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The Fifty Cent Tour:
Personal Meanings in Domestic Artifacts and Concepts of Art

Valerie (Moy) Mah

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Art Education

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

July 1990

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ABSTRACT

The Fifty Cent Tour: Personal Meanings in Domestic Artifacts and Concepts of Art

Valerie (Moy) Mah

The primary aim of the research is to investigate the values and meanings given to the objects and pictures displayed in the homes of four women in my immediate family, including myself. Assuming the simultaneous role of researcher and participant brought its own particular set of conditions, advantages and disadvantages. With a questionnaire and interviews inquiring into the backgrounds of the participants, I was able to gain some insight into their notions about what is art and what is not, and who is an artist and who is not. An additional interview explored the kinds of meanings given to the special objects and pictures found in the home. The written text is paralleled with a visual text of photographs of these cultural artifacts, and of the domestic environments where they are situated.

Art educators and social scientists such as Congdon, Chalmers, Gans, and Painter have been helpful in my inquiry into the uses and meanings of cultural artifacts. Social values more than aesthetic values were associated with the participants' cherished objects. The research did not allow me to subscribe to any one particular approach to art education. It provided a basis in cultural pluralism from which to pursue studies that recognized popular, domestic, and personal art.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The title phrase "The Fifty-Cent Tour" refers to the common social convention of a host taking a first-time visitor on an informal tour of the home. My experience of being the visitor on such a tour has sometimes included descriptions of how the rooms in the home were used and by whom; and usually included being shown aspects of the home that the person was proud of. The spaces and objects presented by proud hosts during several "fifty-cent tours" are the subject of the following research.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

I am concerned with a sector of the population that I will call the general public, rather than to the fine art public. The distinction between these two publics lies in the latter being "... those artists, critics, art historians, gallery administrators, Arts Council, Regional Arts Association officers who constitute the scholarly and pedagogic culture of contemporary fine art and its institutions." (Painter 1983, p 161). In this study I explore how special objects take on social, cultural, and personal meaning for some particular individuals. I ground this study in recent trends in art education that indicate a concern for meaning, not just aesthetics; the meaning artifacts have for a general public, not just connoisseurs (Duncum 1989, pp 13-14). It is the notion of different kinds of art and different kinds of

publics within the context of everyday experience that my inquiry seeks to explore.

I have adopted Congdon's (1989) use of the term art "to refer to those human-made objects meant to, among other purposes, encourage aesthetic response and/or those which are revered or esteemed as special in a culture." (p 176).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Although there has been a growing interest concerning the varied uses and forms of cultural production, relatively few studies have been done. The more notable efforts are those of Colin Painter (1982) in Britain and Herbert Gans (1974) in the United States. Painter conducted a survey to discover what kinds of objects and pictures were hung on the walls of groups of people of different socio-economic backgrounds. He was interested in the kinds of meanings these things had for their owners in relationship to their values and ways of life. For him the underlying question addressed the social function of art. Similarly, Gans (1974) did an analysis of the relationship between high culture and popular culture. He identified five taste cultures and their publics.¹ Both studies found that the differences between audiences corresponded to peoples' socio-economic backgrounds. They also found that conceptions of what was art and what was not differed among these groups. Further it was found that things were generally valued for their associational contexts (particularly personal, family, and community relationships), and not for the intrinsic qualities of the things.

As a result of research done in the social sciences and anthropology it is recognized that within a pluralistic society there exists different kinds of art and different kinds of publics whose needs, values, and attitudes are often in conflict. Brighton's insight (1978) into the importance of bridging the gap between the "fine art" public and the "common" people has been an inspiration to Painter. In part this direction calls for the demystification of the artist and "fine art". Brighton, like Gans (1974) and others, finds that most people do have an interest in art. Gans makes the assumption:

...that all human beings have aesthetic urges; a receptivity to symbolic expressions of their wishes and fears; a demand for both knowledge and wish-fulfillment about their society; and a desire to spend free time, if such exists, in ways that diverge from their work routine. Therefore, every society must provide art, entertainment, and information for its members. People may be their own creators, or they may simply recruit someone to function temporarily as a creator, or they may turn, as in modern society, to trained creators. (p 67)

Becker (1982) perceives art as a social activity which relies on the co-operative efforts between those people who conceive the idea of the work, those who execute it, those who provide the equipment and materials, and those who view the work. The production of art relies on a co-operative effort. Thus, art does not operate in isolation and it is necessary to consider it in its social and cultural contexts (Brooks 1981, Chalmers 1981 1985, Gans 1974, Brighton 1978, Painter 1982, Bersson 1981).

In light of the question of how to make art education more meaningful for students it has been suggested that an approach be adopted that looks at art in its socio-economic and cultural contexts. Aesthetic pluralism or cultural pluralism is one of three approaches to

aesthetics; the other two being formalism and anti-formalism. Of the three, pluralism supports the notion of different kinds of art and different kinds of public where "each art form has its own internal aesthetic which must be evaluated from within its own set of standards." (Hart 1990, p 12). Thus it is necessary to consider more than one art system and its cultural context, and its producers and consumers. Congdon (1987) supports this view stating the underlying assumption of cultural pluralism is the recognition of groups of people with varying lifestyles and different value systems who respond differently to the various art forms.

This position also suggests that art has a social function whereby cultural values, belief systems, and status and roles are identified. The uses of art include enhancement, objectification, differentiation, organization, continuity, and communication (McFee 1986). Of these communication is considered by Chalmers (1987) to be the main function of art, and provides people with a means to share ideas, generate meaning, maintain and improve conditions, create solidarity, and promote change. Thus western aesthetics, according to Chalmers, is not very useful to art educators because it is the basis for an elitist position which is exclusive. He proposes an ethnological approach in order to "consider cultural foundations of art and broaden our [art educators] definitions of art to include the cultural artifacts of all cultures and subcultures." (p 5). Consequently there has been support for the inclusion of popular culture in the school curriculum. According to Duncum (1987) the educational aims include understanding student's lived experience, changing student's attitudes and ideas,

restructuring society along more equitable lines, and student participation in other kinds of art. He further states that the proposal to incorporate popular culture is based on four social theories. The first, liberal humanism, with its strong moral agenda examines popular culture in order to show what's wrong with it. This view tolerates different taste cultures, but does not concern itself with social inequities. The cues are derived from a high culture with emphases on aesthetic appreciation and social values and meanings. Second and third are the two strains of liberal pluralism. One direction advocates cultural diversity without social change while the other strain adopts a critical approach, seeing a need for social change within the existing social system. The assumption in the latter case is that power resides with the elite and is a dominant force in people's lives. The fourth position described by Duncum is neo-marxism. This view holds that society is in a state of conflict, and calls for social reconstruction. The focus is on society, classes, and minorities, all of whom have different interests. Like Duncum I support the open-ended discovery approach advocated by the first strain of liberal pluralism. This approach embraces the range of meanings that cultural forms have for their users.

The perspectives that Painter (1982) offers are first, to make existing fine art more accessible. Second is the perspective that supports art for social change. According to Richard Cork (cited by Painter 1982) the job of the "fine" artist would be to study the conditions of the oppressed (those "blighted by the injustices of poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing and substandard educational provisions." p 1), and

make art about it. Painter recognizes the key problem of this approach is the insider/outsider conflict and as a result the problem of representation by someone whose life experiences are detached from that which he or she is speaking for. The fourth position calls for a more democratic fine art; making fine art more accessible would facilitate a growth to encompass the working class aspirations and conditions.

Gans presents two alternatives, cultural mobility and subcultural programming. He favors the latter and criticizes the former on the basis that it is not feasible because it would require that all have access to an upper-middle class lifestyle. Furthermore, he states that cultural mobility is low on the priority list compared to, for example, an egalitarian economic policy. Subcultural programming would provide the appropriate cultural content specific to each taste public satisfying and expressing their aesthetic standards. This proposal is consistent with the principle of cultural pluralism of providing relevant content appropriate for a cultural group.

THE STUDY AND ITS LIMITATIONS

I studied the choices in objects and pictures made by a small group: the women of my immediate family. In this group of women, I was the sole participant representative of someone who has received academic training in the fine arts. We (the participants) are all representative of the general public. This study looks at everyday experience as a valid, meaningful, and legitimate form of expression which conceptually and practically is a form of "arting" (included are making objects, selecting, arranging, and other kinds of activities).

My study considers the home as a place where arting occurs. My specific interest was in the meanings the participants constructed for their "special" objects and pictures. This interest addresses the function of taste and aesthetic values as they manifest in each woman's objects and pictures, and how she displays them in the domestic environment. Each participants' notions about what was art and what was not, and who was an artist and who was not was also explored. The goal of my inquiry is to see what it is that they (the participants) think, and how they interpret.²

In Chapter Two I outline the evolution of the study and the methodological steps taken. In Chapter Three I present profiles of the participants and their homes from my own phenomenological experience as well as from each participant's point of view.

The section of my study that addressed notions about what is art and what is not, and who is an artist and who is not posed a certain amount of difficulty and confusion. Limitations were inherent in the kind of language I used to pose questions; at times the questions themselves were confusing to the participant. The subject of my inquiry was in itself difficult; not only is it an area of ongoing debate and change but it was also a subject which, prior to this study, the participants had given little conscious attention to. As researcher I limited the discussion of the kinds of objects and pictures by qualifying that these things be "special" to the participant herself; not to other members of the household, or the family as a whole. An additional restriction was that these things be on display as opposed to something

kept in a drawer. Consequently a range of domestic artifacts which no doubt also have significance were excluded. Further is the element of time; I recognize that those things which the participant deemed special were subject to the mood, state of mind, and attention of the moment. For myself I had difficulty choosing those things which were most special to me as opposed to those things which were less special.

SOCIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The orientation of this inquiry assumes that a person's artistic knowledge and experience are socially constructed. This assumption derives from the theoretical perspective that addresses phenomena as they exist within their specific social context and whereby "reality" and "knowledge"³ are developed, transmitted, and maintained in everyday life. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967) such commonsense knowledge constitutes the fabric of meanings essential to a society's existence. They further state that commonsense is a synthesis of social realities whereby the individual's interpretation is a process of internalization in which he or she negotiates what is "out there" with what is "in here". In other words this process renders the objective as subjectively meaningful whereby typical patterns of interaction are established between people. Thus social structures or realities are based on recurrent patterns of interaction where the understanding of others and the apprehension of the world are achieved through negotiation in relation to one's own self.

In Chapter Four the participants' commonsense knowledge and working definitions about what is art and what is not art, and who is an artist

and who is not are explored. Their social reality is juxtaposed with some key notions of western aesthetics (and which represent the traditional base of fine art discourse). The participants' understandings of art and artist show that the fine art base has tenuous links to their social reality of art. Chapter Five focuses on the home as the locus of the individual's interpretation of the "out there" to "in here". Their identity - manifest in the kinds of objects and pictures, and the kinds of meanings they give to these things - imply a specific social world.

PERSONAL MOTIVATION

My own experience both as student and teacher has brought into question my own assumptions regarding what is and what is not art and who makes art and who does not. The meaning of art education and my role as an art educator have been terms I have struggled to define for myself. I am interested in establishing a broader understanding conceptually and practically of the creative efforts and endeavours of the general public, whether they are professionally trained artists or not. I think that different sets of criteria, values, and standards need to be applied to various modes of expression. Rather than attempt to amalgamate or disseminate only one understanding of art, I think it important to provide for not only the acceptance of cultural pluralism but to respect and thus legitimize and validate everyday experience as creative activity, whether it be labelled art or not.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH FOR ART EDUCATION

In our society today it appears that many people find themselves with more free time than ever before. Consequently we are witnessing a growing interest by adults in leisure time activity. According to Statistics Canada (1984, 1985) one in five adults, at some point, enroll in adult continuing education classes. This population of students enroll in professional development courses (especially in business) and hobby and craft courses. In light of this increased enrollment (specific to hobby and craft courses) I think it is important to find out what the expectations are of these students. It is not by any means unimaginable that people like the women in my family could be a part of this student population.

It is Gans' contention (1974) that "... many factors determine a person's choices, particularly class, age, religion, ethnic and racial background, regional origin, and place of residence..." (p 70). Of these factors, he claims that socioeconomic level or class is the most prominent. Income, occupation, and education are the criteria most often used by sociologist to describe and define class. Of these, education is considered by Gans to be the most important factor.⁴

Art educators such as Brooks (1981), Chalmers (1981, 1985), Congdon (1987), and Bersson (1983, 1987) support Gans' view that the development of a person's aesthetic is inextricably linked to that person's socioeconomic and cultural background, and have proposed approaches to art education that reflect this point of view. Duncum (1987) describes Brooks and Chalmers as liberal pluralists who follow a

non-judgemental, functionalist approach. He states:

The functional approach involves a willingness to consider cultural forms within the lifestyle of those for whom cultural forms have meaning and value, and in some cases it involves a desire to discover what these meanings and values might be. (p 8)

Brooks (1981) aligns her childhood experiences of popular culture with her parents' upward mobility. Her insight has helped her to develop an approach to understanding and learning based within the context of each students' lives. Chalmers (1985) supports this approach which he calls "dialogue". Essentially teacher and student alike embark on a mutual quest to find out what art is. He proposes an ethnographic approach as a means to study what people value and why, within specific social contexts.

Congdon (1987) is another art educator dedicated to the promotion of cultural/aesthetic pluralism. She says:

Multicultural education is often mistakenly identified with ethnic groups alone (Congdon 1985), whereas we should also be studying the art, criticism, and aesthetics of religious, occupational, regional, generational, and recreational groups, as well as the much-neglected artistic processes of a variety of female populations. (p 111)

She claims that a person's occupation, or that of one's family, influences "personal perception and creative visual observation." She illustrates this point with an account of how her father's work as a Navy officer meant annual Christmas visits to see the decorated ships. Consequently her appreciation of the holiday lights has been enriched by this childhood experience. Bersson states (1987) that our conceptions of art and art education are shaped by our sociocultural birthplace and residence. He sees the "emancipation from acculturation" as the means to enable art educators to discover or envision alternatives. These art educators are aware of the

discrepancies between cultural groups and advocate approaches to art education based on cultural democracy, which Bersson (1983) says embraces equality of opportunity, pluralism, diversity, variety, and difference. It seems to me not only a reasonable direction but a necessary direction for art education to follow.

Chapter 2

METHOD OF INQUIRY

An ethnographic approach has enabled me to study not only individual responses and understandings but also the cultural aspects within the group. Harper (1990) explains culture as a process whereby membership to a group is established and maintained through shared thoughts and coordinated actions. Comparisons (the similarities and the differences) between each person will begin here, but not end here, to illuminate the cultural aspect of this partial family group. Van Maanen (referring to Conklin, 1968; Becker, 1980; Swindler, 1986) states:

... culture refers to the knowledge members ('natives') of a given group are thought to more or less share; knowledge of the sort that is said to inform, embed, shape, and account for the routine and not-so-routine activities of the members of the culture. (1988, p 3)

EVOLUTION OF THE PROJECT

The idea for this project was initially conceived in 1985 as an art project. At this time I was living in Halifax, Nova Scotia. My intention was to explore the ideas that the women in my family (on my mother's side) had about themselves as women; how they defined their roles in the context of family, and in the context of self outside the family (if this was possible). I wanted to include my mother, her sisters, their sisters in-laws, and the daughters down through the generations (a group total of twenty-three). I was feeling ambitious and foresaw doing paintings, photographic essays, books, sound tapes -

whatever would be appropriate.

In 1986 I went to Alberta for Christmas vacation. I took advantage of the womens' presence at a dinner to explain my project to them. As a beginning I took a photograph of each person, as well as each mother with her daughter/s. I returned home to Montreal, processed and printed the photographs, and studied them. I was disappointed with the results - the portraits were too contrived and they lacked personal context. At this point I realized that the portraits would have to be reshot in each persons' own home. I also realized that this project was not feasible because all the women lived in different locations. I reduced the number to sixteen; the women related through marriage were excluded.

Eight months later (September 1987) I was enrolled in the graduate art education programme at Concordia University. My ideas for the project were still broad. I felt my focus had to be developed through the womens' thoughts. I decided to send a letter to each person, asking them to collect their memories and thoughts on scraps of paper within the regular routine of their day; and once completed send them to me. I also asked them to include photographs or anything else that they thought would help them tell their stories. I did not want this project to present any pressure on their time, nor did I want them to feel that writing skill (or lack of it) was important. I began receiving replies that December. Except for two people, everyone responded.

I took a six week vacation in 1988 to Alberta and arranged to do open-ended interviews⁵ with each participant. I asked general questions focused on significant moments in their lives, such as marriage and childbirth, and memories from their childhood to the present. I initiated the interviews with "Can you tell me about...". This approach simulated a conversation more than direct interview questions. I also took photographs of their homes, concentrating on the objects and images used to decorate each room. Throughout the summer months I printed all the photos and began to transcribe the interviews. The photographs prompted a keen interest in the objects and pictures they displayed in their homes.

At this point the question of how to link my project to art education had to be seriously considered. I shifted my question to: what constitutes visual expression (act of "making") and experience (the meaning and value given to the objects and pictures) for these women? I anticipated that the act of "making" would encompass a variety of activities, and would include decorating, cooking, and dressing oneself. The idea of "making" became an attractive means to link the women more directly to the study in a way that they would be active, rather than passive. That is to say, they would more fully direct some aspect of the study. I thought a "hands on" experience, combining their thoughts visually, would do this. I decided to accomplish this goal by asking the women to contribute squares for a quilt which I would assemble. As a group we would decide on a theme. I assumed that each person would utilize their own resources and probably incorporate sewing and needlework.

As the reality of doing a thesis came to the fore, I made more modifications. I reduced the number of participants to my immediate family; my mother, my sister, my niece, and myself. I realized that a group of sixteen was too large and it would be unrealistic for me to do a large scale project within the projected time frame. The amount of data to be collected, sorted, and interpreted would require an enormous amount of time. Time was also a factor in terms of building relationships with the participants; many family members were acquaintances. The cost involved in conducting a large scale project was also prohibitive. The travel expenses (between Quebec and Alberta) as well as the material expenses to conduct and complete such a study were beyond my budget. I also decided to concentrate on the meanings and values given to the objects and pictures, (displayed in the homes) that each person deemed "special".⁶ Secondary concerns addressed notions about what was art and what was not, and who was an artist and who was not. The reason for choosing these two focii was to see what the connections were between the two, if indeed there were any.

PROCEDURES

According to Barritt et al., 1983, in order for the participant's point of view to be discovered it is necessary to put aside, as much as possible personal bias and preconceived notions. I have tried as much as possible to adhere to this principle. I chose to do my study in the participants' domestic environments. I assumed their taste was the determining factor that dominated in the decoration of their homes. I used the term taste as it generally refers to preference and more specifically to the ability to discern amongst choices. I was

interested in the notion of taste as judgements that " ... rely on not only aesthetic criteria but also status and economic criteria that are part of the social context in which one makes choices in objects and images." (Brooks 1981, p 10).

Questionnaire and Interviews

I gave each participant a blank book in which I had inserted a questionnaire, and two sets of interview questions (see appendices A, B, and C). Prior to the interviews I gave them a few days to think about the questions. I told them to feel free to use their books as a place for their thinking. In the meantime, I asked them to fill out a questionnaire inquiring into their socioeconomic and cultural background. I asked them to apply the questions to themselves, their parents, and their "spouses" to the best of their ability. The first interview addressed the art background of the participants. This inquiry included questions about the kinds of "making" (art and otherwise) they had done, and where this occurred. I was also interested in their notions about what was art and what was not, and who was an artist and who was not. I transcribed the first interview while in the field. This prompted an additional interview to clarify and pursue their ideas. The second interview addressed the meanings and values of the "special" objects and pictures displayed in their homes. The second interview was similarly transcribed and served as a guide to photograph their things. In conjunction with the second interview I asked them to write descriptions of the rooms in their homes, and to write about the significance of these rooms. The significance was revealed in how they felt about each room and how they

lived in them.

These interviews were conducted in an unstructured manner. This approach allowed me (as interviewer) to react to the actual situation; at times changing the sequence of the questions, rewording questions, adding questions, and explaining questions. Bogdan and Biklen's (1982) description of the purpose of the interview respects this view. They say:

... the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world. [and] Even when an interview guide is employed, qualitative interviews offer the interviewer considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics and offer the subject a chance to shape the content of the interview. (pp 135-36)

Photographs

Initially I photographed those objects and pictures that were identified as "special" by the interviewees. These things were the focus of the second interview, and were identified as the interview moved from room to room. In some instances there was nothing that was "special" in a particular room, thus no photograph was taken in this space. Upon further reflection I decided to photograph some of the rooms to provide a context.

I used a 35mm Nikon camera with a standard 50mm lens and a 28mm wide angle lens with Tri-X or T-Max black and white film. My choice in these lenses allowed me to frame particular objects and pictures as central figures in the photographs, and to also make photographs of the physical settings where these things were situated. I used natural

light as much as possible with fill flash or flood lights to retain shadow detail. The choice to shoot in black and white was partially based on my familiarity with the materials as well as my awareness of the use of black and white film in traditional documentary photography. I was also wary of the seduction of color print film; the rich lush colors could potentially act as a barrier to viewing the photographs as illustrative of the cultural artifacts found in the homes and a particular way of life. It was also more efficient for me because I could process and print myself.

I also edited, choosing the photographs that I thought best illustrated the group of things each person identified as "special". The process of editing involved technical considerations such as improper exposure or poor framing. Other criteria for editing the final selection was based on the assumption that many of the things identified are familiar to most of us, and conjure up a myriad of possibilities. The photographic image on the other hand serves to reveal the specificity of the things peculiar to these womens' lives.

These photographs as a partial inventory of the cultural artifacts found in these homes are both illustrative of the space and offer insight into who these women are. Collier (1986) suggests that the cultural inventory can be used to examine economic level, life-styles, the aesthetic of the decor, activities of the household, the character of order, and signs of hospitality and relaxation. He says "The content and organization of a home is usually a reflection of its inhabitants that, if read properly can give considerable understanding

of the people themselves." (p 48).

Fieldnotes

While in the field I recorded what I did and saw, and what I felt. I also wrote my impressions on what the participants were experiencing. When possible I would note comments and gestures made by the participants. These notes served as a mirror for reflection while in the field, as well as after I left it. A few examples of what I reflected on are: the quality of the interview questions, how my double role as participant and researcher affected myself and the other participants, the pros and cons in choosing close family members as participants, and my nervousness as an inexperienced researcher.

I used a three part format, modifying and combining fieldnote procedures suggested by Bodgan and Biklen (1982). The first part described what occurred in the field. This included portraits (physical appearance, dress, and mannerisms of the participant), reconstruction of conversations not tape recorded, the physical setting, and my own behavior. Part two (observer's comments -"O.C.") focused on my own thoughts and feelings, allowing me to speculate on analysis and method, conflicts, and my own frame of mind. Part three ("memo") was a place to write my reflections, making links with the observer's comments.

PERSONAL FACTORS

I chose this specific family group because of the established relationships. This however, posed certain difficulties I had not foreseen. For example, because of our closeness it was assumed, by the

participants, that I could fill in their meanings. As researcher I was compelled to have them state explicitly what they meant. This usually took the form of me restating what I thought was meant and asking for confirmation. Sometimes I would simply ask the person to elaborate which sometimes summoned irritation and impatience. Emotional tensions were always present; at times making the work easier and at other times making the work more difficult. As the research progressed I noticed that my family, when referring to me, would use the third person - Moy, my aunt, my sister, or my daughter. I found this disconcerting until I realized that my double role as researcher and relative was as peculiar for them as my double role as researcher and participant was for me. I did not expect that they would need to distance themselves from me the "researcher".

