is a business when you come right down to it. It is like any other business. If you are not trained for the business aspect of it you are lost unless you are a natural born business person.

Roslind believes she learned more when she was out of school than she did when she was at university. Not only was the apprenticeship experience enlightening, but the man she was 'involved with' while she was at university taught her much that was of utmost value: "Pierre helped me a lot. He was in his last year of university, but he was an extremely active student. He was extremely involved, and he with four other students formed a gallery, an art performance gallery. The only thing that they presented for that whole year were performances where the artist would transform the whole gallery into his own vision, and then he or she would perform. It was really interesting to see that the students could actually go out, form their own gallery, ask for government grants. That I never even imagined doing in school!



Becoming professionals even before the end of school, even before they graduated. I learned an awful lot from him because I would be there continuously. I was introduced to another milieu, a French milieu, performance (art) -- something that I didn't see at the time -- (and) installation works. I realized that they didn't have any kind of direction. In other words, they didn't have a professor telling them that they had to do this. They did this on their own and they realized that the only way they could run this whole show was doing it on their own, was gallery sitting on their own, was taking care of all the bills on their own, was sending out invitations and contacting the press. All these things I wasn't aware of. I think I really learned a lot from him. It was a really, really good period."

After three years studying at university Roslind left. She still has to complete two courses in order to graduate, but at the time she felt she needed to 'break away'. She was disillusioned with school; consequently, she never returned. With Pierre she travelled: "We lived together in Europe. The fact that he had just graduated and I had just left university and we were in the same position was good. So I left. After three years I left and I went to Europe and I stayed there for about eight months. I think that was really an important period because it was a real divorce from Canada, from the things I was familiar with. Suddenly, I was put in an environment, I didn't know the culture, and so I didn't feel threatened by starting to work on a series of works that had nothing to do with what I was taught. It took me awhile to get into my work again. I remember that I had planned to live in Spain for about three months, and I said, 'I'll get all my materials from Paris and then pack it all up and then go to Spain,' which I did. One day I just

decided to get up in the morning and start work and ever since then I haven't stopped."

"Seeing Pierre plugging away really taught me a lot. (I learned from) seeing him coming back to Canada and looking for a studio. He has a studio across the street here. (I learned from) seeing him renovate that studio -- well, we did that together. We fixed the place up and I realized, 'Well, maybe it's not that difficult to do this.' I think it's just because I saw that he had an idea and he went for it. I think Pierre influenced me more than anybody in that he said, 'You can't dream. You have to do it. You have an idea in mind (and) you've got to do it.' He's always dreamt about living in Paris (for example). Now he lives in Paris. In other words, his whole idea is that if you have something in mind nothing should stop you. That you'll find funding somehow. You'll find the support somehow. You'll find it if you really want to do it. I think that was my biggest lesson in life because I wasn't brought up in that way. I was brought up in a very passive home situation. My parents were not fighters, business people or anything like that and to see this was completely foreign to me, but it was very intriguing. It was the type of thing where I felt, 'Maybe I could do it too. Maybe I could look around for a studio. Maybe I could renovate.'"

When Roslind returned from Europe to Canada, she came back to her former apartment. She reminisced about this time when she had come back: "At the time it was interesting because I was living a very bohemian artists' lifestyle where you spend most of your time at bars talking about art instead of doing it! I realized that that lifestyle wasn't for me at all. A lot of those people (I hung out with) are still doing that. They haven't changed one bit. They still meet at the

same bar. They'll still talk for hours and hours right into the early morning about first of all how much of a bureaucratic system it is and how much it's unfair and how much they've tried to push their work and it hasn't worked. Most of these people will never create. They'll just bitch about art and how unfair it's been and how gallerists have taken advantage of them. In the meantime if you look at them, if you look at them with a fresher eye now, you realize that they'll never change. They are the type of people that will always bitch about their situation and they won't ever change. They are not interested in going into their studios and working eight hours a day and producing and pushing (their work). They're more comfortable complaining about their situation. All these friends are no longer in the art world. They're all doing -- except for one person -- something else. It shocks me, but at the same time it's a boost for me because I say to myself, 'Well, I guess I made it this far, it's important to continue.' We were also given statistics (in school). We were told that five percent of all art students will continue for the rest of their lives (making art). Those kind of statistics really discouraged me at first and I just said, 'Do I really want to be part of the people who don't continue?' Then I realized, 'I can't possibly not continue. This is my life; this is my passion.'

"I think that coming back to Canada I panicked again because I said, 'Well, where do I go from here? You know I have these drawings, these series of drawings that I did in Europe. Where do I go from here?' I didn't know where to start. Then finally somebody suggested, 'Why don't you join the parallel gallery? At least you'll be part of an organization. At least you'll be an active member. At least you can do things and share things with other artists who are in the same situation

as you are.' I think that if I didn't make that decision to be part of a parallel gallery, it would have taken me a really long time to get involved in the art world. I wouldn't know where to start. You don't know where to start. All of a sudden you find yourself there out of school with no teachers directing you. Joining the parallel gallery was the best thing I could have done for myself at the time."

It was a stimulating environment at the gallery Roslind had joined. She met various other artists, they shared artistic ideas, and she became involved in the politics of the gallery. Meeting other artists was significant. "I met artists," she said, "that were older or some artists that were younger than me. It was a real learning experience because I realized that no matter what age level you were at you still had the same insecurities, the same doubts, the same struggle."

At this time Roslind lived a hermit-like, reclusive existence. She recalled that this was a consequence of her insecurity about her artistic abilities. "I remember that I didn't show my work at all. I was in my studio, I was plugging away and I didn't want to show anybody my work. Anytime somebody would come over I would quickly hide my work and pretend it wasn't there. I didn't know where I was going. It was a period where you had to sort of get rid of all the influences you had in university. So it was a real sifting out period where I just said, 'This is not me, that's not me, that's not me and I've got to start finding my own language. Something that's original and something that's me.' Nothing is completely original, but it is finding the point where it's more you than anyone else."

In order to survive monetarily, Roslind worked approximately thirty to thirty-five hours a week for a few years. At one time she worked as

a salesperson at a bookstore, at another time she worked as a waitress, and at other times she did numerous odd jobs on contract while at all times she was exceptionally disjointed. It was a difficult period: she earned a minimal amount of money yet most of her time was spent on obtaining it, and her energy was dissipated instead of being focused on her art. She was exhausted. Nevertheless, Roslind did manage to work on her art as much as possible being prodded on by exhibition deadlines. There were a couple of group exhibitions she presented her works in and she had a two-person show.

A year later Roslind was offered a position as assistant coordinator of exhibitions at a commercial gallery. She said, "I knew the woman, Gillian, and I went to her one day. We spent the whole afternoon talking about art and at the end she says, 'I don't know what I could offer you as a job position but I'll keep you in mind.' And then a month later she called me up and she says, 'Well, maybe you can start part-time.' It was terrific because it was a real life situation where I was taken out of the parallel situation -- I was still in the parallel gallery situation, but all of a sudden I was seeing the other side of the coin, the commercial aspect of art. It had nothing to do with the parallel world. You were dealing with a whole set of people that were not marginal. There were people that were interested in investment, whereas in the parallel world they did work because you were following a certain kind of theme and you're not concerned with selling your work. You are concerned with exhibiting, you are concerned with making a statement. All of a sudden I felt that I was wearing three hats: there was part of me that was a parallel artist, part of me was an artist, and part of me was a gallery director.

After Roslind had been working for Gillian for awhile she had the opportunity to show Gillian her art. "I was really reluctant and then finally I said to myself, 'Why not?' So she came over and she really liked it." Gillian offered her a show. Since that time Roslind has been consistently exhibiting her work at this gallery. She said, "Fortunately, if it wasn't for Gillian coming along and doing that, I think that it would have taken me much longer to realize that in order to survive in this kind of milieu you have to find some way of exposing yourself or diffusing yourself out there. Now the gallery represents me so I don't have to do a lot of the pushing. I don't have to put together dossiers and that used to take a lot of time. It was a huge chunk of time to put together your slides, put together your dossiers, present them to other people. It's also a part of the career that I can't stand.

"Then suddenly, I don't know how it happened, but one critic wrote about my work and then another critic came and wrote about my work. I guess it was because the exhibition I had at Gillian's had works that you didn't see much of. I don't want to sound pretentious, but it wasn't something that you saw often here in this city. It was something that really came out of my head. I don't know where it came from. Each piece (it wasn't a sculpture and it wasn't a painting, it was two or three dimensional works) came out of the wall into the spectators' space."

Now Roslind is actively exhibiting. She has works in group shows travelling the country and she still exhibits at Gillian's gallery. Roslind feels exhibiting is important: "I think it is important because what is art all about? It is a language and you have to communicate

that language to other people. If you just produce and produce and produce in your studio and not show your work, it is like talking to yourself. You end up talking to yourself and that is the only language you are dealing with. You are not dealing with an international language, you are not dealing with getting your voice out there and it is really your voice. It is really your point of view. So what happens is you just close yourself off. You live in a vacuum and there is no communication going on. If you don't show your work, you may be the type of person who is completely introverted or who lives that kind of existence. I'm not like that at all."