In the double role as researcher and participant I often felt on the edge of schizophrenia. I had to find a way to negotiate being in two places at the same time. For the first interview I had my niece (Mandi) ask me the questions. She simply read each question in the sequential order that was written in her book. The distance created (small as it was) for me was helpful. Any attempt on her part to role play as researcher would have been futile. After this interview I wrote my responses. This was perhaps more difficult because I was literally participant and researcher at the same time. When my responses became vague and general, the researcher in me would interject, asking myself to be more specific. I also found myself editing as I wrote. I curbed this tendency by speaking aloud while writing, and allowed my "hms" and "ahs" to be spoken.

This problem of identification has plagued me in my writing. My general use of "I" occurs when referring to the "researcher" me, and other references to myself refer to the "participant" me. At times "their", "our", and the "participants" is used to refer to all four of us as a group. I also refer to each participant by their first name. I ask you to bear with me if any inconsistencies arise.

ETCH-A-SKETCH

I draw an analogy with the Etch-a-Sketch toy⁷ to describe my thinking process that has been consistent throughout my tasks in this research project. In every stage, from beginning to end I have experienced something akin to the process of making an image on the Etch-a-Sketch. For instance, in writing a chapter I begin to sketch or formulate an image or picture - tying together parts, trying to make sense...lines are drawn and the drawing progresses. I stop. I reflect - look...adjustments are needed... I shake it up and begin again. As qualitative research suggests, my journey did not consist of a preset itinerary which I followed; rather it was a journey based on a truism about the more you learn the more you find out how little you know. That is to say, meaning is of essential concern to this approach and involves modifications and redefinitions in accordance with the parts, as they are discovered to construct a picture (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). This approach is based on the assumption that not enough is known to recognize the important concerns before undertaking the research, and allows questions to evolve with the study.

My attempts to refocus and/or maintain my focus have been helped by the

advice a friend gave to me once when I was painting. It concerned an accident - unexpected as is the nature of accidents. The first step was to stop and consider it in the context of what I was doing. Three alternatives were given. The first was to keep the accident as it was - as a contribution to the work. The second was to paint over it and delete its presence. The third was to retain it in my mind for later use. In this sense I could suggest that the process by which I have woven this project together has been and will continue to be one accident (some great, some small) after another. This advice enabled me to examine various "accidents" and determine their appropriateness to my study. For me, the process is essentially a continual reflection, whereby I am considering and reconsidering my own assumptions in relation to the data. Here, I refer to data as the information and knowledge gathered from the fieldwork, from reading, and from discussions with people.

Chapter 3

PROFILES

This chapter is divided in two parts, "participant profiles" and "descriptions of the participants' homes". The first consists of factual information about the participants' socioeconomic and cultural background. The second consists of descriptions from the point of view of each participant and from my point of view, as researcher. My point of view will be illustrated with photographs and narratives of the homes. With this approach I attempt to produce an intimate, though by no means complete, portrait.

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

A questionnaire (see appendix A) addressing the socioeconomic and cultural background of the participants was administered. The questions were applied to the participants, their parents, and spouse. The accuracy and factual nature of their answers were contingent on their memories. I have added some additional information from my own knowledge of the interviewees in order to clarify some of the incomplete factual information I received from the questionnaires.

Moy

I was christened Valerie Marie Mah, however I have used the name Moy, not Valerie, as my name for many years - except for legal documents.⁸ I was born (17/02/55) in Edmonton, Alberta to Kathleen

Me Tang Mah and Hong Suey Mah. I was the youngest child, my brother Greg was a year older and my sister, Laura, was four years older than me. Most of my childhood was spent in Edmonton. In 1965 our parents' were divorced and our lives were changed. We resettled in Calgary but my mother lived in one household, my brother in another, and my sister and myself in yet another. Eventually, for a short time, the three of us (Laura, Greg, and I) moved back with our father.

Both of my parents were born in Canada - Kaye in Castor, Alberta and Hong in Edmonton, Alberta. When Kaye completed grade nine and Hong finished high school, they married. The children soon followed and Mom was a full-time mother and housewife. Dad was a restauranteer with three restaurants named, The Cathayan, The College Grill, and The Olympic Grill. I remember spending alot of time at The Cathayan.

I don't know if my mother took any extra-curricular lessons or courses, as a young girl or as an adult. She was involved with the Luthern church, and was a Brown Owl for a short time. Dad had a strong work ethic and did little else but work. He did not believe in God but he would sometimes say he believed in ancestor worship. Recently he has been attending the Unitarian church. Later in life he pursued Tai Chi for a few years. My parents rarely travelled together; they went to Vancouver a few times to visit my dad's sister. In general Dad doesn't like to be away from home for more than a week - he has travelled in Canada, the United States, Europe, and the West Indies. Mom has travelled in Canada and the United States.

As a boy Dad was a waiter and busboy. He told me when he was thirteen he cleaned the gambling houses after they closed for the night. Once all three of us children were in school Mom worked as a hostess at the Beachcomber restaurant. Since then she has worked for the Hudson's Bay Company as a department head and sales clerk.

As a child I remember attending Sunday school and occasionally, during the summer months attending Vacation Bible school. At the age of five I was baptized in the Luthern church. At this time I would play hooky with my brother and sister without our mother's knowledge. As an adult I do not follow any particular religion. During my childhood years I took art lessons at the Edmonton Art Gallery. In my teenage and adult life I have taken skiing, dancing, aerobics, yoga, and French.

When I finished high school I took two years off to travel in Israel, Europe, and the United States. After this transition period I attended the University of Alberta in Edmonton. After my first year in education, I shifted my focus to fine arts and completed my BFA at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, Nova Scotia. During these years I had a variety of jobs. I worked as a hostess at the Beachcomber restaurant and Mother Tucker's, black jack dealer, sales clerk, orchard picker and domestic cleaner on a kibbutz, assistant printmaker, and a map tracer for the Alberta telephone company.

After graduating from the art college I worked as a sales clerk, painter, and teacher. I met my "husband" Douglas Ernest Sharpe at college. He was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick (26/12/'46) and

spent part of his childhood in the mining town of Minto. His work experience has consisted of being a grocery boy, furniture mover, bartender, and architectural draftsman. He attended the University of New Brunswick, Cooper Union in New York, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and the Banff School of Fine Art. He is a self-taught photographer and currently works as a freelance editorial photographer. In general we travel separately. Doug has travelled across Canada and through various parts of the United States. Besides the previous trips mentioned, I have been across Canada.

Laura

My sister Laura Maureen Yee (formerly Mah), was the oldest child of three. She was born in Edmonton, Alberta (22/12/51). As a young girl, Laura was involved in piano, horseback riding, swimming, and ballet. As an adult Laura has taken pottery, curling, skiing, and bowling, art inservices and a training session with Second Cup coffee vendors. Laura entered university immediately following high school. She attended the University of Calgary and received her BEd from the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

After Laura graduated she moved back to Calgary to stay. She became a teacher, housewife and mother of two (Mandi and "little" Greg) within a short period of time. Her husband, William Yuen Yee was born in 1950 in Canton, China. He came to Canada with his family when he was three years old. They lived in Vancouver and Regina before settling in Calgary. According to Laura, Bill's one extra-curricular activity has been to attend a soccer clinic. She also knows that he was a bus boy

at one time. He received his Bachelor of Commerce and is currently an accounting supervisor for an oil company.

The Yee family have travelled to places in Canada and the United States. Occasionally Laura or Bill will take a vacation on their own.

Mandi

Jennifer Mandi Yee was born on November 26, 1974 in Calgary, Alberta. She is the daughter of Laura Maureen Yee and Yuen Choi Yee [William]. According to Mandi, her mother also took baton lessons. She includes babysitting as one of her mother's jobs, and considers her to be a professional mom, teacher, and housewife. She perceives Laura's income to be more than double of what it actually is. Mandi adds to Laura's list, the kinds of work her father has done - food deliverer, bell hop, and dishwasher. Mandi considers her father a professional father and accountant.

Mandi has participated in jazz dancing, gymnastics, swimming, skiing, a babysitting course, and Brownies. She has worked delivering flyers, babysitting, and at Second Cup coffee vendors. Most of her income comes from babysitting and a weekly allowance that she receives for doing household chores. She has gone on family trips to Disneyland, Kelowna, Montana, Banff, Edmonton, and Vancouver.

Kaye

Kaye Roach (previously married to Hong Mah) was born (20/01/34) in Castor, Alberta. She was the eighth child of nine. She has lived in

various places in Alberta, and is currently living in Vanier, Ontario, near Ottawa.

Her parents Wong Tae (1869-1971) and Mary Loo Wong (dates unknown) were born in Canton, China. They immigrated to Canada and lived in Castor, Alberta [until Mary Loo died?]. Later, Wong Tae lived in various towns in Alberta, and settled in Calgary. Kaye's knowledge about her parents' lives is scant. She does not know the kind of education, (formal or informal), they had. Whether her parents followed any religion or if they travelled is also unknown. Of her mother Kaye says: "I don't even know her, how can I tell you where she travelled". I asked why she didn't know much about her mother. She answered: "Because I was 3 years old when she passed away." Her father was a restauranteer (a cook), and he helped build the Canadian railroad. Her mother was a "housewife as far as I know."

Kaye's education consists of grade ten, and math and typing courses at Henderson's College. She has worked as a hostess, housewife, and as a buyer, department head, manager, and sales person for Hudson's Bay Company's department store. She currently works as a sales person for "The Bay" in Ottawa.

Kaye has three children, Laura, Valerie (Moy), and Greg from her first marriage. Her current husband Micheal Thomas Roach was born in 1943 in Rapid City, South Dakota. He received his masters degree in education and taught in the United States. He is now a professional football coach. Kaye and Mike have travelled in Canada and the United States.



figure 1 Moy Mah



figure 2 Laura Yee



figure 3 Mandi Yee



figure 4 Kaye Roach

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS' HOMES

The word "home" not only refers to a physical structure used for shelter but also generates an emotional response. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) examine the home as symbolic environment. They say:

Although we live in physical environments, we create cultural environments within them. We continually personalize and humanize the given environment as a way of both adapting to it and creating order and significance ... the home is much more than a shelter; it is a world in which a person can create a material environment that embodies what he or she considers significant. In this sense the home becomes the most powerful sign of the self of the inhabitant who dwells within. (pp 122-123)

Each home is described in three different ways. First, is the participants' descriptions of the rooms in their homes. I also asked them to write about the significance each room had for them. I will summarize the responses, focusing on those rooms that were most significant. Second, is a photographic description, and third is a phenomenological description of my experience of the different homes.

Moy

Generally we (Doug and I) try to do the best with what we have. I enjoy the bookroom the most. It's a warm, comfortable, and sunny room. I spend alot of time here since this is currently my workroom. The back half of the living room is Doug's workspace. The front half of this room is where we watch tv. In this room we have a small hide-a-bed for guests. I don't spend much time in the bedroom, except to sleep. But it's important to go to bed and wake up peacefully. The kitchen is a good size where alot of time is spent, cooking, eating, cleaning, and talking. We tend to entertain alot in this space. This room catches the afternoon sun and leads onto the deck which we use at

every opportunity. The backroom, though unheated and somewhat dusty is useful. It is used as a pantry, storage room, laundry room, and makeshift darkroom. The bathroom is sandwiched between the kitchen and backroom. It is too small but is adequate for maintaining personal hygiene. At night I enjoy my time relaxing in a hot tub. Continual cleaning is required because of the high traffic through the rooms.



figures 5 and 6



figures 7 and 8



figures 9 and 10

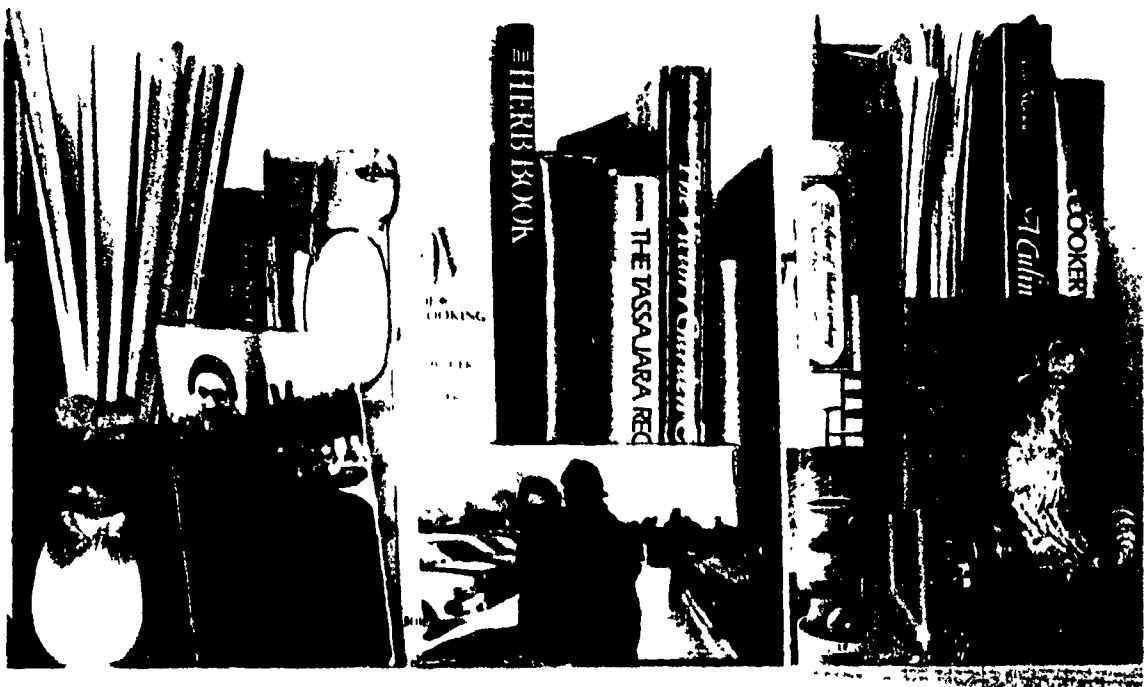


figure 11

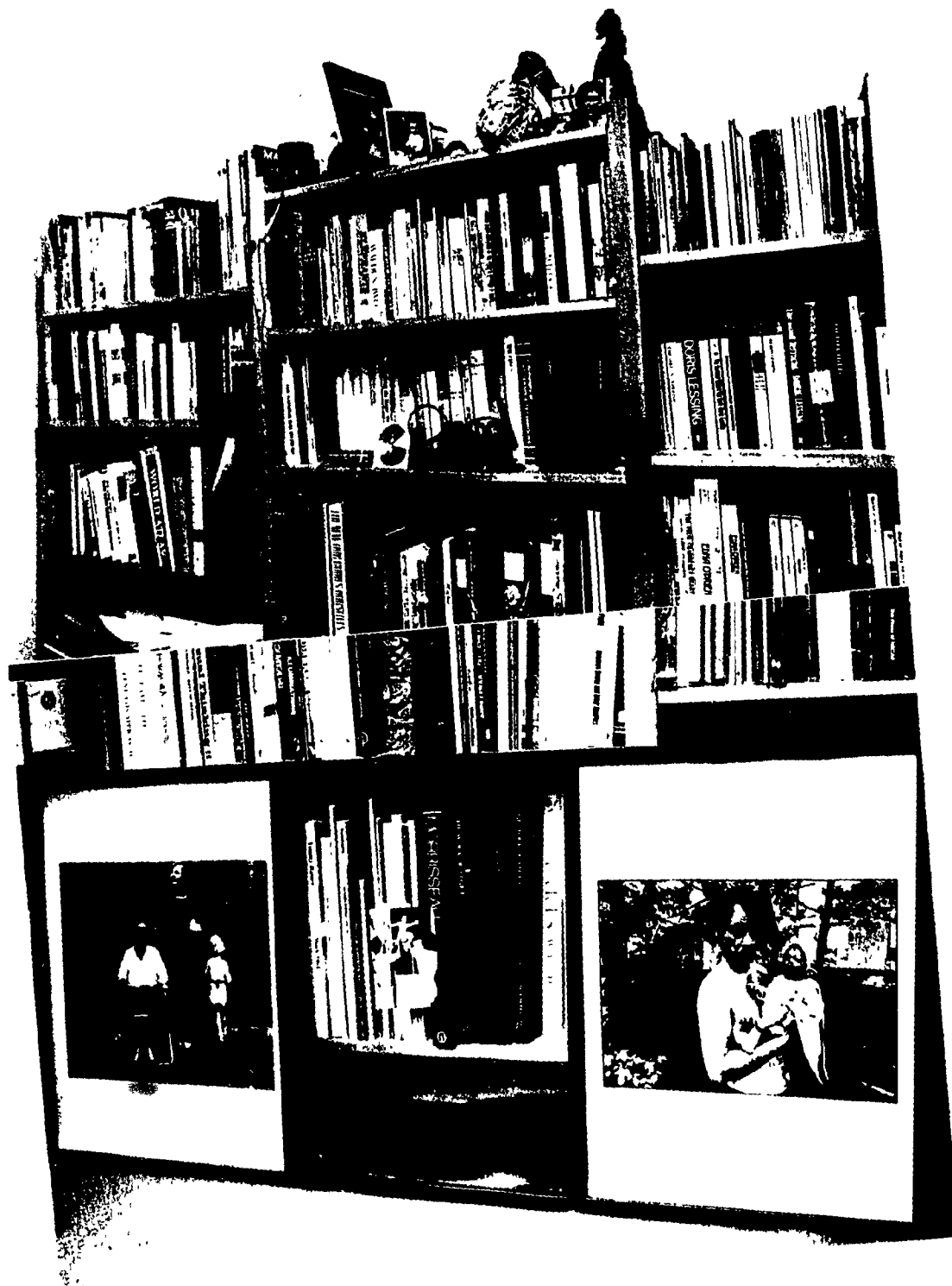
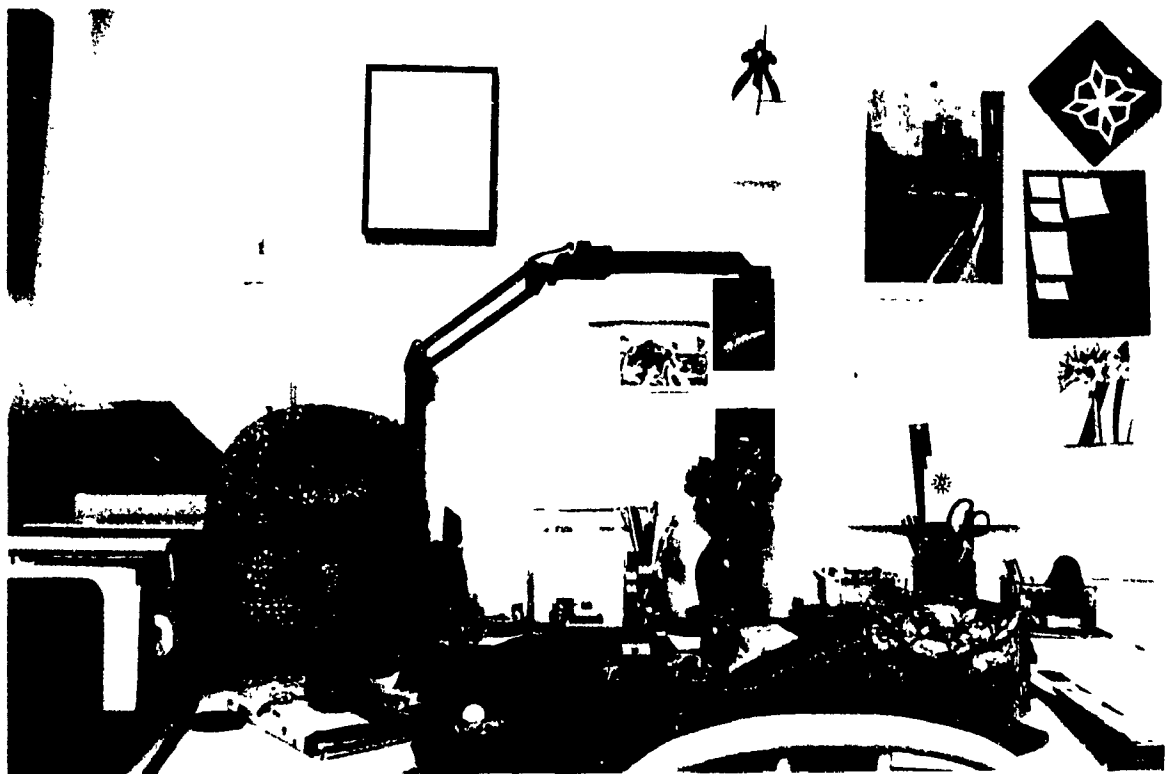
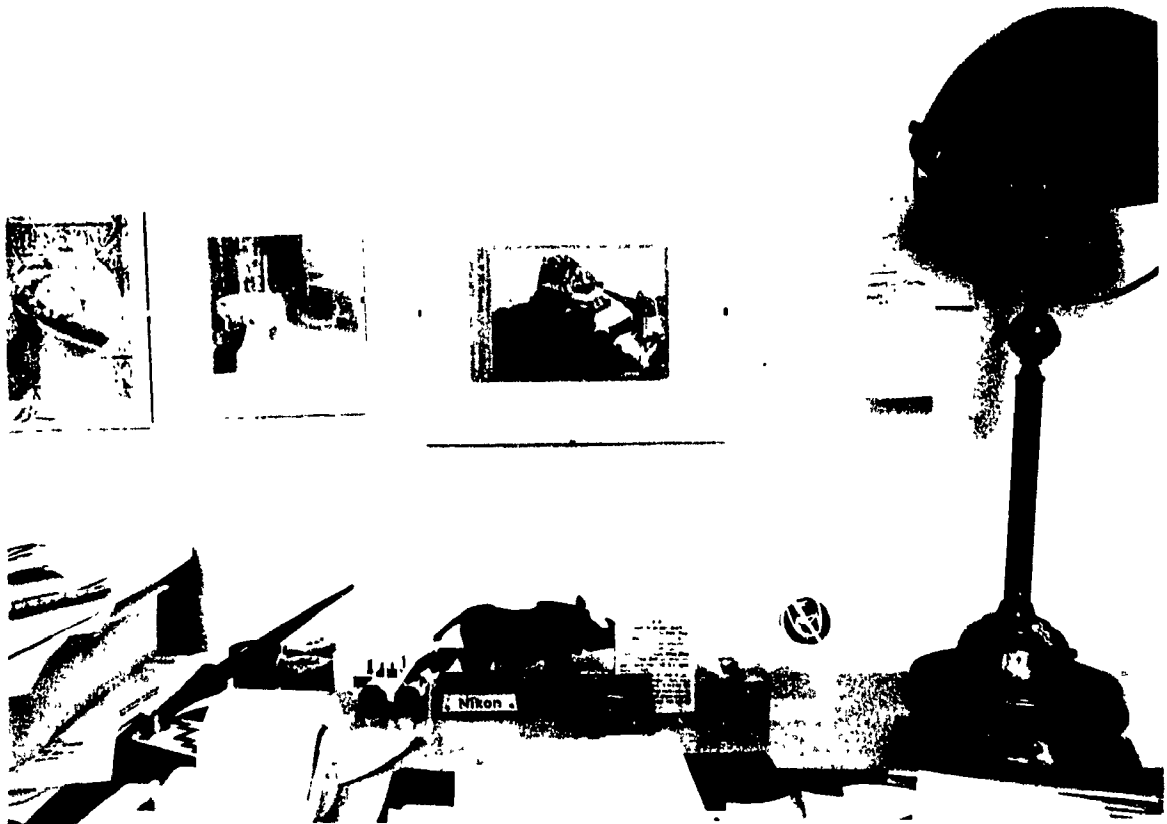
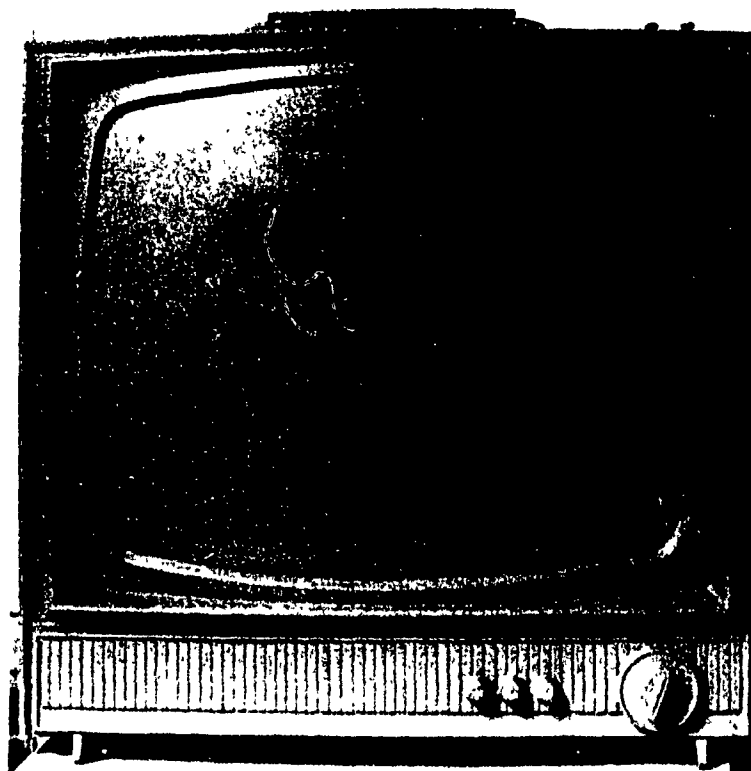


figure 12



figures 13 and 14



figures 15 and 16

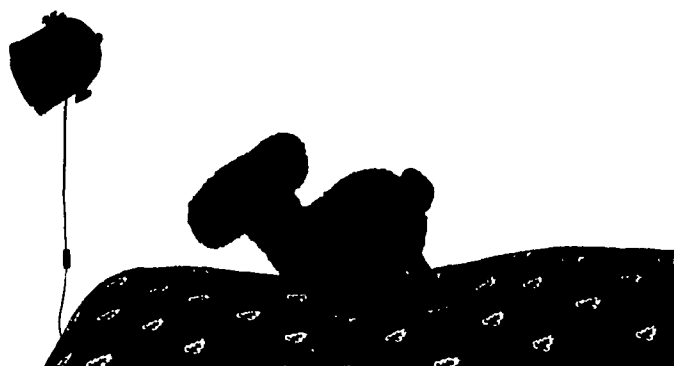
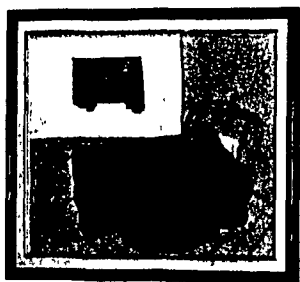


figure 17

Chez Nous

Each time I arrive home on Clark Street in Montreal I take a deep breath thinking that it will give me energy to climb up to the third floor. As soon as I open the apartment door I immediately look to see if the red light on the answering machine is flashing. I take a moment to remove my coat and boots while my eyes scan the walls where paintings of a seagull, horses, and a Virgin Mary are hung (figs. 5-8). The foyer is square shaped and leads off to all the rooms in three directions. The floor is covered in a light gold carpet and a door-mat to catch the dirt from outside. A bookshelf is placed against the wall between the bedroom and living room.

I walk into the kitchen, (figs. 9-11) make myself a cup of coffee and take a few minutes to relax at the kitchen table. The table has been cleared of the morning dishes and a candlestick or a bowl of fruit remain on the checkered green and white tablecloth. From my chair I look around at the pictures and toys on the walls and bookcase. A still life painting hangs above the the cookbooks on the bookcase. Squeezed on the same shelf are snapshots of family and friends, a papier mache rooster, a miniature film loop of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dancing, a prehistoric creature water pistol, and a rubber frog. The rest of the shelves are as congested with a ghetto blaster, audio tapes, and electrical appliances. My gaze shifts to the left and I momentarily look out through the windowed door which leads onto the balcony.

When I look at the calendar picture of cake and pastries I become hungry and prepare dinner. As I do this I glance at the other pictures around me - there is a black and white photographs of two fighting dogs hung above the guinea pig cage, postcards, snapshots, and other paraphernalia are stuck to the fridge with lobster, pancake and dinosaur magnets. Dinner is finished and I wander into the bookroom (fig. 12). I sit and read drinking a cafe au lait while my meal digests. This room is the brightest room in the apartment. It is small and the walls are covered with books, photographs, drawings, and paintings. The top self of the centre bookcase is crowded with family photographs, a satin penguin, wire figure, African doll, and other personal effects. There is a also a desk which is used by Doug (fig. 13).

My desk is in the back half of the living room (fig. 14). On the walls around my desk are paintings, postcards, calendar, and other things I enjoy looking at. Between the front and back half of the living room, besides my desk, there are bookcases where the telephone, stereo system, books and files are placed. On the same wall a poster of a photograph by Atget, and a photograph of a guy wire are hung. Before retiring I watch television in the front half of the living room (fig. 15). This room is used for little else and is furnished with a maroon corduroy sofa, armchair, endtable, filing cabinet, and bookcase on which the TV sits. In the corner above the TV a marionette of a giant dressed in green and holding a club is suspended from the ceiling. Above the sofa, on the wall is the "Test Tube" painting, by Bruce Campbell. On each of the remaining walls there are two more

paintings; one is untitled and the other is called "And Only Man Is Vile". There is a painted television called "Prime Time", also by Bruce Campbell that sits on top of the filing cabinet (fig. 16). In this corner the walls are lined with photographs of friends and family. Bedtime approaches and I enter the bedroom through the adjoining door (fig. 17).

Laura

For Laura, her family room, living room, and loft are the most comfortable spaces in her home. She describes the family room as spacious, sunny, and open. It has a fireplace, TV, and two VCR'S. Most of the family activities take place in the family room: "This room is well utilized and probably the homiest room in our home. This is where we do alot of living."

Although the living room is "probably the least used room" it's "a quiet, relaxing place to be." The loft is "usually where the guests sack out" and "can be relaxing". This room has a stereo system and is where the ironing "gets piled up."

The busiest places are the kitchen ("can be chaotic"), main floor bathroom ("a busy place"), and the main bathroom upstairs ("a hairy place to be"). All three rooms are essential to everyday living. Laura describes her kitchen as large and bright, and the place where she spends a large part of her time. The bathrooms ("too small") are used for personal hygiene.

Laura gives brief descriptions of the bedrooms, laundry room, master bathroom (which only her husband uses), and the dining room. The dining room is "not a warm place to be", and is used "to put things in when I don't know where else to put them." and "gets tidied up once a year, at Christmas."

Mandi

Mandi describes the rooms in her home as "comfortable". The "most special" space is her bedroom. She says: "Everything belongs to me and they mean alot. Its a small room with a pink canopy bed, a desk, and dressers. My belongings each have a special meaning to me. It's very comfortable."

Mandi associates specific rooms with specific significant activities. Although the living room is "rarely lived in", it is a place where Mandi goes for quiet. Taking a bath in the bathroom, and listening to music in the loft are also relaxing activities for her. Mandi uses the family room as a place to relax, and do her homework while watching tv after school. For her the kitchen is where meals are eaten. She especially enjoys her mornings here: "Sitting at the table eating breakfast is most comfortable for me because that is when the sun comes through the window."



figures 18 and 19



figure 20



figures 21 and 22



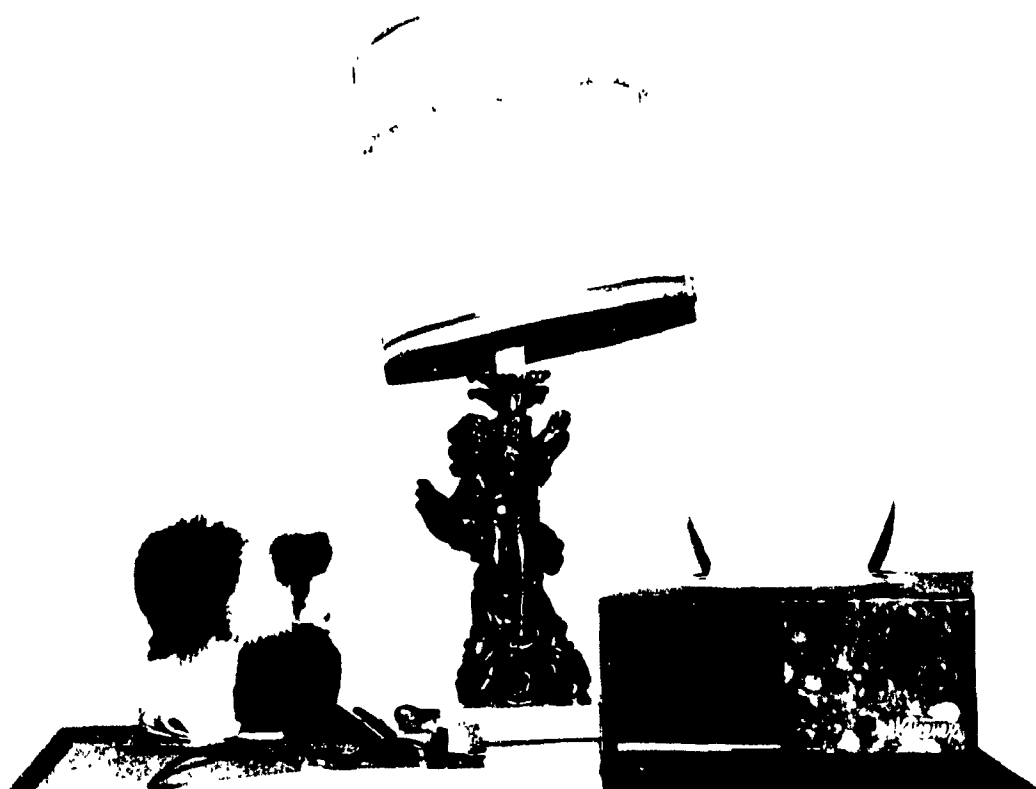
figure 23



figures 24 and 25



figure 26



figures 27 and 28



figure 29



figures 30 and 31

The Yee's

The ritual of going home, (the West where I was born) has varied little with each consecutive visit. I seem to habitually experience culture shock upon arrival to the Yee's home in Calgary, and upon arrival back to my own home in the East. However, the intimacy we share has enabled us to respect the distinctive lifestyles of each other.

The drive from the airport to the front door is so familiar that it's almost a haze. Up the hill into suburbia, turning onto a treelined street, zigzagging along the quiet crescent, past the childrens' park and barely peeking around the bend is their house. Bzzz, and the mechanical garage door opens. The car pulls in, is parked and the luggage lifted out of the trunk. I wait with my luggage on the porch while my sister locks up the garage, and unlocks the front door. In we go.

I set my suitcase down on the tiled ceramic foyer floor. I look momentarily - blankly to my left, where the living room is a few steps down. The immaculate room is how I left it a year or so ago. Nothing has changed. Stepping off the cool tiled floor onto the golden wall-to-wall, I stop and hesitate for a moment - will I ascend the staircase or go straight ahead to the back of the house where the kitchen and family room are located? I walk straight ahead down the hallway past the bathroom. I notice the hallway table with its elaborately decorated Chinese plate on a stand surrounded and flanked by Chinese figurines, unchanged (fig. 18). Past the laundry room,

turning the corner to my left, the open doorway to the dining room is like a blank screen.

An abrupt turn to my right and the life energy of the household envelops me. The kitchen and family room are ostensibly one large living space. The boundaries of the rooms are demarcated by an open wooden bannister, about four feet high, and the kitchen lino and wall-to-wall grey blue carpet in the family room.

The family room has a fireplace which is rarely used. At Christmas, the stockings are hung here (fig. 19). The floor-to-ceiling patio doors have cloth covered vertical blinds. Two couches are strategically placed to watch the 28" color TV, or video movies. As I look around I notice two framed pictures of figures in a Chinese landscape, a few plants, and stereo speakers with the Playboy Bunny character outlined with sprinkle sparkles (fig. 20). School pictures of the children sit on top of the TV, and chronologically ordered photo albums sit on the bookcase.

Into the kitchen to sit, relax, and have a cup of tea at the round oak kitchen table which is covered in plastic for protection. Day to day remains are deposited here; eyeglasses, contact lens solution, a mug, and other paraphernalia. The round yellow asbestos trivet with its fading flowers is the only thing that is fixed. Orange curtained windows welcome the sunlight in on two sides of the room. One set of windows is located above the sink looking onto the backyard. As I sip my tea I gaze out the other windows, overlooking the deck and memories

of summer bar-be-cues flash by.

Modern appliances: microwave and dishwasher are additional conveniences to the fridge and stove. The fridge is covered with drawings by the children and little Greg's (Laura's son) hockey or soccer schedule, depending on the season. To the left, on the wall is hung a ceramic plaque, doll, leather thonged bottles, and a trivet. On the other side of the fridge the cubby hole space is permanently blocked with overflowing papers (fig. 21). A Melitta coffee maker, electric can opener, yellow flowered cannister set, and woven bread basket sit on designated spots on the remaining counter space.

As bedtime approaches I make my way upstairs to the loft where I will sleep for the next six weeks (fig. 22). There is a small sofa, rocking chair, glass table, and stereo system in here. This space is open to the hallway and overlooks the living room. I put my luggage down and visit my niece and nephew in their rooms.

Little Greg's room is at the front of the house. The windows are covered with wooden shutters. Walls of wallpaper depict a boy playing sports: hockey, football, soccer, badminton is what I recall. As I turn my head I am greeted by Jake the Snake and other World Wrestling Federation personalities, who are juxtaposed with Cheryl Tiggs[?] in a revealing swimsuit (figs. 23 and 24). Above his desk are framed photos of Greg dressed in full hockey and soccer regalia, alone and with the team. There also hangs a bulletin board, with what? - I draw a blank. This fair-sized room seems small; toys, books, stuffed animals

and whatever else are neatly displayed on Greg's two desks, bookshelf, bureau, and double bed. A ghetto blaster, speakers, television, and Nintendo game stand out amongst this conglomeration of things.

Straight down the hall is Mandi's room. Like Greg's room, it's a kaleidoscope of images and things. Her wall paper is Holly Hobbie girls and boys framed by flower garlands. Her canopy bed posts are strung with purses of every shape and color. Posters change from time to time, from Corey Hart to panda bears and kittens. Stuffed animals - bears, bears, and more bears, with a couple of Cabbage Patch dolls and a Primi doll compete for the small doll's bed placed on the floor. I don't dare look under the bed.

Crammed between her bed and closet is her desk (which like the doll bed is concealed) with paper, pens, and containers. There's no visual rest, a small blink upwards is met with a barrage of pictures, a ceramic money sock, stickers, paper, and other items push pinned into a bulletin board (fig. 25). When I turn my head around, whether I look straight ahead, left or right I see more things. On top of her dresser there's a ghetto blaster, CD player, Sony Walkman, bank, jewellery boxes, earring tree, ... I close my eyes. Beneath my eyelids I see a ceramic bunny, clown and balloons. I continue to scan the room and a framed mirror with hooks dangle scarfs, framing James Dean's face. I gaze out the window before I refocus on the bookcase (fig. 26). The shelves are displayed with books, a candy dispenser shaped like a duck, dolls, olympic and panda bear pins in a frame, a wooden jewellery box with several paper boxes tucked behind it, and whatever else my memory

fails to see.

The upstairs bathroom is sandwiched between Mandi and little Greg's rooms. With me visiting, it is shared by four people. Small spherical bulbs light up the room, and reflected in the wall sized mirror is a sea shell sink. The counter space is well stocked with bottles of this and that placed in a Miss Kitty container, Body Shop basket, and a Snoppy or Superman holder.

The master bedroom is located next to Mandi's room (fig. 27). It is large, spacious, and sparse in comparison to the childrens' rooms. A suite of night tables, dressers, and bed give a uniform appearance. The deep green curtains with a flower motif and the bedspread are perfectly matched. On one of the night tables I see a telephone, box of kleenex, an alarm clock, and perhaps a ring or wrist watch (fig. 28). A mirror, ceramic water pitcher and bowl, are in one corner of the room, and framed color studio photos of smiling children are on the wall. Clothes, shoes, and boxes upon boxes fill the walk-in closet. Behind the other door is the master bathroom. It's green, I think.

The next day begins, Bill has left for work, Laura and the children are bussling about getting ready for work and school. The last person is out. I slowly come to life in silence with a cup of coffee and cigarette. I take this time alone to reaquaint myself with the rest of the house.

The living room appears to be untouched (fig. 29). Everything has a

look of newness - end tables, coffee table, sofa, loveseat, and chair have been stationary for so long that their impressions have been branded into the carpet. I hesitate to take a seat but finally sink into the middle of the light brown and cream colored, floral sofa. On the glass tabletop in front of me are planters with succulents, a white porcelain figurine ... more plants to my right and left, an ornamental ceramic fan, bank, and incense burner in soft grays with a dragon serpentine around its base close in on one side. A laughing Buddha stands erect against the urn shaped lamp on my other side (fig. 30).

From where I sit, to my right, behind the matching loveseat, natural light filters through the floor to ceiling sheers. Potted trees stretch their branches towards the cathedral ceiling. A picture I never noticed before, peeks through the branches which, as the years go by, slowly conceal its presence. The wall behind me is barren except for the three brass Chinese characters bordered by two framed pictures of peonies [?].

Looking straight ahead I see the dining room on the other side of the wooden bannister (fig. 31). Once a year, at Christmas, the table top is swept clean of the clutter that has accumulated over the year. These traces of human activity are contrasted to the quiet, remote display of dishes, goblets, and mementos in the china cabinet. I feel too alone sitting here, I stand up and walk through the dining room to the kitchen and family room area. Even with everyone at work or school they are ever present in these rooms.

Kaye

Kaye describes the generic function of the rooms in her home. She gives little indication of the personal significance of these rooms. For her certain spaces are relegated for public use - the dining and living rooms are places to entertain, relax, and share meals. The kitchen is for preparing meals and cleaning up the dishes and pots and pans. The bathroom and bedroom are private spaces. Both places are where one begins and ends one's day.

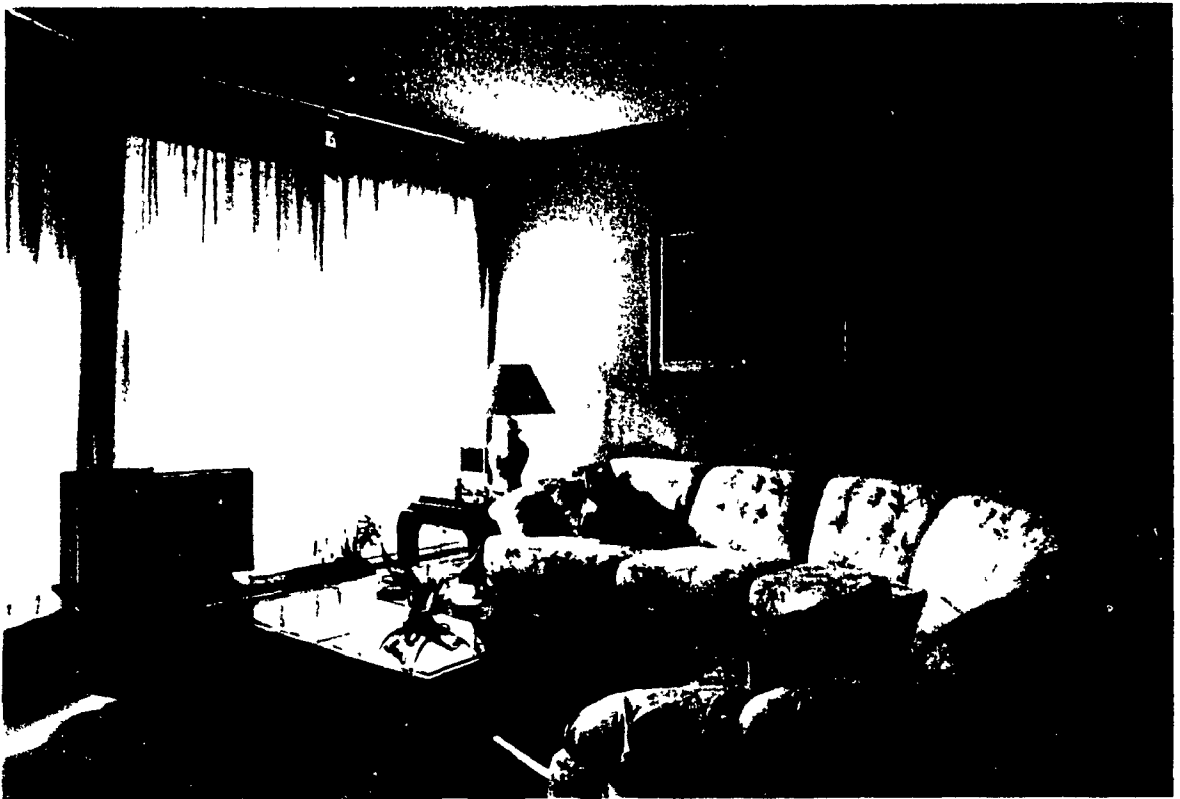
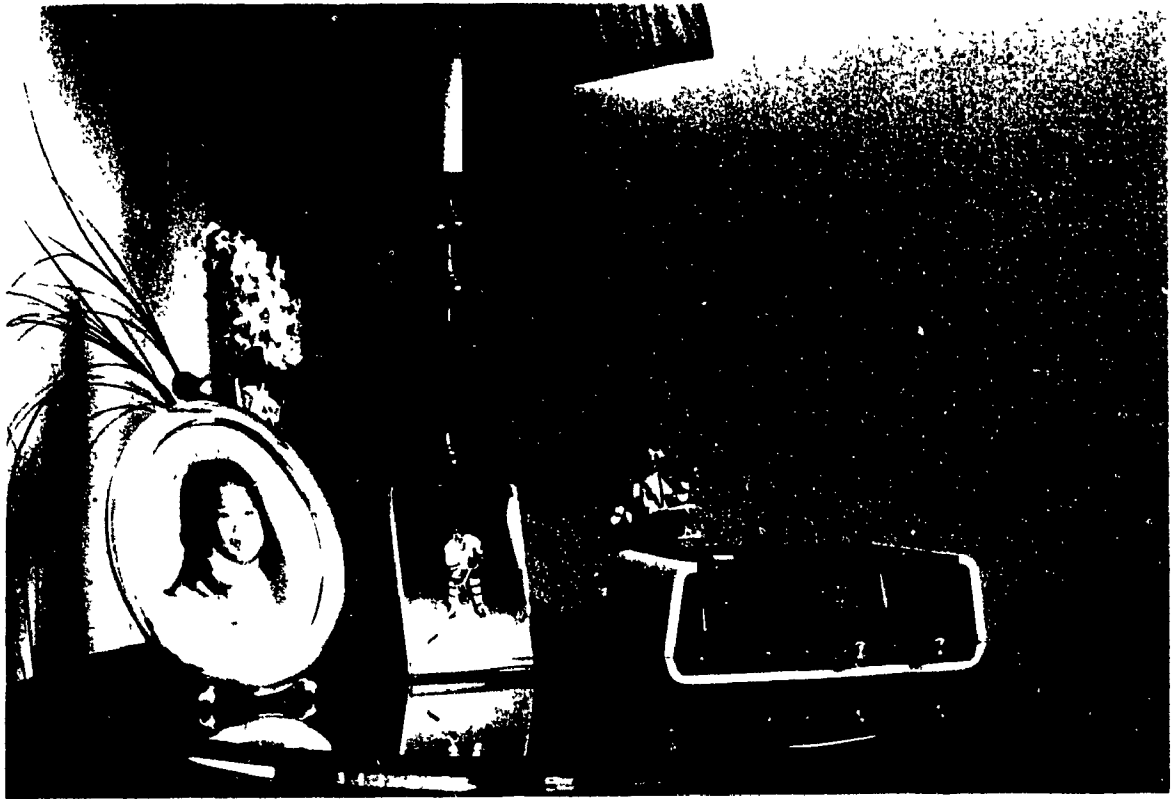


figure 32



figures 33 and 34



figures 35 and 36



figure 37

The Roaches

Kaye and her husband Mike moved to Vanier, Ontario from Edmonton, Alberta about a year ago. They rent a condominium in a new building overlooking the Rideau River. The view out their third floor balcony is unhampered; directly below a community of trees buffer the traffic noise from the freeway. Across the road is a park bordering the river, where on the far side begins the urban sprawl of Ottawa.