As well as painting and exhibiting, Roslind is working part-time two afternoons a week at Gillian's gallery. About two years ago she left the parallel gallery for several reasons: she left because she felt she was growing stagnant there, because she wanted to be more individually and less socially oriented, and because her energy was not focused enough as a result of doing far too many activities.

Three years ago she applied for grants, and consequently Roslind has not had to work at jobs outside the art field. She received a short term grant two years ago, and another grant last year. Furthermore, she has earned extra money through selling her art. The government, a few galleries, museums and private collectors have purchased her work. "Without the sales of my works," she said, "and the grants, there is no way I could continue doing what I'm doing because each piece costs quite a bit of money to create and most of my pieces are very large. The materials cost and living here costs so I think that if I didn't have those grants and if I had to work at a full-time job I wouldn't have the energy or the time to work on my art. So, I am really thankful for

these grants. I'm glad that we have this kind of system in Canada."

Roslind has been involved in the art world for the past six years. At first, she admitted she was intrigued by it, yet she also found it extremely intimidating: "I felt it was a type of world that I could never penetrate. It is that whole feeling that the people in the art world are special people. It is because you're not a part of it. You see it from a distance and you see it from an awkward point of view. You have your notions and preconceived ideas of what it is really all about. (You think), 'They're different and how could I ever be part of it?' but then once you are part of it you just work on your own work and you don't even think about it. You don't stop to think about those other people because those other people are really like you -- they're doing the same things as you are. You exhibit with them, you apply for the same grants, you are part of the system, so it is not intimidating anymore. You realize that it is not magical."

"I think we are very lucky here in this city in that in most cases when you go to a larger city like New York there's a feeling that there's a real elite behind it all. There's a group of people that feel quite superior to the rest of society. Here I find that they're very accessible, that you could talk to them about anything. You could talk to a curator or critic and I find that they are very easy to approach. Maybe I wouldn't feel this way if I wasn't in the milieu professionally. If I wasn't part of the gallery I would still feel intimidated by that whole scene and I may have that same attitude as I do towards the galleries or the art critics or the curators in New York. But, here I find that it's a very tight group and the curator isn't afraid to say, 'I really love your work.' He's not afraid that you're going to try to



get something from him. Most of the time they're very honest relationships that you will have with critics and curators, and because in the past two years (people in the art world) are working together towards a certain goal, the same goal: trying to make contemporary art work. This didn't even exist five years ago. So you see there is a real feeling of togetherness. Maybe it's too easy. It's too easy in the way that one tends to feel very comfortable here, whereas in New York or Paris you are continuously on your toes because the competition is fierce, people aren't as nice, they aren't as accessible, and it's very hard to show your work. Here it's not as hard."

Here, if you are accepted as an artist it's quite easy. It's not as much of a struggle, but then again here what happens is that you are put into the limelight for a year or two or sometimes three years, and then you're shoved aside and then somebody else is put into the limelight; whereas in New York or Europe the opposite usually happens. It takes you a really, really long time to penetrate the market and once you have you're there for life. I haven't experienced this yet so I don't know whether I'll feel resentment or whether I'll feel stifled by it all. From what I've seen around me I think it's unfair. It's funny because a lot of Europeans have told me that when they came to Montreal to live they said, 'It's really easy to make friends. It's easy to make friends but they don't last. These relationships will last a month, two months, sometimes six months and then you don't hear from that person anymore; whereas in Europe,' they said, 'It's very hard to make friends, but once you've made those friends, they're friends for life.' So, I would say it is the same type of thing as the (artist who is popular in the art world). We are living in a very throwaway type of society here,

where if something doesn't work...I mean relationships are the same way. You keep hearing about relationships not working out. There isn't that same drive or perseverance that there is in Europe, for example. It is all based on a very fast type of (attitude that is), 'If things don't work out we'll try something new,' instead of saying, 'We'll work with what we have and we'll make it work.' It's very consumer oriented. It's very throwaway; it's very fast-food. It's like, 'Well, we'll consume this person as much as we can as an artist,' for example. 'We'll grab everything that she produces or he produces now.' Then all of a sudden two years down the line they'll discover somebody else and they'll do the same thing with that other person. This first person is sort of shoved over into the shadows. I don't know if things will change in the future, but this is how it's been."

Roslind admits that being an artist is a struggle: it's a struggle in terms of instability, and a struggle fiscally. Yet, she feels, as she looks back over the last few years, years in which she has been an active member in the art world, that her past experiences have been positive: "I don't think anything that I have experienced in the past few years has been negative. It's been constructive. I guess I don't see things as negative in general. I see things in terms of what one learns from a certain situation, a certain experience, I guess because I am pretty positive about things. Even if something happens that could be negative I try to look at it differently. I try to see it as not positive but a learning experience."

In her young career, Roslind, however, indeed has had numerous positive experiences and she fully realizes this: "I feel very lucky that I could work on a passion that I have always had and that I don't

have to do anything else. Right now I have been given this opportunity to continue with my work, to continue with the whole creative process. It is something that makes me happy; something that I love."

## CHAPTER 5

### THE ANALYSIS

#### Introduction:

After amassing hundreds of pages of transcripts I thought to myself, 'what now? What are the similarities; what are the shared patterns of experiences?' Sylvia's brief comment about her interviews was very illuminating for me at this point. She said, "There is that transition between being in the university and having to make your way economically outside of it. I think that what we are talking about a lot is that bump and how it is handled." This so called 'bump', or in other words the experience of transition from school to the work force is what I will discuss in this chapter.

Four related themes that form a pattern I call "transition" which are discussed in the analysis and are a part of the common experiences the five participants shared. Each participant had set expectations while in university about being an artist and about being involved in the art world. In the analysis these expectations are examined, and then I proceed to discuss how the transition from school to the work force affects these expectations. The pattern of transition consists in, firstly, expectations they had while they were in the university; secondly, the struggles with specific problems they encountered in the art world; thirdly, disenchantment, and lastly; how they coped with their disenchantment. Although each of the interviewees shared this general pattern, the sequence of events is not so clear-cut in real life. When the participants discussed their experiences, for example

their struggles and disillusionment often occur simultaneously. For the sake of clarity I have organized the discussion according to the pattern of the transition phases.

The transition is dealt with on two different levels: one is action, and the other is feeling. The former level is about the changes in the interviewees' lives and the problems they confronted; and the latter is about how they cope with changes in terms of their understanding of and reaction to problems and conflicts. This second level also is about the participants' sense of self-identity expressed through various forms such as explanations, rationalizations and justifications; this self-identity continuously constructs and reconstructs itself in relation to the experiences the five people had as they made a shift from being a student to trying to become an artist.

The expectations are discussed in relation to two very important factors: firstly, in relation to being an artist; and secondly, in relation to being involved in the art world.

As a result of examining similar patterns among the five participants, I have developed ideas that reflect common aspects of their experiences. I make no claim that what are shared experiences of the interviewees are also shared experiences of a large population of studio art graduates. I leave it to the readers to recognize what experiences are universal or more common to art graduates as a whole.

Much of the quoted material that was used in the life histories is again used in the analysis to substantiate ideas. It will be somewhat repetitious, but I hope the reader will recognize and identify exactly why I am arriving at a certain idea.

It is important to realize that the analysis is based on information provided by the people who are looking back at their experiences. As a result, often in the analysis it is difficult to separate what a person recalls as former dreams, attitudes or beliefs from their present understanding and viewpoint of that past.

Their perceptions at the time they were interviewed only pertain to that particular time period from August 1986 to January 1987. If I had, for instance, interviewed the same people immediately after they had left university I probably would have received a very different description of their experiences and attitudes. Perspectives and understandings of past situations are constantly altering as each person encounters new experiences which shed light on old ones, and also as their self-understanding evolves.

I do not assume that I am presenting objective truths or facts in this analysis. The aim of collecting the information was not to acquire facts but to gather an understanding of people's experiences in a particular situation. Moreover, I would like to point out that the information gathered is two stages removed: firstly, time has affected the descriptions since much of the information is based on memories of events that took place years before; and secondly, the interview situation also affects the information acquired as a result of the type of interviews, the type of questions asked, and the person who is conducting the interviews. Like a good novel, in which the author describes situations, dilemmas, experiences vividly I hope that information provided in the analysis enables the reader to acquire a better understanding of the five interviewees' past experiences.

Theme #1: HOPES AND 'PIPE DREAMS'

All the participants remember the attitudes they had while they were attending university. While at school they had definite 'hopes and dreams' about their future artistic careers as artists, and about their relationship to and involvement in the art world.

"Making Art": When Kram, Roslind, Sylvia and Lily were at university, becoming a professional artist was a dream. Kram recalls that "I was just convinced that art is what I wanted to do," and Sylvia says, "I wanted to be an artist who is supporting herself by her teaching," Lily recalls:

For the last twenty years, maybe more I wanted to be an artist...By my last year at university I had decided, 'I'm going to be a sculptor for the rest of my life. Like this is it! I love it!'

Roslind also dreamed about becoming an artist but had apprehensions. By her last school year, however, she had decided to drop her other courses, take studio art ones only and pursue her dream of becoming an artist. Unlike the others, William does not say he had similar career expectations or dreams:

I didn't have that drive that motivates people to create a career. I've never felt the need, the fear that will drive people to say they are painters and paint for fifty years hoping that they will survive...I wasn't pushing for a career. I never really needed it. I never really worried about those things.

Part of the dream included the belief that being an artist is not a very difficult profession. In recalling this belief Lily's comments include the sense of how mistaken her expectations were:

The thing that I was not expecting was all the work I had to do...I love to draw and make things but you are not suddenly somebody who does. That isn't an automatic thing that comes

with the lifestyle, and clothes, and the eccentricity. You have to work at both of them hard.

Kram expresses a similar idea in the following sentence: "Well, I suppose when I first graduated as an undergraduate I had the idealistic outlook of what it was going to be like to be an artist as you were just going to go out there and do your own work and everything would fall into place, everything would be free and wonderful." Roslind, like Kram and Lily expresses an analogous view:

At the time too when you are young you keep thinking you have this whole idealistic image of what you may do in the future. You realize a lot of different things. You realize that the world isn't that easy. It's not as easy as you were led to believe.

The five participants express several preconceived ideas about what being an artist is like. William talks more generally about "romantic ideas":

I think we live submerged and intoxicated by promise. If we didn't have promise we've had it. We'd kill each other. We would just give up. We romance everything we do. (I think) now is the fact that we are young and happy; we live as if we are immortal. There is no other way to drive us, especially artists...It's the romantic notion. You need it. It's an armor for you against reality.

Sylvia also acknowledges her time of being "caught up" in the dream of being an artist:

For me I was lost in the romantic haze of being an artist and I wasn't thinking of the other reality at all...having to support yourself by teaching or selling your work and having shows or building a reputation.

Sylvia thinks that the university played a role in fostering the idea that professional artists need only concern themselves with the art making process:

There's so much that you can initiate people that (sic) are coming into the world out there and it (university) was so oriented towards making art and towards criticizing art and



(it) dealt not at all with the aspects that would enable people to survive.

Lily "echoes" Sylvia's observations: "When I was in painting class...people talked about the meaning of meaning and...I don't know if there was any talk about how to put a portfolio together." Roslind also comments about the lack of university training concerning survival as an artist. "It's an ideal to think that we can go into our studio and that's all there is to it. What happened to survival?"

"Romantic ideas" affected the way the participants viewed what being a professional artist is like, and affected their ideas about the personality of visual artists. William discusses his ideas of the artist as a nonconformist who has the freedom to break conventional rules:

All through school, all through your life you are sold the image that the artist is the free spirit who communicates with his inner self. Out of that union, the illuminating encounter of one's inner self, there produces something. The product of that is, of course, revelatory, and lights the darkness.

Lily communicates her belief of the artist as someone special, an iconoclast:

One of the things that strikes you is that these guys are weird. They are not normal. They are not people in business suits. They are like an outlaw and not someone who has to adhere to the world, (but) someone who has to break a lot of the rules...We all have to be weird and live on the bad side of town and wear berets and dress weird and be bohemian.

And Roslind refers to the unconventional image she had of artists:

(there is that) "bohemian starving artist impression that one has always had."

"The Art World": Roslind recalls her ideas towards the art world when she was in university. She felt it was an exclusive special group of

people; she was intimidated:

I felt it was the type of world I could never penetrate. It is that whole feeling that the people in the art world are special people. It is because you're not a part of it. You see it from a distance and you see it from an awkward point of view. You have your notions and preconceived ideas of what it is really all about. (You think), 'They're different, and how could I ever be a part of it?'

The intimidating feeling Roslind had was similar to the same sentiment Lily had: Lily felt it unapproachable and elitist. William referred to it as being a 'sacred cow', immune from criticism. Roslind also called it magical.

Kram believed that the art world supports only the artists who are talented. He says, (I had) "the ideal that everything that is successful out there is good." Kram furthermore expresses the ideal that the art world is not concerned with money as much as with promoting artwork that is excellent. William relates his belief about the equation of artists and their financial success: "It's an absolutist point of view, (of thinking) that what I do is good, ergo it will sell, ergo I will have a career."

William also discusses how he had felt while at school that the art world is enlightening and has a very sophisticated culture that artists can be a part of:

It is all predicated on attitude that culture is good for us and enriches us...We have such a romantic relationship to the arts. They are unsullied, not sordid, like other endeavors.

For these individuals, the dream of becoming an artist carried with it expectations that the transition from student to professional artist is easy, that professional artists need only concern themselves with the making of art, that being an artist is being someone special, and that the art world is good, magical, and somehow extraordinary. In the

interviews the word 'romance', and 'myths' and 'idealisms' were mentioned over and over again. Many of the participants' expectations can be called illusions -- what William calls his "naivete" or Kram calls his "pipe dreams" -- founded in their lack of experience or knowledge of the working art world. It is this naivete, this romanticism, this idealism that all the participants recall having in varying degrees before they began the transition from the university to the art world.

Theme #2: 'STRUGGLES'

All the participants discussed their struggles with problems encountered as they made or attempted to make the transition from being a student to being a working artist. This transition period is described as an extremely difficult time for all the interviewees. Sylvia comments that, "I felt torn all the time"; and William talks about artists in broad terms saying, "Everyone struggles." Kram is of the opinion that, "It's a sacrifice because short of your family being independently wealthy there are going to be a lot of sacrifices along the way". Lily 'gets to the point' in the following: "Leaving university and trying to deal with the world was the most difficult. It was a bad time for me". Roslind describes the process of becoming a working artist "really tough". The similar words like "tough", "torn", "sacrifice", "struggle", and "difficult" are selected by the five participants to describe the period after they left university. Key kinds of problems which caused these people difficulties are (a) coping with having left a familiar university milieu; (b) coping with their own personal pressures; and (c) experiencing and adjusting to the art world.

"Leaving the University Behind": Changes in environment and structure are the source of many of the problems the interviewees confronted. For several interviewees the university provided a supportive milieu. Lily relates:

When you are in school you are nurtured. There is this art environment. Everyone you know is an artist; everybody is doing this, and there is no question about why you are doing this. We are doing this because we are in art school.

This first problem is leaving the university. This means leaving behind a structured, supportive system as Roslind says: "Once you leave school you are no longer doing things because you are expected to do things because you have to get a credit." She recalls her change of attitude when she left university:

Being an artist was a real test. I felt I had to see how far I can go without having a boss or without having a teacher telling me, well for next week you have to hand in this, that or the other or a boss tell me that at nine o'clock you start and at five o'clock you finish. I wanted to see what it was like to do it on my own and it was really tough.

One factor in the people's struggling was the extent to which they expected to encounter the difference between a structured world of the university and the lack of a similar structure in the working world.

Some of the participants explain their hardship by blaming what they term the 'unrealistic' preparation they received in university for becoming established as a professional artist. This is the second problem encountered. Sylvia says, "That was the kind of faculty it was. It wasn't being realistic in terms of how students related to the world." Kram's remark is similar: "I don't think university trains people at all to be professional artists. That is a complete fallacy. They don't tell you anything, prepare you in anyway for what the real life day-to-day struggles is (sic)." And Roslind likewise asserts,

"University doesn't prepare you for the real world. I mean, it is the type of thing where you are there, everyday, you're taking courses, you're in a situation where you are creating and you are learning, you're having some fundamental interchanges with people, but it doesn't prepare you for what's really out there." It appears as if the word "romantic" -- which was used by the five interviewees to describe their expectations they had when they were in university -- has been supplanted by the word "realistic" which is used often when discussing the period after graduation.

Some of the participants express a third problem: namely that their school did not foster their own personal artistic styles. William mentions the freedom he had at one school to create his own artworks describing this education as being "very healthy, very thick and very fertile." Professors who encouraged students to develop their own style were particularly remembered. Kram recalls one particular teacher who encouraged him to cultivate his own artistic style: "What tends to happen quite a bit in teaching situations is that teachers tend to push and emphasize particular stylistic concerns that they have and not to be as open as they perhaps should be. It was wonderful having this one professor as a teacher because he was open enough in his own mind that, he could readily accept my kind of work that I did, and my interest, and encourage me in that area." Lily says the same thing:

One professor was great. He said that at the time I had to just explore my own stuff and what (my ideas are) aesthetically...He taught me to love painting and also to paint what feels most natural to me which had never occurred to me before.

"Personal Pressures": Whether a student did or did not develop a sense of personal style during art school, they still had to face a

re-evaluation of themselves as artists -- the transition seemed to present this confrontation to them.

Upon leaving school Roslind and Lily talk about how they struggled to develop their own personal style. Roslind reflects back to that time:

It was a period where you had to sort of get rid of all the influences you had at university. So it was a real sifting out period where I just said, This is not me, that's not me, and I've got to start finding my own language. Something that's original and something that's me.'

Lily describes a comparable type of struggle:

I had been up to that point, an abstract painter...Came up here and couldn't paint! Couldn't paint abstractly certainly! Had no anchor; no reason to paint abstractly...I was feeling very, very guilty about relying on subject matter...It took me two years to get over the guilt of painting figuratively which is so weird that a school can do that to you.