There is a pristine quality that permeates this brand new apartment. With each visit my initial impression is the same - I'm entering a show piece. Everything is always in place or rather everything has its place. Mom is as meticulous about her house keeping as she is about the arrangement of her furniture and placement of each object and picture. Sometimes residuals of human activity can be found - a bowl of left over popcorn from the night before is left sitting on the coffee table, or a mug or glass may be left to stand overnight in the sparkling stainless steel sink. There is a trace of private living in the placement of a protective flannel bed sheet covering the sofa, which is removed when guests are expected.

Entering her apartment I am greeted by a full screen of sunlight from the far side of the room. To the right of the foyer is the kitchen. This small space is well equipped with stove, fridge, microwave, and dishwasher. Behind the closed folding doors is the pantry and laundry room. There is an open space between the sink and cupboards above, from where we watch television while doing dishes.

The large space in front of me is divided into the living room and dining room (fig. 32). This division is marked by the back of the sofa which curves around hugging the wall. Pink satin and woven blue cushions rest in the crook of the arms. Above, on the wall is hung a painting depicting a city street. Between the glass sliding doors and sofa I see a lamp, three white elephants, miniature glass vase, and clock displayed on the end table. A slight shift left and a circular vase in matt and gloss black comes into view. Next to this is the television which is continually on. A few inches back sits the square coffee table which fills the L-shaped space created by the sofa. Wooden ribs converge, dividing the glass table top into four smaller squares. On this centre point sits a glass dish of sugarless candy drops. Coasters and a fan shaped, metallic gold placemat are used to catch food and beverage spills.

The walls on each side of this large space run parallel except for a small nook on the left, next to the window. This area has a light blue Lazy Boy chair and end table where a lamp, brass duck, and the telephone are placed (fig. 33). Next to the chair is a tall silk plant whose leaves visually lead my eyes upward. Above the chair are painted landscapes of mountains, trees, and water. I spot another silk plant sitting on a small circular glass table in front of the window.

Two small paintings of flowers in gold oval frames begin my tour of the dining room. My eyes move in a wave like motion as I continue to scan the left wall. A black cushioned chair rests alongside a circular table littered with elephants made of green plastic, white porcelain,

ceramic, brass, and crystal; trunks stretching skywards for luck. A snapshot and vase with yellow silk flowers sit among these good luck charms. A reflection in the arc shaped mirror above the table shifts my gaze to the opposite wall.

A large framed picture of hills, trees, and birds are rendered in soft brown tones. Down and to my right are a black vase, a jade bowl, and a figurine of two old people saying grace. Next to this, against the dividing wall between the kitchen and dining room is a long black hutch with a soup tureen and matching crystal candle holders sitting on top. The dining room ensemble sits in the middle of the room (fig 34).

I turn my attention to the rooms down the hall. The guest bedroom is small. The double bed is covered with a blue bedspread which is removed and carefully folded each night at bedtime. A fingertip away a lamp, alarm clock, figurine, and framed snapshots sit on a circular glass table (fig. 35). A picture of a vase and flowers hangs on the wall at the foot of the bed. Across the hall is the guest bathroom (fig. 36). Like the rest of the apartment it is clean and tidy. On the wall above the toilet is a picture of an oriental dancer framed in gold. The lush yellow and lime green towels are folded in a precise way. These towels are for display purposes only. An elephant, potpourri, soap balls in a basket, comet, vase, etc. flash past my eyes.

I enter the master bedroom and bathroom area (fig. 37). Windows extend across one side and closets across another. The bed and dresser

butt against the remaining wall. At the head of the bed pillows are arranged to form an inverted triangle. A white cotton heart shaped pillow fringed with cotton lace eyelet is inscribed with embroidery to commemorate their wedding day. A floor-length mirror is tucked in one corner, a floor lamp in another, and a chair and table run along the windows. Landscape watercolors hang on the wall. Photographs, brass and ceramic footballs, containers, silk flowers, and telephone are a few of the things displayed in this room. I remember the master bathroom as a peach colored mesh.

In my attempts to convey what happened "in here" I have adopted a method of telling called "impressionist tales" (Van Maanen 1988).

These tales or narratives, along with the photographs present my experience of the three households. My point of view was furnished, in part, by the participants' feelings about their homes. These tales are not judgements but recollections of my impressions. The photographs provide an additional reading which the text alone could not do.

According to Collier (1986) photographic records of what people have in their domestic environment and how things are arranged in relationship to each other, as well as in space provide insights into the character of peoples' lives. He suggests that cultural inventories can begin to ask questions about economic level, life-styles, aesthetic of the decor, the activities of the household, character of order, and signs of hospitality and relaxation. Although my task was not to explicitly analyse the photographs in this way, I think my process of photographing, choosing, and placing the images as I have begin to tell a story of their own.

Chapter 4

COMMONSENSE KNOWLEDGE AND WORKING DEFINITIONS

Common sense as a cultural system has been described by Geertz (1983) as "a loosely connected body of belief and judgement, rather than just what anybody properly put together cannot help but think." (p 10).

Bearing this in mind he further suggests that:

If common sense is as much an interpretation of the immediacies of experience, a gloss of them, as are myth, painting, epistemology, or whatever, then it is, like them, historically constructed and, like them, subjected to historically defined standards of judgement. It can be quest'oned, disputed, affirmed, developed, formalized, contemplated, even taught, and it can vary dramatically from one people to the next. (p 76)

In this chapter I will attempt to make some links with the participants' (of whom I am one) commonsense knowledge and definitions to some of the conceptions found in Western aesthetics. I assume that only Western constructs are applicable despite our Chinese origins. We (the participants) are second, third, and fourth generation Canadians who grew up with scant knowledge of our Chinese heritage.

This chapter is based on two interviews about the participants' art background. This broad topic heading was deliberate in order to promote a wide range of questions and responses. The first interview addressed the participants' own artistic and creative experience at home, school, and other contexts. I was particularly interested in finding out the participants' notions of what was art and what was not; who was an artist and who was not. A follow-up interview was conducted

based on their initial responses.

Structured in the questions were terms such as art, craft, artist, people who do non-art things, and artistic. However, I did not define these terms in any particular way. I wanted the participants to construct their own definition of these terms. As researcher I was open to whatever definitions these terms might suggest. There was no apparent difficulty coupling the participants' notions with these terms. However, I question how relevant these applied terms are in the context of these women's lives. I assume that the terms I chose are familiar to the participants, but I do not assume that the meanings connected to these terms are necessarily the same for the women as they are for me. This assumption is based on the fact that my understanding and use of these terms has largely been formed by the "fine art" world, whereas the "fine art" world has little significance to these women. I was interested in finding out what their interpretations of these terms were. I suspect these women have more appropriate holding terms that more accurately describe their operations and knowledge. I do not disavow the influential nature of my use of these terms. Congdon (1989) reiterates my concern:

I recognize, as does Clifford, how my choices of language here may override or misrepresent another culture's perspective and intentions. I do so in large part, because I am caught in the limits of a language system which does not speak universally. It is precisely these limitations which I ask art educators to recognize and attempt to change. (p 177)

Indeed the structure of my questions may well have discouraged more dormant ideas from coming forth, and unintentionally forced premature closure.

With the background of major categories in traditional Western aesthetic theory the following key concept headings were derived directly from the interviews with Kaye, Laura, Mandi, and myself. At times the responses refer to more than one aesthetic theory. I think these cross-overs exist in part because of the fugitive nature of the topic and also because life is more complex than any theoretical category is able to encompass. A certain amount of confusion was also evident. Perhaps this is inherent in the process of sorting out one's thoughts. This phenomena, I think, also reveals the inadequacy of the existing meaning categories derived from Western aesthetic tenets. Other kinds of categories need to be developed, not as parallels to what already exist but as alternatives.

GOOD EYE

Kaye coined the term "good eye" when describing someone who is an artist from someone who is not. For her an artist has a "gift, you know to, to draw something that you see. You know that they have a good eye to draw."

Skill

The aspect of skill generally refers to draftsmanship and acute observation. Laura shared this interpretation and said that a good drawing is identified by its realism ie. that the object or person portrayed is identifiable. Copying on the other hand was considered by Kaye, but not by Laura, as a form of artmaking. For Kaye copying required draftsmanship and acute observation. She said: "its the same as if you were doing a portrait of someone. You're looking and you're

drawing." Kaye recalls copying as a school and home art activity: "I once remember this one I drew of a football player. It was just a small picture that I copied and I drew it about ten times as large and I got a pretty good mark on that." (this was the only picture she remembered doing at school). And at home, "...just on my own I used to draw animals. I used to copy animals, the things were Bambi, Thumper, Flower." Laura said copying was not a creative activity. I interpreted this to also mean that copying was not an art form. This inference was made from her statement that creativity (or imagination) is a characteristic of an artist. Laura describes her daughter's (Mandi) drawings as being exact imbued with little imagination - "I don't know if I'd call her drawings creative... It's more like copying." In high school I did a still life painting with a vase and a cow's skull in it. Our teacher set up this composition. My goal was to paint a "good" likeness of it. Also, at this time I made pen and ink posters at home. I would copy images of objects from a variety of sources and combine them as metaphors.

Self-expression

Kaye's explanation of "good eye" also alluded to the notion of self-expression. For her an artist is also "able to put across the feeling that you're [they're] trying to put across." and "... they [artists] have a certain, um, image of something that they're moulding into a figure." Laura does not define self-expression but says an artist is "someone who is self expressive, whether it's through drawing or dancing or acting..." The aspect of self-expression appeared again when Mandi discussed the notion of "true artist".

TRUE ARTIST

The term "true artist" evolved from Mandi's distinction between herself and other people who write poetry. They were "true artists" and she was "artistic".

MANDI: ...and I consider her an artist because well, she likes to draw, she likes to write poems and she's creative.

MOY: ok, so if someone is creative and if someone does something like write poems are they. do you consider those people artists?

MANDI: yeah

MOY: So, for yourself, do you consider yourself an artist, or artistic? [Mandi writes poetry]

MANDI: Artistic but not a true artist. My dad, I think my dad is an artist too. Even though he doesn't like to draw or do anything like that, but he's got that talent because he draws good.

Mandi links the ability to draw well with talent. She indicates, with the example of her father, that someone can be an artist by virtue of being talented. Ideas about creativity, talent, and profession were interwoven in the distinction between those who are "true" artists and those who are not.

Creativity

The notion of creativity was paralleled to the notion of self-expression. When I asked Mandi what, for her, creativity was she said: "designing your own stuff...unique". This idea was reiterated when she described a good drawing as "... something of your own, like not anything you've seen or copied but YOUR OWN that you've made up yourself." In this context drawing seems to refer to originality as

opposed to looking at something as a model to draw from. This notion had a similar meaning to Laura when she referred to art as something that "comes from within someone." She also implies that a piece of art is unique when explaining the distinction between craft and art: "Like I find that, I find that crafts is something that can be duplicated, where as a piece of art to me, is not duplicable."

As mentioned earlier, Laura also couples skill and imagination (or creativity) with self-expression. She also said that a creative person exhibits things from different perspectives, meaning "in their works, they, they're able to visualize whatever they're doing from different points of view." and "it's getting back to the fact that I find artistic people wander from the norm, so like even in everyday situations they, they see things from a different view." My own comments that "an artist is someone who is honest with themselves and is true to his or her own spirit carries an element of risk which may require, as suggested above, that an artist operate apart from the norm. For Kaye "everyone's creative in some way...and you could call them all artists in their own way." For example, someone could have "an art for cooking or "an art dealing with people." Perhaps creativity refers to the ability to distinguish oneself from others, and can be done in a variety of ways.

Talent

As mentioned earlier Kaye links talent or gift and self expression ("good eye"). Among artists' abilities, such as skill, appreciation, and imagination, "talent" has to be present. Kaye's opinion that her

daughter (me) is an artist seems to be based primarily on talent: "as far as my daughter goes, it goes way back when she was in grade school that, she enjoyed drawing and, it was nice that her teacher had encouraged her, to further that talent that she was showing which she did ... so she was just a gifted child and pursued it..." I asked her if she thought someone was born with talent or if it was something that could be learnt. She said: "No I think you have to have sort of... I think any, anyone can apply themselves to a degree. But I think to be famous or successful painter or whatever that, tum, you have to be gifted somewhat."

Profession

Concepts of who is an artist and who is not was generally made in terms of kinds of professions. Kaye cited artistic endeavours in peoples' work in visual presentation such as doing display work and interior design, and people who make sculptures and pottery. She said "there's a different name for each category", by profession. Mandi and Laura's distinctions were made with examples of the "non-art" professions. Mandi gave the examples: teachers, doctors, and lawyers - "all the other people." Laura referred to the "more practical everyday kinds of things like fixing cars, working with numbers." For Laura credentials could also signify artist or artistic. In response to who she considered artistic or an artist she said: "several people come to mind...my sister has a BFA and now she's taking her masters..." and "... in order to qualify for such a degree you'd have to be artistic." My role as art educator and artist has been shaped by the "fine art world" and I considered artmaking as a professional activity. For me

this foundation is no longer adequate or stable. My responses reflected my struggle to broaden my ideas and attitudes about art etc.: "Those people who do the so called non-art things I would describe them as people whose primary focus and concerns in their lives do not revolve around the art world... It seems what, what an artist is, is ambiguous and confused. Notions of what makes someone an artist changes, as does what is art. I don't think I can say someone who is an artist has these following qualities and that's that."

HOME DECOR

The concept of beauty as commonsense knowlege is applied to home decoration. This activity (for Kaye, Laura, and myself) is a form of making that is pretty or creative, (but not necessarily called art).

The Arrangements

I tend to concentrate on small areas in my home while Kaye and Laura decorate their homes to produce a homogenous whole. I described the arrangements in my home as niches: "well in my bedroom on my bureaus I have the things I use arranged with things that are decorative. Sometimes it's a combination of an aesthetic and practical function. Like the containers I put my jewellery in. My desk has mainly things that are practical but for me they're also aesthetic. Like I have pencil sharpeners that are heads of oriental girls wearings hats and a couple of glass paperweights."

Kaye described the "look" she aspired to in home decoration: "I like my home to be bright and to be warm tum, hmn warm but elegant... I

like it to be spacious too. Like not cluttered or anything like that, but mainly bright and warm and comfortable." She places herself within a grouping (conservative and contemporary) relative to other groupings (antiques and colonial). She describes the way she dresses as conservative and identifies it as "sort of a basic style...it could be sort of trendy...but still subdued." Laura gives specific examples of home decor to describe her sense of beauty. "Well I think the, the home can look quite pleasing to the eye visually by the way you use colors, by the way you uh, decorate the home with objects, using different shapes, and textures [?]. You could have a broad-leafed plant in a brass vase or in a brass planter. Or you might have an ornamental table piece like the incense burner."

Color

How these women decorate their homes includes commonsense knowledge about the arrangement and combination of formal elements such as texture, space, shape, scale, and color. For Laura and Kaye choices in objects and images often revolves around the color scheme. Kaye describes how she makes her home bright and warm: "By the colors I choose and by the textures of, that I use like the chesterfields ..." and "...also your pictures in your rooms, you know that go with your furniture... the colors that they show in a picture you know what I mean, but I don't choose the picture like the scenery or whatever to match the furniture. It's moreless the colors that were shown in the picture." She has used a variety of colors to decorate her home but said: "I like pastels, but mind you though I like pastels combined with like basic black and, uh I like lots of white. Like Kaye, the

colors Laura preferred were light in tone. She said: "I don't know, it changes from time to time. Right now I'd like to do my home in very soft colors like peaches and um very cool greys."

ART and CRAFT

Both Laura and Mandi distinguish art from craft. This distinction was made by their explanation or identification of what was craft, rather than by what art was. The physical as well as the mental process seemed, for Laura, to be what accounted for the difference between art and craft. She said that although a variety of mediums may be common to both art and craft "there's a vast difference between arts and crafts." She described the craft process as being "more step-by-step; how-to do it" and thus "predetermined", producing useful objects. This "structured dimension" (of crafts) interfered with a person's "freedom to express yourself [oneself] and to be creative." The aspect of self-expression again appears to be a distinguishing factor, that in this context, also applies to the finished product. For Laura craft can be duplicated, whereas a piece of art, because "it comes from within someone", cannot.

Mandi, on the other hand was unable to articulate what it was that distinguished art from craft. Instead, she indicated what kind of activity, such as sewing, was craft. When she talked about sewing she emphasised those things she made, (her initial pillows and giant pillow) rather than the process. Although she did not identify the things she made in industrial art as crafts, she spoke about them in a similar way to those things she made in sewing. All the objects she

mentioned had a practical use and recalls Laura's sentiments. Other activities she referred to as craft, "I don't call it art but I call it crafts." were french braiding her hair, writing poems, and making friendship bracelets. The sewing and industrial arts projects, french braiding, and friendship bracelets refer to the structured, step-by-step, predetermined process mentioned by Laura. Writing poems could also be included here because I know Mandi relies on a rhyming structure to produce her poems.

Laura and Mandi's notions about craft are not uncommon and can be traced to the late eighteenth century. At this time according to Williams (1983) the distinction between artist and artisan was declared (prior to this the two terms were identical) "... - the latter being specialized to 'skilled manual worker' without 'intellectual' or 'imaginative' or 'creative purposes...' (p 41). This general base is still in use today. Some similar ideas can be found in Becker's (1982) discussion on art and craft. According to Becker, the folk definition of craft is: "a craft consists of a body of knowledge and skill which can be used to produce useful objects ..." as well "...it consists of the ability to perform in a useful way." (p 273). I think the first half of this definition refers to the process Laura describes as "step-by-step", and the process which Mandi uses to produce her pillows, or her mirror with wooden pegs. Although Mandi emphasised the resulting products, she acknowledged that she had to learn how to read a sewing pattern and learn how to operate the machinery in industrial arts to make these things.

Becker (1982) states use, virtuoso skill, and beauty as the main criteria by which craft is judged. Of these three, utility seems to be the most important factor for Laura and Mandi. Perhaps Laura's idea that the predetermined nature of craft which lends itself to duplication can be linked to virtuoso skill. The third criterion, beauty was not mentioned by either Mandi or Laura. However, I do know that Mandi takes great care and consideration when choosing the colors she uses to make her friendship bracelets - she chooses the colors that she thinks are pretty.

The creative and self-expressive aspect that Laura has emphasized throughout the interviews is one which many "Members of art worlds often distinguish art and craft" (Becker p 272). The sentiment that art "comes from within someone" and as Kaye suggests, that the talent must be present is congruent to what Becker suggests as the means by which this distinction is made. He says:

They [members of art worlds] recognize that making art requires technical skills that might be seen as craft skills, but they also typically insist that artists contribute something beyond craft skill to the product, something due to their creative abilities and gifts that gives each object or performance a unique and expressive character. (p 272)

WESTERN PHILOSOPHY OF AESTHETICS

I will begin with a overview of four main aesthetic theories (mimesis, expression, form, and beauty) as outlined by Sheppard (1987). I will draw from the interviews in an attempt to illustrate the connections between theory and practice. My intention is not to categorize or classify our notions into nice neat packets but rather to see what the possible references are. I suspect that a melange will be the result.

Mimesis

Mimesis (the Greek term used by Plato) is one of the earliest theories about art. According to Sheppard (1987), imitation implies an inferior value, and representation "is more non-committal about the value of representation and is more likely to suggest the context of art." (p 8). Generally mimesis refers to the relation between representation and object, or appearance and reality (Encyclopedia of Philosophy 1967, 1:18).

Plato postulated that there were three levels of making. That made by God, which was the perfect Form, that which was tangible, for example the carpenter's bed, and that which was the copy, for example a painting of the carpenter's bed. The ideal Platonic Form makes reference to the divine model. Both the bed made by the carpenter and the painter were imitations (of the divine model) and thus inferior. Since a painting was an imitation of the imitation it was the least valued. Plato equates the artist's making to holding up a mirror, to produce a deceptive illusion of reality.

Later thinkers made modifications to Plato's tenets giving art a more favourable status. Art was now an imitation of the ideal Form or an imitation of an idea in the artist's mind, and not an imitation of an imitation. This latter modification influenced Renaissance, seventeenth, and eighteenth century thought.

Theories concerned with mimesis have extended the discourse in terms of resemblance. At one end of the scale is the art of trompe-l'oeil; art

as illusion (the mirror analogy). At the other end representation is a matter of convention (system of signs). Sheppard believes that our understanding of representational art involves the recognition of resemblance and the appreciation of convention.

Expression

The Romantics of the eighteenth and nineteenth century emphasised the expression of the artist's personal emotion as art. It is through the projection of the imagination (intuition) that the artist produces art and that the members of an audience recreate this expression for themselves (Sheppard 1987). The artist's imagination was a special gift of insight into truth. With it he or she could create and reveal nature's essence. Imagination is distinct from fancy in that it is the "...coadunating faculty" that dissolves and transforms the data and creates novelty and emergent quality" (Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1967, citing Beardsley, 1967).

Pure expression (art) has no ulterior purpose. Pseudo-art such as hymns and patriotic songs sought to arouse emotion for some practical purpose, and romances or detective stories were sources of entertainment. The real work of art is the expression of the artist's mind and the physical object (painting etc.) is only its extension.

Form

The theory of form stresses the relationship between formal qualities in a work of art. It is not concerned with artist or audience or any reference to the outside world. Formal features include elements such

as balance, perspective, symmetry, color, shape, and texture.

Critical trends (mid nineteenth century to the mid twentieth) stressed the importance of form in the visual arts. Two art critics, Clive Bell and Rodger Fry were advocates of this view. Both Bell and Fry rejected the theory of realistic imitation believing that form was the important factor in art. Bell introduced the notion of significant form as "... the distinctive characteristic of great art which aroused a special 'aesthetic emotion'" (Sheppard p 44). He states that the artist perceives objects as pure forms, without association, and expresses the aesthetic emotion received from these forms in their re-creation in his or her art.

Beauty

Theories concerned with beauty attempt to account for the diversity of things that can be appreciated aesthetically in art and nature. But what is the nature of beauty? Sheppard (1987) suggests four possibilities. The first is that beauty cannot be defined in terms of anything else but itself; that we recognize beauty through our intuition. The second and third proposals are that beauty can be defined in relation to other specific aesthetic qualities such as grace, elegance, and daintiness, or paralleled with non-aesthetic qualities such as symmetry. The fourth position is grounded in the nature of aesthetic appreciation and judgement.

Sheppard regards this fourth position as the only profitable one to discover the nature of beauty. She describes Kant's account of

aesthetic judgement (kinds of reactions). Kant divides aesthetic judgement into the judgement of taste and the judgement of the agreeable. The latter is simple gratification of the senses, for example, pleasant-tasting food. "This is beautiful" is the prime example of the judgement of taste. According to Kant the judgement of taste claims universal validity; that is, if I judge something to be beautiful I claim that others will have a like reaction. This claim does not imply that there are rules by which to call an object beautiful: "On the contrary he holds that judgements of taste are singular, that is, they judge only one particular object and they judge that object in itself, not as an example of its kind." (p 66). Kant makes a further distinction between free beauty and dependent beauty. Free beauty judges an object by itself isolated from its conceptualized worldly existence. Dependent beauty judges an object as it compares to other objects of its kind.

SYNTHESIS OF CATEGORIES AND PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES

Most of the connections between these theories and the participants' responses refer to aspects of mimesis and expression. The concept of beauty is evident mainly in the context of home decoration and the theory of form is negligible. The links I make between the responses and the theory of mimesis operate on the level of copying (in two dimensions), without reference to the "divine model". It seems that copying in this context has two senses, neither of which is exclusive to itself; both are generally present and both require hand/eye co-ordination. The first sense I call "imitation" and infers some kind of interpretation, while the second sense "translation" has little, if

any interpretation. The concept of self-expression relates to the theory of expression in terms of feeling or emotion, without any implication of insight into truth. I also make the interpretation that pure expression holds little meaning for these women; a tangible object is important, and is not a mere extension or consequence of the artist's mind.

Kaye's recollection of the football player and animal character drawings combine the ideas of "imitation" and "translation". She relied on a model (magazine and storybook images) from which to copy. I assume that a certain amount of interpretation was required in Kaye's decision to enlarge the scale of the figures and in her decision to use these images as a school art project and as wall decorations for her childrens' room. She also transferred these images from one medium (reproduced images) to another (pencil drawings). Generally speaking Laura's example of her daughter's (Mandi) drawings refers to the idea of "translation". She said that they were exact and like copies. Mandi's drawings usually feature characters from storybooks. She takes pride in her ability to draw accurate facsimilies. Realism was my primary concern when I did the still life painting in high school. I don't recall being interested in interpreting the subject matter or the means by which I would produce the painting. On the contrary, although I was concerned with realism in the pen and ink posters I did at home, my main concern was with the symbolic meanings the montaged images produced. For me these posters were more "imitations" than "translations".

Perhaps self-expression is the underlying notion of "imitation" as I

have used it. In the discussion of what is art and what is not and who is an artist and who is not, self-expression was repeatedly mentioned by all the participants. There were a range of descriptors whose meanings were similar. Kaye, when explaining what an artist was, used the analogy of the artist moulding an image of something into a figure. She also said an artist tries to express a feeling of something. Laura described art as something that comes from within someone and an artist as being able to "exhibit things from different perspectives". Mandi used the words "your own stuff" and "unique" to define creativity. I referred to an artist as someone who follows his or her spirit. The two key ideas, inner image and originality could perhaps be considered residual aspects of the theory of expression in terms of the artist's imagination actively assembling his or her inner image or emotions.

Nature was considered, by all the participants, as something that was pretty or beautiful or inspiring. Each person identified specific things in nature that were beautiful, for instance Kaye loved the beauty of the trees, the water, and the clouds; Laura mentioned the trees changing color in the fall and mountains; for Mandi it was the stars, sunset, ocean, and full moon; and I said sunspots, trees, and the aurora borealis. It is uncertain if our appreciation of nature is based on the idea that beauty is intuitively understood and unlikely that it is based on the notion that beauty is self-referential. I assume that our (the participants) appreciation of the beauty in nature is experienced not only through our senses but also through our associations with other people or things.

The other link to the notion of beauty is in terms of taste or

preferences as it relates to home decoration. Kant's notion of dependent beauty can be linked to the notion of taste as it refers to a person's ability to make choices amongst alternatives. In the context of home decoration Kant's judgement of the agreeable is a more probable link than the judgement of taste. The judgements made by these women to decorate their homes were not disinterested; judgements were made with a specific goal in mind. Considerations involved how various factors would contribute to this goal. Kaye used adjectives such as elegant, bright and warm to describe her home. These references are to other aesthetic qualities. Laura made her home pleasing to the eye by combining colors, textures, and shapes. In this context these formal elements are used to achieve a goal (a comfortable home) whose implications are inextricably linked to family life. The concept of "significant form" has no direct conscious bearing.

The social context where these womens' commonsense knowledge is applicable and the social context where the philosophy of aesthetics is useful are fundamentally different. Thus the links made between theory and practice (the actuality) are trace elements or residuals and provide only partial explanations. However I think this is an appropriate place to start. I did not set out with these theories in mind in order to find content to fit them. Rather I collected the content first. My intention, with reference to these theories, is to make sense of the data. No doubt further speculation would lead to other aesthetic theories formed within the context of the fine art world. This would be an area for further research. It is also my intention not to rely solely on these theories as a base, but rather to

see what other base or bases (aesthetic and otherwise) exist within other contexts. As art educators I think it is important for us to try to find a common meeting ground with our students so that we can acquire a more accurate reading and understanding of the incongruencies between what we think and what our students think. To do this I think it is necessary to make direct inquiries into our everyday lives and the everyday lives of our students.

Chapter 5

CLASSIFICATION OF SPECIAL OBJECTS AND PICTURES

This chapter looks at the meanings given to the special objects and pictures, specific to each participant, displayed in their home. I believe that these things reveal in an unspoken way some of the values that each person has, as well as their aesthetic. I assume that taste accounts for the aesthetic choice in objects and pictures. It is, however, not assumed that a particular object or picture is displayed for aesthetic reasons alone. The categories I am using were derived from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton (1981). Their study examined how and why people relate to things in their domestic environment. The categories I have developed were inductively drawn from the objects and pictures named as special by the participants. Consequently some of the categories developed by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton have been changed or deleted (see appendices D, E, and F).

OBJECTS AND PICTURES

There was a group total of sixty-two special things. I named sixteen, Laura eight, Mandi thirteen, and Kaye twenty-five. Physical descriptions were given for all the objects and pictures deemed as special by the participants. These descriptions ranged from identifying the colors, size, materials, subject matter, use, and the way the things were made. For example, I described an arpillera as an

aplique piece made from scraps of fabric by women who are the wives, mothers, relatives, and friends of the disappeared. The arpilleras supplement these womens' income and provide a voice for them. One of my arpilleras depicts an everyday scene in Chili, a soup kitchen. Laura described a clay doll as very colorful with starry eyes, rosy cheeks, a heart-shaped mouth, and a chipped foot. Mandi's descriptions were less elaborate and consisted of brief statements. For example she described her jewellery box as "a wooden box with a jade design" and her panda and olympic pins as "a selection of different pins you would buy or trade during the Olympics in Calgary." Kaye described a picture she has as quiet and peaceful. She said: "It's very simple. There's just a couple of trees, shrubs and two birds flying over. And the colors are in the brown tones and soft."

Moy

About half of my special things were connected to general memories that mainly referred to my adult life. These things included my arpillera, painting box, silver and ceramic frames, and Micmac basket. All of these things except the arpillera were received as gifts from family and friends. Initially I purchased arpilleras for their bold colors (fig. 38). Later, after I had done some research I admired them for the strength they symbolized. The painting box was made by a friend and is the oldest of the gifts. He gave it to me at a time when I had little support for my decision to pursue fine arts. The frames were special because they were gifts from a friend and my brother Greg. The most recent gift, the Micmac basket, (fig. 39) was made and sold by the Micmac Indians in New Brunswick. I had always admired the skills

used to make these beautiful baskets. My "husband", Doug, knew I wanted one and bought it for me last spring.

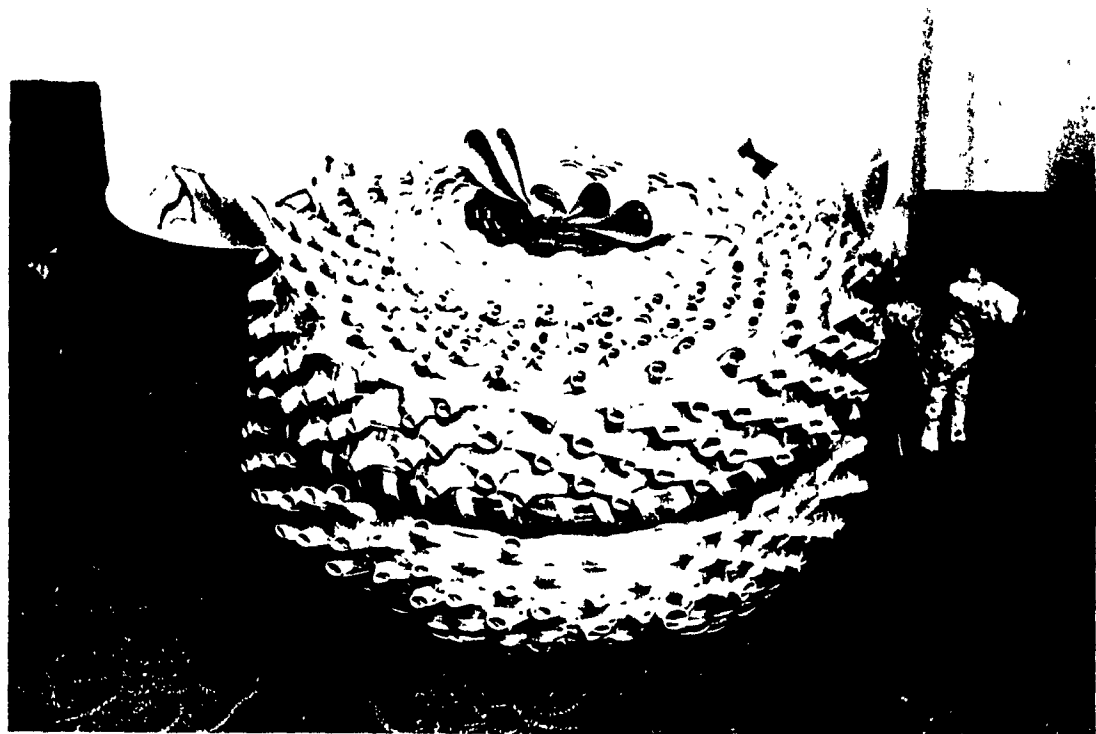
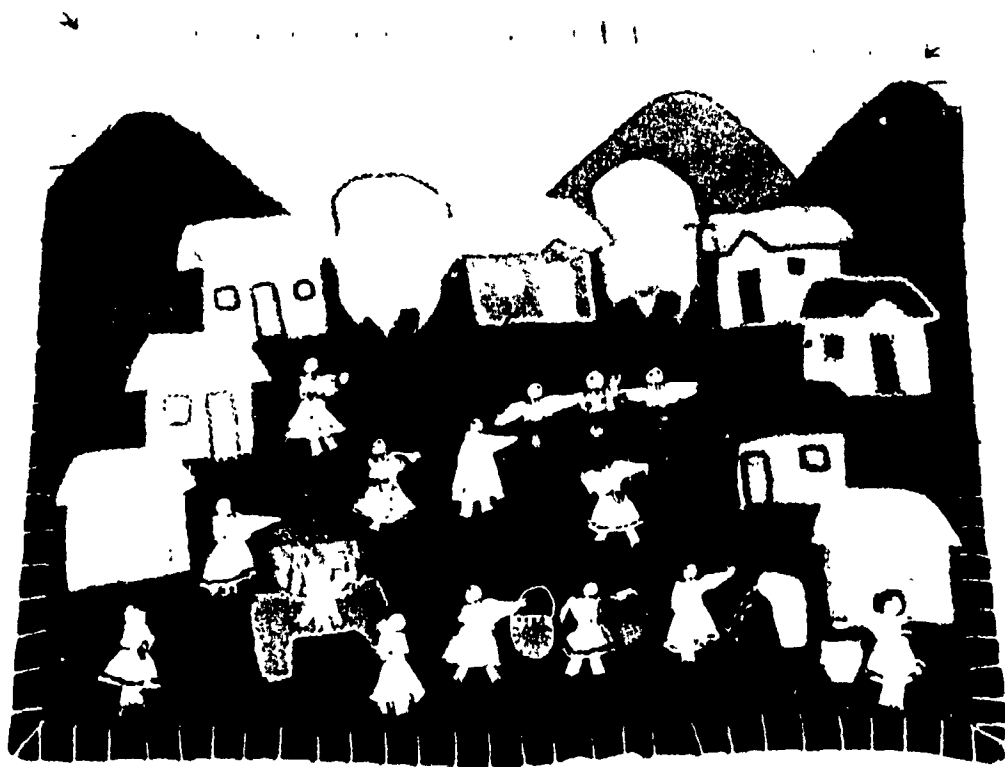
The photographs of myself, my sister, and my brother as children were taken by my uncle and refer to my childhood (fig. 40). The Cathayan platters also remind me of my childhood. These dishes were from my father's restaurant where I spent alot of time growing up. Two photographs which were given to me by my father and uncle bear no memories related to myself. The Mah family portrait, taken when my father was a child, and a photograph of a wedding cake, decorated by my grandfather provide a link to my grandparents (figs. 40 and 41). I was five years old when my grandfather died and I never knew my grandmother.

The remaining half of my things evoked memories of a birthday, a Christmas, and other events. I vividly recall the circumstances whereby I bought the painting "Digby Seagull" by Fred Trask, a Nova Scotian folk artist (fig. 42). I first saw it at an antique fair at the Halifax Shopping Centre. As I wandered through the fair this painting kept reappearing in my mind. I returned to the booth where I had seen it propped up against a table leg and asked how much it was. I never found out. Instead I was told in not so many words that it was too expensive. A year passed and the man, Paul Kilawee, who was selling it at the fair came into the store where I was employed. I inquired after the painting and this time I purchased it. It cost me eighty dollars about eight or nine years ago. Another painting, my self-portrait, (fig. 43) is also significant because I did it at a

time when I was feeling insecure about my painting activity. Doing this painting enabled me to regain my confidence.

The crocheted piece was a birthday gift from a close friend. Her great aunt had made the piece and this gift was a symbol of our friendship. My pencil holder was made with the lego I received one Christmas from Doug. It has a perch with a blue roof and flowers for the alabaster bird that was in my stocking. Playing with lego is relaxing and allows me time away from the work I am doing. The snapshot of my guinea pig Baki, (fig. 44) reminds me of when I first got her - she was my first pet. I enjoy her and she has been a calming force. The other snapshots are of family and friends and remind me of a particular Christmas, Halloween, and wedding. The photograph of the dog fight was the first photograph that Doug gave to me of his own work (fig. 45). It is titled "Dance of Life".

Most of my special objects and pictures made connections between myself and others (friends and family). These things represent past and present, continuous and non-continuous bonds. As a whole they mean people - the warmth, love, and sharing that constitute friendship. These things signified events in our lives and I enjoy looking at them.



figures 38 and 39

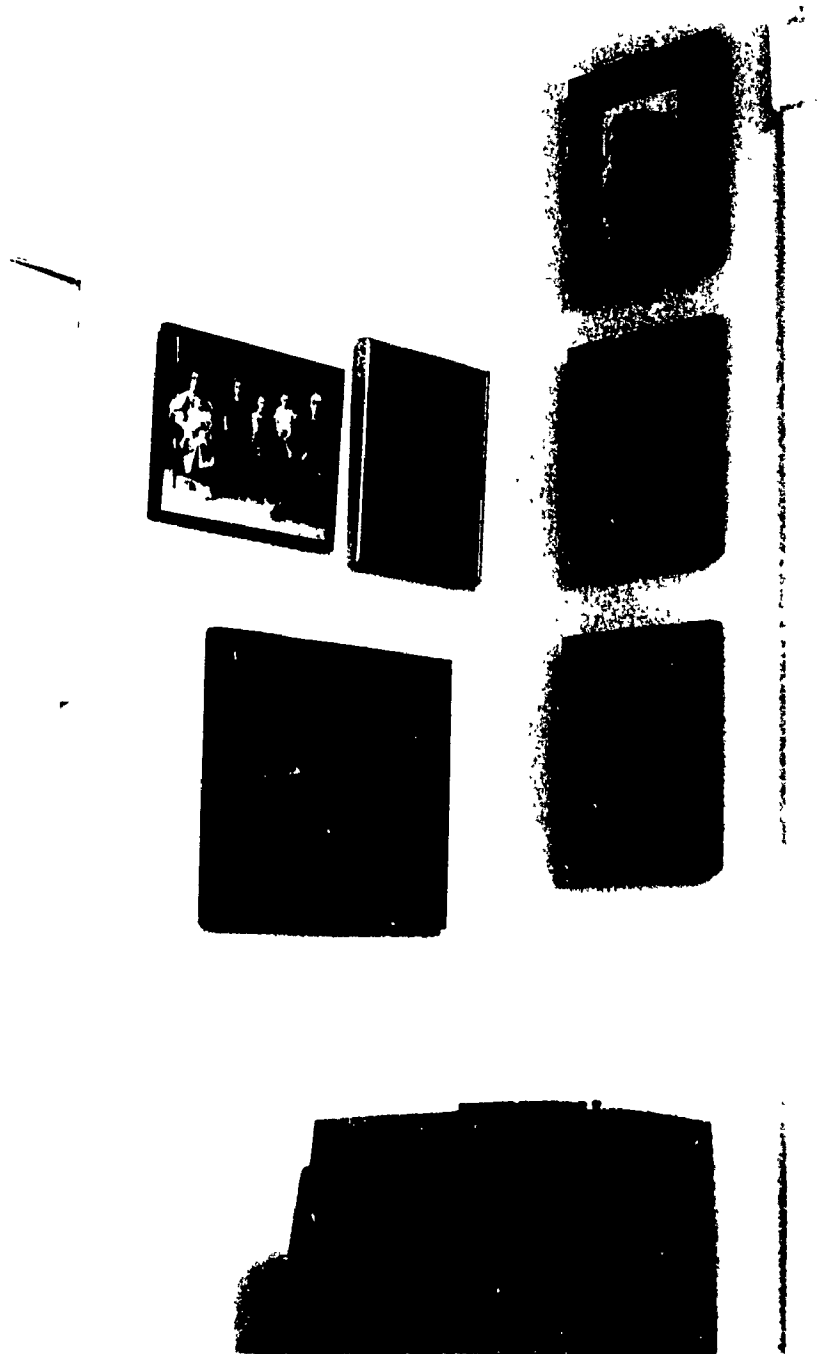


figure 40

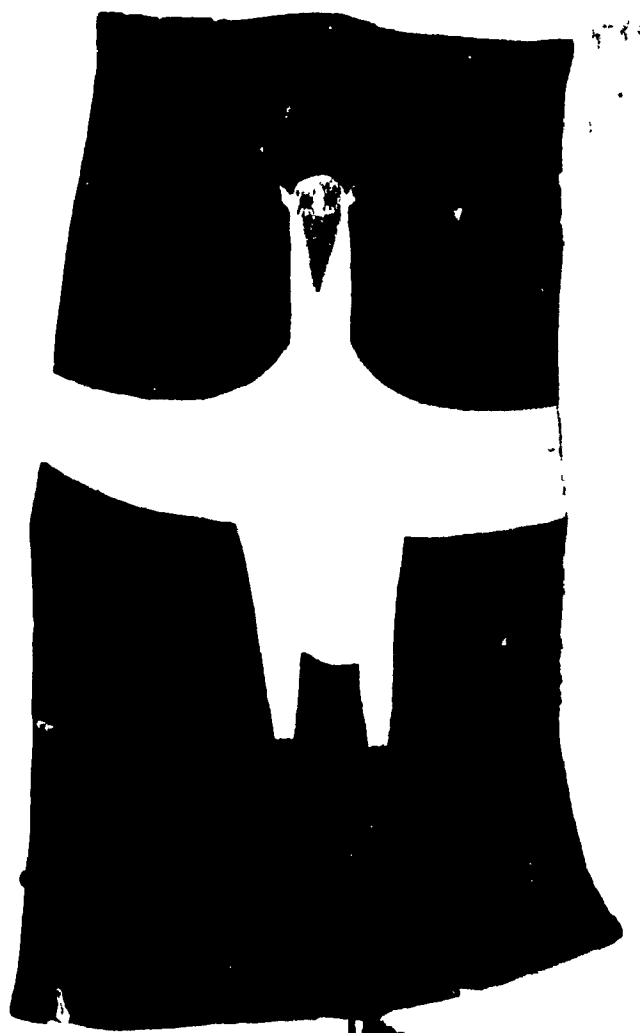


figure 42



figure 43



figure 44



figure 45

Laura

The majority of Laura's special objects and pictures were connected to specific memories. The individual studio photographs of her children, Mandi and Greg, reminded her of a specific time period (figs. 46 and 47). She said: "Some of the pictures that were taken in the hospital bring back good memories and feelings..." She recalled a particular photo session when Mandi was two years old. They had been waiting for approximately an hour and when it was time for Mandi to have her picture taken she was "restless and cranky." Consequently Laura had to bribe her with a Chinese candy to sit still which appears in the photograph. The snapshots in her photo albums were chronologically ordered and included other family members and friends. All of her photographs were linked to her own life history. Without them, she said: "It would be like a missing part of my life."

The works by Laura's children were special because they were made by them and given as gifts (fig. 48). They signified the bond between herself and her children. She said: " I think it's really important to receive things like that from your kids. It's a way of telling you they want to share with you... if I'm displaying them, it's a way of me telling them that I care and I'm concerned about what they do..." They remind her of the time period when they were done. She recalled how a particular picture was made by her son:

Oh, one picture I think is really neat is a picture of a dinosaur that Greg did and he used the crayons ... they were crayons but they were actually like pastels. They were very soft, soft type of pencil crayon, and what he did was he used the texture from my kitchen floor for the background and then he's got the green dinosaur sitting in the middle of the picture. He used alot of various colors.

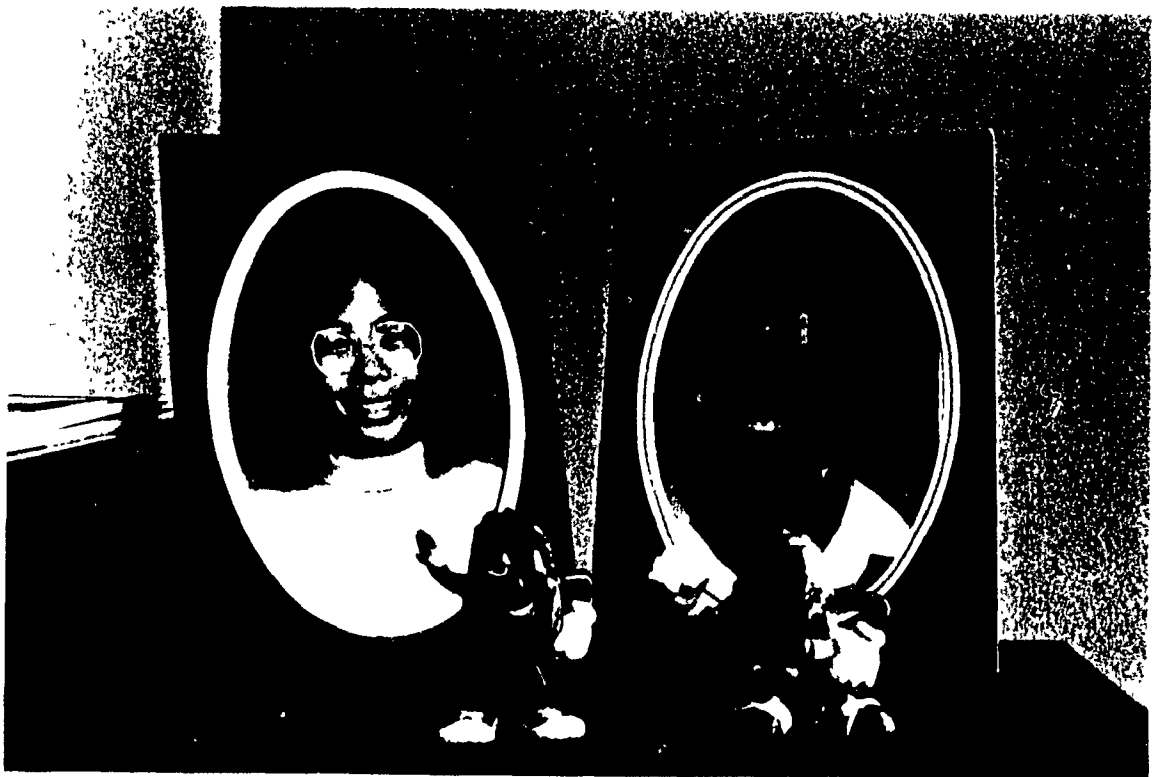
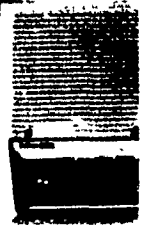
Laura's trivet was a gift from her brother (fig. 49). He bought it for her because he knew she liked it. The clay doll, Marita, was bought in Italy by her sister and was actually given to Laura's daughter (fig. 49). Although Laura enjoys looking at these objects, the significance was in who they came from. The water pitcher and bowl were Christmas gifts also from her family (brother and father) (fig. 50). Again the significance was linked to who they came from. In this particular instance she does not like the objects and finds them ugly.