William relates personal style development to an artist's self image. He says: "The thing that disturbs me about it is that kind of relentless vanity. Maybe that's the necessary fuel for the artist to drive him through the stages of poverty that they go through -- artistic poverty -- that they make things that are worth looking at, that are important, that are personal." William is suggesting that artists develop confidence -- oftentimes too much -- as a means to cope and survive the problems of (a) lack of support, (b) unsureness of their own identity as an artist and (c) unsureness as a creator of a meaningful personal style. This vanity or lack of it is a fourth problem. Lily and Roslind also talk about their self-image. Lily remarks: "With everything there's self-confidence and you need more..." Roslind discusses a lack of confidence:

There are periods where I go through self-doubt...I remember that I didn't show my work at all. I was in my studio, I was

plugging away and I didn't want to show anybody my work. Anytime somebody would come over I would quickly hide my work and pretend it wasn't there.

In short the interviewees are discussing their understanding of their identity as an artist through a development of personal styles and placing a value on this work.

A fifth problem that surfaced in the transition period is making time to make art, and what time indicates about one's commitment to being an artist. William says, "I think that as a young artist there's a point where you have to say, 'Okay this is what I'm doing and I'm going to concentrate for twelve hours a day.'" Sylvia finds herself in a recurring predicament: she does not have enough spare time to make art. She asks questions like: "Do I want to work full-time and forget about art completely? The other thing is do I want to push my art like on Christmas holidays, summer and Easter?" Roslind talks about time in relation to a point in her life when she had little time to devote to her art. She and Kram and Lily consciously put aside enough time for making art. Lily reasons: "You have to protect the time because there is a lot of time that you sit around not painting."

The things that compete for these artists' time varies. Unlike Kram and Roslind, who feel that other jobs encroach upon the time needed for art making, Lily struggles with the demands of personal relationships. She says:

You need a lot of time to yourself. Most people want a lot of time with each other. I've lost people whom I wanted to keep around. It's been a choice between him or 'it' and 'it' usually wins in the end.

A sixth problem is money. Kram notes a dilemma between either being fiscally secure or working on his art. He says one has to ask

oneself, "Are you going to throw everything in and give in and join the system so that you can have a regular salary and be comfortable or is your priority to create work? If your priority is to create work then other things have to be sacrificed in exchange for that." Sylvia also expresses the choice she feels she has to make between two alternatives: "I do feel there is a conflict between the family urge on the one hand towards security and a living wage, and a comfortable old age, and on the other hand the choice to do art..." Roslind talks about her monetary situation and admits it is a struggle. She comments, "Without the sales of my works and the grants there is no way I could continue doing what I'm doing because each piece costs quite a bit of money to create." Money has also been and still is a problem for Lily. She makes enough money at her part-time job to survive, but she just manages to make "ends meet". She reflects upon the apparently nonsensical choice: "to spend all your free time that you've earned doing something that you don't get any money from or any credit -- it's a weird thing for people to do and most people don't do it." William seems similarly aware of the inconsistency of monetary reward for his artworks: "You might spend a month on a photograph and sell it for three hundred bucks, whereas you'd spend a day in a commercial studio and sell it for a thousand. This is the truth!"

Although Lily believes she wants to be alone in order to create art she talks about it being an isolating experience. This points to a seventh problem: specifically the loss of a community of artists and a loss of supportive social interaction found in schools. Lily says, "At university I was surrounded by people who were artists. By the time I was out of school I was living in a little room with a paint box..."



Sylvia, like Lily remembers and makes a point of discussing the feeling of sharing experiences at school: "There were people from all over doing all different kinds of things with all different kinds of skills, with all different ideas on how to go about doing it, and with all our studios together in the same building and almost everyone content to share whatever they were thinking and doing...I think that was absolutely fantastic."

An eighth problem mentioned by some of the interviewees is establishing and sustaining their own discipline and commitment needed in order to become a professional artist. Kram remarks that, "the most important thing you probably have to have in order to make it is total commitment which nobody can train you for. You have to have that in you (so)...that you say, 'No matter how bad and how tough it gets I'm going to stick this out because this is what I really want to do...'" William expresses the same idea: "What you really got to do, to be a good painter, or to be good at anything is you've got to have single-mindedness. Eventually you really have to commit yourself." Likewise Roslind says, "I think it may take discipline...You have to recommit yourself constantly." Roslind talks about this trait in herself and admits that being disciplined is difficult:

It's not as easy as it may sound. Some mornings I really don't feel like working, but I'll get up and force myself to work. I'll procrastinate for an hour or so and then lay on the guilt...

The shift from an externally imposed discipline encountered in schools to self imposed discipline is tough.

"Breaking Into the Art World": A ninth problem, which William and Roslind mention, is the competition they had encountered in the art

world. Although Roslind did not outrightly express her dislike for the competition she encountered in the art world she does say it is a struggle. For example, she discusses the New York art world in the following way: "You are continuously on your toes because the competition is fierce, people aren't as nice, they aren't as accessible, and it's very hard to show your work." William made several remarks about the competitive nature of artists:

There's so much competition among artists that they refuse to admit brilliance among other artists...(And) it is necessary for them to protect their work, it is necessary for them to protect their illusions. They do it by evolving an adversarial relationship with other artists.

A tenth problem a few of the participants struggled with was the process of approaching galleries for exhibiting and for marketing their works. In contrast, these interviewees who did not find this problematic had been showing their artworks professionally and with success before they left university. William recalls selling his photographs at a gallery and even being written about and having his artworks reproduced in magazines when he was a teenager studying art: and Kram remembers his acceptance into a major museum exhibition when he was in his last year at school. Both these interviewees did not speak about any difficulties marketing their work.

For Roslind, however, marketing her work was a struggle. Although she was friends with other people who did know about marketing and who were involved in the art world, Roslind still found it difficult to promote her art. At first, she would hide her art from people when they came into her studio. It took her several years and development of self-confidence to finally approach a commercial gallery. Lily also had this problem and is still trying to have an exhibit at a commercial

gallery. She says, "I just spent years and years painting and applying to the Canada Council trying to get into commercial galleries, trying to get into other galleries elsewhere." The very struggle to win commercial exposure and success create inner ambivalence in many of the interviewees, as they confront the conflicts over quality verses commercial success and acceptability.

The numerous problems the five participants encountered are summarized as follows: (1) an unstructured art world milieu; (2) 'unrealistic' preparation for future roles as professional artists; (3) undeveloped artistic styles; (4) developing self-confidence; (5) lack of time for art making; (6) lack of money; (7) isolation as an artist; (8) discipline and commitment needed; (9) destructively competitive nature of artists and the art world, and (10) being untrained for marketing artworks. These ten problems are what the five interviewees experienced as they left the university and their roles of students to enter the professional art world in order to try to become professional artists.

### Theme #3: 'DISENCHANTMENT: OR GETTING TO KNOW THE REAL ART WORLD'

As the process of transition from university to the professional world progresses, the five interviewees were affected in different ways -- they see some of their cherished beliefs 'bite the dust'. In this section, I will discuss how the interviewees' experiences contributed to their disenchantment with the art world and with their ideal images of the artist. The professional art world presented these artists with a whole system of new sometimes subtle, and sometimes shocking rules and behaviours to learn if they wanted to join, survive and succeed.

"Playing the Game": Kram, William, and Sylvia talk about the art world

in terms of "playing the game" or "playing the right way". Sylvia refers to it in the following sentences: "I think I really needed someone to say to me, 'What are you doing?...You got it from students who had been in the game longer.'" Kram defines this terminology:

There are a lot of things in the art system that are to your advantage to learn about and to accept if you are going to survive as an artist...it helps if you become a part of the system. In other words, if you play the game. Playing the game means...you go to all the openings, you get yourself seen, you speak to people. It doesn't matter what you really do just as long as you appear in the public eye.

In other words Kram defines "playing the game" as compliance to the art world's expectations. He further explains this idea:

If someone was to ask me what is the key to being successful today as an artist, I would say be aggressive, but not obnoxious. You are probably better off doing conceptual work than figurative work...if it is not the kind of work that happens to be popular, then it's not going to succeed -- not readily anyway. To be cynical is really a very accurate outlook on what actually exists out there -- and that is, it's extremely unfair, unjust...If you want to insure the maximum possibility of success you have to sell out a great deal.

William also describes the pressure as learning the rules of the game:

(In art school) you are taught by the rules. It is like Euclidean geometry. If you want to see Euclidean geometry you've got to agree with the axioms or the system doesn't work, but we know the axioms are wrong which refutes the whole system...The same thing happens in the art world. If you want to belong you have to play by the right way or you don't belong.

Roslind describes how an artist adapts to be accepted:

I'll give you an example of this. Let's say an artist who suddenly discovers one day that by doing a certain kind of style he can sell a lot better than by really following his own instincts and doing exactly what he would like to do, he'll do a certain style because it sells better, because it is more acceptable it's more accessible to the public, so he completely forgets about the work that is true to him and starts working on these false works.

In confronting the expectations from the art world to "play the

game", to play the right way, to conform and adapt, the participants encountered a previous expectation they had to change. This is the idea that artists are nonconformists who have limitless freedom. William strongly refutes this idea:

There's such a myth of this freedom of the artist. It's just not true. If Tom Hopkins wants to make a painting of the sexual acts of animals he can't. What if he wants to?...his dealer wouldn't have them.