The oriental incense burner was linked to her own childhood (fig. 51). She remembered it sat on the mantle in her parents' home in Edmonton. "When I was little", she said, "I always noticed the incense burner and I always admired it... I remember liking it as a child and thinking it was interesting, not really pretty but just really interesting." Her Chinese dishes (fig. 52) were special because they were a wedding gift from her parents-in-law, and because they are linked to her cultural background. I asked her to elaborate on the latter aspect. She said:

Well as a child I don't think it was all that important to me to know anything about my cultural background, or as a matter of fact I probably didn't want to be Chinese at some point in my life. But now I think it's really important to know where you came from and to be able to pass on certain customs and traditions down to your children.

Laura's special things were linked to herself in relation to family members and relatives. The focus was on her relationship with her children. Laura's personal history was embedded in the associations the photos (especially those of her children) evoked. One other significant connection was to her cultural heritage. These objects and pictures were symbols of close family ties. In general the actual object was of little or no importance. When asked what it would mean

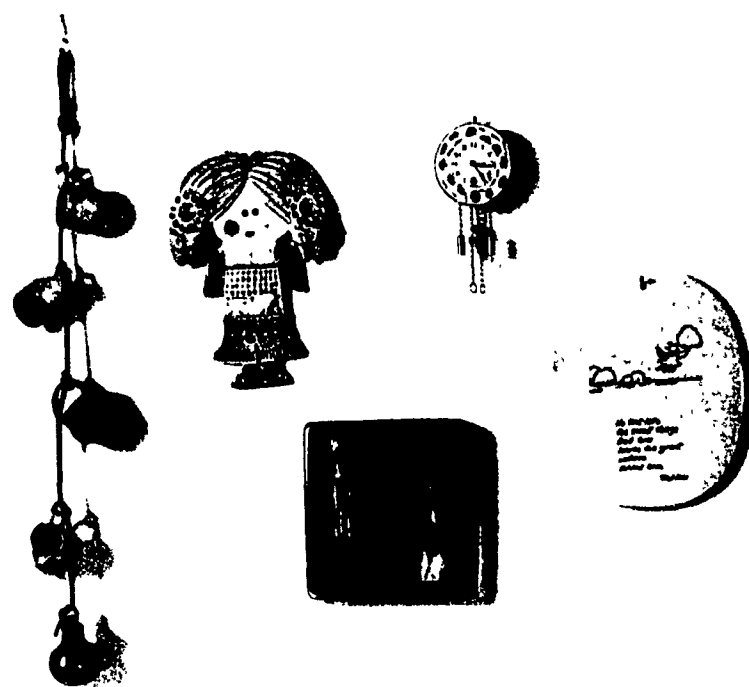
not to have something, she said she would feel no loss, or that she would have something else from that person that was special.



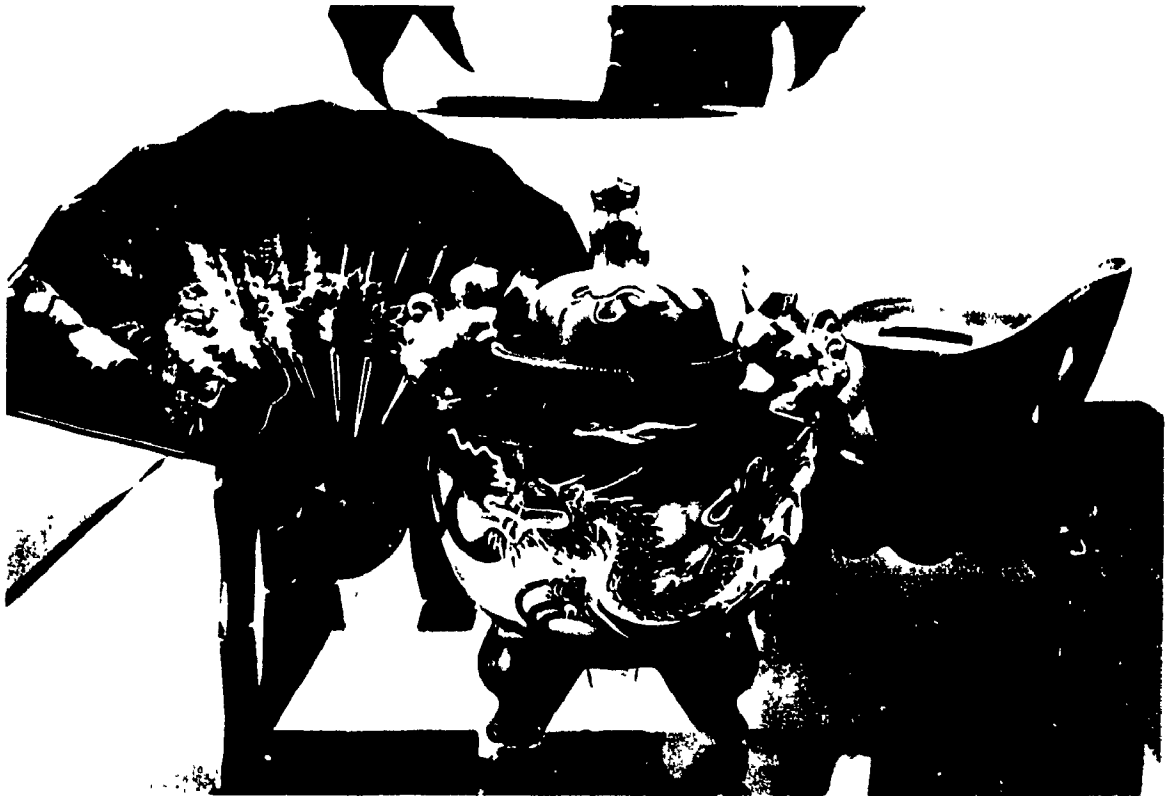
figures 46 and 47



figure 48



figures 49 and 50



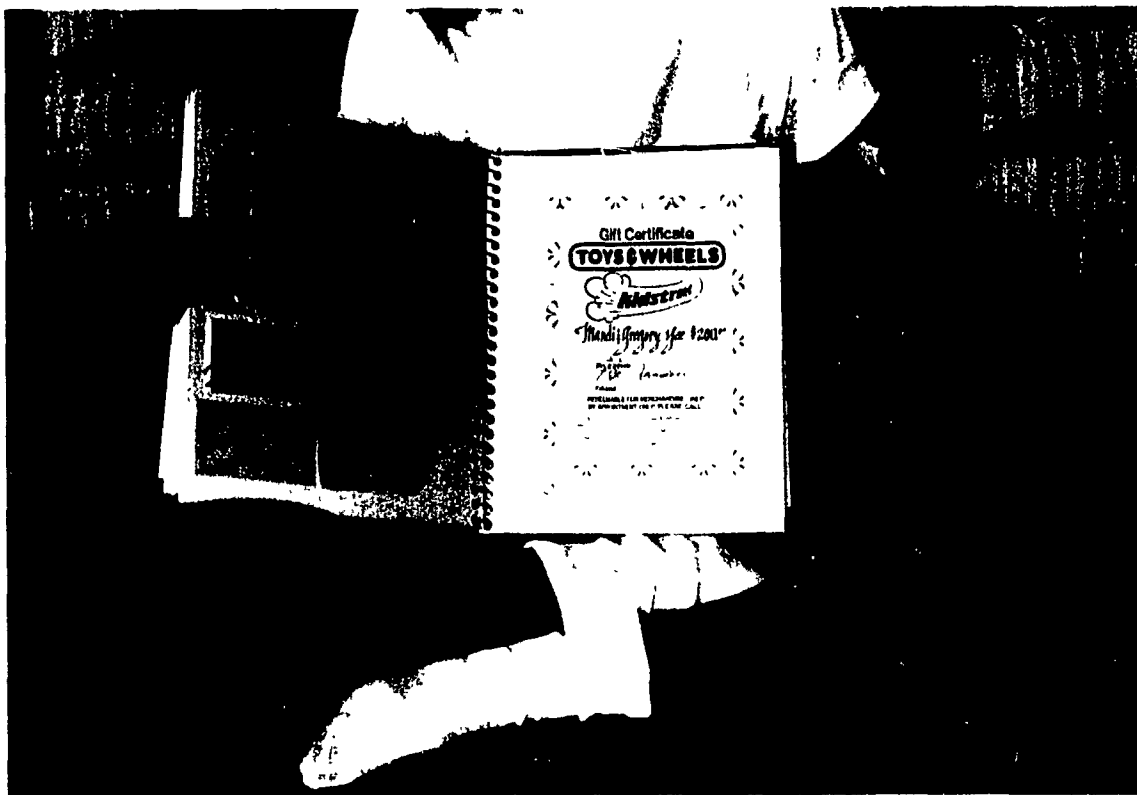
figures 51 and 52

Mandi

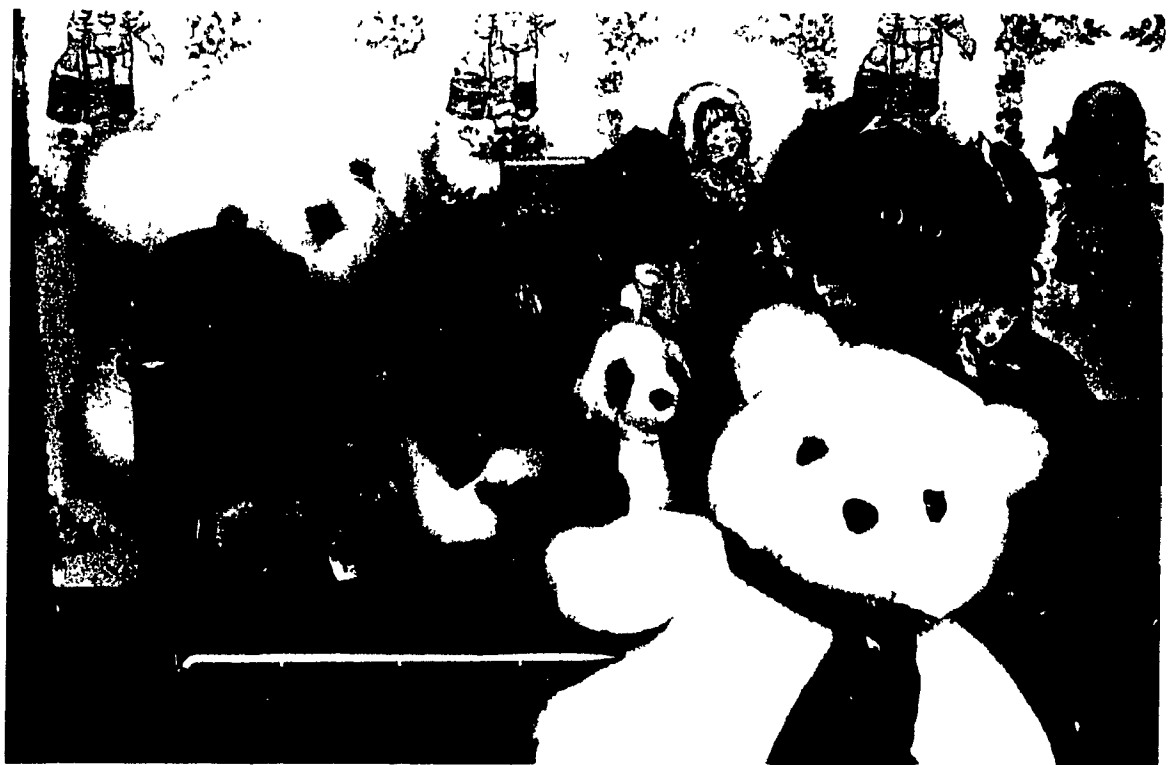
All of Mandi's special objects and pictures were associated with specific events. Fewer than half of her things were received as gifts. The remainder were made or purchased by herself, traded, or received as a reward. All of her special things (except her panda and olympic pins) were linked to self-identity and confirmation of self. For example, her baby cup, a gift from her Uncle Greg, was special because "it proves the birth of me". Her scrapbook, (fig. 53) compiled by her father, made her feel proud because "... it shows how I've grown, and all my certificates... what lessons I've taken and all the badges, special days." Some of her things, the giant pink and white pillow, initial pillows, mirror with pegs, and CD player related to her achievements in school. The pillows and mirror were made by Mandi in sewing and industrial arts (figs. 54 and 55). The CD player was a grade nine graduation present from her father, uncle, and grandfather. Achievement in other activities were represented by her Bay Charity bear, which she received for modelling for the Hudson's Bay Company's department store, (fig. 56) and the Nintendo game, one of the prizes she and her brother won on a television game show called "Kidstreet." Since winning on Kidstreet was based on how well siblings knew each other, the prizes also represented the intimacy Mandi and Greg share.

Some of Mandi's things are connected to specific vacations she and her family took. Her Winnie the Pooh was bought on their first trip to Disneyland (fig. 56). For Mandi, it was the trip more than the souvenir that was important. Her Chinese jewellery box was a gift she received from her grandmother while in Vancouver for Expo 1986 (fig.

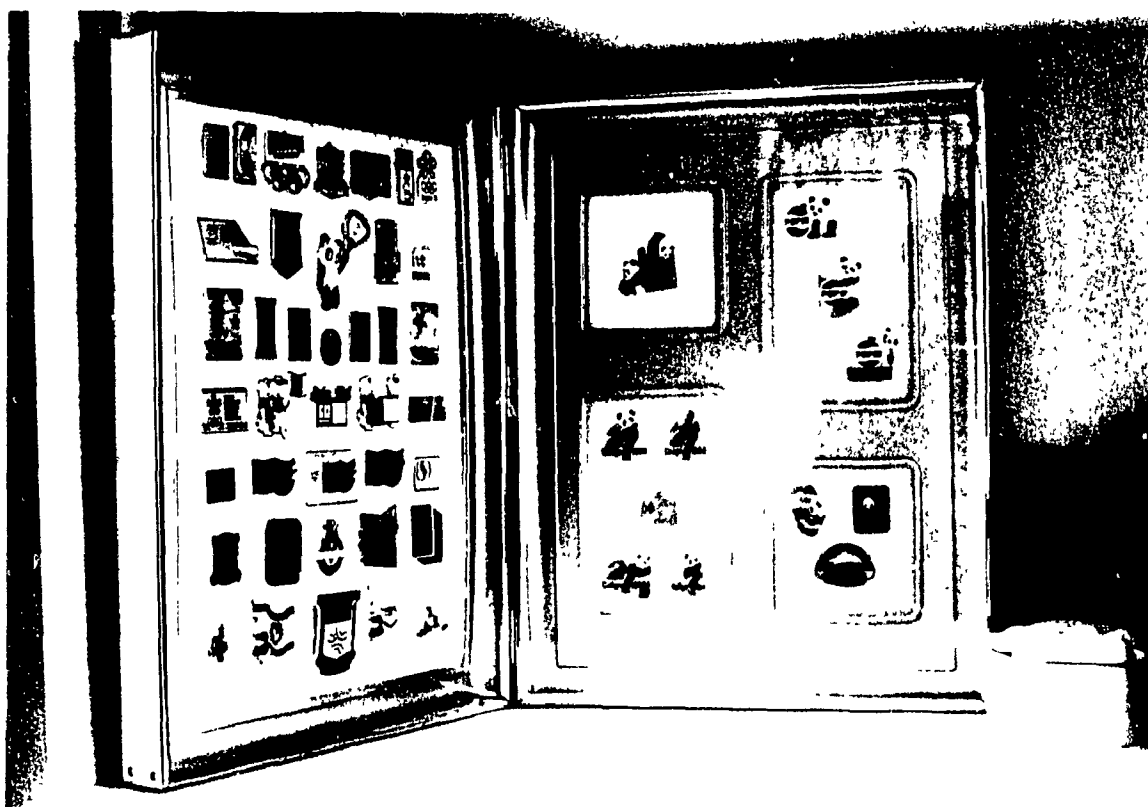
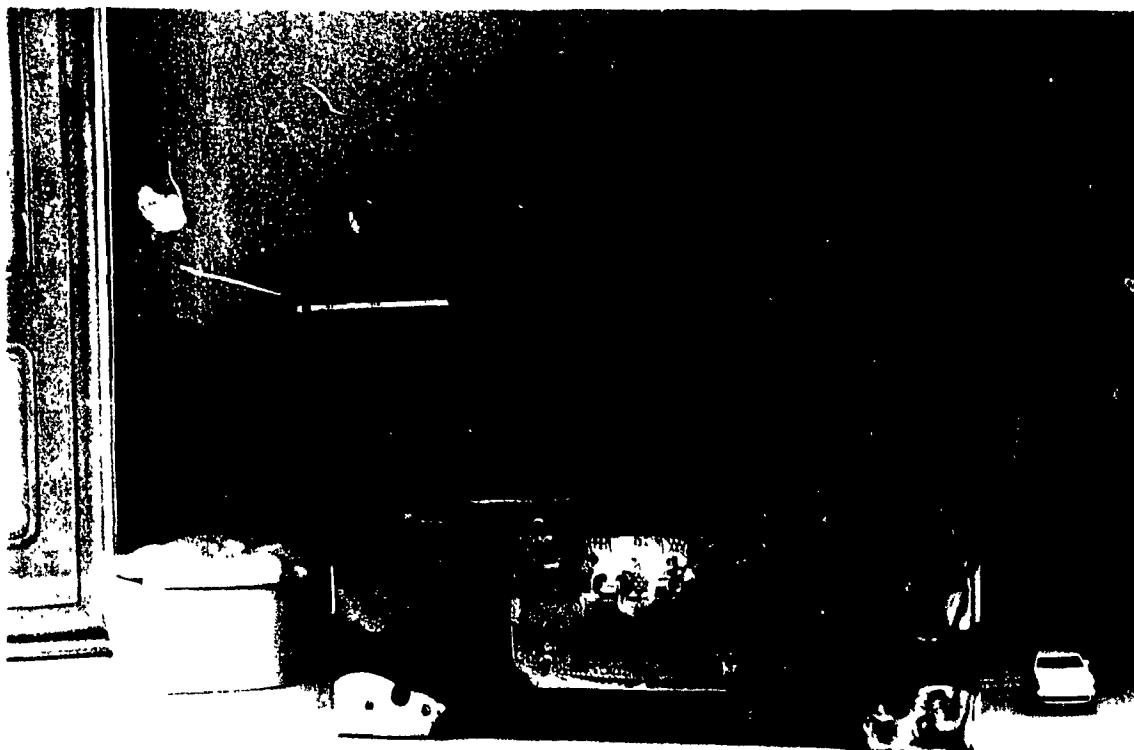
57). This object was something she had wanted for a long time and liked because it was pretty. For Mandi her CD player, like her ghetto blaster and Walkman were valued because they were gifts, and because they played music. Listening to music is relaxing for her - she said: "What's life without music?" Her panda and olympic pins were collected through trading and buying (fig. 58). Mandi perceived the pins as an investment and as commemorative items of the Calgary Olympics and of the pandas at the zoo. She said: "I guess they're really valuable now... If I didn't own them I'd regret not having them since the olympics only come rarely."



figures 53 and 54



figures 55 and 56



figures 57 and 58

Kaye

All of Kaye's special objects and pictures had connections to family, friends, and associates from work. Generally her things made reference to specific occasions such as, her first one bedroom apartment, her wedding, her wedding shower, her birthday, Christmas, and moving. Except for the two matching silk flower arrangements and family snapshots the remainder of her things were gifts. The flower arrangements were purchased by Kaye and were used to decorate the head table at her and Michael's wedding. Her family snapshots (fig. 59) were framed and were placed on the dresser and night table in the bedroom. Her jade bowl (fig. 60) and one of her watercolors, both wedding gifts, made indirect reference to her childhood through the memories Kaye has of the two people who gave her these gifts. Kaye said: "Well everytime I look at the jade bowl,... W.O. [Mitchell] is so special to me and he was very, very important in my life from the time I was little. So when I look at that bowl I always think of him and all the memories that go along with him." The painting was from a woman who was kind to Kaye when they were young girls. Kaye related her memory:

When I was six years old we were living in the small town of Castor where I was born....My mother had been deceased and we just had my father... she [the woman who gave her the painting] was so good to me and sort of took me under her wing and did things with me....I didn't see her for a long time and then just before we got married I saw her and she came to our wedding.

Another indirect reference was to her cultural heritage. She referred to the silk plant she received for a wedding shower gift as a money tree (fig. 61). She explained: "... they put money in little red envelopes and tied it to the branches of the plant.... It's a Chinese custom. There are several different types of envelopes that you put

money in for good luck different occasions. It's all for good luck and good health."

The other wedding gifts that were special to Kaye were pictures; reproductions and original paintings. The two reproductions were also from friends. One was a "contemporary picture in grey and pink....a big vase with flowers and a streak of light going across it." The other picture was a landscape which Kaye had planned to buy herself (fig. 62). The watercolors of flowers in gold wood frames were purchased by a friend. Kaye described them as "delicate looking". The watercolor by her friend, Dr. Gibson, was one of three paintings Kaye found special. One painting in oil, depicted their trip in the country (fig. 63). Another landscape painting was a Christmas gift. Recollections of Christmas were also embedded in a picture of an oriental dancer from her son, Greg, and a miniature royal blue and gold glass vase with a flower motif (fig. 64). Her figurine of two old people saying grace (fig. 60) was a birthday gift from friends. They also gave her a figurine of a drummer boy for her first one bedroom apartment. Their gifts meant alot to Kaye because "...I felt that they had accepted me for me...". Two other items, her twin lamps (fig. 64) from her son and her glass centre piece (fig. 65) from her sister were also presents for her one bedroom apartment.

Some special things were not given to commemorate a specific occasion. Her black vase (fig. 60) in the dining room was a gift her sister had brought back from a vacation in California. Another vase was given to her by a friend. Her wheat wall hanging (fig. 66) was made by a

friend in Saskatchewan which Kaye said was "really beautiful". Some of her elephants (figs. 64 and 67) were given to Kaye for a specific occasion and others were not. Kaye recalls how her collection began: "...a girlfriend gave me my first elephant after we got married, and she said that every elephant you receive as a gift with its trunk going up gave up one year of happiness. So I started collecting them." Her fridge magnets were special because her grandchildren and her brother gave them to her. The one from her brother was a going away gift. Other going away gifts were from friends and associates from work. The "beautiful" black vase, (fig. 68) in the living room was from the women she had worked with at the Bay, as was the brass duck holding a parasol. The yellow and white vase was a going away present to both Kaye and Michael. It was from work associates of Michael's. The significance of Kaye's special objects and pictures was based in their symbolic link to other people. All her special objects and pictures are a "treasure of memories".