"What is Good and What Sells": A second expectation, that the art world is a fair world and will promote only artists whose work excels also undergoes changes in the minds of the interviewees. As they become more familiar with the art world, these artists find that sales and quality do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. They are confronted with what they see as a lack of excellence and a proliferation of mediocrity that is marketed as if it is excellent. Kram, Lily and William talk about the lack of excellent art produced by artists in the art world. Lily remarks that there is a lot of art in which "nothing is going on." Kram says, "I can't deal with ninety percent of my time looking at garbage only to find ten percent good stuff," and William mentions that he rarely visits galleries anymore because of the poor artworks often displayed. He remarks, "We encourage mediocrity at all sorts of levels in our culture and our schools and the art world does the same thing." The participants offer explanations for this disappointing state of affairs. Part of the lack of excellence, William believes is due to the people in the art world's desire to make money:

I think that some work is more important, deserves any price, but those pieces -- there's so few of them. I think most of it is you create a market, you create a need in the same way that you create a market for pet rocks. You make people want it; you make people need it. Even though they don't need it they feel like they need it. People feel like they need good

paintings and there is not enough good paintings around so you make bad paintings and you pretend they are good...

Kram arrives at a similar conclusion to explain what he feels is an abundance of mediocre art:

...part of this idealism is the ideal that everything that is successful out there is good and you find out that it really has very little to do with the quality. What it has to do with is marketability, and who is presenting it, and how they are presenting it, and who these people are contacting, and that is essentially the galleries' job, in a way (which is) to make your work saleable. The gallery's main concern is, 'Can I sell this?'

William is the only interviewee who expresses that he has tolerance, even respect, for the artist who admits his or her career is a business:

Merchants are honest. Joe Smith who sells you a suit knows what he's doing. I respect that honesty. It doesn't mean I agree with what he is doing, (but) I respect his attitude. Likewise, I respect the artist who admits what he is like, he doesn't labor under any delusions...Let's be honest about the whole process...We have such a romantic relationship with the arts. They are unsullied, not sordid like other endeavors ... (but) art is the same way -- of course it is!

Two of the interviewees perceived the mediocrity of the contemporary art world a result of the art world's monetary greed. Some of the participants talked about their disenchantment with the art world and the loss of the cherished beliefs that the artist is divinely inspired, and the art world is just and untainted.

"The Image of 'The Artist'": The participants' romantic images of the artist are being altered by their experience in the professional art world. Lily, Roslind and William all mention how predominant the business aspects are for contemporary artists. Lily's belief in the bohemian image of the artist is undergoing a change: "One of the things that strikes you is that these guys are weird...they are not people in business suits, although that's happening more and more today." William

remarks that, "I think that now, today our culture is different and I think that the hero in our culture today is the businessman, the entrepreneur...These (business) artists are really bright, really professional businessmen and what they sell instead of drapery or cars is their art." Roslind also notices the type of "business-artist": "I think," she says, "the artist of the 1980's is extremely business minded, is extremely concerned with money, is extremely concerned with how he lives, how he dresses...I see how artists live and I see how they dress and I see how they travel and it's not at all that bohemian, starving artist impression that one has always had." Among the five interviewees, the images of the artist vary markedly.

Lily, at the time I interviewed her, maintained the belief she had at university of the artist as someone special, a hero, an iconoclast. She says, "Artists don't have to play by the regular rules. There should be a strong morality there." William and Roslind, however, regard the image of the artist differently. Roslind emphatically talks about this stereotypical image:

That's a bunch of bullshit...to tell you the truth...I think that we have just as many personalities in the art world as in any other business...I don't think that we are a strange animal that most people think we are.

Like Roslind, Kram believes the image of the artist is a stereotype and that there are no common personality traits which artists possess. He thinks that "People are so different from one another. Sometimes what works for one artist, the way they are professionally because of their personality and because of the way they do things, if another artist tries to do the same thing it wouldn't work." William, like Kram and Roslind believe the grandiose image of the artist is an illusion. He

says, "We inherit attitudes from our culture of the artist as hero, artist as iconoclast, artist as revolutionary. That's naive...I've lived all my life with good artists and I have found them to be no more intellectually endowed than a barber."

What function does the romantic stereotype of the artist serve now? Both William and Sylvia expressed the belief that this romantic image is like 'fuel' which enables artists to persevere through all the struggles encountered. William asserts, "I think that is something we sell to art students to keep them going...(it's) like an enchantment," and Sylvia says, "The whole idea is that it's absolutely wonderful to do anything artistic...(but) there is an immense price that you're paying and you have to look at it more critically."

Most of the participants became disenchanted with the artist's romantic image of the artist as special, a person who has some type of divine powers, which most common people do not possess. Three of the participants identified their new image they encountered of the artist as a businessman.

"Threats to Artistic Integrity": As part of the pressure to conform to the art world (ps. 134-135) to make the 'right' kind of art, Kram, William and Roslind discuss a commensurate lack of integrity apparent in artists' attitudes towards art making. William distainfully describes the practice some of his acquaintances have of 'whipping up' a couple of paintings for an exhibit in order to meet deadlines. He says, "I don't think you can make a significant contribution or a significant growth if you are painting that way." Kram expresses a similar view:

People often say, 'I am having an exhibition next September and I don't have any of my work yet. I have to get started, I have to get enough work for the exhibition.' That's not what



being an artist is. Being an artist is working at it all the time. Not that you suddenly think about what you are going to do or how many pieces you have to get ready for an exhibition.

Kram and William believe artists with integrity do not create art because they feel the pressure to do so from the art world.

Another factor which undermines integrity is prejudice. William provides examples such as the people he encountered who like a work of art solely because they are friends with and like the artist. He also talks about people who suffer because of prejudice: "I've been on committees and people have been turned down because someone doesn't like them." Kram also had experienced this phenomenon:

That is not to say that there are not people out there who are objective. They may have never met you, they may have never seen your work, and don't care who you are, and they don't care what you do. They look at your work and say, 'This is terrific!' They are out there but my experience is that that is not the majority of what's out there. The majority of what's out there are people who are working on definite prejudice.

Not conforming to the art world's expectations, remaining true to one's personal vision and standards, and attempting to judge artworks on its own merits without letting personal biases interfere are all qualities some of the participants mentioned in terms of having personal integrity in relation to the art world and art making. Encountering people who lacked this type of integrity was disillusioning for some of the people interviewed.

Fickleness and Fashion: Another disillusioning factor described by Lily and Roslind is what they found to be the fickleness of the art world. Roslind comments, "It's very throwaway; it's very fastfood...here, what happens is that you are put into the limelight for a year or two or sometimes three years, and then you're shoved aside and then somebody

else is put into the limelight." Lily's view is in accord with Roslind's. Lily says, "The art world is like a fashion...it changes every six months or three years."

The sense of magic some of the participants had felt about the art world is addressed by three of the participants in relation to their first exhibition. The opening reception is discussed as a significant time, and a time full of disappointments. Roslind explains 'It is anticlimactic.' "I mean you are building up towards the climax and all of a sudden -- it is like preparing for a party. For example, you've prepared for say two months for a huge party and then all the guests leave and you are there with all the dirty dishes and you say, 'Was that it?'" Lily talks about this experience in a similar manner: "Nothing happens when you have a show and you are not prepared for that at all. This was just two years of work, a month of just maniacal work...I expected bombs to go off." And William says:

The first show I ever had I knew that there was something wrong here. I had twenty-seven photographs...Everyone bought them and it was 'cool'. I kept thinking, 'Is this it? Is this it?'

Being involved in the art world has dispelled many of the participants' previous expectations. Kram's remark is insightful: "... Ideals start to break down as you move along because you start to realize things aren't what you thought they were." The art world had been conceived by some of the participants as being good and fair and just; a world which has high standards of excellence; a world which is untainted, by pettiness or greed; full of just people who enable only talented artists to be recognized; and a world possessed by some type of magic. As a result of trying to be or actually becoming involved in the

art world, the five participants discussed another, very different world. They found that art world to be tough and unfair; a world concerned with making money, too concerned with art that will sell and not concerned enough with quality work; a world that is fickle, is prejudice and has lost its magic.

Some of the expectations discussed in the previous sections about being an artist, were confronted by the participants: first, the expectation that becoming a professional artist is easy, and second, the expectation that professional artists need only concern themselves with the making of art. The former expectation everyone perceived as an illusion, and the latter one everyone except William believed to be unrealistic.

Not only did some of the interviewees in this study become disillusioned with the image they had of the art world, but they also became disillusioned with the image they had of the artist as a special, divinely inspired being, a nonconformist. Many of the participants subsequently replaced this image with another more somber one of an artist who conforms, who lacks integrity and who is more of a businessman than a bohemian.

#### Theme #4: "LIFE AFTER DISILLUSIONMENT"

William observes: "Time goes by and I just lost a lot of the naivete that I had inherited from that environment about making art, about the art world, about other artists. It's the same in that we would shed that naivete about anything else that we would start." What happens when one loses that naivete, when one faces false expectations? How does one cope? This is the last phase of the transition.

Specifically, I will examine first how the participants deal with their disenchantment and second what their attitudes are now toward their chosen occupation.