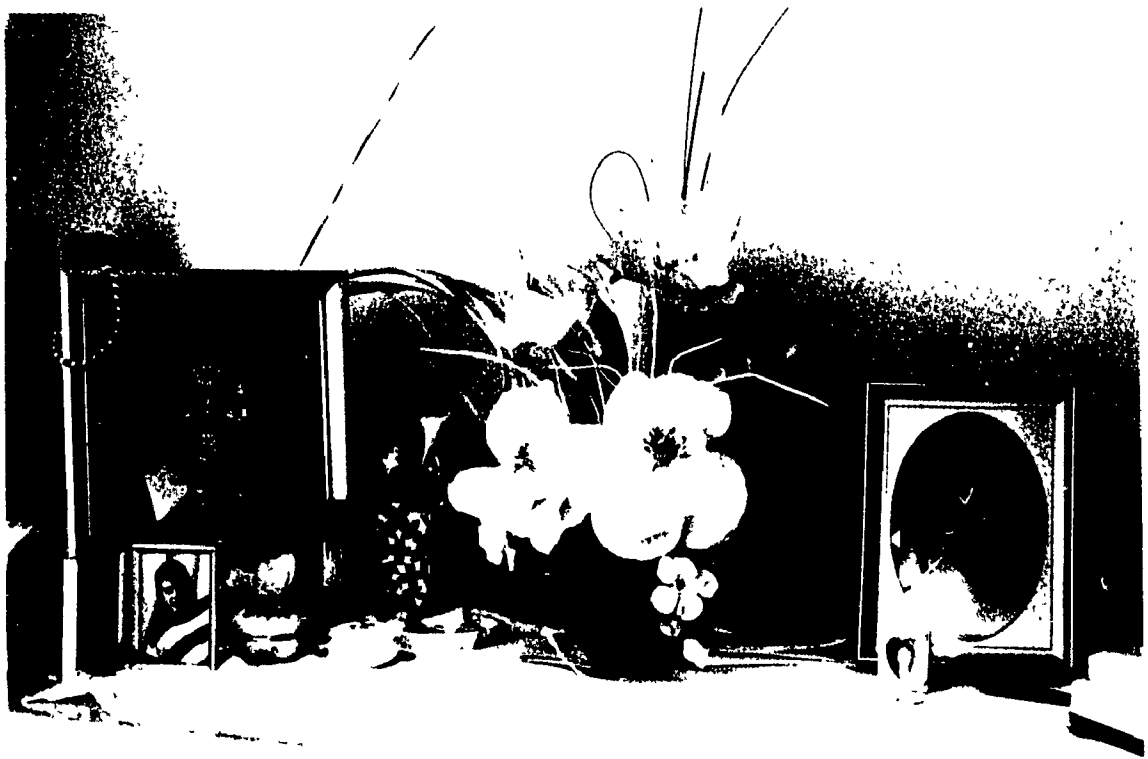


figure 59

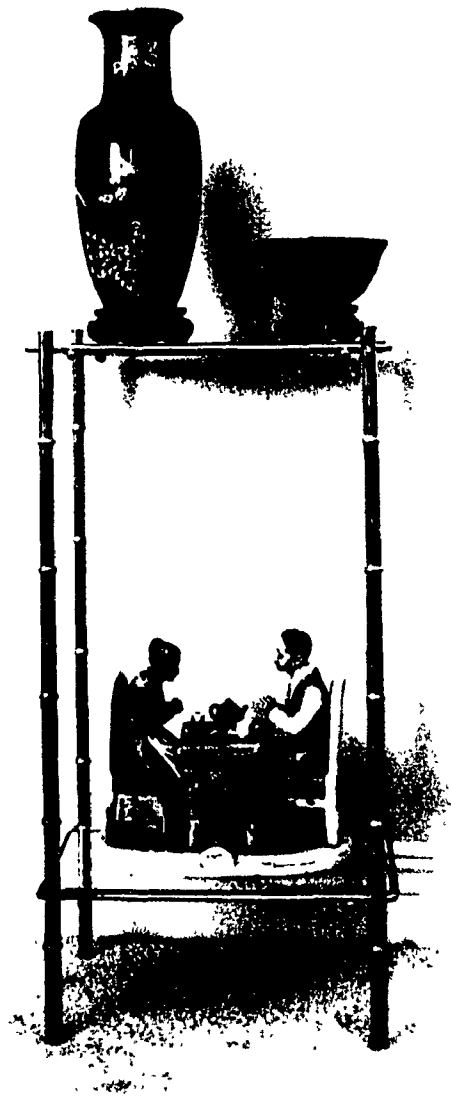
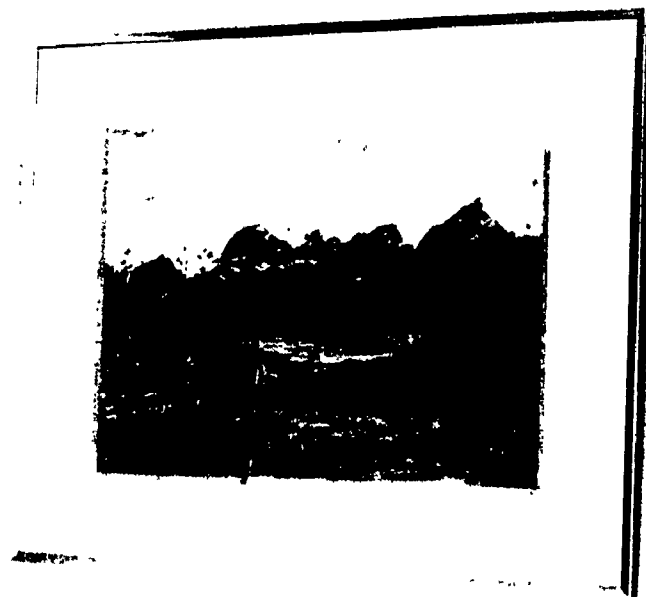
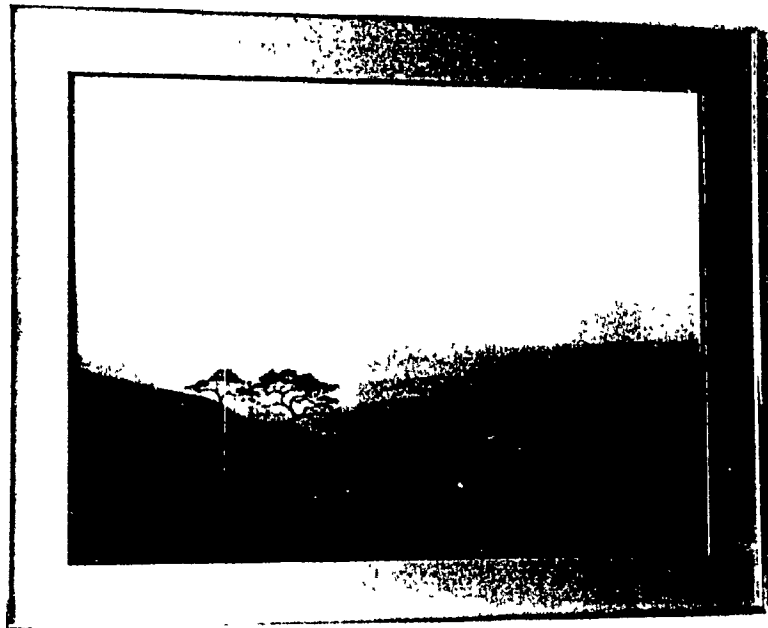


figure 60



figure 61



figures 62 and 63



figure 64



figure 65

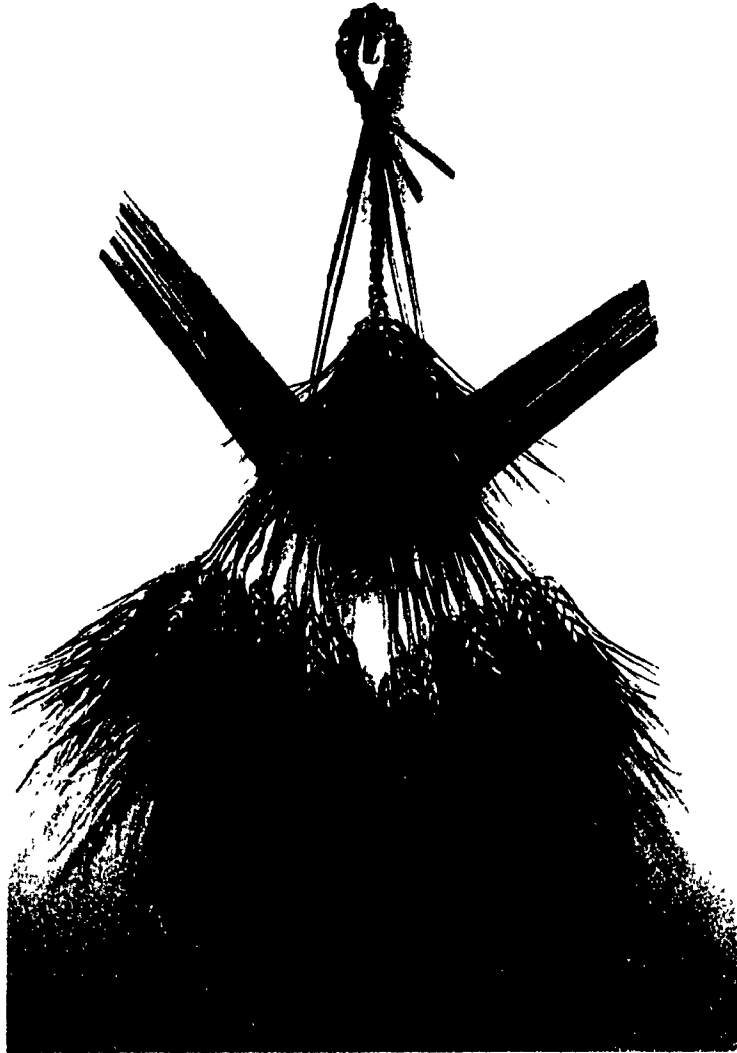


figure 66

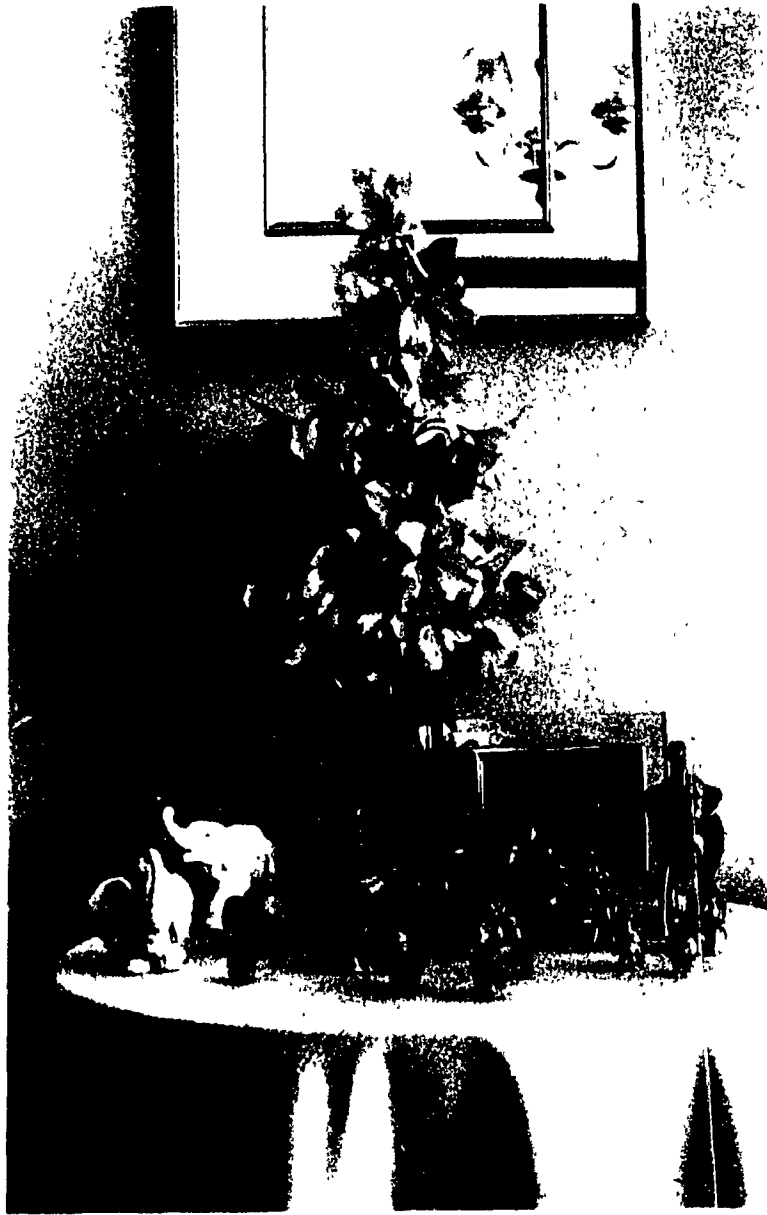


figure 67



figure 68

OBJECT CATEGORIES

This classification consists of twelve groups that describe the kinds of objects and pictures that were special (see table 1). The objects and pictures that figured prominently were those classified as decorative/functional (seventeen), pictures (thirteen), and photographs (nine). The number of objects or pictures that fall in the remaining categories range from one to five. It should be noted however that the number of objects or pictures per category was sometimes weighted primarily by one or two of the participants, and in other instances only one or two people named a thing to create a category. These categories illustrate what one might expect to find within other peoples' home who come from a similar socio-economic and cultural background as the participants.

Decorative/Functional

This category was created to account for those things which potentially have a functional use but was used primarily for decoration. Items such as lamps and mirrors had a practical and decorative use. Other items such as pillows were used for decoration alone. Kaye named seven things in this category which consisted of lamps, vases, and a glass centre piece. Mandi and I cited four things each - Mandi named pillows, a mirror, and jewellery box, and I named a lego pencil holder, picture frames, and a basket. For Laura this category accounted for two of her special things - a trivet and an incense burner.

All of Kaye's things except for her twin lamps were used to decorate her home. Her vases, some with silk flowers and others empty were

placed throughout the apartment; on the floor, the dining room table, the living room end table, and in the master bathroom. Her glass centre piece sits in the middle of her coffee table. Mandi's initial pillows and giant pink and white pillow decorated her bedroom, and her mirror and jewellery box, also in her bedroom, are used in both a decorative and practical way. My things were on my bedroom dresser and desk, and have a decorative and practical function. Laura's trivet was hung on her kitchen wall and her incense burner was on display in her living room. They were used for decoration.

Pictures

This category accounts for those things which are two-dimensional and which are hung on a wall or fridge. It includes original works, and reproductions done by persons known or unknown to the participant, whether they be considered works of art or not. Photographs are categorized by themselves. Again Kaye's things dominated, she named five pictures; two were paintings done by a friend, and three were reproductions. These pictures were hung on the living room, dining room, bathroom, and bedroom walls. Of the things I named two were paintings and one was a fabric work called an arpiller. One of the paintings was done by myself and the other was done by Fred Trask, a Nova Scotian folk artist. These things are hung in the living room and foyer. Laura mentioned two things: a group of drawings done by her children, on the fridge, and a two-dimensional clay doll on the kitchen wall next to the trivet. Mandi did not have anything in this category.

Photographs

This category accounts for all photographs. I dominated this area and the photographs consisted of snapshots of family members, friends, my pet guinea pig, and wedding cakes decorated by my paternal grandfather. Also included was a studio portrait of my father and his immediate family and a photograph of a dog fight. These photographs are on display on the kitchen, bedroom, and living room. Family snapshots were important for Laura, especially those of her children which were displayed in various locations throughout her home. Her photo albums were also special and included snapshots of other family members and friends. These albums were on the bookcase in the family room. The family snapshots that were special to Kaye were in the bedroom. Mandi did not name anything in this category.

Plates

This category refers to any kind of dish whether it is used or not. Five items were named, once by all the participants and twice by Laura. The serving platters from my father's restaurant, (The Cathayan), were special to me. I use them on occasion. Mandi's silver baby cup was special, and was displayed in the china cabinet. Kaye named a jade bowl which is displayed in her dining room. Laura's Chinese dishes which were in the china cabinet are used for special occasions such as Christmas and weddings. In her bedroom the wash pitcher and bowl are used as a catch all for miscellaneous things.

Audio, Stuffed Animals, and Scrap Book

These categories were created for items mentioned by Mandi alone.

Audio refers to electronic equipment used to play pre-recorded music.

Mandi's Sony Walkman, ghetto blaster, and CD player were used extensively and were found in her room. Two stuffed animals were identified by character name, Winnie-the-Pooh, and the Bay bear. These animals were on display in her bedroom and were not played with. Her childhood scrap book (compiled by her father) was a record of her accomplishments and of important events in her life.

Plants and Sculpture

These categories were also created for one person's responses, Kaye.

The plant category includes artificial and real plants. The green leafed plant in the living room was artificial, as were the twin flower arrangements in her bedroom and bathroom. Items of a three-dimensional nature were coded as sculpture. Two figurines (a drummer boy and an elderly couple saying grace), a brass duck with a parasol, and a wall hanging made from wheat comprise the items in this category. These things were in the kitchen, dining room, and guest bedroom.

Toys and Collections

Two items are listed in each of these categories. All toys except stuffed animals, were included. Mandi's toy was a Nintendo game which she shares with her brother and my toy was Lego building blocks.

Collections refers to things which the participant collects. Mandi collected Olympic and Panda bear pins and Kaye's collection consisted of elephants with their trunks going up.

Miscellaneous

This category includes three items that did not fall into the other categories. Kaye and myself named items in this area. For Kaye her magnets on her fridge were special and for myself a wooden painting box and a crocheted piece were special.

TABLE 1

Object Categories

	MOY	LAURA	MANDI	KAYE
Pictures (C)	3	1	0	8
Sculpture (C)	0	0	0	3
Photographs (C)	6	2	0	1
Plants (C)	0	0	0	2
Plates (C)	1	2	1	1
Toys (A)	1	0	1	0
Stuffed Animals (C)	0	0	2	0
Scrap Books (C)	0	0	1	0
Collections (C)	0	0	1	1
Audio (A)	0	0	3	0
Decorative/Functional (C)	4	2	4	7

My lego pencil holder was coded under toy and decorative/functional.

Total number of special things for each person:

MOY = 16 LAURA = 8 MANDI = 13 KAYE = 25

The above categories have also been designated according to "action" (A) and "contemplation" (C) objects. Action objects are those which involve some physical handling, interaction, or movement.

Contemplation objects are those whose use is mainly through reflection or contemplation. These categories will follow in the discussion on objects and the self.

MEANING CATEGORIES

There was a range of meanings embedded in the special objects and pictures, many which related to personal achievements and goals. Often times these special things were also symbols of close personal ties with other people. Some of the things were also valued for their aesthetic qualities. Particular events and occasions were mentioned in connection to many of the items. Some meanings were more prevalent than others, and some things encompassed a combination of meanings (see and table 2).

Memories

This category refers to time and place of the past, and is divided into four areas of signification. The first, memento, refers to memories that fall within a general time frame. This includes references such as when I was a child or when the participant's or another person's age was used to designate a time period. The second, recollection, refers to memories of specific occasions in the participant's lifetime. Occasions such as birthday, Christmas, or wedding are included. Other memorable events such as vacation, moving, and my first one bedroom apartment were also coded as recollection. Heirloom accounts for things handed down from family or friends, and souvenir refers to mention of a particular place whereby the item was purchased by the participant or someone known to the participant who gave it to the participant.

Mementos accounted for approximately one quarter of all the special things. These things generated memories of our (Kaye, Laura, and

myself) adult life and sometimes our childhood. Mandi's memories related to her recent past, as a child. A particular birthday, Christmas, or wedding dominated the kinds of occasions connected to an object or picture and were applicable to most of Kaye's things. Kaye's other references were to her first one bedroom apartment and moving. Most of Mandi's things summoned recollections of other kinds of memorable events such as her birth, modelling for The Bay, and vacations. For Laura, most of her things referred to a general time period and a few things reminded her of a particular birthday or Christmas. Laura's oriental incense burner which belonged to her mother and four items of mine, the wedding cake and family portrait photographs, restaurant platters, and crocheted piece were coded as heirlooms. Souvenirs included Mandi's Chinese jewellery box and Winnie the Pooh which were bought while she was on vacation with her family in Vancouver, British Columbia and Disneyland. The other two items that fall into this sub-category were purchased by others and given as gifts to the participant. Kaye's black vase was bought in California by her sister, and Laura's clay doll was bought in Italy by her sister.

Associations

This category has three sub-codes, ethnic, collectables, and gift. Ethnic includes references, direct or indirect to the participant's ethnic group. Collectables refers to things which people say they collect and gift refers to the object or picture that is special because it was received as a gift.

Connections to ethnic background were made by Laura and Kaye. Laura's

Chinese dishes were important to her not only because they were a wedding gift but also because they referred Chinese culture. Kaye's reference to Chinese culture was embedded not in the silk plant itself (the special object) but in how the plant was converted into a "Chinese" money tree for good health and luck. The idea of luck was also present in Kaye's reason for collecting elephants (they had to be gifts, and the trunks had to point upwards). Mandi collected Olympic and panda bear pins which occurred within a finite time frame. She was aware of the investment value of these commemorative pins. Gifts accounted for all of Kaye's special things except for the matching silk flower arrangement she purchased and her snapshots. For Laura, Mandi, and myself gifts comprised approximately half of each of our special things.

Experience

This category refers to the feelings the object or picture gives to the participant. Enjoyment refers to the positive feelings associated with the thing, and includes comments specific to the intrinsic qualities the object or picture. Release refers to those things which are linked to the feeling of release.

In general we enjoyed most of our special things for the memories they evoked of family and friends. For Kaye she also valued her things for the beauty they gave to her home. The adjectives pretty, beautiful, and delicate were used in her descriptions of eight of her things; some of which made her feel soft and tender, and peaceful and quiet. These things included her wheat wall hanging, two vases, and certain original

paintings and reproductions. Mandi said she liked her Chinese jewellery box because it was pretty and Laura said she liked her trivet. Her clay doll made her feel cheerful and she chose her Chinese dish pattern. As a child Laura had admired the incense burner and found it interesting. In contrast to this Laura said she the water pitcher and wash bowl were ugly and that it was not something she cared for. I mentioned three things that gave me pleasure to look at, fewer than what is actually true. I used the adjectives beautiful, ornate, and intricate to describe my Micmac basket, and the wedding cake in the photograph. I said the painting, "Digby Seagull" was uplifting. For Mandi her CD player, ghetto blaster, and walkman were release mechanisms because music was relaxing. For myself, I said playing with lego was relaxing and fun.

Self

This category has two sub-codes, accomplishment and embodiment of an ideal. The first refers to accomplishment or achievement of the participant and the latter the object or picture embodies personal values, aspirations, goals, or achievements that are desired.

The majority of objects and pictures named were connected to family or friends. These things were symbolic of the accomplished bonds between the participant and others. Laura referred specifically to the bond she has with her children when she spoke about their drawings. She also mentioned the bond that her children have with each other. She said: "... and pictures of Mandi and Greg cuddling bring out warm feelings; knowing that my two children are very close." The

accomplishments that were important to Mandi were referenced to herself. They were manifest in the things that she made (initial pillows, giant pink and white pillow, and mirror) and in those things she received for other kinds of activities (Bay bear, Nintendo game, baby cup, and scrap book). Like Mandi my paint box and self-portrait referred to myself. These things were also coded as embodiment of an ideal; referring to my continued painting practice. This sub-code also included my arpillera. I considered it a symbol of empowerment.

Other Persons

This category accounts for references made to other people. It is divided into immediate family, whole family, relatives, friends, associates, and role models. Some items include more than one sub-code. As stated earlier there was mention of other persons in connection to most of the objects and pictures.