Dealing with the Real Art World: This section discusses the notions, attitudes and behaviours which these people have developed in response to their experiences in the art world. Together these changes represent their ways of coping with the pressures, demands, and realities of the art world they encountered. Both Roslind and Lily discuss their attitudinal change towards promoting their artworks. Before they left university they were unconcerned about marketing. Now Lily comments, "Submitting something to be taken seriously by a gallery or a foundation or anything, you do it as professionally as you can." Roslind expresses her changed viewpoint:

Before I used to say, 'Well I'll do my work and I'll just do it because it is my work and I don't care whether or not it will sell'... (Now) I feel if people want their works to be seen they have to find some way of presenting a dossier or of going from one gallery to the next and not just staying in their studio and working... I think it's important because what is art all about? It is language and you have to communicate that language to other people. If you just produce and produce and produce in your studio and not show your work it is like talking to yourself... So what happens is you just close yourself off. You live in a vacuum...

William and Sylvia believed while in-university and still believe, unlike Roslind and Lily, that good art does not need to be marketed. They think it will naturally be discovered by the public if it is good. Sylvia considers that, "...if you are really good, and if you just do your art it really will be okay. You know someone else will come along who will package it..." William says, "If I do a bunch of brilliant work it would get shown by itself. One of my friends would grab it and take it down and show it..." It is interesting to note that these two

interviewees who have stopped creating art professionally share this attitude.

Finding a way to preserve a sense of personal artistic integrity has been a key issue for Roslind, Kram and William. Some of the participants expressed that they felt pressure to conform to expectations of the art world. William and Lily talk about the positions they have taken in response to the pressure to create artworks that relate to current art world fashions and trends. Both avoided this dilemma. William says, "I don't plunge through the pages of Artforum to look for some kind of justification for (my art)." Likewise, Lily

comments:

I have a friend who was asking me, 'Oh, did you see Art News?' I said, 'No, should I? Sorry.' Things like that aren't really going to affect what I am doing. Anything I'm interested in I paint.

Lily paints what is personal: her friends, her holidays, her family, the animals she likes. Like Lily, William also discusses the importance of creating work which is personal. He has decided he will not conform to any pressures from the art world and will consequently make art only for himself. He says:

It is not important to me that it is good. It is important to me that it is interesting for me to do while I was doing it, and if it happens to be a good work, great, but I do it on my own terms...I think that what makes a good artist is the fact that they listen to themselves and...their perspective is personal.

Kram thinks, "The question really becomes how much you give in and at what point you give in and how much sacrifice you have to make in order for this to work for you."

In terms of 'playing the game' Kram avoids it completely. He says, "I dislike it to such an extent I don't care what it costs me. I'm not

doing it!" William takes a similar stance. He exclaims: "If you make the 'right' kind of art you succeed...that doesn't make it for me -- no thanks!" Along with their change in attitude their activities change. Kram says, "I stopped going to galleries very early in my career...I don't find it a necessary part of the creative process." William likewise comments, "What is the point of going to the vernissage if the work is meaningless? I've given up."

Kram and Roslind both discuss integrity in relation to creating art that is true to themselves. Kram tries to be and hopes other artists are "honest in terms of their work, what they feel for their work and they are not just doing that kind of work because it is...popular...You would hope they are not the kind of artist who jumps the bandwagon."

Roslind is also careful to avoid this practice of producing "trendy" art:

I think one of the hardest things to do is to say, 'Wait a second. I've got to keep doing what I believe in even though it is really marginal, even though this stuff is selling (and) ...can be appreciated by a much larger public...I've got to keep working on the work that's true to me...'

Both William and Kram believe that an artist who has integrity does not work under the pressure of exhibition deadlines. Kram comments about himself, "I don't even feel I ever worked towards exhibitions. I work all the time regardless of whether there is an exhibition or not." Roslind, however, does work under pressure and does not feel that this practice lessens her integrity. She comments about one specific point in her life when she worked under deadline pressures: "I was glad I had these deadlines...I know that I had to work toward that deadline and that there were no ifs or buts about it."

William and Kram try to judge art without letting any personal

biases interfere. They have seen other people who belong to the art world judge art unfairly and consequently they try not to do this themselves. Kram Remarks:

I have a lot of friends who are lousy artists. I would never vote for them sitting on a jury because I don't believe in what they are doing. And vice-versa. I've met artists who I think have awful personalities. I would never want to spend one minute with them in a room at a party but I will vote for their work anytime because what they are doing is terrific.

William's comment is very similar to Kram's. He says, "I don't care who makes it. I don't care if someone I dislike makes a good painting. That's fine with me".

Seeing the reality behind the magic of the art world did not remain a disappointment for some of the interviewees. The magical quality which Roslind and Lily felt the art world had, has been replaced by a feeling of being comfortable with a familiar milieu. Lily describes for example how her feelings changed from nervousness to being at ease with a prominent curator of a national gallery when she painted him: "I was so nervous...(but) it went perfectly from beginning to end. That was pretty neat...We are good friends now". Roslind says about her current feelings towards the art world:

Once you are a part of it you just work on your work and you don't even think about it. You don't stop to think about those other people because those other people are really like you -- they're doing the same things as you are so it's not intimidating anymore. You realize that it is not magical.

In the process of coming to terms with the failed expectations and their disenchantments which arose during the transition from the university to the work world, the interviewees developed various stances on problematic issues. These issues, such as marketing artworks; feeling pressures to conform to popular styles; and maintaining one's

integrity in relation to (a) the 'game' and in relation to (b) honesty, (c) being fair, and (d) producing quality art are major components of the changing sense of identity that has resulted from the transition process.

Attitudes towards Chosen Occupation: Sylvia is the only individual interviewed who is presently dissatisfied with her present career situation. She has chosen a career as a librarian. She has not created any artwork for awhile, has not exhibited in years, and feels, to use her own words, "Just terrible -- I really don't like it. I really would rather be doing art or teaching art or making art at least part of the time." She has feelings of great bitterness and disappointment. Like Sylvia, William did not pursue a career as a professional artist, but unlike her he feels generally content with his situation, other than at times feeling some guilt because he is not creating art professionally. He does create art for himself. "I'm not going to spend the rest of my life making art for anybody else because I feel like I should. I'd rather go fishing...If I'm going to make a good painting, I'll make it anyway -- I'll make it the day after I go fishing." The other three people who were interviewed all decided to pursue careers as artists. All have achieved varying degrees of success, and are very content with their present situation. They make such comments as the following:

...There's nothing I'd rather do than be a painter (Lily).

...I'm really happy. I'm flying. I love what I'm doing (Roslind).

...I love being an artist...There isn't anything else I'd rather do (Kram).

All five participants seriously considered teaching art as a career. William is the only one interviewed who is currently working as



an art educator and has done so since leaving university. About this occupation he communicates: "What drew me to teaching...is a combination of money flexibility, and the fact that it is not that demanding. The fact is, it allows me to do a lot of things I couldn't maybe be able to do...it was never a central preoccupation for me...(however) I take my job quite seriously. I like teaching." Sylvia, like William wanted to teach and did teach until she eventually could not find teaching positions available. She says, "That was a crisis for me because I desperately wanted to get the jobs and didn't get them." Relying on a teaching job as security and being able to create art in her spare time was Sylvia's dream that did not materialize.

Kram, Lily, and Roslind decided before leaving university that they did not want to be art educators. Roslind reminisces about her past experience as a teacher: "I didn't really enjoy it." Kram and Lily's reasons for rejecting being educators are different: both believe it would take away too much time and energy that they want to spend on their art. Kram says that he has to "devote all my time to my work and put my work ahead of everything else." Likewise, Lily believes that "I don't want a job that I have to take home, that's going to drain any creativity that I have."

#### Summary:

All five of the interviewees began their transition with shared expectations which they hoped would be realized. Some expectations were realized, some changed, and some never actualized. What happened to these expectations is tied at least in part to the interviewees' feelings, attitudes about themselves and their chosen profession. In

the 'Hopes and Pipe Dreams' I described the expectations of the interviewees. These are listed as follows:

- a) expecting to become an artist
- b) expecting that the transition from a student to professional artist is easy
- c) expecting that professional artists need only concern themselves with the making of art
- d) believing the art world is good, magical, pure, and untainted
- e) believing that an artist is someone special

The dream to become a professional artist became a reality for three of the five interviewees. One did not see this dream realized, and became bitter and frustrated. Most of the participants thought, when they were in university, that an artist is divinely inspired. Only one person, Lily, maintained this viewpoint through the transition process. The belief that artists need only concern themselves with art making was supplanted by four interviewees with the belief that marketing knowledge is important. All the people interviewed radically changed their expectations concerning two issues: first, that becoming an artist is easy; and second, that the art world is good and pure.

This analysis has focused on the transition five participants have undergone as a result of leaving university and trying to establish themselves in the professional art world. The transition from student to professional entailed difficult personal and psychological struggles which centered around the process of challenging and reconsidering expectations, dreams, and ideals; which of these remained, altered, or faded away was the result of how these five individuals coped with the realities of the new situations and roles they encountered as they entered the professional art world.

## CHAPTER VI

### ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR ART EDUCATION

Now that I have looked at the transition I want to focus in on how this relates to art educational issues.

#### Educational Issues

All the participants talked in detail about their crucial years at university: they talked about learning how to make art, about establishing key relationships with professors and with peers, and about learning "the ropes" in the art world - or not learning about them. When discussing these years little apathy is apparent: opinionated positive and negative comments are given about their educational experiences in relation to their careers.

Most people believe that universities should aim to train students to create art which excels. William, Roslind and Lily all discuss this issue. But, William believes that too many people, when they leave art school are too concerned with making a career from their art and not concerned enough about the quality of the artwork they produce:

We've allowed the making of art to be eclipsed by the selling of it. Art has to be a product of your life and of your observation, not a product of homeostasis, of the organ surviving. It's got to be an expression and so much today is done because of survival because you need a show, you need a grant, you need this and you need that. All of that affects the way you make art.

Like William, Roslind and Lily believe the quality of the artwork is important. However, they disagree with William quite drastically on two issues: first, they both feel that marketing one's work is a struggle

and is important to master. Second, they feel that one of the reasons that the promotion of artwork is difficult for them is because the university, in their experience, did not provide information about this subject. Roslind expresses her opinion in the following passage:

I think there are basic fundamental things that we have to know about so that when we've graduated we are not out there completely cold having only technical training. That's important too...I think you have to train people not only in the simple rules of painting and drawing and everything else that is involved in the creative process, but also what happens after you have done the creation. What then? does the work stay in your studio? Do you want to push it? First of all when I was in university we didn't have any courses dealing with marketing, 'P.R.', like something as simple as putting together a dossier. We didn't learn the basics...All of that stuff I learned afterwards on my own...You have to learn the basics for marketing your work.

Lily's remarks are similar to Roslind's:

My mother was very strong that I get my degree...I told her that if I graduate from art school and I don't know how to paint I'm in a bad, bad way. If you can't paint when you leave art school it doesn't matter whether you can apply to a gallery...but no, I didn't learn the business at all...They don't tell you how to deal with galleries or how to get grants, how to put a portfolio together, or how to write statements. It would be a good idea to have seminars and workshops.

Kram like Roslind and Lily, believes that training in marketing at university is important. Although he never mentions that marketing his work was a struggle when he left university, he does discuss the struggles he saw many university students have because of their ignorance towards marketing their works. Sylvia like Kram, Roslind and Lily believes that universities should teach about the aspects of the art business:

I think it's the gap that you can most accuse university of...They are assuming that you are going to continue as an artist and it wouldn't be that hard to just give you that little extra bit. That would make such a difference...They should offer a package on framing and portfolios and

interviews. I think they should do more in placing people for jobs. I'd add a university non-credit course let's say for half a term about your own packaging...At least people wouldn't blunder through it. Oh yes, looking back on it they could have made my life so much easier with just a few little hints here and there, with just a few little courses, or a few lectures on how to do this.

All the interviewees, with the exception of William, related a lack of realistic understanding of the art world, and a lack of professional skills development (for example marketing ones artwork) to dissatisfaction with the university program and professors. However, all the participants discussed some school experiences in "warm" terms.

The more positive influences of the university and professors is apparent in the relationships the participants established with professors and peers. All the participants discussed professors who are skilled and knowledgeable, and consequently were to them influential and inspiring. They also talked about the students who shared in their university experiences, often providing support and encouragement and created a nurturing environment. Also, the structured, disciplined university program was appreciated by several of the participants. As the participants shifted to being a working artist the nurturing, supportive aspects of school experience were missed.

During the shift from the university to a working milieu, the interviewees, on the one hand, "carried" aspects of their educational training with them. They came "equipped" with knowledge about and experience in making art. All the participants appreciated this preparation. On the other hand, the participants also found that in order to cope with the transition well, they needed to discard some ideas they were taught in school. Many "left behind" using impersonal artistic styles, the idea that only art making is important to artists,

a shyness and hesitancy towards promoting their own work, and idealistic romantic concepts about professional artists and their art world. The interviewees in this study felt a strong ambivalence towards their university training: they fondly talked about the experiences which were supportive and nurturing and which helped them cope with the professional art milieu, and yet they spoke in extremely frustrated and sometimes bitter tones about their negative educational experiences and the lack of professional training they received.

#### Personal Thoughts for University Art Educators

When I began this research I had strongly believed that university studio art programs did not have adequate student professional training. What I felt was needed to rectify this situation were courses in art marketing and business. I found that four of the five participants in this study were in agreement with my views, and consequently, as a result of my research, my views have remained unchanged in this regard.

What I did not expect was the knowledge and insights the participants have given me in regard to the transition period between the university milieu and solidly establishing themselves in the work world. For example, I had never even considered that someone who was doing well as a professional artist could reject this career and be reasonably content with this decision. I thank William for making me aware of his 'chosen path'. Also, when in the process of gathering data for the thesis through countless interviews, I did not anticipate that what would be the focus of this study is the transition period. Furthermore, I did not foresee that so many struggles are involved -- even with successful professional artists -- in deciding to pursue or not pursue a

career as artist. And, I did not expect that the primary focus of this thesis would be on examining the alteration of the five participants' expectations.

This research may not only help art educators but will also help art students who are in studio programs. By reading this thesis these students may vicariously live through each of the five participants' experiences, consequently learn from the interviewees' dilemmas, and be able to have an easier transition from university to the work world. As a result of reading this thesis, future art students may be better prepared for that 'bump' when they graduate and for the possible struggles that are ahead of them when they leave the university. And, I hope that this thesis can help dispel some of the illusions that the art students share with those the participants held. This would better prepare future studio art graduates for coping with disenchantment as they themselves enter the transition process.

#### Suggestions for Art Educators

The transition between university and the work world is a difficult one of which Art Educators, I feel should be better aware. I hope the information gathered in this study may be helpful to Art Educators who "would improve their teaching using these reactions from pupils" (Barrit et al 1983). There is practically no one who makes decisions about the lives of others who could not profit from a better understanding of that other's point of view" (p. 82). This statement relates to knowledge acquired about the five participants' struggles and disillusionment. The following are suggestions for university art curricula and teaching which I believe would make the transition easier: (a) provide optional

art marketing/business courses; (b) discuss contemporary artists, their lifestyle and their art; (c) establish an optional apprenticeship program; and (d) discuss alternative careers in the arts such as art education, art museum work, and commercial art work.

Furthermore, Art Educators could become more sensitive to the difficult struggles and the 'disenchantment syndrome' the five participants discussed. Perhaps art students would benefit from their teachers talking about these issues in art classes at the university level. As a result of this study Art Educators might learn about and hence refrain from contributing to students' false expectations, and also be encouraged to help prepare students for possible struggles that they may confront when they enter the work force.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

As a result of writing this thesis, I realized there are many future areas of research possible. Most studies relating to my thesis are about the successful professional artist; however few are about the university graduate who has left the field. I feel much more research can be done in this area. Researchers can examine art studio graduates' experiences, their decisions, their dilemmas faced when they leave school. They can examine the reasons many graduates leave this career especially in consideration of the extensive training focused on developing professional artists. For example, one such study could be a longitudinal qualitative one about numerous studio art graduates who have chosen careers outside the field of art and who have graduated over twenty years ago.

I have strongly advocated that art educators teach about art



marketing and "art-business" concerns. A few universities in the United States and Canada offer these courses and the effect of these on art graduates need to be researched. Are these courses beneficial? If not, why? And, if they are the reasons for this and the beneficial effects need to be examined. A major question relating to this research is whether these courses do indeed make the transition from the university milieu to the art world easier. If so, how?

Little research has been conducted on the art graduates' transition from the university to the work world. For my research, I interviewed participants who were out of that transition period and had already established themselves in the work force at the time they were interviewed. Data gathered while the interviewees are currently in the transition phase would compliment my study and perhaps reveal new information about the transition.

Three of the five interviewees who participated in this thesis made a career decision about becoming a professional artist within a year after leaving university. This is an important period which could be researched more extensively than I have done by specifically focusing on this crucial time.

The struggle and the disillusionment pattern of the participants could also be the focus of future research. For instance, quantitative research could be done to find out whether this is a common experience of numerous studio art graduates.

As a result of this research, my personal interest is very focused on the participants' "expectations-illusions" they possessed while in school and the general pattern of erosion they underwent. Because of this research, I believe these expectations have a profound effect on

art graduates' attitudes, beliefs, future goals, and behaviour. To my knowledge little research has been done on the effect these expectations have in the field of art education. Many art educators were once art studio graduates. What kind of expectations do art educators have? How are these expectations created? Where do they come from? How do art educators' expectations affect their students? In this study I did not deal with art educators' role in fostering students' expectations which may be undertaken in future research.