In total the majority of items had connections to family and friends. For Mandi those things connected to vacations (Winnie the Pooh and her Chinese jewellery box) relate to her whole family. The jewellery box also relates to her grandmother who actually bought it for her. Laura's photo albums include not only her whole family but also her immediate family, relatives and friends. Friends were a strong reference for Kaye and myself. Friends were connected to most of her things. Some of her associates were also friends. Mandi's Bay bear which was received for modelling was coded as associates. My arpillera was the one thing that was related to role models.

TABLE 2

Meaning Categories

	MOY	LAURA	MANDI	KAYE
MEMORIES				
Memento	8	6	1	6
Recollection	6	5	12	21
Heirloom	3	1	0	0
Souvenir	0	0	2	1
ASSOCIATIONS				
Ethnic	0	1	0	1
Collectables	0	0	1	1
Gift	7	5	6	23
EXPERIENCE				
Enjoyment	3	2	1	9
Release				
SELF				
Accomplishment	2	1	7	0
Embodiment of an Ideal	1	0	0	0
OTHER PERSONS				
Immediate Family	9	5	3	10
Whole family (nuclear)	1	1	2	0
Relatives	0	2	0	2
Friends	4	0	0	16
Associates	0	0	1	4
Role Models	1	0	0	0

Many objects were coded under more than one category.

Total number of special things for each person:

MOY = 16 LAURA = 8 MANDI = 13 KAYE = 25

ACQUISITION CATEGORIES

The objects and pictures have been placed in one or more of seven categories (see table 3) They are: purchased, given, crafted, traded, rewarded, and inherited. Most of my things, except for the frames and platters were crafted. They were all gifts except for those which I made or purchased myself. In some cases the item, like my paint box was made by the friend who gave it to me. The crocheted piece was inherited by my friend from her aunt who had made it. Most of Kaye's things were received as gifts and purchased in stores. The paintings were coded as crafted. Except for those painted by Dr. Gibson (her friend) the others were bought. The things Mandi made and her scrap book (compiled by her father) were also coded as crafted. Other things such as her Bay bear and Nintendo game were considered rewards and her panda and Olympic pins were either purchased or traded. All photographs were coded as crafted; the studio photographs in Lara's home were also coded as purchased. Works by her children were crafted gifts, and her incense burner was inherited. The rest of her things were gifts that were purchased.

TABLE 3

Aquisition Categories

	MOY	LAURA	MANDI	KAYE
Purchased	6	4	8	21
Gift	7	5	6	23
Crafted	13	3	3	6
Traded	0	0	1	0
Reward	0	0	2	0
Inherited	4	1	0	0
Other	0	0	1	0

Total number of special things for each person

MOY = 16 LAURA = 8 MANDI = 13 KAYE = 25

OBJECTS AND THE SELF

It is my belief that a good deal about oneself is revealed in those things we chose to surround ourselves with in our homes. According to Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) self definition is largely developed through a person's transaction with objects. Their study involved eighty-two families in the Chicago area. They considered age and gender as two main factors that accounted for the differences in the kinds of objects a person chooses. Trends were found with regard to each factor as well as correlations between the two. These tendencies were also related to the kinds of meanings given to the cherished objects.

Age

They divided the life cycle into three broad areas, adolescence, parenthood, and late adulthood. Their findings revealed that the younger generation "... received meaningful information from interacting with objects that were appropriate to their stage in life, as defined in this culture; these are different objects, and therefore different selves, from those that their parents and grandparents develop." (p 94). They illustrated this pattern by sub-dividing the object categories into "action" and "contemplation" objects. The first is based on the development of self-control through unique acts; the second, selfhood is based on conscious reflection. The pattern showed that the adolescents tended towards the action objects to release meaning while the oldest generation choose objects requiring little or no physical interaction. The middle generation or "parenthood" choose things that were common to either of the other two generations; with a

tendency towards the older group. For example a youngster may cherish musical instruments, a particular toy, pet, or sports equipment while an older person may choose a book, painting, or photograph. A middle aged person may choose an action object such as a stereo and a contemplation object such as a photograph that is meaningful.

It should be noted however that the physical characteristics of an object does not always determine the kind of transaction that takes place between the person and thing. For example, stuffed animals and plants were considered by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton to be action objects. In my study they were coded as contemplation objects. Mandi did not physically interact with either her Bay Charity bear or her Winnie the Pooh. Another example was the plant category. The plants that were special to Kaye were artificial and did not require the care and nurturing that living plants do.

The ages of the participants in my study span the three generations referred to by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton. Generally speaking the trends they discovered were evident in my study. However, Mandi, who would be considered in the adolescent cycle had a proclivity for contemplation rather than action objects. Nine of the thirteen objects that were special were contemplation objects. The action objects were her CD player, Walkman, ghetto blaster, and Nintendo game. The audio objects were valued for their ability to play music and not for the objects themselves. The trend of older adults was illustrated by Kaye's things which were all contemplative. Laura and myself were in the parenthood cycle; she is four years my senior. I followed the

predicted trend; most of my cherished objects were contemplative, but my lego was an action object. The photograph of my guinea pig was coded as photograph, a contemplation object, however meaning is released through the live pet. Thus the pet, not the photograph was considered an action object. Laura on the other hand cherished objects that were only contemplative; the trend common to the oldest generation.

Gender

Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton found a difference in the kinds of objects that the female and male participants cherished. They suggested that the roles prescribed by "cultural scripts"⁹ account for these gender related differences. They further state that a person's choice in objects is limited by what is available; whether it be based on what a person can afford, or what is actually possible to procure. In either case the objects are embedded with culturally defined meanings. Nonetheless, "By adopting the intentions pervading his or her culture, a person does not feel determined or coerced; usually he or she goes about building the self unquestioningly , doing 'what comes naturally.' (p 105). The main difference between the sexes was that women preferred contemplative objects and males preferred action objects. The contemplative objects that women choose were valued for their connections to a social network, outside the physical boundaries of the self; the same that were cherished by the older generation. The converse was true for the men; action objects (those which the children also valued) were related to individual accomplishments, and self-centredness. Thus meaning is based on two polarities - the self and others, and action and contemplation.

The participants in my study were all female. Their preference for contemplation objects outweighed action objects by a large margin, including those things which Mandi (a teenager) deemed special. As stated earlier some discrepancies were found regarding the correlation between age and the kind of object (action or contemplation) that participants in my study tended to choose, to the patterns described by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton. Although most of Mandi's things were contemplative, more than half were related to the self in terms of accomplishment or relaxation. The action objects were related to relaxation. References to other persons were confined to her immediate or nuclear family. Her recollections were also self-centred. The memories Laura's objects (all contemplative) evoked were linked to a broader family circle, including relatively distant family members. However, the emphasis was on her bonds with her children. Her Chinese dishes which were linked to her cultural heritage are perhaps more indicative of the present and future than the past. She implied that her interest in who she was, and where she came from (her ethnic origins) was a recent development which continues. All of Kaye's objects were also contemplative. She exhibited the broadest range of social networks which included not only immediate family and relatives but also associates and a large number of friends. Her recollection of the circumstances whereby these gifts were received spanned a twenty year period. Although all the participants indicated positive feelings towards their cherished objects, Kaye frequently mentioned the beauty of the actual object. The majority of my objects were also contemplative. Connections were made to social networks involving family, friends, and in one instance a role model. This last reference

was manifest in my arpillera which also embraced personal values related to spiritual strength. The two action objects related to myself alone; my lego was a relaxant as was my guinea pig.

The different kinds of meanings embedded in the different kinds of objects we choose, are influenced by the "cultural scripts" already in place. But when the context changes from "out there" to "in here", redefinition and realignment is exercised to develop our own selfhood. The relationship between people and things is symbolic of the values derived from the meanings embedded in the objects. They are symbols that refer to our self and others, and encompass past, present, and future goals. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton argue that the home is a receptacle for the most special things. They state:

One of the most important psychological purposes of the home is that those objects that have shaped one's personality and which are needed to express concretely those aspects of the self that one values are kept within it. Thus the home is not only a material shelter but also a shelter for those things that make life meaningful. (p 139)

The participants' special objects and pictures were like mirrors reflecting how each individual (who was a member of a specific family unit) expressed who they were as distinct from other families and community. For example, the drawings that Laura received from her children were gifts made for her. Mandi's scrapbook was a compilation of her accomplishments and a record of significant events linked to her family. One of Kaye's paintings (by her friend Dr. Gibson) was a record of a specific trip to the country. The reproduced pictures purchased in department stores were associated with events particular to Kaye and were valued for personal reasons. The photographs which Laura, Kaye, and I cherished were perhaps the most obvious mirrors.

These domestic artifacts or "family art" contributed to the creation of the home as a part of a world bearing individual signatures. Family art is a family's endless giving to itself a home based on love and a sense of belonging (Pacey 1984). This is not to say that aesthetic considerations were not important. Kaye often referred to her paintings and pictures as pretty or beautiful, and Mandi had coveted her Chinese jewellery box because it was pretty. Laura's brother gave her the trivet because he knew she liked it. Paintings which I have by friends appeal to my aesthetic. Aesthetic value was however of secondary importance relative to other values such as human relationships and the establishment of social networks, as well as symbols of personal achievements. Although all the participants referred to liking particular pictures or objects for their aesthetic qualities the importance of these things was based on the love shared, given, and received by family and friends.

Chapter 6

CONNECTIONS TO ART EDUCATION

Art is a larger word than what it appears to be. Because we, art educators, are somehow driven to try to tame it, its larger meaning becomes more and more elusive. Perhaps our job is not to tame - not to teach people how to make art using a pre-meditated programme based on one art system. Perhaps our job is to make our own art (based on our own social reality of art) and encourage those we call our students to make their own art that is congruent to their social reality of art. This would require not only acceptance but a sincere effort to understand art systems other than our own. This perspective would also foster an approach to teaching where learning, discovery, and critical self reflection would be common to student and teacher alike.

My study explored the social construction of art by a few members of the "general public". I juxtaposed the participants' notions about art and artist with notions from western aesthetics, as a means to better understand the source of their knowledge and values. As a result I found some discrepancies. Perhaps the most obvious reason for these discrepancies is that the fine art subculture, and not the general public relies most heavily on the Western tradition of aesthetic philosophy as a model of understanding. There were, however, indications that these womens' thoughts reflected their commonsense knowledge of western aesthetics. For example, similar criteria such as

skill, self-expression, and talent were used to indicate and discriminate between art, artist, craft etc. Although some of the criteria were similar, standards of judgement and value were not necessarily the same as one might find in a "fine art" public. This is not to imply that any one set of standards is superior or inferior, rather that they are different, and that they are socially constructed.

The inadequacy of the lexicon derived from the fine art world became an important issue in the course of the study. I conclude that this specialized language is a problematic and inappropriate means to communicate about the different kinds of art and with their audiences. This became apparent to me during the interview sessions addressing the participants' ideas about art. In addition to discovering what and why they thought about art and artists I also discovered that it is as important to listen to the language people use to talk about their ideas on art. This is an area of study worthy of more research. It would be useful to embark on a project where words are discussed in terms of the various meanings they have for people from a variety of backgrounds. It would also be necessary to further investigate how these various meanings or interpretations are formed. This could, first, illuminate where miscommunication can occur, and second, open up possibilities for creating alternative lexicons more appropriate to a population from diverse backgrounds.

In this study I also explored the home as a place where each person's aesthetic and identity was manifest. This was reflected in the kinds of activities, overall decoration, and choice of objects and pictures

displayed in the home. The meanings given to the special objects and pictures confirmed each person's self-identity in the context of family, friends, and larger social networks. Objects referring to specific events and general memories were associated with bonds of friendship and love. Some objects signified personal accomplishments and goals. Aesthetic values were prominent in discussions about the decoration of the home; visions of how they wanted their homes to look was specific to their own taste. The value these women gave to the things in their homes were subjectively meaningful producing a powerful sense of their own life histories; past, present, and future.

It seems to me that "art" (as Fine Art) is a mysterious, almost untouchable abstraction for these women because it has been so far removed from their everyday lives. The notion that "art" is something other worldly is often reinforced by the "fine art" world. However, my inquiry also shows that these women do engage in a kind of arting whereby they are able to negotiate objective reality with their subjective reality. This too is a social structure which is valued and preserved. Perhaps art and other terms associated with it need to be developed to encompass a variety of view points that take into account the various social contexts where it is produced. This would be a beginning where, perhaps not all voices would be represented, but at least a variety of voices would be heard rather than continuing to allow one sub-culture to dominate in the discourse of art for the whole society. The demystification of the fine arts is important to developing an awareness that art can and does exist in everyday life, be it in the home or any variety of settings.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

As a result of this research my conviction towards making art more meaningful for all people becomes stronger. This requires a continual examination and evaluation of what is condoned as art so that new ideas can be generated and realized. That is not to say that I feel the fine arts are insignificant; quite the contrary. Rather I am saying that because it is specialized it is relevant to a small population. Thus I think it is important to recognize that there are other perspectives and art forms that are of equal importance to other subcultures. Concern with my ability as an art educator, artist, and person to contribute meaningful and fruitful dialogue with people about art has been evident for some time. I recognize my frustration in a number of instances. For example, as a teacher I sometimes found that what I assumed would be accessible and inspirational to my students produced instead a barrage of questions which reflected the lack of meaning the content had for my them. Another instance I recall was when an uncle asked me why a certain painter, who was being highlighted on the news, was so significant. I was speechless. My own response to much of the contemporary fine art is one of dumbfoundedness. Sometimes my own artmaking becomes stifled when I question its relevancy to others and I ask myself if I am not simply paying lip service to the fine art world.

These concerns were addressed at a cultural policy conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia by a popular theatre group (Popular Projects Society) of which I was a member. We produced a series of skits, one which specifically advocated cultural pluralism. The scene was an art gallery where two cleaning women (I was one of the women) talked about

the art on the walls. The sentiment portrayed was that fine art exemplars were a part of a culture separate from ours (the cleaning women). The women resolve their conflict by deciding to make art of their own: "I can make art that tells people about the way I live and the way my friends live." (p 9). The group recommended there be support for the representation of multiple cultures, particularly for indigenous work about the daily lives of people in Nova Scotia.

Talking with the women in my immediate family confirmed my hunch that everyday activities such as cooking family meals and decorating the home were important for aesthetic, social, and political reasons. These kinds of values are also apparent in other cultural contexts. For example, in Chili the resurgence of the arpillera was prompted by political and social conditions during the 1970's (Agosin 1987). Initially these small wall hangings (depicting scenes from everyday life), were made as a means to earn more money. These scenes include arrests, beatings, unemployment, food and water shortages, as well as hopes of a better future symbolized in images of fields of animals and ripe crops. These works of "art" do have an aesthetic value but more important is their symbolic value of solidarity and political denunciation. Whether everyday activities are called art or not is not the issue - it has more to do with what kinds of activities and things do, in fact, nourish the aesthetic urges. I am equally concerned with what other meanings and values are embodied in these activities and things, and how these meanings can be incorporated into what is currently referred to as art education.

It seems to me that there is a substantial contingency group, in the social sciences and art education, who support the principles of cultural pluralism. Articles and even books have been written on the subject. In a few cases attempts have been made to bridge the gap between theory and practice through qualitative research methods. I think that this approach should be continued so that the eventual outcome of this work will be the implementation of a dialogical practice whereby the learning process is reciprocal between student and teacher, teacher and teacher, and student and student, and where all sub-cultures will be equally represented (as nearly as is possible) not by others but by themselves. But that is an ideal; so what can we work towards today? I think it useful to continue studies similar to what Gans, Painter, and Csikzentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton have done. These works provide a useful template by which art educators can discover not just what their students value but why they value it. What has been fruitful in my study is the cautionary note that we, as art educators can no longer remain in a state of inertia. We must recognize where the inadequacies are and take action towards overcoming myopic view points and embrace the challenge that new ways of thinking and doing are appropriate and necessary to promoting an art education that is meaningful for ourselves and for our students. This is an ambitious task that has no end; not only is the phenonema of art, how we think about art and what we consider as art, continually evolving, but we, as people, are not static entities. Our ability as human beings to develop and change through a process of critical reflection is our most valuable resource.

CONTENT NOTES

1. Herbert J. Gans, Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 68-70. Gans defines taste publics and taste cultures stating: "The values and standards [by which people make choices] constitute the basis of what I defined earlier as a taste culture, and the people who make similar choices for similar reasons are a taste public....Taste cultures are not cohesive value systems, and taste publics are not organized groups; the former are aggregates of similar values and usually but not always similar content, and the latter are aggregates of people with usually but not always similar values making similar choices from the available offerings of the culture."
2. The interviews indicated that these womens' Chinese origins bore little influence on how these women lived. Except for the older women, they were ignorant of their Chinese heritage. What the older women knew was scant and fragmented. They perceived themselves as Canadians - their culture is Canadian. Consequently, I eliminated the ethnic question from this this study.
3. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 1. Reality is defined as "a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition (we cannot 'wish them away')", and knowledge as "the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics."
4. Gans discusses the term education to mean not only schooling but also what is learnt from the mass media and other sources. He cites two reasons for this broad use: "First, every item of cultural content carries with it a built-in educational requirement, low for the comic strip, high for the poetry of T.S. Eliot. Second, aesthetic standards and taste are taught in our society both by the home and the school. Thus a person's educational acheivement and the kind of school he or she attended will probably predict better than any other single index that person's cultural choices. Since both of these are closely related to an individual's (and his or her parents') socioeconomic level, the range of taste cultures and publics follows the range and hierarchy of classes in American society, although the correlation is hardly perfect." (70-71) See Herbert J. Gans, *ibid.*
5. Louis Cohen and Lawrence Manion, Research Methods in Education (London: Routledge, 1980), 247. cite Lerlinger's definition of open-ended items as "those that supply a frame of reference for the respondents' answers, but put a minimum restraint on the answer and their expression."
6. I use the term special as delineated by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and The Self (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 56. Their definition of "special" is open to the subjective interpretation of the

participants. In this way it is hoped that the participant will define what constitutes the meaning of an object or picture. They define "special" - "... to mean significant, meaningful, highly valued, useful and so on."

7. The Etch-a-Sketch toy, originally called L'Ecran Magique was invented by Arthur Grandjean in his garage in the late 1950's. It consists of a screen (undercoated with powdered aluminum and plastic beads) with a knob on either side to sketch with. The left knob controls the horizontal lines and the right the vertical. Curved lines are produced by turning the knobs simultaneously. Shake the screen to erase all the lines and recoat the surface to begin again. See Diane di Costanzo, "Etch a Sketch," Metropolitan Home, April 1990, 56.

8. The Chinese language has family title designations for a person's relation to the rest of the family members. As the youngest female, I was called Moy. Although there are titles appropriate to the other family members, they were never used.

9. The term cultural scripts refers to "... the world of objects and meanings a person confronts is 'always already'...constituted in his or her environment. What objects are available, how one should react to them and why, are issues already decided in advance by the social milieu into which one is born." (105) See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, *ibid*.

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APPENDIX A

WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire was distributed asking the participants to apply the questions to themselves, their parents, and their "spouses".

1. Name
2. Date of Birth
3. Place of birth
4. Previous place/s of residency (to include different homes in the same city).
5. Current place of residency
6. Marital status
7. Number of children and their respective ages and sex.
8. Formal education (public school, college, university). Please indicate grade level, degree/s achieved.
9. Informal education (other than in number 8)
10. Employment (including housewife)
11. Religion
12. Region (urban/rural)
13. Travel
14. Income
15. Profession

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW ONE - ART BACKGROUND

1. Have you ever taken art or craft courses/lessons before? Where (school, community centre, home etc.)? When? What medium/s? What do you remember about these experiences?
2. Do you now do any making that you find creative or pretty but that might not be called art?
3. Do you know someone you consider to be artistic or an artist? Tell me about that person.
4. If you could be any kind of artist what would you choose to be?
5. What is an artist? What do you call other people who do the non-art things? (how would you describe these people)?

Following are two additional general questions:

1. What are your hobbies or personal interests?
2. If you want to enjoy looking at something pretty or beautiful or inspiring what do you look at?

NOTE: These questions were distributed to the participants a day or two prior to the interview. This provided the opportunity for them to think about the questions.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW TWO - OBJECTS AND PICTURES IN THE HOME

The following interview questions were applied to each object and picture designated, by the participant, as being special.

1. For each room in your home, what are the objects and pictures that are special to you? Could you tell me why they are special?
2. Could you give a brief physical description of these objects and pictures? Could you give a further description in terms of the mood or feelings these things evoke in you?
3. Do these objects and pictures have any other associations for you?
4. When and how did you acquire these objects and pictures?
5. What would it mean not to have these objects and pictures?
6. Can you tell me about the arrangement or combination of the objects and pictures?
7. What do all of your special objects and pictures taken together as a whole mean to you?

APPENDIX D

OBJECT CATEGORIES

1. Pictures - Refers to the full range of two-dimensional representations other than photographs, commonly hung on a wall. Drawings by children are included in this category.
2. Sculpture - Refers to the full range of three-dimensional representations.
3. Photographs - All photos coded under this category.
4. Plants - All plants whether they be artificial or real.
5. Plates - This category includes "dishes" of any sort whether they are used or not.
6. Toys - All mention of toys excluding stuffed animals.
7. Stuffed animals
8. Scrap books - Compilation of memorable events.
9. Collections - Refers to objects that the participant collects.
10. Audio - Refers to electronic equipment used to play pre-recorded music.
11. Decorative/Functional - Refers to things that can have a functional and decorative purpose. Included are objects such as lamps, pillows, and picture frames.
12. Miscellaneous. Refers to objects that do not fit any other category.

APPENDIX E

MEANING CATEGORIES

These categories outline the different kinds of meanings and values the objects and pictures have for the participants.

MEMORIES

1.Memento. Memories within a particular time frame such as when I was a child.

2.Recollection. Memories of specific occasion(s) or events in participant's Included are occasions such as birthday, Christmas and other memorable events.

3.Heirloom. Object handed down; it can be from family or friends.

4.Souvenir. Memory of a place. The object was purchased at the place either by the participant or by someone known to the participant who gave it to the participant.

ASSOCIATIONS

1.Ethnic. Some reference is given to the participant's ethnic group.

2.Collectables. Objects which people collect, keepsakes, etc.

3.Gift. Object is special because it was given as a gift.

EXPERIENCE

1.Enjoyment. Refers to the positive feelings associated with the object/picture.

2.Release. A feeling of release is linked to the object or picture.

SELF - object or picture reflects personal values

1.Accomplishment. The object manifests creativity or accomplishment or achievement of the participant - something already achieved.

2.Embodiment of an Ideal. Object embodies personal values, aspirations, goals, achievement that are desired or sought after.

OTHER PERSONS - direct reference is made to other people

1.Immediate Family. Specific individual(s) mentioned. Included are spouse/ lover, children, parents, siblings, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and grandparents.

2.Whole Family (Nuclear)

3.Relatives (outside immediate family). This includes cousins, aunts, uncles, and in-laws.

4.Friends

5.Associates (relation of the participant to the person/s named is primarily through the association - eg.work)

6.Role models, admired people (object valued in reference to some role model)

APPENDIX F

ACQUISITION CATEGORIES

1. Purchased. The object was acquired as a purchase regardless of who bought it.
2. Gift. The object was given as a present to the participant.
3. Crafted. Made by hand by participant or someone, known or unknown by the participant,. This includes such things as taking a photograph. object.
4. Traded. The participant traded something for the object.
5. Reward. The respondent received object for a specific action they did.
6. Inherited. The object was owned by the previous generation or the participant lived with the object as a child and it was out of her possession for a number of years.

GIFT SUBCODES

Occasions

1. Birthday
2. Christmas
3. Wedding and related events
4. Moving
5. Graduation
6. Multiple Occasions

Persons

1. Spouse/Lover
2. Parent(s)
3. In-Laws
4. Grandparent(s)
5. Grandchildren
6. Relative(s)
7. Nonrelatives
8. Sibling(s)
9. Multiple persons