What I did do in this study is firstly depict the career experiences of five studio art graduates, and secondly examine their transition from a university to a work world milieu in relation to unfulfilled expectations. As a result of reading this thesis, art educators should become more aware of the career issues the participants encountered. For those art teachers who want to help prepare students for the work force this research provides art educators with a strong focus on their students' career concerns.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, M.C., & Kowalski, G.S. Professional self-identification among art students. Studies in Art Education, 1980, 21(3), 31-39.
- Adizes, I. & McWhinney, W. Arts, society and administration: the role and training of arts administrators. Arts in Society, 1973, 10(3), 40-49.
- Barritt, L., Beekman, T., Bleeker, H., & Mulderij, K. A handbook for phenomenological research in education. The United States: University of Michigan, 1983.
- Barron, Frank. Artists in the making. U.S.A.: Seminar Press, Inc., 1987, pse XIII-50.
- Becker, H.S. & Strauss, A.L. "Careers, personality and adult socialization." In M.P. Stein, A.J. Vidich & D.M. White (Eds.), Identity and Anxiety. New York: Free Press, 1960, 205-218.
- Becker, H.S. The relevance of life histories. In N.K. Denzin (Ed.) Sociological Methods. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977.
- Becker, H.S. Art worlds. California: University of California Press, 1982.
- Bogdan, R.C. & Bicklen, S.K. Qualitative research for education; an introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982.
- Brodsky, J. Should the art school curriculum include professional job training? American Artist, October 1977, 41(423), 16-17.
- Burnham, Mark. Visual artists and part-time employment. Toronto: Canadian Artists' Representation Ontario, 1982.
- Chamberlain, B. After college astonishment. American Artist, December 1974, 38(389), 45.
- Chamberlain, B. Career opportunity opportunists. American Artist, May 1976, 40(406), p. 30-31, 76-77.
- Chamberlain, B. Sources of job information. American Artist, August 1977, 41(421), 28, 58.
- Chapin, Mildred. Kohut's theories on Narcissism: implications for art therapy. American Journal of art therapy, October 1979, 19, 3-8.
- Cipriano, Michael, Artists on their art education. (Doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1977.)

- Coles, Robert. Children of crisis: a study in courage and fear. Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1967.
- Coles, Robert & Coles, Jane. Women of crisis: lives of struggle and hope. New York: Delacorte press, 1978.
- Denzin, N.K. The research act. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970, 122-147, 219-259.
- Dollard, John. Criteria for the life history: with analyses of six notable documents. New Haven: Yale University press, 1935.
- Edinborough, E. For canadian talents, reserve, quibbles and stingy attitudes. Financial Post, July 23, 1977, 31, 30.
- Evans, R.N. & McCloskey, G. Rationale for career education. Journal of Aesthetic Education, October 1973, 7(4), 9-22.
- Fingleton, E. Portrait of the artist as a moneyman. Forbes, February 1, 1982, 129(3), 58-62.
- Freundlich, A.L. On the university as the best environment for training artists. Leonardo, 1975, 8(12), 121-124.
- Getzels, J. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. The creative vision: a longitudinal study of problem finding in art. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976.
- Gillespie, D. Professionalism and the woman artist (or functioning in the art world). In E.H. Fine, L.B. Gellman & J. Loeb (Eds.) Women studies and the arts. United States: Women's Caucus for Art, Pp. 154-159.
- Glueck, G. How emerging artists really emerge: Putting the biennials together. Artnews, May 1977, 80(5), 95-99.
- Goetz, J.P. & LeCompte M.D. Ethnography and qualitative design in education research. Florida: Academic Press Inc., 1984.
- Goodman, C.T. Are you a professional artist? American Artist, January 1974, 35, 19-21.
- Goodman, J. Getting started: how to develop your own clientele. American Artist, January 1975, 39(390), 20-23.
- Goodman, C. Every artist is a dealer. American Artist. February 1976, 40(403), 47-51.
- Goodman, C. The 2 1/4 billion dollar art market, where is your share? American Artist, June 1981, 45(467), 66-67.
- Gouin, Judy. The cost of earning as a visual artist. Toronto: Canadian Artists' Representatin Ontario, 1981.

- Graham, R. Business and the arts make a perfect match. Nations Business, April 1979, 67(4), 50-55.
- Griff, M. The commercial artist: a study in changing and consistent identities. In M.P. Stein, A.J. Vidich, & D.M. White (Eds.) Identity and anxiety, New York: Free Press, 1960, Pp. 219-241.
- Griff, M. The conflict of the artist in mass society. Diogenes, 1964, 46, 54-68.
- Hayman, Sasha. Visual arts-related women and the canadian educational system. Paper presented at the meeting of the Status of Women Canada, September, 1981.
- Hendricks, J.A. Artistic career development as an interactive process. Dissertation Abstracts International, 1073, 33, 3792-A.
- Hill, H.D. Defining personality characteristics of commercial artists and fine artists and their counseling implications. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, 1980).
- Jevnikar, J. Learning the business at home. American Artist, August 1984, 48(505), 20, 92-93.
- Langness, L.L. and Frank, G. Lives: an anthropological approach to biography. California: Chandler and Sharp Publishers Inc., 1981.
- McCall, M.M. The sociology of female artists: a study of female painters, sculptors, printmakers in St. Louis (Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana, 1975) Dissertation Abstracts International, 6321-A.
- Mollenhauer, Linda. The fats of art: a practical guide for the visual artist. Canada: Visual Arts Ontario and the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, 1982.
- National Art Education Association. A major study report on undergraduate education. National Art Education News, October, 1986, 28(5), 3.
- Pope, A. Art, artists and layman. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1937.
- Rosenberg, A.L. A fact sheet for and about women in art. Unpublished manuscript, February 1980.
- Sgouros, T. Survival in the commercial world: preparing a portfolio. American Artist, April, 1978, 42(429), 104-106.
- Spradley, J. The ethnographic interview. U.S.A.: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979.
- Tarrant, M. Making it in the arts. Money, November 1977, 6(11), 72-78.

- Taylor, P.L. Formative influences of secondary education on the artistic development of twenty-four recognized american artists. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia, 1982). Dissertation Abstracts International, 3489-A.
- Terkel, S. Working. New York: Pantheon Books, 1974.
- Whitesel, L.S. Career commitment of women art students. (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1974). Dissertation Abstracts International, 5243-A.
- Whitesel, Lita. Women as art students, teachers, and artists. Journal of the National Art Education Association, March 1975, 28(3), 22-26.
- Whitesel, L. Attitudes of women art students. Art education, January 1977, 30(1), 25-27.
- Whitesel, L. Career attitudes of art students. Studies in Art Education, 1980, 22(1), 36-41.
- Wilton, N.C. The antecedents of artistic success: a study of the early lives of women visual artists, Dissertation Abstracts International, 1978, 39(5), 2849-A.
- Winder, K. Selected Iowa artists' perceptions of the significant factors leading to their decisions to become artists. (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Iowa, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1981, 42, 1915A.
- Witten, M. One man shows: three artists who have mastered the fine art of self-promotion. Canadian Art, Fall 1984, 1(1), 100-102.

## APPENDIX A

Denzin's steps for organizing and synthesizing life history data are as follows: (Denzin, 1970, p. 253-254).

STEP 1: Select a series of research hypotheses and problems to be answered or explored in the life history. Formulate tentative operationalizations of key concepts.

STEP 2: Select the subject(s) and determine the form the life history is to take.

STEP 3: Record the objective events and experiences in the subject's life that pertain to your problem. These events should be triangulated by source and perspective so that contradictions, irregularities and discontinuities can be established.

STEP 4: Obtain the subject's interpretations of these events as they occurred in their chronological, or natural order.

STEP 5: Analyze all reports and statements collected thus far in terms of internal validity, internal criticism, external validity, and external criticism.

STEP 6: Resolve the validity of the above sources, and establish the priority of sources for subsequent hypothesis tests.

STEP 7: Begin testing hypothesis that have emerged to this point, search for negative evidence, and continue to modify, generate, and test these hypotheses.

STEP 8: Organize an initial draft of the entire life history and submit this to the focal subject(s) for their reactions.

STEP 9: Rework the report in its natural sequence in light of the above reactions. Present the hypotheses and propositions that have been supported. Conclude with its relevance for theory and subsequent research.

Steps one through six were followed with one exception. I triangulated by source but not by perspective. Triangulation means using multiple research methods: I used multiple sources to obtain data, but I did not interview relatives or friends of the interviewees selected. Hence, I did not gain another perspective.

Steps six to nine deal with the analysis. Denzin presents the modified analytic induction method of analysis. I did not follow these steps.

## APPENDIX B

The following are examples of some of the types of questions asked five interviewees during the second, focused or what is termed 'nonscheduled standardized interview':

- a) What was your attitude toward university before you went into it in comparison to your feelings about university when you left it?
- b) What personality traits do you see as common with artists?
- c) You had said that university was 'artificial'. Can you explain that word?
- d) You had mentioned in the last interview, that a problem with the university is that it doesn't train students to cope with the art world. Do you have any other criticisms of the university?
- e) What was the main positive aspect of university in terms of helping you with your professional career?
- f) What do you think is the 'stuff' it takes to be a professional artist?
- g) Do you have any positive attitudes towards the art world?
- h) What was your attitude towards the art world before you became involved in it in comparison to your attitude about it now?
- i) Why did you want to be a professional artist?
- j) When you look back at your earlier career can you see any points as being especially significant? Are there periods or experiences that stood out as being particularly important?
- k) Can you describe how an artist is supposed to be?
- l) Can you describe the ideal artist?
- m) You had mentioned that in school you were a 'star'. Can you explain this further?
- n) You had mentioned that being an artist is a struggle. Can you describe that further?
- o) How do you feel about your present career situation?



APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH

I \_\_\_\_\_, the interviewee,  
agree to participate in one or more tape-recorded interview(s) for an  
Art Education research project with Joanna Black. I realize that the  
information obtained from the interview(s) will be used for educational  
purposes. I understand that my participation in this research project  
is voluntary, and furthermore, I understand that I am free to withdraw  
my participation at anytime, without any negative consequences.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_